

DATE: March 16, 2006
TO: Salt Lake City Planning Commission
FROM: Lex Traughber
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RE: **STAFF REPORT FOR THE MARCH 22, 2006 MEETING**

CASE NUMBER: 400-06-01

APPLICANT: Salt Lake City Planning Commission

STATUS OF APPLICANT: City Board

REQUESTED ACTION: The Planning Commission initiated a petition requesting that Planning Staff review the Zoning Ordinance in reference to regulations governing tandem parking in residential zones.

PROJECT LOCATION: This is a Zoning Ordinance text amendment that has implications city wide.

COUNCIL DISTRICTS: The proposed Zoning Ordinance text amendment will affect all Council Districts.

PROPOSED ZONING TEXT AMENDMENT: Parking is not currently allowed in the front or corner side yard (area between the property line and the front wall of the principal building) in any residential district. The one exception is the R-MU (Residential Mixed-Use) district which does allow some limited front yard parking if the parking is located a minimum distance of fifteen feet (15') from the front lot line.

Planning Staff proposes limited tandem parking in the front and corner side yards for existing and new single family residential development, which includes townhomes and twin homes, where the parking will have minimal impacts on adjacent property owners and the localized area in general.

RATIONALE FOR THE PROPOSED AMENDMENT:

It would be beneficial to local neighborhood communities and to the City as a whole to allow some limited parking in a tandem pattern in required yards, to recognize existing and commonly utilized parking configurations and to facilitate single family residential infill development. Allowing this parking configuration has the potential to decrease the number of automobiles that are parked on the street, decrease car theft and burglary, and facilitate the maintenance of public streets.

APPLICABLE LAND USE REGULATIONS:

Salt Lake City Zoning Ordinance Section and Table 21A.44.050 – Parking Restrictions Within Yards

APPLICABLE MASTER PLANS:

Salt Lake City Strategic Plan 1993
Salt Lake City Futures Commission
Salt Lake City Community Housing Plan
Capitol Hill Master Plan

PROJECT HISTORY:

The vast majority of Salt Lake City’s single-family neighborhoods were designed at a time when automobile ownership was less prevalent than it is today. These neighborhoods were established when it was not common for individuals and families to own one automobile, much less several. People relied more heavily on public transportation, such as the now defunct street car system, and less on private transportation. These neighborhoods were essentially designed with the pedestrian in mind. If a driveway was originally constructed for homes in the older neighborhoods throughout the City, the width of the driveway was typically one car width in size.

Over the years, as the public has become more affluent, automobile ownership has significantly increased. Today, it is the rule rather than the exception for many households to have two or more vehicles. Further, with the preference of the American public for SUVs, passenger vehicles are often times larger than those of the past.

Over time, as automobile ownership has increased, parking demands have become problematic for many Salt Lake City Neighborhoods. It is common for residences in the City’s neighborhoods to have little or no off-street parking. Due to a lack of off-street parking spaces and a rise in automobile numbers, the City has been experiencing an increase in complaints from residents who have been cited for illegal concrete parking

pads or parking vehicles in the front yard of a residential lot. To compound this problem, the City does not recognize “tandem parking” in a driveway as an appropriate parking configuration, when in fact, many people unknowingly “tandem park”. As noted previously, driveway construction, if any, in the older neighborhoods across the City was typically one car length in width, and residents are accustomed to “tandem parking” in this type of driveway design.

A positive argument can certainly be made that off-street parking in residential zones is preferable to on-street parking. This type of parking arrangement can provide greater security for automobiles because they can be parked closer to a residence, thereby potentially decreasing the incidents of car prowls. Additionally, off-street parking is preferable for streets that are narrow, one-way, or steep because vehicles parked on streets of this nature compound the difficulty. Planning Staff contends that a tandem parking configuration could eliminate the need for some on-street parking by recognizing this parking pattern for existing single family residences, as well as allowing limited parking for new single-family residential development.

To further complicate the parking dilemma, developers who are involved in new residential infill development are often faced with properties that are small or may have certain physical characteristics or configurations that do not easily lend themselves to contemporary residential development. It is not in the City’s best interest to forego new residential infill development due to a lack of parking options, when in many instances there is currently no option for tandem parking in a required yard in residential zoning districts in the Salt Lake City Code. Planning Staff proposes that with certain required criteria, a tandem parking option should be incorporated into the Salt Lake City Zoning Ordinance to allow a degree of flexibility to encourage residential infill development.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

Table 21A.44.05 of the Salt Lake City Zoning Ordinance indicates that parking is not allowed in any residential district in the front or corner side yard with the one exception of the R-MU zone. In the R-MU zone, parking is allowed in the front or corner side yard if it is located at least fifteen feet from the lot line.

Planning Staff proposes to recognize one (1) tandem parking space in the required front or corner side yard for existing or new single-family residential development city wide if the following criteria are met.

1. The tandem parking space is at least nine feet (9’) wide by twenty feet (20’) deep;
2. The vehicle will not encroach into the public right of way;
3. The tandem parking space is located within a driveway that leads to a properly located new or existing parking space (garage, carport or parking pad);
4. Parking on the hard surface tandem space is limited to passenger vehicles only.

In addition, in order to encourage residential infill development, Planning Staff proposes that for new single-family, residential construction, one (1) parking space located within the front or corner side yard setback in a “tandem” configuration will be permitted, and said space can be included in the required parking calculation for the proposed residential use if the same criteria are met.

