

SUBJECT: ZONE TEXT AMENDMENTS REGARDING MECHANICAL
PARKING LIFTS AND AUTOMATED PARKING STRUCTURES

INITIATED BY: DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
(Bianca Siegl, Long Range & Mobility Planning Manager)
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STATEMENT ON THE SUBJECT

The Planning Commission will hold a public hearing to consider text changes to the Zoning Ordinance to introduce new standards for mechanical parking lifts and automated parking structures.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission hold the public hearing, consider all pertinent testimony, and adopt the following:

- 1) Draft Resolution No. PC 15-1147: **“A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD, RECOMMENDING TO THE CITY COUNCIL APPROVAL OF A ZONE TEXT AMENDMENT TO INTRODUCE NEW STANDARDS FOR MECHANICAL PARKING LIFTS AND AUTOMATED PARKING STRUCTURES, CITYWIDE, WEST HOLLYWOOD, CALIFORNIA.”** (EXHIBIT A)

OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED CHANGES

The proposed zone text changes introduce new standards to allow for and regulate the design, safety, and operation of mechanical parking lifts and automated parking structures.

BACKGROUND

The purpose of this Zone Text Amendment is to introduce standards for mechanical lift systems and automated parking structures – a new technology – to satisfy off-street parking requirements. With small lots and high property values in West Hollywood, mechanical parking lifts and/or automated parking structures may provide an efficient way for developers to meet parking demand requirements.

Mechanical Parking Lifts are defined as an automated mechanism that lifts vehicles to make space for a vehicle below. Automated Parking Structures are defined as a parking garage that uses an elevator/robotic system to move vehicles from a receiving area to an auto storage area.

The City has received proposals to include mechanical parking as part of new projects; however, the existing Zoning Ordinance does not address these newer parking formats. Prior to approving the use of mechanical parking lifts and automated parking structures, the City needs to develop a set of standards to ensure these systems are safe, functional, and an effective use of parking in a project – while also adapting to potential changes in the technology.

While several cities have opted to provide minimal standards on mechanical parking lifts and automated parking structures, staff recommends that the City of West Hollywood provide sufficient standards in its Zoning Code to ensure the safe operation and design of the system. Exhibit B shows examples of mechanical parking lifts. Exhibit C provides a summary of mechanical parking standards in other cities.

Proposed Mechanical Parking Lift Regulations

The proposed zone text changes for mechanical parking lifts will apply to off-street parking standards. The recommended amendments to the Zoning Code address the following concerns:

1. Appropriate uses of mechanical parking lifts;
2. Residential versus non-residential application of the technology;
3. Ease of use in both residential and non-residential contexts;
4. Accommodation of a diverse range of passenger vehicle types;
5. Safety in the event of emergencies; and
6. Vehicle protection, including damage prevention and vehicular fluid leakage.

Table 1 summarizes the standards for residential and non-residential uses described on the next page.

Table 1 Summary of Mechanical Parking Lift Standards for the City of West Hollywood

Standards	Residential (Each lift is assigned to one unit)	Residential (Lifts are shared between units)	Non-Residential
Operations	Self-park	Valet	Valet
Allowable Application	Allowed in enclosed parking		Allowed on surface and enclosed parking
Permit Requirement	Retrofit: Administrative Permit required New: Applicable new project permit		
Operations Plan	Parking Operations Plan Required		
Access Plan	Parking Access and Layout Plan Required		
Maximum Levels Per Stacker	Two		Three
Minimum Height + Clearance	Accommodate 2 full-size SUVs per stacker unit	Accommodate a minimum of 1 full-size SUV per stacker unit	
Safety	Manual override for emergencies		
Screening Requirements	Follow parking structure screening requirements Mechanical lifts on surface lots screened and covered per Administrative Permit		
Vehicle Protection	Prevent fluid leakage from vehicle above		

As follows, the new standards for mechanical parking address these considerations:

Appropriate uses of mechanical parking lifts: Staff recommends requiring an Administrative Permit for any existing parking facility that installs mechanical lifts. Projects will be reviewed to ensure that these retrofitted facilities are properly covered (i.e. fully enclosed on top), meet all screening requirements, will not create a noise disturbance, and will include appropriate landscaping (applicable only to surface parking lots).

