

Agenda Report

TO: CITY COUNCIL

DATE: SEPTEMBER 15, 2008

FROM: CITY MANAGER

SUBJECT: ZONING CODE AMENDMENTS – SERIES III - AMENDMENTS INCLUDING BICYCLE SHOWER AND LOCKER FACILITIES, REGULATIONS FOR DONATION COLLECTION FACILITIES, WALL SIGNS IN THE CENTRAL DISTRICT, BOARDING HOUSES, A SERIES OF MINOR AMENDMENTS, CORRECTIONS AND CODIFICATION OF INTERPRETATIONS AND PRACTICES

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council:

1. Adoption of the Initial Study (Attachment C) and the Negative Declaration for the proposed Zoning Code Amendments;
2. Direct the City Clerk to file a Notice of Determination;
2. Approval of a finding of consistency with the General Plan; and
3. Approval of the proposed Zoning Code Amendments as contained in this report.

PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION:

The Planning Commission recommends approval of this Series of Zoning Code amendments with the exception of amendment #5 (Page 4) related to parking caps, which the Commission recommended disapproval.

TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION:

The Transportation Commission recommends approval of the Zoning Code amendment regarding bicyclist shower and locker facilities for nonresidential projects (Amendment #1).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Approval of this series of amendments will require that new construction of 75,000 square feet or more provide bicyclist shower and locker facilities either on-site or through a lease agreement off-site. The amendments will establish minimum standards for the operation and establishment of Donation Collection containers to protect adjacent neighborhoods. Additionally, this series includes amendments that will modify the sign requirements of the Central District to allow an additional sign for buildings that have a secondary frontage. This series of amendments creates a 500-foot distance requirement for any new boarding house from existing boarding houses, and includes an amendment to allow for the modification of the parking requirement for projects subject to the caps under the Transit Oriented Development requirements. This amendment would allow the Zoning Administrator to modify the parking requirement by up to 10 spaces either above or below the required parking. A number of minor amendments and corrections are proposed as well as the codification of Zoning Administrator interpretations.

BACKGROUND:

This is the third series under the new Zoning Code which was adopted in February of 2005 and includes policy changes as well as minor amendments, corrections and the codification of interpretations. The focus of this report is on the major policy changes. Minor amendments, corrections, and the codification of interpretations and practices have been included in Attachment A.

Analysis of Major Policy Changes:

1. Bicyclist Shower and Locker Facilities for Nonresidential Projects.

This proposed amendment will require bicyclist shower and locker facilities in nonresidential projects. It is intended to encourage bicycle commuting and supports the City's General Plan to encourage alternative modes of transportation. The genesis of this recommendation came from the Green City Action Plan which was adopted by the City Council in 2006 and is a progressive list of environmental initiatives for the City to take in its quest to become a sustainable and green community and follows the framework of the United Nations Green Cities Declaration and Urban Environmental Accords. The amendment will allow employees who commute to work by bicycle the convenience to shower at or near their place of business. The Transportation Advisory Commission reviewed this amendment and voted to recommend approval to the Council.

In developing this recommendation, staff reviewed the requirements of other cities. It should be noted that most cities do not require shower/locker facilities for bicyclists so the number of cities surveyed is small. Additionally, the few cities that do have such a requirement range in size from large cities such as San Francisco and Seattle to smaller cities such as Palo Alto and Newport Beach. There is no consistency with the thresholds as bicyclist shower and locker facilities are a new requirement for cities. The recommendation is to require one shower and four lockers, per gender, for new projects over 75,000 sq. ft. of gross floor area. The threshold was selected for consistency with the Trip Reduction

Ordinance because these buildings will have to submit Transportation Demand Management (TDM) plans to the City and staff can ensure that they are properly marketing and managing the locker/shower facilities to their employees through the City's TDM plan review and approval.

