

Staff Report - Village Board Meeting of May 21, 2024

Topic: Discussion of potential ordinance amendment to increase the maximum residential driveway width beyond the established maximum of 24 feet in residential zoning districts.

Zoning Districts

Potentially Affected: One-Family Residential (R1) District, Two-Family Residential (R2) District, Multifamily (RM) Residential District

Existing Ordinance: Zoning Ordinance Sec. 155.15.9

The Residential Driveway Design Standards of Sec. 155.3.4(B)(6) set a maximum residential driveway width of 24 feet at the property line. The code was written to provide a built-in flexibility to accommodate garages that are larger than a standard two-car garage by allowing a residential driveway to match the width of a garage's front façade for a total distance of 20 feet beyond the garage doors before tapering within a 10-foot distance down to the established maximum driveway width of 24 feet.

The Board is considering an amendment to allow driveways to extend to a width beyond the current established maximum, with possible consideration to allow driveway design to run at one continuous width all the way to the street without requiring the established tapering as it meets the public right-of-way.

Staff Analysis

& Considerations: Residential Driveway Design Standards are established within the Code to minimize the amount of excessive pavement in residential neighborhoods. The standards in place allow for a maximum driveway width that permits the easy maneuvering of two vehicles to and from up to a two-car garage, providing an ample 12 feet of access per car, which is the standard width of a highway traffic lane. This width was chosen because it is a standard roadway width that provides more than ample room for the maneuvering of vehicles within a residential driveway.

As described above, there is also a provision that provides flexibility to accommodate continuous paving to garages with widths greater than 24 feet and more than two garage doors.

Allowing an exception from the established maximum residential driveway width creates a precedent that could have the negative effect of substantially increasing the amount of hardscape and paved surfaces allowed within the Village's residential neighborhoods. Excessive amounts of hardscape have the following effects:

- Substantially reduce the amount of greenspace in residential front yards visible from the public right-of-way. While the difference of an additional 5 – 10 feet, for example, may seem minimal on a specific site, the impacts that such an increase could have on entire neighborhoods would drastically change the visual appearance and character of residential neighborhoods and detract from the amount of greenspace in areas where people live.
- Nearby communities have similar established regulations:
 - City of Beloit, WI:
 - According to [Sec. 11-23\(6\)](#), no noncommercial driveways may have a width greater than 24' at the public street right-of-way.
 - Driveways with 3-car garages or larger may have driveways that may not exceed 30'.
 - City of Rockford, IL: Sec. 20-007(c)(1)
 - The width of any driveway may not exceed 24 feet as measured at the street right-of-way. The width of a driveway may not exceed 24 feet except when the driveway flares to accommodate parking in a 3-car garage.
 - Village of Rockton, IL:
 - Single-family residential uses may have a driveway that does not exceed 18 feet at the right-of-way line for any one or two-car garage.
 - Single-family residential uses with 3-car garages may have a driveway width up to a maximum 20 feet.
 - Two-family residential uses may have a driveway with a maximum width of 20 feet.
- Stormwater runoff impacts:
 - Per the US EPA:
 - When it rains, stormwater runoff from impervious surfaces runs off driveways and roofs into the street. Runoff on hardscape picks up fertilizer, oil, pesticides, dirt, bacteria, and other pollutants as it makes its way to and through storm drains and ditches, where it then runs – untreated – into our streams, rivers, and lakes. Polluted runoff is one of the greatest threats to clean water in the United States.
 - Increasing driveway width maximums would allow any residential property to significantly expand the amount of hardscape allowed on their property, which would reduce the

amount of pervious greenspace that would otherwise soak up rainwater, keeping it onsite and reducing polluted runoff flowing into streets and local waterways. Driveways capture rainwater runoff and sediment that gets carried into the stormwater infrastructure which can increase the likelihood of clogging and flooding.

- Increasing driveway widths beyond what is generally accepted as standard and practical runs counter to implementing policies that promote climate resiliency.
- According to the [Illinois State Climatologist Office](#) and Prairie Research Institute, increasing rainfall intensity associated with climate change is projected to increase flood frequency across the state and has already stressed urban drainage systems, which are often prone to flooding due to prevalent land development patterns. Between 2007 and 2014, 94.63% of the \$2.319 billion in private and National Flood Insurance Program claims were in urban areas, and over 90% of those claims were outside of mapped floodplains.