



City of Arts & Innovation

Utility Services / Land Use / Energy Development Committee

TO: UTILITY SERVICES / LAND USE / ENERGY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS **DATE: MARCH 10, 2016**

FROM: COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT **WARDS: ALL**

SUBJECT: WAREHOUSE DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS IN INDUSTRIAL ZONES ADJACENT TO RESIDENTIAL

ISSUE:

The issue for Utility Services/Land Use/Energy Development Committee consideration is to receive a report summarizing the City's development criteria for industrial zoned properties when adjacent to residentially zoned properties.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Utility Services/Land Use/Energy Development Committee receive this report and provide direction regarding for additional regulations or guidelines.

BACKGROUND

At the May 19, 2015, City Council meeting Councilmember Melendrez requested staff present to the Utility Services/Land Use/Energy Development Committee a report on the areas in the City where industrial zones abut residential zones, specifically in regards to the potential for large warehouses to encroach on residences. This report summarizes the existing conditions related to the construction of large industrial warehouses in proximity to residentially zoned properties.

Industrial and Residential Adjacent Zones

It is not uncommon in the City of Riverside for industrial zoned properties to abut residential zones. In some cases industrial zones were established many decades ago, based on practical considerations, such as access to railroad tracks (e.g., old citrus packing houses, etc.), or within a reasonable walking distance to commerce and employee housing. These old industrial zones have long been an integral part of a neighborhood, even after the old buildings are demolished and new structures constructed in their place. An example of such an industrial area is the warehouses east of Downtown, which abut the Eastside Neighborhood. In other cases industrial zoned land have been developed on large parcels with available freeway access.

Many of these areas have been developed with business centers or local warehouses, which have limited impact on nearby residents because the industrial buildings are relatively low in height, have low intensity uses, and are often buffered from residential neighborhoods by streets, alleys or parking lots. These types of industrial zones were mostly developed after 1960, and

often accommodate small local businesses. Examples of these developments are the low-scale industrial centers off of 3rd Street, west of the 215 freeway; as well as buildings on the north side of Spruce Street, in the Hunter Park Industrial area.

In many areas of the City industrial zoned properties are compatible with residential tracts, where they are quite neighbors during the night and on weekends. However, recent concern with industrial/residential compatibility has arisen due to the growth of the Inland Empire's Logistics industry, which has created a demand for large warehouse buildings with high pile storage systems and a significant amount of nighttime activity. These structures often maximize the permitted building heights and floor areas; and generate significant amounts of truck traffic.

When considering compatibility of industrial areas with residential uses, it is important to recognize that the industrial zoning itself is not necessarily the problem, but rather the design of the buildings and the intensity of their activities. Unfortunately, with modern technology it has to be possible to construct, fill and manage the processing of goods in mega-warehouses, which can be larger than a million square feet.

Development Standards vs. Guidelines

When considering the development regulations related to the construction of warehouses, it is necessary to note a distinction between development "standards" and development "guidelines". Standards are requirements that must be complied with. Guidelines are recommendations, and provide criteria useful during the review of discretionary projects. Guidelines are, essentially, what "should" be done; whereas standards are requirements.

Development Standards:

The City's Zoning Code has four defined industrial zones, including Business and Manufacturing Park (BMP), General Industrial (I), Airport Industrial (AI) and Airport Zone (AIR). Warehouse facilities 400,000 square feet or less are permitted by right in all four zones; Warehouses greater than 400,000 square feet require the approval of a Minor Conditional Use Permit (MCUP).

Attachment 1 reflects two tables taken from the Zoning Code, which specifies the basic requirements for buildings in the industrial zones. As illustrated in the tables, the maximum heights in the BMP, I and AIR zones is 45 feet, and 20 feet in the AI zone. There are no special height restrictions associated with a building's proximity to a residential zone.

