

SECTION 19 - AUTOMOBILE SERVICE STATIONS¹

Editor's note: current through Ordinance 2018-1131

19.1 JUSTIFICATION

- (a) In order to promote and preserve the public health, safety, convenience, general welfare and general prosperity, it is the intent of this Ordinance that automobile service stations shall not create increased pedestrian and vehicular traffic hazards and shall not be detrimental to the ordinary maintenance, development and redevelopment of the surrounding area as reflected by the General Plan, Zoning Regulations or specific plans approved by the City.
- (b) The purpose of this Section is to present locational criteria, developmental standards and operational standards to be used by the City Council, the City Planning Commission and the service stations under Conditional Use Permit procedures.

In addition, it is intended that these criteria and standards will be guidelines for the service station Conditional Use Permit applicant, the service station operator, communities throughout the City and the City as whole in order to achieve a balanced and effective integration of service stations with other land uses throughout the City.

19.2 CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT REQUIREMENT - Automobile service stations may be permitted in only the Neighborhood Commercial and Service Commercial Districts subject to the requirement of a Conditional Use Permit for each development.²

19.3 OPERATIONAL STANDARDS

- (a) Operations and Activities Expressly Prohibited:
 - 1) Major automobile repairs, except where the service station is located in a C-3, C-4 or M Zone and when permitted by regulations under Section 5.4.3(a)(1) of Ordinance 360 and where the major repairs are to be performed in a building which is separate to the area requirements for, the service station proper. A separate use permit for the major repair use shall be required unless it is included as part of the use permit for the service station.
 - 2) Exterior sales display and storage areas shall be considered as areas of principal business activity, and therefore, they shall be required to be located and designed in a manner which will not detract from the pleasing appearance of the enterprise.
 - 3) Outdoor displays of products such as tires, excepting if such products are in an enclosed storage rack or structure or on a portable rack. Service stations are to be limited to one such storage rack or structure or portable rack six feet in height, eight feet in length, four feet in depth. Other displays may only be made through obtaining a Special Events permit.

¹ Added by Ord. 474, 7/28/71

² Amended by Ord. 2018-1131, §38, 4/24/2018

- 4) Soft drinks, candy, cigarettes sold via dispensers are prohibited as an activity outside the building located on the service station site except if in an enclosed patio type area.
- (b) Rental Vehicles - The lease or rental of utility trailers, rental trucks and automobiles shall be permitted as an adjunct to the service station per the development standards contained herein.

A separate Use Permit for the trailer rental use is required unless included as part of the Use Permit for the station. Utility trailers, trucks and rental automobiles not exceeding an aggregate of six in number may be stored for rent on service station premises provided they are screened from view and occupy an area which is in addition to area requirements of this Section. Trailers shall be located so as not to interfere with normal on-site circulation when attaching or detaching from vehicles.

- (c) Hours of Operation - Service stations located in neighborhood commercial centers and sites adjoining residentially zoned or residentially developed property shall not commence operations before 6:00 A.M. and shall close down operations not later than 11:00 P.M. Signs on such sites should not be lighted between the hours of 11:00 P.M. and 6:00 A.M.
- (d) Gasoline Loading into Tanks - No gasoline should be loaded into any storage tank from any tank truck or tank trailer except through a permanent submerged fill pipe, unless the tank is equipped with a vapor loss control device or is a pressure tank.
- (e) Noise - Noise shall be muffled so as not to become objectionable due to intermittence, beat frequency, or shrillness and the decibel level measured at property lines shall not exceed street background noise normally occurring at location site.

19.4 LOCATIONAL AND SITE STANDARDS

(a) General Criteria

- 1) Service stations shall be grouped along thoroughfares and at the intersections of thoroughfares, unless unusual circumstances prevail. Distances between service station groups should be such as to clearly define such groups as separate entities.
- 2) Corner locations are preferred so as to provide ease of access. All stations shall have frontage on at least one major or collector street.

Service stations are encouraged to locate as part of or in conjunction with larger developments such as shopping centers and auto service centers.

- 3) When stations are located in commercial centers, they shall in all cases be located at the periphery in order to minimize traffic and pedestrian conflicts. In no case shall stations be located on isolated sites within residential areas. Service stations have relatively strong functional linkages with other commercial facilities and shall be so located as to minimize distances between stations and the other commercial facilities.

- (b) Site Dimension - The size and nature of a service station may be expected to vary with the location of the enterprise and/or the market it is intended to serve; however, minimum land area for service stations and accessory service stations shall be 6,000 square feet for the first pump island; plus 4,000 square feet for the second pump island; plus 1,000 square feet for each additional pump island. In addition, there shall be 1,000 square feet for each lubrication or non-mechanical washing bay.
- (c) Access and Internal Circulation
 - 1) Driveways shall be designed and located to ensure a safe and efficient movement of traffic on and off the site to and from the lane of traffic nearest the curb.
 - 2) All driveways shall be located and constructed according to the standards of the City of Belmont.

