

PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 24, 2008**2008-0487 - Parking Requirements for Medical Office Buildings (Study Issue)**
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Rosemarie Zulueta, Assistant Planner, presented the staff report. She said staff recommends that an ordinance be introduced to amend the zoning code including that the current parking requirement of one space per 200 (1:200) square feet for medical uses remains unchanged, that a new definition be added, and a slightly different permitting review be required for medical clinics. She said the recommended changes include defining a medical clinic to be a medical office with ancillary services, i.e. retail, classes. Ms. Zulueta said the resident who requested this study has suggested recommendations which were received after the completion of the report. She said these recommendations have been provided to the Commission on the dais this evening.

Comm. Klein referred to Attachment F and asked staff about the ordinance stating that he was surprised that there was no size-relation to the definition of a "Medical Clinic" and that a small medical office, with any retail added, would become a clinic. He asked staff if that was according to the current code. **Trudi Ryan**, Planning Officer, answered that the current code has no distinction, or category defining a "Medical Clinic". She said the particular medical offices that triggered this study are in an Office zoned district and were just seen as ancillary services to the medical office, not distinguished as a clinic. She said this study allowed staff to distinguish and examine the types of uses to see if the use would affect any of the on-site requirements, which might be parking. She said if parking were the issue then a Parking Management Plan could be required. Comm. Klein and staff discussed that with the staff recommendation that whenever retail is added and it is part of a medical office then a Parking Management Plan would be required. Ms. Ryan said the type of zoning district could affect the requirement. Comm. Klein discussed the 1:200 parking ratio and said if the medical office converted more to retail that the site would not be meeting the retail ratio which requires more parking spaces. Comm. Klein and staff discussed that if a site is deemed a clinic then a Parking Management Plan would assure that adequate parking for patrons is made available. Ms. Ryan said on several of the sites that are having parking issues, the staff was not parking on the facility site, and with the recommendations in this report staff is wanting to make sure that employee parking is not becoming a nuisance in the neighborhood.

Chair Rowe referred to the document provided on the dais this evening containing recommendations from a resident. Chair Rowe referred to a

suggestion regarding revisiting parking standards of existing sites with Ms. Ryan stating that traditionally staff would not require any retroactive zoning standard. Ms. Ryan said that generally if the parking standards are changed that the changes would apply to new construction only. Chair Rowe said she was not sure what the resident was referring to regarding the requirement of "6 spaces per Dr. using the site". Ms. Zulueta said that prior to 1988 the City's parking requirement was 6 spaces per doctor based on occupancy. She said later the parking requirement was changed to be based on square footage. Ms. Zulueta said that the 1:200 square feet was typical in neighboring cities, and also yielded a higher parking space requirement than the 6 spaces per doctor requirement. **Andy Miner**, Principal Planner, added that he is not sure what the resident meant, but possibly she meant the previous requirement should be reinstated for any "person" rather than just doctors generating clients on more than 80% of typical workdays per year.

Chair Rowe opened the public hearing.

Jeff Jones, a Sunnyvale resident, said he feels staff did a good job putting the report together. He said he participated in the October 2008 outreach meeting. He discussed the recommendations by staff and said he does not really follow why there is no recommendation to change the parking ratio. He said he is currently embroiled in a project referred to in the report, the Palo Alto Medical Facility on Old San Francisco Road, which is currently being developed at the 1:200 parking ratio. He said that the field survey indicates the current facility does not meet that ratio, further discussing the parking situation in this area. He recommended that the Commission request staff return to this area and reconsider the parking. He suggested that possibly the parking ratio be changed to a 1:175 gross floor area (gfa) near residential areas to lessen the impact of the medical facilities to residential areas. He said he can see how the 1:200 gfa may be applicable in shopping centers. He referred to policy C1.1 on page 2 of the report and said that through this policy that the City is trying to reinforce "positive neighborhood values". He commented on the alternatives suggested by staff commenting that he strongly agrees with the requirement for a Parking Management Plan as a condition of approval for new medical clinics. He said in addition he thinks that as the Planning Commission and staff review sites that he would like to see staff come up with something to put teeth into making parking areas more useable. He said parking may be provided on a site and if the parking is difficult on-site, patrons or employees park off-site often in residential areas.

Chair Rowe closed the public hearing.

