



AGENDA ITEM#: 6

---

---

## MEMORANDUM

TO: Metropolitan Planning Commission

FROM: Mark Donaldson, Executive Director

DATE: February 13, 2014

SUBJECT: Consideration of amendments to the City of Knoxville zoning ordinance regarding definitions, appropriate zoning and development standards for drop off donation centers  
2-A-14-OA

---

### REQUEST

This is a request by City Council that MPC study and make a recommendation regarding the definitions, appropriate zoning and development standards for drop off donation centers. MPC postponed this item from its December 13, 2013 meeting.

### BACKGROUND

On October 15, 2013, the City Council of Knoxville passed a resolution without discussion making the above request. The request also included terms used to describe group living facilities, which will be split from the original request and will be considered as MPC case number 12-B-13-OA. Drop off donation centers typically receive used goods from the public for the ultimate purpose of resale and are typically run by non-profit organizations and institutions as a means to raise funds to help support the goals and objectives of the organization.

### ANALYSIS

The term "drop off donation center" is not currently used in the Knoxville zoning ordinance. If the donation center is the principal use of a lot, building or space within a building, it is a type of non-residential facility more akin to a retail or wholesale operation than anything else. A small drop off donation facility could also serve as an accessory use to a retail, service, recycling or similar operation.

Currently in Knoxville there are several examples of drop off donation centers operating with a wide range of size and characteristics. There is a donation center located in a portion of a strip commercial center; there is a donation center that occupies buildings located on its own lot; there are donation centers that use sizeable trailers placed in conjunction with recycling centers; and

there are small free standing donation boxes set up in the parking and loading areas of many convenience stores and gasoline stations.

Nashville and Charlotte, NC have recently added donation centers to their zoning ordinances and each have created development standards which are required as a condition of the development of these uses. Charlotte has addressed donation facilities as accessory uses to other types of permitted uses in addition to consideration as a principal use. Nashville and Charlotte allow drop off donation centers in most commercial and mixed use districts; in addition, Charlotte allows them in higher density residential, office and industrial districts. All require conditional use permits.

There should be a distinction between a drop off donation center and a drop off facility. The size and operating characteristics of each are significantly different.

- The term "drop off donation center" could be used to describe a principal or accessory use and could be either a building or a portion of a building that includes the opportunity for citizens to drop off materials for donation. Local examples of this type of donation center are the *Habitat for Humanity ReStore* in the Merchant Village Shopping Center, the *AmVets Thrift Store* on Holston Drive or the *Community Chest Donation Center* on N. Central Street.
- The term "drop off donation facility" could be used to consider a free standing trailer or box as an accessory use in conjunction with some other principal use or a donation center on the same lot. Examples of this type of facility are the trailers used by Goodwill at many City of Knoxville recycling centers or the free standing boxes now used in many convenience stores or gasoline stations.

Knoxville should consider allowing drop off donation centers as a principal use permitted on review in the C-3, C-4, C-6 and as a permitted use in the planned shopping (SC-1,2 &3) and planned commercial (PC-1 & 2) districts and as a by-right accessory structure to any retail operation without review by the planning commission but subject to approved standards.

#### Development Standards

Development standards for drop off donation centers should be created in Article V, Sections 3 (Uses permitted on review) and 4 (Accessory uses) similar to those found in Charlotte.

#### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the planning commission recommend that City Council approve the proposed definitions, assignment of uses permitted on review and development standards as shown in Exhibits C, D and E.

#### **EXHIBITS**

- Exhibit A – Current Definitions, Selected Cities
- Exhibit B – Charlotte standards for Donation Facilities
- Exhibit C – Proposed definitions
- Exhibit D – Proposed Assignment of Use on Review by District
- Exhibit E – Proposed development standards, principal and accessory uses

