

VILLAGE OF LOMBARD
INTER-DEPARTMENTAL REVIEW GROUP REPORT

TO: Lombard Plan Commission

HEARING DATE: July 21, 2008

FROM: Department of
Community Development

PREPARED BY: Michael S. Toth
Planner I

TITLE

PC 08-21; Text Amendments to the Lombard Zoning Ordinance: The Village of Lombard is proposing text amendments to Section 155.222, Section 155.405 through Section 155.411 (Detached Single Family Residence only) and Section 155.802 (and any other relevant sections for clarity) pertaining to attached garages and average front yard setbacks, in the following respects:

1. In addition to current General Provisions, add provisions regulating the size of attached garages; and
2. In addition to current zoning provisions for Single Family Residence properties, add provisions regulating average front yard setbacks.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Petitioner: Village of Lombard
255 E. Wilson Ave
Lombard, IL 60148

ANALYSIS

DESCRIPTION

As part of the Village Board of Trustees' 2007 – 2008 Strategic Plan, the Board directed staff to pursue actions to institute better residential design review for residential development. Potential code changes were explored as they relate to redevelopment, teardowns, and building additions; setback requirements comparing averages with a specific limit; elevation restrictions as related to water run off; restrictions on attached garages in the front of a house; design review of residential height limits and lot coverage; transitional zoning districts; and other engineering and site design issues.

Under the Board's direction, the residential redevelopment items were first introduced to the Plan Commission during the February 18, 2008 Plan Commission workshop. More specific items were then later brought back to the Plan Commission during the June 16, 2008 Plan Commission workshop, which included the proposed text amendments.

Under the direction of both the Village Board and Plan Commission, the Village of Lombard is proposing text amendments to the pertinent sections of the Zoning Ordinance as it relates to attached garages and residential front yard setbacks. The proposed amendments will place a cap on the maximum allowable size of garage doors, require a de facto square foot setback for attached garages and require average setbacks for all detached single family homes.

INTER-DEPARTMENTAL REVIEW COMMENTS

PUBLIC WORKS

The Department of Public Works has no comments on the petition.

PRIVATE ENGINEERING SERVICES

The Private Engineering Services Division of Community Development has no comments.

BUILDING & FIRE

The Fire Department/Bureau of Inspectional Services has no comments at this time.

PLANNING

Absolute vs. Relative Setbacks

Throughout the development/redevelopment process, the buildable area of lots is now being maximized in the construction of many new single family residences. Reducing setbacks can have certain implications throughout those neighborhoods experiencing substantial redevelopment. Some of these implications caused by reduced setbacks include a diminished viewshed, canyon effects, and a congested appearance.

Absolute setbacks can also have negative implications in established neighborhoods. As an example, if homes in a neighborhood were developed at a forty (40) foot front setback, this could alter the character of the neighborhood because the Zoning Ordinance allows new homes to be built at a thirty (30) foot front setback. Staff recognizes the need for absolute setbacks for side, rear, and corner yards; however the front setback requirements for single-family homes should be more closely examined, as they were part of the focus group discussions. Because the current Zoning Ordinance utilizes absolute setbacks as opposed to relative setbacks, certain factors are not taken into consideration, such as the positioning of the neighboring homes or the mean (average) setback for all homes on the block.

The proposed text amendments will require relative setbacks for all detached single family residences, which is modeled after Wheaton's zoning ordinance. The intent of the proposed relative setback text is to maintain the character of existing neighborhoods and to establish status quo for

any new developments. The proposed text utilizes certain methods of application that addresses front setbacks in a relational manner, as follows:

- The proposed text will be supplementary to the existing thirty (30) foot minimum front yard requirement.
- In no case shall the front yard setback of any new attached single family residence be less than thirty (30) feet, while no greater than fifty (50) feet.
- A minimum setback will be established for any new home constructed based upon the mean of the existing homes on the adjacent lots.
- To address corner lots, the proposed text states that in no case shall the front yard setback be less than the setback of the building on the abutting developed lot. If the subject lot abuts a reverse corner lot or any other lot used in a manner other than attached single family residence (e.g. parks, schools, commercial businesses), the default thirty (30) foot setback line shall be used to determine the mean.
- If a lot abuts a developed lot on one side and a vacant lot on the other side, the front yard setback would be determined by taking the mean of the setback of the building on the abutting developed lot and the setback of the building on the lot immediately adjacent to the vacant lot.

