

**COUNCIL ACTION FORM**

**SUBJECT: ZONING ORDINANCE TEXT AMENDMENT TO REDUCE THE MINIMUM NUMBER OF OFF-STREET PARKING SPACES REQUIRED FOR GROCERY STORES**

**BACKGROUND:**

**Referral by City Council/Application for Text Amendment.** On January 19, 2010, the City Council referred a request from Scott Renaud, Fox Engineering, on behalf of Hy-Vee. This is a request to reduce the minimum number of off-street parking spaces required for grocery stores that are part of a “Retail and Shopping Center.” Since that time, Hy-Vee has submitted a formal application for a “Text Amendment to the Zoning Ordinance,” which alters their request for an amendment to parking standards, as referred to staff by the City Council. The applicant’s request for a text amendment no longer requests a change to the off-street parking standards for grocery stores that are a part of a retail and shopping center. **The revised request is to change the minimum number of required parking spaces for “grocery stores” from 1 space/150 square feet of gross floor area to 1 space/250 square feet of gross floor area, as shown in Table 29.406(2) of the Municipal Code below.**

**Table 29.406(2)  
 Minimum Off-Street Parking Requirements**

PRINCIPAL LAND USE	ALL ZONES EXCEPT DOWNTOWN AND CAMPUS TOWN SERVICE CENTER ZONES	DOWNTOWN AND CAMPUS TOWN SERVICE CENTER ZONES
Grocery Stores	<del>1 space/150 sf</del> 1 space/250 sf, except that in CVCN zone and CGS zone, 1 space/300 sf.	None

**Reasons for the Applicant’s Request.** The applicant has stated the following in support of the zoning text amendment:

*“We are requesting a reduction in the city’s parking requirements to allow for more flexibility to grow and expand our existing stores in the city of Ames. We believe that a reduced requirement to 1 space per 250 sf would work well in a community such as Ames that has good public transportation and residents accustomed to modes of transportation other than cars.*”

We are specifically requesting a revision to Table 29.406(2) from the current requirement of: '1 space/150 sf' to read '1 space/250 sf.'

Ideally, Hy-Vee provides parking for our customers at a 1/200 sf ratio. When designing a new store we attempt to meet this ratio. However, as we expand some of our existing stores, space for parking is not always readily available. In these cases, we work with a lower parking ratio and give up the extra spaces in order to maintain or acquire a good store location.

Per your request, we have compiled parking requirements we have encountered for grocery stores in other communities. Below is a table illustrating these parking requirements:

1/250 sf

Waukee, IA  
West Des Moines, IA  
Cedar Rapids, IA  
Clive, IA  
Iowa City, IA

1/222 sf

Cedar Falls, IA

1/200 sf

Council Bluffs, IA  
Des Moines, IA  
Omaha, NE

*The requested change most directly impacts our proposed C-Store in the Lincoln Center Development at 640 Lincoln Way. Under the current ordinance, the development would not meet current parking requirements. With the requested ordinance change, the project would meet proposed parking requirements and allow the project to move forward. We would like to begin construction on the C-Store this spring. Thank you in advance for your timely review of this request."*

**City of Ames Grocery Store Parking Survey.** In 2007, the City of Ames Planning and Housing Department contacted various cities in Iowa regarding the parking requirements for grocery stores. The total results of that survey are included in "Attachment A." City staff surveyed some of the same communities the applicant used to support their proposed change in parking standards. Parking standards for Iowa City, West Des Moines, Cedar Falls, Des Moines, and Council Bluffs are cited by both the applicant and the City survey and the findings match.

