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 Vote: Unanimous
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 Vote: Unanimous

CITY OF PALMER, ALASKA

ORDINANCE NO. 05-027

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 17.32 (CG, GENERAL COMMERCIAL DISTRICT) OF TITLE 17 (ZONING) TO DOWNZONE ITS RESIDENTIAL USES TO NO MORE THAN SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENCES WITH THE EXCEPTION OF USES WHICH ARE IN CONJUNCTION WITH GROUND FLOOR COMMERCIAL USE

THE CITY OF PALMER, ALASKA ORDAINS:

Section 1. Classification. This ordinance shall be permanent in nature and shall be incorporated into the Palmer Municipal Code.

Section 2. Severability. If any provision of this ordinance or any application thereof to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of this ordinance and the application to other persons or circumstances shall not be affected thereby.

Section 3. Chapter 17.32 is hereby amended to read as follows (new language is underlined and deleted language is stricken out):

Chapter 17.32

CG GENERAL COMMERCIAL DISTRICT

Sections:

17.32.010 Intent.

17.32.020 Permitted uses.

17.32.025 Standards for a large retail establishment permit.

17.32.026 Procedures for a large retail establishment permit.

17.32.030 Conditional uses.

17.32.040 Prohibited uses.

17.32.050 General conditions.

17.32.060 Building height limit.

- 17.32.062 Lot area restrictions.
- 17.32.064 Setback requirements.
- 17.32.066 Open space requirements.
- 17.32.068 Fencing requirements.
- 17.32.070 Repealed.
- 17.32.080 Parking.

17.32.010 Intent.

The CG district is established as a district in which the principal use of land is for commercial enterprises to provide for commercial enterprises which serve the needs of a large population and a large land area, and to provide a centralization of service by allowing heavier uses.

17.32.020 Permitted uses.

Permitted principal uses in the CG district are:

- A. Any use permitted in the limited commercial district;
- B. Motels, hotels;
- C. Bar, cocktail lounge, liquor and beer sales;
- D. Drive-in cafe or restaurant;
- E. Private club of fraternal, religious or philanthropic associations and union hall;
- F. Home appliance, electrical or electronic equipment, instrument, medical appliance, office equipment, plumbing equipment and store fixture sales, service and repair;
- G. Hardware store, general merchandise, pet shop;
- H. Surplus or second-hand store, pawnshop;
- I. Department store, furniture and household goods, sales and repairing, glass and mirror sales, paint, flooring;
- J. Tailor shop or furriers;
- K. Blueprinting and photostating, engraving, photo developing, print shop, publishing, rubber stamp or sign painting;
- L. Beauty or business college and studio or school of art, design, dancing, drama, modeling or photography;
- M. Collection or employment agency, janitor service, taxi or vending machines;
- N. Dental laboratory, funeral parlor, mattress repairing, taxidermy or upholstering;
- O. Telegraph or telephone office or travel agency;
- P. Radio and TV studios;
- Q. Veterinarian clinic, except no boarding of animals;
- R. Nursery and Christmas tree sales;
- S. Billiard hall, bowling alley or theater;
- T. Utility substation;
- U. Motorcycle, boat and bicycle sales, parts and service;
- V. Auto parts;
- W. Service station, tire sales and service, battery sales;
- X. Automobile and farm machinery sales; provided, that any open area used for the incidental repair of automobiles or farm machinery is located not less than 70 feet from the front lot line nor less than 25 feet from any other street line, unless such incidental repair is conducted and wholly confined within a building;

- Y. Garages including automobile repairing, painting, body and fender, or upholstering if all operations are conducted wholly within a completely enclosed building. If adjoining any R district, it shall have no openings other than stationary windows facing the R district;
- Z. Recreational vehicle and units, modular housing units, mobile homes, trailer repair and supporting parts and accessory sales; provided, that any open area used for the incidental repair of boats, automobiles, recreational vehicles and units, modular housing units, and mobile homes and trailers is located no less than 70 feet from the front lot line nor less than 25 feet from any other street line, unless such incidental repair is conducted and wholly confined within a building;
- AA. Tool and light equipment rental;
- BB. Large retail establishments;
- CC. Accessory uses customarily incidental to any of the above uses.

