



**DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SERVICES**

*Planning Division*

**m e m o r a n d u m**

**TO:** Urbana Plan Commission

**FROM:** Jeff Engstrom, AICP, Planner II

**DATE:** November 4, 2011

**SUBJECT:** Plan Case 2162-T-11: An amendment to Section VIII-5.K of the Urbana Zoning Ordinance to revise parking requirements in the CCD, Campus Commercial District.

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**Introduction and Background**

The Zoning Administrator is requesting an amendment to Section VIII-5.K of the Zoning Ordinance in order to revise the minimum number of parking spaces for multi-family residential uses in the CCD, Campus Commercial Zoning District. Specifically, the Zoning Administrator is proposing to reduce the parking requirement from 0.75 spaces per bedroom to 0.5 spaces per bedroom. This change would bring residential parking requirements in the CCD in line with other residential zoning districts.

The CCD zoning district was created to promote urban-style development in the area just east of the University of Illinois. In November 2001 the University of Illinois issued a Request for Proposals to develop the property they own on Gregory Place. Concurrent with the University review of development proposals, City staff proposed a text amendment to create a new zoning district called the CCD, Campus Commercial District. The new district was intended to allow for the establishment of new commercial and mixed-use developments in this area of campus where many commercial developments had been lost in previous years. The Urbana City Council adopted the new district in 2002. Currently two sites are zoned CCD: Gregory Place and Gregory Place II mixed-use developments.

A third site is under consideration for rezoning to CCD. This property is directly west of Gregory Place, and is currently under consideration for a rezoning to CCD (plan case 2153-M-11), a special use permit to allow a mixed-use development known as Krannert View (2153-SU-11), and a variance to reduce the required amount of parking from 107 to 71 spaces (ZBA case 2011-MAJ-03). The rezoning and special use were forwarded to the November 7, 2011 City Council meeting by a six-to-one vote at the October 20, 2011 Plan Commission meeting. Along with the proposed rezoning to CCD, a variance is being sought to reduce the required amount of parking. The Zoning

Board of Appeals considered the case on October 19, 2011, and continued the case to their next meeting. During review of the proposed CCD site, the Urbana Plan Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals both suggested that staff review whether the higher parking requirements of the CCD should be reduced to match the requirement in other residential zoning districts. The proposed text amendment is an alternative to the variance and would avert future variance requests in the CCD district.

## **Comprehensive Plan**

The Campus Commercial District is tied to the “Campus Mixed-Use” future land use in the Comprehensive Plan. Future Land Use Map #8 designates the area where “Campus Mixed-Use” should be located, and is further annotated with “Encourage more East Campus Commercial Center [Gregory Place I] style of development.” The Comprehensive Plan defines Campus Mixed-Use as follows:

“The Campus Mixed-Use classification is intended for limited areas that are close to campus. These areas promote urban-style private development with a mix of uses that commonly include commercial, office and residential. Design Guidelines shall ensure that developments contain a strong urban design that emphasizes a pedestrian scale with buildings close to the street, wide sidewalks, and parking under and behind structures. The design and density of development should capitalize on existing and future transit routes in the area. Large-scale developments containing only single uses are discouraged within this classification.”

Additionally, the following goals and objectives relate to this case:

### **Goal 5.0 Ensure that land use patterns conserve energy.**

#### *Objectives*

5.1.1. *Encourage development patterns that help reduce dependence on automobiles and promote different modes of transportation.*

### **Goal 18.0 Promote infill development.**

### **Goal 49.0 Avoid development patterns that can potentially create an over-dependency on the automobile.**

#### *Objectives*

49.2 *Increase land use densities to promote availability of transit service and walkability.*

## **Discussion**

For commercial uses, parking requirements in the CCD zoning district are lower than they are for

other areas of the City, except for the B-4, Central Business District, which has no required parking. This parking requirement reflects the concentrated, urban nature of this area and its close proximity to the University of Illinois. Most of the residential properties in this area are leased by students who primarily walk to campus, and students in the nearby residence halls and sororities generally do not bring cars to campus. The CCD parking requirements are one half of the standard amount for most commercial uses and one fourth of the standard amount for restaurants and cafés. No change is recommended for commercial parking requirements in the CCD zoning district.

