

TOWN OF WINDSOR AGENDA REPORT

Joint Windsor Town Council, Windsor Redevelopment Successor Agency and Windsor Water District Meeting Date: July 16, 2025

To: Mayor and Town Council
From: Jennifer Sedna, Planner I
Subject: Urgency Ordinance Extension – Moratorium on Personal Storage Facilities

Recommendation to Council:

Adopt an Urgency Ordinance of the Town Council of the Town of Windsor making findings and extending the temporary moratorium on the establishment of new and expansion or relocation of existing personal storage facilities within the Town of Windsor for a period of ten (10) months and fifteen (15) days, to become effective immediately.

Strategic Plan Element:

The recommended action supports the goal of Livability. Goal Statement: Preserve community character by maximizing the use of existing amenities and creating future opportunities that enhance quality of life for all.

Background:

In 2001, the Town amended the Zoning Code to include a section to regulate personal storage facilities (Section 27.34.210). Later that year, the Town adopted Resolution 1136-01 (Attachment 2) to establish a policy for personal storage facilities requiring:

- Design review by the Planning Commission
- Prevention of facilities with a walled appearance along streets, especially major connectors (e.g. Old Redwood Highway, Shiloh Road, Conde Lane, Hembree Lane, Arata Lane, etc.)
- Allowance for facilities with a walled appearance to interior lots without street front visibility and a design that addresses the equivalent of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED)
- Design and architecture that encourages CPTED features
- Design and architecture that encourages activation of the facility and space, including a mixed-use component

In November 2024 the Council adopted an updated Zoning Code which included two additional standards for Personal Storage Facilities (Section 17.40.25; Attachment 3). The additions require:

- Variation of the setback to avoid a walled appearance
- A restriction on building height to be a minimum of two stories, unless near a residential area

On June 18, 2025, the Town Council adopted an urgency moratorium on and prohibiting the issuance of permits and entitlements for the establishment, expansion, or relocation of personal storage facilities. The staff report, (Attachment 4), addressed the numerous health, safety, and aesthetic concerns for the expansion and establishment of additional personal storage facilities in Windsor, including:

- This land use type has few to no employees on-site, produces little to no sales tax, and often has lower assessed valuations than other types of development permitted in industrial and commercial zoning districts

- The associated security concerns inherent with this type of land use with the potential for criminal activity due to the lack of CPTED; they are internally focused with few people on site which does not allow for the property frontage to be monitored easily from inside
- Their expansion and establishment allowed by the Town's Zoning Code is inconsistent with goals and policies in Windsor's 2040 General Plan
- This land use type has low pedestrian activity, lacks architectural design details, and offers minimal site improvements
- Where these facilities have not been zoned out in the County (e.g. Rohnert Park), their growth has noticeably increased (e.g. Santa Rosa)

Discussion:

There are currently six personal storage businesses in Town, which includes five dedicated personal storage facilities (Attachment 4). The construction of the speculative personal storage facility entitled by the Planning Commission in June would result in six dedicated storage facilities and seven personal storage businesses in Town. This would equate to one facility for every 4,200 residents.

The Town has a limited supply of industrial land, and the expansion or establishment of additional facilities displaces more desirable future development. According to the Economic Development Strategic Plan's (EDSP) dataset report:

- Over 85% of employed Windsor residents commute out of town for work
- Windsor has about 12,600 employed residents but only 8,100 local jobs, meaning many residents are forced to leave town to work
- Attracting more employment-generating uses—particularly in the industrial sector—could help reduce commute distances and associated greenhouse gas emissions

The EDSP's analysis shows that industrial and advanced manufacturing uses generate two to three times more jobs per acre than personal storage facilities. Thus, these facilities are a low-employment use and do not contribute significantly to the local job base or the Town's broader economic goals.

A moratorium followed by zoning code amendments would prevent the establishment and expansion of personal storage facilities, limiting their economic, health, safety, and aesthetic impacts in the Town. The urgency ordinance extension requires a 4/5 vote for the Town Council to adopt and would extend the moratorium for 10 months and 15 days. Should the ordinance be adopted, the moratorium would apply to the establishment, expansion, or relocation of personal storage facilities. The moratorium would not apply to the renewal of a business license for existing personal storage facilities in the Town provided the renewal seeks to maintain the business in its existing location. The moratorium also does not affect the establishment of any facility for which a land use entitlement is active. Existing personal storage facilities would remain as legal, non-conforming uses and could continue to operate per Zoning Section 17.70, Nonconformities, which allows for improvements that do not result in expansion.

Approval of the moratorium extension would give staff an opportunity to review and analyze storage uses and facilities within the Town's Zoning Ordinance. Any proposed zoning code amendments relating to personal storage facilities would first be considered by the Planning Commission with their recommendations to the Town Council.

Fiscal Impact:

While difficult to quantify, staff expect that this action will be overall fiscally beneficial for the Town in the long term. Personal storage facilities generate little to no sales tax and generally lower property tax revenues compared to active community commercial and industrial uses.

Environmental Review:

The adoption of this Urgency Ordinance extension is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act pursuant to Section 15308 because it is a regulatory action taken by the Town, in accordance with Government Code section 65858, to assure maintenance and protection of the environment pending consideration of amendments to the Town’s municipal codes, including its zoning code. Additionally, the Ordinance is not a “project” within the meaning of Section 15378 of the State CEQA Guidelines, because adoption of a temporary moratorium has no potential for resulting in either a direct or indirect physical change in the environment. It temporarily prevents certain physical changes in the environment pending study and potential adoption of zoning amendments or policies regulating personal storage facilities.

Attachment(s):

- 1. Personal Storage Moratorium Urgency Ord. Extension
- 2. TOW Policy Mini-Warehouse Facilities
- 3. Storage Facility, Personal Section 17.40.250
- 4. Agenda Report 12.2

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