For new lifts included in a new development project, the City will permit and condition mechanical parking lifts as part of the applicable permit process.

Residential versus non-residential application of the technology: Staff recommends that mechanical parking lifts be allowed for all uses; however, for any residential use, the mechanical lifts must be sited in an enclosed structure. For all other uses, the City’s permit process will ensure proper conditioning of the design and operation of mechanical parking lifts. For all non-residential uses of mechanical lifts,

staff recommends requiring attendance of a parking valet at all times of operation. To ensure compliance with this requirement, non-residential applications must include a parking operations plan that also meets all valet parking standards. For residential uses, staff also recommends attendance of a parking valet unless the nature of the mechanical lift does not require valet attendance (i.e. one “stacker” is assigned per residential unit and operated by a secure device controlled by the residential unit). For both residential and non-residential uses of mechanical lifts, applications for permit must include a parking layout and access plan to address staging, loading, ADA access, etc. See Exhibit B for images of mechanical parking lifts.

Ease of use in both residential and non-residential contexts: To ensure that vehicles can be accessed in a convenient manner, staff recommends limiting the total number of stacked vehicles to three (3) levels for non-residential and two (2) levels for residential. These requirements are similar to the City’s tandem parking standards.

Accommodation of a diverse range of passenger vehicle types: Manufacturers of mechanical lifts specify a wide-range of ceiling height requirements for parking lifts. Due to these varying requirements and the need to accommodate a diverse range of passenger vehicle types, staff recommends requiring a minimum unobstructed clearance height per vehicle type within each lift, rather than an overall ceiling height. For mechanical lift systems operated by a valet/attendant, each mechanical lift module (i.e. one stacker) should accommodate at least one full-size sport utility vehicle (SUV) and one standard vehicle. Because the valet service will be operating the mechanical lift, the parking attendant will be able to strategically park various-sized vehicles on the lifts. For mechanical lifts in residential projects that are individually operated by a residential unit (non-valet), each mechanical lift module shall accommodate two full-size SUVs, ensuring that residents can park an SUV in any space.

Safety in the event of emergencies: Staff recommends requiring that all mechanical lifts in the City include a manual override function in the event of an electric outage. This will help ensure residents can access their vehicles in the event of an emergency.

Vehicle protection, including damage prevention and vehicular fluid leakage: Staff recommends requiring that lifts approved for use in the City be designed to prevent vehicular fluid leakage onto the vehicle below.

Proposed Automated Parking Structure Regulations

The proposed zone text changes allow for automated (i.e. robotic) parking structures to satisfy off-street parking requirements. The City of West Hollywood’s new state-of-the-art automated parking structure located adjacent to West Hollywood City Hall is an example of a sustainable and compact parking solution, providing much-needed parking in addition to community open space and opportunities for public art, community and civic events.

Some of the advantages of automated parking structures are:

- Footprint (i.e. space) reduction: compact option to meet parking requirements;
- Sustainable: reduce driving and idling when searching for a parking space;
- Public Safety: limited opportunity for loitering; and
- Accessibility: easier handicap accessibility.

The Zoning Ordinance will be modified to:

1. Allow automated parking structures through a Development Permit;
2. Require a Parking Operations Plan;
3. Require a Parking Access Plan;
4. Require design standards; and
5. Require a back-up generator for emergency access.

Staff will review the automated structures to determine if the design and operations are safe, convenient, and functional through the development permit and project review process.

The zone text changes attached in Exhibit A provide standards for compact parking solutions in West Hollywood.

Public Notice

The City published a legal notice in the *Beverly Press* and *West Hollywood Independent* on September 3, 2015. In addition to the noticing required by the Municipal Code, the Planning Division noticed all West Hollywood neighborhood groups on September 3, 2015.

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

The zone text changes are Categorically Exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 15061 of the CEQA Guidelines. Section 15061 states that CEQA applies only to projects that have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment. Where it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment, the activity is not subject to CEQA. No possibility exists that the proposed zone text amendments will have a significant effect on the environment. The zone text changes are also exempt pursuant to Section 15308, which involves regulatory processes and procedures undertaken to protect the environment, because introducing new standards to allow for and regulate the design, safety, and operations of mechanical parking lifts and automated parking structures has the potential to reduce local CO2 emissions by reducing the number of vehicles driving through and idling in parking facilities.

