



AGENDA ITEM EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Agenda Item number: 4h

Title: Plan Commission recommendation to approve a General Amendment to Title 17 of the St. Charles Municipal Code (Zoning Ordinance) regarding design review standards and guidelines for the RT and CBD-2 zoning districts.

Presenter: Ellen Johnson

Meeting: Planning & Development Committee

Date: June 10, 2019

Proposed Cost: N/A

Budgeted Amount: N/A

Not Budgeted:

Executive Summary *(if not budgeted please explain):*

Staff has filed a General Amendment to the Zoning Ordinance to revise the Design Standards and Guidelines applicable to the RT Traditional Residential Districts. This item is a follow-up to past discussions on this topic spurred by an appeal request regarding application of the Design Standards for a “container home” on S. 3rd St.

In August of 2017, Plan Commission discussed the existing RT Design Standards and Guidelines and suggested they be revised to require traditional architectural style as a baseline, and require non-traditional designs to be reviewed by the Plan Commission.

In December 2017, Planning & Development Committee discussed the Standards and Guidelines and the Plan Commission’s recommendations. The Committee did not support requiring traditional building style nor did they support establishing a new review process for non-traditional designs. The Committee directed staff to leave the code as-is, but to add clarification to the existing requirements in order to reduce the potential for future appeals based on the requirements being unclear or open to interpretation.

Based on this direction, staff is proposing modifications to Ch. 17.06 of the Zoning Ordinance, Section 17.06.060 which attempt to remove vague language and clarify requirements. The proposed Standards and Guidelines are in keeping with staff’s past interpretation and application of the code. Staff believes the proposed changes will be clearer for permit applicants and will help to avoid future appeals of code interpretation.

Plan Commission Review

Plan Commission held a public hearing on 4/2/19 and voted 8-0 to recommend approval of the General Amendment as presented.

Attachments *(please list):*

Plan Commission Resolution, Staff Report, General Amendment Application

Recommendation/Suggested Action *(briefly explain):*

Plan Commission recommendation to approve a General Amendment to Title 17 of the St. Charles Municipal Code (Zoning Ordinance) regarding design review standards and guidelines for the RT and CBD-2 zoning districts.

City of St. Charles, Illinois
Plan Commission Resolution No. 7-2019

A Resolution Recommending Approval of a General Amendment to Ch. 17.06 “Design Review Standards and Guidelines” regarding design review standards and guidelines for the RT and CBD-2 zoning districts

Passed by Plan Commission on April 2, 2019

WHEREAS, it is the responsibility of the St. Charles Plan Commission to hold public hearings and review requests for amendments to Title 17, “Zoning”; and

WHEREAS, the Plan Commission held a public hearing and has reviewed the petition for a General Amendment to Ch. 17.06 “Design review Standards and Guidelines” regarding design review standards and guidelines for the RT and CBD-2 zoning districts; and

WHEREAS, in accordance with Section 17.04.320.C, the Plan Commission has considered the following criteria for General Amendment:

1. The Consistency of the proposed amendment with the City’s Comprehensive Plan.

The proposed amendment is consistent with the applicable Residential Land Use Policies contained in Ch. 4 of the Comprehensive Plan, particularly the following:

“Preserve the character of the City’s existing single family residential neighborhoods.”
The revised design standards and guidelines will promote attractive architectural designs that add to the character of St. Charles’ older residential neighborhoods.

2. The Consistency of the proposed amendment with the intent and general regulations of this Title.

The proposed amendment supports the following purpose statements listed in Ch. 17.02 of the Zoning Ordinance:

- Preserving and enhancing the quality of life for residents and visitors.
- Protecting the character of established residential neighborhoods.

3. Whether the proposed amendment corrects an error or omission, adds clarification to existing requirements, is more workable than the existing text, or reflects a change in policy.

The proposed amendment clarifies existing requirements by eliminating vague language and rephrasing certain provisions to promote clear and consistent interpretation.

