



MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor and City Council

From: Mindi Hurley, Director of Community Development

Date: September 24, 2024

Reference: Discussion regarding ordinance updates: Chapter 12, Article 31-3 (Off-street loading space, all districts); Chapter 12, Article 31-6 (Parking requirements based on use); Chapter 12, Sec. 12-31-7. – (Rules for computing number of parking spaces); Chapter 12, Sec.12-29-6 (Nonconforming Signs).

2040: Create Business and Innovation Nodes

Introduction:

The purpose of this Work Session item is to discuss amendments to the Zoning Ordinance to incorporate items discussed during the Industrial 2.0 and Retail Roundtables.

Background:

These are text amendments to the Zoning Ordinance that allow for more flexibility in parking for industrial and retail users and modification to City Requirements related to non-conforming monument signage.

Off-Street Loading/Dock Area Parking:

The first is a minor text amendment to the Zoning Ordinance to allow for conversion of the dock areas to vehicular parking within an existing office/warehouse site, provided the area is screened from view. Currently, a conversion of dock areas to car parking would necessitate a Minor Site Plan Amendment and would need approval from the Director of Community Development. With this amendment, the change would be allowed by right and could be done at time of building permit. The amendment would allow more flexibility for reconfiguration of the site to accommodate more vehicles for a change in tenant or operations of an existing tenant.

Warehouse/Distribution Parking:

The second is a minor text amendment to the Zoning Ordinance to address the current requirement for warehouse/distribution centers. The proposed changes decrease the minimum parking required from 1 parking space per 1,000 square feet to 1 parking space per 2,000 square feet while ensuring the number of employees on the maximum working shift each have a parking space. This text amendment also uses the same term – “warehouse/distribution” as defined in the Special Definition’s Section of the Zoning Ordinance. Although the comparison city research showed a range of required parking from 1 parking space per 1,000 square feet to 1 parking space per 2,000 square feet and from 1 parking space per 1 employee to 1 parking space per 4 employees, staff feels comfortable in recommending the adjustment to our minimum standard.

Parking for Retail Centers Over 10,000 sq. ft. in Building Area:

The third text amendment was the result of a Retail Roundtable held with retail developers to discuss the future trends in retail. During the roundtable, the parking requirements for retail centers was brought up. The parking requirements of the Zoning Ordinance are based on extreme cases, during peak times, and often there is a large amount of parking that is never utilized except during the holidays. The Director of Community Development is proposed to be authorized, but not obligated, to grant a 5% reduction in parking for retail centers greater than 10,000 square feet in building area. The Director of Community Development is proposed to be authorized, but not obligated, to approve a reduction of the number of required parking spaces by more than 5% reduction in the number of required parking spaces for retail centers greater than 10,000 square feet in building area, if such reduction is supported by the findings of a parking study and alternate parking plan obtained by the owner or developer of the property that is prepared by a licensed transportation engineer. Greater flexibility in administering the parking requirements allows for more potential businesses to fill the retail centers.

Nonconforming Signage:

During that roundtable, it was the consensus that the current non-conforming signage was most likely never going to be removed and brought into conformance, unless destroyed by a natural disaster. Because these signs were built prior to the current ordinance, they are typically larger in size and greater in height than what the current ordinance permits and are considered legal non-conforming. If they could be rebuilt to the same height and width that they are currently, then the owners of the centers would consider rebuilding these signs to be more architecturally compatible with the centers and would be more uniform with the existing signage along the city roads. Staff is recommending the following verbiage be introduced into the nonconforming signage section: If the freestanding sign was built prior to 1990, and if the sign is not considered a pole sign, then the sign can be rebuilt in the same location with the same height and width, provided it is architecturally compatible with the main structure on site.

Benefit to the Community:

This would provide more flexibility for the development and the reuse of the office/warehouse buildings, would allow for the aesthetic improvement of monument signage along the City's primary image zones and would allow more flexibility in leasing up the shopping centers that are greater than 10,000 square feet in size providing more retail opportunities for the community.

Legal Review:

Staff is coordinating with the City Attorney to draft the proposed ordinance changes.

Fiscal Impact:

N/A

Recommendation:

This is a work session item, so there is no formal recommendation. Staff is seeking feedback from City Council on the draft ordinance changes.