

BREAKING NEWS

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South Tucson restricts 'big boxes,' payday loans

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So-called "big box" stores can locate in South Tucson, but only if they restrict grocery sales.

Under a "90-10" rule approved by the South Tucson City Council last night, large stores that want to build in the square-mile city must be either 90 percent general retail with a maximum of 10 percent food and beverage, or vice versa, said Planning Director Richard Salaz.

Four of the six council members voted in favor of the ordinance, with Miguel Rojas absent and Ildefonso Green abstaining from voting. Green has voiced his support of "big box" retailers in South Tucson, and before the vote said he thought a large retail store would "really help the community."

Before the large retailer vote, the members voted unanimously in favor of an ordinance that would restrict payday loan centers in the city.

The most significant aspects of the ordinance are:

- Payday loan centers must be at least 1,000 feet from each other.
- No more than one payday loan store is allowed in each parcel or shopping center.
- Payday loan stores are not allowed within 500 feet of a residence.

Existing payday loan businesses can continue to do business. The ordinance affects future businesses. Mayor Jennifer Eckstrom said South Tucson is the first municipality in southern Arizona to adopt a payday loan ordinance.