City of Los Altos Citywide Parking Committee Memorandum – 11/4/2015

To: City Council and Planning Transportation Commission
From: Citywide Parking Committee; Sub- Committee Members William Maston and David Rock

Subject: Parking Lot Standard Layout and Striping Standard Recommendations

Background

Currently Los Altos minimum parking dimensions (9 feet by 18 feet) are greater than those required by nearby cities. As a result, a number of inefficiencies exist with the current parking configurations throughout the downtown and city as a whole for commercial, retail, and multi-family residential uses. Establishing a new parking stall configuration will increase those efficiencies and increase the potential yield of the total parking spaces available when existing parking lots are restriped.

Discussion

Currently Los Altos has an official policy of a minimum parking stall configuration of 9 by 18. However, due to the age of many parking lots throughout the city, many existing parking stalls do not meet the required 9 by 18 stall size. For Example, in the downtown business triangle there are parking stall dimensions as small as 7 by 15 and as large as 9 ½ by 18. Historically the smallest sizes seem to be associated with the Downtown White Dot Program or when communities embraced the concept of compact parking. While a number of cities have varying parking stall sizes (see attached), the lion's share of nearby communities have embraced an 8 ½ by 18 foot stall dimension. Since the vast majority of downtown parking stalls in Los Altos rely on either 9 or 9 ½ foot wide stall configurations, it is assumed that establishing a new stall configuration of 8 ½ by 18 will increase the total parking stall yield in the downtown thereby increasing parking capacity within our existing parking lots. This increase yield would allow the city additional time to develop a comprehensive parking expansion program for the downtown and increase parking efficiencies throughout the city as well. These efficiencies could increase the available square footage to be developed in new projects or remodeled and expanded projects throughout the city resulting in increased tax revenue for the city. It is therefore recommended that the city embrace a parking lot restriping program to increase these efficiencies.

As an example of those increased efficiencies, a preliminary study was conducted regarding plaza 8 downtown. The original parking layout, when the parking lots were built, yielded 124 parking spaces. Using the new proposed 8 ½ by 18 parking stall configuration increases the parking supply to 160 parking stalls (see attached). Due to changes over the years, the total parking spaces counted in the Fehr and Peers report places capacity at 131. The difference in parking stall count is primarily due to existing parking stall dimensions that do not meet current city policy of 9 by 18. Based upon the Peers Report, the preliminary parking layout study increases the available parking for Plaza 8 by 29 stalls. While this percentage increase may not apply to all parking lots, this study clearly demonstrates the benefits of implementing a restriping program as part of an ongoing maintenance of the existing parking lots while increasing the parking supply downtown and throughout the city.

Previous reports and discussion regarding parking lot restriping assume parking lot restriping would require significant additional capital improvements including replacement of all asphalt and base rock, undergrounding of existing utilities, installation of new irrigation systems for trees, additional landscape

improvements, storm drainage/retention improvements, etc. These capital improvements potentially render a restriping program uneconomical.

If the restriping program is implemented as a maintenance program where minimum site improvements are undertaken and the existing parking lots are merely slurry coated as part of a maintenance program to provide immediate benefit by increasing parking supply, then this approach would "buy time" for the city to develop a comprehensive strategy for long term use and potential development of the city owned parking lots.

This slurry coat/maintenance program would also minimize unnecessary expenses for capital improvements that may have to be demolished in the future if those parking lots are redeveloped.

Some concerns have been raised about potential loss of existing trees in the parking lots when they're reconfigured. While many of these trees have already reached their full life expectancy and are in decline, any policy should include a strategy for tree replacement, removal, and a possible in lieu fee for future trees.

Recommendation(s)

#1:

Adopt a new policy uses 8 ½ feet wide by 18 feet long parking bays with a double striping configuration where the double striping is 16 feet long even though the actual parking bay is 18 feet long. This reduced length in striping encourages drivers to park deeper into the stall and against the concrete tire stops thereby increasing the perceived width of the drive isle. Additionally, the double wide parking stripes, that are 1 foot in width, encourages drivers to center their cars in individual parking spaces thereby providing more useable space between individual cars. (See attached diagrams)

#2:

A restriping program should be established by the city and private land owners as part of a maintenance program rather than capital improvement program as an interim solution to a long-term parking program. Slurry coating is a required ongoing maintenance item for parking lots. Restriping can create an economical and expedient way to increase parking supply for various existing developments throughout the city. This approach may eliminate or postpone the need to meet new state mandates regarding storm water retention and other city policies regarding undergrounding of existing utilities, landscaping, etc. Those improvements should be done as capital improvements separate from a restriping maintenance program to the extent applicable by state law.

#3:

When lot restriping and reconfigurations are proposed where existing landscape tree planters are affected, a tree and landscape replacement plan should be provided either through direct replacement or payment into a tree replacement fund and paid for by the private party requesting such restriping or reconfiguration.

#4:

A restriping program may be funded through an in lieu fee program to increase parking supply.

#5:

In parallel with establishing a parking restriping/maintenance program, the city should also establish long term goals regarding the increasing of available parking supply. The development of these new parking strategies for increased parking supply would benefit from a simultaneous implementation of our parking maintenance and restriping program.

#6:

When an existing parking lot is being reconfigured through the parking restriping/maintenance program, consideration should be made to provide bicycle parking areas to increase available parking supply. Potential bicycle parking areas should be focused on the irregularly shaped parking lot areas that remain after the reconfiguration to maximize available parking.

Presentation

See attached documents and PowerPoint for new proposed parking layouts. In addition, see attached example of increased parking efficiency using downtown Lot 8 as an example.