

PLANNING & REDEVELOPMENT STAFF REPORT PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING February 28, 2008

Prepared by: Elisa Reynolds, Associate Planner

ITEM II - A: PARKING LOT DESIGN WORKSHOP

PURPOSE

At the request of the Planning Commission, the purpose of the workshop is to discuss commercial parking lot design.

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION

The Planning & Redevelopment Department recommends that the Planning Commission discuss the current standards set forth in the Zoning Ordinance and Community Design Guidelines, accept input from members of the design community, accept public comment, and provide direction to staff.

BACKGROUND

Because parking is a topic that frequently arises during the review of projects that come before the Planning Commission, the Commission requested that a workshop be scheduled to specifically discuss parking lot design. To facilitate the discussion staff has listed the various components and factors that influence parking lot design to address whether the City's current standards, prescribed by the Zoning Ordinance and the Community Design Guidelines, encourage and facilitate "good" parking lot design.

This workshop is timely in that the Zoning Ordinance (ZO) is currently being updated, and based on the Planning Commission's discussion and direction, staff can prepare any proposed changes for incorporation into the document.

To inform the discussion of parking lot design, staff solicited input from members of the design community with extensive experience working with the City's parking lot design standards. We received input from Lane Borges, Mark Marvelli, and Lisa Mattos, and have incorporated their feedback into this report.

Each workshop participant received a questionnaire that requested feedback and comments on:

- What constitutes "good" parking lot design?
- What factors influence parking lot design?
- ➤ How is the design of a parking lot affected by the Zoning Ordinance and Community Design Guidelines standards?

The questionnaire is included as Attachment 1 to this staff report.

DISCUSSION

The parking lot is the first - and last - space of a shopping center or building complex that the public will see. Typically, parking lots consists of paved parking area, entries and exits, drive aisles, pedestrian pathways, trash enclosures, loading areas, landscaping, and lighting. See Figure 1 below.

Figure 1 – Typical Parking Lot Layout



A "good" parking lot:

- Maximizes capacity,
- Circulates well,
- Is visually attractive,
- Is easily navigable.
- Convenient,
- Safe and secure, and
- Separates vehicle and pedestrian functions.

It is the intent of the Zoning Ordinance and the Community Design Guidelines to achieve good parking lot design and to provide adequate parking in an efficient and attractive setting. To that end, the Zoning Ordinance provides minimum standards that regulate the number and size of parking stalls, drive aisle widths, etc. while allowing some flexibility to designers by providing methods for requesting deviations from the requirements. The Community Design Guidelines provide criteria for how the various components can be best arranged and address design goals related to parking lot shading, dispersion of compact stalls and placement of loading areas, trash enclosures, etc.

Design professionals are tasked with balancing the physical constraints of the site and the needs of clients/tenants and then producing a design that meets the City's standards. Physical site constraints can include:

- Lot shape,
- Topography (natural and finished),
- Drainage,

- Easements (can affect placement of paving and landscaping),
- Building layout,
- > Surrounding land uses and street volumes, and
- Restricted turning movements.

Parking lot design is heavily dependant on site constraints and conditions. For instance, entrances and exit locations are determined by traffic volumes on the surrounding streets and locations of medians that will restrict turning movements. The location of entrances and exits affects the design of the internal vehicular circulation pattern which, in turn, affects the design of pedestrian circulation. Trash enclosures must be located where they meet the 65-foot clear approach required by Environmental Utilities but also meet the visual screening requirements of the Community Design Guidelines. Making a change to one element of a parking lot design has a chain reaction effect in that it can result in changes to each and every design element of the parking lot. It is easy to see how one design element is intrinsically linked to all others.

Other factors that affect parking lot design are the expectations and demands of the parking lot designer's client. Some clients/tenants have their own national standards with respect to parking stall dimensions, angle, and quantity of spaces provided. These demands can result in a design that revolves around accommodating 45° angled parking, or a design centered on locating at least 50% of the spaces within 100 feet of building entrances.

