

**CITY OF WEST DES MOINES  
PLAN AND ZONING COMMISSION**

**Meeting Date:** January 18, 2016

**Item:** Self-Storage - Amend Title 9 (Zoning), Chapter 2 (Zoning Rules and Definitions), Chapter 6 (Commercial, Office, and Industrial Zoning District), Chapter 10 (Performance Standards), Chapter 15 (Off-Street Parking and Loading) to establish standards and regulations related to indoor self-storage and modify standards and regulations for self-storage mini-warehousing – City Initiated - AO-002949-2015

**Request Action:** Approval of an amendment to the City Code

**Case Advisor:** Kara Tragesser, AICP 

**Applicant's Request:** The City of West Des Moines requests an amendment to Title 9, Zoning, to amend Chapter 2, Definitions to redefine self-storage facilities, to amend Chapter 6, Commercial, Office, and Industrial Zoning use matrix to modify approvals for interior access and exterior access self-storage facilities, to amend Chapter 10, Performance Standards to set development standards for exterior unit access and interior unit access self-storage facilities, and to amend Chapter 15, Off-Street Parking and Loading, to modify parking standards for interior access and exterior access self-storage facilities.

This ordinance amendment request stems from a letter (see Attachment B – Request Letter) requesting that the City consider an amendment to allow interior accessed self-storage on a parcel zoned Professional Commerce Park. The parcel is in the West Glen Town Center PUD, however, staff feels that a city-wide amendment to the city code should be considered to address whether self-storage should be allowed in zoning districts other than the currently allowed Warehouse retail and various Industrial districts.

**City Council Subcommittee:** This item was discussed at the November 5, 2015, and the December 17, 2015, Development and Planning City Council Subcommittee. The subcommittee was supportive of changes to the ordinance to allow indoor storage facilities with the right performance standards; however, the subcommittee reached no consensus on support of these facilities in the commercial districts, especially Neighborhood Commercial.

**Staff Review and Comment:** There are no outstanding issues. According to information gathered from the Self Storage Association, most of the self-storage facilities operating today are typical row buildings, some multi-story facilities and conversion of older buildings. A new generation of facilities are emerging characterized by location in non-industrial zoning districts and aesthetics in construction and design compatible with office and retail development. The City has received its first inquiries into re-using vacant buildings and constructing new buildings in non-industrial zoning districts for indoor or interior access self-storage, and as mentioned above, the City received a request to change the zoning ordinance to allow an indoor self-storage facility in a Professional Commerce Park zoning district. To address this request, staff discussed what the challenges may be and what mitigation of those challenges should be to allow this activity in non-industrial zones. Staff presented and discussed this matter with the Development and Planning Subcommittee and developed a draft ordinance after receiving feedback from the Subcommittee.

**Self-storage facilities in non-industrial zones:** Staff discussed the challenges presented by allowing indoor self-service storage facilities in non-industrial and non-residential zones and how those challenges may be mitigated. The challenges discussed included: aesthetics of the building and the view of roll up exterior doors, activity level, outdoor storage, screening, loading and unloading locations, and buffering. Staff believes that if self-storage was to be allowed in non-industrial zones that it should not be allowed in residential districts as the aesthetic and design of the facility (typically not a residential style) and operation do not appear to be compatible with residential development. Also, staff believes that self-storage should not be allowed in the commercial districts as the low activity level is not really compatible with retail districts. Retail has high activity levels during business hours, where storage facility activity is low and sporadic creating 'dead-zones' within the otherwise active and energetic retail areas.

Staff proposes to allow indoor or interior accessed self-storage facilities in office and professional commerce park zoning districts with performance and building form standards. Staff believes that the aesthetics, operation, and activity level can be compatible with office and professional park uses and that these facilities could benefit the community by providing more opportunity for these facilities to be located closer to where the majority of users are located. Staff notes that office and professional commercial park zones frequently are designated in close proximity to residential zones within

the city. Essentially, staff feels that if the self-storage building can act like and look like an office building, it should be compatible with office development.

**Indoor or interior access self-storage facilities versus traditional mini-storage:** Traditional self-storage, sometimes called mini-storage or mini-warehousing, is typified by long rows of connected storage units with roll-up doors open to the outdoors and often clustered in groups of buildings constructed to a minimal industrial standard. Indoor or interior access self-storage facilities are proposed to be storage units that are fully enclosed in a building with the access to the individual storage units being from interior hallways of the building, rather than from accessing the unit directly from the outdoors. Staff proposes to redefine self-service storage facilities into two sub-definitions to differentiate between the interior access and exterior access types of facilities and put in place more applicable performance standards to each and allow for the differing aesthetics and building form.

