



# CITY OF SAN MATEO

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## Agenda Report

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**TO:** City Council  
**FROM:** Drew Corbett, City Manager  
**PREPARED BY:** City Manager's Office  
**MEETING DATE:** November 16, 2020

**SUBJECT:**  
400 East 5th Avenue Parking Garage – Site Plan and Architectural Review Modifications

### RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt a Resolution to approve the proposed Site Plan and Architectural Review Modifications that includes incorporation of a Universal Stall design, moving the driveway location, changes to the circulation layout, new structural framing design, building length and floor area reduction, and related exterior changes to the 400 E. 5th Avenue parking garage approved as part of the City-Owned Downtown Affordable Housing and Parking Garage Sites project, and the amended Conditions of Approval.

### BACKGROUND:

On August 17, 2020, the City-Owned Downtown Affordable Housing and Parking Garage Sites project (PA-2019-033) was approved by the City Council. The project includes the redevelopment of two City-owned sites into an affordable multi-family residential building located at 480 E. 4th Avenue and a separate five-level parking garage on 400 E. 5th Avenue. The parking garage included 164 private residential parking stalls and approximately 532 public parking stalls to replace the existing 235 public parking spaces across the two project lots.

The approved garage design was developed with the existing constraint of an approximately 12-foot, 4-inch wide Union Pacific Railroad easement running the length of the parcel (~391 feet) along its south property line that restricted the developable area. To accommodate this easement area, provide the necessary residential parking count, maximize the total number of public parking stalls, and maintain all applicable code compliance, MidPen Housing (the applicant) requested as one of its four concessions afforded via AB 1763 to increase the percentage of compact parking stalls in the garage to 66 percent, rather than the maximum 40 percent permitted under San Mateo Municipal Code (SMMC) Section 27.64.265.

Additionally, Conditions #25 - *Parking Garage Layout* and #33 - *Conformance with Approved Planning Application* were included in the adopted conditions of approval to allow flexibility of the final parking garage layout design at the building permit phase. Condition #25 specifically allowed the total number of parking spaces to be reduced up to 15 percent, provided the required number of accessible parking spaces specified by the California Building Code is maintained, and that the final parking layout would not increase the percentage of compact parking spaces.

During post-entitlement development with International Parking Design and the structural engineer for the parking garage, opportunities were identified to improve the structure. The applicant design team has worked closely with Public Works Department staff in reviewing and revising the proposed redesign to provide a more equitable and enhanced experience for future patrons of the garage. A comparative plan set (approved vs. proposed design) is included as Attachment 1 – Exhibit A.

On November 10, 2020, the proposed SPAR Modification (PA-2020-055) was brought to the Planning Commission for recommendation. The Planning Commission recommended approval of the modification by a unanimous vote of the Commissioners present at the meeting.

Proposed Modifications

The project proposes several modifications from the approved design that have been summarized in the subsections below. The changes primarily affect the design of the garage’s interior but do result in some minor corresponding changes to the exterior. The applicant has provided a project description letter outlining the proposed changes that has been included as Attachment 2.

*Parking Stall Standards*

The Municipal Code permits a mix of full-size and compact stalls to satisfy off-street parking requirements. Full-size stall dimensions measure 8-feet 6-inches wide by 18-feet in depth, while compact stalls have reduced dimensions measuring 8-feet wide by 17-feet in depth. As previously noted in this report, the project was approved with a State Density Bonus concession to allow up to 66 percent, or 459 of the originally approved 696 total stalls, to be compact stalls.

In review of the design of the approved parking garage layout the parking garage design team determined there were opportunities to remove circulation inefficiencies by modifying the garage layout and provide a more equitable parking experience by incorporating a uniform *Universal Stall*.

The general parking design on each floor of the approved parking layout was comprised primarily of two parallel rows of all-compact stalls with narrower 22-foot 9-inch drive aisle widths and smaller segments of parking bays where full-size stalls were directly across from all-compact rows. For those segments where full-size stalls were located across from rows of all-compacts the drive aisle width was 25-feet. The Universal Stall dimensions would match the full-size stall width at 8-feet 6-inches and the 17-foot depth of a compact stall allowing for the wider 24-foot drive aisle along both sides of the longitudinal drive aisles (i.e. longer side of the garage) on each level of the garage, providing for a more uniform experience for drivers navigating the garage, further clearance, broader sight lines, and added maneuverability. The Universal Stall approach eliminates the inefficiencies that can occur when patrons bypass compact stalls in favor of larger full-size stalls, which can create queuing issues in the garage. In addition, the uniform 24-foot drive aisle will mitigate the issue when patrons park an extra-long, full-size car in a compact space and block part of the drive aisle, or a portion of a neighboring stall. A comparative table specifying the stall dimensions for full-size, compact, and Universal Stall, as well as the associated drive aisle widths is provided below.