The Zoning Code also establishes regulations that limit how close a building can be constructed to a property line. As reflected in Table A, any building constructed in the BMP, I or AIR zones must be at least 50 feet from the property line when adjacent to a lot with a residential zone or use. In the AI zones, the side and rear setbacks shall be the same as the required front yard setback whenever a side or rear yard abuts a lot zoned for residential use. In the AI zone, the minimum front setback depending on the size of the lot; with 20 and 15 foot setbacks allowed for properties smaller than 20,000 and 14,000 square feet, respectively.

TABLE A - Minimum Required Building Setbacks				
	Zones			
	BMP	I	AIR	AI
Front Setback				
Buildings over 30' high	50', or 40' if setback is landscaped in entirety	20'	15'	15', 20' or 50' based on lot size
Buildings under 30' high	20' of landscaping	20'	15'	15', 20' or 50' based on lot size
Side Setbacks				
Interior	0'	0'	0'	20'; or 0' for lots < 20,000 sf
Street or Alley	Same as front	20'	15'	20'; or 0' for lots < 20,000 sf
To Adj. Residential Zone	50'	50'	50'	Same as front yard setback
Rear Setbacks				
Interior	0'	0'	15'	20'; or 0' for lots < 20,000 sf
Street Adjacent	Same as Front	20'	20'	20'; or 0' for lots < 20,000 sf
To Adj. Residential Zone	50'	50'	50'	Same as front yard setback

While Table A summarizes building setbacks, it does not clarify what part of the setback must be landscaped. If not landscaped, then parking, outdoor activities and minor structures are allowed within the building setbacks. Table B summarizes the Zoning Code's landscape setback requirements.

TABLE B - Minimum Landscaped Setbacks				
	Zones			
	BMP	I	AIR	AI Zones
Front Landscape Setback				
Buildings over 30' high	20'	20'		20', except 15' in AI-4 @ <14,000 sf lots
Buildings under 30'	20'	20'		20', except 15' in AI-4 @ <14,000 sf lots
Side Landscape Setback				
Interior	0'	0'	0'	0'
Street or Alley	20	10'	10'	"Suitably landscaped" per RMC §
Adj. to Residential Zone	0'	0'	0'	Same as front setback (i.e., 20')
Rear Landscape Setback				
Interior	0'	0'	0'	0'
Street Adjacent	20'	0'	0'	"Suitably landscaped" per RMC §
Adj. to Residential Zone	0'	0'	0'	Same as front setback (i.e., 20')

In addition to the height and setback requirements illustrated above, the Riverside Municipal Code (RMC) also requires the construction of a 6-foot high solid masonry wall along a property line if an industrial area is adjacent to a residential zones, or along an alley adjacent to a residential zone (RMC sec. 19.130.040.A).

In addition to the Zoning Code, the City has specific plans that establish development criteria that are intended to address the unique characteristics of an area. As such a specific plan may create development standards that are different than the Zoning Code. The specific plans that are most relevant to large warehouse facilities include the Sycamore Canyon Business Park Specific Plan, and the Hunter Park Specific Plan.

The Sycamore Canyon Specific Plan was initially adopted in July 1982, and has been amended numerous times as development has occurred within its boundaries. Most of the Sycamore Canyon Specific Plan has been built out, and the last large undeveloped parcel has an application pending. For the most part, the Sycamore Canyon Specific Plan refers back to the Zoning Code for the application of development standards, except that it does establish the unique setbacks requirements reflected in Table C.

TABLE C – Specific Plan Setbacks	
Front Building Setbacks	
Arterial streets and buildings over 30 feet in height	Same as Zoning Code for buildings over 30 feet in height in BMP Zone
All streets where building is less than thirty feet in height	Same as Zoning Code for buildings less than 30 feet in height in BMP Zone
Side and Rear Building Setback	
Interior, except where a lot abuts any R Zone	None required
Abutting an R Zone	50 feet
Street	Same as front setback

The Hunter Park Specific Plan was initially adopted in 1988, and has been amended numerous times. Like the Sycamore Canyon Specific Plan, Hunter Park mostly defers to the Zoning Code for development standards. Also like Sycamore Canyon, Table C reflects those unique setback requirements that apply to the Hunter Park area; except, however, there is a provision that approved lots less than one acre in size shall have a 20 foot minimum front yard setback.

