

# AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY SHEET

City of Rollingwood

Meeting Date: June 4, 2025

## Submitted By:

Staff

## Agenda Item:

Discussion and possible action on addressing setback orientation for lots with limited street frontage.

## Description:

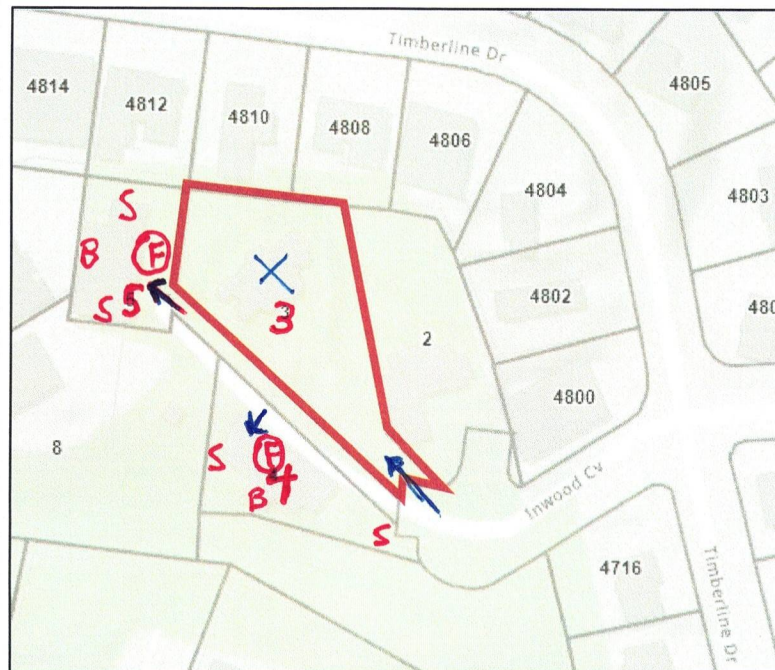
There are several lots in Rollingwood that have no street frontage other than the driveway. In our code, setbacks are set based on street frontage which is not applicable for these lots. We need to establish the basis for setting setbacks for these lots to ensure protection of property rights for these property owners and adjacent property owners.

**4 Inwood Cove**

**5 Inwood Cove**

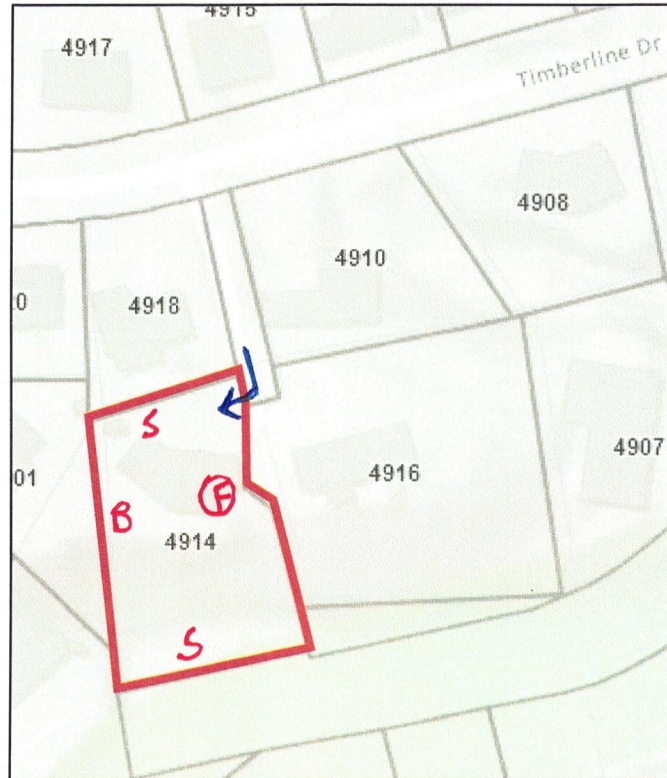
**Recent Rebuilds**

*If front, ~~yard~~  
Setback is  
determined by  
where driveway  
enters into main  
lot area as is  
done in Westlake,  
Austin, then  
Front yard would  
be as indicated*

