

COUNCIL ACTION FORM

SUBJECT: ZONING TEXT AMENDMENT TO REDUCE MEDICAL OFFICE PARKING REQUIREMENTS FOR BUILDINGS LESS THAN 50,000 SQUARE FEET AND UPDATE DEFINITIONS

BACKGROUND:

On April 26, 2022, the City Council referred a letter to staff from Mary Greeley Medical Center (MGMC) regarding a requested change in the required parking for Medical Office uses. The request focused on having the parking rate for smaller medical office facilities match the parking rate for larger medical office facilities with a requested parking rate of 5 parking spaces per 1,000 square feet of floor area. **City Council reviewed the request and at its June 14 meeting approved initiating a zoning text amendment to reduce the medical parking rate for all types to 4 parking spaces per 1,000 square feet of floor area.**

Medical Office uses currently have a base requirement to provide parking at a rate of 1 space per 143 square feet (equivalent to 7 spaces per 1,000 square feet). Facilities greater than 50,000 square feet in area or that have a shared parking agreement benefit from a reduced rate of 5 spaces per 1,000 square feet. Medical Offices include the Zoning Ordinance definition of a “Clinic” and the description of medical office in Article V, this includes uses such as dental clinics, chiropractors, medical laboratories, general practice doctors and surgery centers that do not permit overnight stays.

The medical parking rate for larger facilities at 5 spaces per 1,000 square feet is already greater than the standard office parking rates (3.3 spaces per 1,000 square feet) to account for high levels of employment and turnover of patients. The higher parking rate for smaller facilities (<50,000 sq. ft.) at 7 spaces per 1,000 square feet assumes there is high level of base demand that begins to dissipate with larger facilities.

Two outside technical resources, the Urban Land Institute (ULI) and the International Traffic Engineers (ITE), recommend minimum parking for medical uses at a rate of 4 to 4.6 per 1,000 square feet to meet typical demand, commonly targeted to the 85th percentile. City Council identified when initiating the text amendment that lowering the rate to a level of 4 spaces per 1,000 square feet is consistent with these resources.

PROPOSED TEXT AMENDMENT

The applicant applied for a parking standard of 4 spaces per 1,000 square feet, consistent with what is being recommended in the proposed Zoning Ordinance text amendment. Upon further review of the request as part of the public hearing process, staff proposed to the Planning & Zoning Commission multiple options for a text amendment to address

potentially unique conditions of the Hospital Medical area and the Downtown Gateway Commercial zone.

The proposed draft ordinance is consistent with the Planning and Zoning Commission recommendation discussed in more detail below. The city-wide parking rate in Section 29.406(2) is being updated to reflect a 4 space per 1,000 square feet rate in areas outside of Hospital/Medical (S-HM) and Downtown Gateway Commercial (DGC) zones. The proposed change is for all building sizes.

For both the S-HM and DGC zones the draft ordinance reflects a 5 space per 1,000 square foot standard. The proposed change is for all building sizes. Staff believes that maintaining a 5 space per 1,000 square foot standard in the S-HM accounts for providing adequate parking in an area with a large concentration of medical uses to avoid spillover parking into abutting residential areas. The 5 spaces per 1,000 square feet is consistent with the historically applied parking standard for the area.

Additionally, the DGC general zone standards in Section 29.1004(4)-1&2 has its own parking standards developed that due to its intention of supporting a unique urban character. The current DGC standard is 6 spaces per 1,000 square feet of medical offices. However, DGC includes a number of strategies to reduce overall parking for major redevelopment project that can lower the actual requirement. The DGC standard was still lower than the current 7 spaces per 1,000 square foot standard in other areas of the city. The proposed reduction follows Council's intent while staying consistent with the overall parking standards of DGC.

As part of the proposed text amendment the definitions of 'Clinic' in Section 29.201 and terminology of 'Medical and Dental Clinics' in Section of Chapter 29.501(4)-2 were reviewed and are being updated to better reflect the uses that are subject to what has been historically applied to Medical office type uses.

The new definition eliminates 'Clinic' as a defined use and replaces it with 'Medical Service Facility' which then lists uses in the new definition that are considered part of a Medical Service Facility which include those that staff would view as being a clinic currently. Similarly, in 29.501(4)-2 the term 'Medical and Dental Clinics' is being changed to 'Medical and Dental Services' under the Office Use category to appropriately reflect this type of office use. This definition included a wide range of medical services ranging from doctors to physical therapy. Although Emergency Medical Services (e.g. Urgent Care) is listed as personal service use and not an office use, it would also be subject to the Medical Services parking standard.

A draft of the text amendment is attached to this report below.

