

## **Other Business**

### **Zoning Ordinance Amendment**

#### **Outdoor Storage Yards with Aggregate Surfaces**

**September 5, 2013**

#### **Staff Comments:**

Amendment to the Zoning Ordinance which would create a new type of use in the Chart of Permitted Uses to allow Outdoor Storage Yards with Aggregate Surfaces in B-5, I-1, and I-2 by right, and B-3 with Planning Approval

This proposed amendment is being presented at the request of the Mobile City Council, via a resolution adopted by the council, which asked the Planning Commission to consider allowing aggregate surfaces in I-1.

Currently, the Zoning Ordinance allows aggregate surfacing only in I-2, Heavy Industrial Districts for parking, circulation, and storage of equipment/vehicles. The purpose of the proposed amendment is to allow similar aggregate surfacing in “lesser” zoning classifications such as I-1, B-5, and possibly B-3 with Planning Approval.

There are numerous reasons that the allowance for aggregate was specific to I-2 and not I-1 or lesser districts. As stated above, I-2 is a heavy industrial district and the majority of the uses are of a nature that they do not provide direct services to the public, or have the public as on site customers. Additionally, much of the traffic on site is attributed to heavy equipment or vehicles that may not necessarily operate in the “lesser” districts.

Many of the uses allowed in I-1 and B-3 may provide direct on-site customer service to the public and/or have public traffic to and within the site.

Another issue is that such surfaces tend to “travel” beyond the confines of the storage yard and/or the site. Given the number of I-1 and B-3 sites that are not within “industrial areas”, but are intermingled with other commercial zoning classifications that do not have and are not allowed to have aggregate surfaces, the impact of the aggregate (or its dust) travelling to those site is inappropriate and may be unsafe.

Frequently the justification given when aggregate is requested in I-1 and B-3 is that it is a pervious surface and does not require detention. This is not necessarily the case. Over time, compaction causes the aggregate to no longer be pervious, and without sufficient detention facilities provided, it creates not only a run off problem, but the dust and sediment included in the run off exacerbates the problem.

To address the run-off issue, the Engineering Department has commented that a land disturbance permit will need to be obtained when gravel surfacing of any size is proposed. A site plan and erosion control plan will be required; and storm water detention will need to be

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provided for the post-1984 impervious area on-site greater than 4000 square feet. The c-value used in storm water calculations will be 0.70 for gravel.

Another issue with aggregate surfacing is that travel lanes within the storage area cannot be delineated. While these travel lanes are within private property, they should still be delineated to maintain a safe environment.

The Fire Department has commented that Fire Code requires fire apparatus access roads. If there is something that can burn, adequate access for a fire truck is required. The access must be an asphalt or concrete surface road with a minimum width of twenty feet that will support 75,000 pound loads. The road must to be within 150 feet of the fire load.

This fire apparatus access road could be used as travel lanes within the storage yard.

Even if the Zoning Ordinance is amended to allow for the aggregate storage yards, the requirements of the Engineering and Fire Departments must still be met.

The proposed amendment addresses compliance with other codes by saying “for equipment, materials and vehicles; cannot be used for required parking except in I-2 districts. **Does not usurp or negate compliance with other codes and ordinances such as but not limited to the City’s Storm Water Control Ordinance**”.

Based on the preceding, it is recommended that the Commission carefully consider the proposal, its potential impacts on surrounding properties, the appropriateness of gravel surfacing in districts less than I-2, and the implications of compliance with other city codes will have on such storage yards.