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COMMISSION EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT
(213) 978-1300

**CITY OF LOS ANGELES
CALIFORNIA**



ERIC GARCETTI
MAYOR

EXECUTIVE OFFICES

200 N. SPRING STREET, ROOM 525
LOS ANGELES, CA 90012-4801

VINCENT P. BERTONI, AICP

DIRECTOR

(213) 978-1271

KEVIN J. KELLER, AICP

DEPUTY DIRECTOR

(213) 978-1272

LISA M. WEBBER, AICP

DEPUTY DIRECTOR

(213) 978-1274

JAN ZATORSKI

DEPUTY DIRECTOR

(213) 978-1273

<http://planning.lacity.org>

ADVISORY NOTICE RELATIVE TO ABOVE-GRADE PARKING

TO: APPLICANTS FOR PROJECT THAT INCLUDE ABOVE-GRADE PARKING

FROM: THE CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

EFFECTIVE DATE: OCTOBER 27, 2016

APPLICABILITY AND INTENT OF THIS NOTICE

This notice serves to advise applicants of discretionary land use requests of the Commission's concerns with respect to the potential impact above-grade parking can have on the quality of the public realm and the pedestrian environment. Project design alternatives to visible above-grade parking have been identified below. If integrated into project design, these measures can help enhance the pedestrian experience and livability of neighborhoods and lessen the potential impacts of above-grade parking.

PROJECT DESIGN FEATURES TO REDUCE IMPACT OF ABOVE-GRADE PARKING

Discretionary projects are encouraged to consider the following parking design features to enhance pedestrian orientation and reduce the visual impacts of above-grade parking:

1. Place required parking below grade;
2. When parking is provided above grade, consider the following design features:
 - a. line above-grade parking with habitable uses,
 - b. integrate parking levels into the building design,
 - c. be free of blank walls, and/or
 - d. otherwise screen completely with architectural features;
3. Design parking levels to complement the rest of the building with flat levels and standard ceiling heights which can increase flexibility of use over time
4. On larger sites with multiple buildings, provide parking in a shared stand-alone parking structure rather than embedded within multiple buildings;

Discretionary projects will need to consider general strategies to reduce required parking to lessen the need for above-grade parking:

5. Where possible, take advantage of parking reductions available in the Los Angeles Municipal Code to alleviate the need for additional parking levels;

Incorporating the above measures into the design of projects can further enable decision makers to evaluate the design of buildings in order to make required Findings of consistency with applicable policies in the City's adopted General Plan..

EXISTING ADOPTED POLICIES

The City's General Plan contains policies addressing urban design and the affect poorly designed buildings dominated by parking and vehicular access can have on the public realm and the pedestrian experience. Below is a selection of polices that directly relate to above-grade parking design and will be implemented with this Advisory Notice:

General Plan Framework Element

Objective 5.5: Enhance the livability of all neighborhoods by upgrading the quality of development and improving the quality of the public realm.

Policy 5.5.3: Formulate and adopt building and site design standards and guidelines to raise the quality of design Citywide.

Mobility Plan 2035

Policy 2.3: Recognize walking as a component of every trip, and ensure high--quality pedestrian access in all site planning and public right-of-way modifications to provide a safe and comfortable walking environment.

Walkability Checklist

Locate parking behind buildings rather than directly exposed to the adjacent major street.

Incorporate architectural features on parking structure facades that respond to the neighborhood context and that contribute to "placemaking".

Use architectural features to provide continuity at the street where openings occur due to driveways or other breaks in the sidewalk and building wall.

BACKGROUND

The development of this Advisory Notice grew out of the need to establish further policy direction regarding the design of above-grade parking and buildings with podium parking.

The City's guiding policy document, the General Plan Framework Element, identifies the City's intent to encourage well-designed buildings that contribute to a safe, secure, and attractive public realm. Adopted Citywide Design Guides discourage visible ground level parking, but do not expressly address parking above the ground floor. The Downtown Design Guidelines does address parking above the ground floor, limiting revealed above-grade parking to three levels.