

St. Charles Parish

Department of Planning & Zoning

Land Use Report

Case Number: PZO-2019-02

Introduced by Paul J. Hogan, PE, Councilman-At-Large, Division B

To amend the St. Charles Parish Zoning Ordinance of 1981, Section VI and VII to allow landscaping services in the OL zoning district with supplemental regulations.

Background

Lawn care service providers permitted as a home occupation can grow and expand to a point that they require heavy equipment, employees, and in some cases, licensing by the Louisiana Horticultural Commission. This can make them non-complaint with the regulations for home occupations which are meant to preserve the residential character of a neighborhood.

For a business to expand in this way is especially likely to occur in the OL zoning district where homes are often located on large, open tracts of land that require farming and maintenance equipment on site. The OL Policy Statement, below, suggests why equipment and employees are likely to be needed in the OL zoning district:

This district is composed mainly of large open unsubdivided land that is vacant or in agricultural, forestry or residential use. The regulations are designed to protect the open character of the district, and to allow residents to retain their traditional ways of living, by prohibiting the establishment of scattered business, industrial and other uses that are unrelated to any general plan of development and that might inhibit the best future utilization of the land in accordance with the amendment procedure set forth in the St. Charles Parish Code.

Potential outcomes

1. Because there is no definition of landscaping services as a business type or permitted use, the public and permit staff may not understand exactly what "landscape services" can be permitted in the OL zoning district. Landscaping services could mean lawn maintenance, yard work including trimming and edging with or without chemicals, or even landscape professionals, such as landscape architects, landscape horticulturalists, arborists, irrigation contractors, and other professions.
2. Businesses that could be considered "landscaping services," as many as six (6) different companies operating in commercial and industrial zoning districts today, would become non-compliant with the supplemental regulations regarding their signage.

Recommendation

1. Consider using a term like "Lawn care service businesses" and adding a definition of that aligns with or at least does not create conflicts with the definitions of the different landscape professionals the LA Horticultural Commission.
2. Add "in the OL zoning district" to the supplemental regulations clause regarding signage.