17.32.025 Standards for a large retail establishment permit.

- A. Intent. The standards in this section govern development plans and their review, promote architectural variety, access amenities, site improvements, and mitigation of community impacts. Where these standards conflict with other provisions of this title, these standards and the terms of the development plans approved under this section shall govern.
- B. Traffic Impacts.
 - 1. Vehicular Access. There shall be a minimum of two primary vehicular accesses. Primary and secondary vehicular access shall be from a street designated collector or greater on the city's most recent traffic study or analysis.
 - 2. Traffic Impact Analysis.
 - a. The developer shall submit a traffic impact analysis prepared by an engineer licensed by the state of Alaska under AS Title 8. Operational analysis and determination of level of service (LOS) for the traffic impact analysis prepared under this section must be in accordance with the Transportation Research Board's publication Special Report 209, Highway Capacity Manual (most current version).
 - b. The minimum acceptable LOS at intersections and on road segments both on the development's opening date and 10 years after the development opens is:
 - i. LOS C, if the LOS on the date of application is LOS C or better;
 - ii. LOS D, if the LOS on the date of application is LOS D or poorer; or
 - iii. If the LOS is poorer than LOS D, a lower minimum LOS is acceptable if the operation of the road does not deteriorate more than 10 percent in terms of delay time or other appropriate measures of effectiveness from the LOS before the development's opening date.
 - c. The traffic impact analysis must address the following:
 - i. Intersections on roads where traffic to any approach is expected to increase as a result of the proposed development by at least five percent of the approach's capacity.
 - ii. Segments of roads between intersections where total traffic is expected to increase as a result of the proposed development by at least five percent of the segment's capacity.

- iii. Each driveway or approach road that will allow egress from or ingress to a road for the proposed development.
 - iv. Parking and circulation routes within the proposed development to the extent necessary to ensure that traffic does not back up onto a roadway.
 - v. Pedestrian and bicycle facilities that are part of the road network affected by the development.
- d. For a development expected to generate less than 250 vehicle trips during the peak traffic hour of an adjacent road, the traffic impact analysis must consider the following:
- i. Projected traffic as the development's anticipated opening date, excluding the traffic generated by the development; and
 - ii. Projected traffic at the development's anticipated opening date, including the traffic generated by the development.
- e. For a development expected to generate more than 250 vehicle trips during the peak traffic hour of an adjacent road, in addition to the projected traffic volumes before and after the completion of the proposed development, the traffic impact analysis must consider the:
- i. Projected traffic 10 years after the development opens, excluding traffic generated by the development; and
 - ii. Projected traffic 10 years after the development opens including the traffic generated by the development.
- f. A traffic impact analysis prepared under this section must identify the following:
- i. Locations where road improvements are necessary to mitigate traffic impacts, including locations where the LOS is less than acceptable under this section (A) due to the development at either the opening date or 10 years after the development opens or (B) at either the opening date or 10 years after the development opens without the development and what improvements are necessary to prevent the LOS from deteriorating further.
 - ii. Road improvement alternatives that will achieve an acceptable LOS or minimize degradation of service below an already unacceptable LOS (A) on the opening date of the development and (B) 10 years after the development opens for a development expected to generate 250 or more vehicle trips during the peak hour of the adjacent road on the opening date of the development.
 - iii. Bicycle or pedestrian improvements necessary to accommodate bicycle and pedestrian traffic as negotiated between the city and the applicant; and
 - iv. Improvements needed for internal circulation and parking plans.
- g. The city will review and comment upon a traffic impact analysis prepared and submitted under this section. The city will, in its discretion, request clarification or further analysis of the impacts that it considers necessary to adequately consider the risks presented to the traveling public by the proposed development. If alternative means are proposed by an applicant for mitigation of the traffic impacts of a proposed development, the city will select the alternative that provides the greatest public benefit, at the least private cost, and that meets the appropriate LOS on an impacted city road. If the city accepts a means of

mitigation, the mitigation must be successfully completed before an occupancy certificate is granted.

