

	PLAN COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM EXECUTIVE SUMMARY			
	Project Title/ Address:	General Amendment to Title 17 of the City Code (Zoning Ordinance) regarding residential driveways		
	City Staff:	Russell Colby, Planning Division Manager		
Please check appropriate box (x)				
	PUBLIC HEARING (7/2/13)	X	MEETING (7/2/13)	X
APPLICATIONS UNDER CONSIDERATION:				
General Amendment				
ATTACHMENTS AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS				
Staff Report (dated 6/27/13)		General Amendment Application		
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:				
<p>In October 2006, the City adopted new regulations in the Zoning Ordinance for driveways for single and two family residential properties. Regulations enacted in 2006:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Driveway width at the property/right-of-way line is set at a maximum of 24 ft. This standard had been in place in other areas of the City Code since 1997. However, the 2006 regulations did not specify whether more than one driveway access was allowed per lot. Staff interpreted this to mean that more than one driveway is allowed, provided the combined width of all driveways does not exceed 24 ft. • Pavement coverage in the required front yard area is set at a maximum of 25% for a single driveway or 50% for a circular driveway with two access points. Regardless of the pavement coverage, all residential properties are entitled to at least a 16 ft. width driveway in the front yard. (This is an issue primarily for smaller lots in older neighborhoods, where 25% results in a very narrow driveway). <p>In practice, staff has encountered issues with the regulations, particularly when a homeowner wishes to replace an existing driveway that is considered non-conforming based on the above restrictions. To address this issue, staff proposes the following amendments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarify that two access points are allowed for circular driveways, each up to 18 ft. The extent of the driveway on the lot itself will continue to be regulated based on the percentage of front yard pavement coverage. This will enable existing circular driveways in larger lot residential zoning districts to be reconstructed similar to what is common today in areas such as Woods of Fox Glen, Persimmon Woods, and Royal Fox. • Provide that all residential properties are at least entitled to a driveway width of 18 ft. (instead of 16 ft.). This is a more reasonable width to accommodate two cars parked next to each other. • Increase the allowable front yard pavement coverage for three-car front loaded garages to 33% to reflect existing conditions in neighborhoods where three-car front loaded garages are common. 				
RECOMMENDATION / SUGGESTED ACTION (<i>briefly explain</i>):				
<p>Conduct the public hearing and close if all testimony has been taken.</p> <p>Staff has provided Findings of Fact to vote on tonight, if the Commission believes it is appropriate to close the hearing and is satisfied that no additional information is necessary.</p> <p>Staff recommends approval of the General Amendment application and has provided the attached draft Findings of Fact to support that recommendation.</p>				

Community Development
Planning Division

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Staff Report

TO: Chairman Todd Wallace
and Members of the Plan Commission

FROM: Russell Colby, Planning Division Manager

RE: Application for a General Amendment to Title 17 of the City Code (Zoning Ordinance)
regarding Residential Driveways

DATE: June 27, 2013

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

Project Name: General Amendment for Residential Driveways

Applicant: City of St. Charles

Purpose: Modify driveway width regulations for single and two family residential properties to clarify requirements and reflect existing conditions.

II. BACKGROUND

In October 2006, the City adopted new regulations in the Zoning Ordinance for driveways for single and two family residential properties. The regulations were created as a part of the 2006 Zoning Ordinance rewriting process. Previously, the City did not regulate the portion of residential driveways located on private property. The new regulations were intended to control aesthetics by limiting excessively large driveways in front yards with the goal of preserving neighborhood character.

Regulations enacted in 2006:

- Driveway width at the property/right-of-way line is set at a maximum of 24 ft. This standard had been in place in other areas of the City Code since 1997. However, the 2006 regulations did not specify whether more than one driveway access was allowed per lot. Staff interpreted this to mean that more than one driveway is allowed, provided the combined width of all driveways does not exceed 24 ft.
- Pavement coverage in the required front yard area is set at a maximum of 25% for a single driveway or 50% for a circular driveway with two access points. Regardless of the pavement coverage, all residential properties are entitled to at least a 16 ft. width driveway in the front yard. (This is an issue primarily for smaller lots in older neighborhoods, where 25% results in a very narrow driveway for a 50 or 60 ft. wide lot.)