**Expansion of performance standards for self-storage:** The current city code does not provide performance standards for aesthetics or building form for self-storage. In order to consider the opportunity to allow self-storage in non-industrial zones, staff believes that performance and building form standards need to be established to ensure that the use and site are compatible with the zoning district in which is located and mitigate any impacts it may have on adjacent property. Staff proposes performance and building form standards for both exterior access and interior access self-storage facilities to mitigate typical negative elements such as overhead doors, outdoor storage, use of the self-storage units, façade materials and form, and overall aesthetics. In the case of interior access self-storage, performance standards are proposed to enhance the aesthetics and use of the facility to emulate the surrounding office and professional commerce park development, as well as these districts through-out the city in general.

**Parking:** Staff proposes changes to the parking standards for self-storage to more closely resemble industry and other communities' standards. Also, to allow for re-use of an indoor or interior access facility, staff proposes that a site demonstrate the ability to meet the parking standards of common re-use of a building in the office or professional park district, but only require the construction of the parking required for a self-storage facility. This requirement plans for the possibility of the self-storage building being re-used for an office building with the ability to provide for the parking of the office use. In the event a storage building becomes vacant, the re-use of the building will be easier to accommodate with sufficient area on the site for parking. Staff recognizes that while the building is used for self-storage that more of the site will be open space, but staff feels it is important to plan for the re-use of the building which otherwise may have restricted re-use in the future.

**Outdoor Storage:** Along with proposing to allow interior access self-storage in the office and professional commercial park districts, staff proposes that no outdoor storage be allowed in these districts. Outdoor storage is prohibited in these two districts for all other uses allowed in the districts due to the negative aesthetics and difficulty in screening the storage. Staff likewise feels that the views of tops of RVs, boats, trailers, and other typical outdoor storage materials cannot be sufficiently screened from public view and the views from adjacent property to allow them to be stored in these districts. The city code provides for outdoor storage in the industrial districts.

**Noticing Information:** On January 8, 2016, notice of the January 18, 2016, Plan and Zoning Commission public hearing for this project was published in the *Des Moines Register*.

**Staff Recommendation and Conditions of Approval:** Staff recommends the Plan & Zoning Commission approve a resolution recommending to the City Council approval of the ordinance amendment.

**Attachments:**

- Attachment A – Proposed Resolution
- Exhibit A – Proposed Ordinance
- Attachment B - Letter

RESOLUTION NO. PZC-

**A RESOLUTION OF THE PLAN AND ZONING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF WEST DES MOINES, RECOMMENDING TO THE CITY COUNCIL THAT IT APPROVE AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND TITLE 9 (ZONING), CHAPTER 2 (ZONING RULES AND DEFINITIONS), CHAPTER 6 (COMMERCIAL, OFFICE, AND INDUSTRIAL ZONING DISTRICT), CHAPTER 10 (PERFORMANCE STANDARDS), AND CHAPTER 15 (OFF-STREET PARKING AND LOADING) TO ESTABLISH STANDARDS AND REGULATIONS RELATED TO INDOOR SELF-STORAGE AND MODIFY STANDARDS AND REGULATIONS FOR SELF-STORAGE MINI-WAREHOUSING**

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to the provisions of Title 9, Chapter 1 et seq, of the West Des Moines Municipal Code, staff requests an amendment to Title 9 (Zoning), Chapter 2 (Zoning Rules and Definitions), Chapter 6 (Commercial, Office, and Industrial Zoning District), Chapter 10 (Performance Standards), Chapter 15 (Off-Street Parking and Loading) to establish standards and regulations related to indoor self-storage and modify standards and regulations for self-storage mini-warehousing;

**WHEREAS**, studies and investigations were made, and staff reports and recommendations were submitted which is made a part of this record and herein incorporated by reference;

**WHEREAS**, this Commission held a duly-noticed hearing to consider the application for an amendment to ordinance;

**WHEREAS**, this Commission did consider the application for an amendment to ordinance;

**NOW, THEREFORE, THE PLAN AND ZONING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF WEST DES MOINES DOES RESOLVE AS FOLLOWS:**

SECTION 1. The findings for approval in the staff report or as amended orally at the Plan and Zoning Commission public hearing are adopted.

