

**CITY OF MARSHALL
AGENDA ITEM REPORT
L&O 7/16/26**

Presenter:	Ilya Gutman
Meeting Date:	Thursday, July 16, 2026
Category:	NEW BUSINESS
Type:	ACTION
Subject:	Maximum garage size in residential districts – discussion only
Background Information:	During a recent discussion on a variance request for a larger garage, staff were requested to look into potential action to increase the minimum size of accessory buildings permitted in residential districts. Staff reviewed our current ordinance and also relevant provisions in other cities. The reason the size of an accessory building (in most cases, it is a detached garage that people want to maximize) is twofold: allow for open space in the back yard and keep residential districts feeling residential, meaning that houses are the dominant structures built in the area. Considering that practically all other cities limit garage sizes, it is a common and reasonable idea. The city of Marshall limits garage sizes in three ways: an absolute number of 1,000 SF maximum, as a maximum fraction (80%) of the house size provided a house is over 1,200 SF (which will never be a governing factor in a single family residential district since this percentage will be over 1,000 SF for larger houses, and a 1,000 SF limit will govern), and as a maximum fraction (25%) of the rear yard size (which will rarely be a determining factor, since most rear yards are over 4,000 SF). So for all practical purposes, 1,000 SF limit is usually a decisive factor for maximum garage size determination. In reviewing other city's ordinances, staff discovered that 1,000 SF absolute limit is by far the most common maximum size (maybe because people like round numbers). For a single building, it varies from 864 SF to 1,080 SF; several cities set a larger limit (1,200 SF and 1,400 SF), but they are for the total square footage of all accessory buildings. It should also be noted that some cities establish a limit based on the site size, for example, 10% of the lot area. Marshall already has a 50% increase built in for lots over 0.7 acres, meaning that a 1,500 SF garage may be built on such property. Applying a 10% limit becomes meaningful only for lots over 10,000 SF, which is realistically applicable only to newer (built in early 80's and later) houses, and those houses already have at least two car attached garages, possibly even 3-car. On the other side of the spectrum are older and smaller houses without attached garages, and staff have considered a provision to add certain percentage to maximum sizes for such houses. However, this is exactly the areas where extra-large garages would look out of place and unbalanced compared to typical smaller houses, exactly the thing the ordinance provision limiting garage sizes is intended to prevent. It should also be taken into consideration that a 1,000 SF garage allows storing three vehicles, which should be fully adequate for most people, even without attached garages.
Fiscal Impact:	None.
Alternative/ Variations:	None recommended.
Recommendations:	Staff recommend leaving current accessory building size limitations intact.