Additionally, staff reviewed the two facilities that we know exist in the City, City Hall and Western Asset Plaza (214,000 sq. ft.). The City Hall facilities which serve City Hall, Permit Center, Transpiration and Library (299,000 sq. ft.), has three to five regular users of bicyclist shower and locker facilities, and the Western Asset project has about five to eight users of bicyclist shower and locker facilities. Staff considered a smaller threshold but found that because the percentage of regular bicyclists who travel to work (bike mode split) is small requiring shower and locker facilities at a lower square footage would not be effective. The current bike mode split is approximately one percent and the goal is to increase this to five percent.

It was intended to apply these new standards to uses that had a high employment density, employees who work a standardized time, and to tie this to the new Trip Reduction Ordinance thresholds to increase the possibility that such a facility would be used. While other cities apply their requirements strictly to office uses, in this recommendation, the number of uses has been expanded to include industrial uses as well as office uses. These uses would be as follows:

- Offices – Administrative business professional
- Offices – Governmental
- Research and Development – Offices
- Research and Development – Non-offices
- Industry – Standard
- Public, Semi-Public Uses

Staff found that many commercial uses did not have the density of employees as those cited above. For office uses 85 percent of the parking is for employees while nonretail uses such as an industrial use have 90 percent of their parking for employees. For restaurants and retails uses, the breakdown is different with 80 percent of their parking for customers and only 20 percent of their parking for employees. Thus focusing this amendment on uses with a high density will increase the possibility that the shower and locker facilities will be used. Additionally, this is consistent with the focus of many of the City's Trip Reduction Strategies to reduce vehicle trips during the morning/evening peak hours.

As part of this recommendation, any existing building that adds more than 25,000 sq. ft. and would thus be over 75,000 as a result of the addition will also be subject to the shower and locker facilities requirement. For Public and Semi-public Uses (Institutional Uses such as colleges, schools, churches, etc.), this requirement will be reviewed and considered as part of the Conditional Use Permit or Master Plan.

Additionally, the Zoning Administrator may modify the shower/locker facilities requirement to allow off-site shower and locker facilities at no cost to the employees of a building. A

recorded lease agreement or other method shall be approved by the Zoning Administrator and would be required for such an arrangement made with a health club or other facility, located within 1,500 feet of the building. This measurement shall be from the entrance of the building with the shower and locker facilities to the entrance of the building in which the applicant is requesting the modification via the shortest pedestrian route. In the event that the shower/locker facilities are no longer available, the property owner would be required to either arrange for lockers elsewhere or retrofit their building for the shower/locker facilities.

2. Donation Collection Facilities.

The purpose of this amendment is to establish minimum requirements for the location of donation collection facilities. Recently small brightly painted bins have begun to appear in commercial districts in parking lots and setback areas (See photo in Attachment B). These bins are used to collect household goods that can be reused. The intent of the regulations is to ensure that the bins are located in an area that does not create traffic or parking problems and does not impact the appearance and character of the neighborhood.

Staff recommends the following standards:

1. The donation collection bins would be allowed in commercial and PS districts and shall be accessory to a commercial, industrial or public, semi-public use;
2. The bins shall be setback a minimum of 15 feet (the current building setback requirement from a residential zoning district) in order to minimize any impact on adjacent residential uses;
3. The bins shall be located at least 25 feet from a street property line in order to minimize any impact on street traffic and entries into parking lots;
4. The bins shall not be located in a required landscaped area or located in a required parking space;
5. There shall be no more than one facility per site;
6. The site shall be kept clean and maintained in a litter-free condition at all times; and
7. The property owner shall ensure that any materials that are left outside the bin are removed within 24 hours.

3. Signs in the Central District.

The Central District Sign Regulations currently allow two total signs per business. Outside the Central District, the Zoning Code allows two signs per "frontage." The maximum allowable size of a sign is 1.5 sq. ft. per foot of building frontage. This sign allowance has been in place since the adoption of the new sign regulations in 2004. However, staff and retailers have concerns that corner lots with two frontages and lots with an alley frontage have a disadvantage with the limitation of only two signs. The proposal is to amend the code to allow one additional sign to be located only on a secondary frontage (i.e., located on a corner side or alley side). The maximum size of this additional sign would be smaller at only 1.0 sq. ft. per foot of building frontage (see sign diagram in Attachment B). This amendment would only apply to signs in the Central District and is consistent with the Old Pasadena Streetways and Alleyways Refined Concept Plan and the Pasadena Playhouse District Concept Plan for Streetscapes, Walkways, and Alleys which encourage the use of alleys for pedestrian access.

