

URMX Zone – Drive-up Service

File #: PLN 2010-00013

Applicant: Councilmember Crawford

Description: Amend URMX zone to remove “without drive-up service”.

WHATCOM COUNTY
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

SUGGESTED ZONING AMENDMENT APPLICATION FORM

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Date Received: _____

File #: _____

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PLU 201900013
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Whatcom County P&D

A. GENERAL INFORMATION

1. NAME: _____ Sam Crawford, Whatcom County Councilmember

SIGNATURE: _____

MAILING ADDRESS: _____ 310 Grand Avenue
Bellingham, WA 98226

BUSINESS PHONE: _____ 676-6690 HOME PHONE: _____ 671-7262

2. AGENT'S NAME: _____

MAILING ADDRESS: _____

BUSINESS PHONE: _____

3. Please give a complete but short description of the suggested amendment:

Remove the words "without drive-up service" in the Whatcom County Code 20.24.161 (1) (a) as follows:

(1) Uses.

(a) Commercial uses with a neighborhood or specialty nature including, but not limited to, barber and beauty shops, bakeries, drugstores; provided, that food markets may have no more than two gasoline pump islands, hardware stores, restaurants and coffee shops (**without drive-up service**), stationery stores, laundromats, video rental, bookstores, frame shops and other small convenience retail, rental, or repair shops.

Similarly, consider amending WCC 20.64.053 and .055 to allow "drive-through service", and expanding allowable square footage to 5000 square feet.

B. PURPOSE/APPLICABILITY

1. What is the purpose of the suggested amendment?

To allow drive-up, drive-through and pick-up windows for businesses, particularly coffee shops, in the Urban Residential Mixed Use District and the Resort Commercial Dist.

A commercial operator needs assurance of some market-capture of area traffic. Commercial zoning that can only serve those within walking distance in an area that is not already highly densely developed is not a practical approach.

Drive-up windows are enough to 'tip the scale' in favor of market-capture, without creating burdensome impacts to the surrounding neighborhood.

2. Describe any "changed" condition(s) which support the suggested amendment:

Locations where small neighborhood commercial nodes would otherwise be constructed to the benefit of the neighborhood have not developed, because business operators do not see a financial model that will work without the drive-up aspect. These areas are different than downtown and Meridian St. businesses which have a commercial and residential density to support non-drive-up businesses, particularly coffee shops.

Research, a neighborhood survey, and neighborhood communications have been done indicating overwhelming neighborhood support for this concept.

Community input from Birch Bay, Point Roberts and Glacier should also be solicited regarding applicability in the Resort Commercial zone areas.

3. If the suggested amendment is the result of a state or federal mandate or requirement please give a short description of the requirement or mandate and include the citation or number of the RCW, WAC, Bill, etc.

Much legislation encouraging greenhouse gas reduction has been passed or is being considered. As the intended use of these neighborhood commercial nodes will reduce vehicle trips, and length and duration of vehicle trips, this will further reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

In the case of resort commercial, economic development considerations should be given to encourage business development.

4. Are there any other circumstances that justify the proposed change?

On April 27, 2006, County staff recommended this change to the Planning Commission, but the Planning Commission overturned that recommendation. Since then, the intended and zoned build-out of the Sunset/Trickle Creek commercial node has been unable to be constructed due to this restriction.

In the case of Resort Commercial zones, community input has not recently been solicited on this topic, but should be pursued regarding the character of physical development as well as the encouragement of economic development in these areas.

C. RELATIONSHIP TO PUBLIC HEALTH, SAFETY, AND WELFARE

1. What general benefit will the public receive as a result of the suggested amendment?

Area-wide traffic reduction, services available to immediate and adjoining neighborhoods, and economic development are all means by which planning goals are accomplished. The URMX zones have not developed as intended, and do not currently serve the neighborhoods in which they are located. In the Resort Commercial zone of Birch Bay, older businesses remain abandoned because of inflexibility of regulations regarding size and drive-up prohibitions.

The innovative mix of commercial and residential activity intended in these areas has not occurred to date, and this 'barrier' to development must be removed.

2. Is the suggested amendment the result of a situation that poses an imminent threat to public health, safety, or welfare?

The public welfare is not well-served when regulations exist that do not accomplish their intended purpose, while inhibiting the development of neighborhoods they are intended to create.

If you have any questions regarding the zoning amendment process please feel free to contact the Whatcom County Planning and Development Services Department at (360) 676-6907.

D. Authorization

Signature of Applicant(s) or Agent(s)

I (we) certify that the information supplied in this application is true, accurate, and correct to the best of my (our) knowledge:

Date: _____

Date: _____

Date: _____