SECTION 2. The AMENDMENT TO ORDINANCE (AO-002949-2015) is recommended to the City Council for approval, as stated in the staff report or as amended in the attached Exhibit A.

PASSED AND ADOPTED on January 18, 2016.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Craig Erickson, Chair  
Plan and Zoning Commission

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Recording Secretary

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing resolution was duly adopted by the Plan and Zoning Commission of the City of West Des Moines, Iowa, at a regular meeting held on January 18, 2016, by the following vote:

- AYES:
- NAYS:
- ABSTENTIONS:
- ABSENT:

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Recording Secretary

Prepared by: K Tragesser, West Des Moines Development Services, PO Box 65320, West Des Moines, IA 50265, 515-222-3620  
When Recorded, Return to: City Clerk, City of West Des Moines, PO Box 65320, West Des Moines, IA 50265-0320

**ORDINANCE NO.**

**AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE CITY CODE OF THE CITY OF WEST DES MOINES, IOWA, 2014, TITLE 9 (ZONING), CHAPTER 2 (ZONING RULES AND DEFINITIONS), CHAPTER 6 (COMMERCIAL, OFFICE, AND INDUSTRIAL ZONING DISTRICT), CHAPTER 10 (PERFORMANCE STANDARDS), AND CHAPTER 15 (OFF-STREET PARKING AND LOADING) TO ESTABLISH STANDARDS AND REGULATIONS RELATED TO INDOOR SELF-STORAGE AND MODIFY STANDARDS AND REGULATIONS FOR SELF-STORAGE**

**BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WEST DES MOINES, IOWA:**

**Section 1. Amendment.** Title 9: Zoning, Chapter 2: Zoning Rules and Definitions, is hereby amended by deleting the definition for Self-Service Storage Facility as illustrated by the highlighted strikethrough lettering and replacing it with the text in bold italic lettering:

~~SELF SERVICE STORAGE FACILITY: A building, group of buildings or outdoor storage yard divided into separate, divided compartments or defined areas leased to individuals on a seasonal or long term basis for the self storing of household and personal property, including operable vehicles, recreational vehicles, including, but not limited to, RVs, boats, snowmobiles, etc., and enclosed and open air trailers. No commercial activity, except the leasing of storage units/area is allowed.~~

***SELF SERVICE STORAGE FACILITY (mini-warehousing/climate-controlled/indoor storage/single or multi-story): a non-residential building, portion of building, or group of buildings with defined storage space or units rented to and accessible to the public for the storage of household and personal property, operable vehicles, and recreational vehicles, including, but not limited to, RVs, boats, snowmobiles, enclosed or open air trailers, etc.***

***A. Exterior Unit Access: an exterior unit access self-storage facility generally consists of a long, single-story, simplified building structure with roll-up doors and direct drive-up access to conventional outside units.***

***B. Interior Unit Access: an interior unit access self-storage facility consists of a building with all units contained within that building and all units having an access door from an interior hallway.***

**Section 3. Amendment.** Title 9: Zoning, Chapter 6: Commercial, Office and Industrial District, Section 6, Commercial, Office, and Industrial Use Regulations, Subsection C. Table 6.1 is hereby amended by deleting text in highlighted strikethrough lettering and adding text in bold italic lettering:

SIC CODES	RC	CMC	NC	CVC	SC	VJC	VJHB	WR	BP	VJLI	LI	GI	OF	PCP	OS
<b>4225</b> Miniwarehousing and self-Service storage facility including caretakers' facilities															
<b>-Exterior Unit Access</b> With no outside storage yard								P		Pc	P	P			
<b>-Exterior Unit Access</b> With paved outdoor storage yard								Pe			Pe	P			
<b>-Exterior Unit Access</b> With gravel outdoor storage yard (*see also subsection 9-10-4A7 of this Title)												P*			
<b>- Interior Unit Access</b> with no outside storage yard								P	P	P	P	P	P	P	
<b>- Interior Unit Access</b> with paved outside storage yard								P			P	P			
<b>- Interior Unit Access</b> with gravel outdoor storage yard (*see also subsection 9-10-4A7 of this Title)												P*			