Parking standards for Iowa communities and Omaha, Nebraska, as provided by the applicant, and as determined by the City of Ames survey are summarized as follows:

**City Parking Standard (based on square feet of gross floor area)**

**Ames:  
(existing) 1 space/150 s.f. (6.67/1,000)**

Johnston: 1 space/175 s.f. (5.71/1,000)

Davenport: 1 space/181 s.f. (5.5/1,000)

Cedar Falls: 1 space/222 s.f. (4.5/1,000)

Ankeny: 1 space/200 s.f. (5.0/1,000)

Urbandale: 1 space/200 s.f. (5.0/1,000)

Council Bluffs: 1 space/200 s.f. (5.0/1,000)

Des Moines: 1 space/200 s.f. (5.0/1,000)

Omaha, Neb. 1 space/200 s.f. (5.0/1,000)

Iowa City: 1 space/250 s.f. (4.0/1,000)

Cedar Rapids: 1 space/250 s.f. (4.0/1,000)

Clive: 1 space/250 s.f. (4.0/1,000)

Waukee: 1 space/250 s.f. (4.0/1,000)

West Des Moines: 1 space/250 s.f. (4.0/1,000)

Waterloo: 1 space/250 s.f. (4.0/1,000)

**Ames:  
(proposed) 1 space/250 s.f. (4.0/1,000)**

Marshalltown: 1 space/300 s.f. (3.33/1,000)

**Ames:  
(existing for  
CVCN zone) 1 space/300 s.f. (3.33/1,000)**

**Summary of Parking Survey Findings.** The existing parking requirement for grocery stores in all zoning districts in Ames, with the exception of CVCN, is the highest standard for parking of any city cited in this report. The parking requirement for grocery stores in CVCN is the lowest standard for parking of any city contacted, with the exception of Marshalltown, which has the same standard. Parking standards for fifteen (15) other cities are cited in this report. Six (6) of those cities have the same grocery store parking standard as what is proposed by Hy-Vee (1 space/250 s.f.). Five (5) of the cities have a parking standard that matches the “ideal” parking standard that Hy-Vee strives for as they build new grocery stores in their market area (1 space/200 s.f.). Three (3) cities have a higher parking standard, as does Ames, than the Hy-Vee’s “ideal” standard . Only one (1) city requires less parking for grocery stores (1 space/300 s.f.) than what Hy-Vee is proposing for Ames.

**Grocery Store Parking and Landscaping Requirements in the CVCN.** In July, 2008, Fareway proposed the construction of a new grocery store in the “CVCN” (Convenience Commercial Node) northwest of the intersection of Bloomington Road and Stange Road. At that time, Fareway representatives noted that the City’s parking requirement for grocery stores is significantly higher than what their marketing practices require. They indicated that they were willing to meet this higher requirement, but said they would be willing to provide more landscaping in lieu of what they believed to be surplus parking.

In response to this proposal by Fareway, the City Council approved an ordinance in September, 2008, reducing the amount of parking required for grocery stores in the CVCN zone from 1 space/150 square feet of gross floor area to 1 space/300 square feet of gross floor area, including the installation of additional landscaping to meet the following requirements as stated in *Section 29.403(4)(h) of the Municipal Code*:

(h) **CVCN District Landscaping.** In addition to (and in conjunction with) the lot line landscaping requirements specified in Table 29.403(4), increased landscaping shall be provided around the perimeter of parking lots that serve, or partially serve, Grocery Stores and/or any category of Retail and Shopping Centers as listed in Table 29.406(2), as follows:

- i. For every 1 square foot of grocery store or shopping center gross floor area, 0.28 square feet of landscaping shall be provided.
- ii. Landscaping shall be contiguous to parking lot landscaping otherwise required by this Chapter, or in landscaped areas abutting parking lots that are at least 350 square feet in area, and which are no narrower than 10 feet in any dimension.
- iii. The area of increased landscaping required under this Section shall conform to the L1, General Landscaping requirements of Section 29.403(1)(a).
- iv. All remaining areas of the site that are not otherwise covered by site improvements such as parking areas, driveways, buildings or parking lot landscaping shall be landscaped under the L1 standard.

**Application of the CVCN Parking Standards and Landscaping for Grocery Stores to Other Zoning Districts.** At the time the City Council was considering a reduction in the parking required for grocery stores in the CVCN district, there was discussion about applying the same parking/landscaping standards to all grocery stores throughout the community, or possibly to select zones in addition to the Convenience Commercial Nodes. Staff has been in the process of exploring the implications of reducing parking in other zones, but had not finalized its research or had any further discussion with the Planning & Zoning Commission or City Council on this issue. The proposal by Hy-Vee now brings this issue back to the forefront for discussion and consideration. The grocery store parking standard proposed by Hy-Vee would provide slightly more parking (4.0 spaces/1,000 sq. ft. of floor area) than what is required in the CVCN district (3.33 spaces/1,000 sq. ft. of floor

area). However, no additional landscaping has been proposed by Hy-Vee in their revised grocery store parking standards.