4. The extent to which the proposed amendment would be in the public interest and would not serve solely the interest of the applicant.

The revised design standards and guidelines will help to preserve and enhance the character of St. Charles' older residential neighborhoods while still allowing for flexibility in architectural creativity and style.

5. The extent to which the proposed amendment creates nonconformities.

The amendment will not create nonconformities. The revised design standards and guidelines will apply only to new construction and exterior alterations of existing homes within the RT and the CBD-2 districts (one and two-family dwellings only). Existing structures will not be required to come into compliance with the revised design standards and guidelines.

6. The implications of the proposed amendment on all similarly zoned property in the City.

The proposed amendment applies to all property in the City zoned RT-1, RT-2, RT-3, RT-4, and CBD-2.

NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved by the St. Charles Plan Commission to recommend to City Council approval of a General Amendment to Ch. 17.06 "Design Review Standards and Guidelines" regarding design review standards and guidelines for the RT and CBD-2 zoning districts.

Roll Call Vote:

Ayes: Pretz, Kessler, Funke, Holderfield, Melton, Vargulich, Macklin-Purdy, Becker

Nays: None

Absent: Wallace

Motion carried: 8-0

PASSED, this 2nd day of April 2019.

Chairman
St. Charles Plan Commission

Community & Economic Development
Community Development Division

Phone: (630) 377-4443

Fax: (630) 377-4062



Staff Report

TO: Chairman Rita Payleitner
And the Members of the Planning and Development Committee

FROM: Ellen Johnson, Planner
Russell Colby, Community Development Division Manager

RE: Application for a General Amendment to Title 17 of the City Code (Zoning Ordinance) regarding Design Standards & Guidelines for the RT Traditional Residential Districts

DATE: June 4, 2019

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

Project Name: General Amendment – RT Design Standards & Guidelines
Applicant: City of St. Charles
Purpose: Amend language to clarify requirements

II. BACKGROUND

RT Districts & Design Review Standards and Guidelines

Single-family residential zoning districts in the City are divided between two types: RT-Traditional Residential Districts (areas primarily constructed before World War II) and RS-Suburban Residential Districts (constructed later). RT-zoned neighborhoods are characterized by smaller, narrow lots and detached or less prominent garages.

Design Standards and Guideline for new construction and building additions in the RT districts were added to the Zoning Ordinance in 2015. The Standards and Guidelines do not require specific architectural styles or exterior building materials; rather they are written to encourage incorporation of design features that are found in traditional neighborhoods, addressing items such as appearance of a garage, front door location, distribution of windows, and use of consistent siding materials and trim on all elevations. The code includes many “Guidelines” which are more advisory in nature, and only a few “Standards”, which are binding requirements that must be complied with.

Planning staff conducts administrative-level design review for new buildings and additions in the RT Districts based on the Design Review Standards and Guidelines for the RT Districts contained in Ch. 17.06. If staff determines that a design does not meet applicable standards or guidelines, staff works with the applicant to modify the design to come into compliance.

“Container Home” Appeal

In May of 2017, Plan Commission reviewed an appeal to the staff interpretation of the Design Standards and Guidelines as applied to a house being constructed out of metal shipping containers on S. 3rd St. Staff identified the plans submitted for building permit did not comply with a standard that requires “360 degree architecture”, which requires buildings to have a consistent appearance when viewed from all sides. This Standard is intended to prevent a building with a front elevation that greatly differs from the side and rear elevations.

Plan Commission affirmed the staff interpretation and the permit applicant was required to modify the plans to comply with the Standard prior to the building permit being issued. This home has since been constructed. As was required by staff, cement board siding was incorporated in similar proportions on each elevation and windows were aligned and used more consistently.

