

## STAFF REPORT FOR DISCUSSION

To: Downtown Commission  
Date: April 21, 2017  
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Subject: Use of gravel lots for parking in the Central Business District

### Overview

In response to property owner requests and at the direction of City management, recommendations are being considered to allow vehicular parking on lots with gravel surfaces on a temporary basis in the central business district (otherwise prohibited).

This issue was discussed with the Downtown Commission's Parking and Transportation Sub-Committee meeting on April 4<sup>th</sup>, 2017 and with the Design Review Committee on April 18, 2017.

Feedback from both committees yielded the following themes:

- Acknowledgement of the need for parking downtown, and specifically for monthly/employee parking
- Concern about encouragement of long term (permanent) use of gravel lots for parking, and incentivizing surface parking lots downtown generally (as opposed to higher investment development)
- Concerns about aesthetic, economic, access and environmental impacts of site conditions, specifically in the Central Business District, of gravel lots used for parking
- General consensus that a higher standard should be maintained for the Central Business District and that if gravel lots are permissible for parking, some site improvements should be required

### Options for Consideration

- 1) **Amendment to UDO section 7-14-2(e)(2) Interim parking and construction staging.**  
The detailed standards for this use is found in 7-16-1(41) and would be consolidated back to Article 14 for ease of administration.

#### **Existing Code Requirement**

Vacant parcels may be used on an interim basis for temporary uses such as, but not limited to: construction staging or parking needs related to construction, or temporary uses on a property that has been approved for development but delayed in starting construction.

Permitted uses may include uses such as parking for construction staff, construction staging and equipment storage areas, and employee or business parking where existing parking is displaced due to construction activity, or other uses authorized on a temporary basis by the planning and development director.

Site improvements related to landscaping and paving shall not be required as the lot is being used on an interim basis.

All other local, state and federal regulations shall be complied with including driveway, grading, stormwater, handicap accessibility and sign regulations.

The city engineer will determine if sidewalks will be required during the term of the interim use.

The zoning permit for any such interim use will be valid for a period of two years but may be extended for additional two-year periods in conjunction with a valid, open building permit on the lot or the location of construction.

### **Amendment considerations**

- Add general parking as a permitted use (not necessarily tied to an open building permit) authorized on a temporary basis
- Change interim period to two years with possible extension of one year periods (as opposed to two)
- Require a paved apron at the entrance and gravel restraint around the graveled areas to control spillage of stone and gravel.
- Introduce a maximum allowable area of .25 acres for the lots used for interim general parking
- Curb cut width will be managed and approved through the application process
- Site landscaping and street trees would continue to be waived during the approved interim period

**Pros:** May lead to additional employee/monthly spaces; makes use of existing vacant sites; creates tool for nonconforming/non-compliant sites to come into compliance.

**Cons:** Allows for wider use of gravel lots in the Central Business District; may not meet high aesthetic, economic, access and environmental standards; does not allow for the prioritization of employee/monthly parking and would be open to all parking.

## **2) Amendment to UDO section 7-11-2(b)(5) parking, loading and access standards**

### **Existing Code Requirement**

#### *Parking Surface Treatment*

The material for surface parking spaces and corresponding access drives required by this section shall consist of suitable paving material which will prevent the exposure of subsoil. Suitable paving material for required parking areas includes, but is not limited to asphalt, porous asphalt, concrete, compacted stone (road bond), gravel and aggregates such as bituminous surface treatment (BST) and "chip and seal".

Porous paving blocks and pervious paving materials are permitted and encouraged as material for parking lots. The use of grass as a parking lot surface is permitted for overflow and intermittent parking. Pervious paving systems are required for parking spaces which exceed the maximum number of spaces required by subsection 7-11-2(c). The use of grass or other vegetation as a parking surface is permitted only for parking spaces which are provided in excess of the maximum number of parking spaces required by

subsection 7-11-2(c) or used for intermittent or overflow parking. Parking lots associated with arenas, sporting facilities, amphitheaters, fairgrounds, and religious institutions may, however, use grass or other vegetation for the entire parking lot.

Additional requirements are as follows:

- a. Parking lots utilizing road bond, gravel or vegetative surfacing are prohibited within the Central Business District.
- b. Parking lots utilizing road bond or gravel shall provide such material with a minimum thickness of at least four inches and must be maintained in a stable condition.
- c. Parking lots utilizing road bond or gravel shall be designed and constructed such that siltation resulting from stormwater run-off does not enter adjacent properties or public rights-of-way. The lots must be designed so as to prevent loose stone, aggregate or other materials from leaving the lot.
- d. All driveway aprons, which are defined as that portion of the parking lot entrance which abuts the street, shall consist of concrete, asphalt, or bituminous surface treatment for a length of at least ten lineal feet starting at the street and extending into the driveway. Subsection 7-11-2(g) sets forth specific driveway entrance requirements.
- e. The individual parking spaces shall be delineated in all parking lots, except lots utilizing road bond, gravel grass or other vegetative surfacing.
- f. All handicapped parking spaces and corresponding access paths to the building entrance shall consist of concrete, asphalt or bituminous surface treatment.
- g. All driveways with an average grade exceeding five percent shall consist of concrete, asphalt or bituminous surface treatment.
- h. Parking spaces serving one, two, three and four family dwellings are exempt from the requirements of this subsection.
- i. All driveways and parking lots shall be of sufficient strength and thickness to safely support fire emergency vehicles.

#### Amendment considerations

- b) Remove prohibition of parking lots utilizing road bond, gravel or vegetative surfaces in the Central Business District under (a) above.
- c) Since the allowance for gravel lots already applies city-wide, maintain compliance with other standards for landscaping, stormwater, driveway apron, etc.

**Pros:** creates a tool and standards for nonconforming/non-compliant sites to come into compliance without standard paving materials while still meeting other standards such as stormwater, sidewalk and landscaping; may lead to additional parking spaces downtown

**Cons:** may de-incentivize development or higher/better use of property; additional standards are costly; may not meet some measures of aesthetic and economic standards.