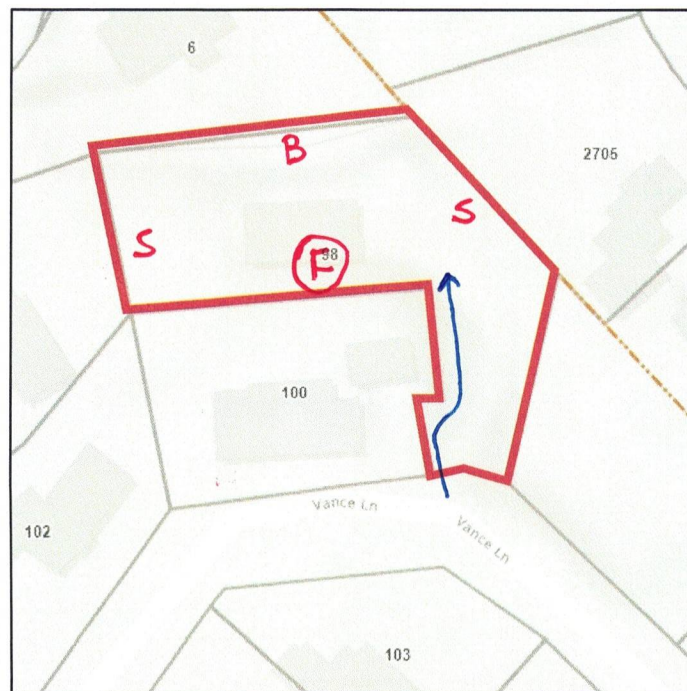


*Lots on  
4 Inwood Cv &  
5 Inwood Cv have  
driveways as  
indicated and  
are "flag" lots  
3 Inwood Cv is  
not a "Flag" lot.*

### 4914 Timberline Drive (Remodeled 2010)

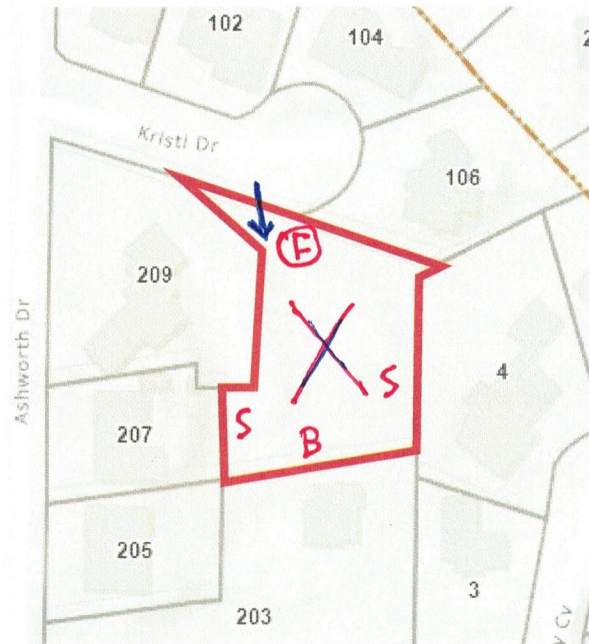


### 98 Wallis Lane (Current empty lot)





## 108 Kristy (Rebuilt 2024)



This lot is  
not a "flag" lot  
as driveway enters  
street directly

### Action Requested:

To discuss and consider various options for how setbacks would be placed on lots with limited street frontage.

### Fiscal Impacts:

No fiscal impacts are anticipated.

### Attachments:

- N/A

## “FLAG” LOT SETBACKS AND DETERMINATION OF FRONT, BACK AND SIDE SETBACKS

This scenario happens often with flag lots, panhandle lots, or landlocked parcels with only driveway access to a public street. The determination of front, side, and rear yard setbacks in these cases depends on how the local zoning code defines a front yard when there’s no street-facing frontage. Here’s how cities typically handle it:

### 1. Default Rule: Front Yard = Access Point

In many zoning codes, the front yard is defined as the side facing the street or the primary access easement, even if the house doesn’t visually “face” the street.