Guidelines:

The City has adopted citywide design guidelines that provide best practices for site planning and architectural design. These design guidelines are general in context, and help ensure consistent review and approval of Design Review applications, which are required for all warehouse projects in industrial zones. The citywide design guidelines can also be helpful in reviewing and conditioning discretionary project, such as warehouse projects that require a minor conditional use permit.

In 2003, at the direction of the Riverside County Board of Supervisor's, a Regional Air Quality Task Force (RAQTF) was formed to study air quality in the region, and make recommendations on how to improve it. An outcome of that effort was the Western Riverside Council of Government's (WRCOG) "*Good Neighbor Guidelines for Siting New and/or Modified Warehouse/Distribution Facilities*". WRCOG's Good Neighbor Guidelines were completed in September, 2005, and identify goals to reduce air pollution, strategies that support the goals, and recommended regional guidelines (Attachment 2).

Subsequently, in October 2008 the Riverside City Council adopted the “*City of Riverside’s Good Neighbor Guidelines for Siting New and/or Modified Warehouse/Distribution Facilities*”. The City’s document is a modified version of WRCOG’s Guidelines, and was intended to include goals and strategies tailored to the unique characteristics and specific needs of the City of Riverside. The City’s Good Neighbor Guidelines were intended to focus on the relationship between land use, permitting, and air quality, and highlight strategies that help minimize the impacts of diesel emissions associated with warehouse/distribution centers (Attachment 3).

Both the WRCOG and City Guidelines focus on reducing impacts of diesel emission on sensitive receptors, including residential neighborhoods, schools, parks, playgrounds, day care centers, nursing homes, hospitals, and other public places where residents are most likely to spend time. However, there are significant differences between the two documents. Attachment 4 summarizes the goals and strategies of the two documents, and notes the significant differences. One issue that has been identified in recent months is that the WRCOG Guidelines stipulate that sensitive uses should be buffered 300 meters (~1,000 feet) from warehouse/distribution facilities by offices, parking, landscaping, etc; whereas the City’s Guidelines require that a health risk assessment be done in compliance with SCAQMD guidelines/policies when a project is within 1,000 feet of a sensitive receptor.

Another significant difference is that the City’s Guidelines only apply to facilities of 400,000 sq. ft. or great. The basis of the 400,000 sq. ft. is unclear in the guidelines, but it likely simply based on the premise that the Zoning Code, which underwent a comprehensive update in 2007, allows facilities under 400,000 square feet by right, whereas larger facilities require a conditional use permit.

To help illustrate where there are industrial and single family residential adjacencies, staff has provided a Citywide map that reflects all the industrial zones (BMP, I, AIR & AI), and all the single family residential zones (R-1, RR, RC, RE & RA-5). The map is provided as Attachment 5.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact associated with this report.

Submitted by: Rafael Guzman, Community & Economic Development Director
Certified as to
availability of funds: Brent A. Mason, Finance Director/Treasurer
Approved by: Al Zelinka, FAICP, Assistant City Manager
Approved as to form: Gary G. Geuss, City Attorney

Attachments:

1. RMC, Tables 19.130.030. A & B; Development Standards for Industrial Zones.
2. Good Neighbor Guidelines for Siting New and/or Modified Warehouse/Distribution Facilities, WRCOG, 2005
3. Good Neighbor Guidelines for Siting New and/or Modified Warehouse/Distribution Facilities, City of Riverside, 2008
4. Comparison Matrix of WRCOG and City Good Neighbor Guidelines
5. Citywide Map Showing Industrial/Single-Family Residential Adjacencies
6. Presentation