Planning Commission Long-Range Planning Subcommittee

The Long-Range Planning Subcommittee discussed the proposed zone text amendments on August 20, 2015. The Commissioners were supportive of the zone text changes and requested staff to make minor clarifications in the permit requirement for new development and a clarification in the conditions for the Administrative Permit required for existing non-residential surface parking lots. The subcommittee also requested staff to look into requiring valet operations for rental projects that include mechanical parking lifts. Staff addressed this concern by requiring valet operations for mechanical lift systems that are not designed to be operated by the individual residential unit.

Public Comment & Correspondence

Staff presented the proposed changes to the West Hollywood Chamber of Commerce Board meeting on August 11, 2015. The members were generally supportive and requested that staff include standards for automated parking garages.

EXHIBITS

- A. Draft Resolution 15-1147
- B. Examples of mechanical parking lifts
- C. Summary of mechanical parking standards in other cities

RESOLUTION NO. PC 15-1147

A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD, RECOMMENDING TO THE CITY COUNCIL APPROVAL OF A ZONE TEXT AMENDMENT TO INTRODUCE NEW STANDARDS FOR MECHANICAL PARKING LIFTS AND AUTOMATED PARKING STRUCTURES, CITYWIDE, WEST HOLLYWOOD, CALIFORNIA.

The Planning Commission for the City of West Hollywood hereby finds, resolves, and orders as follows:

SECTION 1. The City of West Hollywood initiated amendments to the Zoning Ordinance, Article 19 of the Municipal Code to modify parking standards for mechanical parking lifts and automated parking structures.

SECTION 2. A public hearing was duly noticed for the Planning Commission meeting of September 17, 2015 by publication in the Beverly Press newspaper, the West Hollywood Independent Newspaper, and the City website and by announcement on City Channel 6 by September 3, 2015.

SECTION 3. The zone text changes are Categorically Exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 15061 of the CEQA Guidelines. Section 15061 states that CEQA applies only to projects that have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment. Where it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment, the activity is not subject to CEQA. No possibility exists that the proposed zone text amendments will have a significant effect on the environment. The zone text changes are also exempt pursuant to Section 15308, which involves regulatory processes and procedures undertaken to protect the environment, because introducing new standards to allow for and regulate the design, safety, and operations of mechanical parking lifts and automated parking structures has the potential to reduce local CO₂ emissions by reducing the number of vehicles driving through and idling in parking facilities.

SECTION 4. The Planning Commission of the City of West Hollywood hereby finds that Zone Text Amendment 2015-0007 is consistent with the Goals and Policies of the General Plan, specifically Policy M-8, which states that the City should “manage parking supply to serve residents, businesses and visitors.” A clearer Zoning Ordinance will help the City meet this goal. In addition, new standards for mechanical parking lifts and automated parking will allow for more efficient car storage for more sustainable use of land.

SECTION 5. Based on the foregoing, the Planning Commission of the City of West Hollywood hereby recommends approval to the City Council of Zoning Text Amendment 2015-0007, which is attached hereto as Attachment A.

PASSED, APPROVED AND ADOPTED by the Planning Commission of the City of West Hollywood at a regular meeting held this 17th day of September, 2015 by the following vote:

AYES: Commissioner:

NOES: Commissioner:

ABSENT: Commissioner:

ABSTAIN: Commissioner:

CHAIRPERSON

ATTEST:

BIANCA SIEGL, PLANNING MANAGER
LONG RANGE AND MOBILITY PLANNING

Decisions of the Planning Commission are subject to appeal in accordance with the procedures set forth in West Hollywood Municipal Code Chapter 19.76. Any action to challenge the final decision of the City of West Hollywood made as a result of the public hearing on this application must be filed within the time limits set forth in Code of Civil Procedure Section §1094.6.

Attachment A

ZONE TEXT AMENDMENT 2015-0007 WEST HOLLYWOOD MUNICIPAL CODE SECTIONS TO BE MODIFIED

(New text indicated with underlining, deleted text with strikethrough.)

