

**Community Planning and Economic Development Planning Division Report
Zoning Code Text Amendment**

Date: June 22, 2009

Initiator of Amendment: Council Member Schiff

Date of Introduction at City Council: March 30, 2007

Ward: Citywide **Neighborhood Organization: (If Applicable):** Citywide

Planning Staff and Phone: Brad Ellis, 612-673-3239

Intent of the Ordinance: To require all new single- and two- family dwellings to provide enclosed parking

Appropriate Section(s) of the Zoning Code:

Chapter 525: Administration and Enforcement

Chapter 530: Site Plan Review

Chapter 535: Regulations of General Applicability

Chapter 541: Off-Street Parking and Loading

Background: This amendment would require construction of a garage—either attached or detached—when constructing or relocating any new single-family dwelling in the city. New authorized variance provisions are proposed from the garage requirement in case of hardship.

According to U.S. Census Department figures, the number of new single-family dwellings constructed in the United States with no carport or garage declined from 16 percent in 1990 to a low of eight percent in 2005 before increasing to nine percent in 2007. In the Midwest region, the number of new single-family dwellings constructed with no carport or garage declined from nine percent in 1990 to a low of five percent in 2004 before increasing back to nine percent in 2007.

Since the 2006 (the first full year after the adoption of the 1-4 unit administrative site plan review, which encourages detached garages) there have been 320 permits for new single- and two-family homes in the City of Minneapolis. Of these 320 new permits, thirteen had no garage or a carport (4 percent), 86 had attached garages (27 percent), and 221 had detached garages (69 percent).

The adoption of an administrative site plan review for single- and two-family dwellings and multiple-family dwellings having three or four dwelling units in 2005 included point system in which an applicant can receive points for providing a detached garage. The point system has increased the percentage of houses providing detached garages. The proposed amendment would require a garage but not affect the existing point system, since the goal of the point system is to encourage the traditional urban form of the city which includes detached garages. Note that this amendment will only affect homes requiring an administrative site plan review, and will not affect existing single- and two-family homes.

Minneapolis City Planning Department Report

This amendment was originally proposed in 2002 but was not approved. At that time, the City Council adopted regulations pertaining to front-facing attached garages.

Purpose for the Amendment:

What is the reason for the amendment?

What problem is the Amendment designed to solve?

What public purpose will be served by the amendment?

What problems might the amendment create?

The City Council is concerned about development of single- and two-family dwellings that have neither an enclosed parking space nor enclosed place for materials that naturally accompany home ownership such as yard-care equipment, snow removal items, etc.

The amendment requiring a garage is intended to solve the problems associated with homes that are constructed without an enclosed garage. These problems include lack of space to store equipment necessary for maintaining one's yard. For those households with an automobile or automobiles, the amendment would reduce theft *of* vehicles and theft *from* vehicles, provide relief from extreme weather, and offer an aesthetically superior alternative to parking vehicles outdoors.

The public purpose underlying the amendment, as noted above, includes increased public safety as well as protection and preservation of the character of the city's residential neighborhoods.

Requiring a garage with new single-family dwellings will increase the cost of dwellings that would have otherwise been constructed without garages. Construction of a basic two-car garage generally costs between \$14,500 and \$17,500. A single-car detached garage, which would be the minimum required by this ordinance, would typically cost around \$8,000. As noted above, however, only four percent of new homes constructed in recent years have been built without enclosed parking due to overall market demand for garages with single- and two-family homes. In some cases, steep topography or other unique characteristics of a parcel may prevent any reasonable opportunity for construction of a garage. Staff is recommending that the City Council adopt a variance provision from the garage requirement. Note that economic reasons alone would not be grounds for granting a variance.

Timeliness:

Is the amendment timely?

Is the amendment consistent with practices in surrounding areas?

Are there consequences in denying this amendment?

Minneapolis City Planning Department Report

There is nothing inherent about the amendment that makes the issue timely. Without the regulation, a certain percentage of homes in the city would continue to be constructed without enclosed parking.

According to the May 1991 issue of *The Zoning Report*, approximately 20 percent of zoning codes nationwide at that time required that one or more parking spaces must be located within a garage. The amendment requiring construction of a garage is generally consistent with practices in some nearby communities. Alternatively, some nearby communities stipulate that when constructing a dwelling a space must be identified on the site where a garage could be constructed without a variance.

