

Background Information – Cloud/Ghost Kitchens

“Cloud” or “ghost” kitchen facilities are professional food preparation and cooking facilities that have numerous leased kitchens on-site for the preparation of delivery-only meals. These facilities are most often occupied by restaurants who do not have brick and mortar locations, by restaurants unable to process “to go” orders from their retail locations and/or for caterers who prepare meals for delivery. They do not include a storefront or indoor seating although one location in West Los Angeles has been observed to have outdoor seating. A ghost kitchen most often contains kitchen space and facilities for more than one (multiple) restaurant brands (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ghost_kitchen).

Due to increased demand for food delivery services triggered in part by the pandemic, areas of the Westside have seen the introduction of ghost kitchens in commercial areas, sometimes adjacent to residential neighborhoods. As this is a new business model that behaves quite differently from a retail restaurant or a traditional manufacturing facility, there is a need for the City Planning Department and other relevant agencies to evaluate potential impacts on nearby businesses and residential neighborhoods and to consider the adoption of a specific zoning classification or regulations specific to this use.

As this business model relies upon the pick up and delivery of food stuffs, are there any specific traffic circulation issues that must be addressed? Should a trip generation analysis be required to assess whether there might be negative impacts affecting the operation of nearby businesses and/or on residential streets? As this business model concentrates a number of energy-intensive uses on site, is there a need for analysis of electrical demands on local power resources beyond that which is normally done? As there are very differing demands for a location that includes 10 kitchens vs. a single location with 30, 40 or more kitchens, is there a need to scale conditions accordingly?

The WRAC motion requests clarification from relevant City agencies as to a definition of what constitutes the business, identification of criteria for permitting and buildout, and assessment of needed infrastructure, in order to guide the City’s review and decision-making process.

Barbara Broide

Member/Westside NC rep, WRAC Land Use & Planning Cmtee (LUPC)

Westside NC alternate rep, WRAC Board

Board member, Westside NC/Co-Chair, Westside NC Land Use Cmtee