



*Where Life is Sweet*

Mayor and Members of the City Council  
**STAFF REPORT**  
For the Meeting of January 23, 2023

**Title/Subject**

Ordinance 2344 Amending Driveway Width Standards to Match Public Works Standards

**Summary and Background**

As part of the annual update to the public works standards, an ordinance amendment is proposed to match the city code with the public works standards. In 2018 the city council passed Ordinance No. 2320 setting a uniform driveway width of 36 feet to accommodate larger driveway demand in single-family neighborhoods. The proliferation of three car garages and RV pads in single-family neighborhoods has revealed that the 36-foot maximum is still too small to accommodate many resident needs. As a result, the city has granted numerous driveway variances over the five-year period, especially in subdivisions such as the Desert Sky neighborhood which have wide lots and large homesites.

Each driveway variance must be reviewed by the street superintendent and city engineer and requires significant staff resources. The additional time and frustration created for residents also creates a bottleneck in closing on new construction. Thus, staff has reviewed the existing standard and determined that there is not a compelling public interest in setting a driveway width at 36 feet, especially when a lot may be as wide as 100 or 120 feet in some cases.

Therefore, staff is recommending that the council adopt Ordinance No. 2344 which eliminates the width standard from the city code entirely. Instead, the width standard in the code will be a reference to the driveway standard in the public works standard plans. The standard itself is subject to annual review by the city council, city staff, and the city engineer. The council adopts future revisions to the standard plans but using this format an ordinance amendment is not required each time a revision is proposed.

The driveway standard is contained in standard drawing ST05 "Driveway and Alley Ramp Details" in the standard plans. The 2023 standard establishes the driveway width as 50 feet or 50% of lot width, whichever is smaller. This standard allows exceptionally wide, large lots to accommodate larger driveways for wider three or four car garages while simultaneously limiting driveway width on narrower lots to preserve on-street parking. In the event a special circumstance arises which may require an exceptionally wide driveway, there is a variance process established in §94.73 which allows the city engineer to review driveways on a case-by-case basis.

### **Tie-In to Council Goals**

The council reviews and maintains the public works standards as a matter of policy.

### **Fiscal Information**

There is no fiscal impact to the city from this decision.

### **Alternatives and Recommendation**

#### **Alternatives**

The city council may choose to:

- Adopt Ordinance 2344 and set the maximum driveway width to correspond with ST-05 in Hermiston Design Standards, Specifications, and Plans
- Reject Ordinance 2344 and maintain the 36-foot maximum driveway width

#### **Recommended Action/Motion**

Staff recommends that the council adopt Ordinance 2344

#### **Submitted By:**

Clinton Spencer, Planning Director