

GENERAL INFORMATION

Applicant: HOM Furniture Inc. (Owner)

Location: Citywide

Request: Privately initiated ordinance amendment to Section 19.03 defining “Large Item Retail Goods” and establishing Off-Street Parking Standards for Large Item Retail Goods in Section 21.301.06.

CHRONOLOGY

Planning Commission Action: 10/08/15 – Recommend approval of the Ordinance as presented.

City Council Agenda: 11/02/15 – Public Hearing scheduled

PROPOSAL

HOM Furniture, Inc. requests a privately initiated City Code Amendment to create a separate off-street parking requirement for large good retail stores, specifically intended for furniture and appliance stores. Currently, large item retail stores have the same parking requirements as any other retail use. The proposed amendment would be to Section 19.03 (definitions) and Section 21.301.06 (off-street parking) of the City Code.

HISTORY

HOM Furniture, Inc. owns and operates an 84,000 square foot furniture and accessories store at 7800 and part of 7850 Dupont Avenue South. The property at 7850 Dupont is shared with Golf Galaxy. HOM recently purchased 7850 Dupont Avenue with the intent of Golf Galaxy vacating the site and are proposing a large expansion in the next 6-12 months, effectively doubling the total retail square footage for the furniture store. In preparing plans for the store expansion, accommodating the City Code required number of parking stalls on the site became the greatest challenge. HOM Furniture maintains the City of Bloomington off-street parking requirement for Retail Sales and/or Services requires significantly higher parking quantity than what is necessary to serve a large furniture store. As a result, the applicant provided the funding to complete a parking study and submitted an application for a privately initiated City Code amendment to create a lower parking standard for large item retail sales.

ANALYSIS

The applicant has two related proposals. The first is to add a new definition for large item retail sales. Second, the applicant would like to establish a new parking standard for that specific use.

A privately initiated request to create a set of standards for a unique use is common. Auto sales are an example of a unique retail sales use. Staff agrees the retail sale of furniture is unique based on sales generally resulting in delivery with inventory located in a warehouse. The showroom use of large items has characteristics different from a traditional retail use.

Staff reviewed American Planning Association and other municipal ordinances definitions for similar uses. The definition is important, as it establishes which type of retail uses are eligible for a reduced parking requirement. The applicant proposes and staff supports a definition as follows:

Retail, Large Item Sales - Facilities where large items are displayed and sold for later delivery, with minimal incidental over-the-counter sales. Examples include facilities that sell furniture, carpet, mattresses, large appliances, cabinets and other large items that are determined by the Issuing Authority to create similar parking demands per square foot, but specifically exclude motor vehicle sales, pawnshops and facilities with more than incidental over the counter sales. While classified separately for parking purposes, Large Item Retail Sales facilities are considered retail uses for determining use status in each zoning district.

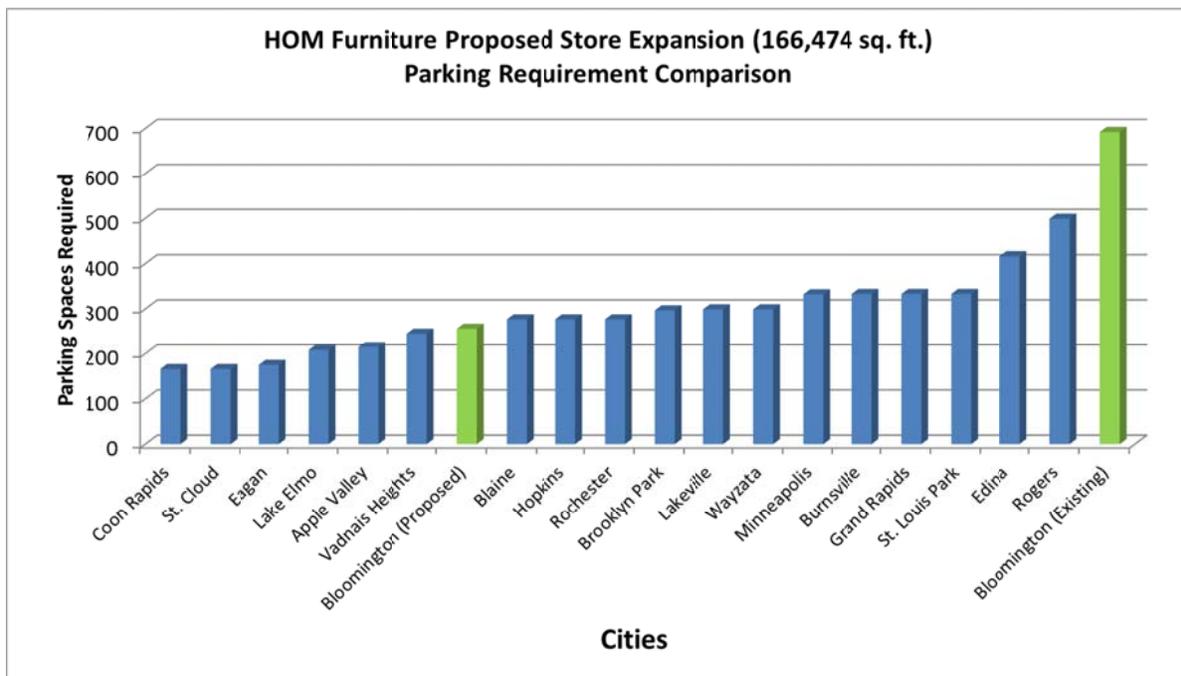
Determining the appropriate amount of off-street parking required by a municipal zoning ordinance, like many aspects of planning, is not an exact science. When reviewing off-street parking provisions, the list of sources available is often short and largely based on the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) for information related to parking demand generated by various land uses. Despite the fact that ITE's information may be the most extensive quantitative data readily available, ITE cautions much of the information is based on studies conducted in locations where few transportation alternatives exist and/or are based on studies with a very small sample size.