**Parking Requirements for Grocery Stores in Comparison to Parking Requirements for Retail Sales and Services-General.** The consequences of reducing the parking requirement for grocery stores in comparison to parking required for retail and service establishments is worthy of further consideration. Parking standards for grocery stores (current and proposed) and parking standards for retail sales and services is described as follows:

Current Parking Standards:

Grocery Stores:	<b>1 space/150 square feet</b> of gross floor area (6.67/1,000)
Retail Sales and Services:	<b>1 space/200 square feet</b> of gross floor area on the ground floor (5.00/1,000) <b>1 space/300 square feet</b> of gross floor area on a floor other than the ground floor (3.33/1,000)

Proposed Parking Standards:

Grocery Stores:	<b>1 space/250 square feet</b> of gross floor area (4.00/1,000)
Retail Sales and Services:	<b>1 space/200 square feet</b> of gross floor area on the ground floor (5.00/1,000) <b>1 space/300 square feet</b> of gross floor area on a floor other than the ground floor (3.33/1,000)

In comparing current and proposed parking standards, it is evident that **grocery stores currently have a much higher requirement for parking (6.67/1,000) as compared to retail sales and services (5.00/1,000)**. If the parking requirement for grocery stores is reduced, as proposed by Hy-Vee, **grocery stores will have a lower requirement for parking (4.00/1,000) than retail sales and services (5.00/1,000)**.

**Consistency with the Land Use Policy Plan (LUPP).** This proposed amendment is not contrary to the goals and policies of the LUPP.

**Landscaping Considerations.** The question for the City Council is whether the proposed standard will provide adequate parking for any future grocery stores constructed in Ames. The City Council adopted a lower parking standard for the CVCN zone; however, this included a requirement for additional landscaping. Hy-Vee is also requesting a lower parking standard for grocery stores, not just in a single zoning district, but for all zoning districts in the community that allow grocery stores, except CVCN. The Hy-Vee request includes no proposal for additional landscaping to accompany the lower parking standard. Application of the landscaping requirement for grocery stores in the CVCN zone to grocery store developments in other zones throughout the community is deserving of consideration by the City Council.

A consequence of reducing the number of parking spaces for grocery stores is the availability of fewer parking spaces for snow storage on the hard-surfaced parking lot. A potential advantage of fewer parking spaces is the use of a larger percentage of the site for landscaping/green space, which could offset the loss of surplus parking otherwise used for snow storage. While it is not advisable to store snow on landscape shrubbery, increased landscape areas facilitate larger areas of grasses and other groundcovers, which can readily tolerate the impacts of snow storage. Other advantages of increased landscaping in exchange for reduced parking include improved aesthetics of parking lots, improved storm water infiltration, and reduced heat island effects from expansive areas of hard surface (known to increase temperatures in urban areas).

**Recommendation of the Planning & Zoning Commission.** At its meeting of March 17, 2010, with a vote of 6-0, the Commission recommended approval of the Zoning Ordinance text amendment to reduce the number of required parking spaces for grocery stores in all zoning districts throughout the community that allow grocery stores as a permitted use, with the exception of the CVCN zone, from 1 parking space for every 150 square feet of gross floor area to 1 parking space for every 250 square feet of gross floor area.