Another important provision being proposed as part of the relative setback initiative would be the establishing of a 'build-to' line. Under the current Zoning Ordinance, a minimum setback of thirty (30) feet exists; however, the only other provision that would prevent an attached single family residence from building to an extreme depth (within the lot) would be the rear setback provision. As an example, the R2 – Single Family Residence District has a rear yard setback requirement of thirty-five (35) feet. If someone wanted to construct a new attached single family residence deep into the lot, the only limitation would be the thirty-five (35) foot rear yard setback requirement. Establishing a maximum front yard setback will help maintain neighborhood homogeneity by over time creating consistent front yard setback parameters.

Attached Garages

The majority of single-family homes being constructed feature attached front-facing garages. This trend has caused concern as garages can overtake single-family homes as the dominant visual element on residential streets, obscuring the homes' entrances and filling the front yard with vehicles. Although detached garages are well regulated, the Zoning Ordinance currently has no regulations addressing the location and placement of attached garages. The attached garage issue was brought forth as a Plan Commission workshop in 2002, but no code amendments were pursued.

During the February 18, 2008 Plan Commission workshop, staff presented a number of tools that could possibly accomplish the desired goal of reducing the visual impact of attached garages. Lot width, setback requirements, number of garage doors, and elevation frontage requirements were

some of the tools examined during the workshop. After exploring a number of resources, such as other municipal ordinances, staff has drafted amendments to the Zoning Ordinance. The proposed text addresses attached garages with corresponding provisions pertaining to side/rear entry garages, and garages on corner lots.

When drafting the proposed attached garage text amendments, staff utilized a number of techniques to reduce the visually dominating feature that attached garages have become. Instead of looking directly at the size of the lot, staff examined the size of the garage door itself. Under the proposed amendment, a forty-two percent (42%) width cap would be placed on the actual garage door, as it relates to the street-facing façade. However, all properties would be allowed a sixteen (16) foot door width. The rationale behind those numbers lies in the required size and space of a two-car garage, with sixteen (16) feet being the minimum garage door width for a two-car garage.

The forty-two percent (42%) garage door cap is intended to ensure that the garage door does not comprise more than one-half of the front elevation on a typical sixty (60) foot wide lot. Assuming a 60-foot wide lot, with the residence building up to the interior property lines (i.e., a 48 foot wide house), the 42% figure would allow for up to a twenty (20) foot garage door (excluding supporting garage walls). As the lot size and/or house size is reduced, the allowable size of a garage door is simultaneously reduced with the front elevation. But in all cases, the house could still include a sixteen foot wide (16') garage door.

In addition to reviewing the percentage or width of a garage door, staff also considered the overall square footage of attached garages located in the front of the residence. Instead of establishing a required lineal setback for attached garages, the (500) foot maximum allowable square footage acts as a de facto setback. The rationale behind the (500) foot maximum lies again with the minimum size necessary for a two-car garage, which is (480) square feet (24' X 20'). Under this provision, two-car side-entry garages could still be constructed, but a three-car side-entry garage could not.

The same standards discussed above shall pertain to attached single family residences on corner lots and side/rear entry garages. Side-entry garages can be aesthetically beneficial if viewed in the same context as a standard front-entry garage. Even though garage doors on a side-entry garage do not directly face the street, they can still present a visual impact when viewed from a diagonal point of view from the street. As the same standards for front-entry garages apply to side-entry garages, the maximum allowable square footage of any garage extending beyond the remainder of the street-facing façade shall be limited to (500) feet.

Standards for Text Amendments

For any change to the Zoning Ordinance, the standards for text amendments must be affirmed. The standards and the petitioner's and staff comments are noted below:

1. *The degree to which the proposed amendment has general applicability within the Village at large and not intended to benefit specific property;*

The proposed amendments would be uniformly applied to all residential properties in the Village that are developed with detached single family residences.

2. *The consistency of the proposed amendment with the objectives of this ordinance and the intent of the applicable zoning district regulations;*

Without the proposed text amendments, staff has no means to regulate front yard setbacks as it applies to the entire neighborhood or block. With only one absolute front setback as the means of calculating how close a house can be to the front property line and a rear setback to control how far back a house can go, neighborhood uniformity is difficult to manage. The Zoning Ordinance contains language regulating detached garages, but no means to regulate attached garages. As the Zoning Ordinance is staff's tool to manage the different land use objectives, the proposed text amendments would allow staff greater regulatory flexibility to administer those issues.

3. *The degree to which the proposed amendment would create nonconformity;*

The proposed amendment would create non-conforming situations for the neighboring detached single family residences if they were developed in manner that does not reflect the letter of the proposed text amendments. If an existing detached single family residence was developed in accordance with the previously required absolute setback of thirty (30) feet and both adjacent properties were developed with a forty (40) foot front yard setback, the subject detached single family residence would be considered non-conforming. This example illustrates how the non-conformity was created, but it also demonstrates how the non-conforming detached single family residence impacts the neighboring property and why the text amendment is being proposed. The proposed amendment would cause the Zoning Ordinance to become restrictive; however, the amendments are intended to reflect improved neighborhood uniformity and aesthetics as opposed to viewing each individual lot on a case-by-case basis.

