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Council File: #10-1673 California Vehicle Code Exemption/Parking in Front of Driveways

1 message

Lisa Schechter <lisa.schechter@lacity.org>

Wed, Aug 17, 2011 at 9:37 AM

To: john.white@lacity.org, shannon.hoppes@lacity.org, tom.labonge@lacity.org, sheila.irani@lacity.org, jody.perez@lacity.org, rene.engle@lacity.org, rkfannin@ca.rr.com, "Souza-Rountree, Maria" <Maria.Souza-Rountree@lacity.org>

Dear John:

Please submit this letter to the council file referenced above. Our constituent, Lance Fisher, submitted this letter on Tuesday August 9th and it still has not been uploaded into the CMFS and further Mr. Fisher resubmitted this again on the 12th.

Please confirm with my office that it has been uploaded. Thank you

On Tue, Aug 9, 2011 at 8:01 PM, <camlance@aol.com> wrote:

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Dear Hearing Coordinators:

The only important aspect, regardless of all other factors, IS that parking demand exceeds supply. The rights of homeowners and tenants of dwellings shall not be diminished in order to give additional rights or flexibility to others who do not reside in the area.

Homeowner and tenant rights can no longer be further eroded. When laws or ordinances are passed that benefit everyone who does not reside in a neighborhood, yet infringe on the homeowner or resident to park in front of their own dwelling, we have come to the point of ridiculousness and have thrown common sense and ethics down the drain.

There are several arguments against 'apron or parkway' parking, and I will try to answer each one.

1 Is wholly opposite to the primary reason the CVC does not allow the same, i.e., emergency vehicles must be able to park out of the way of street traffic. There is no rational basis to prioritize increased residential parking supply over the safety of a single Los Angeles resident or a first-responder

RESPONSE: No emergency vehicle operations are hindered or at increased risk with 'apron or parkway' parking. The safety of a first responder is not reduced in any way. There is ample space for many, let alone one, emergency vehicles. In any event, has there ever been a report or any indication that ANY emergency operation was hindered due to a car parked on the 'apron or parkway', and duly not obstructing the sidewalk? A car parked on the 'apron or parkway' in no way constitutes a circumstance that would prevent a first responder from doing their job. What would they say?, 'gee-there's a car parked on the parkway.. I guess we should go home." Hardly. First responders are trained to handle many different circumstances, including traffic jams and obstructions of a severe nature. A car parked on the 'apron or parkway' does not constitute a hindrance to any emergency operations and no first responder would ignore safety precautions or procedures because of a parked car.

2 Will not only restrict three-point turns, it will eliminate the space for a car to get out of the way of an oncoming vehicle.

RESPONSE: Three point turns areas are accessible at many points in a street, and can be executed by any accomplished driver. If a three point turn cannot be executed, I suggest that 1, the driver find another spot to do so a few feet further along, or 2, that their driving skills are so extremely diminished as to create a hazard to safe drivers and they should not be on the road in the first place. In any case, why should the resident's right to park in front of their dwelling be denied in order to give rights to an unskilled driver, who at some time in the far off future, MIGHT wish to do a three point turn exactly in front of that dwelling. Do the turn somewhere else or get off the road.

3 Ignores the fact that many streets, such as the Alphabet Streets in the Palisades, often have room for only one car to pass and the escape is into the open space in front of driveways. This problem is magnified with construction vehicles, dumpsters and large vehicles parked on our neighborhood streets.

RESPONSE: Again, if you have large vehicles or construction vehicles on your street, that is a separate problem in your area that you must address in your neighborhood. Preventing thousands of residents in LA from safely and legally parking their vehicles in spots that have been used for decades because you live on a narrow street in an upscale area is again, beyond all reason. Parking on the 'apron or parkway' DOES NOT mean the vehicle can extend out into the street or obstruct traffic. The vehicle MUST NOT extend farther into the street than a vehicle that is legally parallel parked on the same street. If it does, parking on the 'apron or parkway' is not allowed.

4 Fails to consider safety on streets with busy traffic such as Sunset Boulevard. Kids who walk to Palisades High School or need to get to bus stops would have to walk out onto Sunset Blvd. to pass where cars are allowed to block driveways and sidewalks.