The City's parking standards are intended to result in adequate and efficient parking but should also remain flexible enough to allow the users of the standards to balance site constraints and client demands.

Each area of discussion provided below has been a frequent topic of Planning Commission discussion or is being studied by staff for proposed changes in association with the Zoning Ordinance update.

Compact Parking Stalls

The Zoning Ordinance (Section 19.26.040.1.b.) allows parking lots with more than 20 parking spaces to substitute up to 30% of the total required parking spaces with compact spaces. The Zoning Ordinance specifies that the minimum stall dimension for a compact space is 8' wide and 16' long.

Previous discussions regarding compact parking spaces have included:

- Is 30% too high, too low, or just right?
- > Is the 8' x 16' dimension adequate?
- Should compact spaces be eliminated altogether?

Staff finds compact spaces to be valuable in site design in that their placement allows for larger planters that would otherwise be too small to accommodate trees, which, in turn, helps parking lots designers meet the 50% shade requirement prescribed by the Community Design Guidelines.

Staff compared the Zoning Ordinance standards to those of neighboring communities (see Attachment 2, Parking Stall Dimensions and Aisle Widths). Overall, the standards prescribed by the Zoning Ordinance are in line with similarly sized communities.

The concern has been expressed that 8 feet in width is not practical with current trends in vehicle size, particularly the increase in size of SUV's and trucks. Is has been suggested that the City maintain the 16 foot length and increase the minimum width to 9 feet.

Staff has received more than one request for more specific guidance on the dispersal of compact parking stalls. Location and dispersal of compact spaces is addressed in the Community Design

Guidelines. The Community Design Guidelines (Section 3.4.A.) state that compact parking spaces should be dispersed throughout the parking lot and not concentrated or grouped in one area. It is the intent of this section to prevent the "banking" of compact stalls in one area of a parking lot. Banking or grouping of compact stalls is in conflict with the tenets of good parking lot design. It is often found that when compact spaces are banked in one area parking lot users will park in those spaces regardless of size of vehicle. Vehicles which are too large for a compact space will protrude into the drive aisle, affecting navigability and safety, and may encroach into the neighboring parking space, rendering it useless and affecting convenience, availability, and efficiency.

At this time, staff requests that the Planning Commission provide staff direction with respect to the size, quantity, and distribution of compact parking stalls.

Parking for Office Projects - Net vs. Gross Square Footage

The Zoning Ordinance (Section 19.26.030.A.4.) requires 1 space for every 250 square feet of professional office uses. However, the Northeast Roseville Specific Plan (p. 31) allows professional office uses to base their parking calculations on the net leasable square footage of the building(s). The Northeast plan states that common areas such as conference facilities, hallways, restrooms, elevators, stairwells, etc. shall not be included in the net square footage of the building(s). These areas are not "leasable" elements of buildings and are available for use of all of the buildings tenants. Therefore, they do not increase the parking demand of the building site. Typically, the net leasable square footage is about 90% of the gross square footage. This net leasable square footage provision has worked well in the Northeast plan area and has not resulted in any shortfall of parking at professional office sites. For that reason, in conjunction with the Zoning Ordinance update, staff has proposed changes to Section 19.26 that include the incorporation of the net leasable square footage provision for professional office uses city wide.

Additionally, staff received feedback requesting that the Zoning Ordinance specify how to calculate "net" square footage. The proposed changes will allow all professional office uses to base the required parking on net leasable square footage, which shall begin at 90% of the gross square footage. Staff has found that the 10% reduction of gross square footage is the average percentage of floor area devoted to common areas. Project proponents that wish to receive further reduction will have to demonstrate, during the Design Review or Major Project Permit process, that the percentage of common area is greater than 10%. The new provisions stipulate that the net leasable square footage shall be determined at the time of initial approval of the building shell(s).

Parking Ratios

Section 19.26.030.A.4. of the Zoning Ordinance provides parking ratios for commercial use types (Attachment 3).

