



Agenda Item No. \_\_\_\_\_

File Code No. 640.01

# CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

## COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

**AGENDA DATE:** August 24, 2010

**TO:** Mayor and Councilmembers

**FROM:** City Administrator's Office

**SUBJECT:** Request From Councilmembers Frank Hotchkiss and Bendy White Regarding Automobile Lifts

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That Council receive information regarding a request from Councilmembers Frank Hotchkiss and Bendy White to hear a report from the Public Works Department Staff about automobile lifts.

**DISCUSSION:**

Councilmembers Frank Hotchkiss and Bendy White requested a staff presentation to the City Council regarding automobile lifts (see attached memo).

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Memo From Councilmembers Hotchkiss and White
2. Information From Public Works Department On Automobile Lifts

**PREPARED BY:** Linda Gunther, Administrator's Office Supervisor

**SUBMITTED BY:** Nina Johnson, Assistant to the City Administrator

**APPROVED BY:** City Administrator's Office



**City of Santa Barbara**  
City Administrator's Office

**Memorandum**

**DATE:** June 21, 2010

**TO:** Jim Armstrong, City Administrator

**FROM:** Councilmember Frank Hotchkiss  
Councilmember Bendy White

**SUBJECT:** Effectiveness of Automobile Lifts

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Pursuant to Council Resolution 05-073 regarding the Conduct of City Council Meetings, we request that an item be placed on the Santa Barbara City Council Agenda regarding Automobile Lifts.

- Summary of information to be presented:

To receive information about the basis for a presentation of the following regarding automobile lifts:

- What are the advantages and drawbacks of automobile lifts?
- How do they affect building design?
- Do they put more pressure on on-street parking?
- Do they operate better if they have a subterranean component?
- What size car can they accommodate?
- Show specific examples of developments where lifts are in use.

- Statement of Specific Action:

The specific action to be taken by the City Council at this meeting will be to explore the reason that the City of Santa Barbara should allow automobile lifts.

- Statement of the Reasons Why it is Appropriate and Within the Jurisdiction of the Council to Consider this Subject Matter and to Take the Requested Action:

A Council discussion of this subject is appropriate and within the jurisdiction of the City Council due to the issues that the automobile lift would have on planning architecture in the City of Santa Barbara.

We are requesting that this be scheduled for an upcoming Council meeting.

cc: Mayor and Council  
City Attorney  
Community Development Director

### CITY OF SANTA BARBARA LAND DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS THAT HAVE INCLUDED PARKING LIFTS

The City has processed three applications that have parking lifts associated with the design. All three designs were developed by applicants and reviewed by staff for functionality and code requirements. All three original submittals required changes prior to staff being able to support each proposed parking design for board and commission approval.

#### 320 East Victoria Street

On July 12, 2004 the applicant submitted a proposal which originally included the construction of three new residential units with an attached two-car garage for each of the units.

On March 16, 2006 at a Planning Commission (PC) lunch meeting, the applicant proposed providing parking on lifts in garages accessed from the public Laguna Alley. Staff expressed guarded support for the concept of the parking lifts due to the location being on a "dead end" alley and the community benefit of closing an existing curb cut on Victoria Street. Staff also wanted to explore the design because it implements the goals expressed in Section 7.4.1 of the Circulation Element which calls for incorporating innovative design standards, such as tandem parking, stacked parking, and valet parking in projects. The PC discussed the vehicle parking lifts proposal and was generally supportive. It was suggested that long-term maintenance be ensured by a condition requiring an inspection as part of the Zoning Information Report. The PC expressed some concern regarding massing above the garages. They wanted the units to be bolted down and permanent. They suggested that the location at the end of the alley made this a good test location.

On May 12, 2006 and August 28, 2006, staff stated that the designs were unacceptable. Garage widths were inadequate to accommodate the lifts, more information on the parking lift operation was needed and apparent maneuvering conflicts existed between the vehicles and the parking equipment caused by the limited alley width.

The applicant met with staff on multiple occasions between application submittals to discuss the parking lift design. Staff also simulated vehicle maneuver requirements from the parking lift specifications in the City's parking lot to demonstrate sufficient operation.

On November 1, 2006, the applicant obtained an easement from the property across the alley to allow additional maneuvering area and therefore eliminated the maneuvering conflicts. At that point staff was able to recommend the design.

On January 31, 2007 the project was presented to the Staff Hearing Officer at a public hearing and it was approved with conditions. HLC approval was attained November 14, 2007. The Building Permit was issued 4/10/08 and is currently active and the improvements are under construction and should be complete by the end of the year.

#### 101 East Victoria Street

On December 22, 2006 applicant submitted a proposal to demolish an existing two-story commercial office building and construct a new one, two and three-story commercial building comprised of 50 condominium office units. Forty-five parking spaces were to be provided underground. PC approval required a modification to provide less than the required amount of parking spaces.

Staff stated in the pre-application letter that there were several parking design and functionality concerns. The applicant redesigned the garage over three Design Review Application (DART) submittals. Ultimately the applicant proposed the use of three Klaus Model 2062 parking lifts to provide parking for six vehicles and staff indicated potential support because the project was consistent with the Circulation Element goals expressed in Section 7.4.1.

On December 19, 2007 the applicant formally submitted the last DART application. Transportation Staff supported the Klaus Parking lift system particularly because the system did not require the maneuvering of any vehicle to park or retrieve another vehicle due to the provision of "pits" allowing the selection of any platform at any time.

On May 22, 2008 the project was presented to the PC at a public hearing and it was approved with conditions requiring additional lifts. However, on July 10, 2008 the project was reconsidered by the PC and approved with the originally proposed three lifts with the condition that a report be provided by an independent consultant to the PC on the parking garage and lift functionality. The report is to be provided two years after occupancy.

On December 23, 2008 the project was approved by the City Council on appeal. No building permit has been issued. The project's entitlements are currently valid until July 10, 2013.

#### 825 De la Vina Street

On April 8, 2009, the applicant submitted a DART application with seven residential units and three attached commercial office spaces. Seven garages were proposed with vertically stacked parking lifts for the residential units. Staff indicated no support for the problematic parking design due to inadequate maneuvering room in the driveway and within the garages associated with the parking lifts.

Several meetings outside of the DART process took place between applicant and staff to discuss both the function of the parking lifts, different lift designs, and revisions to the driveway area and landscaping to allow for adequate vehicular maneuvering.

On August 24, 2009, the applicant responded with a revised DART proposal which included a revised parking lift and driveway design which was found acceptable for maneuvering. Support was also found because the project was mixed-use, which allows tandem parking, and the maneuvers required for parking lifts essentially match the maneuvering required for tandem parking. Other criteria for conceptual support included the downtown location of the project, where it is immediately adjacent to the Central Business District where the parking requirement is one space per unit and the project implements the goals expressed in Section 7.4.1 of the Circulation Element.

On December 3, 2009 the project was reviewed by the PC and continued indefinitely with the direction to eliminate all modification requests.

The project received PC approval March 18, 2010. On May 11, 2010 the project was approved by the City Council on appeal. On June 28, 2010 the ABR provided preliminary design approval. No building permit has been issued to date. The project's entitlement is currently valid until July 10, 2013.

### Summary

As indicated in the recap of the three documented experiences with auto lifts as part of the land development process over the past six years, staff has used performance based requirements to determine acceptability of submittals. Given the variety of auto lift manufacturers, designers, the continually changing technology, and unique characteristics of each proposal, the performance standard approach is working and is covered within the existing land development review process and Parking Design Standards.