PLANNING & ZONING RECOMMENDATION

At the July 6 Planning & Zoning Commission meeting, the Commission reviewed the proposed text amendment. Staff presented the Planning & Zoning Commission with three

options for a proposed amendment to lower the overall medical parking standard. A representative of Mary Greeley was also present at the meeting and supported the options described in the report. After some discussion regarding the current conditions at many of the facilities across the community the Planning & Zoning Commission voted 6-1 to recommend the following:

- (A) That the City Council approve reducing the medical office parking rate in areas outside the Hospital Medical Area and Downtown Gateway Commercial zones to 4 per 1,000 square feet.
- (B) That the parking rate within Hospital Medical and Downtown Gateway Commercial zones would have a 5 per 1,000 square feet parking rate.
- (C) That related definitions be updated.

NOTIFICATION PROCESS:

In addition to standard publication requirements, staff reached out to the City Manager's Hospital Medical Advisory group to inform the members that this issue would be up for discussion. Staff also advised the standard developer interest group email list of the proposed change. Staff only received one comment from a member of the Hospital Medical Group, which stated the changes sounded reasonable and supported having new facilities built outside of the neighborhood.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Approve first reading of an ordinance to implement the Planning and Zoning Commission Recommendation to:
 - a. Reduce medical parking to 4 spaces per 1,000 square feet for areas outside of the Hospital Medical Area and Downtown Gateway Commercial district.

Currently, the requirement is 7 spaces per 1,000 for buildings under 50,000 square feet in size and 5 spaces per 1,000 square feet for buildings over 50,000 square, which will not change with this alternative.
 - b. Establish a parking rate of 5 spaces per 1,000 square feet for areas inside the Hospital Medical Area and Downtown Gateway Commercial district.

Currently, the requirement is 7 spaces per 1,000 square feet for buildings in the Hospital Medical Area under 50,000 square feet & 6 spaces per 1,000 square feet for buildings under 50,000 square feet in the Downtown Gateway Commercial district as well as 5 spaces per 1,000 square feet for buildings over 50,000 square feet in both Hospital Medical Area and Downtown Gateway Commercial district.

- c. Revise the definitions to replace the term “clinic” with “Medical Service Facility.”
2. Approve first reading of an ordinance to reduce all medical service parking to 4 spaces per 1,000 square feet as organically requested by MGMC, and revise the definitions to replace the term ‘clinic’ with ‘Medical Service Facility’.
3. Do not modify the Medical Parking rate

CITY MANAGER’S RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Staff finds that the 7 spaces per 1,000 square feet requirement exceeds typical parking demands. Construction of excess parking is an inefficient development standard for utilization of a site and adds potentially unnecessary impervious coverage to a site. Staff’s research and observations support lowering the standard.

Staff believes that across the City a lower standard of 4 spaces per 1,000 square feet is reasonable standard for areas with a low concentration of medical uses outside of the Hospital Medical Area. However, staff believes having a consistent standard of 5 spaces per 1,000 square feet is appropriate for the S-HM and DGC zones. This aligns with the recommendation from the Planning and Zoning Commission in its discussion of the topic on July 6.

Therefore, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council adopt Alternative #1 a-c, as stated above.

ORDINANCE NO. _____

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE MUNICIPAL CODE OF THE CITY OF AMES, IOWA, BY AMENDING SECTION 29.201, 29.406(2), 29.501(4)-2, 29.1000(4)-1 and 29.1000(4)-2 THEREOF, FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROVIDING A DEFINITION OF MEDICAL SERVICE FACILITY, AND REDUCING MEDICAL PARKING RATIOS, 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 amending Sections 29.201, 29.406(2), 29.501(4)-2, 29.1000(4)-1 and 29.1000(4)-2, as follows:

***** “Sec. 29.201. DEFINITIONS.**

(35) **Medical Service Facility—Offices, clinics, and laboratories.** Facilities primarily engaged in furnishing outpatient medical, mental health, surgical and other personal health services. Such facilities include: medical, dental, and psychiatric offices (counseling services by other than medical doctors or psychiatrists are included under "offices"); medical and dental laboratories; outpatient care facilities; and allied health services.

*****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

OFFICE		
Medical/Dental Services	4 spaces/1000 sq. ft. Special-Hospital Medical (S-HM) Downtown Gateway Commercial (DGC) 5 spaces/1000 sq. ft.	NONE

Sec. 29.501. CLASSIFICATION OF USES.

**Table 29.501(4)-2
OFFICE USE CATEGORIES**

*** Medical and dental services, laboratories and offices. ***
--

Sec. 29.1004. "DGC" DOWNTOWN GATEWAY COMMERCIAL

**Table 29.1004(4)-1
Downtown Gateway Commercial Parking Standards General**

Medical and Dental Services	5 spaces/1000 sq.ft.

**Table 29.1004(4)-2
Downtown Gateway Commercial Parking Standards Kellogg Avenue**

Medical and Dental Services	None required for less than 3,000 square feet, 5 spaces /1000 sq. ft. for total square feet of use if exceeds 3,000 square feet within a building

***'

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

John A. Haila, Mayor