

2/27/2023

3/06/2023

ORDINANCE NO. M-4406

AN ORDINANCE amending and restating Vancouver City Ordinance M-4396, an ordinance declaring an emergency and imposing a temporary moratorium for the duration of six months upon the acceptance and processing of applications for permits for the development or expansion of large warehouse and distribution facilities totaling more than 250,000 square feet under the Warehouse/Freight Movement use classification in the Light Industrial (IL) and Heavy Industrial (IH) zoning districts, as defined in Vancouver Municipal Code Title 20 or as otherwise allowed, such as by prior development agreement, based on certain findings of fact justifying such action and adopted by City Council, and establishing an immediate effective date.

WHEREAS, in accordance with to Section 2.12 of the Vancouver City Charter, an ordinance to be revised or amended shall be re-enacted at length as revised or amended, this ordinance amends and restates Vancouver City Ordinance M-4396, originally adopted December 12, 2022; and

WHEREAS, the City has the authority to adopt temporary moratoria pursuant to RCW 36.70A.390 and RCW 35.63.200, provided that such action is justified by adopted findings of fact and a public hearing is scheduled and held within 60 days of adopting this emergency moratorium in accordance with these statutes; and

WHEREAS, this temporary moratorium may be renewed for one or more six-month periods if a subsequent public hearing is held and findings of fact demonstrating the necessity for such an extension are made prior to each renewal; and

WHEREAS, warehouse and distribution facilities have a role in the local and regional

economy but, because they are typically a low skill and low employment use, they are not a high priority sector in the *2018 – 2023 Clark County Economic Development Plan*; and

WHEREAS, as described in the *2018 – 2023 Clark County Economic Development Plan*, certain Traded Sector Industry cluster uses do promote economic development and job growth and may require facilities that would otherwise be delayed or prohibited by this ordinance; and

WHEREAS, permit applications for large warehouse and distribution facilities tend to be speculative in nature and may not have a defined user at the time of application or when land use approval rights may conditionally vest; and

WHEREAS, as set forth in the City's recent climate action plan workshops, building energy and transportation are the most significant sources of greenhouse gas emissions and are unavoidable elements of the large warehouse and distribution facility use; and

WHEREAS, warehouse capacity is reportedly at a premium in the United States with ninety-six percent of available space in use and the continued post-COVID-19 growth in e-commerce represents a fundamental shift in warehouse and shipping logistics requiring more and larger facilities not contemplated by the existing code or evaluated in the context of the City's current climate action priorities; and

WHEREAS, commercial real estate market data and warehouse development standards indicate that warehouses are typically constructed at less than 25,000 square feet or greater than 250,000 square feet for large-scale distribution and that those large warehouse and distribution facilities of greater than 250,000 square feet are developing at an unprecedented and unforeseen rate; and

WHEREAS, the City currently has eight such proposed development projects in the land use application or building permit process, one with 80,000 square feet and seven with between

275,000 to 681,000 square feet of planned large warehouse and distribution facility space resulting in a total of 3.34 million allocated square feet; and

WHEREAS, the City currently allows warehouse and distribution facilities as a permitted use in the Light Industrial (IL) and Heavy Industrial (IH) zones with no limit on size and such facilities may be a permitted pursuant to existing development agreements; and

WHEREAS, the City does not have unlimited industrial land, particularly larger, contiguous parcels, and the consumptive nature of these facilities may foreclose opportunities for higher value employment sectors with lesser climate impacts; and

WHEREAS, the surge in new, large warehouse developments and national trends suggest that more such proposals will be forthcoming with unconsidered and potentially irreversible implications for the City's climate action goals, transportation systems, and stated goal of attracting high-skilled, high-wage employment uses; and

WHEREAS, bulk storage warehouses are integral to the operations of the Port of Vancouver USA, which, since it was established in 1912 as the authorized Port district for Clark County pursuant to Chapter 53.04 RCW, has played a key role in the region's economy and is the primary point of entry for goods arriving by ship and rail in Southwest Washington, and that the Port of Vancouver USA, in accordance with its authorized purposes under RCW 53.04.010 as a Washington port district, requires warehouse space to store goods that are arriving or being shipped to other destinations in fulfillment of its mission as a public jobs-creating agency; and

WHEREAS, an exception to Ordinance M-4396 for warehouse development projects for the transshipment and storage of bulk goods and wholesale distribution on land owned and retained by the Port of Vancouver USA is merited based on the unique character of the Port of Vancouver USA as a public agency, provided that such an exception would not allow the Port of Vancouver

USA to transfer any vested rights that would otherwise be prohibited by this temporary moratorium and were obtained pursuant to this exception to a third party or to develop facilities for home delivery of retail goods; and

WHEREAS, without a temporary moratorium the City could, in the near future, receive applications for development that would conflict with the achievement of the long-range vision for the City's economic development and climate action initiatives but be vested to existing land use regulations before the City can study potential effects; and

