

COLUMBIA BOARD OF REALTORS®

October 25, 2022

Mayor & Members of the City Council
City of Columbia Missouri
P.O. Box 6015
Columbia, MO 65202-6015

VIA: EMAIL

Re: Revisions to UDC Code – Drive Up Facilities

Dear Mayor & Members of the City Council:

The Columbia Board of REALTORS® would like to express concern with the proposed Amendments to Unified Development Code (UDC) Section 29-3.3 (jj)(2) as it relates to Drive-Up Facilities. Changes to the UDC, such as those outlined below, can have potential unintended consequences for many existing locally-owned businesses. We offer the following comments for your consideration:

Section 29-3.3 (jj)(2)(iii) states that no menu boards or other signs shall be visible from an R-1 or R-2 zoning district. This would mean that no menu boards could be visible from, for example, Hickman High School, Stephens Lake Park, or many other R-1 or R-2 zoned properties that are not used for one- and two-family dwellings. A regular planning comment is the desire to provide more services within or adjacent to neighborhoods to allow for walkability. This dictates the mix of commercial and residential uses, commercial uses that many times might have ancillary drive-up facilities. We recommend changing the threshold from 'visible' to having limitations of a certain distance. We also recommend that any restriction be only for menu boards or backlit signs (*not all signs*) as there are a number of drive-up situations that are very appropriate adjacent to residential properties that do not need menu boards but may require other signage.

Section 29-3.3 (jj)(2)(viii) requires a traffic impact analysis for practically every situation where a drive-up facility might be considered. Traffic Impact Analyses are comprehensive and expensive. Current practice is that during the preliminary project scoping meeting, the City Traffic Engineer will outline the level of Traffic Study or Full Traffic Impact Analysis that is required on a site-specific basis. We recommend not codifying a requirement for a Traffic Impact Analysis that many times are not required.

Section 29-3.3 (jj)(2)(vii)(A) is a change that permits a drive-up facility service windows on a building's street-facing façade. We support that a drive-up facility service window can be placed on a street-facing façade. We find, however, the restrictions that include the construction of a Porte-cochere structure to fully screen the service windows from ground to roof and additional landscape buffering to be overly restrictive as described herein:

- a. The construction of a fully screened area from ground to roof provides multiple 'hiding' areas and can be a security concern for business owners, users of the drive-up, and police officers.

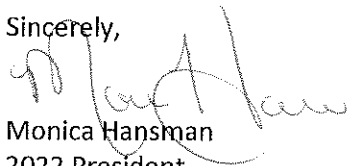
- b. A fully screened Porte-cochere creates a tunnel effect and can be quite discomforting for many users. The full screening creates additional blind spots and safety concerns as drivers cannot see pedestrians or service personnel that may be walking across parking lots that are obscured by the structure.
- c. Requiring a Porte-cochere creates more impermeable surface on the site. The construction requires two feet minimum horizontal thickness for the supporting structure and curbs required to protect the structure. An additional two feet needs to be allowed for 'shy distance' on the inside and outside of the structure to accommodate drivers' concerns for hitting the structure. This adds 6' plus of additional pavement width to drive lanes, times the length of the Porte-cochere and transition pavement.
- d. A Porte-cochere can be costly - \$25,000 – 50,000 and more depending on the complexity of the structure. These additional construction (*and long-term maintenance*) costs are ultimately passed on to the consumers through higher prices for services.
- e. The requirement for additional landscaping area adjacent to the street right-of-way should be removed. Creating visual screens from an automobile-centric use (*roadway*) to an automobile-centric use (*drive-up*) should not be necessary. If required, this landscaping area should be counted as part of the general landscaping requirements and NOT be in addition to.

This ordinance amendment is important. The City has been able to navigate most occurrences of problems with the existing ordinance since the UDC was adopted because they occurred in Planned Developments. There has been a positive move with the UDC to not have as many PD Zoned developments which will lead to more occurrences where the City does not have the required flexibility to address these issues.

There are a number of examples of drive-up service windows in our community that are on the street-facing façades that are highly functional and serve our citizens well. Many of these are retrofits to existing structures that cannot accommodate the construction of an elaborate and costly Porte-cochere or have sufficient room for the required landscape area. Some are newer construction and include architectural elements that provide a pleasing look to the structure. We encourage you to have a heightened awareness of the various drive-up service windows that you use or encounter in our community and consider whether this ordinance would allow those uses. Think about how this ordinance will impact uses such as cleaners, pharmacies, banks, and other locally owned businesses in addition to the higher volume of fast food and related uses.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Monica Hansman
2022 President
Columbia Board of REALTORS®