Plan Commission Discussion – Aug. 2017

Plan Commission held a discussion regarding the RT Design Standards and Guidelines in response to the issues raised during the container home appeal. Two main points were identified:

- The Standards and Guidelines do not regulate architectural style, but they require design elements that are characteristic of traditional building styles, which creates conflicts in the review of a building with a modern architectural design.
- The Standards and Guidelines do not require that buildings be compatible with the surrounding neighborhood in terms of style, building form, roof type, materials, etc. Rather, these items are listed as “Guidelines” which are advisory and meant to be applied with flexibility.

The consensus of the Plan Commission was as follows:

- The Standard and Guidelines should be rewritten to require traditional building styles (form, roof type, materials, etc.) as a baseline.
- Buildings that do not meet the baseline standards (for example, different architectural styles, flat roofs, non-standard building materials, etc.) would need to be reviewed and approved by the Plan Commission:
 - The Plan Commission would function like an architectural review board, and could negotiate with the applicant to improve the design or make it more compatible with the neighborhood.
 - Neighboring property owners would receive a letter from the City notifying them that plans for a house would be reviewed at a meeting.

Planning & Development Committee Direction – Oct./Dec. 2017

P&D Committee reviewed the Plan Commission’s recommendations over two meetings. The majority of members did not support rewriting the RT Design Standards & Guidelines to require traditional building style nor did they support establishing a new review process for non-traditional designs.

The Committee directed staff to leave the code as-is, but to add clarification to the existing requirements in order to reduce the potential for future appeals based on the requirements being unclear or open to interpretation.

III. PROPOSAL & ANALYSIS

Based on direction received from Planning & Development Committee, staff is proposing several modifications to Section 17.06.060 “Standards and Guidelines- RT-1, RT-2, RT-3, RT-4, and CBD-2 Districts”. The full text of this section showing the proposed changes can be found attached.

The proposed changes attempt to remove vague language and clarify requirements. The proposed Standards and Guidelines are in keeping with staff’s past interpretation and application of the code. Staff believes the proposed changes will be clearer for permit applicants and will help to avoid future appeals of code interpretation.

IV. PLAN COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

Plan Commission held a public hearing on 4/2/19 and recommended approval by a vote of 8-0.

V. ATTACHMENTS

- Proposed Amendment Text
- Application for General Amendment, filed by staff on 2/11/19

7.06.060 Standards and Guidelines – RT-1, RT-2, RT-3, RT-4, and CBD-2 Districts (one-and two-family dwellings only)

A. Site Layout and Context

Intent: To ensure building placement ~~is compatible with neighboring properties and reflects~~ is consistent with the development pattern of the surrounding neighborhood.

Standards:

1. Buildings facades shall be oriented to the street. Front facades should squarely face the street and should not be set at an angle. However, if adjacent homes are set at an angle the new home may be similarly sited.
1. Site grading shall be consistent with that of adjacent properties. The slope and elevation of the property shall not be altered in such a manner that results in an artificial change of grade.
2. The amount of front or exterior side yard covered by driveways shall be limited per Section 17.24.070Z.

Guidelines:

1. Setbacks (front, side, rear) should generally follow the averages for the block on which the new house is located. Front and exterior side yard setbacks may be reduced based on averaging of existing principal building setbacks along the street frontage of a block – See Table 17.12-2 for setback requirements.
2. Building and site layout should be compatible with existing topography and vegetation. Preservation of existing trees, particularly older growth trees, is recommended.
3. The coverage of driveways and parking areas in the front and exterior side yards should be minimized to the greatest extent possible.

B. Garages

Intent: To reduce the appearance and prominence of garages ~~in order to maintain a pedestrian friendly streetscape.~~

Standards:

1. Garages shall meet the provisions of Section 17.22.020 Accessory Buildings and Structures, including but not limited to: requirement to provide access from a public alley; limitations on garage door width; and requirements to set back street-facing attached garages from the remainder of the building

2. Detached garages shall be consistent with the architectural style of the house. ~~Use of similar window styles, exterior materials, and trim detailing is required~~ shall have a similar appearance to the house (but use of exact materials shall not be required).