Section 1: A line item in Table 2-2 of Section 19.06.030 in Chapter 19.06 of Title 19 of the West Hollywood Municipal Code is added and footnote in amended to read as follows:

LAND USE ²	PERMIT REQUIRED BY ZONE				Specific Use Regulations
	R1	R2	R3	R4	
<u>Parking, Mechanical lifts</u>	<u>P¹</u>	<u>P¹</u>	<u>P¹</u>	<u>P¹</u>	<u>19.28.090</u>
<u>Parking, Automated structures</u>	<u>P¹</u>	<u>P¹</u>	<u>P¹</u>	<u>P¹</u>	<u>19.28.090</u>

Section 2: A line item in Table 2-5 of Section 19.10.030 in Chapter 19.10 of Title 19 of the West Hollywood Municipal Code is added and footnote in amended to read as follows:

LAND USE ²	PERMIT REQUIRED BY ZONE						Specific Use Regulations
	CN	CC/SSP	CA	CR	PDCSP	PF ³	
<u>Parking, Mechanical lifts</u>	<u>P¹</u>	<u>P¹</u>	<u>P¹</u>	<u>P¹</u>	<u>P¹</u>	<u>P¹</u>	<u>19.28.090</u>
<u>Parking, Automated structures (accessory retail required)</u>	<u>P¹</u>	<u>P¹</u>	<u>P¹</u>	<u>P¹</u>	<u>P¹</u>	<u>P¹</u>	<u>19.28.090</u>

Section 3: Subsection (B) in Section 19.28.030, General Parking Regulations, of Title 19 of the West Hollywood Municipal Code is amended to read as follows:

B. *Parking Operations Plan Required.* Applicants for mechanical lifts or automated parking structures, non-residential uses with new parking lots, or freestanding parking lots shall submit a parking operations plan to the Director of Transportation and Public Works for review and approval before issuance of building permits.

1. The plan shall include information required by the Director, as needed for a complete understanding of the proposed parking operations. Examples of the information that may be required include the type and location of access control that will be used, rates charged for parking (if any), method of payment for parking, number of transactions that can be accommodated throughout the day,

whether the development will offer validated parking, whether parking for employees will be subsidized, and other information.

2. If using off-site parking, the plan shall address both on-and off-site parking lots. The Director may require a list of incentives that the applicant will provide to encourage patrons to park in the off-site lot rather than driving to the project site and having the valet drive to the off-site lot. The plan shall specify when and to whom the incentives will be given.

Section 4: Subsection (B)4 in Section 19.28.090, Parking Area Design and Layout Standards, of Title 19 of the West Hollywood Municipal Code is amended to read as follows:

4. *Vertical Clearance.* A minimum height of 14 feet shall be maintained clear of obstructions from the parking surface to any structure or landscape feature above that may interfere with the safe passage of vehicles, except within garages, carports, or parking structures, where the minimum clearance shall be eight feet six inches. Vertical clearance for mechanical lift systems shall be determined by Section 19.28.090(G).

Section 5: Subsection (G) of Section 19.28.090 in Chapter 19.28 of Title 19 of the West Hollywood Municipal Code is added to read as follows:

G. Mechanical Parking Lifts. Mechanical parking lifts may be used to satisfy parking requirements at the discretion of the review authority through the approval of the parking plan required by Section 19.28.030(A) (General Parking Regulations - Layout and Access Plan Required), as follows.

1. Permit Requirements.

- a. Administrative Permit. An administrative permit is required for the installation of a mechanical parking lift system at an existing parking facility. The permit shall condition screening, noise and/or landscaping requirements for mechanical lift systems.
- b. Mechanical lifts installed as part of new development shall be permitted through applicable project permits and must comply with the standards below.

2. Non-Residential Uses.

- a. Mechanical parking lifts may be used to satisfy parking requirements for non-residential uses.
- b. Mechanical parking lifts shall not park more than three (3) levels of cars per individual lift unit and no additional vehicle(s) shall park so as to limit access to the lift.
- c. Mechanical parking lifts installed for non-residential uses shall be operated by a valet or attendant at all times such that the parking is accessible to users. In addition to these standards, a Parking Operations Plan per

Section 19.28.030(B) shall be submitted and operation must comply with valet standards in Chapter 5.120 (Valet Parking).