- Richfield zoning code, section 514.15, Subd. 3: “Building plans submitted after July 5, 2008 for new single-family dwellings 1,200 square feet or less shall include garage space for not less than one vehicle and shall designate area on the lot for future construction of garage space for a second vehicle that will not require any variances. Building plans submitted after July 5, 2008 for new single-family dwellings over 1,200 square feet shall include garage space not less than two vehicles. For the purposes of this subdivision only, each vehicle shall require a garage space of not less than 10 feet in width by 20 feet in depth.”
- Edina zoning code, section 850.08, sub. 1, requires two enclosed parking spaces for single-family dwellings, two-family dwellings, and townhouse units.
- Golden Valley requires construction of a garage with new single-family dwellings unless a registered survey “reflects the necessary area and setback requirements for a future two (2) stall (minimum) garage” of the zoning code.
- Bloomington requires four spaces per dwelling unit, two of which must be within a garage or area that could be occupied by a garage.
- St. Louis Park does not require enclosed parking with a new single- or two-family dwelling.

Staff conducted research into similar regulations in peer cities. The Cities of St. Paul, MN; Denver, CO; Milwaukee, WI; San Diego, CA; Seattle, WA; Portland, OR; and Pittsburgh, PA do not require construction of a garage with a new single-family dwelling.

The consequences of denying the amendment are clear: A certain percentage of single-family dwellings will continue to be constructed without garages. The effects of this are noted above.

Comprehensive Plan:

How will this amendment implement the Comprehensive Plan?

The following policies of the Minneapolis Plan are related to the proposed amendment:

Relevant Policy: 9.8. Minneapolis will maintain and strengthen the character of the city’s various residential areas.

Relevant Implementation Steps:

Minneapolis City Planning Department Report

- Infill development standards must reflect the setbacks, orientation, pattern, materials, height and scale of surrounding one and two family dwellings.

Staff comment: Requiring garages to be constructed accessory to new single-family dwellings would be consistent with the pattern of most residential development in the city. The existing point system in the 1-4 dwelling unit site plan review would continue to encourage detached garages in line with the City's existing residential character.

Relevant Policy: 9.21. Minneapolis will preserve and enhance the quality of living in residential neighborhoods, regulate structures and uses which may affect the character or desirability of residential areas, encourage a variety of dwelling types and locations and a range of population densities, and ensure amenities, including light, air, privacy and open space.

Staff comment: Staff believes that a garage is an amenity that increases privacy and increases the desirability of residential areas.

The following policies of the Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth are related to the proposed amendment:

Relevant Policy: 10.8: Strengthen the character and desirability of the city's urban neighborhood residential areas while accommodating reinvestment through infill development.

Relevant Implementation Steps:

- 10.8.1 Infill development shall reflect the setbacks, orientation, pattern, materials, height and scale of surrounding dwellings.
- 10.8.2 Infill development shall incorporate the traditional layout of residential development that includes a standard front and side yard setbacks, open space in the back yard, and detached garage along the alley or at back of lot.

Staff comment: As noted above, requiring garages to be constructed accessory to new single-family dwellings would be consistent with the pattern of most residential development in the city. The existing point system in the 1-4 dwelling unit site plan review will continue to encourage detached garages in line with the city's existing residential character.

Relevant Policy: 2.2: Support successful streets and communities by balancing the needs of all modes of transportation with land use policy.

Relevant Implementation Steps:

- 2.2.4 Develop strategies to mitigate and/or reduce negative impacts of transportation systems on adjacent land uses.

Staff comment: Staff believes that a garage reduces the impact of autos parked on-street as well as parked in the open in an approved parking area by offering an aesthetically desirable alternative to parking in the open or in an unenclosed structure.

Recommendation of the Community Planning and Economic Development Planning Division:

The Community Planning and Economic Development Planning Division recommends that the City Planning Commission and City Council adopt the above findings and **approve** the zoning code text amendment, amending chapters 525 and 530, and **return** chapters 535 and 541 to author.

Attachments:

- 1) Public Comments