Guidelines

1. Detached or rear-loaded garages are recommended. A Building Coverage bonus shall be provided where a detached garage or an attached garage accesses via an alley is provided. See Table 17.12.2.
1. Street-facing doors on attached garages should incorporate glass panel windows.
2. The use of individual bay doors (single stall) is preferred over double-wide doors, particularly for street-facing attached garages. Stepped back, separate garage doors should also be considered to further soften the impact of a street-facing attached garage.

C. Massing and Proportion

Intent: To reduce the appearance of mass and to encourage new ~~houses~~ buildings to match the scale of the existing neighborhood.

Standards:

1. Buildings shall comply with the Bulk Requirements provided in Table 17.12-2 (including Setbacks, building coverage, and building height).

Guidelines:

1. Scale, proportions, and height should be compatible ~~with adjacent homes and~~ with the general characteristics of homes in the surrounding neighborhood. For example, effort should be made to ~~limit the height, or~~ reduce the appearance of height, of a two-story house constructed among single-story houses.
2. Simple building forms and shapes are encouraged.
3. The following methods may be incorporated to reduce the apparent mass of a home:
 - a. Step back portions of the home. For example, set the second story back ~~a number of feet~~ from the first story or add an unenclosed porch on the first story.
 - b. Use dormers to break up roof mass, if consistent with the architectural style of the home.
 - c. Incorporate horizontal design detailing to visually break up flat walls. Examples include wide skirt boards, mid-section trim between stories, frieze boards along roof eaves, partial or complete gable returns, or a change in siding or masonry patterns or materials.

D. Roofs

Intent: To encourage roofs and rooflines that add character and interest to a home, ~~while blending with the roof forms found throughout the existing neighborhood.~~

Guidelines:

~~1. The form, pitch, and scale of roofs should be compatible with the surrounding neighborhood.~~

~~2.1.~~ Roof form, pitch, and scale should match the architectural style of the house.

~~3.2.~~ Simple gabled and hipped roof forms are preferred. Mansard and flat roofs should be used only if appropriate for the architectural style of the house.

~~4.3.~~ Eaves that extend a sufficient distance to create shadow lines are encouraged if appropriate for the architecture of the structure.

~~5.4.~~ The roof of the garage and other accessory structures should mimic the roof of the house in both form and pitch.

~~6.1. Mansard and flat roofs should be used only if appropriate for the architectural style of the house.~~

E. Architectural ~~Details~~ Materials

Intent: To promote use of architectural interest materials and design that in a manner that complements ~~the traditional building styles found in older neighborhoods.~~

Standards:

~~“360 degree architecture” is required, meaning that facades must be designed to be viewed from all directions. At a minimum, the same window types and similar trim detailing to the front elevation must be used on the side and rear elevations.~~

~~1. Primary siding materials shall be used consistently and at approximately the same proportion on each elevation of the building. For example, for a building with a masonry front elevation, masonry shall be used in a similar proportion on all other sidings of the building. (Note this Standard does not apply to materials used for accent purposes.)~~

~~1-2. Exterior trim detailing shall be consistent on all elevations. For example, the same size window casing shall be used for all windows on each elevation.~~

Guidelines:

~~1. Siding materials used for accent purposes on the front elevation (for example, a masonry water table or siding type used within a gable) are encouraged, but not required, to be used on each other elevation.~~

- ~~1. Use of masonry should be consistent on all facades. Use of masonry on the front façade only is discouraged.~~
2. The use of exterior trim detailing is recommended. ~~In addition to the,~~ including window casing (a minimum of 4 inches), such detailing includes: wide vertical corner boards, skirt boards, frieze boards, and midsection trim.
3. The limited use of decorative elements such as gable trusses, exposed rafters, arched doors and windows, quoins, pediments, etc. is encouraged, provided such elements do not overwhelm or clutter the home's appearance and are appropriate for the architectural style of the home.
- ~~4. All window openings should be articulated by window casing of at least four (4) inches if the primary all material is sliding.~~
- ~~5.4.~~ Shutters should only be utilized where appropriate for the architectural style of the building. If shutters are used, they should exactly match the window size.
- ~~6.~~ Chimneys should be masonry when located on a street-facing elevation.