C. Traffic Impact Mitigation.

1. Developments expected to generate 250 or more vehicle trips during the peak hour of the adjacent road on the opening date of the development shall make improvements as follows:
 - a. Improvements to a road or intersection shall be made to maintain an acceptable LOS if a road or intersection has an acceptable LOS under subsection (B)(2)(b) of this section without traffic generated by the development and an unacceptable LOS under subsection (B)(2)(b) of this section with traffic generated by the development at the opening date of the development or 10 years after the development opens.
2. If a road has an unacceptable LOS under subsection (B)(2)(b) of this section without traffic generated by the development, either at the opening date of the development or 10 years after the opening of the store, the developer shall make improvements to the adjacent roads so the operation of the roads does not deteriorate more than 10 percent in terms of delay time or other appropriate measures of effectiveness with the addition of the traffic generated by the development at the opening date of the development or 10 years later.
3. A development for which a traffic impact analysis report has been approved shall use signs and markings on approaches to highways within the development that conform to the Alaska Traffic Manual. The city adopts by reference the Alaska Traffic Manual, consisting of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Streets and Highways, 1988 Edition, including Revisions 1 through 7, issued by the United States Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, and the State of Alaska Supplement, as revised as of January 27, 1992. Internal circulation and parking layout must provide sufficient queuing distance within the development between the road and potential internal block points to ensure no traffic backs up onto the highway, including bicycle or pedestrian facilities.
4. If a traffic impact analysis discloses impacts upon pedestrian and bicycle traffic, a developer shall take steps to mitigate the impact.
5. The city will, in its discretion, relax the requirements for mitigation under this section, if it finds in writing that the:
 - a. Roads only marginally achieve an acceptable LOS without the traffic generated by the development and would likely fall below an acceptable LOS within five years.
 - b. Traffic generated by the development results in an unacceptable LOS and the cost of mitigating the impacts is disproportionate to the cost of the development.

D. Landscaping and Screening. The landscape plan shall provide for landscaping that reasonably reduces visual, sound, and/or traffic distraction impacts of vehicular movements. The variety of materials selected shall be compatible with the climate, planting location, and landscaping function.

1. Landscaping shall be equal to 15 percent of the total lot area.
2. Landscaping shall consist of a combination of components such as lawn area, landscape beds, ground cover plants, shrubs, evergreen trees, deciduous trees,

earthen berms and wooden fences. No single landscaping component may occupy more than 50 percent of the area to be landscaped.

- a. Evergreen and deciduous trees shall be planted at intervals no greater than 15 feet on center and shall be a minimum of three feet in height at planting.
 3. All parking lots visible from public rights-of-way shall be screened with a combination of trees, shrubs or other plant materials, possibly in combination with fences and berms.
 4. Where a side, or portion thereof, of an LRE parcel is adjacent to a residential zone, an earthen berm, no less than six feet in height, with evergreen trees planted at intervals of 15 feet on center shall be provided on such side or portion thereof. A solid wooden fence, no less than six feet in height, may be substituted for the berm. Due to the high winds in Palmer, an interlap fence (alternating board on each side) may also be used, and may be preferable to solid. For purposes of this subsection, "adjacent" means touching or across from an alley or residential street. "Adjacent" does not mean across from a commercial, collector, or arterial street.
 5. All landscaping structural requirements (e.g., drainage grading, concrete, rock or keystone bed structures, sidewalks) must be met at occupancy. Topsoil addition and final grading and seeding and all plantings of flora must be met within 12 months of occupancy, or within the first growing season after occupancy, whichever comes first. The owner, lessee, etc., shall continue to meet such requirements thereafter and replace all dead shrubs and trees to maintain the landscaping in good condition.
 6. Grassy areas shall be maintained according to standard turf practices, which include regular mowing, fertilizing and watering.
- E. Setbacks. The minimum setback for any building shall be 35 feet from the nearest property line.
- F. Parking.
1. A detailed parking plan shall address the convenience and safety of patrons, adequate winter lighting, landscaping amenities, and the configuration of parking spaces, walkways, and other amenities. Aesthetic features, landscaping, and the design of parking areas shall, wherever practicable, reduce the appearance of large expanses of parking from neighboring streets and enhance the view of the establishment from its principal point(s) of access.
 2. No more than 60 percent of the off-street parking area for the lot, tract or area of land devoted to the large retail establishment shall be located between the front facade of the large retail establishment and the abutting streets (the front parking area).
 3. The minimum number of parking spaces is determined by PMC 17.64.010. Additional landscaping and community space may be required where the applicant wishes to provide parking that exceeds 115 percent of the minimum standards of this title.
 4. The owner and lessees shall prohibit storage or overnight camping of trailers or recreational vehicles.
- G. Pedestrian Access. The establishment shall provide sufficient accessibility, safety, and convenience to pedestrians. Unobstructed sidewalks shall link the site to existing

