



TO: Longview Planning Commission

FROM: Steve Langdon, Planning Manager

HEARING

DATE: March 14, 2018

SUBJECT: CASE NUMBER PC 2018-3: Proposed zoning code amendments to allow data centers in Longview’s industrial zoning districts.

TYPE OF

DECISION: Legislative

BACKGROUND

Over the last two years, the city has received several inquiries about locating data centers in the City of Longview. One firm is negotiating a lease for a city-owned building. The zoning code currently does not list “data centers” as a permitted use in any of its zoning districts. Data centers are defined as following:

Data center: A facility equipped with or connected to one or more computers, used for processing or transmitting data. (*Random House Dictionary*)

A data center is a facility used to house computer systems and associated components, such as telecommunications and storage systems. It generally includes redundant or backup power supplies, redundant data communications connections, environmental controls (e.g. air conditioning, fire suppression) and various security devices. A large data center is an industrial-scale operation using as much electricity as a small town. (*Wikipedia*)

In further reading about data centers, they typically do not generate much traffic and the only noise they tend to generate is from heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems. As stated in the definition above, data centers can be “industrial-scale operations.” Thus, industrial zoning districts seem to be the appropriate districts for them.

The proposal also include eliminating the term “technology centers” from the list of permitted uses in the industrial district. City staff has found that technology centers typically refer to geographic locations (e.g. Silicon Valley in California) or to large academic centers such as universities. It is a general, non-specific term that typically does not refer to an individual building or land use.

PROPOSAL

The proposal, if adopted, will amend one line and add another line to LMC “Table 19.58.020-1. Permitted uses in industrial districts” as follows:

Table 19.58.020-1. Permitted uses in industrial zones.			
Use			
	LI-A & B	HI	C/I
Research, development, <u>and testing services</u> , and technology centers	P	P	P
<u>Data centers</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>P</u>

Note: text that is underlined is proposed to be added. Text with a line thru it is proposed to be eliminated.

Table 19.58.020-1 in its entirety with the proposed amendments is attached as Exhibit A.

S.E.P.A. Determination

An Environmental Checklist for the proposed zoning code revisions was reviewed pursuant to the State Environmental Policy Act and a determination of non-significance was issued on February 28, 2018. [E 2018-4 SEPA checklist] The comment period for the SEPA checklist ended on March 14, 2018. SEPA documents are attached as Exhibit B.

Additional Information

Pursuant to Chapter 19.81 of the Longview Municipal Code, a legal notice was published in the Longview Daily News on March 4, 2018 and March 11, 2018.

Citizen Correspondence

As of this writing, the City has received no written comments.

Comprehensive Plan Goal and Policies

The comprehensive plan contains a multiple goals, objectives and policies relating to land use compatibility including the following:

Goal LU-A To encourage orderly, efficient, and beneficial development within Longview while maintaining a balance of business and residential uses within the City.

Goal LU-E To support existing businesses and provide an energetic business environment for new industrial and commercial activity providing a range of service, office, commercial, and mixed uses.

Policy LU-E.1.3 Ensure zoning regulations accommodate a range of allowable business and commercial uses in appropriate locations at the neighborhood, community, and regional levels.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FUTURE LAND USE MAP

The City industrial classifications are primarily located in the southern portions of the City along or near the Columbia and Cowlitz Rivers.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN INTENT STATEMENT

The comprehensive plan intent statements for the industrial classification are given below:

Light Industrial

The overall intent of the light industrial designation is to provide for low-intensity manufacturing, assembly, industrial services, distribution, storage, and similar uses that are conducted with minimal adverse impact on the environment and the general community. Light industrial uses tend to involve assembling and manufacturing of products from previously prepared material. Uses allowed in this district are generally contained within buildings. Compatible uses that directly serve the needs of other uses in the district or nearby districts are also allowed. The light industrial classification recognizes areas for such uses as those listed below:

- light manufacturing and fabrication;
- warehousing and storage;
- wholesale distribution;
- product processing and packaging;
- construction and contracting operations;
- heavy equipment and truck sales, service, and repair;
- feed and seed stores;
- building material wholesale and retail sales;
- laboratory and research operations;
- veterinary offices and clinics requiring outside animal runs; and
- offices and institutions serving industrial workers.

Heavy Industrial

This classification recognizes areas currently used or suitable for heavy industry because of good vehicular access, rail access, waterfront access, or proximity to existing heavy industry. Heavy industrial uses tend to involve processing of natural and manmade materials into finished goods for sale, and may take place in interior and/or exterior settings. Uses in this district may require some handling of hazardous or flammable materials, may require outdoor storage, and may create some external emissions of noise,

odor, glare, vibration, etc., but these are largely contained on-site, and, where possible, such uses are buffered from sensitive land uses. The heavy industrial classification recognizes areas for such uses as those listed below:

- manufacturing and fabrication,
- warehousing and storage,
- wholesale distribution,
- product processing and packaging,
- energy production, and
- shipping.

