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WeHo will soon park in automated garage

By Edwin Folven, 12/19/2013

Structure will increase parking capacity at site by 132 spaces

The city of West Hollywood is making final arrangements for its new automated parking garage to be located behind city hall, and officials plan to break ground on the project by the end of January.



A rendering depicts how the automated garage will be configured to the rear of West Hollywood City Hall, and how vehicles will enter and exit. (photo courtesy of the city of West Hollywood)

The West Hollywood City Council on Monday approved some final preparations for the parking garage, such as plans for off-site parking while the garage is being built. The new automated garage is anticipated to cost approximately \$16 million, with an additional \$2 million budgeted for contingency projects such as the widening of Sweetzer Avenue and the addition of a northbound left turn lane near Santa Monica Boulevard, said Oscar Delgado, director of public works for the city of West Hollywood. The overall project is expected to be completed in 17 to 18 months.

“This is strictly robotic. It will be really, really cool,” Delgado said. “There are about twenty [automated garages] in the U.S., and it is pretty common in Europe and Japan, where space is pretty tight.”

The garage is anticipated to be approximately three-stories tall, matching the height of the existing West Hollywood City Hall. Vehicles will be garaged in five levels within the structure. It will have four entrances, and motorists will first drive into an open bay. After exiting the vehicle and either paying a fee or swiping a pre-paid card, the vehicle will be mechanically

moved with lifts into an open space in the upper levels of the garage. Delgado said each space is wide enough to accommodate most vehicles.

“There are some vehicles it can’t accommodate because of their size, like the old Hummers like our [former] Gov. [Arnold Schwarzenegger] used to drive around in, but like an F-150 truck, it can accommodate vehicles of that size,” Delgado said. “You won’t have to worry about security, and door dings will be a thing of the past.”

The automated parking garage will have 200 parking spaces, an increase of 132 spaces currently available in the existing surface lot. When motorists return to the garage, the system retrieves their vehicles and turns it around so that it faces the exit, Delgado added.

While construction is underway, the city will provide public parking for city hall at the nearby Kings Road Parking Structure, located at 8383 Santa Monica Blvd., two blocks west of city hall. The city will validate visitor parking.

The council on Monday made arrangements for employee parking at the privately-operated Hancock Garage, located on Santa Monica Boulevard between La Cienega and San Vicente boulevards, and the La Brea Gateway Garage, near the corner of Santa Monica Boulevard and La Brea Avenue. The city will subsidize the cost of Metro passes for approximately 200 employees if they opt to use public transportation between the temporary parking lots and city hall.

Delgado said once the automated garage is completed, the cost for parking will be similar to the current rates at the Kings Road Garage, which is \$5 in the evening, and \$7.50 maximum. West Hollywood City Councilman Jeffrey Prang said the new garage will benefit local businesses.

“I think it’s an exciting project that allows us to increase public parking in the central city area,” Prang said. “It will be good for the businesses, which are often strapped for parking in the area. It is a way to build something economically and build it quickly and to use the technology that is available.”