<b>STALL DIMENSION COMPARATIVE TABLE</b>			
	<b>Full-Size (or Standard)</b>	<b>Compact</b>	<b>Universal Stall</b>
<b>Stall Width</b>	8'-6"	8'	8'-6"
<b>Stall Depth</b>	18'	17'	17'
<b>Drive Aisle Clearance</b>	24'	22'-9"	24'

In total, Universal Stalls would replace 572 of the total number of full-size and compact stalls in the garage. The remaining 121 stalls (of 693 total) are comprised of regular accessible stalls, van accessible stalls, electric vehicle charging station stalls, parallel parking stalls, and other designated stall types will retain the respective dimensions required by local and state municipal code.

MidPen Housing has amended Concession #3 of the approved Density Bonus Request letter to reflect implementation of a Universal Stall design. All other concessions and waivers noted in the letter remain unchanged. The amended Density Bonus Request letter is included as Attachment 3 and a Factual Data Sheet is included as Attachment 4.

*Turning Radius*

Public Works Department staff worked closely with International Parking Design in development of the revised parking garage layout. While the Universal Stall design approach would allow for 696 parking stalls and still maintain all applicable code compliance, it was determined that designing the garage to meet the maximum parking count would create

inefficient circulation patterns and reduce the overall parking experience for future patrons. As such, three (3) parking stalls have been removed from the public parking stall allotment (529 remaining) to allow for improved turning radius and maneuverability. It should be noted Condition #25 previously referenced in this report allows for up to 15 percent (approximately 80 stalls) of the public parking stalls to be removed. It may be determined upon review at the building permit stage that additional stalls be should be removed to improve the parking experience for patrons within the limits of the condition.

#### *Moment Frame System and Associated Changes*

The approved garage design utilized a shear wall system for its lateral seismic resisting system which necessitates the use of internal transverse shear walls. Internal transverse shear walls in the interior of the garage can obstruct views of oncoming vehicles for drivers and blind exits for pedestrians circulating the parking lot. The proposed redesign utilizes a moment frame system comprised of reinforced concrete beams and columns. This system is considered superior to the shear wall system in that it achieves the same structural objectives but eliminates the internal transverse shear walls in the interior of the garage, placing all of the moment frames at the building's perimeter.

The moment frame system allows for a more compact design resulting in reductions to both the overall length of the garage by approximately 8 feet and total net garage floor area (201,431 sq. ft. proposed vs. 210,509 sq. ft. as-approved). The changes also provide sufficient setback from East 5th Avenue along the building frontage to locate the back flow prevention devices for fire, domestic, and irrigation water services on the outside of the building rather than in the structure's interior as it was with the approved garage design. The back flow preventors will be fully screened from public view per the requirements of the originally approved conditions of approval. Additionally, the height of the garage has been reduced by approximately 8 inches from the approved design as measured to the top of the parking deck on the 5th floor.

The moment frame system creates minor exterior changes requiring the pedestrian stairwell along East 5th Avenue to be partially enclosed by concrete beam and column framework. Additionally, the proposed framing system and switch to Universal Stalls allows for a more compact garage design and continuous CMU plane wall adjacent to the PG&E substation. The continuous plane wall eliminates individual wall segments and the vertical concrete columns of the approved design. This will make this wall easier to maintain in the long-term, which is a significant advantage to the City who will be the owner and operator of the parking garage. The changes to the exterior have been formally reviewed and are discussed in the Design Review section of this report.

#### *Interior Rated Exit Corridor*

The location of the as-entitled interior rated exit corridor on the ground-floor of the northeast emergency exit stair was necessitated by the previously noted 12-foot 4-inch railroad easement on the parcel's southside. This easement restricts any improvements, including outdoor emergency egress that exits into the designated area. The proposed revised design solution modifies the approved corridor position on the ground floor through a concrete ramp to the second floor, instead positioning the corridor along the ramp from the second floor to the first floor.

#### *Sight Triangle*

SMMC Section 27.84.010 (b)(2) requires a triangular area of visual clearance or "sight triangle" at the point of intersection of the edge of driveway on the subject property and edge of the sidewalk closest to the private property. To comply with the required sight triangle clearance along the garage's sole driveway entry/exit, the building has been shifted east approximately 6 feet to create an 8-foot setback from the property line along East 5th Avenue. The proposed building shift will not reduce the open area at the far east of the lot and will not impact the two heritage Oak trees in that area.

