



City of Culver City

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Staff Report

File #: 20-783, **Version:** 1

Item #: PH-1.

PC - Consideration of a City-Initiated Zoning Code Amendment to Modify Definition and Parking Requirement for Fitness Studio Uses.

Meeting Date: February 26, 2020

Contact Person/Dept: Michael Allen/Current Planning Manager

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Phone Number: (310) 253-5727 / (310) 253-5706

Fiscal Impact: Yes ☐ No ☒

General Fund: Yes ☐ No ☒

Public Hearing: ☒

Action Item: ☐

Attachments: ☒

Public Notification: (E-Mail) Meetings and Agendas -Planning Commission (2/20/2020); (Posted) City Website (02/06/2020); Gov Delivery (02/06/2020); NextDoor (02/06/2020); (Published in) Culver City News (02/06/2020).

Department Approval: Sol Blumenfeld, Community Development Director (02/21/2020)

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends the Planning Commission adopt a resolution recommending to the City Council approval of a Zoning Code Text Amendment to modify the definition and parking requirement for fitness studio uses.

PROCEDURES:

1. Chair calls on staff for a brief staff report and the Planning Commission poses questions to staff as desired.
2. Chair opens the public hearing and receives comments from the general public.
3. Chair seeks a motion to close the public hearing after all testimony has been presented.
4. Commission discusses the matter and arrives at its decision.

BACKGROUND:

Many current fitness uses stress a more specialized and personal approach in a smaller studio format than larger traditional gyms. Consequently, studio fitness business owners are seeking storefront spaces along the City's commercial corridors to attract clients in a more personalized setting. Fitness related studios including cycling, cross-fit, yoga or pilates, and martial arts currently operate in the City and are permitted in commercial and industrial zones, provided they meet Zoning Code development and land use standards.

In October 2018, the City commissioned a Retail Market Analysis specific to the downtown, which found that Culver City is expected to continue to experience strong job growth and retail opportunities but that the nature of retailing was changing. The report indicated that in order to maintain pedestrian activation along the commercial corridors, the City should consider expanding retail services to include fitness uses, and other similar retail/service industry land use categories.

Some fitness related business owners who specifically inquire about spaces previously occupied by a retail or office use, find it difficult to obtain City approvals without making costly adjustments to their business operations to meet Zoning Code parking and land use requirements.

The purpose of the proposed Zoning Code Amendment is to modify the definition and parking requirement for studio use for both stand-alone studios and within mixed use developments to accommodate the changing retail environment.

DISCUSSION**Definition**

Fitness studio uses such as Yoga or Pilates are permitted, provided they meet the definition of a "Studio" use. The City's Zoning Code provisions for studios is listed under the land use category of "Studios for Art, Dance, Music, Photography, etc." and is defined as follows:

Small-scale facilities, typically accommodating one group of students at a time, in no more than one instructional space. These include facilities for: individual and group instruction and training in the arts; performing arts and production rehearsal; photography, and the processing of photographs produced only by users of the studio facilities; martial arts training studios; and aerobics and gymnastics studios with no other fitness facilities or equipment. Larger facilities are included under the definition of "Schools, Specialized Education and Training."

Fitness studios offer small groups of individualized and specialized instruction at the same time; however, the current definition of a studio is prohibitive for fitness studios with more than one group of students training at time and in more than one instructional space. Additionally, a key component to the operation of many fitness studios is the need for equipment with built in technology to sync with fitness apps and collect data to guide and improve performance. The current definition of a fitness studio does not allow fitness equipment, disqualifying many fitness studios from locating in the City.

Culver City is home to several fitness studio uses. To determine the average size of fitness studios in Culver City, staff surveyed ten existing studios, including personal training, cross fit, yoga, and pilates. Floor area ranged from approximately 550 square feet to approximately 4,800 square feet. The average floor area of these facilities was 2,133 square feet. Staff also reviewed data from the Association of Fitness Studios (AFS), a trade association that supports studio owners and entrepreneurial fitness professionals. The AFS states that the average size of personal/training and small group studio use is generally 2,970 square feet.

The proposed modifications to the definition and parking requirements for a fitness studio use is intended to address the increased interest in smaller fitness studio use location along the City's commercial corridors. Based on the above information, staff recommends the definition of "Studios for Art, Dance, Music, Photography, etc." specify the term "fitness studios" for clarity purposes and limit the maximum size to 3,000 square feet in overall instruction area. This will create a standard that separates smaller scale fitness studio uses from larger scale "Health/Fitness Facilities."

Parking and Trip Generation

As discussed above, many fitness studios seek to occupy retail and/or office storefront spaces along the commercial corridor as it is readily available, around the average size for fitness studio uses and visible to passing pedestrians and automobiles. However, required parking presents a barrier for fitness studio uses, with a parking requirement of one (1) parking space per 200 square feet, compared to retail and office uses parked at one (1) parking space per 350 square feet. This prevents new fitness studio uses that cannot provide the additional code required parking, generated by the calculating the differential between 1/200 and 1/350 based on the gross square footage

In order to better understand empirical data related to fitness use parking demand, staff reviewed Institute of Traffic Engineers (ITE) Parking Generation Manual, 5th Edition for "Health/Fitness Clubs". ITE defines "Health/Fitness Club"

Health/Fitness Club - A privately-owned facility that primarily focuses on individual fitness or training and typically provides exercise classes; weightlifting, fitness and gymnastics equipment; spas; locker rooms; and small restaurants or snack bars".

