

Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND
CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Councilmember Dev Davis

SUBJECT: **DATE:** November 30, 2021

Approved



Date. 11/30/2021

Recommendation:

1. Replace staff's recommendation to "Replace 100% of the existing square footage of commercial or industrial space on site with commercial space." With "Required commercial replacement will encompass every net usable parcel front foot (net of vehicular ingress/egress) to a minimum depth of 50 feet. Further, encourage 12-15 foot first-floor heights for commercial space replacement." (For example, a 60-foot-wide parcel that has a 20-foot-wide vehicular ingress/egress area leaves 40 feet of frontage. 40 feet x 50 feet deep = 2,000/sf of new commercial required regardless of what is on site today.)
2. In the event a site is smaller than 0.5 acres gross yet abuts existing commercial and/or existing multi-family housing, explore appropriate increase in heights.

Discussion:

We should not wait another ten years to address the changes in market demand for commercial and residential requirements in Neighborhood Business Districts. Many of our business districts are just starting to recover from COVID shutdowns and economic upheaval. Requiring 100% replacement of existing commercial space is not looking to the future of the city's economics.

We do not want to force sizes and shapes of properties that essentially become unleaseable and sit empty, or worse, don't even get developed. The goal is to have great, leaseable retail built to current market needs and standards, not just more commercial space. This recommendation, since it applies to only a small proportion of our commercial properties, is a good experiment to see whether a focus on frontage rather than total square footage will encourage the development of higher-quality, more leaseable commercial spaces in our Neighborhood Business Districts.

The Planning Commission realized the need for a change in commercial requirements and in their suggested revision to the NBD overlay, they call for flexibility where it makes sense to do so, to achieve successful outcomes. I support the Planning Commission's thoughtful evaluation and recommendations.