Subject: First Reading of an Ordinance Amendment Regarding Off-Street Loading and Unloading Regulations

Meeting Date: Monday, March 28, 2022

Submitted/Presented by/Department: Melissa Houtsma - Community Development

Action Type
☐ Consent Item
☐ Public Hearing
☒ Action/Motion
☒ Ordinance/Resolution
☐ Discussion/Direction
☐ Informational Only
☐ Report
☐ Other:

Action
City Staff requests that the City Council review and approve the first reading of the proposed ordinance amendment.

Background
Presently the zoning ordinance reads, “Loading berths shall not occupy the front yard or a side yard adjacent to a street”. However, after some review and discussions with an industrial property owner, City Staff has elected to revisit this language and recommends an amendment that would allow more flexibility for some industrial properties while still maintaining the intent of the code.

The attached ordinance alters the code in order to allow loading berths/docks to be in the front yard in industrial districts, as long as said yard does not sit adjacent to a property of a different zoning district (such as commercial or residential). City Staff believes the intent of the current language was to lessen the visibility of loading docks from the street and/or adjacent properties. However, loading docks and larger scale vehicles are much more common in industrial areas and therefore, City Staff does not believe allowing the loading docks in the front yard (not abutting a different zoning district) to be detrimental to the views of the adjacent properties.

Planning Commission Review
The Planning Commission met in regular session on March 15th, 2022 to review the proposed site plan and held a public hearing on the item. No one from the public wished to speak on the item.

The Commission discussed the following items:

- Required setbacks and screening between industrial uses when adjacent to other uses to ensure sufficient separation between two different uses.
  - Staff confirmed that there is a higher threshold for lot sizes, screening, and setbacks when an industrial lot is adjacent to a residential use. Similarly,
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Loading docks must be setback a minimum of 25 feet from the intersection of two street rights-of-way.

- Commonality of loading docks that are currently in the front and/or side yard adjacent to a street.
  - Staff confirmed that there are currently multiple properties that have a loading dock in locations that would not be allowed by the current code, however most of them would be allowed with the proposed amendment.

Ultimately, the Commission voted 8-0 to recommend approval of the amendment as presented by City Staff.

Attachments
Planning Commission Memo
Staff Presentation
Draft Ordinance

Previous Relevant Actions
The proposed amendment was reviewed by the Planning Commission on 03/15/2022.

Alternatives
If City Council is not satisfied with the proposed ordinance amendment, please advise City Staff or the desired changes and recommendations.

Financial
Budgeted: ☐ Yes ☒ No Financial Impact
Fund: N/A
Department: N/A
Account: N/A
Amount: N/A