

ZONING FROM A TO Z

Business and Commercial Districts (Chapter 17-3) – Part III

As explained in “Business and Commercial Districts Part I” in the March/April 2007 issue of this newsletter, the three business (“B”) and three commercial (“C”) districts are further differentiated based upon bulk and density standards, that is, on the basis of floor area ratio (FAR) standards and minimum lot area (MLA) requirements for residential units. Recall that residential districts are similarly differentiated based upon FAR and MLA. Part II in the May/June 2007 issue explained that just as in residential districts, the zoning code imposes other significant limitations on structures in B and C districts, such as requirements relating to ground floor space, height standards, and setbacks.

This installment will focus on the types of uses allowed in B and C districts.

Most of the business zoning in Sheffield is designated B3. B3 zoning can accommodate residential living, public and civic uses, and a majority of possible commercial uses.

As in residential districts, some uses are *permitted as of right*, some require *special use approval*, and some are *not allowed*. Special use approval involves a case-by-case review procedure to determine whether the use will be compatible with surrounding uses and development patterns. The process requires public notice of the hearing before the Zoning Board of Appeals, which must find that the proposed use in the proposed location meets certain criteria.

Residential Living. B3 zoning permits as of right dwelling units and artist live/work space above the ground floor. It also permits as of right certain types of group living, such as assisted living and community home family.

Special use approval is required for other types of household or group living, however. This includes dwelling units of various types on the ground floor. In addition, many types of group living require special use approval, including temporary overnight shelters, transitional residences, and domestic violence shelters.

Public and Civic Uses. B3 zoning permits as of right colleges and universities, cultural exhibits and libraries, day cares, parks and recreation, postal service, public safety services, and minor utilities and services. On the other hand, special use approval is required for lodges or private clubs, community centers, religious assembly, schools, and major utilities and services. Correctional facilities and hospitals are not allowed.

Commercial Uses. Commercial uses run the gamut from Animal Services to Vehicle Sales and Services and are too numerous to comprehensively review here. Sheffield neighbors may be most interested in the following permitted and special uses, however.

B3 zoning permits as of right restaurants, food and beverage retail sales (including liquor sales as an accessory use), undertaking, bed and breakfasts, medical services, offices, non-accessory parking, many personal services, dry cleaners and coin-operated

laundromats, and even auto supply/accessory sales and some motor vehicle repair shops (not including body work, painting, or commercial vehicle repair).

Uses that require special use approval in a B3 district include kennels, body art services, day labor employment agencies, drive-through facilities, taverns, payday loan stores and pawn shops, liquor stores that sell package goods, fortune telling services, cremating, gas stations, hotels, and cabarets. In certain areas, banks may require special use approval.

No adult uses are allowed in a B3 district. Similarly banned are stables, flea markets, cemeteries, car washes, and most other uses related to vehicles and boats.

Sheffield contains few C districts, and these primarily are designated C1 and C2. The uses allowed in these C1 and C2 are similar to those allowed in B3, with some notable exceptions. Taverns and liquor stores with package goods are permitted as of right, as are car washes, construction storage yards, and motor vehicle repair shops (including body work, painting, and commercial vehicle repairs). C1 and C2 districts also allow some industrial uses such as dry cleaning plants, recycling facilities, and warehousing, wholesaling, and freight movement.

Adult uses require special use approval in C1 and C2 districts.

Fortunately, the new version of the code contains a simple chart outlining the possible uses for each business and commercial district and whether they are permitted as of right, require special use approval, or are not allowed. To review the chart, visit www.cityofchicago.org/zoning and click on "Ordinance Text" under Zoning Code, then open Chapter 3 (Business and Commercial Districts). The chart begins on page 5.

This is the eighth in a series of articles designed to educate the community about the basics of the new zoning code adopted in late 2004. The first five installments focused on residential districts. If you would like to learn about a particular topic, contact the Association by calling 773-929-9255 or by sending an e-mail message to sheffieldneighborhoodassociation@hotmail.com; please be as specific as possible when describing your topic or question. Electronic copies of previous installments also are available by request via the SNA email address.