Overall, feedback indicates that the current parking ratios are adequate and have worked well for the City. In conjunction with the Zoning Ordinance update staff is proposing a reduction to the required ratio for banks from 1 space per 150 square feet to 1 space per 300 square feet of floor area.

Attachment 4 is a matrix comparing the City's parking ratios to those of other jurisdictions. As shown, the Zoning Ordinance requirement of 1 space per 150 square feet of floor area is not consistent with other jurisdictions. Staff feels that the proposed ratio of 1 space per 300 square feet of floor area will not result in any shortfall of parking as the trend for banks is to locate in grocery stores and at commercial/retail centers where shared parking is available.

Specific feedback was received that indicated that the ratios for martial arts studios, medical office, and fast food with drive thru are too high. The following discussion is based on those comments.

Fast Food with Drive Thru: Of the nine (9) jurisdictions surveyed only six (6) jurisdictions had standards for fast food with drive thru. The comparison in Attachment 4 shows that the City's required ratio of 1 per 50 square feet of fast food restaurant with drive thru is higher than that of other jurisdictions. The average ratio of those jurisdictions was 1 per 100 square feet. However, Roseville's experience has been that, even with the proliferation of drive thru restaurants, at peak times (lunch and dinner rush) fast food has a high parking demand. Therefore, staff does not recommend any changes to the current parking ratio.

Martial Arts/Aerobics: The comparison shows that the required ratio of 1 space per 50 square feet of aerobics or martial arts is higher than that of other jurisdictions. Of the nine (9) jurisdictions surveyed only six (6) jurisdictions had standards for aerobic or martial arts studios. The average ratio of those six (6) jurisdictions is 1 space per 230 square feet, although requirements ranged from 1 space per 100 square feet to 50% of maximum occupancy. However, these use types have a very high parking demand during peak hours and staff recommends that no change be made to the current parking ratio. Staff will continue to evaluate each martial arts and aerobics studio on a case by case basis and prefers to have the flexibility to recommend a parking reduction when appropriate.

Medical Office: The City's required ratio of 1 space per 150 square feet of medical office is also slightly high. Of the nine (9) jurisdictions surveyed only six (6) jurisdictions had standards for medical office. The average ratio of those jurisdictions is 1 space per 200 square feet of floor area.

Parking studies have been conducted at both medical campuses in Roseville and the studies have confirmed that the current ratio is appropriate. No changes to the ratio are proposed with the Zoning Ordinance update.

Reserved Parking

Section 19.26.020.D.3. of the Zoning Ordinance prohibits reserved, timed, and assigned parking. Planning department staff often receive inquiries as to why the Zoning Ordinance prohibits "reserved" parking.

Past experience has shown that reserved parking is not an efficient use of available parking and that it often requires City enforcement which can be costly, time consuming, and ineffective at resolving the problem.

In commercial and retail centers the Zoning Ordinance (Section 19.26.030.B.8.) requires that parking be provided based on the "sum of all users" within the center or building complex. This is to ensure that there is adequate parking and is based on the assumption that all of the parking within a center or building complax will be shared amongst the tenants to ensure efficiency. Reserved parking is in conflict with the core tenets of "good" parking – efficiency, convenience, and availability. Full use of shared parking is required to accommodate fluctuations in peak demand throughout the day.

Staff is not proposing any changes to the Zoning Ordinance's prohibition of reserved parking spaces at this time.

Parking Reductions & Parking Variances

The Zoning Ordinance (Section 19.26.030.C.) provides provisions for administrative parking reductions based on shared parking or on the unique characteristics of individual uses. Reductions from required parking for other reasons require a Variance be approved by the reviewing authority. Parking reductions and Variances are valuable tools that allow a certain amount of flexibility to parking lot designers and Planning staff. Overall, this process works well. There have been limited instances where a parking reduction created a parking problem, but generally feedback has been that parking

reductions are appropriately managed. Staff is not proposing any changes to the standards that regulate parking reductions at this time.

