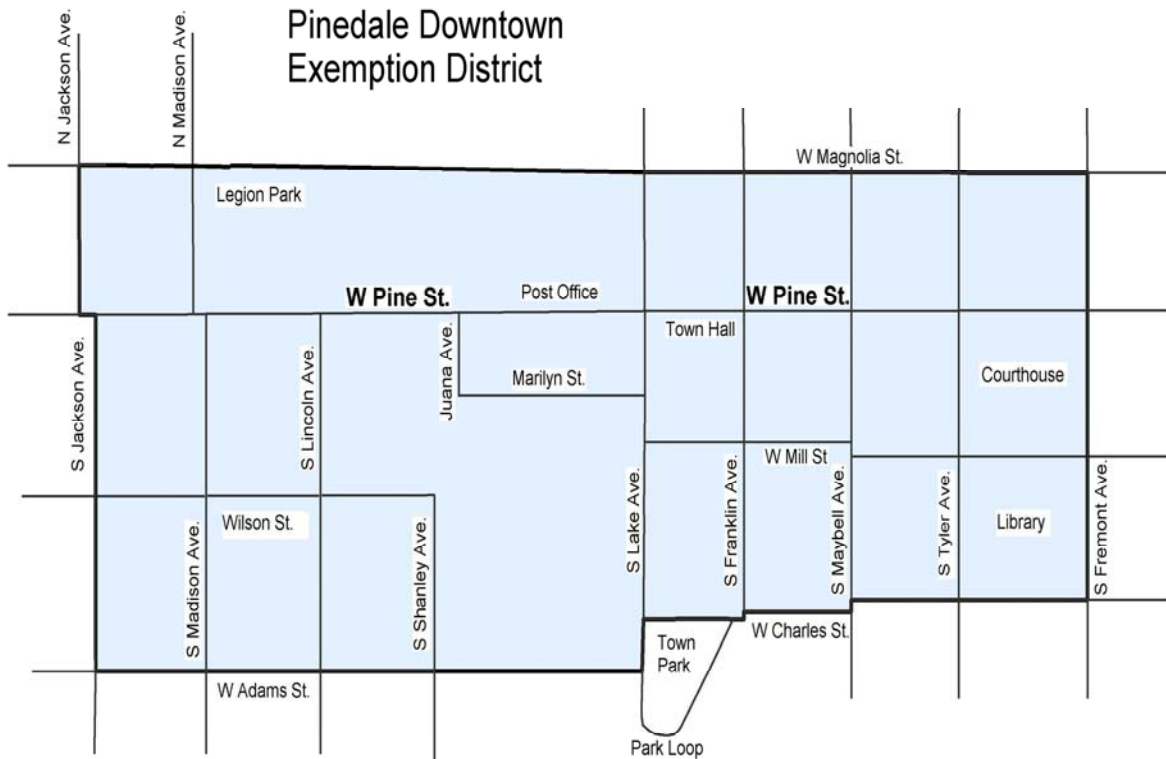




October 29, 2012

Dear Property Owner,

This letter is written to inform you the Town of Pinedale is considering a parking exemption downtown and your property lies within the proposed exemption district. The Planning & Zoning Commission is requesting comments by those affected by the proposed district.



WHAT & WHERE

The downtown exemption district is centered on the downtown where the new infrastructure projects have taken place and is the center of commercial development for Pinedale. The proposed ordinance exempts the parking requirement for commercial uses within this district. This means that a building can have change uses without requiring more parking. It also means that additions and new construction

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can be added without requiring parking onsite. The old ordinance required different uses to meet different requirements. For example, if a 2000 square foot building housed an office then 6 parking spaces were required. If it changed to retail, then 10 spaces were required (parking spaces are required to be on the same lot as the use). If the building has less than those required spaces the use could not move into that building. That provision helped create many vacant buildings downtown that had plenty of street parking around, just no spaces on the property that would count for the requirement. In addition, the parking requirements were so stringent they discouraged development in Pinedale, because developers could not fit the amount of parking required on the lot and construct a reasonably sized building. Parking would be exempted for new construction whether it was on a vacant lot or a redevelopment project. There are currently 12 undeveloped/vacant parcels in the Downtown exemption district. This ordinance does not prevent businesses from building parking, they just won't be required to.

Parking is not proposed to be exempted for residential in this area. Any new residential construction would require parking (1-2 spaces per unit). Residential is proposed to require parking on the basis that direct parking is a necessity for residential (unload groceries etc.) and also have a place to park where your vehicle is not subject to a ticket. There is a 48 hour maximum parking limit on Town streets to ensure turnover, while this is easy for commercial uses to meet because both employees and customers stay for less time, this is not the case for residential, where residents may park their vehicle all weekend, or walk to work and only use their vehicle for groceries and trips out of Town. It is a necessity for most people in Pinedale to have a vehicle or access to one and have a place to park it for longer than 48 hours. The parking requirement would only apply to new construction.