RESPONSE: NO!—parking on the 'apron or parkway' DOES NOT allow any obstruction or infringement to the sidewalk or walking area. This is NOT what we do, and is NOT what we are asking for, so this objection is not germane. We have abided by this rule and cooperated fully with DOT and Parking Enforcement and we have maintained this peaceful and safe status quo for decades. There are no safety hazards present with a vehicle parked properly in this manner.

5 Lets presuppose that drive way parking is an issue when on-street parking spaces are at a premium. This is already the case on many streets in Marquee Knolls, and those street are usually narrow and the blocks between cross streets are often long in the hillsides. Under those conditions, on narrow streets with cars parked on both sides, there will be no space left for cars to move out of the way into the spaces in front of drive ways to make room for oncoming traffic. Under those conditions, there will be no space to turn around using somebody's drive way. And most importantly, under those conditions, there will be no place to park for emergency.

RESPONSE: Again, why should you be using anyone's driveway to turn around. Are your driving skills that impaired? If the street is too narrow for two cars to pass in opposite directions, then the solution is to make only one side of the street legal to park on as is done in many canyon areas, not to restrict residents from parking on their own 'apron or parkway'. Yes, you may encounter difficulties driving during an emergency. That is why it's called an 'emergency'. First responders will park wherever they need to get the job done. If it's a narrow street, during an emergency, other traffic is ALWAYS obstructed and impaired now matter where vehicles are parked. That is the price you pay for choosing to live on a narrow street. If your street is too narrow to accommodate this, I agree, 'apron or parkway' parking should not be allowed in your area. But it is vitally needed in the majority of other areas, the denial of which results in a devastating, and I do not exaggerate, negation of quality of life, especially those who are elderly, handicapped, work night or weekend shifts, or have personal equipment to load and unload on a daily basis, such as carpenters or other craftsman.

6 In today's world, not only do families have more cars, but more and more households are using their

garages for household item storage or are converting them (illegally) into livable spaces. This is contrary to the intention of the zoning code requirements that provide for a specific number of garage or carport spaces to house cars not storage or people. The drive way parking allowance will only promote further misuse of required garage spaces.

RESPONSE: While this may be a valid argument, as stated before, we are already beyond the point of prevention. There is a huge parking crisis. Yes, with families having more than one vehicle, far outstripping the planning for the city 30 years ago, parking demand exceeds supply. But we have been parking this way for 20 years and one one ever said anything about it. To arbitrarily remove this ability for thousands of LA residents and just telling them to park elsewhere without any alternatives does not help the problem, it will only make it worse. It is not fixing anything, it only shrinks the supply further.

We have paid, at taxpayer expense, for wheelchair cutouts in our neighborhood. This gives handicapped persons unfettered access to the sidewalk. Parking on the 'apron or parkway' ENSURES that these expensive measures remain accessible and retain their value. As to safety, there is nothing so dangerous as having hundreds of cars racing around the neighborhood on LACMA concert nights until 1 am in the morning, searching for street parking that does not exist. If we are not allowed to park on the 'apron or parkway' as we have done for decades, all this does is increase cars on the road and congestion, and put the residents who live in the area in the same competition as non-residents for spaces that don't exist. Stress increases, patience and civility become short, tempers fray, and accidents HAVE ALREADY occurred because of trying to back up in the dark, or trying to beat someone else to a spot, etc. This is the real danger.

On a related topic i have just emailed Councilman Labonge's office photos of dozens of cars parked on 'apron or parkway' in Councilman Koretz's district. Again, this has been the status quo for decades because of the increasing parking and density requirements of the area. The confusion comes about because, although the cars are parked illegally on the 'apron or parkway' there is no enforcement here, while in my district, #4, there is vigorous enforcement since July 1, 2011. This selective and unequal enforcement for special high-density areas is an indicator of how unreasonable the law is and how impractical it is to apply unilaterally. I did not include these photos, as I don't wish to argue in favor of enforcement, but rather to put forth that different areas have different needs, and the elimination of parking on the 'apron or parkway' is already causing deleterious effects, confusion, and erosion of quality of life in LA.

LANCE FISHER

—
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