PLANNING & LAND USE MANAGEMENT

MOTION

Official Police Garages (OPGs) are City-approved vendors of vehicle towing and storage services that support the public safety mission of the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) and Department of Transportation (DOT). OPG yards are where tow trucks are staged and towed (impounded) vehicles are stored; given their support of public agencies, these sites essentially function as public facilities. In addition to needing to adhere to zoning laws, OPGs are strictly regulated by the LAPD's Commission Investigation Division (CID).

Several factors make the acquisition and improvement of property for OPG yards an ongoing challenge. First, land use goals and market forces can make it infeasible for existing OPG yards to remain in their current locations. Second, the City periodically re-procures OPG services, and there is no guarantee that existing OPGs will continue to serve the City continuously and indefinitely. Specifically, new OPGs may need to acquire and/or improve a yard to operate. In addition, many existing OPG lots have lost storage capacity because of the recent uptick of medium and large vehicle impounds and require additional space, sometimes on relatively short notice.

The Zoning Code explicitly allows the storage of impounded vehicles in three industrial zones (M1, M2 and M3) and imposes various conditions and limitations on the use, such as required walls or fencing, a landscaped buffer, and paved off-street parking. Beyond this, it may be appropriate to consider allowing OPGs in other non-residentially zoned areas, provided that they are compatible with adjacent land uses. For example, the PF Public Facilities zone may allow the storage of impounded vehicles; however, the current Zoning Code language is ambiguous. Also, a Zoning Administrator, in theory, could approve an OPG yard in any zone subject to certain findings being made.

Given the ongoing need to site OPGs in appropriate locations throughout the City to support the LAPD and DOT, a review of the Zoning Code should be initiated to determine whether the Council should consider changes related to the storage of impounded vehicles and OPGs. The City should also consider the use of temporary (up to one year) locations with a separate set of rules that recognize the temporary nature of the use but still maintain protections for adjacent properties.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the Council instruct the Planning Department, with the assistance of LAPD's Commission Investigation Division, provide a report back in 30 days with: 1) a summary of the Zoning Code regulations that apply to the storage of impounded vehicles and OPGs, with an analysis of how these regulations affect the siting and approval of OPGs, 2) recommended options to expand siting locations for impounded vehicles and OPGs, and 3) recommended options to establish overflow lots on a short-term basis to provide additional needed capacity.

PRESENTED BY: _____
MITCHELL ENGLANDER
Councilmember, 12th District

DEC 0 8 2017

SECONDED BY: _____

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