4. *The degree to which the proposed amendment would make this ordinance more permissive;*

The proposed amendment will not make the ordinance permissive in regards to building applications; however, the amendments will allow the Village to have the regulatory tools in place to better manage neighborhood uniformity and aesthetics.

5. *The consistency of the proposed amendment with the Comprehensive Plan;*

Staff believes that the proposed text amendments would be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. A general goal of the Comprehensive plan is to *Improve and maintain the attractive appearance of all areas of the Village*. As the proposed text amendments promote enhanced aesthetics and

improved neighborhood uniformity, the amendments would be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

6. *The degree to which the proposed amendment is consistent with village policy as established in previous rulings on petitions involving similar circumstances.*

The Village has a history of amending its Zoning Ordinance to address evolving circumstances presented by petition or to clarify the intent of the Ordinance provisions. The proposed amendments are consistent with established Village policy in this regard.

Proposed Text Amendments

The following are the proposed text amendments for the Zoning Ordinance and Code of Ordinances.

Chapter 155 Section 2 - General Provisions

155.222 ATTACHED GARAGE REQUIREMENTS

The following regulations shall apply to all detached single-family dwellings:

- A. Front entry garages allowed provided:
 1. No garage door(s) shall exceed the greater of sixteen (16) feet or 42% of the street-facing façade.
 2. For the interior garage-portion of the street-facing façade, no more than 500 square feet shall be permitted to extend beyond the remainder of the street-facing façade.
- B. Side/Rear entry garages.

When the vehicle doors do not directly face a street, the following standards shall be met:

1. For the interior garage-portion of the street-facing façade, no more than 500 square feet shall be permitted to extend beyond the remainder of the street-facing façade.
2. The total length of the street-facing façade, including the garage-portion must be architecturally integrated through the use of dormers, windows, continuing rooflines, eaves and/or accent materials.

C. Corner Lots

1. If the garage doors are located on the street-facing façade that faces the front property line (as defined in Section 155.802); front entry garage requirements shall be met.
2. If the vehicle doors are located on the street-facing façade that faces the corner side lot line, side/rear entry garage requirements shall be met.

Chapter 155 Section 4 – Zoning Districts

The proposed amendments shall apply to the following sections of the Zoning Ordinance:
Section 155.405(F)(1); Section 155.406(F)(1); Section 155.407(F)(1); Section 155.408(F)(1)(a);
Section 155.409(F)(1)(a); Section 155.410(F)(1)(a); 155.411(F)(1)(a)

- a. Detached single family residences shall meet the following requirements in addition to the required minimum 30 foot front yard setback:
 1. When the subject lot abuts, on both sides, lots that have already been developed with detached single family residences, the front yard applicable to the subject lot shall be determined by taking the mean of the setbacks of the two abutting residences.
 2. When the subject lot abuts a lot developed as a use other than a detached single family residence, the abutting lot shall be considered to have a default thirty (30) foot setback.
 3. When the subject lot abuts a lot that has already been developed as a detached single family residence on one side and a publicly dedicated right of way on the other side, the front yard setback shall not be less than the setback of the building on the abutting developed lot.
 4. If the subject lot abuts a developed as a detached single family residence on one side and a vacant lot on the other side, the front yard applicable to the subject lot shall be determined by taking the mean of the setback of the residence on the abutting developed lot and the setback of the residence on the opposite side of the vacant lot.
 5. For lots in which the adjacent single family residence was constructed greater than fifty (50) feet from the front lot line, the abutting lot shall be considered to have a default fifty (50) foot setback.
 6. No detached single family residence shall be constructed greater than fifty (50) feet from the front lot line.

Section 155.802 Rules and Definitions

Street Facing Façade – exterior walls of a building which extend from grade to top of the parapet or walls and the entire width of the building elevation, and; are parallel to, or front, a public or private street.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the above findings, the Inter-Departmental Review Committee recommends that the petition as presented does meet the standards set forth in the Zoning Ordinance and recommends that Plan Commission make the following motion recommending **approval** of this petition:

Based on the submitted petition and the testimony presented, the requested text amendments **comply** with the standards required by the Lombard Zoning Ordinance; and, therefore, I move that the Plan Commission accept the findings and recommendations of the Inter-Departmental Report as the findings of the Plan Commission and I recommend to the Corporate Authorities **approval** of PC 08-21.

Inter-Departmental Review Group Report Approved By:

William Heniff, AICP
Acting Director of Community Development