- d. At least one (1) parking lift level shall have a minimum unobstructed clearance height of seven (7) feet. All other levels shall have a minimum unobstructed clearance height of (5) feet.
 - e. Mechanical lifts installed on existing surface lots shall be covered on top and screened on all sides.
3. Residential Uses.
- a. Mechanical parking lifts may be used to satisfy parking requirements for residential uses if enclosed in a structure as part of the residential use.
 - b. Mechanical parking lifts shall not park more than two (2) levels of cars per individual lift unit no additional vehicle(s) shall park so as to limit access to the lift.
 - c. Mechanical parking lifts installed for residential uses shall be operated by a valet or attendant at all times such that the parking is accessible to users unless the review authority determines that the lift system may be operated independently by residents (i.e. self-park) in a secure manner. In addition to these standards, a Parking Operations Plan per Section 19.28.030(B) shall be submitted and operation must comply with valet standards in Chapter 5.120 (Valet Parking).
 - d. For self-park lift systems, each parking lift level shall have a minimum unobstructed clearance height of seven (7) feet.
 - e. For lift systems operated by a parking attendant/valet, at least one (1) parking lift level shall have unobstructed clearance height of seven (7) feet. All other levels shall have a minimum unobstructed clearance height of (5) feet.
4. Minimum Width and Length of Parking Space. Parking spaces in lift systems shall comply with subsection 19.28.090(B)1.(Parking Area Design and Layout Standards).
5. Emergency Override. Mechanical parking lifts shall provide a manual override to access or remove vehicles from the parking lift in the event of a power outage.
6. Vehicle Protection. Mechanical lifts shall be designed to prevent vehicle liquids and/or debris from spilling onto other vehicles or building surfaces.

Section 6: Subsection (H) of Section 19.28.090 in Chapter 19.28 of Title 19 of the West Hollywood Municipal Code is added to read as follows:

H. Automated Parking Structures. Automated parking structures may be used to satisfy parking requirements at the discretion of the review authority through the approval of the parking plan required by Section 19.28.030(A) (General Parking Regulations - Layout and Access Plan Required).

1. Development Permit. A development permit is required for an automated parking structure.
 2. Parking Operations Plan. The use of an automated parking structure for new residential and non-residential uses shall require a Parking Operations Plan per Section 19.28.030(B).
 3. On-site Generator. Automated parking structures shall be equipped with a stand-by generator with sufficient capacity to store and retrieve cars if or when the electrical power is down.
 4. Design. Automated parking structures shall be properly designed per Section 19.28.110 (Parking Structure and Rooftop Parking Standards). Automated parking structures in commercial zones shall have pedestrian-oriented uses on the ground floor and must comply with Section 19.10.060 (Commercial Building Façade Standards).
 5. Vehicle Protection. Automated parking structures shall be designed with a method to prevent vehicle liquids and/or debris from spilling onto other vehicles or building surfaces.
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Section 7: Section 19.44.020 (Administrative Permits) in Chapter 19.44 of Title 19 of the West Hollywood Municipal Code is amended to read as follows:

19.44.020 Applicability.

A. *When Required.* An administrative permit shall be required for any land use listed in Article 19-2 (Zoning Districts and Allowable Land Uses) as requiring administrative permit approval, and the following uses and construction:

1. An exterior alteration that changes architectural character or theme;
2. Up to 500 square feet of second story construction to either a single-family home or duplex either as a new second story or an addition to an existing second story;
3. An addition of more than 500 to 1,000 square feet to any structure other than a single-family home or duplex;
4. An addition which does not exceed 500 square feet but changes the architectural character or theme, or encloses a balcony in conformance with Section 19.72.030(B);
5. Garages, carports, and other residential accessory structures under 500 square feet which do not maintain the same architectural character as the primary structure(s);
6. Outdoor dining areas.
7. A mechanical parking system installed at an existing parking facility in conformance with Section 19.28.090(G).