**ALTERNATIVES:**

1. The City Council can approve the proposed zoning text amendment that will reduce the number of required parking spaces for grocery stores in all zoning districts throughout the community that allow grocery stores as a permitted use, with the exception of the CVCN and CGS zones, from 1 parking space for every 150 square feet of gross floor area to 1 parking space for every 250 square feet of gross floor area.
2. The City Council can approve the proposed zoning text amendment to the City Council that will reduce the number of required parking spaces for grocery stores in all zoning districts throughout the community that allow grocery stores as a permitted use, with the exception of the CVCN and CGS zones, from 1 parking space for every 150 square feet of gross floor area to 1 parking space for every 250 square feet of gross floor area, with the following condition:
  - A. Landscaping for grocery stores in all zoning districts that allow grocery stores as a permitted use shall meet the same standards as is required for grocery stores in the CVCN and CGS zoning districts, as described in Section 29.403(4)(h) of the *Municipal Code*.
3. The City Council can decide not to adopt the proposed reduction of the minimum number of parking spaces required for grocery stores from 1/150 to 2/250.
4. The City Council can refer this back to staff, and/or the applicant for further information and analysis.

**MANAGER’S RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

The proposed reduction in the minimum number of parking spaces required for grocery stores in zoning districts throughout the community seems reasonable when the current parking standard is compared with other Iowa communities. A closer examination of the parking requirements for retail sales and services, as described in this report, is warranted if the proposed requirement for grocery store parking is adopted.

It is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council act in accordance with Alternative #1, which is to approve the proposed change in required parking for grocery stores in all zoning districts throughout the community that allow grocery stores as a permitted use, except CVCN and CGS zones, from 1 space for every 150 square feet of gross floor area to 1 space for every 250 square feet of gross floor area. If the Council believes that additional landscaping is of benefit, as adopted for grocery stores in the CVCN and CGS zoning districts, the Council can choose alternative #2.

# Attachment A

## Parking Requirements for Retail and Grocery Stores

Jurisdiction	Off Street Parking Requirements
Ankeny	High Volume Traffic Generation 1 space/200 S.F. Gross Floor Area
Des Moines	Retail, Supermarkets, etc. 0-4,000 S.F. without gas sales - 1 space/400 S.F. Gross Floor Area 0-4,000 S. F. with gas sales - 1 space/300 S.F. Gross Floor Area 4,001-200,000 S.F. - 1 space/200 S.F. Gross Floor Area 200,000+ S.F. - 1 space/200 S.F. Gross Floor Area
Davenport	Retail+Grocery 0-2,000 S.F. - 1 space/100 S.F. 2,001-20,000 S.F. - 1 space/200 S.F. 20,000+ S.F. - Minimum parking ratio of 5.5 spaces/1,000 S.F.
Dubuque	Retail+Grocery 1 space/250 S.F. floor area available to the public. Parking credit in downtown for grocery (1/4 of total required parking exempt)
Waterloo	Retail+Grocery 0-2,000 S.F. - 1 space/250 S.F. + 1 space/2 employees Minimum of 5 parking stalls required regardless of S.F.
Iowa City	Retail 1 space/300 S.F. Shopping Center 1 space/250 S.F. floor area available to the public.
Council Bluffs	Retail+Grocery 1 space/200 S.F. Gross Floor Area
West Des Moines	Grocery 0-50,000 S.F. - 1 space/225 S.F. 50,000+ S.F. - 1 space/250 S.F.
Urbandale	Retail 5 spaces/1,000 S.F. Gross Floor Area
Cedar Falls	Retail 2,000+ S.F. - 4.5 spaces/1,000 S.F. Convenience Store 1 space/100 S.F. + 1 space/2 employees
Marshalltown	Grocery+Retail 1 space/300 S.F. Gross Floor Area
Johnston	Retail/Grocery 0-2,000 S.F. - 1 space/500 S.F. +1 space/1employee 2,000+ S.F. - 1 space/175 S.F. Gross Floor Area



**ORDINANCE NO. \_\_\_\_\_**

**AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE MUNICIPAL CODE OF THE CITY OF AMES, IOWA, BY REPEALING SECTION TABLE 29.406(2) AND ENACTING A SECTION TABLE 29.406(2) THEREOF, FOR THE PURPOSE OF REDUCING THE MINIMUM NUMBER OF OFF-STREET PARKING SPACES REQUIRED FOR GROCERY STORES; REPEALING ANY AND ALL ORDINANCES OR PARTS OF ORDINANCES IN CONFLICT TO THE EXTENT OF SUCH CONFLICT; AND ESTABLISHING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.**

