



Property Development Trend: *Automated Parking*

Automated parking is a term that describes computerized systems for automated parking and storage of motor vehicles, with “green” features, such as low lighting, no auto CO2 emissions and no concrete ramps, and increased user safety, due to lack of need for public access to each remotely stored vehicle. A driver pulls into a cabin, leaves the vehicle with ignition off and doors locked, and takes a parking ticket. The vehicle is then moved automatically by computer controlled equipment to a storage slot. When the driver returns, with parking ticket, the vehicle is retrieved and returned, facing out, ready to be driven off. Because of the absence of ramps, aisles, and other human-access requirements, this is a major space saving device, able to park twice as many vehicles in the same space as would need to be utilized by a conventional garage. Thus, this is a boon to developers seeking to maximize entitlements for parking-challenged development projects and to optimize high value alternative rentable uses for projects, for increased productive and economic purposes. Such facilities can be used either for self-parking (“valet parking without the tip”) or combined with conventional valet parking.

Gilchrist & Rutter hosted a one-hour presentation discussing pros and cons of automated parking, presented by *Paula Reddish Zinnemann* of Automated Parking Solutions (www.autoparkingsolutions.com) and by *Ryan Astrup* of Park Plus, Inc., a leading automated systems provider in the US. In addition to a number of non-US facilities, the company has a fully functioning facility in NYC and a hybrid project (part conventional/part automated) opening in Towson, Maryland, with other projects in the pipeline. Park Plus, Inc. also is a leading provider of mechanized “stacker” systems, commonly in use in New York City and other places.

Paula Reddish Zinnemann is the former Commissioner of the CA Department of Real Estate and former Chair of the Real Property Section, LACBA. She is now on a mission to bring automated parking to the West Coast. A “cutting edge” concept here, at present (just as were automated high-rise elevators when first introduced, many years ago), automated parking systems have been used successfully for years in Europe, Asia, and South America to maximize parking availability in high density urban and commercial settings.