Drop Off Donation Center  
**SIMILAR DEFINITIONS**  
 Selected Cities

<b>SIMILAR DEFINITIONS</b> Selected Cities	
<b>Nashville</b>	
Donation Center, Drop-Off	Any lot, building, structure or premises used solely for the collection of clothing, furniture, house-wares, small electrical appliances, household textiles, toys, and other small household items. The center shall not pay for materials collected or sell any collected materials on the premises. Collected materials shall be stored in an enclosed location on-site until picked up and taken to a central sorting and distribution center. Types of drop-off donation centers range from storefront centers, which may include a drive-thru facility, to other enclosed facilities.
<b>Charlotte</b>	
Donation Drop-Off Facility	A facility where donations for non-profit agencies or institutional uses are collected. Such facilities may accept common household and clothing items. Items that may not be accepted include large appliances such as washers/dryers, stoves, refrigerators, and other large or bulky items (such as furniture) that cannot be stored inside the collection facility. Donation drop-off facilities shall not be considered a recycling center.

## DONATION DROP-OFF FACILITY STANDARDS CHARLOTTE APPROACH

### CHAPTER 2            DEFINITIONS

#### Donation Drop Off Facility

A facility where donations for non-profit agencies or institutional uses are collected. Such facilities may accept common household and clothing items. Items that may not be accepted include large appliances such as washers/dryers, stoves, refrigerators, and other large or bulky items (such as furniture) that cannot be stored inside the collection facility.

Donation drop-off facilities shall not be considered a recycling center.

### CHAPTER 12           DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

#### Part 5: Special Requirements for Certain Uses

##### **Section 12.532. Donation drop-off facilities.**

Donation drop-off facilities are permitted in all single family and multi-family residential districts, the urban residential districts of UR-3 and UR-C, and the non-residential districts of INST, RE-1, RE-2, RE-3, O-1, O-2, O-3, B-1, B-2, BD, BP, CC, MUDD and UMUD, I-1, and I-2, subject to the following conditions:

1. Permitted in single family, multi-family and the UR-3 and UR-C districts only as an accessory use to a public utility structure, or as an accessory use to an institutional use.
2. No outdoor storage of donated items is permitted.
3. If the drop-off facility is an accessory use, then the facility, parking, and unloading area shall meet the setback and yard requirements of the principal building based upon the zoning district in which it is located.
4. If the drop-off facility is a principal use, it shall meet the setback and yard requirements of the zoning district in which it is located. The location of the facility, parking, and unloading areas are subject to approval by Engineering and Property Management.
5. All drop-off structures shall be a minimum of one hundred (100) feet from abutting residentially zoned property.
6. The drop-off facility including unloading area, trash handling and dumpster areas shall be screened from abutting property view and view from a public street according to the standards of Section 12.303.
7. Any open area beneath a storage unit shall be enclosed with a durable skirting material as deemed suitable by the Zoning Administrator.
8. Donation drop-off facilities located in residential districts shall be limited in size to 340 square feet.
9. Donation drop-off facilities shall have an employee or volunteer on duty during all hours of operation, or have a mechanism in place to prevent after-hour deposit of donations on the site, such as a locked gate.
10. Items that may not be accepted include large appliances such as washer/dryers, stoves, refrigerators, and other large or bulky items such as furniture, that cannot be stored inside the collection facility.
11. The donation drop-off facility shall display the ownership/identification information on the facility, with a contact phone number, in a prominent location. A sign permit is not required for identification signage that is no larger than 1.5 square feet in area.

PROPOSED  
NEW DEFINITIONSAdded language

## ARTICLE II DEFINITIONS

The following definitions will be added:

**Drop Off Donation Center - Any building, structure or premises where donations for non-profit organizations or institutions are collected. Types of drop-off donation centers range from space within shopping centers to stand alone buildings and may include a drive-through or drive-up to facilitate the drop off operation. A center may be a principal use or accessory to another use, such as a retail store. Drop off donation centers shall not be considered a recycling center.**

**Drop Off Donation Facility – A free standing facility, such as a trailer or collection box, accessory to a principal use, where donations for non-profit organizations or institutions are collected. Drop off donation facilities shall not be considered a recycling center.**

DONATION CENTER  
PROPOSED ADDITIONS TO PERMITTED USES

**ARTICLE IV, Section 2.2.6 C-3 General Commercial District**

C. Uses permitted on review.

.  
.

