



**Request for City Council Committee Action
From the Department of Community Planning & Economic Development**

Date: November 28, 2005

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

Prepared by: Jason Wittenberg, Planning Supervisor, (612) 673-2297

Approved by: Jason Wittenberg, Planning Supervisor, (612) 673-2297

Subject: Six month update regarding changes to site plan review

Previous Directives: N/A

<p>Financial Impact: Not applicable Community Impact: See staff report Ward: All Neighborhood Notification: Not applicable City Goals: Not applicable Comprehensive Plan: Not applicable Zoning Code: Not applicable Living Wage/Job Linkage: Not applicable End of 60/120 Day Decision Period: Not applicable Other: Not applicable</p>
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• **Background/Supporting Information:**

The City adopted substantial revisions to its site plan review ordinance on April 29, 2005. The Zoning & Planning Committee requested that staff report back regarding the effectiveness of the new standards after six months of implementation.

As you'll recall, the scope of site plan review (i.e., the types of buildings and uses that are subject to the regulations) was altered significantly. Planning staff is satisfied that the changes have resulted in departmental resources being used more effectively to evaluate all new construction in the City rather than focusing substantial time and energy on tenant changes in existing buildings.

Planning staff has not identified significant unintended consequences that would require further revision to the regulations at the present time. One relatively minor typographical error has been identified that should be revised next time Chapter 530 is amended.

Staff’s understanding is that the Committee was particularly interested in understanding the consequences of the new Article VI, which includes design standards for new buildings with between one and four dwelling units. This section of the ordinance includes a point system that introduced a new type of review to the zoning code. Within Article VI, Table 530-2 offers a “menu” of standards for developers of new single-family through four-unit buildings (see attached). In addition to meeting the mandatory minimum standards of the zoning ordinance, developers must obtain a minimum of 15 points from Table 530-2 in order to allow CPED staff to administratively approve their plans.

**Table 530-2
Standards for single and two-family dwellings and multiple-family
dwellings having three or four dwelling units**

<i>Points</i>	<i>Design Standard</i>
5	Not less than one (1) off-street parking space per dwelling unit is provided in an enclosed structure that is detached from the principal structure
5	The structure includes a basement as defined by the building code
4	The primary exterior building materials are masonry, brick, stone, stucco, wood, cement-based siding, and/or glass
3	Not less than twenty (20) percent of the walls on each floor that face a public street, not including walls on half stories, are windows
3	Not less than ten (10) percent of the walls on each floor that face a rear or interior side lot line, not including walls on half stories, are windows
2	The pitch of the primary roof line is 6/12 or steeper. However, the point shall be awarded for a building with a flat roof where there is at least one existing building with a flat roof within one hundred (100) feet of the site
1	The structure includes an open front porch of at least fifty (50) square feet where there is at least one existing open front porch within one hundred (100) feet of the site
1	The development includes at least one (1) deciduous tree in the front yard

Of the 69 new structures approved under this system between April 29 and mid-September, points have obtained as follows:

- **87%** of the structures have obtained points for having a **detached garage**.
- **100%** have obtained points for including a **basement**.
- **35%** have obtained points based on providing specified **exterior materials**.

- **72%** have obtained points for providing at least **20 percent window area** on the walls of each floor **facing a street**.
- **9%** have obtained points for providing at least **10 percent window area** on walls of each of the **interior side and rear elevations**.
- **99%** have obtained points based on the **roof pitch**.
- **84%** have obtained a point for including an **open front porch**.
- **42%** have obtained a point for providing a deciduous **tree in the front yard**.

The above statistics indicate the pervasiveness of vinyl siding. These figures also suggest that compliance with the standard related to window area facing all interior side and rear lot lines may not be practical for most dwellings. The City should consider amending this standard in the near future.

Comments received to date have varied substantially. Most home developers seem to have had little trouble obtaining the minimum number of points from Table 530-2. One organization representing the development community stated, “(M)ost organizations we heard from noted that they had essentially been doing all of these things prior to implementation of the standards, and did not feel the standards were a burden in that sense.” One architectural firm has recommended that the City reconsider the point system altogether or implement a system that is more sensitive to the characteristics of individual sites. A number of comments have suggested that the window incentives are not practical, as noted above, and may conflict with energy efficiency goals. Staff believes that it is important, however, to retain a predictable, non-discretionary review for one- to four-unit buildings. It’s important to note that no appeals have been filed to date regarding the City’s implementation of the new design standards.

Staff Recommendation

Planning staff are not recommending revisions to the Site Plan Review chapter of the zoning code at this time. Staff will continue to monitor the impacts of the revised chapter, and, more specifically the design standards for new residential buildings with one to four dwelling units, and bring proposed revisions to the Planning Commission and City Council as warranted or directed.