F. Windows

Intent: Provide windows that are consistent with the architectural style of the house while being complimentary to the window types and fenestration found on traditional building styles.

Standards:

1. The same window types and style shall be used consistently on each elevation where feasible. Double hung and casement windows may be used interchangeably provided they are of a similar proportion and incorporate similar detailing where possible- (such as the same lite/muntin pattern).

Guidelines

1. Windows should be incorporated on all elevations.
~~Window openings and panes should be similarly proportioned throughout.~~
2. Windows should be placed in a manner that creates a balanced elevation on all sides of the house. The distribution of windows on each individual elevation should be balanced. Large areas of blank wall should be avoided.
3. The style of windows should match the architectural style of the house.
4. ~~Double hung or casement windows are preferred.~~ The use of fixed and large, undivided pane windows should be limited. is discouraged.

5. The use of window muntins (divides) should be consistent for all windows.

~~The style of windows and doors (particularly the front door) should complement the architectural style of the house.~~

~~In addition to window casing, design elements such as window muntins (divides), window sills, and head trim, should be incorporated if such details are appropriate for the architectural style of the house.~~

FG. Windows, Doors, and Entrances

Intent: To promote ~~an inviting presence that contributes to the designs that contribute to the~~ pedestrian friendly character ~~and reorientation of~~ the ~~neighborhood streetscape~~.

Guidelines:

~~1.~~ 1. The ~~home's~~ primary entrance should be located at the front of the house, facing the street.

2. The front entry should be the predominate feature on the front elevation. Multi-story entry features should be used only when architecturally appropriate.

~~2.~~ 3. The style of doors, particularly the front door, should complement the architectural style of the house.

~~3.~~ 4. Open, full-width front or wrap-around porches are recommended to emphasize the front entrance. Porches should be at least six (6) to eight (8) feet in depth and constructed in a manner so as to be fully functional. Porch detailing should be consistent with the architecture of the house.

~~4.~~ 5. Unenclosed Porches are permitted to encroach up to eight (8) feet into the front, exterior side or rear yards. Unenclosed porches are not included in the calculation of Building Coverage. For the definition of an Unenclosed Porch vs. Enclosed Porch and Building Coverage see Ch. 17.30. For information on permitted yard encroachments, see Section 17.22.030.

~~5.1. Windows should be incorporated on all elevations.~~

~~6.1. Window openings and panes should be similarly proportioned throughout.~~

~~7.1. Windows should be placed in a manner that creates a balanced elevation on all sides of the house.~~

~~8.1. Double-hung or casement windows are preferred. The use of fixed and large, undivided pane windows should be limited.~~

~~9.1. The use of window muntins (divides) should be consistent for all windows.~~

~~10.1. The style of windows and doors (particularly the front door) should complement the architectural style of the house.~~

~~11.1. In addition to window casing, design elements such as window muntins (divides), window sills, and head trim, should be incorporated if such details are appropriate for the architectural style of the house.~~

GH. Additions and Exterior Alterations

Intent: To ensure additions and exterior alterations are complementary to the existing home and blend with the neighborhood.

Standards:

1. Additions and exterior alterations shall abide by the applicable standards and guidelines in Section 17.06.606 A-F.

Guidelines:

1. Additions should match the scale and mass of the original structure.
2. Additions and exterior alterations should match the existing house in exterior materials, color, architectural style and detailing, window proportion and type, and roof form, pitch, and color.