**BE IT ENACTED**, by the City Council for the City of Ames, Iowa, that:

Section One. The Municipal Code of the City of Ames, Iowa shall be and the same is hereby amended by repealing Table 29.406(2) and enacting a new Table 29.406(2) as follows:

**“Sec. 29.406. OFF-STREET PARKING**

**Table 29.406(2)  
Minimum Off-Street Parking Requirements**

<b>PRINCIPAL LAND USE</b>	<b>ALL ZONES EXCEPT DOWNTOWN AND CAMPUS TOWN SERVICE CENTER ZONES</b>	<b>DOWNTOWN AND CAMPUS TOWN SERVICE CENTER ZONES</b>
<b>RESIDENTIAL DWELLINGS</b>		
One and Two-Family and Single Family Attached (including Manufactured Homes outside RLP District)	2 spaces/Residential Unit (RU)	1 space/RU
Apartment Dwellings	1.5 space/RU; for one-bedroom units  1 space/bedroom for units of 2 bedrooms or more  1.25 space/bedroom for units of 2 bedrooms or more in University Impacted (O-UIE and OUIW)	1 space/RU
Dwelling House	1 space per bedroom	N/A
Family Home	2 spaces plus 1 space/2 full time staff members of the largest shift	NONE
Group Living		NONE
Nursing and convalescent homes	1 space/2 beds, plus 1 space/2 staff members of the largest shift	
College and University housing, fraternities and sororities	1 space/bed	

Mobile Home and Manufactured Home in Manufactured/Mobile Home Parks	2 spaces/Manufactured/Mobile Home Space plus 1 space for guest parking/4 Manufactured/Mobile Home Spaces	NONE
<b>PRINCIPAL LAND USE</b>	<b>ALL ZONES EXCEPT DOWNTOWN AND CAMPUS TOWN SERVICE CENTER ZONES</b>	<b>DOWNTOWN AND CAMPUS TOWN SERVICE CENTER ZONES</b>
Short-Term Lodging Hotel/Motel, including ancillary uses  Boarding houses, rooming houses, and lodging houses	1 space/guest room; plus 6 spaces/1,000 sf of ballroom, meeting, bar and restaurant areas; plus 1 space/2 employees of the largest shift  1 space/bed	1 space/guest room, plus 5 spaces/1,000 sf of ballroom, meeting, bar and restaurant areas; plus 1 space/2 employees of the largest shift  0.5 space/bed
<b>OFFICE</b>		
Medical/Dental office	1 space/143 sf where there is no agreement for shared parking; 1 space/200 sf where there is an agreement for shared parking or for medical facilities that exceed 50,000 sf	NONE
Other office	Ground level: 1 space/250 sf; other than ground level: 1 space/300 sf	NONE
<b>TRADE AND WHOLESALE</b>		
Retail Sales and Services-General	Ground level: 1 space 200 sf; other than ground level: 1 space/250 sf	NONE
Wholesale Trade	1 space/500 sf	NONE
Printing	1 space/200 sf of retail area; plus 1 space/2 employees on largest shift; plus 1 space/company vehicle	NONE
Fuel Sale/Convenience Stores	1 space/200 sf; spaces at fuel pump islands may be counted towards this requirement	NONE

