

COUNCIL ACTION FORM

**SUBJECT: ZONING TEXT AMENDMENT TO REDUCE THE GENERAL OFFICE
REQUIRED PARKING RATE**

BACKGROUND:

At its January 28 meeting, City Council referred to staff a letter from Chuck Winkleblack requesting a text amendment to address the parking requirements for general office uses within all zoning districts (see Attachment 1). Mr. Winkleblack has identified a potential conflict in the code regarding the development of speculative commercial buildings in that different parking rates may apply to the same space for similar uses.

Typically the use a future tenant may make in a speculative commercial building is unknown, and determination of parking at the time of original development may limit the ability of the site to secure future tenants. The current request would not change the existing parking ratios for medical or dental offices.

In response to a proposed development at 517 Grand Avenue, the applicant is requesting that **the general office parking ratio be decreased to 1 parking space for every 300 square feet of gross floor area (equivalency of 3.3 parking spaces per 1,000 sq. ft.) to be consistent with the 2nd floor office parking rate and retail sales and service parking rate.** This change would accommodate the needs of a new general office use for the applicant's speculative building.

General office describes a wide variety of uses that include professional, administrative, business, and financial uses. It does not include medical uses for parking purposes. Currently Table 29.406(2): *Minimum Off-Street Parking Requirements* requires that general office uses provide one parking space for every 250 square feet of ground floor area devoted to office space and one space for every 300 square feet of office space on other levels of the building. As currently written, the code requires more parking for a ground level office tenant than for a retail tenant that may occupy the same space.

Staff notes that a significant parking text amendment was adopted in June 2012 to simplify and lower the retail parking rate to one space per 300 square feet of floor area. Prior to the text amendment, retail use had a similar parking rate to office. Retail had previously been described in terms of size of shopping center and whether floor area was on the ground floor or 2nd floor to determine required parking. The amendment was approved in recognition of lower parking needs for retail compared to existing built shopping centers and the desire to have easier administration of the requirements with one parking rate, since the use of a building may change over time.

Staff has reviewed codes from other communities. There is some variation in requirements based on either gross floor area or number of employees. Many communities, such as Fort Dodge, Cedar Falls, Nevada, Clive, Sioux City, and Iowa

City, have a minimum parking standard for general office uses at one parking space for every 300 square feet of gross floor area. **The typical national average when reviewing Institute of Traffic Engineers (ITE) and Urban Land Institute (ULI) comparisons is between 1 space per 300 square feet to 1 space per 400 square feet in the context of a suburban environment.**

The proposed change will reduce parking requirements by approximately 17%. This will allow for a property owner to build a larger building on a site compared to current requirements, approximately 10% larger floor area. For small sites, there would be only marginal effects on building size because of the constraints of a small site compared to setback and parking dimension requirements. For larger sites, it will provide for more flexibility to either design a larger building or to consider a phased approach to providing parking based on tenant needs. This second scenario would be more likely to occur on large parcels in the industrial parks.

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS:

A text amendment was prepared for consideration by the Planning and Zoning Commission and by the City Council. Table 29.406(2) would be modified as shown below:

PRINCIPAL LAND USE	ALL ZONES EXCEPT DOWNTOWN AND CAMPUS TOWN SERVICE CENTER ZONES	DOWNTOWN AND CAMPUSTOWN SERVICE CENTER ZONES
OFFICE		
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 1 space /300 sf	NONE

Planning and Zoning Commission Recommendation

The Planning and Zoning commission held a public hearing on this proposed text amendment on March 5, 2014, and voted 5-0 in support of the amendment.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. The City Council can adopt the zoning text amendment to change the required parking for other office uses to one space for every 300 square feet of gross floor area.
2. The City Council can deny the proposed text amendment.
3. The City Council can refer this issue back to staff for further information.

MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION:

This amendment, although proposed in response to one particular property, would apply to any general office use throughout the City. This would include office uses in the industrial zones, as well as in commercial zones that require parking. The proposed zoning text amendment is a reasonable change to the current parking requirements given the experience cited by the applicant in reference to development of speculative commercial buildings, and is in line with other surrounding communities' parking standards.

Parking requirement for both general office uses and retail uses would be equal, which would allow for an easier evaluation of parking needs when determining parking needs for speculative mixed retail and office buildings. It would also expand the range of use for existing buildings, as well as for newly constructed buildings.

Staff believes that the proposed amendment is a reasonable revision to the parking standards to better align parking needs for compatible uses. **Therefore, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the Council adopt Alternative #1, thereby adopting the zoning text amendment to change the required parking for other office uses to one space for every 300 square feet of gross floor area.**

It should be remembered that Council has a current goal to consider parking development requirements and their relationship to sustainability. While this text amendment will reduce parking required for one use type, it will not change the site development standards. **A comprehensive assessment of parking development and landscaping requirements for all zoning districts and use types will be part of a later analysis to address the Council goal.**

**Attachment 1
Request Letter**

Date: January 24, 2014

To: Honorable Mayor and City Council

From: Chuck Winkleblack

RE: Office parking standards in commercial zones

Mayor and Council,

I met with the planning director this past week to discuss the parking standards for buildings that are in commercial zones. Currently there is a conflict in the code when we are developing commercial buildings. We don't generally know who is going to be the tenant when we start buildings. That makes it very difficult to complete the site plan when the parking standards differ between retail and office. It is also hard for staff to analyze the site plan when we cannot guarantee who will be occupying the building.

My request is to modify the parking standards for office uses. The request is to bring the office standards in line with what the retail standards are. The minor change will simplify things for everyone involved. Currently the office standard is 4 stalls per thousand square feet of building. The retail is 3.3 stalls per thousand square feet of building.

The 3.3 request is consistent with other municipalities. We all strive to reduce impervious areas; this is another way to help accomplish that goal. We are currently seeking approval of a project at 517 Grand; we have an office user that wants to go into the property occupying half of the building. The parking standards affect what will or could be allowed to occupy the balance of the building.

Although this request affects the property mentioned above, the code change would be community wide. We believe the planning director and planning staff are supportive of the minor change in the code.

Thanks in advance for your consideration,



Chuck Winkleblack
Hunziker & Associates, Realtors

ORDINANCE NO.

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE MUNICIPAL CODE OF THE CITY OF AMES, IOWA, BY REPEALING TABLE 29.406(2) AND ENACTING A NEW TABLE 29.406(2) THEREOF, FOR THE PURPOSE OF CHANGING REQUIRED PARKING FOR OTHER OFFICE USES; 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**

PRINCIPAL LAND USE	ALL ZONES EXCEPT DOWNTOWN AND CAMPUS TOWN SERVICE CENTER ZONES	DOWNTOWN AND CAMPUS TOWN SERVICE CENTER ZONES
RESIDENTIAL DWELLINGS		
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/residential unit for an Independent Senior Living Facility	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/5 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
Short-Term Lodging Hotel/Motel, including ancillary uses	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/guest room, plus 5 spaces/1,000 sf of ballroom, meeting, bar and restaurant areas; plus 1 space/2 employees of the largest shift
Boarding houses, rooming houses, and lodging houses	1 space/bed	0.5 space/bed
OFFICE		
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	1 space / 300 sf	NONE
TRADE AND WHOLESALE		
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	1 space/300 sf	NONE
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

INSTITUTIONAL AND MISCELLANEOUS USES		
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
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
INDUSTRIAL		
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
MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT	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

Ann H. Campbell, Mayor