



# City of Harrisonburg, Virginia

## Department of Planning & Community Development

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Building Inspections

Engineering

Planning & Zoning

To: Eric Campbell, City Manager  
From: Adam Fletcher, Director - Department of Planning and Community Development; and  
Harrisonburg Planning Commission  
Date: June 11, 2019 (Regular Meeting)  
Re: Zoning Ordinance Amendment – Off-Street Parking Regulations to Allow Community Centers  
Associated with Housing Developments to Have No Minimum Off-Street Parking Requirements

### **Summary:**

Public hearing to modify Section 10-3-25(14) of the Zoning Ordinance, which currently specifies that community centers, libraries, museums, and other similar facilities are to provide one parking space for each 250 square feet of building gross floor area. The modification of Section 10-3-25(14) would eliminate minimum off-street parking requirements for community centers associated with housing developments, where the use of such space is primarily for the use of residents of the housing development.

### **Background:**

Article G of the Zoning Ordinance – Off-Street Vehicle and Bicycle Parking, Section 10-3-25 (14) addresses minimum off-street parking requirements for community centers, libraries, museums, and similar uses. This subsection reads as follows:

“Community centers, libraries, museums and similar facilities not dependent on public assembly or seating: One (1) parking space for each two hundred and fifty (250) square feet of gross floor area.”

When calculating minimum off-street parking requirements for community centers, libraries, museums and similar facilities, staff takes the gross floor area of the entire building (restrooms, foyers, hallways, etc.) and divides by 250 square feet. All totals are rounded up to the nearest whole number. This number is the total number of off-street parking spaces that are required for the use.

### **Key Issues:**

Staff proposes to amend Section 10-3-25 (14) with the following language (new text is underlined):

Community centers not associated with a housing development, libraries, museums and similar facilities not dependent on public assembly or seating: One (1) parking space for each two hundred and fifty (250) square feet of gross floor area. Community centers associated with housing developments, where the use of such space is primarily for the use of residents of the housing development, have no minimum off-street parking requirements.

Community centers within housing developments can provide many different amenities for the residents of the community it serves; including, but not limited to, open space for classes or gathering, exercise rooms, computer areas, laundry facilities, office space, and game rooms. Currently, when a housing development (townhouse, apartment, duplex, or single-family detached development) has an associated community center they are required to provide off-street parking for the associated center based on one parking space for every 250 square feet of gross floor area of the structure. Off-street parking

requirements are calculated the same for a community center contained within the same building as residential dwellings and for a community center within a separate structure.

When housing developments are constructed, the parking requirements for dwelling units, Section 10-3-25(7) of the ZO, must be met for each individual dwelling unit on site; and therefore, would meet the parking needs for the residents of the community. The residents are the same individuals who will primarily use the housing development's community center. Having to provide additional parking for an area to be utilized by the residents, whom already have parking, creates excessive parking, reduces available green space for residents, increases stormwater runoff, and increases the cost of development.

Staff believes that the proposed amendment to Section 10-3-25(14) of the off-street parking requirements is supported by Objective 4.4 of the Comprehensive Plan: "To provide off-street parking to adequately meet demand and provide access to key destinations, businesses, and services, without creating oversupply that increases the costs for development, and impacts the community character, natural environment, and economic vitality."

Staff recommends in favor of the Zoning Ordinance amendment as presented.

**Environmental Impact:**

N/A

**Fiscal Impact:**

N/A

**Prior Actions:**

N/A

**Alternatives:**

- (a) Recommend approval of the Zoning Ordinance amendment as submitted; or
- (b) Recommend denial of the Zoning Ordinance amendment.

**Community Engagement:**

As required, the request was published in the local newspaper twice advertising for Planning Commission's public hearing and twice advertising for City Council's public hearing. The advertisement was published as shown below:

***Zoning Ordinance Amendment – Off-Street Parking Regulations to Allow Community Centers Associated with Housing Developments to Have No Minimum Off-Street Parking Requirements***

Public hearing to modify Section 10-3-25(14) of the Zoning Ordinance, which currently specifies that community centers, libraries, museums, and other similar facilities are to provide one parking space for each 250 square feet of building gross floor area. The modification of Section 10-3-25(14) would eliminate minimum off-street parking requirements for community centers associated with housing developments, where the use of such space is primarily for the use of residents of the housing development.

In addition, adjoining property owners were notified of the public hearing; the property was posted with signage advertising the request; and a notice was provided on the City's website at <https://www.harrisonburgva.gov/public-hearings>.

**Recommendation:**

Staff recommends alternative (a) approval of the Zoning Ordinance amendment request as submitted.

**Attachments:**

- 1. Extract (3 pages)

2. Proposed Zoning Ordinance amendment (2 pages)

**Review:**

Planning Commission recommended approval (7-0) of the Zoning Ordinance amendment as submitted.