



PLANNING COMMISSION

AGENDA SECTION	PUBLIC HEARINGS
MEETING DATE	JANUARY 7, 2025

ITEM:	Zoning Ordinance Amendments to amend Chapter 9 – Land Use: 9.104 Administration and Enforcement 9.106 General Development Standards 9.107 Specific Development Standards 9.110 Commercial Districts 9.111 Industrial Districts	
DEPARTMENT:	Community Development	BY/DATE: Andrew Boucher, City Planner December 31, 2024

CASE NUMBER: 2024-PZ08
APPLICANT: The City of Columbia Heights
LOCATION: Citywide
REQUEST: Zoning Ordinance Amendment
PREPARED BY: Andrew Boucher, City Planner

INTRODUCTION:

Staff discussed potential updates to City Zoning Code – Chapter 9 Land Use at the December 3rd, 2024 Planning Commission Workshop based on observations, feedback, and recommendations from staff and community members to make adjustments to the Zoning Code that reflect the needs of the community while encouraging consistency as future development occurs. The proposed amendments are as follows:

1. Amending 9.104 Administration and Enforcement (I) to change Interim Use Permit to Zoning Review Permit and including over-height fences, seasonal sales stands, accessory structures under 200 sq. ft., and parking/impervious surface additions to be reviewed administratively as well as establishing a permit for Accessory Dwelling Units.
2. Amending 9.106 General Development Standards to reduce the minimum required parking for two bedroom or more dwelling units to 2 spaces per unit with one of these being enclosed. Also including language to (e) Calculating space to allow: “The Council, at its discretion, may reduce the minimum required parking to not less than 1.5 parking spaces per unit for multifamily structures with seven or more units, after consideration of factors including but not limited to the present or future availability of transit services, shared parking, pedestrian orientation, and occupancy characteristics.”
3. Amending 9.106 General Development Standards to include language under the Dwellings section to contain habitable space based on the adopted MN Building Code.
4. Amending 9.107 Specific Development Standards to require a sound study as a specific condition for car washes as well as considering adding the minimum of one acre of property to this use along with recreational vehicle sales.
5. Amending 9.110 Commercial Districts and 9.111 Industrial Districts to remove fences greater than six feet in height from conditional uses to permitted accessory use, adjusting General Business (GB) to move minor automobile and motorcycle repair and car washes from permitted uses to conditional uses, along with consignment/secondhand stores from conditional uses to permitted uses. In I-1 and I-

2 Districts, major and minor automobile repair is proposed to be changed from permitted to conditional uses.

9.104 Administration and Enforcement - Interim Uses are no longer applicable in the Zoning Code as there are no uses at this point that would require an Interim Use Permit. Staff proposes a zoning text amendment to replace Interim Uses with a Zoning Review Permit. This would allow for certain items such as over-height fences, seasonal sales stands, accessory structures under 200 sq. ft., and parking/impervious surface additions to be reviewed administratively as well as establishing a process for Accessory Dwelling Units to ensure compliance with the owner/occupancy deed restriction and rental licensing.

9.106 General Development Standards include an amendment to (3) Accessory Dwelling Units (h) to reflect the requirement of habitable space based on the adopted MN Building Code. Other sections of 9.106 proposed to be amended include establishing a one (1) off-street parking space requirement for Accessory Dwelling Units and amending the two-bedroom or larger unit parking requirement from two enclosed spaces to one enclosed space. Many multi-family developments proposed within the City are handled as PUDs rather than proceeding by right or requiring only rezoning. This prompted discussion about whether the City's current parking standards are too restrictive or unattainable, warranting a potential review and adjustment. Frequent reliance on PUDs for relatively straightforward redevelopments—such as single-parcel, single-use residential projects—raises concerns about whether the existing standards reflect the City's goals and practical realities.

The City strives to ensure that multifamily housing developments provide adequate parking without burdening residents or the community. However, if concessions are regularly made during the development process, the standard appears to be ineffective.

Use	Minimum Spaces Required
Residential Uses	
Accessory Dwelling Units	1 off-street parking space per unit
Multiple-family	
Two-bedroom or larger units	2 per unit, one must be enclosed (garage)

9.107 Specific Development Standards include requiring a sound study as a specific condition for car washes and adding the minimum of one acre of property to the car wash use along with recreational vehicle sales.

9.110 Commercial Districts and 9.111 Industrial Districts include removing fences greater than six feet in height from conditional uses to permitted accessory uses as well as adjusting General Business (GB) to move minor automobile and motorcycle repair and car washes from permitted uses to conditional uses along with consignment/secondhand stores from conditional uses to permitted uses. In I-1 and I-2 Districts, major and minor automobile repair could have changes from permitted to conditional uses.

Staff Review

Staff has not received any comments on the proposed zoning text amendments.

ZONING ORDINANCE AMENDMENT

FINDINGS OF FACT

Section 9.104 (F) of the Zoning Ordinance outlines certain findings of fact that must be met in order for the City to grant approval for a zoning amendment. The findings are as follows:

(a) The amendment is consistent with the comprehensive plan.

The City’s 2040 Comprehensive Plan identifies strengthening the identify and image of the community as a desirable place to live, work, and play as well as preserving and enhancing the existing viable commercial and industrial areas within the community. The zoning code amendments proposed will help achieve more consistency with the 2040 Comprehensive Plan.

(b) The amendment is in the public interest and is not solely for the benefit of a single property owner.

The zoning text amendments are in response to concerns expressed by residents over commercial businesses and ensuring consistency across zoning districts.

(c) Where the amendment is to change the zoning classification of a particular property, the existing use of the property and the zoning classification of property within the general area of the property in question are compatible with the proposed zoning classification.

The amendment is not to change the zoning classification of a particular property.

(d) Where the amendment is to change the zoning classification of a particular property, there has been a change in the character or trend of development in the general area of the property in question, which has taken place since such property was placed in its current zoning classification.

The amendment is not to change the zoning classification of a particular property.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the following zoning text amendment to the Zoning Code:

- A. Approval of Draft Zoning Ordinance Amendment No. 1709 amending City Code 9.104 Administration and Enforcement, 9.105 Nonconformities, 9.106 General Development Standards, 9.107 Specific Development Standards, 9.110 Commercial Districts, and 9.111 Industrial Districts as presented.

RECOMMENDED MOTION(S):

MOTION: Move to waive the reading of draft Ordinance amendment No. 1709, there being ample copies available to the public.

MOTION: Move to recommend City Council approve draft Ordinance amendment No. 1709, a Zoning Ordinance Amendment, as presented.

ATTACHMENT(S):

[Planning Report from December 3, 2024 Planning Commission Workshop](#)
[Draft Ordinance No. 1709](#)

[Notice of Public Hearing](#)
[Zoning Permit Review Application](#)