Section 8: Section 19.48.020 (Development Permits) in Chapter 19.48 of Title 19 of the West Hollywood Municipal Code is amended to read as follows:

19.48.020 Applicability.

A development permit shall be required for:

- A. An addition of more than 1,000 square feet to any structure other than a single-family home or duplex;
- B. An addition of more than 500 square feet to a single-family dwelling or duplex (see Section 19.36.320(D), Residential Uses – Single-Family Dwellings and Duplexes);
- C. Any new non-residential parking facility in a -PK (Parking) Overlay Zone or any alterations to an existing non-residential parking lot including intensification of hours of operation;
- D. Any substantial remodel to any structure other than a single-family home or duplex, which shall be defined as the removal of 50 percent or more of the exterior wall area (which includes walls, doors, and windows), or the removal of 50 percent or more of the supporting members of a structure (e.g., beams, bearing walls, columns, or girders), whichever is more restrictive. A demolition permit shall also be required for this work; and
- E. A common interest development created through the conversion of existing residential units that does not comply with Section 19.36.100(C);
- F. An intensification of use; or
- G. A new structure except as follows:
 1. A new garage or carport or other residential accessory structure of 500 square feet or less. See Chapter 19.42 (Zone Clearances).
 2. Fences and other yard improvements or equipment in compliance with Article 19-3 (Site Planning and General Development Standards).
 3. Other structures specified by Table 2-2 (Allowed Residential Uses) and Table 2-5 (Allowed Commercial and Public Uses).
- H. An automated parking structure in conformance with Section 19.28.090(H).

Section 9: New definitions are added to Section 19.90.020 (Definitions of Specialized Terms and Phrases) in Chapter 19.90 of Title 19 of the West Hollywood Municipal Code as follows:

Parking, Mechanical Lift. A mechanical system that lifts vehicles to make space available to park other vehicles in a vertical tandem fashion.

Parking, Automated Structure. An automated garage using elevator systems to hoist individual vehicles from receiving areas to separate auto storage areas.

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EXHIBIT B
Examples of mechanical parking lifts



Figure 1 Unacceptable example mechanical parking on a surface parking lot.



Figure 2 Example of mechanical parking on a surface parking lot with screening and covering.

EXHIBIT B (CONTINUED)

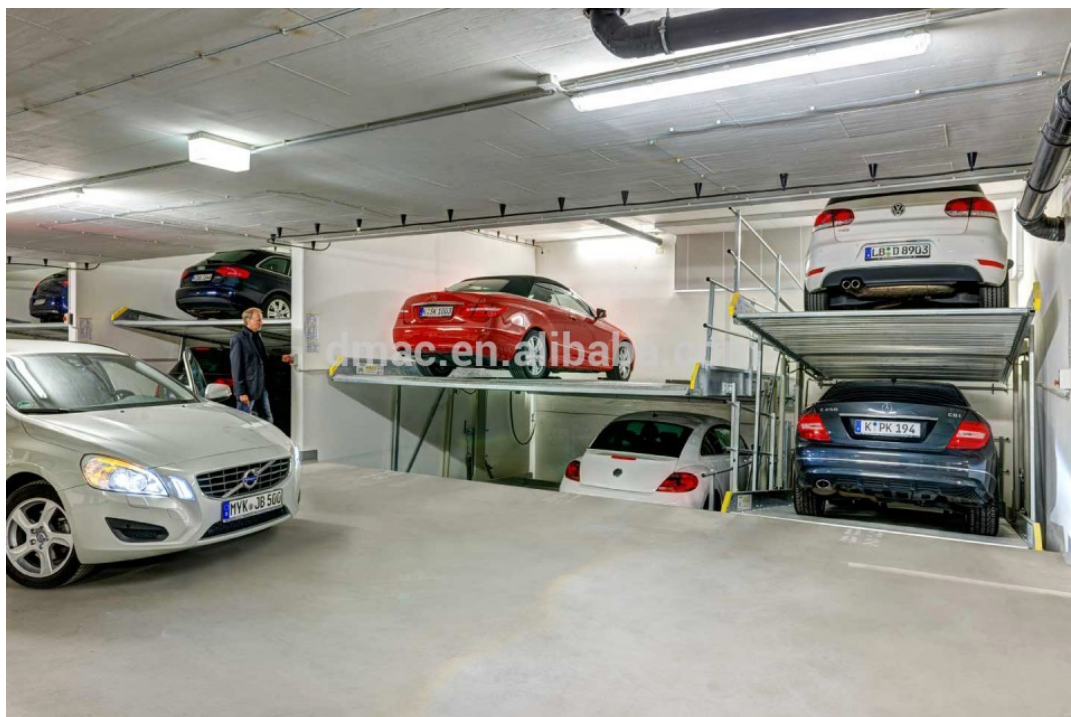
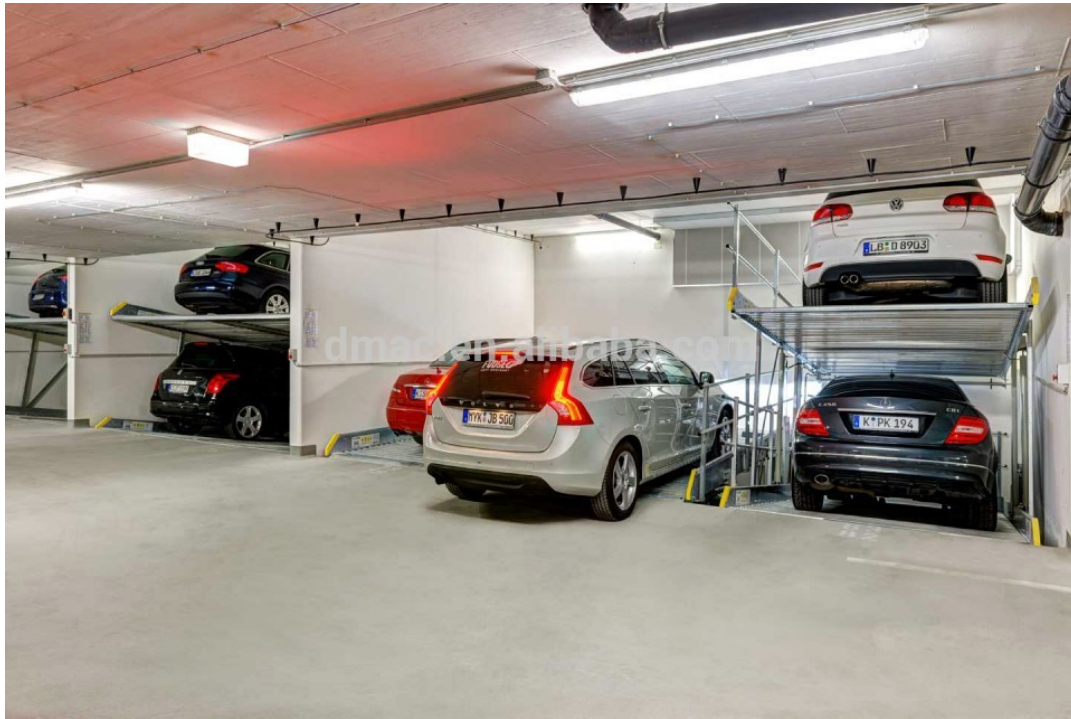