Driveways for service stations which are developed as part of or in conjunction with adjacent uses shall be located as part of the total circulation facilities of such adjacent uses.
 - 3) Provisions for on-site stacking lanes shall be provided.
 - 4) Access to lube bays in service stations shall be from the side or rear of the station except in cases where the Planning Commission finds that front access will best preserve the interests of adjacent land users and will foster the development of desirable circulation patterns. On stations where front access to lube bays is permitted, landscaping and related screening devices shall be used to reduce the view into the lube room work areas.
- (d) Setbacks - All pump islands shall be located a minimum of twenty feet from exterior property lines, and pump island canopies may project to within five feet of exterior property lines.
- (e) Minimum Street Frontage - Service station sites shall have least one hundred and thirty (130) feet of frontage on a major or secondary arterial or collector street.
- (f) Parking
 - 1) Parking on site is prohibited except for such vehicles as are in the process of being or have been serviced, those belonging to employees, service trucks owned by the establishment and rental trailers, rental trucks and automobiles.
 - 2) No vehicle which is waiting for service or which has been serviced shall be parked for a period longer than 48 hours on the station site.
 - 3) Gasoline tanker trucks shall not obstruct the public right-of-way during delivery.
 - 4) A minimum of two parking spaces for each service bay, plus one space for each employee on the longest shift shall be provided. All such parking spaces shall be

clearly striped and shall meet all City codes and standards as to size and accessibility.

- (g) Architectural Design - The siting and the architectural design and service station buildings shall be compatible with existing improvements and character of the area in which it is to be located. Unique design concepts are encouraged.
- (h) Landscaping
 - 1) At least twelve and one-half percent of the site shall be landscaped with plant materials designed to provide beautification and screening. Planting areas shall include but not be limited to the following:
 - a) Five-foot wide planters separating pump island for at least three-fourths of their entire length from the sidewalk or public right-of-way.
 - b) A planting area at the exterior corner of the site.
 - 2) A six inch high (minimum) concrete or masonry curb shall encompass all planting areas.
 - 3) Plant materials shall be chosen for their screening qualities, beauty and durability. Plantings shall include a mixture of trees, shrubs and ground covers.
 - 4) City parkway areas shall be provided with ground cover and street trees.
 - 5) All planting areas shall be provided with a permanent underground sprinkler irrigation system of a design suitable for the type and arrangement of planting selected.
 - 6) Landscape planting and sprinkler irrigation plans, and specifications shall be submitted by the applicant and approved by the Board of Design prior to the issuance of a building permit.
- (i) Perimeter Walls - New service station sites shall be separated from adjacent residentially zoned or residentially developed properties by a six foot high masonry wall or fence utilizing materials similar in color, module and texture to those utilized in the building. Such walls shall be reduced to three feet in height within adjacent street setback areas. Such walls need not be installed when building or other acceptable walls already exist on such property lines, or when located in conjunction with an adjacent use. Perimeter walls shall be maintained at all times.
- (j) Lighting
 - 1. All lighting facilities shall be directed away from adjoining properties.
 - 2. Luminaries shall be of low level, indirect diffuse type and shall not exceed a height of greater than twenty feet above finished grade.

- (k) Rest Rooms - All rest rooms shall be located inside or to the side or rear of the building with all outside entrances screened from public view by a six-foot high wall of materials in harmony with those utilized in the building.
- (l) Signing - No rotating, flashing, blinking or signing with animation shall be permitted. No banners or other attention attractive devices shall be permitted.³

At each place of business, which abuts or is adjacent to any street or highway, at which gasoline or other motor vehicle fuel is sold, offered for sale or otherwise dispensed to the public, there shall be posted or displayed and maintained on said place of business a sign or other advertising medium clearly visible from each abutting or adjacent street or highway which indicates or shows the actual price per gallon, including all taxes, at which grade of gasoline or other motor vehicle fuel is currently being sold, offered for sale, or otherwise dispensed at said place of business.

The gasoline or other motor vehicle fuel, the price of which is advertised by means of any sign or other advertising medium, shall be immediately available to be sold or dispensed to the public at said place of business, at said advertised price.

No change shall be made in the price of any grade of gasoline, or any other motor vehicle fuel which is offered for sale, sold or otherwise dispensed to the public at said place of business, without such change being first indicated or shown on a sign or other advertising medium as herein required.

Each sign or other advertising medium posted, displayed and maintained pursuant to the requirements of this section, shall comply with the provisions of Article 8 of Chapter 7 of Division 8 of the Business and Professions Code of the State of California.

- (m) Utilities - All utilities shall be installed underground within the exterior property lines of the site.
- (n) Trash Storage - A six-foot high enclosed trash area to be integrated with the design of the service station shall be provided.
- (o) Drainage - All drainage to the street shall be by underground structures to avoid drainage across walks or drive aprons.
- (p) Paving - All areas other than planting or building areas shall be surfaced in accordance with the requirements of the City Engineer.

19.5 NOTICE/ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

- (a) It shall be required as a condition of any Use Permit granted hereunder that the applicant/grantee of the Use Permit provide the oil company, the property owner and/or lessee each with a copy of the conditions embodied in the Use Permit so that there shall be no person operating the premises who is not aware of the conditions of operation.

³ Amended by Ord. 559, 5/28/75

(b) The Planning Commission shall have the right to add additional conditions or requirements in order to insure compatibility to the automobile service station with the surrounding area and the goals and objectives of the General Plan of the City.

19.6 ENFORCEMENT - This Section shall be enforced pursuant to the provisions of Section 17 of this Ordinance.

19.7 NONCONFORMING SERVICE STATIONS - Nonconforming service stations and uses on said service station sites shall be handled pursuant to Section 9 of this Ordinance. If conformity with standards adopted pursuant to this Section causes hardship due to existing configuration of on-site buildings or structures, a Variance may be applied for pursuant to Section 14 of this Ordinance.