Compatible uses that directly serve the needs of other uses permitted within the district are also allowed.

Mixed Use

This classification is intended for areas that will promote an urban-style development with a mix of uses that commonly include commercial, office, and residential, with a strong emphasis on pedestrian connections. Strip commercial and residential development should not be allowed; instead, development should be focused into nodes or clusters. Mixed Use development may include permitted activities mixed within the same building or within separate buildings on the same site or on nearby sites. This classification should provide flexible development standards, which will ensure design compatibility between the site and the development, as well as between the development and the surrounding area. Three Mixed Use Designations (Residential/Commercial, Commercial/Industrial, and Office/Commercial) are described below.

Commercial/Industrial

This designation is intended to allow low intensity industrial uses, including light manufacturing, warehousing and distribution, research and development, and regional commercial services. Commercial uses should be compatible to and complement low-intensity industrial uses and provide a convenient business environment for employees and visitors. High quality employment facilities are encouraged, such as corporate office headquarters and technology centers.

ZONING CODE – PURPOSE STATEMENT

LMC 19.58.010 provides a “purpose” section for the industrial districts. It reads:

19.58.010 Purpose.

This chapter accommodates a range of industrial and commercial uses in two industrial districts, light industrial (LI) and heavy industrial (HI), and one mixed use district,

commercial/industrial (C/I). The LI district is split into two subdistricts (LI-A and LI-B) in recognition of previous development patterns. All of these districts are intended to provide for land use compatibility while providing a high-quality environment for businesses and employees.

The overall intent of the LI district is to provide for low intensity manufacturing, assembly, industrial services, distribution, storage, and similar uses that are conducted with minimal adverse impact on the environment and the general community. Uses allowed in this district are generally contained within buildings. Compatible uses that directly serve the needs of other uses in the district or nearby districts are also allowed.

The HI district is intended for industrial uses that tend to involve processing of natural and manmade materials into finished goods for sale, and may take place in interior and/or exterior settings. Uses in this district may require some handling of hazardous or flammable materials, may require outdoor storage, and may create some external emissions of noise, odor, glare, vibration, etc., but these are largely contained on-site.

The C/I district is intended to allow low intensity industrial uses, including light manufacturing, warehousing and distribution, research and development, and regional commercial services. Commercial uses should be compatible to and complement low-intensity industrial uses and provide a convenient business environment for employees and visitors. High quality employment facilities are encouraged, such as corporate office headquarters and technology centers.

This chapter guides the orderly development of industrial areas based on the following objectives:

- (1) Provide for efficient use of land and public services;
- (2) Provide appropriately zoned land with a range of parcel sizes for industry;
- (3) Provide transportation options for employees and customers;
- (4) Provide flexible lot standards that encourage compatibility between land uses, efficiency in site design, and environmental compatibility;
- (5) Locate business services close to major employment centers;
- (6) In conjunction with Chapter 19.55 LMC, Performance Standards – Industrial/Manufacturing Zones, ensure compatibility between industrial uses and nearby commercial and residential areas;
- (7) Provide appropriate design standards to accommodate a range of industrial uses; and
- (8) Provide attractive locations for businesses to locate.

STAFF DISCUSSION

City staff is recommending that data centers be allowed in the City's industrial districts. Allowing them in some of the City's commercial districts was discussed also. However, because data centers typically have low activity (relatively few employees and visitors), staff is concerned that they would cause dead spots in commercial areas and not add to the synergy of commercial neighborhoods. Even though they would not be allowed as a primary use in the City's commercial districts, they would be allowed as an accessory use to a permitted commercial use.

STAFF FINDINGS

Staff has examined the merits of the proposal to amend the Longview Zoning Code and makes the following findings:

1. Data centers are not listed as a permitted use in any of the City's zoning districts. Since the City has received several inquiries about locating data centers in the city, the City needs to amend the zoning code to determine in what districts they should be allowed as a primary use.
2. Data centers, as a primary use, can be large industrial-scale operation with substantial electricity and HVAC demands yet they typically do not generate much activity. Industrial districts are an appropriate location for data centers.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission recommend to the City Council to adopt the subject zoning code amendments.

EXHIBITS

- A. Table 19.58.020-1 with the proposed amendments
- B. SEPA Documents

Report Date: March 7, 2018