



**MINUTES
PLANNING COMMISSION SPECIAL MEETING
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2021
VIA ZOOM MEETINGS
6:00 p.m.**

Call to Order:

Chairperson Maier called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and welcomed attendees.

Attendance:

Present: Chairperson Maier, Vice-Chair Townsend, Commissioners Eadie, Mealer, Smith, and Palmer. Commissioner Ridley was excused. Also present were Planning Manager Stevens and Administrative Assistant II Follett.

Approval of Agenda:

Chairperson Maier presented the agenda and asked for a motion to approve.

VICE-CHAIR TOWNSEND MOTIONED AND COMISSIONER PALMER SECONDED THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE DECEMBER 8, 2021 AGENDA AS PRESENTED. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Approval of Minutes:

Chairperson Maier presented the minutes from the October 27, 2021 Meeting and November 10, 2021 Workshop for approval.

COMMISSIONER PALMER MOTIONED AND COMMISSIONER MEALER SECONDED THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 27, 2021 MEETING AND NOVEMBER 10, 2021 WORKSHOP AS DRAFTED. MOTION PASSED 5-0

New Business:

1. CA2021-109 - CODE AMENDMENT TO RMC SECTION 23.28.030

Chairperson Maier introduced the item and recognized Mr. Stevens to make the staff presentation. Mr. Stevens referenced the Planning Commission workshop regarding this item and highlighted changes based on comments and discussion from the workshop.

At the conclusion of the staff presentation, Chairperson Maier opened the public hearing at 6:12 p.m.

Rick Simon, representing the applicant, provided testimony in support of the application and would be available to commission questions.

Chairperson Maier closed the public hearing at 6:16 p.m. and noted written comments submitted by SMI Group, and opened the floor for Commission discussion and questions. Commissioners asked questions of staff regarding building requirements related to the wall height requirement.

COMMISSIONER PALMER MOVED AND COMMISSIONER EADIE SECONDED THE MOTION TO CONCURE WITH THE FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS SET FORTH IN STAFF REPORT CA2021-109, AND RECOMMEND TO THE CITY COUNCIL ADOPTION OF THE PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO RMC SECTION 23.28.030 AS PROPOSED BY THE APPLICANT WITH A REVISION TO FOOTNOTE 16.D TO READ: MINI WAREHOUSES SHALL BE ENCLOSED ON ALL SIDES WITH A SOLID CONCRETE OR MASONRY WALL AT LEAST 8' IN HEIGHT. CHAIRPERSON MAIER RESTATED THE MOTION AND ASKED FOR A ROLL-CALL VOTE. MOTION CARRIED 6-0.

Communications:

Mr. Stevens pointed out that the January meeting would kick off the LUDR review. He also noted that the Planning Department is recruiting for a Sr. Planner and Planning Tech.

Adjournment:

Chairperson Maier adjourned the meeting at 6:38 p.m.

PREPARED BY: *Lynne Follett*
Lynne Follett, Administrative Assistant II

REVIEWED BY: *Mike Stevens*
Mike Stevens, Planning Manager

APPROVED BY: *fmaier*
Francesca Maier, Chairwoman

SMI GROUP XV, LLC – PROPOSED B-RP ZONING CODE AMENDMENT
Supplemental Information
December 2, 2021

The following is in answer to some of the questions and comments Planning Commissioners raised at their workshop session held November 10, 2021.

Intent of the Application

The zoning code amendment application has been submitted with the goal of providing SMI Group a viable development opportunity for its property considering the current economic climate. (The original proposal highlights the reasons for this and so they are not repeated here.) For the purpose of transparency, the zoning code amendment application included architectural renderings and a site plan depicting SMI's proposed mini-warehouse project, and SMI acknowledges that a change in zoning code would also benefit other landowners who may want to construct mini-warehouse facilities in the future. To be clear, SMI has no specific knowledge of any such projects or intentions. To alleviate any concerns that the City may have with an overabundance of mini-warehouse facilities springing up within the B-RP zone, the proposed code language would limit the total land area that could be devoted to mini-warehouse use to no more than 5% of the total B-RP land area. This is a technique that is already in use within the B-RP zone, as residential uses are limited to 20% of total land area and commercial uses to 15%.