**Section 4. Amendment.** Title 9: Zoning, Chapter 10: Performance Standards, Section 4, Specific Use Regulations, Subsection A, is hereby amended by adding the following language in bold italic lettering:

**15. Self Service Storage Facilities:** *The intent of these performance standards is to allow two distinct building forms while maintaining building form compatibility with the zoning district in general and the site-specific surrounding development.*

**A. Exterior Unit Access (mini warehouse storage):** *This building type is intended to allow for single-story, long-row, connected units with exterior access doors in the Warehouse Retail and Industrial districts. The following development standards shall apply, in addition to development standards cited elsewhere in this Title, including, but not limited to, landscaping, open space, buffers, screening, parking, setbacks, trash enclosures, etc.*

- 1.** *Views of individual unit exterior access doors shall be screened from the public street or from adjacent non-industrial or warehouse retail zoned or developed property.*
- 2.** *The building(s) shall be surfaced with materials compatible with adjacent industrial or Warehouse Retail development. Facades visible from the public street shall be enhanced to add visual character and distinction from the interior of the development. Facades facing adjacent residential property shall be screened with a fence or evergreen landscaping and otherwise*

*enhanced by incorporating front façade materials or enhanced materials used elsewhere in the development. 360° architecture is not intended for mini-storage, but those buildings visible from the street or adjacent residential developed or zoned property shall be expected to reflect material enhancements that may not be commonly considered in Warehouse Retail and industrial developments.*

3. *Outdoor storage areas, as allowed in this Title, should be consolidated into a single area and screened as required elsewhere in this Title.*
  4. *Fences and walls used to provide screening shall be maintained in a neat, clean, safe, and structurally sound condition. RVs, boats, and recreational trailers may exceed the height of the fence or wall; all other materials shall not exceed the height of the wall or fence. Fences shall be placed no closer to the front lot line than the front yard established by the building or building setback line.*
  5. *Wall signage for the development shall be calculated according to the sign code calculations located elsewhere in this Title for the building façade in which the business office is located. No signage or advertising is allowed on screen walls or fencing.*
  6. *Vehicle circulation shall allow for two way drive aisles and circulation with no dead-ends.*
- B. Interior Unit Access:** *This building type is intended to allow for facilities where all units are accessed by interior hallways. These structures shall emulate the exterior architecture and characteristics of buildings in the specific district in which the facility is located. The following development standards shall apply, in addition to development standards cited elsewhere in this Title, including, but not limited to, landscaping, open space, buffers, screening, parking, setbacks, etc.:*
1. *All storage units shall gain access from the interior of the building, no unit doors may face the street or be visible from off the property.*
  2. *One entrance and one exit overhead door shall be allowed. If the facility abuts residentially zoned property, the facility loading bays, docks, or doors shall not be visible from the residential property. Whenever possible, these features shall be located on facades which face non-residentially zoned or developed property*
  3. *Ground floor and upper floor facades shall be designed to be compatible with expected four-sided office design in the city's office districts. Examples of such architectural and design features include varied massing, proportion, façade modulation, exterior building materials and detailing, varied roof line, pedestrian scale, windows, repetition, etc.*
  4. *The building shall be surfaced with high-quality, durable materials consistent with the surrounding commercial or office uses. Un-faced concrete block, painted masonry, tilt-up and pre-cast concrete panels and non-architectural metal siding are prohibited in the office districts. Prefabricated buildings are not allowed in the office districts.*
  5. *There shall be a pedestrian entrance facing the street. This entrance shall be considered the main or principal entrance, even if the tenants enter through loading docks, bays, doors or other side or rear entrances. This entrance shall present as a prominent feature that emulates a store front or office lobby.*
  6. *Parking for re-use of the building for other permitted or permitted conditional uses in the applicable zoning district shall be demonstrated at the applicable ratio; however, only the parking required for the indoor self-storage shall be required to be constructed.*
  7. *Tenant Access shall be restricted to the hours of 7 a.m. to 10 p.m.*
- C. Prohibited Uses:** *the only activity permitted in individual storage units shall be the storage of goods and property. Storage units shall not be used for:*
1. *Residences, offices, workshops, studios, hobby, events, or rehearsal areas;*
  2. *Manufacturing, fabrication, or processing of goods, services, or repair of vehicles, engines, appliances, or other electrical equipment or any other industrial activity;*
  3. *Retail sales of any kind including, but not limited to, garage sales, estate sales, auctions or to conduct any other commercial activity, except in the business office or retail store front as permitted in the zone in which the facility is located; excludes auctions of units conducted by the property owner or manager due to non-payment, default, or other storage business operation.*
  4. *The storage of flammable, perishable, or hazardous materials or the keeping of animals.*

