

Total Fees Due: \$ 450
Application Fee: \$450.00

Date Application & Fee Received: 9/7/18
Received by: THD

Application for Zoning Ordinance Amendment City of Harrisonburg, Virginia

www.harrisonburgva.gov/zoning-applications

Section 1. Description of Amendment

Zoning Ordinance Section: 10-3-25

Proposed Text (if additional space needed, attached as separate sheet)

Amended 17) Retail stores, sales rooms, and mercantile establishments (applicable where no other specific retail standard is set forth): ... (remainder to match existing text)

18) Retail of furniture and/or appliances: Two (2) parking spaces, plus one (1) parking space per each one thousand (1,000) square feet of gross floor area of the establishment.

Section 2. Applicant's Information

Applicant's Name: Tim Reamer (Cottonwood Commercial)

Street Address: 1958 Evelyn Byrd Ave Email: tim.reamer@cottonwood.com

City: Harrisonburg State: Virginia Zip: 22801

Telephone: Work _____ Fax _____ Mobile 540-271-7525

Section 3: Applicant's Representative Information

Applicant's Representative: Seth Roderick (Monteverde Engineering & Design Studio)

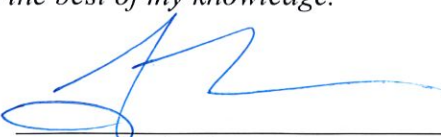
Street Address: 128 W Bruce St Email: sroderick@MonteverdeDesigns.com

City: Harrisonburg State: Virginia Zip: 22801

Telephone: Work _____ Fax _____ Mobile 540-820-0898

Section 4: Certification

I certify that the information supplied on this application and on the attachments provided is accurate and true to the best of my knowledge.

Signature: 

Applicant Signature

Section 5. Required Attachments

Letter explaining reasons for seeking Ordinance Amendment



9/3/2018

Seth Roderick, PE
Monteverde Engineering & Design Studio
128 W Bruce Street
Harrisonburg, VA 22801

Mayor Deanna Reed & Members of
the Harrisonburg City Council
409 S Main Street
Harrisonburg, VA 22801

RE: Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment App – Furniture & Appliance Retail Parking

Dear Mayor Reed and Members of the City Council,

As per the attached Zoning Ordinance Amendment application, my client is seeking a text revision in order to create a parking requirement specific to the use of furniture and appliance retail operations. Presently, such a specific use category does not exist, and thus furniture and appliance sales are considered under the more broad category of "retail."

Section 10-3-25 (17) of the Harrisonburg Zoning Ordinance, which governs parking requirements for general retail within the City's limits, reads as follows:

Retail stores, sales rooms and similar mercantile establishments: If ten thousand (10,000) square feet or less of gross floor area, one (1) parking space for each two hundred (200) square feet of gross floor area; if over ten thousand (10,000) square feet of gross floor area, one (1) parking space for each two hundred and fifty (250) square feet of gross floor area.

As no differentiation is made between various types of sales, a user with a high parking demand, such as grocery or convenience item sales, requires the same amount of parking as low-demand users, such as furniture and appliance sales. The latter of these have especially low parking demand when viewed as a ratio to floor space, partially due to the amount of area required to display their stock (more space per sale), and partially due to the high price point at which their stock sells and the infrequency between user purchases (fewer customers at a time).

Many localities choose to differentiate between various forms of retail operations, for this very reason. When researching the most appropriate treatment for furniture and appliance retail, parking ordinances of many cities and counties throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia

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were reviewed. It was found that, while varied, many localities (including those of Winchester, Charlottesville, and Roanoke) required only 1 parking space per 1,000 square feet of furniture and appliance retail space. In drafting the proposed language, we felt that a slightly more conservative approach would be appropriate, to ensure that smaller operations would have enough parking for both employees and customers. This influenced the target base rate of two parking spaces, plus one per 1,000 square feet (or fraction thereof, in accordance with the City-regulated calculation method), creating a minimum quantity of three spaces.

We also took the time to review parking usage at several of the more prominent furniture retail operations in the City of Harrisonburg, to ensure that the proposed reduction does in fact still meet witnessed demand. It was found that even during peak hours (Saturday afternoons), these establishments witnessed very little parking demand. As an example, the Mattress Firm located at the northeast corner of E Market Street & University Blvd, was found to have only two of its sixty-five parking spaces utilized at 1:00 PM on a given Saturday ... and both by employees. Upon interview, it was indicated that a very busy time for the store may indicate the presence of two customers at the same time. If this store had been developed under the proposed regulations, the roughly 6,200 sf building would require a total of nine parking spaces; under current regulations, it would require thirty-one. While the proposed amendment is still conservative by all measured accounts, it would create a savings, when compared to current standards, of nearly 12,000 sf of unnecessary pavement, and all of the unwanted consequences that come with it.

Excessive parking is not just a burden on the user/developer, in that it creates an unnecessary higher cost of construction, but also creates a burden on the City and its citizens, in a multitude of ways:

- incentivizing driving over public transportation, bicycling, and walking, which leads to unnecessary congestion on our roadways and creation of pollutants
- creating an inefficiency of urban parcel development, which leads to lower realized taxation and urban sprawl
- reducing available green space and increasing stormwater runoff / stream pollutants
- increases the “heat island effect” created by the City, which has harmful environmental consequences

Through recent years, the City of Harrisonburg has taken significant steps to increase awareness of environmental issues imposed by commercial development. More stringent regulations have been implemented to ensure that the health and wellbeing of our future residents are protected to the maximum degree possible. These efforts include promotion of



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walking and cycling through establishment of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee and investments into shared use pathways, and emphasizing the protection of our streams and waterways through establishment of the Stormwater Advisory Committee and multiple collaborations aimed at cleaning and restoring our City's waterways. Reducing unnecessary parking, wherever possible, is another opportunity for the City to prove its commitment to these valuable efforts. The proposed text amendment is a step in that direction.

It is my hope that this letter sufficiently details the purpose of the proposed text amendment, and explains how the change would be a benefit to the City as a whole, and not just those retailers directly affected.

Sincerely,



Seth Roderick, PE

Managing Partner

Monteverde Engineering & Design Studio