**8. Drop off donation center.**

◇ ◇ ◇ ◇ ◇

**ARTICLE IV, Section 2.2.7 C-4 Highway and Arterial Commercial District**

C. Uses permitted on review.

.  
.

**8. Drop off donation center.**

◇ ◇ ◇ ◇ ◇

**ARTICLE IV, Section 2.2.9 C-6 General Commercial Park District**

C. Uses permitted on review.

.  
.

**7. Drop off donation center.**

◇ ◇ ◇ ◇ ◇

**ARTICLE IV, Section 3.2 SC-1 Neighborhood Shopping Center District**

B. Uses permitted.

.  
.

**9. Drop off donation center.**

◇ ◇ ◇ ◇ ◇

**ARTICLE IV, Section 3.4 PC-1 Retail and Office Park District**

B. Uses permitted

.  
.

**(18) Drop off donation center.**

PROPOSED STANDARDS  
DROP OFF DONATION CENTERS and FACILITIES

**ARTICLE V, Section 3 Development Standards for Uses Permitted On Review**

F. Other Uses Permitted on Review.

.  
. .  
.

**14. Drop Off Donation Centers**

- a. Drop off donation center buildings and drop-off facilities shall meet the setback and yard requirements of the zoning district in which they are located. The location of drop off facilities, parking, and unloading areas are subject to approval by the planning commission.
- b. Drop off donation centers shall have an employee or volunteer on duty during all hours of operation, or have a mechanism in place to prevent after-hour deposit of donations on the site, such as a locked gate.
- c. Drop off donation centers are limited to the collection of clothing, housewares, small electrical appliances and other small household items, household textiles, toys, furniture or building materials.
- d. Drop off donation centers shall not accept large appliances such as washer/dryers, stoves, refrigerators, and other large or bulky items that cannot be stored inside the drop off donation center.
- e. Drop off donation centers shall permit no outdoor storage of donated items. All collected materials shall be stored in an enclosed structure on site.
- f. Drop off donation centers may sell any collected materials on the premises, subject to the provision of the loading and parking requirements of a retail operation
- g. Drop-off donation facilities as part of a donation center shall be a minimum of one hundred (100) feet from abutting residentially zoned property.
- h. Drop off donation facilities as part of a donation center, including unloading area, trash handling and dumpster areas, shall be screened from abutting property view and view from a public street.
- i. Any open area greater than eighteen (18) inches in height beneath a storage unit shall be enclosed with a durable skirting material.

PROPOSED STANDARDS  
DROP OFF DONATION CENTERS and FACILITIES

**ARTICLE V, Section 4 Accessory Uses, Buildings and Structures**

**B. PERMITTED ACCESSORY STRUCTURES:**

The use of land, buildings, and other structures permitted in each of the districts established by this ordinance are designated by listing the principal uses permitted. In addition to such principal uses, this section shall regulate uses customarily incidental to any principal uses permitted in this district.

**9. For Drop Off Donation Centers, Retail Stores, Gasoline Service Stations, Recycling Centers or Institutional Use**

- a. **Drop off donation facilities, subject to meeting the following standards:**
- i. **The drop off donation facility, parking, and unloading area shall meet the setback and yard requirements of the principal building based upon the zoning district in which it is located.**
  - ii. **Drop off donation facilities are limited to the collection of household and clothing items.**
  - iii. **Drop off donation facilities shall not accept large appliances such as washers/dryers, stoves, refrigerators, and other large or bulky items (such as furniture).**
  - iv. **Any open area beneath a trailer or storage unit greater than eighteen (18) inches in height shall be enclosed with a durable skirting material.**
  - v. **The facility shall be limited in size to three hundred forty (340) square feet.**
  - vi. **Drop off donation facilities shall permit no outdoor storage of donated items. All collected materials shall be stored in an enclosed structure on site.**
  - vii. **The drop-off donation facility shall display ownership/identification information on the facility, with a contact phone number, in a prominent location. A sign permit is not required for an identification sign that is no larger than two (2) square feet in area.**