However, for residential uses, parking requirements in the CCD zoning district are significantly higher than for the rest of the City. The CCD District requires 0.75 parking spaces per bedroom for apartments (with a minimum of one space per unit). This requirement is 50% higher than any other residential district, which generally require only 0.5 parking spaces per bedroom (and a minimum one space per unit). Given the walkable, transit-oriented nature of the district and its close proximity to campus, requiring a parking level of 0.75 spaces per bedroom seems unnecessary and contrary to the City's goal of creating walkable, less automobile-oriented neighborhoods.

For the two existing developments in the CCD zoning district, the parking requirement has been met by an agreement between that developer and the University to lease off-site parking. For example, the Gregory Place development required 165 parking spaces, but only 59 are provided on site. The remainder are provided in a nearby lot owned by the University of Illinois. Providing all of the required parking on site in the CCD district is extremely difficult to achieve while meeting the design standards and densities called for by the Comprehensive Plan. The proposed amendment would help alleviate this inconsistency, and would allow for a level playing field in the planned Campus Mixe-Use area by allowing properties to be developed without seeking parking agreements with the University.

Increased parking requirements relative to other mixed-use and multifamily residential zones are not justified for the CCD zoning district. The CCD is only found in close proximity to the University of Illinois, in an area where multiple modes of transportation are available. The City and the University have installed a network of on-street bicycle lanes and off-street bicycle paths, and the Champaign-Urbana Mass Transit District has four routes in the immediate area, and several more routes within walking distance. There is also a Zipcar car-sharing station within a few blocks of the area. The proposed amendment would cause no more overflow parking than what is seen in other districts, and there is no off-site parking or overnight street parking available in the area.

Reducing the residential parking requirement in CCD to what is required for other residential districts would not result in a burden for residents. In recent years, students have been bringing fewer cars to college (see Exhibit A). The owner of the apartments currently located on the proposed Krannert View site has estimated that only 85% of his parking spaces are leased, and some are leased to non-residents.

### **Text Changes**

The proposed changes are listed below, using a strikethrough and underline notation system. A strikethrough is used to indicate ~~deleted language~~, while an underline is used to indicate added language.

## **Section VIII-5. Amount of Parking Required**

- K. *CCD, Campus Commercial District Parking Requirements.* Parking requirements shall be calculated for individual uses permitted in the CCD, Campus Commercial District, as specified in Table V-1. Each use shall provide parking at a rate of one-half of the requirement for said use outlined in Table VIII-7, with the following exceptions:
1. *Restaurants, Cafés, and Coffee Shops.* 1 space per 400 square feet of floor area, including outdoor seating areas.
  2. *Multiple Family Dwellings.* ~~0.75~~ 0.5 spaces per bedroom; no less than 1 space per dwelling unit.
  3. *Technical Training and Test Preparation.* 1 space per 600 square feet of floor area.

The proposed text amendment would match the parking requirements for multiple family dwellings in the CCD zoning district with that for other residential zoning districts. Table VIII-7 of the Zoning Ordinance lists parking requirements by type of use. For multiple family dwellings, the parking requirement is 0.5 spaces per bedroom, with no less than one space required per unit.

## **Summary of Staff Findings**

1. The proposed amendment will modify Section VIII-5.K of the Urbana Zoning Ordinance to reduce the minimum parking space requirements for residential uses in the CCD zoning district from 0.75 spaces per bedroom to 0.5 spaces per bedroom.
2. The proposed amendment will revise parking requirements in the CCD district to match that required in other residential districts.
3. The proposed amendment will help to facilitate infill development in the area near the University of Illinois campus.
4. The proposed amendment will promote development in an area that is highly walkable and has multi-modal transit access.
5. The proposed amendment would eliminate the need for the pending variance request for the proposed Krannert View development (ZBA-2011-MAJ-03).
6. The proposed amendment would not negatively affect properties in the CCD district because there is no off-site parking or overnight street parking available in the area.

7. The proposed amendment is consistent with the goals and objectives of the 2005 Urbana Comprehensive Plan to promote infill and increase densities to promote walkability and transit.
8. The proposed amendment conforms to notification and other requirements for the Zoning Ordinances as required by the State Zoning Act (65 ILCS 5/11-13-14).

## **Options**

The Plan Commission has the following options for recommendation to the Urbana City Council regarding Plan Case 2162-T-11:

- a. forward this case to City Council with a recommendation for approval as presented herein;
- b. forward this case to City Council with a recommendation for approval as modified by specific suggested changes; or
- c. forward this case to City Council with a recommendation for denial.

