

## MEMO

**DATE:** October 13, 2021

**TO:** Planning Commission Members

**FROM:** Clint Smith, Senior Planner

**RE:** Maximum Parking Provisions

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On September 14, 2021, staff processed a variance request to the Board of Adjustment to allow parking to exceed 200% of the minimum required parking on property addressed as 894 Vandiver Drive, which is not permitted per the standards of Section 29-4.3(e)(3) of the Unified Development Code. The requested variance was for a proposed Dobbs Tire and Auto Center. The proposed building is west of the newly constructed Starbucks and would consist of a 9,747 square-foot building that includes a sales area as well as service bays for servicing automobiles. The applicant sought a variance to permit a total of 70 parking spaces. This request was denied by the Board.

Parking in the City is regulated by Section 29-4.3 of the UDC, and more particularly, Table 4.3-1 of the UDC which establishes the minimum amount of parking for each permitted use listed within the code, typically expressed as a ratio and based on the gross floor area of a building. The minimum parking ratio for the permitted use of "Light Vehicle Service and Repair" is 1 parking space/ 500 square feet of gross floor area (gfa). Per Section 29-4.3(e)(3), the maximum amount of off-street parking allowed on a site is 200% of the minimum. The use and building size would require the site to provide a **minimum** of 20 spaces (9,747/ 500), and would then be limited to a **maximum** of 40 spaces, which is 200% of the minimum.

The site plan submitted with the variance request (Exhibit E6) included 70 marked parking spaces, which is 350% of the minimum amount required. Put another way, the amount of parking requested (70 spaces) is 75% more than that allowed at 200% of the minimum (40 spaces). The applicant provided evidence to the Board regarding their experiences with parking in their other locations around the St. Louis metropolitan area that states that they have encountered parking deficiencies at these locations. Exhibit E of the application submission includes an analysis of other Dobbs Tire and Auto Centers, including the location, number of bays, and parking spaces. Exhibit E also includes aerial photos of existing conditions at several of their store locations demonstrating the parking conditions.

Since the decision was rendered by the Board, staff has been asked to reevaluate the maximum parking provision at it relates to the use "Light Vehicle and Service and Repair" to determine if the parking formula needs to be adjusted based on factors such as current business trends. The maximum parking limit was included in the UDC in order to put a finite cap on the amount of parking constructed on a site. There is clear evidence that when left unregulated, parking can often exceed what is reasonably needed on a site. Parking is expensive to construct, which can make goods more

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expensive, and it can take up physical space on a site, which can contribute to sprawl and inefficient use of infrastructure when compared to more compact development. However, there does need to be careful consideration of what the correct range of parking is for a particular use, given that each site is only permitted to construct parking within a range of 100-200% of the required minimum. The applicant in the case of the variance has provided evidence that given their business model, they require more parking than other uses that fall within the same category.

Staff is evaluating two potential methods that may address the issue. One potential revision would directly address the maximum parking provision that currently restricts all sites to no more than 200% of their minimum required parking. It would permit a level of administrative adjustment in certain circumstances that would allow a site to exceed the 200% threshold.

Another potential option would directly address the specific use in question (Light Vehicle Service and Repair), and would adjust the formula for how parking is calculated to allow parking spaces to potentially be allocated based upon the number of bay doors on the building, and on the number of employees on site, which is similar to provisions found in other jurisdictions.

Work on draft revisions is currently under way and will be presented during the work session on October 21. Should you have questions, please contact me.

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