Aesthetics

The intent of SMI Group is to provide a quality development that enhances existing developments found within and nearby the B-RP district. The code language proposed in the application specifies that *"mini warehouses shall be enclosed on all sides with a wall, landscape hedge or combination thereof at least 6 feet in height."* This language establishes a higher aesthetic standard than is typical of a mini warehouse facility in other locations outside the B-RP zone. SMI Group intends to construct a decorative concrete masonry wall around its proposed facility, as shown in the architectural rendering previously submitted. SMI Group has no objection to modifying the code language to require that a decorative concrete or masonry wall be used to enclose the facility and/or that prohibits the use of chain link fencing.

Additionally, the other standards proposed in the code amendment require the use of subdued exterior building colors and the use of a mix of building materials, not to be primarily composed of metal siding. (This language was borrowed from the existing design standards that are in place for the Business Commerce Zone.) These standards,

together with the existing B-RP requirement that 25% of B-RP land be landscaped and the B-RP building setback requirements will ensure that mini warehouse facilities shall be consistent with the high aesthetic standard that has been established within the B-RP district.

Proximity of Other Storage Uses

There is a storage project in a Medium Industrial District adjacent to Stevens Drive in North Richland, which is nearing completion. The use is different from a typical mini warehouse facility in that the units are designed to be sold rather than leased to homeowners with large RVs, extra vehicles and equipment that won't fit next to their residences. In contrast, SMI's mini warehouse units are designated as rentals and would be much smaller.

The only other existing mini warehouse facilities in North Richland are (1) near the Richland Airport, and (2) on Kingsgate Way in Horn Rapids.

Permitted vs. Special Use Permit

The proposed code amendment would classify mini warehouses as a permitted use, as opposed to a special use. The purpose of a special use permit, as identified in the municipal code (Section 23.46.010) states:

"The purpose of a special use permit is to provide opportunities to accommodate certain uses, which, by nature of use, intensity, or general impact on an area, cannot be considered as a use of right within a zoning district. Where special conditions and regulations can be complied with, and such use is authorized as a special use within the zoning district for which application is made, such uses may be found to be permissible."

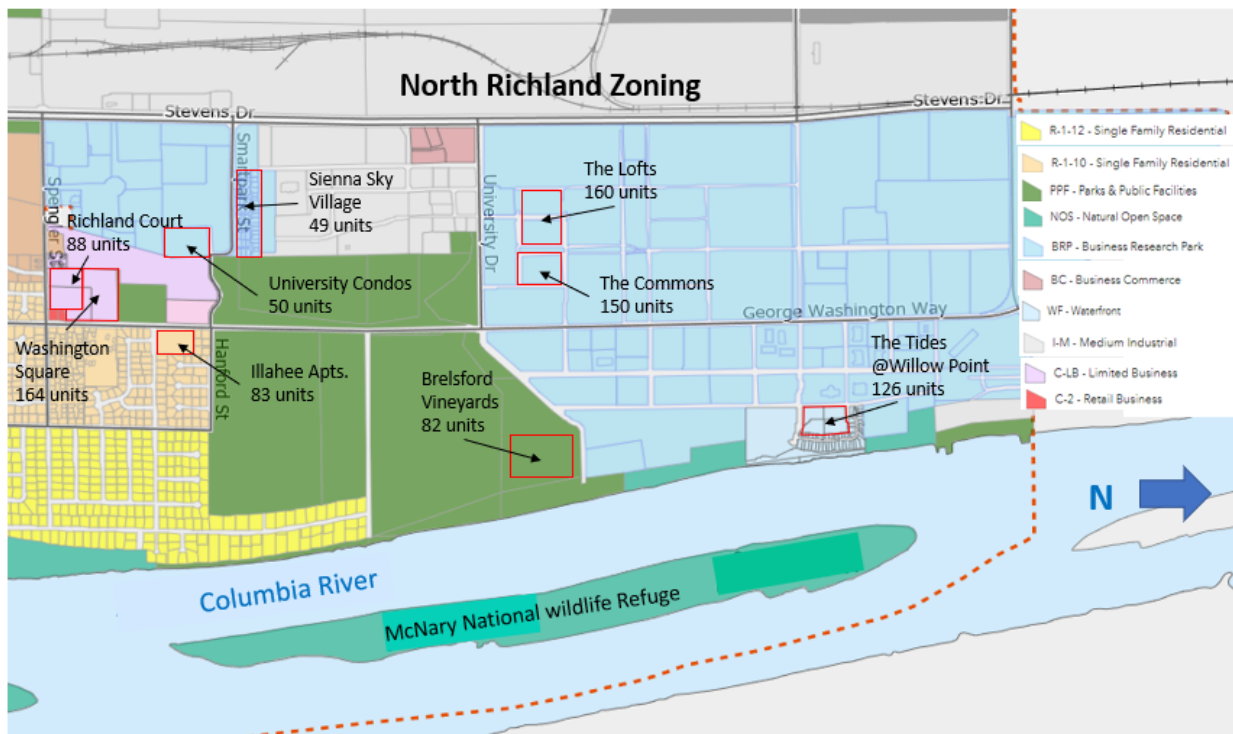
A mini-storage complex is a less intense use than many other uses already permitted in the B-RP zone and would not result in greater impacts to adjacent uses or the surrounding area. Traffic volumes generated by a mini warehouse are much less than office or residential uses. There are no industrial processes or storage of hazardous materials associated with mini warehouses. Buildings are single story and lower in height than the 55-foot building height limitation in the B-RP zone. In addition, mini warehouses do not generate excessive light, glare, or noise that would negatively impact adjacent properties. Therefore, mini-storage uses in the B-RP zone would not be an appropriate application of the special use permit process.

