



MEMORANDUM

To: Robert Jones

From: Breana Soto, Community Development Department

Date: September 10, 2025

Subject: Comparison of CH-C Central Commercial District and CG Historic Commercial District – Clarifications for 1005 Alamo Street

Purpose

This memo provides a summary comparison of the CH-C and CG zoning districts, focusing on neighborhood impacts, development standards, parking/loading, signage, and review processes. In addition, several clarifying questions have been raised, and responses are provided below for the record.

Comparison of CH-C vs. CG Districts

1. Uses – Neighborhood Impact

- **CH-C (Central Commercial)**
 - Allows high-intensity and auto-oriented uses: auto sales, body shops, contractor yards, warehouses, welding/machine shops, and similar.
 - Bars/taverns, event centers, and package stores are permitted, with fewer restrictions.
 - Outdoor service restaurants and drive-throughs may be permitted.
 - Hotels and motels are allowed.
- **CG (Historic Commercial)**
 - Focuses on low-intensity, neighborhood-compatible uses: retail, offices, small restaurants, and services.
 - Bars and high-impact nightlife are restricted.
 - Outdoor service and event venues more limited; subject to Historic Landmark Commission (HLC) oversight.
 - Upper-story residential is typically allowed to encourage mixed use.
 - Hotels may be allowed but subject to stricter compatibility review.
 - Auto-oriented uses (drive-throughs, repair shops) are not permitted.

2. Development Standards

- **Height/Stories:** Both districts generally capped at 35 feet or 2–3 stories.



- **Setbacks:** CG requires compatibility with historic block patterns, often with reduced setbacks or build-to lines.
- **Lot Coverage:** CH-C allows greater lot coverage for intensive commercial; CG emphasizes preservation of historic scale.
- **Screening/Lighting:** CH-C applies standard commercial requirements; CG applies additional protections including dark-skies lighting and compatibility standards for adjacent residential.

3. Parking and Loading

- **CH-C:** Standard off-street parking ratios required. Employee parking and loading may be located in side/rear yards.
- **CG:** Offers flexibility for historic preservation, including reduced minimums, shared-parking allowances, and exemptions for historic buildings. Loading/delivery management must minimize disruption to surrounding neighborhoods.

4. Signage

- **CH-C:** Allows larger freestanding and wall-mounted signage, illuminated signs, and auto-oriented formats.
- **CG:** Restricts signage to smaller, pedestrian-scaled formats (projecting, wall, or window signs). All signage is subject to Historic Landmark Commission review to ensure historic compatibility.

5. Review Process

- **CH-C:** Standard permitting process through staff review; no historic oversight required.
- **CG:** Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) required from the Historic Landmark Commission for new construction, exterior alterations, site work, and signage. This ensures compatibility with the district's historic character before permits are issued.

Clarifying Questions and Responses

Q1. Will upper-story residential remain allowed under CG at this site, and are there any limits that could unintentionally reduce housing in the historic core?

A: Yes, upper-story residential remains permitted in the CG District. The intent of CG zoning is to support mixed-use and encourage residential in the historic core. No new limitations are introduced that would reduce housing opportunities.



Q2. Does this project trigger a Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA) or a trip-generation review, and how will existing congestion and on-street parking pressure be addressed?

A: The proposed zone change itself does not automatically trigger a TIA. A traffic review would be required at the time of any redevelopment that meets trip-generation thresholds defined in the City's subdivision and zoning code. Parking congestion in the downtown core will continue to be evaluated through site plan review, with consideration for shared parking and loading strategies.

Q3. Will a Parking Plan be required at entitlement, including employee parking location, delivery hours, and trash/dumpster screening?

A: Yes. A Parking Plan is required at entitlement under both CH-C and CG. For CG, flexibility is provided to accommodate historic buildings, but site plans must still address employee parking location, delivery/loading hours, and dumpster/trash screening to ensure minimal impact on surrounding properties.

Q4. Given the City's discussion of managing downtown character through a Historic Overlay, how does a base-district change fit that policy direction?

A: The CG base-district change is consistent with the policy direction, as it places the property under Historic Landmark Commission jurisdiction immediately. This ensures that all exterior modifications, new construction, signage, and site work are subject to full COA design review. Overlay discussions may expand this framework in the future, but CG zoning already ensures compatibility and preservation.

Q5. If the Commission proceeds, could conditions ensure full HLC/COA design control and appropriately scaled signage?

A: Yes. By rezoning to CG, the property becomes subject to HLC oversight for all exterior changes and signage. If desired, the Commission could also recommend conditions clarifying that all redevelopment must comply with full COA review, historic design guidelines, and signage scaled to the pedestrian environment.