



## PLAN COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**Project Title/Address:** Discussion of Residential Design Guidelines

**City Staff:** Ellen Johnson, Planner  
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**PUBLIC HEARING**  
**3/3/15**

**MEETING**  
**3/3/15**

X

**APPLICATION:** N/A

### ATTACHMENTS AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS:

Draft Design Guidelines

### SUMMARY:

Staff gave a presentation on residential teardowns and infill development at the 2/3/15 meeting of the Plan Commission. Commissioners provided feedback on staff's question as to whether it would be appropriate to adopt design standards and guidelines for new homes constructed in the RT- Traditional Residential zoning districts. Commissioners stated support for advisory-only design guidelines.

Staff has prepared a draft of design guidelines for new homes constructed in the RT and CBD-2 zoning districts. The proposed standards and guidelines have been formatted similarly to the existing Zoning Ordinance design standards and guidelines for commercial and multi-family zoning districts, which can be accessed at: <http://www.stcharlesil.gov/sites/default/files/codebook/t17-ch06.pdf>

Staff is seeking feedback from Commissioners on this draft.

**EXISTING:**

**17.06.010 How to Use This Chapter**

**A. Standards and Guidelines**

The provisions of this Chapter include “Standards” and “Guidelines”, both of which must be addressed in order to obtain Design Review approval. “Standards” are specific requirements that must be met. A Standard typically offers little flexibility unless options are provided within the Standard itself. A Standard may establish requirements not otherwise contained in this Title, or may refer to other requirements more fully set forth elsewhere in this Title or the St. Charles Municipal Code. “Guidelines” are descriptions of design characteristics intended to be applied with flexibility. Where a proposed design does not precisely follow the guideline, it may still be acceptable if the applicant can show how it meets the intent for that group of standards and guidelines and the purpose and intent of this Title.

**PROPOSED:**

**17.06.060 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 the development pattern of the surrounding neighborhood.

***Standards:***

1. See Section 17.24.070.Z regarding limitations on yard coverage of driveways in front and exterior side yards

***Guidelines:***

1. Strong orientation to the street is encouraged. Front facades should squarely face the street and should not be set at an angle. If adjacent homes are set at an angle the new home may be similarly sited.\*
2. Site grading should be compatible with that of adjacent homes.\*
3. Setbacks (front, side, rear) should follow the averages for the block on which the new house is located, regardless of whether the average setbacks are greater than required by this Ordinance (See Table 17.12-2 for setback requirements. Front and exterior side yard setbacks may be reduced, per Table 17.12-2, footnote 5).
4. Siting should be compatible with existing topography and vegetation. Preservation of existing trees, particularly older growth trees, is strongly encouraged.
5. The coverage of driveways and parking areas in the front and exterior side yards should be minimized to the greatest extent possible.  
(See Section 17.24.070.A for limitations on yard coverage of driveways in front and exterior side yards)

**B. Garages**

***Intent:*** To reduce the appearance and prominence of garages in order to encourage a pedestrian friendly environment.

***Standards:***

1. Garages must meet the provisions of Section 17.22.020 Accessory Buildings and Structures, related to alley access requirement, garage door width, and front-loaded garage placement.

***Guidelines:***

1. Detached or rear-loaded garages are encouraged to promote a strong pedestrian orientation and reduce the appearance of bulk.  
(A building coverage bonus for providing a detached garage or an attached garage accessed via an alley is available, per Table 17.12-2 footnote 4).
2. Front-loaded (street facing) garage doors should incorporate either glass panel windows or individual bay doors (single stall).
3. The use of individual bay doors (single stall) is preferred over double-wide doors, particularly for attached, front-loaded garages. Stepped back, separate garage doors should also be considered to further soften the impact of a front-loaded garage.
4. Detached garages should be consistent with the architectural style of the house. Use of the same exterior materials and trim detailing is encouraged.\*

### C. **Massing and Proportion**

**Intent:** To reduce the appearance of mass and help to ensure that new houses are not out of scale to the existing neighborhood.

**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 new house constructed among single-story houses.
2. Simple building massing is 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.
  - b. Use dormers to break up roof mass, if consistent with the architectural style of the home.
  - c. Incorporate horizontal detailing such as frieze boards and mid-section trim.

### D. **Roofs**

**Intent:** To encourage roofs and rooflines that add character and interest to a home, while complementing 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. Roof form, pitch, and scale should complement the overall design and architecture of the house.
3. Simple gabled and hipped roof forms are preferred.
4. Eaves that extend a sufficient distance to create shadow lines are encouraged if appropriate for the architecture of the structure.
5. The roof of the garage and other accessory structures should mimic the roof of the house in both form and pitch.
6. Mansard and flat roofs should be used only if appropriate for the architectural style of the house.

### E. **Architectural Details**

**Intent:** To promote architectural interest and quality design that complements the traditional building styles found in the surrounding neighborhood.

**Guidelines:**

1. “360 degree architecture” is encouraged, meaning that facades should be designed to be viewed from all directions. The same detailing used on the front elevation should be used on the side and rear elevations.\*
2. All window openings should be articulated by window casing of at least four (4) inches if the primary wall material is siding.

3. The number of wall materials per elevation should be limited to two (not including the foundation).
4. The use of exterior trim detailing is strongly encouraged. In addition to window casing, such detailing includes: wide vertical corner boards, frieze boards, and mid-section trim.
5. If shutters are used, they should be exactly one half the width of the window they are covering.
6. 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.
7. Chimneys should be masonry when located on a street-facing elevation.

#### **F. Windows, Doors, and Entrances**

***Intent:*** To promote an inviting presence that contributes to the pedestrian friendly character of the neighborhood.

***Guidelines:***

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.
3. Windows should be incorporated on all elevations.\*
4. Open, full-width front or wrap-around porches are encouraged 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.  
(Note that unenclosed porches, as defined in Ch. 17.30, are permitted to encroach up to eight (8) feet into the front yard setback, per Section 17.22.030 Permitted Encroachments. Unenclosed porches are not included in the calculation of building coverage, as defined in Ch. 17.30.)
5. Window openings and panes should be similarly proportioned throughout.
6. Windows should be placed in a manner that creates a balanced elevation on all sides of the house.
7. Double-hung or casement windows are preferred. The use of fixed and large, undivided pane windows should be limited.
8. The use of window muntins (divides) should be consistent for all windows.
9. The style of windows and doors (particularly the front door) should complement the architectural style of the house.
10. In addition to window casing (see E.2), 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.

#### **G. Additions and Exterior Alterations**

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

***Guidelines:***

1. The scale and mass of additions should be in keeping with 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.

\* denotes guidelines that could be made standards (mandatory).