Village Preservation and Improvement Society

August 5, 2024

To: Mayor Hardi and Members of the City Council
Chairman Puentes and Members of the Planning Commission

Subject: (TO24-11) Ordinance to Exclude the First 1,000 Square-Feet of Commercial Parking Requirements

Dear Mayor Hardi, Chairman Puentes,
and Members of the Council and Planning Commission:

The members of the Board of Directors of the Village Preservation and Improvement Society (VPIS) have been discussing the draft parking ordinance that would, generally, exempt the first 1000 square-feet of a business from parking requirements.

At recent work sessions, some members of the Council and of the Planning Commission raised questions about the ordinance, focused primarily on a few but significant issues. They include (a) whether the 1000 square-feet applies to the size of the building, or individually to the businesses within the building. The latter standard would greatly expand the number of businesses that can open without providing any parking. Other issues raised are whether the ordinance will result in drivers who cannot find commercial parking spaces parking in, possibly overwhelming, nearby residential streets, and whether the ordinance will result in drivers using parking spaces reserved for other businesses.

We share these concerns. In some areas of the City, parking lots can be full at peak times, and this ordinance easily could exacerbate that problem. We believe staff and the Council need to study these possible unintended negative consequences and, if they are proven accurate, revise the ordinance to address them. In addition, it appears that the ordinance was drafted with the expectation that it did not raise difficult issues and could be adopted expeditiously. That may have been too optimistic. There is no reason to push this ordinance forward on such a fast track while significant issues remain.

Sincerely,

Mark Gross

Mark Gross, President, VPIS

cc: Mr. Shields
Mr. Stoddard