



CITY OF ALEXANDRIA
Department of Planning & Zoning

Discussion: Trailers for Commercial Uses





Discussion Goal

- ▶ Guidance on a potential policy change to consider trailer use for commercial uses

- ▶ Possible topics:
 - Types of commercial uses operating from a trailer
 - Time limitations
 - Zoning approval path
 - SUP conditions if applicable



Recent SUP Approvals

2020

Four Mile Run Park	RPCA summer classroom	Summer use for two years
5101 Seminary	Double Apple Lounge restaurant	Two years with option for six additional months with admin SUP

2021

4513 Duke St	DHL retail mail facility	Two years
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2022

101 N Union St	Vola's taco restaurant	Two years with additional three year option with admin SUP
500 N Union St	Juicebox	Two years with additional three year option with admin SUP

2023

Canal Center Plaza	The Bike Club restaurant	Two years
2307A Mt Vernon Ave	Shaved ice restaurant	Two years with additional three year option with admin SUP

2024

421 Clifford Ave	Mother of Light classroom	Three years to coincide with lease
4320 Seminary Ave	Inova storage	Four years or later with admin SUP for construction delays
80 S Early St	David Donnelly retail & storage	Two years
3950 Wheeler Ave	Port City restaurant	Two years with additional three year option with admin SUP



City Council SUP Approval Trends

- ▶ Commercial uses:
 - private commercial schools
 - restaurants
 - retail establishments
 - storage
- ▶ Restaurant approvals, viewed as active uses, most often allowed for five years; other uses generally allowed for two years
- ▶ Occasional comments raised that private commercial schools, retail and storage uses should eventually locate in bricks and mortar spaces



Neighboring Jurisdictions

▶ Arlington County

- State building and fire codes regulate trailers as permanent structures; when used for temporary purposes, administrative approval applies
- Administratively approves temporary uses for offices, schools, and construction -related uses operating in trailers; all other uses are considered permanent and are regulated by standard zoning ordinance approval processes.

▶ Fairfax County

- State building and fire code regulate trailers
- Any commercial use allowed in trailer subject to zoning ordinance compliance

▶ Montgomery County

- State building and fire code regulate trailers
- Any commercial use allowed in trailer subject to zoning ordinance compliance



Summary of Comparison Study

- ▶ Considers trailers as permanent structures, approved through building permits, applying state building and fire code standards
- ▶ Two of three allow any commercial use in a trailer on a permanent basis in compliance with the zoning ordinance requirements



Option A

- ▶ Rely on state building, fire, and health codes to address maintenance, structural, health, and safety matters for by-right trailers
- ▶ Commercial uses would be subject to zoning ordinance approval

processes

Temporary trailer: Administrative SUP for two years

- Storage not visible from the public right of way
- Retail shopping establishments
- Private commercial school or private academic school

Permanent trailer: By - right

- Restaurants
- Public academic schools (currently administrative SUP)



Option B

- ▶ Require Administrative Special Use Permit approval for all trailer requests subject to conditions; commercial use must be allowed in the zone

Approval for one year

- Storage not visible from the public right of way
- Retail shopping establishments
- Private commercial school or private academic school

Approval for two years with proof of signed tenant lease and/or building permit submission

- Storage not visible from the public right of way
- Retail shopping establishments
- Private commercial school or private academic school

Approval with no time limit

- Restaurants
- Public academic schools



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