Demand for Mini warehouse Use in North Richland

Of the existing 952 multi-family residential units located in North Richland only 409 are located within the B-RP zone. The other 543 units are in a variety of other zones, as shown on the table below and on the attached map. New apartments planned on the Washington State University Campus (PPF zone) and at Willow Pointe (WF zone) would significantly add to the number of apartment units in North Richland but would be located outside the B-RP zone boundaries. Of all the North Richland zoning districts that contain apartments (WF, PPF, C-LB, R-1-10, & B-RP), none currently permit mini warehouse facilities.

NORTH RICHLAND APARTMENT COMPLEXES

<i>Name</i>	<i>Units</i>	<i>Zone</i>
<i>The Commons</i>	<i>150</i>	<i>B-RP</i>
<i>The Lofts</i>	<i>160</i>	<i>B-RP</i>
<i>University Condos</i>	<i>50</i>	<i>B-RP</i>
<i>Sienna Sky Village</i>	<i>49</i>	<i>B-RP</i>
<i>Total Units (B-RP Zone)</i>	<i>409</i>	
<i>Brelsford Vineyards</i>	<i>82</i>	<i>PPF</i>
<i>Illahee Apartments</i>	<i>83</i>	<i>R-1-10</i>
<i>Washington Square Apartment</i>	<i>164</i>	<i>C-LB</i>
<i>Richland Court Apartments</i>	<i>88</i>	<i>C-LB</i>
<i>The Tides @ Willow Point</i>	<i>126</i>	<i>WF</i>
<i>Total Units (Other Zones)</i>	<i>543</i>	
<i>TOTAL UNITS (ALL ZONES)</i>	<i>952</i>	



Currently, only 24.5 acres of B-RP zoned land have been developed with residential uses. The provisions of the B-RP zoning (Section 23.28.020(B)(4)) allow up to 20% of the total acreage of the B-RP zone to be developed with residential uses. A maximum of 120 additional acres of B-RP zoned land could be developed with residential uses in the future. The code also requires that a minimum density of 8 units/acre be maintained for residential development. Full build out of the B-RP zone would result in at least 960 additional residential dwelling units. At this point, no nearby options for mini warehouse uses exist that are near either the existing residential units or those that may be built in the future.

As development of the B-RP zone occurs, the maximum acreage that could be developed with mini warehouse uses would be 36 acres (5% of total B-RP zoned acreage) under the proposed code amendment. This figure represents the maximum that would be allowed. The actual number of acres devoted to either mini warehouses or residential units will be determined by market conditions and landowner preference.

Conclusion

Adding mini warehouses to the list of permitted uses would be beneficial to the property owners and residents of North Richland within the B-RP zone.

SMI Group XV respectfully requests approval of the proposed code amendment.