

PLANNING DIVISION STAFF REPORT

January 23, 2017



PREPARED FOR THE PLAN COMMISSION

Proposal: Zoning Text Amendment

Legistar File ID #: 45556

Prepared By: Planning and Zoning Staff

The following is a summary of the proposed zoning text amendment related to Vehicle Access Sales and Service Windows (drive-through facilities), for Plan Commission consideration.

45556 Vehicle Access Sales and Service Windows under Buildings and in TSS District (substitute)

This amendment allows vehicle access sales and service windows (drive-through facilities, or VASSW's) underneath buildings as a Conditional Use in the TSS, MXC, CC-T, and CC districts as long as the building has commercial or residential uses along the primary street frontage. The amendment includes a change to the use chart to add the use into the TSS district, where it is not currently allowed, and a substitute also includes clarifying language to allow under-building VASSW's in the other districts noted above.

Staff supports language allowing vehicle access sales and service windows underneath buildings in districts where they are already allowed as a conditional use.

However, the Plan Commission should carefully discuss whether it is in the public interest to add this as a conditional use in the TSS District (parts of Williamson Street, Atwood Avenue, Old University Avenue, South Park Street, Monroe Street, etc.) On one hand, it would open up possibilities to fill first floor commercial spaces with businesses such as banks and certain restaurants that are heavily reliant on drive-through service for their customers, and it limits the possibilities for VASSW's to areas under buildings and hidden from the street in the TSS District. On the other hand, when the TSS District was created, the Plan Commission at the time determined that such facilities should not be allowed at all in this district, where the intent was to strongly support walking, biking, and transit as means of access and movement through these areas. Also, zoning lots in TSS are often shallower in width and depth than zoning lots in other districts that allow VASSW's. Usage of under-building area for VASSW's tends to consume large portions of the available floor plate for vehicle maneuvering, staging and queuing, which could result in a significant reduction of available floor area for the more desirable commercial/retail/service uses and apartment lobby space.

Plan Commission should carefully consider whether the proposed change amendment meets the standards for zoning text amendments and make a recommendation to the Common Council as to whether to approve it.