



PLANNING DEPARTMENT
Heidi Gudde, Planning Director
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Planning Department Memorandum

To: City Council
From: Heidi Gudde, Planning Director
Date: May 15, 2019
Re: Residential Design Standards

The residential design standards for the City of Lynden are proposed to be combined into one location within the Lynden Municipal Code. Currently, many standards repetitiously appear in each zoning category. Additionally, some standards are proposed to be revised to address aesthetic or maintenance concerns within the City of Lynden.

The effort to consolidate and revise residential standards stemmed from the Pepin Creek planning effort as standards were originally written specific to the Pepin Creek Sub-area. After a number of review sessions with the Planning Commission, the Community Development Committee, and the Design Review Board, the recommendation was made to create relatively simple standards which could be applied to all districts rather than be specific to the Pepin Creek Sub-area.

The Design Review Board is the approving body that will be working most closely with the standards as all attached housing types and detached accessory dwelling units (ADU's) are required to seek Design Review Board Approval. On April 2 the Design Review Board completed their review of the proposed standards and recommended approval of the design standards with alterations suggested in several areas.

At a public hearing on April 11, the Planning Commission reviewed the version recommended by the Design Review Board and, after several alterations of their own, recommended the draft which is now reflected in Ordinances 1580, 1581, and 1582. The points at which the Design Review Board and Planning Commission differed are included in the summary points below.

The standards are now proposed to be organized into categories – each with its own objective. These will appear in a new section of code - LMC 19.22. The categories are listed below with a summary of changes below each. To coordinate the reorganization of residential design standards the update will also include amendments to the landscape code (LMC 19.61), residential use restrictions (LMC 19.31) and the subdivision code (LMC 18.14).



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19.22.010. Establishment and Purpose

- This new section identifies the general and specific objectives of the residential design standards.

19.22.020. Site Design – Setback, Yards, Building Orientation, and Pedestrian Connections

- The majority of standards appearing in this section already exist. Minor changes were made to accommodate measuring setbacks to the foundations rather than eaves, and a section was added addressing pedestrian connections.

19.22.030. Residential Architecture and Attached Garages

- Many of these standards already exist in the municipal code but are consolidated into 19.22.
- The amendment initially included the elimination of a minimum roof pitch but ultimately the Planning Commission recommended keeping the minimum roof pitch of 4:12 while acknowledging that alternate designs which may call for a more shallow or flat roof could seek the approval of the Design Review Board.
- The new standards add a requirement to include articulation to buildings, they address placement and scale of attached garages, new points regarding the architecture of front entries, and a clarification about the screening of back decks and patios.

19.22.040. Detached Garages and Accessory Structures

- This section includes tougher architectural standards on accessory structures which will require some cohesive design elements between the residence and the accessory structure. It also clarifies language related to the scale of shared garage structures.
- No revisions to the permitted size or height of detached structures is being proposed with this amendment.

19.22.050. Landscape, Fences, Screening, and Lighting

- This section is intended to address concerns related to the screening of mechanical equipment and the proper storage of garbage containers and vehicles and several other miscellaneous topics.

19.31.080. Residential Property Use Restrictions

- Some use restrictions appeared in other sections of code. The amendment moves these use restrictions to the more appropriate location of 19.31. The section is used heavily when responding to code violation complaints. Additionally, one clarification was added to this section to state that recreational vehicles shall not be covered by utility tarps.



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19.61.080. Landscape Requirements

- Generally, there are very few landscape requirements specific to single family homes, but a few were located in other sections of code and have been relocated to 19.61.
- Additionally, some clarification related to front yard use and hedges in single-family areas are also included in this section.
- Multi-family landscape requirements currently exist in the 19.17 and are being relocated to the landscape section of the code, 19.61, to consolidate landscape requirements.

18.14.130. Street Trees and Planting Strips

- This is a proposed update to the street tree planting requirement. Cities frequently have street tree requirements of one tree for every 30 to 40 feet while the City of Lynden has required one tree for each lot with no maximum spacing more than 100 feet. As lot frontages become smaller this standard would be difficult to enforce with inconsistencies between neighborhoods with differing lots widths.
- The Design Review Board recommended a conservative revision to a maximum spacing of 75 feet between trees. The Planning Commission recommended the maximum spacing be 50 feet as staff had initially recommended.