#### *Solar Carports*

The design modifications include minor adjustments to the solar photovoltaic panel carports located on the fifth-level of the parking garage to slightly increase stall coverage, re-orient the panels to maximize sunlight exposure, and adjust for the location of the artistic paneling facing 5th Avenue.

### Amended Conditions of Approval

The proposed Universal Stall parking design would remove the total allotment of compact parking stalls from the originally approved garage design. As such, the existing language in Condition #25 stipulating that the final parking layout may decrease but not increase the total number of compact stalls has been removed. The remaining stipulations of the condition are otherwise unchanged. Similarly, Condition #54 – *PARKING LOTS* has been modified to account for the utilization of Universal Stalls and specify the parking dimensions shall substantially conform to the revised project plans that would be approved under PA-2020-055. A red-lined draft of each amended condition is included as Attachment 5 and the complete master list Conditions of Approval as Attachment 1 – Exhibit B.

### Design Review

While the proposed modifications resulted in only subtle changes to the exterior, the revised design was formally reviewed by the City's design review consultant, Larry Cannon of Cannon Design Group, in his design review letter dated October 8, 2020. His comments acknowledged the changes to the floor plan and circulation layout, pedestrian exit corridor, corner stairway tower, and changes to the structural system (moment frame system) would not significantly change the overall appearance of the structure. Cannon did provide one critical comment related to the decorative fins located along the west and south-facing elevations of the garage. The fin-to-column relationship of the previous design provided a more uniform pattern with some fins located on support columns, which aided in masking the concrete structural framework. The proposed new design does not place any of the fins on the support columns, which presents a less organized fin-to-column pattern, making the concrete columns a more dominant feature. Cannon recommended exploring ways to possibly bring the revised design more in line with the originally approved design.

In review of the proposed modifications, staff has concluded the corresponding changes to the exterior are relatively minor and that the overall design aesthetic is in keeping with the originally approved design intent. Staff acknowledges the revised fin-to-column design is less aesthetically uniform due to the varying column widths associated with the preferred moment frame structural system. However, given the fact that the primarily affected elevation is along a low-visibility frontage (i.e. facing the railroad tracks), a less uniform fin-to-column design element is deemed an acceptable trade-off. Mr. Cannon's Design Review letter has been included as Attachment 6.

### Traffic Analysis

The City requested Hexagon Transportation Consultants, Inc. (Hexagon) to review the proposed project to determine whether the modifications would necessitate additional analysis or an amendment to the previous traffic-related reports included in the Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration approved under PA-2019-033. Hexagon prepared a brief memorandum dated November 3, 2020, discussing the conclusions of the CEQA traffic analysis, intersection levels of service (LOS), queuing (and recommendations), and vehicular parking studies included as part of the noted environmental analysis. The memorandum concluded the modifications as proposed would not adversely impact vehicle miles traveled (VMT) or LOS, nor would the removal of three public parking stalls (the impact of removing up to 11 stalls was considered) impact the parking recommendations. The Hexagon Traffic Analysis memorandum is included as Attachment 7.

### **BUDGET IMPACT:**

These proposed changes to the parking garage design will not impact the financial terms of this public-private development project, and therefore will have no net budget impact.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION:**

The City prepared an Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND), adopted by the City Council on August 17, 2020. The IS/MND concluded the project would not have significant effects to the environment with the implementation of mitigation measures. The proposed modifications to the approved site design do not substantially change the information or conclusions in the IS/MND or implicate any of the factors in CEQA Guidelines Section 15162, therefore, no additional CEQA review is required.

### **NOTICE PROVIDED**

In accordance with Government Code sections 65090 and 65091, and the City's Municipal Code noticing requirements, this public hearing was noticed to the following parties more than ten days in advance of this City Council public hearing:

- Notice was published in the San Mateo Daily Journal on October 31, 2020;
- Property owners, residential tenants and business tenants within 1,000 feet of the project site;
- The City’s “900 List”, which contains nearly 100 Homeowner Associations, Neighborhood Associations, local utilities, media, and other organizations interested in citywide planning projects;
- The City’s Planning “Notify Me” email list; and,
- The interested parties list, which includes interested individuals who contacted the City and requested to be added to the project notification list.

**ATTACHMENTS**

Att 1 – Proposed Resolution

    Exhibit A – Project Plans

    Exhibit B – Conditions of Approval

Att 2 – Project Description Letter

Att 3 – Revised Density Bonus Request Letter (Oct. 22, 2020)

Att 4 – Factual Data Sheet

Att 5 – Amended Conditions of Approval #25 and #54 (track changes draft)

Att 6 – Larry Cannon’s Design Review Letter (10.08.2020)

Att 7 – Hexagon Traffic Analysis Memorandum (Nov. 3, 2020)

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