

Department of Community and Economic Development
Planning Division
ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY/CODE INTERPRETATION

**ADMINISTRATIVE
POLICY/CODE**

INTERPRETATION #: CI-62

**MUNICIPAL
CODE SECTIONS:**

4-11-250, Definitions Y

REFERENCE:

RMC 4-6-060.J, Shared Driveway Standards, provides a means to access up to four lots with a shared driveway – revised per Docket Item #103 and previously referred to as “private streets.” RMC 4-11-250, Definitions Y, states that a side yard along a street is defined as “[t]he yard requirement which is neither a front yard nor a rear yard, yet it abuts a street right-of-way, private street or shared driveway.”

SUBJECT:

Side Yard Abutting Shared Driveways

BACKGROUND:

Code Interpretation (CI) #34 of Docket Group #9 (2012) clarified that a lot’s yard abutting a shared private driveway shall qualify as a side yard instead of a side yard along a street if the lot also has frontage on a public or private street. CI-34 was implemented by altering the definition of a Side Yard along a Street, as shown below:

“The yard requirement which is neither a front yard nor a rear yard, yet it abuts a street right-of-way or private ~~access easement~~ street.”

Docket Item #103 (2014) altered the standards of “private streets” and renamed them “shared driveways.” The term “shared private driveways” was eliminated from Title IV. To implement the amendments of D-103 all references to “private street” were revised to also include “shared driveways,” and therefore the term was added to the definition of side yard along a street.

JUSTIFICATION:

Setbacks are intended to create reasonable separations between structures, and between structures and other features (e.g., rights-of-way, property lines, etc.). Setbacks greatly influence the built environment and therefore play an integral role in establishing the character of a neighborhood.

Side yard along a street setbacks vary among low-density residential zones, but are generally closer in measurement to a front yard setback as opposed to a side yard setback. The purpose of this increased setback is to ensure that a structure located on a lot that has frontage on two streets (i.e., a lot situated on the corner of a residential block) is setback

from each street; the side yard along a street setback creates a separation from the street that is similar to the front yard setbacks of adjacent lots on the same block. The increased setback creates consistency for the character of the neighborhood.

A "shared driveway" is required to be at least 16' wide but, because of the Fire Department's standards, most shared driveways will require 20' of width. Zones R-1, R-4, R-6, and R-8 have an averaged side yard along a street setback of 25'. The averaged side yard setback for these zones is 8.125'; therefore, structures on abutting lots within these zones are typically separated by a distance of ~16' (8.125' of setback on either side of a common property line). Therefore within these zones, if a side yard along a street setback were required for lots abutting a shared driveway the total *minimum* separation between the structure and the furthest edge of the driveway would be ~45', and ~53' between structures on separate lots fronting the public street.

A ~53' gap between structures fronting on the same public street would create a distinct disparity from the typical separation of ~16' and therefore the side yard along a street setback would decrease consistency in the built environment and generally not serve the purpose of setbacks.

DECISION: A side yard along a street setback shall not be required for lots abutting a shared driveway.

ADMINISTRATOR APPROVAL:

C. E. "Chip" Vincent

DATE:

APPEAL PROCESS:

To appeal this determination, a written appeal--accompanied by the required filing fee--must be filed with the City's Hearing Examiner (1055 South Grady Way, Renton, WA 98057, 425-430-6515) no more than 14 days from the date of this decision. Your submittal should explain the basis for the appeal. Section 4-8-110 of the Renton Municipal Code provides further information on the appeal process.

CODE AMENDMENTS NEEDED TO IMPLEMENT

DETERMINATIONS: RMC 4-11-250, Definitions Y.

B. Side Yard along a Street: The yard requirement which is neither a front yard nor a rear yard, yet it abuts a street right-of-way, or private street, ~~or shared driveway.~~

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