public sidewalks, its entrances, and abutting residential and commercial areas. Sidewalks shall also be provided along the full length of any building where it adjoins a parking lot. Sufficient sidewalks or barriers shall be provided between parked cars and buildings to prevent vehicles from protruding into reasonable pedestrian passages. Sidewalks shall be separated from adjacent streets by an area sufficient for snow storage and to provide a buffer for pedestrians from vehicular traffic.

- H. Outdoor Lighting. A photometric and outdoor lighting plan to mitigate negative impacts on adjacent uses shall be submitted for approval. Outdoor lighting fixtures shall be arranged and shielded so that area lighting shall not shine unreasonably into the sky or onto adjacent property. This reasonableness standard may consider the zoning and uses of the adjacent parcels.
1. The outdoor lighting plan shall contain the following information:
 - a. Plans to indicate the location, type, intensity, and height of luminaries including both building and ground-mounted fixtures.
 - b. A description of the luminaries, including lamps, poles or other supports and shielding devices, which may be provided as catalogue illustrations from the manufacturer.
 - c. Photometric data, such as that provided as catalogue illustrations from the manufacturer, showing the angle of light emission and the foot-candles on the ground.
 - I. Outdoor Storage or Display Areas. Products stored or displayed outside shall not be visible from abutting property. Areas for the outdoor storage and sale of seasonal inventory shall be permanently defined and screened with walls and/or fences. The height of stored materials shall not exceed the height of the screening wall or fence. Materials, colors, and the design of screening walls and/or fences and their covers shall be complementary to those used as predominant materials and colors on the building.
 - J. Trash Collection and Recycling. Trash handling and recycling shall be screened from public streets and pedestrian ways, internal pedestrian sidewalks, and residentially used or residentially zoned property by landscaping or architectural features in conformity with the external design and materials used by the establishment. Screening shall be designed to abate noise and to confine loose trash. The routes and hours of trash collection may be limited as necessary to reduce the effects of noise or traffic on surrounding residential areas.
 - K. Snow Storage or Removal. A plan for snow storage or removal from the site shall be submitted and approved. Use of sidewalks, circulation drives, and landscaped areas for snow storage shall be prohibited.
 - L. Community Spaces. In large retail establishments over 70,000 square feet, appropriate interior and exterior public areas shall be provided and maintained for customers and visitors to the site to congregate and relax. Public areas shall be no less than three percent of the square footage of the structure.
 - M. Delivery and Loading Spaces. Delivery and loading operations shall be designed and located to mitigate visual and noise impacts on adjacent R-zoned property. Routes and hours may be limited as necessary to reduce the effects of noise or traffic on surrounding residential areas. Commercial trailers, shipping containers, and similar equipment used for transporting merchandise shall remain on the premises only as

long as required for loading and unloading operations, and shall not be maintained on the premises for storage purposes.