## **Staff Recommendation**

Based on the evidence presented in the discussion above, and without the benefit of considering additional evidence that may be presented at the public hearing, staff recommends that the Plan Commission recommend **APPROVAL** of the proposed text amendment to the Zoning Ordinance as presented herein.

Attachments:

Exhibit A: "Students Bringing Fewer Cars to U of I", September 9, 2011 News-Gazette

News-Gazette.com

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## Students bringing fewer cars to UI

Fri, 09/09/2011 - 8:00am | [Tom Kacich](#) <sup>[1]</sup>

URBANA — Local transportation planners believe there has been a significant reduction in the number of vehicles students are bringing to the University of Illinois campus, leading to more bicycle and bus use.

The number of student parking permits sold by the UI has plunged nearly in half in the last four years; sales of city of Champaign on-street parking permits in the university district have dropped, and ridership on Champaign-Urbana Mass Transit District buses has soared to record levels.

"We've been trying really hard to make this happen," said Morgan Johnston, the UI's campus transportation coordinator. "This is the result of a lot of things, including policy changes, facility changes and of course there's also the change in the national economy.

"I think the younger generation is much more in tune with the benefits of walking and riding a bike and taking transit and using Zipcars."

So far this year, the UI has sold 2,000 student parking permits, compared with 2,800 in fiscal year 2011 and 3,200 in fiscal year 2009.

Furthermore, the city of Champaign has sold 642 on-street parking permits this year, down from 743 permits at this point last year.

"The Campus Area Transportation Area Study goal was to reduce the number of vehicles in the core of the campus area and to improve pedestrian safety, and it looks like we're doing that," said Stacy Rachel, administrative services supervisor in Champaign's public works department.

As recently as four years ago Champaign was able to lease 94 percent of its parking spaces in the university district. At the current level the city has leased only 54 percent of the 1,200 available spaces there.

Both the UI and the city of Champaign have increased their campus area parking rates in recent years. Champaign now charges between \$540 and \$495 per space per academic year. Rates are highest along the Green Street corridor.

The UI now charges \$540 for a nine-month contract (\$600 for 12 months), which is up from \$480 and \$540 last year. In fiscal year 2009 the rates were \$420 and \$480.



<sup>[2]</sup>

**Photo by: Heather Coit/The News-Gazette**

Pedestrians and bicyclists near the corner of Sixth Street and Armory Avenue in Champaign.

Students also can purchase parking spaces in remote shuttle lots for \$127 an academic year.

At the same time the number of leased parking spaces has decreased by almost 900 in a year, the C-U MTD has seen a significant spike in bus ridership. It has established monthly ridership records for the last four months, including about 780,000 rides last month, a 9 percent increase over August 2010.

And the use of Zipcars, a car-sharing program most prevalent on campus, has increased, according to Tom Costello, assistant managing director of the MTD. There are now 1,100 Zipcar members in Champaign-Urbana, using 11 different vehicles scattered about the community.

"Even a year and a half ago we only had about 600 members," Costello said.

Johnston said the university actively promotes transportation alternatives in student orientation materials, campus tours and by other means.

"I think we're looking to become known as a bike-friendly community, and that's impacting decisions of freshmen who are looking for a place where they can ride their bikes. They know that we are doing everything we can to make it convenient and helpful for them," she said.

Later this month the UI hopes to unveil a new network of bike paths and bike lanes on campus, and is working to install more bike racks.

"People in different departments who are responsible for individual buildings and facilities have been reaching out to me a whole lot more this year for more bike parking," Johnston said. "It's a bit of an issue because we have extremely minimal funding for it."

The change in transportation use has its drawbacks. It means less parking income, acknowledged Rachel.

"From a revenue standpoint it is challenging, but safety is our concern," she said.

For Johnston it means an entirely new safety concern.

"It's really getting into a different type of conversation about safety on campus," she said. "It's no longer about, how do we keep these cars from speeding through and hitting somebody? Now it's about complaints and concerns about interactions between pedestrians and bicycles: How do we all work together and make sure that conflicts are minimized?"

Whether the transportation changes on campus lead to fewer accidents will be determined with a two-year study set to begin later this fall, according to Rita Black, planning and community development director at the Champaign County Regional Planning Commission. Another RPC study, already under way, is looking at traffic counts on campus and throughout the county.

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