In practice, staff has encountered issues with the regulations, particularly when a homeowner wishes to replace an existing driveway that is considered non-conforming based on the above restrictions.

III. PROPOSAL

To address this issue, staff proposes the following amendments:

- Clarify that two access points are allowed for circular driveways, each up to 18 ft. The extent of the driveway on the lot itself will continue to be regulated based on the percentage of front yard pavement coverage. This will enable existing circular driveways in larger lot residential zoning districts to be reconstructed similar to what is common today.
- Provide that all residential properties are at least entitled to a driveway width of 18 ft. (instead of 16 ft.). This is a more reasonable width to accommodate two cars parked next to each other and is a more functional width for a two-car garage.
- Increase the allowable front yard pavement coverage for three-car front loaded garages to 33% to reflect existing conditions in neighborhoods where three-car front loaded garages are common.

IV. ANALYSIS

Driveway Width Standards in Nearby Communities

Staff surveyed nearby communities to determine if their restrictions on residential driveways were significantly different from St. Charles. The findings are listed in the table below.

	Geneva	Batavia	Elgin	Illinois Department of Transportation Standard
Maximum driveway width at property line	24 ft. max.	14 ft. if garage is 45 ft. set back from property line; otherwise 18 ft. max.	24 ft. max. 32 ft. for 3-car garage	24 ft. max 12 ft. min.
Circular Driveways	Permitted by code at width of 24 ft. each; generally not approved by City.	Permitted, reviewed on a case-by-case basis.	Not permitted.	

Circular Driveways in St. Charles

Unlike other neighboring municipalities, St. Charles has a number of large lot residential neighborhoods where circular driveways were commonly built when the properties were initially developed.

Staff analyzed driveway width in neighborhoods where circular drives are common. Circular driveways are common in residential estate districts (RE-1 and RE-2 – Woods of Fox Glen, Persimmon Woods, Persimmon Fields, Thornley on the Fox) and can be found in isolated locations in some suburban residential districts (RS-1 and RS-2 – Royal Fox, Aintree, Hunt Club, Red Gate). The proposed 18 ft. width for each access point would accommodate most existing conditions. The existing restrictions on pavement coverage will continue to effectively limit which individual lots can accommodate a circular driveway.

Driveways for Three-Car Front-Loaded Garages

St. Charles has a number of neighborhoods where three-car front loaded garages are common, including Kingswood, Charlemagne, Hunt Club, Majestic Oaks, Artesian Springs, and Red Gate.

Staff found only a small number of driveways for three-car front loaded garages that exceed 24 ft. at the property line, and of these driveways, the increased width is minimal (no more than 28 ft.). However, many of these existing driveways approach or exceed the maximum front yard coverage of 25%. In the future, if these driveways are reconstructed, due to a combination of narrow lot width and short front yard building setbacks, it may be difficult to create a driveway wide enough to effectively access three garage bays without exceeding the 25% limitation. Increased pavement coverage of 33% specifically for three-car front-loaded garages would accommodate most existing conditions.

V. DRAFT AMENDMENT

Existing Text: Yard Coverage

17.24.070 Design of Off-Street Parking Facilities

All off-street parking facilities shall comply with the following standards:

A. Setbacks

2. No access drive shall cover more than twenty-five percent (25%) of the front or exterior side yard in which it is located, except that circular driveways serving one and two family dwellings may cover a) up to fifty percent (50%) of the front yard, if both access points intersect with the front lot line, b) up to fifty percent (50%) of the exterior side yard, if both access points intersect with the exterior side lot line or c) up to twenty-five percent (25%) of the total area of the front and exterior side yards, if one access intersects the front lot line and the other intersects the exterior side lot line.

Notwithstanding this limitation on lot coverage for access drives, one driveway up to 16 feet wide generally perpendicular to the street is permitted for one and two family uses, and one driveway of up to 24 feet wide generally perpendicular to the street is permitted for other uses, regardless of the percentage of the yard it occupies.