N. Aesthetic Characteristics.

1. Facades and Exterior Walls, Including Side and Back Walls. The building shall be designed in order to reduce the appearance of massive scale or a uniform and impersonal appearance and to provide visual interest. Long building walls shall be broken up with projections or recessions.
2. Detail Features. The design shall provide architectural features that contribute to visual interest at the pedestrian scale and reduce the massive scale effect by breaking up the building wall, front, side, or rear, with color, texture change, and repeating wall offsets, reveals, or projecting ribs.
3. Roofs. The roof design shall provide variations in roof lines and heights to add interest to, and reduce the massive scale of, large buildings. Parapet walls shall be architecturally treated to avoid a plain or monotonous style.
4. Materials and Colors. The buildings shall have exterior building materials and colors which are aesthetically pleasing and compatible with the overall development plan. Construction material shall provide color, texture and scale. Predominant exterior building materials shall not include smooth-faced concrete block or prefabricated steel panel.
5. Entryways shall be designed to orient customers and add aesthetically pleasing character to buildings by providing inviting customer entrances that are protected from the weather. Each entrance shall be a clearly defined, highly visible customer entrance featuring no less than three of the following: canopies or porticos; overhangs; recesses/ projections; arcades; raised corniced parapets over the door; peaked roof forms, arches, outdoor patios; display windows; architectural details such as tile work and moldings which are integrated into the building structure and design; integral planters or wing walls that incorporate landscaped areas and/or places for sitting.
 - a. Structures over 80,000 square feet shall have a minimum of two entryways.
6. Screening of Mechanical Equipment. Roof- or ground-mounted mechanical equipment shall be screened to mitigate noise and views in all directions. If roof mounted, the screen shall be designed to conform architecturally with the design of the building, whether it is with varying roof planes or with parapet walls. Ground-mounted mechanical equipment shall be screened. The screen shall be of such material and be of sufficient height to block the view and noise of the equipment.

O. The development plan for a large retail establishment shall include, and govern the improvement of, the entire commercial parcel.

P. Northern Design Elements. Provision of design elements may be required that address Palmer's distinct geography, low light angles, length of days, cold temperatures, wind, snow and ice.

Q. Construction shall not commence without a large retail establishment permit signed by the city manager.

17.32.026 Procedures for a large retail establishment permit.

- A. Application. A developer must apply to the city for a large retail establishment (LRE) permit. The application shall include a site plan and all components of the development plan. The application fee is \$500.00.
- B. Public Meeting. The city manager or designee will review the plans with the applicant against the standards set in this section, and the applicant may make necessary amendments to the site plan and development plan. A public meeting shall be held where the applicant shall display all plans and public comments shall be received on the development plans. The meeting shall be advertised in the newspaper of general circulation in which the city regularly advertises its council meetings. The public notice shall run at least once a week for two weeks, with the first publication at least 10 days before the date of the meeting.
- C. Response to Public Comments. After the public meeting, the applicant and the city manager shall duly consider the public comments and the applicant may make amendments to the site plan and development plan.
- D. City Manager Review. When the city manager determines the application and plans meet the requirements of PMC 17.32.025, the manager will give tentative approval, subject to such special limitations as the manager may deem reasonable arising out of the comprehensive plan, mitigation of adverse impacts of the project on the neighborhood or public facilities, or the public health and safety.
- E. Objections to Special Limitations. If the applicant objects to any of the manager's proposed special limitations, the applicant may request review of the special limitations by the city council. The applicant shall clearly denote each objection and state why the applicant objects to it. The applicant's objections shall be forwarded to the city council with the manager's proposed special limitations.
- F. Public Hearing. The council shall hold a public hearing regarding the manager's tentative approval, the manager's proposed special limitations, and the applicant's objections. Notice for the public hearing shall be given in accordance with PMC 17.80.030, as if the LRE were a zoning map amendment.
- G. Council Determination. After the public hearing the council shall determine whether the permit shall be approved. After due consideration of the public input, the council may approve the permit if the applicant's plans meet the requirements of PMC 17.32.025, subject to such special limitations as the council deems are reasonably related to the comprehensive plan, mitigation of adverse impacts of the project on the neighborhood or public facilities, or the public health and safety.
- H. Effective Permit. The permit shall not be effective until signed by the city manager and also signed by the applicant agreeing to comply with the plans approved by the council and such special limitations as set by the council. A copy of the plans and limitations shall be attached to the permit.