WHEREAS, the enactment of this ordinance constitutes an emergency, due to potential land use, climate, transportation, and economic impacts that may result from continued development of large warehouse and distribution facilities without adequate standards to address unintended consequences; and

WHEREAS, a temporary moratorium will require the City to hold public hearings and maximize public input in the development of standards without jeopardizing any possible land use options that may be precluded by unrestricted development; and

WHEREAS, the City Council finds that the adoption of a temporary moratorium promotes the public health, safety, and general welfare and convenience of the people of Vancouver, and will encourage the most desirable and productive use of land and properties; and

WHEREAS, based on the facts recited above, the City Council finds that it would be appropriate to enact a moratorium on new applications for such projects to allow the City time to study the climate, transportation infrastructure, and economic implications from this recent trend and, if merited by such study, recommend regulatory changes to the Vancouver Municipal Code as needed to address concerns;

NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY OF VANCOUVER:

Section 1. Temporary Moratorium. As authorized by RCW 36.70A.390 and RCW 35.63.200 and justified by the findings of fact set forth above, the City Council hereby adopts a temporary moratorium for the duration of six months upon the acceptance and processing of applications for permits for the development or expansion of large warehouse and distribution facilities totaling more than 250,000 square feet under the Warehouse/Freight Movement use classification in the Light Industrial (IL) and Heavy Industrial (IH) zoning districts, as defined in Vancouver Municipal Code Title 20 or as otherwise allowed, such as by prior development agreement.

Section 2. Exemptions.

Subsection A. Maintenance. The moratorium established in Section 1 of this ordinance shall not apply to permits required for upkeep, repair, or basic maintenance of existing large warehouse and distribution facilities or to work mandated by the City as necessary to maintain public health and safety.

Subsection B. Port of Vancouver USA. The moratorium established in Section 1 of this ordinance shall not apply to warehouse development projects on land owned and retained by the Port of Vancouver USA for the transshipment and storage of bulk goods and wholesale distribution; provided that such exception will not apply to the transfer of any Vested Rights obtained by the Port of Vancouver USA pursuant to this exception that would otherwise be prohibited by this ordinance and provided that any such warehouse development shall not be for home delivery of retail goods.

Subsection C. Traded Sector Industry Use. Applications for permits otherwise prohibited by the moratorium established in Section 1 of this ordinance that are exclusively for use

by a Traded Sector Industry shall continue to be processed throughout the duration of this ordinance, however no Vested Rights shall attach to any such Traded Sector Industry application until a Development Agreement is entered into with the City and recorded on the subject property in accordance with Chapter 20.250 VMC. For purposes of this ordinance, “Traded Sector Industry” shall be defined as North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) sectors 31, 32, 33, 42, 51, 54, and 55, in accordance with the respective industry sector clusters specified in the *2018-2023 Clark County Comprehensive Economic Development Plan*.

Section 3. Duration. This moratorium shall be in effect for six months following the effective date established in Section 6 of Ordinance M-4396.

Section 4. Vested Rights. The moratorium created by this ordinance does not apply to properties with vested rights existing on the date of enactment of this ordinance. “Vested Rights” shall be defined in accordance with VMC 20.210.110 and VMC 20.250.040.

Section 5. Public Hearing Required. Pursuant to RCW 35.63.200 and RCW 36.70A.390, a public hearing on the adopted moratorium will be held no more than sixty days following the adoption of this ordinance.

Section 6. Effective Date. The City Council hereby finds and declares that an emergency exists which necessitates that this ordinance become effective immediately in order to preserve the public health, safety, and welfare. This ordinance shall become effective immediately upon passage. The City Clerk is directed to publish a summary hereof including the title at the earliest possible publication date.

SIGNED this 6th day of March 2023.

DocuSigned by:

Anne McEnerny-Ogle

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Anne McEnerny-Ogle, Mayor

ATTEST:

DocuSigned by:

Natasha Ramras

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By: Natasha Ramras, City Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

DocuSigned by:

Jonathan Young

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By: Jonathan Young, City Attorney

SUMMARY

ORDINANCE NO. M-4406

AN ORDINANCE amending and restating Vancouver City Ordinance M-4396, an ordinance declaring an emergency and imposing a temporary moratorium for the duration of six months upon the acceptance and processing of applications for permits for the development or expansion of large warehouse and distribution centers totaling more than 250,000 square feet under the Warehouse/Freight Movement use classification in the Light Industrial (IL) and Heavy Industrial (IH) zoning districts, as defined in Vancouver Municipal Code Title 20 or as otherwise allowed, such as by prior development agreement, based on certain findings of fact justifying such action and adopted by City Council, and establishing an immediate effective date.

The full text of this ordinance will be mailed upon request. Contact Raelyn McJilton, Records Officer at 487-8711, or via www.cityofvancouver.us (Go to City Government and Public Records).