Retail Sales and Services-General	Ground level: 1 space/200 sf; other than ground level: 1 space/250 sf; and all levels in CVCN zone and CGS zone: 1 space/300 sf	NONE
Retail and Shopping Centers, exclusive of Grocery Stores and Offices Uses, 50,000 - 99,999 sq. ft.	4.5 spaces/1,000 sf; except that in CVCN zone and CGS zone, 1 space /300 sf4.50 spaces/1,000 sf	NONE
<b>PRINCIPAL LAND USE</b>	<b>ALL ZONES EXCEPT DOWNTOWN AND CAMPUS TOWN SERVICE CENTER ZONES</b>	<b>DOWNTOWN AND CAMPUS TOWN SERVICE CENTER ZONES</b>
Retail and Shopping Centers, exclusive of Grocery Stores and Office Uses, 100,000 - 199,999 sq. ft.	4.25 spaces/1,000 sf, except that in CVCN zone and CGS zone, 1 space /300 sf.	NONE
Major retail and Shopping Centers, exclusive of Grocery Stores and Office Uses	4.00 spaces/1,000 sf, except that in CVCN zone and CGS zone, 1 space /300 sf	NONE
<b>Grocery Stores</b>	<b>1 space/250 sf, except that in CVCN zone and CGS zone, 1 space/300 sf.</b>	<b>NONE</b>
Display store (furniture, appliances, carpets, etc.)	1 space/500 sf	NONE
Financial institution (freestanding or as ground level service area)	Ground level: 1 space/250 sf; other than ground level: 1 space/300 sf	NONE
Entertainment and Recreation Trade	14 spaces/1,000 sf	NONE
Sit-Down Restaurant	9 spaces/1,000 sf	NONE
Fast food restaurant	12 spaces/1,000 sf in dining or waiting area, or 1 space/2 employees if no seating	NONE
Recreation facility, health club	5 spaces/1,000 sf	NONE
Enclosed tennis, handball, racquetball or squash courts	4 spaces/court plus 1 space/200 sf for rest of building	NONE
Bowling Alley	5 spaces/lane. Bar, restaurant and other uses shall provide parking according to the requirement for that use	NONE
<b>INSTITUTIONAL AND MISCELLANEOUS USES</b>		

Auditoriums, theaters, stadiums and arenas	Greater of 1 space/5 seats or 10 spaces/1,000 sf, with a minimum of 20 spaces	Greater of 1 space/4 seats or 10 spaces/1,000 sf, with a minimum of 20 spaces
Places of Worship	When seating is provided in main auditorium: 1 space/4 seats, exclusive of Sunday School and other special areas. When seating is not provided in main auditorium: 1 space/60 sf of worship area	NONE
<b>PRINCIPAL LAND USE</b>	<b>ALL ZONES EXCEPT DOWNTOWN AND CAMPUS TOWN SERVICE CENTER ZONES</b>	<b>DOWNTOWN AND CAMPUS TOWN SERVICE CENTER ZONES</b>
Private clubs, fraternal organizations, libraries, museums and community buildings	1 space/200 sf	NONE
Funeral Home/Mortuary	1 space/50 sf in slumber rooms, parlors and funeral service rooms	NONE
Vehicle Service Facilities Fuel Sales Only Service/Repair Facilities	3 spaces plus 1/employee 3 spaces plus 2 spaces/service bay	NONE
Car Wash	2 spaces plus 5 stacking spaces/washing bay	NONE
Motor vehicle sales and service	2 spaces plus 1 space/500 sf over 1,000 sf in the showroom, plus 2 spaces/service bay	NONE
Heliport or helicopter landing area	Greater of 1 space/employee or 2 spaces/1,000 sf of patron area, but not less than 10 spaces	NONE
Hospital/medical center	1 space/2 beds plus 1 space/2 staff members of the largest shift	NONE
Schools primarily serving children younger than age 16	Greater of 2 spaces/classroom or 1 space/4 seats in auditorium	NONE
High schools and universities	Greater of 1 space/2 students; or 10 spaces/classroom; or 1 space/4 seats in auditorium	4 spaces/classroom
Sports Practice Facility	2 spaces/1,000 sq ft of gross floor area	2 spaces/1,000 sq ft of gross floor area
<b>INDUSTRIAL</b>		
Industrial Service, Manufacturing and Production, Resource Production and Extraction	1 space/500 sf plus 1/space/company vehicle	NONE

Warehouse	One (1) parking space per 5,000 sq. ft.	NONE
<b>MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT</b>	Mixed-use development parking shall be determined as the sum of parking requirements of the individual use components	NONE

\_\_\_\_\_ Section Two. All ordinances, or parts of ordinances, in conflict herewith are hereby repealed to the extent of such conflict, if any.

Section Three. This ordinance shall be in full force and effect from and after its passage and publication as required by law.

Passed this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Diane R. Voss, City Clerk  
001220

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Ann H. Campbell, Mayor