Proposed Text: Yard Coverage

17.24.070 Design of Off-Street Parking Facilities

All off-street parking facilities shall comply with the following standards:

A. Setbacks and Yard Coverage

2. Maximum Front and Exterior Side Yard Coverage for Access Drives

- i. Access drives serving one and two-family dwellings shall not cover more of the front or exterior side yard in which it is located than is specified below:
 1. For circular driveways, up to fifty percent (50%) of the front yard, if both access points intersect with the front lot line, b) up to fifty percent (50%) of the exterior side yard, if both access points intersect with the exterior side lot line or c) up to twenty-five percent (25%) of the total area of the front and exterior side yards, if one access intersects the front lot line and the other intersects the exterior side lot line.
 2. For driveways to access three-car front loaded garages, 33%.
 3. For all other driveways, 25%, except that one driveway of at least 18 feet wide generally perpendicular to the street is permitted regardless of the percentage of the yard it occupies.
- ii. For all other uses, no access drive shall cover more than twenty-five percent (25%) of the front or exterior side yard in which it is located, except that one driveway of at least 24 feet wide generally perpendicular to the street is permitted for one and two family uses, regardless of the percentage of the yard it occupies.

Existing Text: Width at property line

17.24.070 Design of Off-Street Parking Facilities

C. Access

3. Driveway width adjoining public streets, measured parallel to the curb or edge of pavement at the property line, shall be as follows:
 - a. A maximum of twenty-four (24) feet in width for single-family and two-family dwellings.

Proposed Text: Width at property line

17.24.070 Design of Off-Street Parking Facilities

C. Access

3. Driveway width adjoining public streets, measured parallel to the curb or edge of pavement at the property line, shall be as follows:
 - a. For single and two family dwellings, a maximum of twenty-four (24) feet in width for a single driveway access to a lot, or for two driveway access points to a lot, a maximum of eighteen (18) feet in width per driveway. No more than two access drives shall be permitted.

VI. RECOMMENDATION

Conduct the public hearing and close if all testimony has been taken.

Staff has provided Findings of Fact to vote on tonight, if the Commission believes it is appropriate to close the hearing and is satisfied that no additional information is necessary.

Staff recommends approval of the General Amendment application and has provided the attached draft Findings of Fact to support that recommendation.

VII. FINDINGS OF FACT

APPLICATION FOR GENERAL AMENDMENT

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

The amendment is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan’s goal of preserving the character of the City’s residential neighborhoods.

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

This amendment is consistent with the intent of limiting the size of residential driveways for the purpose of aesthetics and preservation of neighborhood character. The proposed changes are intended to make the ordinance requirements more consistent with what exists today, without enabling excessively large driveways to be constructed.

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 of policy.

The amendment will create more workable requirements that reflect the existing conditions in residential neighborhoods in St. Charles.

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 amendment will benefit all residential neighborhoods.