Bike Parking

As part of the Zoning Ordinance update process staff has been working closely with the Alternative Transportation Division to ensure that the Zoning Ordinance and the Transportation Systems Management Ordinance are not in conflict. The Transportation Systems Management Ordinance (Title 11 of the RMC) requires commercial/retail projects that meet certain criteria to provide bike parking, carpool spaces, and other trip reduction measures. As a result of our meetings with Alternative Transportation staff, we have incorporated suggestions with respect to bicycle parking and the placement of bike racks and lockers into the Zoning Ordinance update.

Additional Items

The following items are included as a response to comments received from parking workshop participants.

Stacking Requirements

Section 3.4.A. of the Community Design Guidelines requires 180 feet of stacking distance for fast food restaurants and a minimum of 100 feet of stacking for car washes, automatic teller machines, and similar operations.

Feed back indicates that the requirements for fast food/coffee shops and automatic teller machines/banks are adequate. However, concern was expressed that the City currently has no specific standard for drive thru pharmacies.

Internal policy has been to evaluate each pharmacy drive thru on a case by case basis. Typically, staff requests 100 feet (about 10 car lengths) of stacking distance for pharmacies.

It was also noted that the City standards do not specify stacking distances for double lane drive thrus. As with pharmacy drive thrus, staff evaluates double lane drive thrus on a case by case basis. Typically, staff requests that the combined stacking distance of each lane equal the total stacking distance required.

Staff is not proposing any changes to stacking distances at this time.

Loading Requirements

The Zoning Ordinance is silent with respect to required loading areas or minimum distances for commercial/retail uses. Section 19.26.040.F. stipulates that the location, number, size, and access of loading areas shall be determined through the design review process. The Community Design Guidelines (Section 3.9.A.) specify only that loading areas be adequately screened from public view and that they are separated from pedestrian and vehicular functions.

Comments received indicate that the City's standards should require loading areas for buildings or tenant spaces over 10,000 square feet and should specify required minimum distances and dimensions.

Outdoor Restaurant Seating

Planning department policy regarding outdoor restaurant seating is outlined in the attached memo (Attachment 5). The policy directs staff differentiate between secured and unsecured outdoor restaurant seating (requirements described in Section 19.52) based on certain design criteria.

To be exempt from parking calculations the outdoor area should only provide fencing in compliance with state alcohol service requirements. Required fencing should be transparent and not taller than 3 feet tall (or as required by the State). The area should not be improved to provide protection from the elements such that a building permit would be required. Secured outdoor restaurant seating that meets these criteria should not be included in the total square footage used for parking calculations.

In conjunction with the Zoning Ordinance update staff is proposing changes that would incorporate this internal policy into Sections 19.26, Off-Street Parking and Loading, and Section 19.52, Outdoor Restaurant Seating.

Staff received comments from workshop participants that requested clarification in the Zoning Ordinance with respect to calculating required parking for outdoor restaurant seating. The concerns expressed by the participants should be addressed by the updates described above.

CONCLUSION

As noted, staff believes that the current Zoning Ordinance and Community Design Guidelines standards relating to parking lot design have served the City and development community well over the years. Based on staff's review, comments provided by workshop participants, and other feedback, staff believes that a comprehensive overhaul of the above mentioned standards is not needed or warranted. Rather, staff requests that the Planning Commission provide recommendations and direction to staff on specific issues and standards that concern the Commission.

RECOMMENDATION

The Planning & Redevelopment Department recommends that the Planning Commission discuss the current standards set forth in the Zoning Ordinance and Community Design Guidelines, accept input from members of the design community, accept public comment, and provide direction to staff.

ATTACHMENTS

- 1. Parking Workshop Worksheet
- 2. Matrix of parking stall and drive aisle dimensions
- 3. Section 19.26 of the Zoning Ordinance, Off-street Parking and Loading
- 4. Matrix of parking ratios
- 5. Outdoor Restaurant Seating Memo from Planning & Redevelopment Director Paul Richardson