The ITE Parking Generation Manual included a total of 26 studies for health and fitness clubs ranging from 1980 to present, including sites in Arizona, California, Colorado, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, and Texas, that fall into the general urban/suburban setting. The study demonstrates that the average parking supply ratio for health and fitness clubs is 4.73 per 1,000 square feet (or one parking stall per 211 square feet). This data is consistent with the City's existing parking requirements.

Further, the cities of Beverly Hills, Inglewood, Santa Monica, and West Hollywood were surveyed to obtain their parking requirements for fitness studio uses (Table 2 of Attachment No.2). The following information was gathered:

- Inglewood had the most restrictive standard at one (1) parking space per 150 square feet of floor area, but no specific definitions differentiating different fitness uses.

- Santa Monica and West Hollywood had less restrictive parking standards at one (1) per 300 and one (1) per 500, respectively, but had more restrictive use definitions.
- Beverly Hills had parking requirements that mirrored Culver City but had provisions for reduced parking through conditional use permit review.

Staff also inquired during its survey of the ten local establishments, their client's commuting patterns. Staff asked the estimated percentage of clients who came from Culver City and surrounding communities (Mar Vista, Playa Del Rey, Palms) and how their clients generally traveled to the site (walking, automobile, bike, transit, etc.).

Estimates from the fitness business owners showed that 80 percent of clients came from the surrounding communities and that the remainder generally came in from further away on their way to and from work. Estimates also showed that the most frequent mode of travel to the sites was by car. However, fitness business owners stated that a growing number of local patrons' bike or walk and use alternative modes of travel.

Existing data supports that fitness studio uses draw a higher parking demand than their retail commercial counterparts and are consistent with the City's existing parking requirements. Because of this, staff proposes modifying only the parking requirements for "Studio" uses when located in the Commercial Downtown Zone (CD) or located within mixed use projects that are more consistent with the ITE Parking Generation Manual's findings related to parking demand for "shopping centers" (non-December, weekday).

The ITE defines "shopping center" to include an integrated group of commercial establishments that is planned, developed, owned, and managed as a unit. A shopping centers composition is related to its market area in terms of size, location, and type of store, and provides on-site parking facilities enough to serve its own parking demands. Different than a standalone business establishment, the ITE use of shopping center is most like the City's existing commercial downtown district with district parking, as well as the development of mixed-use projects along the City's commercial corridors.

The ITE Parking Generation Manual included a total of 5 studies on existing shopping centers ranging from 1980 to present, including sites in Arizona, California, Colorado, Delaware, and Florida, that fall into the dense multi-use urban setting. The study demonstrates that the average parking supply ratio for shopping center is 2.76 per 1,000 square feet (or one parking stall per 362 square feet). This data is consistent with the City's existing parking requirements for retail uses.

Staff recommends the modification of Table 3.3 of CCMC Section 17.320.020.H to require "Studio" uses have one (1) parking space per 350 square feet gross floor area only when they are located in the Commercial Downtown (CD) Zone, or within a Mixed-Use Project.

Recommendations:

Staff recommends updating Chapter 17.700 to define "Studio" uses as follows:

Studios for Art, Dance, Music, Photography, and the like. Small-scale facilities, typically

accommodating ~~one a~~ group of students ~~at a time, in no more than one instructional space in no more than 3,000 square feet of instructional area~~. These include facilities for: individual and group instruction and training in the arts; performing arts and production rehearsal; photography, and the processing of photographs produced only by users of the studio facilities; ~~and fitness studio uses including, but not limited to,~~ martial arts training, ~~studios; and~~ aerobics, yoga, ~~personal training, indoor cycling, pilates,~~ and gymnastics ~~studios with no other fitness facilities or equipment~~. Larger facilities are included under the definition of “Schools, Specialized Education and Training ~~or “Health/Fitness Facilities.”~~”

Staff recommends modifying Chapter 17.320 to reflect Studio parking requirements as follows:

Land Use Type: Recreation, Education & Public Assembly	Vehicle Spaces Required
Studios for dance, art, music, photography, martial arts, personal fitness, etc	1 space per 200 sf of gross floor area. 1 space per 350 sf of gross floor area in CD Zone or in Mixed Use Projects.

Proposed text amendments are also provided in Exhibit A to Attachment No. 1.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Staff received no public comment prior to the finalization of agenda packets.

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION:

Pursuant to Section 15061(b)(3) of the California Environmental Quality Act, the proposed Zoning Code Text Amendment is considered exempt because it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the “project” to amend Zoning Code Sections 17.320 - Off-Street Parking and Loading and 17.700 - Definitions, will have a significant effect on the environment. The project by itself, does not result in any physical changes in the environment because it will only amend the Zoning Code to modify parking requirements and definitions to clarify smaller scale and specialized fitness studios, and does not result in changes to existing land use, density or an intensification of development beyond what the Zoning Code currently allows.

FISCAL ANALYSIS:

There are no fiscal impacts related to this item.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Draft Planning Commission Resolution No. 2020-P002 and Exhibit A - Proposed Code Amendments

2. ITE and Adjacent Jurisdiction Data Tables
3. City of Beverly Hills Traffic Study for Yoga Use

MOTION:

That the Planning Commission:

Adopt Resolution No. 2020-P002 recommending to the City Council approval of Zoning Code Text Amendment P2020-0018-ZCA to modify definition and parking standard for fitness related studio uses.