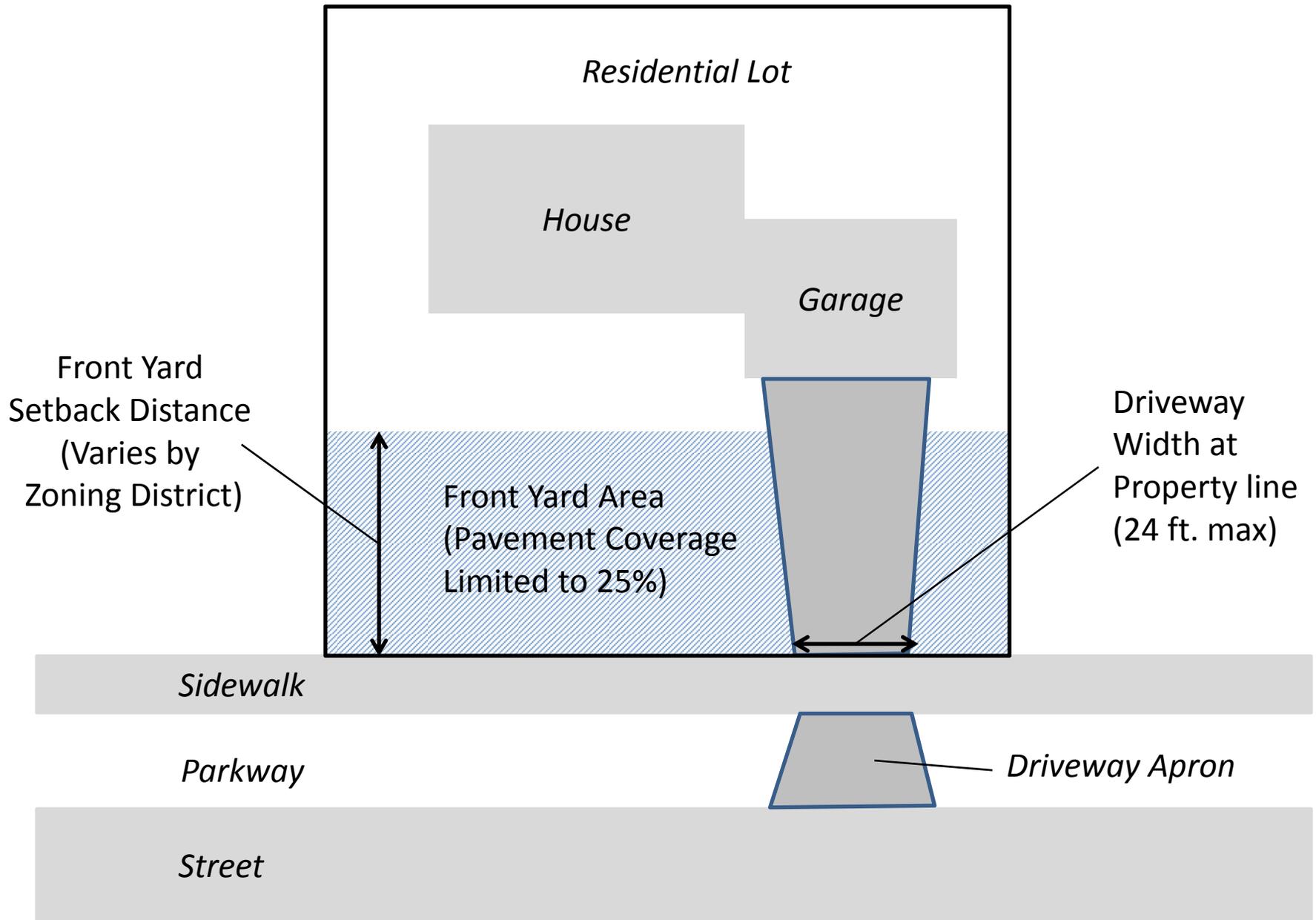
5. The extent to which the proposed amendment creates non-conformities.

The proposed amendment will significantly reduce the number of existing non-conforming driveways and enable many residential driveways to be reconstructed similar to how they existed when the property was originally developed.

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

This amendment will be applied equally across all residential zoning districts.

How driveways are regulated in the Zoning Ordinance



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



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT/PLANNING DIVISION

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

GENERAL AMENDMENT APPLICATION (ZONING ORDINANCE)

CITYVIEW PROJECT NO: 2013 PH009
CITYVIEW APPLICATION NO: 2013 APO18
PROJECT NAME: G.A. - Driveway width at R.O.W

RECEIVED
Received Date
St. Charles, IL

JUN 12 2013

CDD
Planning Division

Instructions:

To request an amendment to the text of the St. Charles Zoning Ordinance, complete this application and submit it with all required attachments to the Planning Office.

We 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 Office and we will be happy to assist you.

1. Applicant Information:	Name City of St. Charles	Phone 630-377-4443
	Address 2 E. Main Street St. Charles IL, 60174	Fax 630-377-4062
		Email rcolby@stcharlesil.gov
2. Billing: <i>To whom should costs for this application be billed?</i>	Name City of St. Charles	Phone 630-377-4443
	Address 2 E. Main Street St. Charles IL, 60174	Fax 630-377-4062
		Email rcolby@stcharlesil.gov

Attachment Checklist

Application Fee (make checks payable to the City of St. Charles)

