

Minneapolis City Planning Department Report

Zoning Code Text Amendment

Date: September 22, 2003

Initiator Of Amendment: Council Member Johnson

Date of Introduction at City Council: June 20, 2003

Ward: All

Planning Staff And Phone: Jason Wittenberg, 673-2297

Intent Of The Ordinance: To require a walkway between the principal entrance and the public sidewalk for buildings having one to four dwelling units.

Appropriate Section(s) of the Zoning Code: 535.90

Background: The zoning code currently does not require a walkway connection between the principal entrance and the public sidewalk for buildings having one to four dwelling units. For buildings having five or more dwelling units, the site plan review ordinance requires a walkway.

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?

Current regulations do not require a walkway between the public sidewalk and the entrance(s) to buildings having fewer than five dwelling units. The amendment would be consistent with current regulations, which requires a walkway for uses that are subject to Chapter 530, Site Plan Review. The amendment would serve the public purpose of ensuring that dwellings are accessible to pedestrians, including letter carriers and emergency personnel. (In the winter, in particular, it is unclear how emergency personnel would be expected to reach a dwelling without a walkway unless a path has been cleared over the lawn.) The zoning ordinance currently requires that new dwellings include a front entrance. The intent of the requirement for a front entrance is undermined when no walkway is constructed to allow comfortable access to the entrance.

The Planning Department does not anticipate that the amendment would create significant problems. There is some concern about adding more impervious surfaces to

residential properties. Appropriate Public Works and Inspections Department staff have reviewed the proposed amendment and have not expressed concern.

Timeliness:

Is the amendment timely?

Is the amendment consistent with practices in surrounding areas?

Are there consequences in denying this amendment?

The amendment is timely insofar as the City has an interest in ensuring that additional dwellings are not constructed in a manner that provides no pedestrian connection to the public right of way.

Many area communities do not have sidewalks adjacent to their residential streets and therefore do not require a walkway connection to the public sidewalk. Driveways to the public streets in such communities typically allow for pedestrian access to the dwelling.

If this zoning code amendment is not passed, a small percentage of the dwellings in the city would be constructed with no reasonable connection between the public sidewalk and the entrance to the dwelling.

Comprehensive Plan:

How will this amendment implement the Comprehensive Plan?

The Minneapolis Plan directs the City to ensure that infill development is consistent with the orientation and pattern of existing neighborhoods. While the zoning code already requires that dwellings include windows and an entrance on the front façade, these rules may be incomplete and not fully effective without a requirement that a walkway connect the entrance to the public sidewalk.

Recommendation Of The City Planning Department:

The City Planning Department recommends that the City Planning Commission and City Council adopt the above findings and **approve** the text amendment.

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MEMORANDUM

DATE: October 2, 2003

TO: Council Member Schiff, Chair, Zoning & Planning Committee
Members of the Zoning & Planning Committee

FROM: Jason Wittenberg

SUBJECT: Walkway Text Amendment

The City Planning Commission, on September 22, 2003, recommended approval of the attached version of the zoning code amendment related to front walkways. Revisions to the amendment include a cross-reference to Table 535-1 and a prohibition on asphalt walkways in required setback areas.

Johnson

Amending Title 20, Chapter 535 of the Minneapolis Code of Ordinances relating to Zoning Code: Regulations of General Applicability.

The City Council of The City of Minneapolis do ordain as follows:

Section 1. That Section 535.90 of the above-entitled ordinance be amended to read as follows:

535.90. Minimum size and width, principal entrance and windows, and location of attached garage requirements for residential uses. (a) *Size and width.* The minimum gross floor area of a dwelling unit, except efficiency units, shall be five hundred (500) square feet. The minimum gross floor area of efficiency units shall be three hundred fifty (350) square feet. Not less than eighty (80) percent of the habitable floor area of single or two-family dwellings and multiple-family dwellings of three (3) and four (4) units shall have a minimum width of twenty-two (22) feet.

(b) *Principal entrance and windows.* Not less than fifteen (15) percent of the first floor facade of single and two-family dwellings and multiple-family dwellings of three (3) and four (4) units that faces a public street shall be windows, and shall include at least one (1) principal entrance. Subject to Table 535-1, Permitted Obstructions in Required Yards, the principal entrance shall be connected to the public sidewalk by an impervious walkway not less than three (3) feet wide and shall include stairs where needed. Where no public sidewalk exists, the walkway shall extend to the public street. The principal entrance may face a side lot line when part of a front vestibule or extended portion of the front facade, provided the entrance is located no further than eight (8) feet from the facade closest to the street. In the case of a corner lot, only the facade facing the front lot line shall be subject to the requirements of this section.

(c) *Attached garage facing the front lot line.* Attached accessory uses designed or intended for the parking of vehicles accessory to single and two-family dwellings and multiple-family dwellings of three (3) and four (4) units shall extend no more than five (5) feet closer to the front lot line than the facade of a habitable portion of the dwelling when the garage door or doors face the front lot line. In addition, the width of the garage wall facing the front lot line shall not exceed sixty (60) percent of the width of the entire structure.

Section 2. That Table 535-1 of the above-entitled ordinance be amended to read as follows:

Table 535-1 Permitted Obstructions in Required Yards

Type of Obstruction	Front or Corner Side Yard	Interior Side Yard	Rear Yard
Walkways, not exceeding four (4) feet in width. Walkways for multiple-family dwellings of five (5) units or more shall not exceed six (6) feet in width. Walkways for Institutional and Public Uses shall not exceed eight (8) feet in width. <u>Except for public recreational walkways and bicycle trails, walkways in required yards shall not be constructed of asphalt.</u>	P	P	P