For example, the ITE manual study of furniture stores consisted of researching six stores of various sizes within mostly suburban locations. This research yielded a range of parking demand of 0.67-1.30 vehicles per 1,000 sq. ft. of gross floor area for furniture stores at peak periods. Alternatively, the ITE study of carpet stores resulted in a parking demand range of 0.88-3.00 vehicles per 1,000 square feet for peak period on Saturdays. This research suggests that the parking demand for these types of uses is much less than the amount parking required in most municipalities. According to the Alliant Engineering Study, the ITE Parking Generation Manual requires 1.04 parking spaces per 1,000 square feet for furniture stores.

Beyond a review of the ITE studies, staff evaluated amending the City's off-street parking standards for large item retail sales by requiring a parking study and researching other cities in Minnesota. Of the 30 cities surveyed, 18 cities list a separate parking standard for large item retail sales (mostly furniture and appliance sales). The research results can be found in the attached table *Large Item Retail Sales – Off-Street Parking Research*. In addition, staff

completed an analysis to determine how many parking spaces would be required for the proposed Bloomington HOM Furniture store expansion in other Minnesota cities that offer a reduced parking standard for these types of retail uses. Figure 1 shows the comparison of all the cities that have large item retail parking. Cities that do not offer reduced parking quantities for large item retail sales were not included, as they would not offer a useful comparison to the parking quantity in the ordinance amendment. The proposed parking requirement would be in the mid-range of local cities where a reduced large item retail parking standard exists.

FIGURE 1: Parking Requirement Comparison - Proposed HOM Furniture Expansion



As required, the applicant commissioned a parking study through the City. Alliant Engineering completed the independent research to determine the appropriate parking demand for the retail sales of furniture and appliances. HOM Furniture provided historical parking data for the stores in the metropolitan area. Supplementing that material, Alliant Engineering evaluated the parking demand at two appliance retail stores. The result of the study was the following:

- The parking demand at the Bloomington HOM Furniture store is confirmed to be significantly lower than the amount required by City Code. The parking demand rate is 1 space per 1,300 square feet.
- Data from other HOM stores suggest the parking demand to be in the range of 1 space per 1,000-2,000 square feet. Data from the two appliance stores studies suggest a parking demand of 1 space per 1,700 square feet.
- There is not a linear correlation between parking demand and store size for large item retail stores. In other words, the amount of parking needed does not increase at the same rate as square footage as the store gets larger.

- Finally, typical range for reduced parking requirements for large item retail stores in other municipalities is between 1 parking space per 400 to 1000 square feet.

The study is included as an attachment to the Staff Report for consideration by the City Council.

Considering the information (ITE Parking Manual, Alliant Engineering Parking Study, and internal City research), staff determined that a higher parking requirement may be required to accommodate building reuse. An example would be a 10,000 square foot appliance store in a retail center that could not be re-occupied by traditional retail use without constructing more parking.

Thus, in the context of the ITE Parking Manual and the consultant’s recommendations, there is a significant staff concern of reducing the parking requirement for smaller furniture stores. While staff does not disagree the parking demand for large retail sales is less per square foot than traditional retail stores, there is concern over the re-use of a smaller site. It is important to ensure that buildings/developments have a long and effective life cycle for multiple users/uses. For example, if a 10,000 square foot furniture store was constructed using the ITE Parking Generation Manual requirements of 1 space per 1,000 square feet, the total parking provided would be 10 spaces. Using this parking recommendation, the future use of the building could not be retail or office without a variance to the parking requirements. Basically, the most suitable reuse would be warehouse, which is not allowed in retail districts.