CITY OF ST. CHARLES
TWO EAST MAIN STREET
ST. CHARLES, ILLINOIS 60174-1984



COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEV./PLANNING DIVISION

PHONE: (630) 377-4443 FAX: (630) 377-4062

GENERAL AMENDMENT APPLICATION

CITYVIEW	
Project Name:	GA- RT Design Guidelines & Standards
Project Number:	2019 -PR- 004
Application Number:	2019 -AP- 005



Instructions:

To request an amendment to the text of the St. Charles Zoning Ordinance (City Code Title 17), complete this application and submit it with all required attachments to the Planning Division.

City staff will review submittals for completeness and for compliance with applicable requirements prior to establishing a meeting or public hearing date for an application.

The information you provide must be complete and accurate. If you have a question please call the Planning Division and we will be happy to assist you.

Applicant:	Name	City of St. Charles	Phone	(630)377-4443
	Address	2 E. Main St. St. Charles, IL 60174	Fax	
			Email	ejohnson@stcharlesil.gov

Attachment Checklist

If multiple zoning or subdivision applications are being submitted concurrently, do not submit duplicate checklist items or plans. Fee must be paid for each application.

- APPLICATION FEE:** Application fee in accordance with Appendix B of the Zoning Ordinance (\$500)
- REIMBURSEMENT OF FEES AGREEMENT:**
An original, executed Reimbursement of Fees Agreement and deposit of funds in escrow with the City, as provided by Appendix B of the Zoning Ordinance.
- REIMBURSEMENT OF FEES INITIAL DEPOSIT:**
Deposit of funds in escrow with the City. (For a General Amendment application only: \$1,000 deposit.)
- FINDINGS:** Fill out the attached form or submit responses on a separate sheet.

□ **WORDING OF THE REQUESTED TEXT AMENDMENT**

What is the amendment regarding?

Add clarification to existing requirements.

What sections are proposed for amendment?

Chapters(s): Ch. 17.06 "Design Review Standards and Guidelines"

Section(s): 17.06.060 "Standards and Guidelines - RT-1, RT-2, RT-3, RT-4 and CBD-2 Districts"

The wording of the proposed amendment: Insert below or attached wording on a separate page.

See attached.

I (we) certify that this application and the documents submitted with it are true and correct to the best of my (our) knowledge and belief.

Allen Johnson
Applicant

2/11/19
Date

Findings of Fact

1. The Consistency of the proposed amendment with the City's Comprehensive Plan.

The proposed amendment is consistent with the applicable Residential Land Use Policies contained in Ch. 4 of the Comprehensive Plan, particularly the following:

"Preserve the character of the City's existing single family residential neighborhoods." The revised design standards and guidelines will promote attractive architectural designs that add to the character of St. Charles' older residential neighborhoods.

2. The Consistency of the proposed amendment with the intent and general regulations of this Title.

The proposed amendment supports the following purpose statements listed in Ch. 17.02 of the Zoning Ordinance:

- Preserving and enhancing the quality of life for residents and visitors.
- Protecting the character of established residential neighborhoods.

3. Whether the proposed amendment corrects an error or omission, adds clarification to existing requirements, is more workable than the existing text, or reflects a change in policy.

The proposed amendment clarifies existing requirements by eliminating vague language and rephrasing certain provisions to promote clear and consistent interpretation.

4. The extent to which the proposed amendment would be in the public interest and would not serve solely the interest of the applicant.

The revised design standards and guidelines will help to preserve and enhance the character of St. Charles' older residential neighborhoods while still allowing for flexibility in architectural creativity and style.

5. The extent to which the proposed amendment creates nonconformities.

The amendment will not create nonconformities. The revised design standards and guidelines will apply only to new construction and exterior alterations of existing homes within the RT and the CBD-2 districts (one and two-family dwellings only). Existing structures will not be required to come into compliance with the revised design standards and guidelines.

6. The implications of the proposed amendment on all similarly zoned property in the City.

The proposed amendment applies to all property in the City zoned RT-1, RT-2, RT-3, RT-4, and CBD-2.