4. Separation Requirement for Boarding Houses.

When the City Council reviewed the Municipal Code Amendments regarding group homes for the disabled and unlicensed care facilities (Boarding Houses), they requested that staff look at the issue of requiring a separation requirement for boarding houses in the RM-32 and RM-48 districts where this use is permitted. Staff reviewed the current Zoning Code and recommends that the separation distance requirement be 500 feet. This is consistent with the City Council adopted distance requirement of 500 feet for Boarding Houses in the RS-6 and RM-12 Districts. This distance requirement will be applied to any new boarding house in the RM-32 and RM-48 Districts and will be measured from the proposed boarding house site’s property lines.

5. Parking Caps.

Under the Transit-Oriented Development requirements (TOD), the Zoning Code has parking caps on the maximum number of parking spaces. The parking standards for nonresidential uses are reduced by 10 percent for most projects and 25 percent for offices - business, professional and administrative. The parking requirement after the reduction is the parking cap and new projects can not exceed this cap. Staff has found that when development projects are being designed with underground parking or parking in a parking garage, it is difficult to design the garage to meet the exact number of parking spaces as required by the Zoning Code. In order to provide a small amount of flexibility, it is recommended that the Zoning Administrator be allowed to approve a parking garage in which the number of parking spaces either exceeds or is reduced below the exact parking requirement by a small margin. Staff recommends that the Zoning Administrator be allowed to approve parking that either exceeds or reduces the number of parking spaces by five percent, but not more than 10 spaces. This will apply only to parking garages (free-standing or underground). As a practical matter providing the exact number of spaces in a garage requires that a few spaces may need to be constructed on an additional level and/or a few spaces not be used because they exceed the code requirement. Spaces in parking structures start at a cost of \$20,000 a space and can go in excess of \$35,000 a space. This proposed amendment will not apply to parking lots. The Planning Commission did not favor this change because they determined that the amendment would undermine the City’s parking caps. Staff does not agree because the amendment will allow only up to 10 spaces to be modified, a very small change. Additionally, this amendment will allow the Zoning Administrator to reduce the parking by not more than 10 spaces below the required number of spaces.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:

An Initial Study and Negative Declaration were prepared. Adoption of the amendments to Title 17 involves no potential significant impacts. The Department of Fish and Game has approved a determination that the proposed code amendments have no potential effect on fish, wildlife and habitat.

GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY:

The proposed revisions to the Zoning Code are consistent with the following objectives and policies of the City’s General Plan.

The Zoning Code Amendment for bicyclist shower and locker facilities supports one of the General Plans Guiding Principles that, "Pasadena will be a City where people can circulate without cars." This amendment will promote alternative means of transportation by providing shower and locker facilities for bicyclists.

The Zoning Code Amendments related to Boarding Houses and Donation Collection Facilities are intended to protect residential neighborhoods. This is consistent with the Objective 7 - Preserve the character and scale of Pasadena's established residential neighborhood.

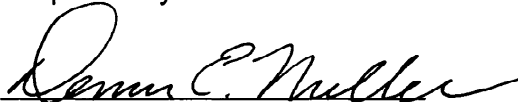
FISCAL IMPACT:

The proposed amendments will not likely have a major fiscal impact.


Respectfully submitted,


ca BERNARD K. MELEKIAN
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LIST OF ATTACHMENTS

ATTACHMENT A - MINOR AMENDMENTS, CORRECTIONS, AND THE
CODIFICATION OF INTERPRETATIONS

ATTACHMENT B - PHOTO OF DONATION COLLECTION FACILITY AND SIGN
DIAGRAM

ATTACHMENT C - INITIAL STUDY