



MCKENNA

Variance Review

TO: City of Grosse Pointe Woods
FROM: Laura Mangan (Haw), AICP, NCI
SUBJECT: 20311 Mack Avenue (#007-03-0016-000) – Variance Review #1
DATE: August 12, 2026

BACKGROUND AND VARIANCE REQUEST

The applicant for a proposed cosmetic surgery and medspa facility at 20311 Mack Avenue has requested a variance from the City’s off-street parking requirements. The subject property contains an existing 5,488-square-foot medical office building on an approximately 7,045-square-foot parcel. The site currently provides four (4) dedicated off-street parking spaces, however, 14 total parking spaces are required by the Zoning Ordinance.

The subject property is zoned the C, Community Business District and is located on a corner lot with frontage along both Mack Avenue and Lochmoor Boulevard. The building and site are fully developed, and the applicant is not proposing an expansion of the existing building footprint.

The applicant requests the following variance, pursuant to the City’s Zoning Ordinance:

Code Section	Ordinance Requirements		Proposed	Requested Variance
Sec. 50-5.3.H	Off-Street Parking: <i>“For medical or dental centers or clinics, and professional offices of doctors, dentists or similar professions, one parking space is required for each 200 square feet of gross floor area.”</i>	Based on the square footage of the building: <u>14 off-street parking spaces are required</u>	Four (4) off-street dedicated spaces are provided	Ten (10) off-street parking spaces



Variance Criteria and Evaluation

Per Section 50-7.15.I.1, the Zoning Board of Appeals may grant a variance only upon a finding that compliance with the restrictions would create a practical difficulty. A finding of practical difficulty, based on competent, material, and substantial evidence on the record, shall require the petitioner to demonstrate that all of the five criteria below are met.

Additional information brought forward by the Board, the applicant, and/or during the public hearing should be incorporated into the record prior to the Board making any determination. Our comments follow:

CRITERIA #1:

That strict compliance with the restrictions governing area, setbacks, frontage, height, bulk, density, and other similar items would unreasonably prevent the petitioner from using the property for a permitted purpose or would render conformity with said restrictions unnecessarily burdensome.

Findings:

The subject site is zoned the C, Community Business District, which is intended to accommodate retail businesses and service uses serving nearby residential areas and to encourage the concentration of local businesses at appropriate locations. Per Section 50-3.1.J:

"The C commercial business district is intended to be that permitting retail business and service uses which are needed to serve the nearby residential areas. In order to promote such business development insofar as it is possible and appropriate in each area, uses are prohibited which would create hazards, offensive and loud noises, vibration, smoke, glare, heavy truck traffic or late hours of operation. The intent of this district is also to encourage the concentration of local business areas to the mutual advantage of both the consumers and merchants and thereby promote the best use of land at certain strategic locations and avoid the continuance of encouraging marginal strip business development along major streets."

The proposed cosmetic surgery and medspa facility is consistent with the type of professional and service use contemplated within the district. Further, the building has previously operated as a medical office (urgent care).

CRITERIA #2:

That a variance would do substantial justice to the petitioner as well as to other petitioners in the zoning district; or whether a lesser relaxation of the restrictions would give substantial relief to the petitioner and be more consistent with justice to others (i.e., are there other more reasonable alternatives).

Findings:

Strict compliance with the current parking requirement would be unnecessarily burdensome due to the existing physical development of the property. The approximately 5,488-square-foot building occupies a substantial portion of the approximately 7,045-square-foot parcel, leaving insufficient land to construct the ten additional parking spaces necessary to comply with the Ordinance without removing or substantially altering the existing building.

The applicant is proposing to reuse the existing building rather than expand its footprint or otherwise intensify the physical development of the site. Requiring full compliance with the parking standard would substantially limit the reasonable reuse of an existing commercial building for a use otherwise permitted within the district.



CRITERIA #3:

That the plight of the petitioner is due to unique circumstances of the property.

Findings:

See criteria #3 above.

CRITERIA #4:

That the petitioner's problem is not self-created.

Findings:

The applicant's problem is not self-created. The existing building, parcel configuration, and limited parking area predate the applicant's proposed use of the property. The applicant is not proposing an expansion of the existing building footprint or a reduction in the four existing off-street parking spaces.

CRITERIA #5:

That the spirit of this chapter will be observed, public safety and welfare secured, and substantial justice done.

Findings:

The requested variance supports the intent of the City's Zoning Ordinance by enabling the reasonable re-occupancy of an existing commercial structure, in a manner that is consistent with the surrounding corridor. The proposed addition does not negatively affect public safety or welfare.

Additionally, the subject property benefits from its location directly across Mack Avenue from a City-owned public parking lot. Although public parking cannot be counted as dedicated off-street parking for purposes of satisfying the Ordinance requirement, its proximity provides an important, shared parking resource within the commercial corridor and reduces the potential impact associated with the site's limited on-site parking.



Recommendation

Subject to any additional information presented and discussed by the applicant, Board, and/or public during the public hearing and incorporated into the record prior to any findings being made, we recommend that the Zoning Board of Appeals **approve the requested variance of ten (10) off-street parking spaces from Section 50-5.3.H, permitting four (4) dedicated off-street parking spaces where 14 spaces are otherwise required**, based on the following findings of fact:

1. The approximately 7,045-square-foot property is already fully developed with an existing approximately 5,488-square-foot medical office building, leaving insufficient land area to accommodate the ten additional parking spaces required by the Ordinance.
2. The proposed cosmetic surgery and medspa facility represent the reuse of an existing commercial/medical office building for a use consistent with the intent of the C, Community Business District, and the applicant is not proposing to expand the existing building footprint.
3. The parking deficiency results from the existing size, configuration, and development of the property and was not created by the current applicant.
4. A lesser variance would not provide substantial relief because the physical constraints of the site provide little practical opportunity to construct additional off-street parking without substantially altering or removing portions of the existing building.
5. Four (4) dedicated off-street parking spaces will continue to be provided on the subject property, and the City-owned public parking lot directly across Mack Avenue provides an additional nearby parking resource that can help accommodate parking demand within this portion of the commercial corridor.
6. Approval of the variance facilitates the productive reuse and continued occupancy of an existing commercial building, supports reinvestment along the Mack Avenue corridor, and is not anticipated to adversely affect surrounding properties or compromise public health, safety, or welfare.

Should you have any questions, please reach out to us. Thank you.