

249 Sportsplex Special Exception
From Parking Requirements
Explanation of How This Project Exceeds Code

This project at 249 Sportsplex Park, owned by Intrepid Commercial Properties, LLC, presently has one tenant, Ascension Seton Dripping Springs Health Center. This center which was originally permitted as a site with professional offices in mind used a 1:300 parking ratio to determine their parking needs. However, due to many reasons - market demand and the Covid pandemic - the companies looking for tenant space has been almost exclusively medical.

When it comes to “exceeding code requirements”; the point and purpose of a special exception is to not have to strictly comply with the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance with which the applicant / property owner cannot comply. In this case, the parking requirements for a building for medical offices, the “most intense use” (which is a parking ratio of 1:200 per the City of Dripping Springs Zoning Ordinance) cannot be met. However, when considering alternative standards, the following standards are proposed to be considered. (These and similar standards were used last month in a similar parking variance considered and approved by the Board of Adjustments.)

We also would like to have considered that the owner, Chris Nygard, did propose several months ago to purchase additional property across the street to build a parking lot to help with his parking shortage and provide additional parking for the community during weekends and special events. We were told that this was not acceptable or advisable due to the concern of pedestrians crossing the street. Mr. Nygard let that property return to the open market. It was and will most likely remain an unusable lot due to the amount of floodplain it contains. That would have been an example of exceeding code by purchasing additional property to help absorb other properties’ parking shortages.

However, after observing the approval last month of 391 Sportsplex’ parking variance for a gymnasium, we believe that a revisitation of this project’s parking was warranted. Below are two tables with two scenarios under which are calculated the parking requirements for the gross square footage of the building using various parking standards from neighboring communities and a similar table using the perspective of realistic parking requirements based on useable square footage (a list of the unusable areas are listed below the second table based on information provided from Kevin Herron, AIA, to Mr. Nygard.

In either case, using other communities' standards, as was done by Robyn Miga, Planning Consultant for the City of Dripping Springs in her staff report for the parking variance for 391 Sportsplex, the numbers present a wide array of potential considerations. Using what may be deemed as the most prudent standard, the City of Austin's mixed use with medical, which requires a 1:275 ratio, the parking shortage based on the gross floor area is 1 space. When calculating parking for the useable space scenario with the same parking ratio, the required number of spaces would be 3 less than the number of spaces provided as evidenced on the approved site plan (see Exhibit included of the one page from the site plan with the parking calculations and the site plan layout).

Gross Floor Area (13,200 SF)	Required Parking Spaces	Provided Spaces	Spaces Short	Cities using standard
As approved @ 1:300	44	47	+3	DS (As approved, For General Office Use)
@ 1:200	66	47	-19	DS (Most Intense Use)
@ 1:250	53	47	-6	Kyle, Georgetown, Marble Falls
@ 1:275	48	47	-1	Austin (Mixed use w/ Medical)
@ 1:400	33	47	+14	Buda

Useable Space (12,548 SF)	Required Parking Spaces	Provided Spaces	Spaces Short	Cities Using Standards
As approved @ 1:300	42	47	+5	DS (As approved, For

				General Office Use)
@ 1:200	62	47	-15	DS (Most Intense Use)
@ 1:250	51	47	-4	Kyle, Georgetown, Marble Falls
@ 1:275	46	47	+1	Austin (Mixed use w/ Medical)
@ 1:400	32	47	+15	Buda

Another perspective to be considered is that with the increasing pedestrian sidewalks becoming established in this area, more people could walk to this center as opposed to driving and thereby parking. Whether from their places of employment or the schools they attend, or from their homes, the need for parking is not always the only consideration when planning on how we move people and store their vehicles. It begins to provide an opportunity to warrant bicycling, walking, ridesharing, etc. This consideration should be given as it was for the 391 Sportsplex variance for parking.

The economic argument presented in the staff report for 391 Sportsplex can be equally applied here which is that the property cannot be fully developed with the City’s prohibition of allowing the site to be fully leased unless Mr. Nygard resolves his parking shortage pursuant to the City’s Zoning Ordinance requirements. He has potential tenants that would fill up the remainder of his building and would provide the maximum benefit to the City, the community, and Mr. Nygard in the environment that when one succeeds, we all succeed.