

I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

A hookah lounge is a commercial establishment where patrons smoke flavored tobacco, commonly referred to as shisha, using a waterpipe device known as a hookah. Originating from Middle Eastern cultural practices, hookah smoking has gained broader popularity in the United States over the past two decades, particularly as a social activity among young adults. These establishments typically function as social gathering spaces, often operating in a manner similar to cafés or lounges and commonly locating within commercial or entertainment-oriented areas.

In 2023, the City amended its Land Development Regulations (LDRs) to formally establish “hookah lounge” and “cigar bar” as defined uses and to identify the zoning districts in which these establishments may operate. As part of the 2023 LDR amendment, hookah lounges and cigar bars were permitted within the Community Commercial (CC), Commercial Warehouse (CW), and Commercial Entertainment (CE) zoning districts.

The General Commercial (CG) zoning district was not included in this amendment and therefore does not currently permit these uses. This regulatory framework reflects the City’s approach to directing such uses to specific commercial areas where they are more compatible with surrounding development patterns and intensity.

II. PROPOSED TEXT AMENDMENTS

LAND DEVELOPMENT – REGULATIONS

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SCHEDULE B - ALLOWABLE USES

Schedule B-2 - Uses Allowed in Nonresidential Districts.

Land Use Category	CO	CN	CG	CC	CW	CE	IL	PO	PL	PR	CR	S-1	CF	UT	NOT ZONED
Accessory uses	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	
...															
Holiday sales			SE/L	SE/L	SE/L	P			SE	SE					
Hookah Lounge/Bar			<u>SE</u>	SE	SE	SE									
Horticulture (i.e., garden store, nurseries and greenhouses)			A												
...															

III. ANALYSIS

The City’s Land Use Element of the Comprehensive Plan does not specifically address “Hookah” as a use, as such the specific determination for allowing this commercial use would be based on consistency and compatibility with other uses. Below are the pertinent factors that must be considered as part of an

amendment to the Land Development Regulations. LDR Article IV., Part 2.0., Section 2.4., requires the Board and City Commission to consider and evaluate zoning text changes in relation to all pertinent factors but with reference to six (6) specific factors. The proposed Ordinance is evaluated below against the six (6) identified factors.

a. The character of the district and its peculiar suitability for particular uses.

The proposed zoning designation (CG) is intended to accommodate commercial uses. Expanding “Hookah Lounges” within this district can provide additional opportunities for businesses or offer enhanced amenities to existing restaurants or bars. This uses is anticipated to have minimal impacts on surrounding properties, as they must be designed to capture and filter the smoke/vapor within the building.

Additionally, such uses are generally low-intensity in nature, occur within existing structures, and are compatible with the character and function of commercial developments. As a result, they are not expected to generate significant increases in traffic, noise, or demand for infrastructure beyond what is already associated with permitted in these areas.

b. Conservation of the value of buildings and encouraging the most appropriate use of land and water throughout the City.

The proposed ordinance considers the conservation of the value of building and encourages the most appropriate use of land and water throughout the City. This low-intensity, revenue-generating activity promotes the adaptive and efficient use of existing structures without requiring additional land or significant physical expansion.

c. The applicable portions of the adopted City Comprehensive Plan and programs such as land use, trafficways, recreation, schools, neighborhoods, drainage and housing, and so forth. *The proposed*

The City’s Comprehensive Plan does not specifically address “Hookah” as a permitted use; however, the proposed ordinance is consistent with the following goal of the Comprehensive Plan:

Goal 1 Future Land Use Element: The City Commission shall provide for a distribution of land use by type, density, and intensity to meet the needs of the current and future resident and seasonal population in a manner that; promotes compatible development, redevelopment, and urban infill; promotes a land use pattern that supports a multimodal transportation system, with an emphasis on pedestrian-ways and walkability; protects and improves the natural and physical characteristics of the City; and, ensures the timely, cost-effective provision of public facilities and services.

d. The needs of the City for land areas for specific purposes to serve population and economic activities.

The proposal may allow new and expansion of services to existing and new businesses within the city.

e. Whether there have been substantial changes in the character of development of areas in or near an area under consideration for rezoning.

The factor applies to Zoning District Map amendments and not LDR text amendments. Since this is essentially and LDR text amendment, this factor does not apply.

f. The facts and opinions presented to the Planning and Zoning Board through hearings.

This Development Review Report represents the Department's written findings of information submitted by staff. Staff reserves the right to take into consideration any additional information that may be brought to our attention.

IV. RECOMMENDATION/ACTION

The Department recommends the Board enter into the record the Development Review Report (DRR) and all other substantial competent evidence presented at the hearing, adopt the findings and conclusions contained herein, and forward the record to the City Commission with a recommendation that the proposed Ordinance amending the LDR be adopted.

V. ATTACHMENTS

1. None