Comm. McKenna commented that the medical centers that cause parking problems to neighborhoods are where parking is allowed on residential streets. Comm. McKenna discussed with staff the Parking Management Plan which could include designations for where employees and patrons should park, and any other items that the Commission would like to recommend be included. Ms. Ryan said it is a bit difficult for the City to impose where employees park especially when City street parking is available. Comm. McKenna commented about the parking problems on residential streets near Wright Avenue, Astoria, and Fremont Avenue, and said that she knows staff was working with neighbors in this area to improve the parking. She said she thought staff was working with the medical clinics to have their employees park in the lots and she has not seen much improvement. She said she would like to know the results of staff's efforts in this area and asked if anything else has been considered to discourage people from parking on the street. Ms. Ryan said the residents have said the problems of on-street parking and driveway blockage, have been improving. Ms. Ryan said staff can continue to work with the residents, and could provide the Commission with progress reports. Comm. McKenna confirmed with staff that the passage of this ordinance would not preclude the Commission from recommending that action be taken, i.e. signage, permit parking. Ms. Ryan added that the ordinance will not change the parking requirements for facilities that are already in operation.

Comm. McKenna moved for Alternative A. 1 through 5, which is to introduce an ordinance to amend the zoning code to: add a definition for medical clinics to include ancillary services such as retail, classes, etc.; require a Miscellaneous Plan Permit for new medical clinics in zones where medical offices are currently permitted by right; require a Use Permit with public hearing for new medical clinics in zones where a Use Permit is currently required for medical offices; establish a parking requirement for medical clinics the same as medical office (1:200 gfa); require a parking management plan as a condition of approval for new medical clinics.

Comm. Klein asked about staff parking and if it would be included under a Parking Management Plan. Ms. Ryan reviewed the recently adopted definition for a Parking Management Plan. She said the speaker in the public hearing was also concerned about patrons parking off-site and the Parking Management Plan could also address how to keep patrons parking on site. Comm. Klein asked about Alternative B and why staff does not recommend requiring a Use Permit for all new medical clinics. Ms. Ryan said that in a zone that already requires a Use Permit for medical office that staff would also require a Use Permit for a medical clinic. She said staff is suggesting that where a medical office is permitted as a matter of right, that one more step be taken, which would be to require a Miscellaneous Plan Permit (MPP). She said through the MPP that staff can assess whether the ancillary use triggers the need for more parking and Parking

Management Plan. She said if the Commission thinks that any application for a clinic should require a public hearing that the Commission include that in the recommendation. Comm. Klein further discussed medical clinics and medical offices and situations that would require a MPP which could be appealed to the Planning Commission. **Comm. Klein seconded the motion.**

Chair Rowe said that she is a patron of the Palo Alto Medical Foundation and feels that their parking is sufficient, asking staff if the same parking ratio was used for their parking as we are using in Sunnyvale. Ms. Ryan said that she thinks that both the Palo Alto and Mountain View offices do not have as high of a parking ratio as what Sunnyvale is requiring.

Comm. McKenna commented that she asked the same question in the Planning Commission Study Session, and said that she does not think the Palo Alto Medical Foundation parking was sufficient. Comm. McKenna said that the developer for the Sunnyvale site assured the Commission that the Sunnyvale parking would be more generous than Palo Alto's parking.

Comm. Klein offered a Friendly Amendment and asked if the maker of the motion would agree to require a Use Permit for all new medical clinics. The Friendly Amendment was acceptable to the maker of the motion.

Comm. McKenna commented that she feels staff's study of the issue seems to have resulted in a good recommendation which is why she made the motion. She said she agrees with the Friendly Amendment that all new facilities should require a Use Permit. She said that she is comfortable with this recommendation as it does not preclude that in the future if the area around Wright and Astoria continues to be a problem that there are other alternatives that can be dealt with in the neighborhood.

Comm. Klein said that he would be supporting the motion, that the staff report definitely covers an issue where the community has had problems and staff has been working to try to alleviate the issues. He said one of the issues the public brought up is medical clinics in residential areas. He said with Alternative A.5 the requirement of an addition of a Parking Management Plan helps alleviate and clarify the issue. He said requiring that all new medical clinics have to go through a Use Permit process will give the appropriate noticing to the community and will allow public input. He said he is hoping that these changes will provide opportunity for community input and prevent problems before they occur.

ACTION: Comm. McKenna made a motion on 2008-0487 to recommend to City Council to introduce an ordinance to amend the zoning code to: add a definition for medical clinics to include ancillary services such as retail, classes, etc.; require a Use Permit for new medical clinics; establish a parking requirement for medical clinics the same as medical office (1:200 gross floor area); and require a parking management plan as a condition of approval for new medical clinics. Comm. Klein seconded. Motion carried unanimously, 7-0.

APPEAL OPTIONS: This recommendation will be forwarded to City Council for consideration at the December 9, 2008 City Council meeting.