Figure 2 Example of a two-level independent mechanical lift system, where driver can access vehicle without moving the vehicle below.

EXHIBIT B (CONTINUED)



Figure 3 Example of a two-level dependent mechanical lift system, which may require a valet operator.

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EXHIBIT C

Summary of mechanical parking lift standards in other cities

City	Uses	Permit	Technical Standards	Inspection Report	Back-up power	Exemptions
Los Angeles	Not specified	Subject to review by Director	Min. 16' ceiling and 8'-6" wide X 18 ft. Max. 14.5' height for non-sprinklered building 2 levels permitted	No	No	Not allowed when tandem parking is prohibited
Culver City	New building or building >5000 sf	Not specified	Technical Studies required	Yes	Yes	Building addition <5000sf
San Luis Obispo	Commercial and Multi-family developments	Administrative	None.	No	No	25% surface parking may be required for larger vehicles
Emeryville	Not specified	Not specified	Aisle req. 24'. 90° parking standards apply. Each vehicle is independently accessed	No	No	None
Sacramento	Not specified	Special conditions on case-by-case	Comply with parking dimensional standards in code	Case-by-case basis	No	None
Berkeley	Mixed-Use Residential and Commercial buildings	May modify requirement through administrative permit	Comply with parking dimensional standards in code	No	No	Mixed-Use: Comm. Parking not allowed; Mixed-Use: Resi. 10% spaces required at grade. Commercial: 10% required at grade
New York City	Only specified indoor and outdoor use	Not specified	Min. height 11' 7"; Floor loads shall be re-calculated	No	No	In resi. zoned district, lift shall not be located at the first row of cars or within 20' of property line
Honolulu	Not specified	Approval by Director	Visually screened with solid wall 42" high on each level	No	No	None