Given the concern noted above, staff and applicant collaborated to create a tiered parking demand approach to address staff concerns over reuse of smaller structures, yet allow larger users to have a decreased parking requirement. The recommended City Code change, as shown in the applicant’s project description and proposed ordinance amendment, is as follows:

Large Item Retail Sales – Store Size	Parking Schedule
Under 20,000 square feet	1 parking space per 220 square feet of gross floor area
20,000 – 49,999 square feet	90 spaces plus 1 space per 600 square feet over 20,000 sq. ft. gross floor area
50,000 square feet and over	140 spaces plus 1 space per 1,000 square feet over 50,000 square feet gross floor area.

This recommended schedule would accommodate the proposed HOM Furniture store expansion with the existing number of parking stalls at the site. In addition, staff is confident the recommended parking schedule will provide adequate parking quantities for other large item retail stores/uses in the community. After reviewing the parking study and conducting internal research, it is clear that the City’s parking standard for general retail provides a much greater amount of parking than is necessary for large item retail sales. In addition, staff finds that the recommended parking schedule will allow smaller retail sites that sell large items to be reused by other users should they be vacated.

RECOMMENDATION

Given that staff and the Planning Commission recommend approval, the following motion is recommended:

In Case 10000H-15, I move to adopt an ordinance to amend City Code Section 19.03 by creating a definition for “Retail, Large Item Sales” and Section 21.301.06 by creating off-street parking standards for “Large Item Retail Sales”.

ORDINANCE NO. 2015-29

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING SECTION 19.03 TO DEFINE “RETAIL, LARGE ITEM SALES” AND AMENDING SECTION 21.301.06(D) TO ADD PARKING REQUIREMENTS FOR “LARGE ITEM RETAIL SALES”, THEREBY AMENDING CHAPTERS 19 AND 21 OF THE CITY CODE

The City Council of the City of Bloomington, Minnesota ordains:

Section 1. That Chapter 19 of the City Code is hereby amended by adding those words that are underlined, to read as follows:

CHAPTER 19 ZONING

ARTICLE I. GENERAL PROVISIONS

* * *

Division B. Definitions

SEC. 19.03. DEFINITIONS.

The following words and terms when used in this Chapter shall have the following meanings unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

Retail, Large Item Sales - Facilities where large items are displayed and sold for later delivery, with minimal incidental over-the-counter sales. Examples include facilities that sell furniture, carpet, mattresses, large appliances, cabinets and other large items that are determined by the Issuing Authority to create similar parking demands per square foot, but specifically exclude motor vehicle sales, pawnshops and facilities with more than incidental over the counter sales. While classified separately for parking purposes, Large Item Retail Sales facilities are considered retail uses for determining use status in each zoning district.

Section 2. That Chapter 21 of the City Code is hereby amended by adding those words that are underlined, to read as follows:

CHAPTER 21

ZONING AND LAND DEVELOPMENT

ARTICLE III. DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

Division A. General Standards

SEC. 21.301.06. PARKING AND LOADING.

(d) **Number of off-street parking spaces required.**

(1) The minimum number of off-street parking spaces provided within a development must meet the provisions of this subsection, varying by land use as provided in the following table. If more than one land use is present on a site, the required parking is determined by adding together the required number of parking spaces for each use.

If the number of off-street parking spaces results in a fraction, each fraction of one-half or more will constitute another space required. A lesser number of constructed off-street parking spaces may be allowed through flexibility measures (see Section 21.301.06(e) of this Code, parking reduction flexibility measures). The requirements for off-street surface parking space dimensions are set forth in Bloomington Code Section 21.301.06(c).

MINIMUM OFF-STREET PARKING REQUIREMENTS

NON-RESIDENTIAL

Retail Sales and/or Service	
General Retail under 10,000 square feet of gross floor area	One space per 180 square feet of gross floor area;
10,000-99,999 square feet of gross floor area	55 spaces plus additional one space per 220 square feet of gross floor area over 10,000 square feet;
100,000 square feet of gross floor area and over	460 spaces plus additional one space per 285 square feet of gross floor area over 100,000 square feet
Large Item Retail Sales	
<u>Large Item Retail under 20,000 square feet of gross floor area</u>	<u>One space per 220 square feet of gross floor area;</u>
<u>20,000-49,999 square feet of gross floor area</u>	<u>90 spaces plus additional one space per 600 square feet of gross floor area over 20,000 square feet;</u>
<u>50,000 square feet of gross floor area and over</u>	<u>140 spaces plus additional one space per 1,000 square feet of gross floor area over 50,000 square feet</u>

Passed and adopted this 2nd day of November, 2015.



 Mayor

ATTEST:



 Secretary to the Council

APPROVED:



 City Attorney