17.32.030 Conditional uses.

Uses which may be permitted in the CG district by obtaining a conditional use permit are:

- ~~A. Mobile home courts;~~
- BA Laundry and linen supply service, dry cleaning businesses;
- CB Propane or butane service;
- DC Car washes;

- ED Crematory;
- FE Welding service and supplies;
- GF Mental health facility;
- HG Residential care facilities.

17.32.040 Prohibited uses.

Prohibited uses and structures in the CG district are all uses and structures not specified as permitted outright, including:

- A. Parking or storage of heavy equipment, such as tractors, graders or trucks;
- B. Manufacturing, compounding, processing or treatment of products except that which is clearly incidental and essential to the retail or wholesale store or business.

17.32.050 General conditions.

All selling, dealing in or displaying of goods or merchandise by shops, stores or businesses shall be entirely conducted and located within a permanent building unless otherwise specifically excepted.

17.32.060 Building height limit.

The maximum building height shall be 50 feet above grade.

17.32.062 Lot area restrictions.

Lot areas shall be subject to the following restrictions:

- A. Minimum lot width is 60 feet.
- B. Minimum lot area is 7,200 square feet.
- C. Residential square footage shall not exceed commercial square footage.
- ~~C. Minimum lot area per dwelling unit is as follows:~~

No. of Dwelling Units	Lot Area per Unit Minimum	Total Lot Size
1	7,200 Sq. Ft.	7,200 Sq. Ft.
2	4,500	9,000
3	3,600	10,800
4	3,000	12,000
5	2,800	14,000
6	2,600	15,600
7	2,400	16,800
8	2,200	17,600
9 or more	2,200	As required

17.32.064 Setback requirements.

Minimum setback requirements:

- A. For ground level dwelling units, (except for buildings existing as of January 17, 1978, in a recognized historic district, in which case the building setback for ground level residential use shall be the existing building setback) any part of a dwelling unit and residential garages the setbacks are:
 - 1. Front yard: 25 feet.
 - 2. Side yard: 15 feet.

3. Rear yard: 25 feet.
- B. For residential uses above the ground level and nonresidential uses not abutting or immediately across an alley from an R1, R1E or R2 zone, the setbacks are:
 1. Front yard: none.
 2. Side yard: none.
 3. Rear yard: none.
- C. For nonresidential uses abutting or immediately across an alley from an R1, R1E or R2 zone, the setbacks are:
 1. Front yard: none.
 2. Side yard: 25 feet.
 3. Rear yard: 25 feet.

The width of the alley may be included in the side or rear setback measurement.

17.32.066 Open space requirements.

- A. All residential uses require a minimum of 200 square feet of open space for outdoor activities per dwelling unit. No dimension of the open space shall be less than 10 feet. This open space requirement does not apply to any building which has a footprint constructed before January 17, 1978, and which footprint has not been significantly altered.
- B. Open space shall not be used for storage, driveway, vehicle or other parking, above ground building utilities or services, or any structures (other than a fence). Open space may be used for lawn, shrubs, or trees.

17.32.068 Fencing requirements.

Lots abutting or immediately across an alley from any residential zone which contain four or more dwelling units or any nonresidential use shall have a six foot, six inch, solid or interlap fence on the side or sides abutting or across an alley from residential zones. The fence shall be well built, finished and maintained.

17.32.080 Parking

Parking requirements shall meet the requirements of PMC 17.64.010 through 17.64.030.

Section 7. Effective Date. This ordinance shall become effective upon adoption

Adopted by the City Council of the City of Palmer, Alaska, this 14th day of June, 2005.


 John Q. Combs, Mayor


 Janelle M. Bower, City Clerk