- For flag lots or recessed lots, the “pole” of the flag (the driveway) connects the lot to the street.
- The end of the driveway where it meets the main part of the lot is often considered the front yard for setback purposes.
- The opposite side is the rear yard.
- The remaining two are side yards.

### 2. Defined by Lot Orientation or Entry Point

If there’s no clear street frontage, cities may base setbacks on:

- The orientation of the front door or primary entrance.
- The direction the house faces architecturally.
- A city-defined “front lot line” — sometimes whichever lot line is narrowest, opposite the rear lot line, or closest to the driveway.

### 3. Rear Yard = Opposite of Front Yard

Once the front yard is defined, the rear is generally directly opposite, and the remaining sides are side yards. Setbacks for each yard are then applied accordingly:

- Front yard setback is often the largest.
- Rear yard is also significant.

- Side yard setbacks are usually smaller
- **4. Zoning Variability**

Some cities have specific flag lot or panhandle lot provisions. For example:

- Cities may reduce front setbacks for recessed lots.
- May allow a different method to define the “front” for privacy or development flexibility.

**In the City of Austin, flag lots**—also known as panhandle or frying pan lots—are parcels that access a public street via a narrow strip of land (the “pole”) leading to a larger, buildable area (the “flag”). Due to their unique configuration, the City has specific guidelines for determining yard setbacks on these lots.

### **Determining Yard Setbacks on Flag Lots**

#### **Front Yard Setback**

For flag lots, the front yard is typically considered the portion of the lot adjacent to the access strip connecting to the public street. This area is treated as the front for setback purposes, regardless of the orientation of the dwelling.

According to recent amendments to the Land Development Code:

- The minimum front yard setback for a flag lot is 5 feet.
- If the flag lot shares a front lot line with a lot that was subdivided to less than 5,750 square feet on or after August 16, 2024, the front yard setback can be reduced to 0 feet.

#### **Rear and Side Yard Setbacks**

Once the front yard is established, the rear yard is located directly opposite the front yard, and the remaining sides are considered side yards. Setback requirements for these yards are determined by the zoning district in which the property is located. For example, in the SF-4A zoning district:

- Rear yard setback: 5 feet
- Interior side yard setback: 3.5 feet, with a combined minimum of 7 feet for both sides

**In the City of West Lake Hills, Texas, flag lots**—also known as panhandle or frying pan lots—are subject to the same setback requirements as standard lots. However, due to their unique configuration, specific considerations apply when determining how these setbacks are measured.

### **Standard Setback Requirements**

According to the West Lake Hills Code of Ordinances, the minimum setback distances for principal buildings are:

- Front yard: 50 feet
- Rear yard: 30 feet
- Side yards: 25 feet on each side

These distances are measured from the respective property lines inward toward the structure.

### **Determining Setbacks on Flag Lots**

For flag lots, the determination of front, rear, and side yards is based on the configuration of the lot:

- **Front Yard:** The front yard is considered to be the portion of the lot adjacent to the access strip (the “pole”) that connects the lot to the public street.
- **Rear Yard:** Located directly opposite the front yard.
- **Side Yards:** The remaining two sides of the lot.

Importantly, on flag lots, setback measurements are taken from the point where the lot reaches its maximum width, not along the narrow access strip. This approach ensures that the buildable area complies with the required setbacks.



**In the City of Rollingwood, Texas**, the zoning code does not explicitly define “flag lots” or provide unique setback requirements for them. Instead, all residential lots, including those with flag-like configurations, are subject to the standard setback requirements outlined in the city’s zoning ordinances.

### **Standard Setback Requirements**

According to Section 107-75 of the Rollingwood Code of Ordinances:

- Front Yard: Minimum depth of 30 feet
- Rear Yard: Minimum depth of 20 feet
- Side Yards: Minimum of 10 feet on each side, with a combined total of 25 feet

These setbacks are measured from the respective property lines inward toward the structure.

Given the unique configurations of such lots, it’s advisable to consult directly with the City’s Building and Development Department to ensure accurate application of setback requirements.