REASONS FOR THE EXEMPTION DISTRICT

Exempting a downtown district from on-site parking requirements is a common tool used to address the unique situation in downtowns. Many towns throughout Wyoming and the Nation have parking exemption districts in their downtowns. Downtowns are often referred to as "traditional town" design, which means a grid pattern with streets, alleys and square blocks. These areas pre-date the automobile and are pedestrian scaled, the lots are small, buildings are close together and commercial buildings are set right on the front property line facing the street. Additionally, the downtown is almost built out with 12 undeveloped parcels in the area. It does not make sense to have buildings torn down to provide parking when there is plenty available and you want to preserve building stock. As part of a greater economic development and diversity strategy, it is important to maintain existing buildings as they generate significantly more sales and property tax than a parking lot, as well as provide places for businesses to be located. Improving the downtown and providing an incentive to locate downtown maintains a compact community which encourages foot traffic which leads to sales and encourages

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empty buildings to be reused, vacant lots to be developed, and underutilized lots to be redeveloped, improving the overall base of services and products in town.

As the Town has completed the infrastructure projects the last several years, sidewalks and delineated parking has been provided on the streets. The street parking spaces are well distributed through-out downtown. Pinedale currently has over 1800 parking spaces downtown. The average number of parking spaces in downtowns is 75 spaces 1000 people, Pinedale almost has 1 space for every person living in Pinedale (1800 spaces per 2030 people). A parking inventory was recently done and it was discovered that of the 124 businesses in downtown 82 did not meet the parking required by the Town Ordinance. These businesses did not meet the ordinance, because they predate the automobile and the ordinance, which was adopted about 1980.

A parking space in Pinedale is estimated to cost between \$2000-\$5000 on private property, and \$700 on Town Streets. The town's cost is much lower because they do not have land acquisition costs and it is cheaper to build lots of parking at one time such as during the infrastructure projects.

According to numerous Town Plans and Studies, residents have indicated they want to keep Pinedale compact, walkable, with a centralized commercial district, this proposal supports that.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

1. Why isn't an exemption considered for all commercial areas?

An exemption is not considered for the east and west sides of Pinedale for two reasons. First those areas contain newer subdivisions/additions with larger lots which can accommodate a building and onsite parking better. The lots are also not built out, so they can be developed to accommodate vehicles. The second reason is there is not designated parking and sidewalks to accommodate street parking. This would result in vehicles parking in inappropriate places because there are no curbs to designate driveways, no parking areas, fire hydrants etc. As more vehicles park on the street there has to be a place for pedestrians to walk that is separated from the travel lane. As more infrastructure projects are completed those areas could be considered for exemption.

2. What impact is expected on the street?

There will be an increase in vehicles parked on the street, traffic, and pedestrians in the long term. As the district is pretty well built out, it is not expected that this will increase drastically in the immediate future. It will occur gradually in pockets as a vacant property is developed, underutilized places are redeveloped, and additions occur.

3. What if people can't park directly in front of my business?

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The impetus of improving the downtown district is to continue to make it the most attractive and successful place to be where both residents and visitors want come. This means having a walkable downtown filled with a good mix of businesses, maintaining our uniqueness and heritage by improving existing buildings, holding events and promotions to attract people downtown, and other strategies. Studies indicate that people feel comfortable walking a 1/4 of a mile to a destination if they want to go there. This can easily be seen with malls and large retailers such as Wal-Mart where the parking lots can extend over a 1/4 of a mile from the front door (1320 feet) and people never complain about walking that distance. In a downtown setting 1/4 of a mile is about 4 blocks. In Pinedale one hardly ever parks more than 1/2 a block from a destination. Locating a business is up to each individual business owner, it will up to them to determine whether it is more important to their business model to be located downtown where they can capitalize on the foot traffic, or located in other parts of Town where parking directly in front of the business 24/7 is feasible.

4. What about residential?

As the historic core, the downtown contains many residences. The entire exemption district is zoned general commercial (C-1). It is important to maintain residential in commercial to have a successful downtown. However the natural progression of commercial districts as they get more successful is residential uses and buildings will be taken over by commercial uses and buildings and residences that don't have parking on-site will have to compete for street parking with everyone else. Again this will be left up to property owners to assess their own situation to determine the tradeoff's between the convenience of living downtown close to amenities or moving into a residential only style neighborhood. It will also be up to them to determine if they have extra room on their property to accommodate on-site parking spaces.

The proposed ordinance and staff report can be reviewed online at townofpinedale.us. If you have questions or concerns please feel free to contact me to discuss them, or I can meet with you. A survey is located on the next page which you can complete and return to Town Hall by Nov. 21st. You are also welcomed to attend the upcoming Planning & Zoning meeting on Nov. 5th at 6pm at Town Hall.

Sincerely,

Kate Grimes
Planning & Zoning Administrator
zoningtop@wyoming.com

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Please complete and return this survey to Town of Pinedale by Friday Nov. 21st. Surveys can be dropped off at 210 W Pine or mailed to Town of Pinedale at P.O. Box 709 Pinedale, WY 82941. Comments can also be emailed to zoningtop@wyoming.com.

Are you in favor of the proposed exemption district?

Yes ____ No ____ I don't know _____

If you are not in favor of the exemption district please describe your concerns and/or provide a suggestion on how you would like to see it handled.

General Public Survey

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