5. *Accessory uses such as the rental of trucks, trailers, moving equipment, or the installation of trailer hitches are prohibited unless otherwise permitted in the zone in which the facility is located.*

**Section 5. Amendment.** Title 9: Zoning, Chapter 15: Off-Street Parking and Loading, Section 7, Number of Parking Spaces Required, Subsection E., is hereby amended by deleting text in highlighted strikethrough lettering and adding text in bold italic lettering:

4225 General Warehousing and Storage (except <del>Miniwarehouse and Self-Service Storage Facility Storage</del> )	*Up to 10,000 s.f. of G.F.A.- 1 space per 500 s.f. *Over 10,001 s.f. of G.F.A.- 1 space per 5,000 s.f
<del>Miniwarehouses and Exterior Unit Access Self-Service Storage Facility-Storage Including Manager's Quarters</del>	*1 space per 20,000 s.f. of G.F.A. *1 space per 50 vehicle or boat storage spaces, with a minimum of 3 spaces
<del>Indoor Access Self-Service Storage Facility</del>	<i>*1 space per 200 s.f. of G.F.A. for office area *1 space per 50 units or 1 space per 10,000 G.F.A, whichever is greater or a minimum of 3 spaces  *Demonstrate parking availability for re-use of the building for a common use in the zoning district in which it is located</i>

**Section 6. Repealer.** All ordinances or parts of ordinances in conflict with the provision of this ordinance are hereby repealed.

**Section 7. Savings Clause.** If any section, provision, sentence, clause, phrase or part of this Ordinance shall be adjudged invalid or unconstitutional, such adjudication shall not affect the validity of the Ordinance as a whole or any provision, section, subsection, sentence, clause, phrase or part hereof not adjudged invalid or unconstitutional.

**Section 8. Violations and Penalties.** Any person who violates the provisions of this Ordinance upon conviction shall be punished as set forth in Section 1-4-1 of the City Code of the City of West Des Moines, Iowa.

**Section 9. Other Remedies.** In addition to the provisions set out in the Violations and Penalties Section herein, the City may proceed in law or equity against any person, firm or corporation for violation of any section or subsection of this Ordinance.

**Section 10. Effective Date.** This Ordinance shall be in full force and effect from and after its passage, approval and publication as provided by law.

Passed by the City Council on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2016, and approved this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2016.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Steven K. Gaer, Mayor

ATTEST:

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Ryan T Jacobson  
City Clerk

The foregoing Ordinance No. \_\_\_\_\_ was adopted by the Council for the City of West Des Moines, Iowa, on \_\_\_\_\_, 2016, and was published in the Des Moines Register on \_\_\_\_\_, 2016.

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Ryan T. Jacobson  
City Clerk



October 9, 2015

Ms. Kara Tragesser  
City of West Des Moines  
4200 Mills Civic Parkway, Suite 2D  
West Des Moines, IA 50265

**Re: Amendment of City Code to allow additional uses at West Glen Town Center Plat 2, Lot 1, located at approximately 450 South Prairie View Drive in West Des Moines, IA ("Subject" property)**

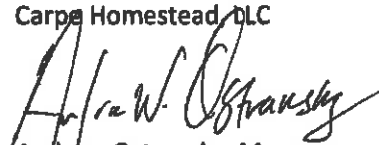
Dear Ms. Tragesser:

Thank you very much for you and your team's generous investment of time and resources to-date regarding the Subject property and our desire and intent to develop self-storage at this location – we sincerely appreciate your partnership.

Our review of the Summary of Comments, dated 08/20/2015, resulting from the 08/18/2015 Development Review Team (DRT) Pre-Application Meeting regarding Project Number PA-002730-2015 (the "Project") leads us to understand that amendments to City Code are required to allow development of the Project at the Subject property. We further understand that a written request need be submitted to initiate the aforementioned amendments to City Code.

Please consider this letter our formal, written request that the City of West Des Moines initiate the amendment of City Code to allow development of the Project at the Subject property.

Sincerely,  
Carpe Homestead LLC

  
Andrew Ostransky, Manager  
10/09/2015