



Staff Report

File #: REPORT 20-0692, Version: 1

Honorable Mayor and Members of the Hermosa Beach City Council
Regular Meeting of November 10, 2020

**TEXT AMENDMENT 20-02, CONSIDERATION OF AMENDMENTS
TO CHAPTER 17.44, "OFF-STREET PARKING" OF THE HERMOSA
BEACH MUNICIPAL CODE TO ALLOW PARKING PROVIDED
WITH MECHANICAL VEHICLE LIFTS TO COUNT TOWARDS
THE REQUIRED NUMBER OF PARKING SPACES AND TO
SET STANDARDS FOR THE PERMITTING AND USE
OF MECHANICAL VEHICLE LIFTS**

(Community Development Director Ken Robertson)

Recommended Action:

Staff recommends that the City Council introduce for the first reading the attached ordinance to amend Chapter 17.44, "Off-Street Parking" of the Hermosa Beach Municipal Code to allow parking provided with mechanical vehicle lifts to count towards the required number of parking spaces and to set standards for the permitting and use of mechanical vehicle lifts.

Executive Summary:

Due to the unique lot configurations and conditions that exist in Hermosa Beach, such as small lot sizes, half lot conditions, lots with significant slopes, vehicle access from narrow alleyways and other site constraints, alternative options for on-site parking would potentially improve the quality and livability of residential and commercial development projects. At their meeting of October 20, 2020, the Planning Commission recommended the City Council adopt the proposed ordinance, which would amend Hermosa Beach Municipal Code Chapter 17.44. "Off-Street Parking" to allow the use of mechanical vehicle lifts as a method to provide required parking, and to establish the definition and standards for the permitting and appropriate use of "mechanical vehicle lifts."

Background:

Beginning in February 2020, the Planning Commission considered various approaches and possible code amendments to allow vehicle lifts to count towards parking minimums.

Past Planning Commission Actions

Meeting Date	Description
February 21, 2017	The Planning Commission approved a parking plan for 3 rd Street, allowing a proposed parking arrangement that uses alternative methods, including a mechanical parking system and compact sized guest stalls. Although the vehicle lift was initially approved in error by the City and approved for construction by the Planning Commission, the Planning Commission did not want to establish a precedent. The Planning Commission, however, agreed to monitor the 3 rd Street residence and use it as a case study for a potential zoning code amendment.
February 18, 2020	On February 13, 2020, the Planning Commission received a letter from a resident requesting the Commission initiate a zoning code amendment to allow vehicle lifts as a mechanism for satisfying parking requirements. In response, at the February 18, 2020 meeting, the Planning Commission requested staff place the item on a future agenda so that they can discuss its advantages and disadvantages.
May 19, 2020	The Planning Commission agreed to initiate a code amendment and approved P.C. Resolution 12-20 authorizing an amendment to Title 17, entitled "Zoning" of the Hermosa Beach Municipal Code allowing the use of mechanical vehicle lifts; and determined that the action was exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).
August 18, 2020	Staff presented additional research and alternatives for the Commission feedback. At this meeting the Planning Commission directed staff to draft text amendments and present them at the next meeting.
October 20, 2020	Planning Commission adopted Resolution 20-26 recommending the City Council adopt a text amendment to HBMC Chapter 17.44 to allow the use of mechanical vehicle lifts as a method to provide required parking, adopt proposed definitions of "mechanical vehicle lift," and determination that the project is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Analysis:

Hermosa Beach Municipal Code (HBMC) Title 17 (Zoning Code) does not specifically prohibit the use

of vehicle lifts; however, currently, vehicle lifts do not count toward meeting the parking requirements. The City has received requests from residents and architects struggling to meet parking requirements on smaller lots¹ in the City, while trying to design buildings with a functional first level floor plan. Additionally, on all residential and commercial lots in the City, additional parking options would allow more flexibility to achieve better building design and orientation to enhance the quality of development in residential and commercial districts, such as minimizing curb cuts and maximizing active street frontages.

While developing the ordinance, the Planning Commission considered lot size, zoning districts, screening, location, staging, vertical clearance, and increased floor area. After careful consideration and discussion, the Planning Commission recommends allowing vehicle lifts to count towards parking requirements.

The Municipal Code would be amended as set forth in the attached ordinance to add a definition for “mechanical vehicle lift,” allow a vehicle lift to meet parking requirements on residential lots less than or equal to 2,100 square feet and as a potential alternative method to achieving parking requirements as part of a Planning Commission approved Parking Plan on all other lots. Further the ordinance would establish development and performance standards for the use of vehicle lifts such as screening, vertical clearance, safety, and location requirements.

Environmental Determination:

The project is not subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15060(c)(2), because the project will not result in a direct or reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment. In addition, the project is exempt from CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3), which states that CEQA applies only to projects which have a potential for causing a significant effect on the environment. Where it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment, the activity is not subject to CEQA. The zone text amendment changes are not subject to CEQA and in addition to, the project would be categorically exempt as the project is procedural in nature and there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment.

¹Small lots are typically considered 2,100 square feet or less. Out of 7,140 total residential lots in the City, only 532 (0.07%) are equal to or less than 2,100 square feet.

General Plan Consistency:

This report and associated recommendation have been evaluated for their consistency with the City's

General Plan. Relevant Policies are listed below:

PLAN Hermosa encourages “a parking system that meets the parking needs and demand of residents, visitors, and employees in an efficient and cost-effective manner” (Mobility, Goal 4). While vehicle lifts are not specifically mentioned in this Goal, that plan does say that innovative parking supply solutions will be used to meet the parking demand in the City.

The Pacific Coast Highway Corridor is the only section of the Plan that specifically mentions vehicle lifts as means for easing parking demand in the City. Policy 6.8 (Balance pedestrian and vehicular circulation) requires new development along corridors to “encourage the use of systems to increase parking lot efficiency, such as mechanical lift systems or occupancy sensors.” Parking guidelines in residential portions do not have such requirements. However, the General Plan encourages off-street residential parking to be oriented toward to the alley to reduce curb cuts and disruptions to the pedestrian realm. Limited curb cuts are an effective way to ensure on-street parking is available. The use of mechanical vehicle lifts may result in more innovative building and site designs where the vertical stacking of vehicles may lend to more narrow driveway approaches and less hardscape on-site. This would result in more permeable surface area and sites providing more open space.

Fiscal Impact:

There are no direct fiscal impacts anticipated with the implementation of the proposed ordinance. To the extent this more flexible parking approach encourages new development, it may indirectly encourage investment and redevelopment of properties that could result in increased property tax revenue over the longer term.

Attachments:

1. Draft Ordinance
2. Planning Commission Resolution 20-26
3. Link to February 21, 2017 Planning Commission Meeting
4. Link to February 18, 2020 Planning Commission Meeting
5. Link to May 19, 2020 Planning Commission Meeting
6. Link to August 18, 2020 Planning Commission Meeting
7. Link to October 20, 2020 Planning Commission Meeting

Respectfully Submitted by: Melanie Emas, Assistant Planner

Concur: Ken Robertson, Community Development Director and
Nicole Ellis, Associate Planner

Noted for Fiscal Impact: Viki Copeland, Finance Director

Legal Review: Mike Jenkins, City Attorney

Approved: Suja Lowenthal, City Manager