These criteria would appear in the Zoning Ordinance as a footnote to Table 21A.44.050 - Parking Restrictions Within Yards, Residential Districts (Exhibit 1). Because a definition of “Tandem Parking” is not currently included in the Zoning Ordinance, Planning Staff proposes the attached definition (Exhibit 2), which reads, “A parking space within a group of two or more parking spaces arranged one behind the other such that the space nearest the street serves as the only means of access to the other space(s).”

Planning Staff notes that this tandem parking provision is not applicable for the purposes of unit legalization. The unit legalization process does not apply to single-family residential housing units, rather applies to what the City recognizes as duplexes, triplexes and so forth. The unit legalization process is for the purposes of recognizing more than one dwelling unit on a given parcel. This proposed amendment is for new or existing single-family residential development only; one dwelling unit on one parcel.

DEPARTMENT/DIVISION COMMENTS:

The following is a summary of the comments received from various City Divisions/Departments. The comments in their entirety are attached (Exhibit 3) to this staff report.

1. Transportation

Planning Staff received comments from Transportation Staff on March 16th, 2006, the day Planning Commission packets were mailed out. Attached as Exhibit 6 are the Transportation comments and draft minutes from the TAB Board. The comments received from Transportation conflict with Planning Staff’s recommendation.

2. Engineering

Could not foresee any possible problems with the proposal.

3. Code Enforcement

Did not respond.

4. Permits

Per verbal discussion, Permits has no issue with the proposal.

5. Public Utilities

For all cases of this petition where Public Utilities’ properties and facilities are not encroached upon, Public Utilities has no issues. In any case of an

encroachment all proposed construction must meet Public Utilities' standards, specifications, and requirements.

6. Property Management

So long as the parking spaces are not located within the right-of-way, Property Management has no comment on the proposed amendment.

7. Police

Did not respond, however verbally via telephone indicated that cars parked adjacent to residences are less likely to be burgled than those parked on the street.

8. Fire

Generally, the Fire Department has no objections concerning this tandem parking amendment.

9. Public Services

The benefits of allowing the stacking of cars in a driveway or side yard are:

- takes more cars off of residential streets
- during the snow season the residential roads are more open and easier to plow
- during the neighborhood clean up, road surface treatment period, and leaf collection period, roads are more open and accessible.
- weekly residential waste collection could see fewer cars interfering with placement of containers.

10. Salt Lake City International Airport

The proposed amendment affects vehicle parking in residential zoning districts and does not have impacts on operations at the Salt Lake City International Airport.

PUBLIC PROCESS & COMMENT:

Planning Staff met with the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) on February 6, 2006. Attached are the comments received from the TAB Board and a response to each from Planning Staff (Exhibit 4). Planning Staff attended a follow-up meeting with the TAB Board on March 6, 2006, presenting written responses to issues and concerns initially raised, and presented the details and specifics of the proposed language regarding the text amendment. The TAB Board recommendations, motion, and vote are noted in the draft minutes attached in Exhibit 6.

An Open House was held on February 23, 2006. All Community Council Chairs, business groups, and all those on the City's list serve were contacted regarding the Open House. Three members of the public attended the meeting and all were in support of the proposal. Two of the attendees provided Planning Staff with written comments which are included in Exhibit 5. No Community Council Chairpersons attended the meeting. Other comments received from the public are also attached in Exhibit 5.

ANALYSIS:

Because this petition is a modification of the Zoning Ordinance, the Planning Commission must review the proposal and forward a recommendation to the City Council based on the following standards for general amendments as noted in Section 21A.50.050 of the Zoning Ordinance.

A. Whether the proposed amendment is consistent with the purposes, goals, objectives, and policies of the adopted general plan of Salt Lake City.

Discussion: The City's Master Plans are generally silent on parking issues as they relate to residential zones and residential development, with the exception of the Capitol Hill Master Plan.

The Capitol Hill Master Plan does not address tandem parking per se, however it does address several issues relating to parking in the District that support the proposal to allow limited tandem parking. The Plan reads on page seven, *"Because they were developed prior to the advent of the automobile, many properties in the Marmalade, Kimball and West Capitol Hill neighborhoods do not have adequate off-street parking. Therefore, residents are relegated to limited amounts of on-street parking."* This section of the Plan goes on to read, *"In addition, steep narrow streets make on-street parking inconvenient and in some instances unsafe. In winter months, when streets become icy, on-street parking on steep streets, such as North Main, Apricot and 300 North, can be a problem for drivers who lose control of their cars. In other instances, on-street parking on narrow streets, creates difficulties for traffic circulation, garbage pick-up and street maintenance."* These statements support the idea of tandem parking, as this configuration can reduce the number of cars parked on the street and work to alleviate these types of issues. Further, according to the Salt Lake City Police Department, vehicles parked off the street are less likely to be vandalized or burgled.

The Salt Lake City Futures Commission lists as a goal that, *"The ideal neighborhood will have good traffic management that provides an adequate system for all modes of travel. Appropriate and adequate parking will be available to meet the needs of residents and be designed to fit the characteristics of the neighborhood (Page 46)."*

The Salt Lake City Strategic Plan states that the City should develop policies and programs that create strong economic incentives to stop the deterioration of housing units by encouraging vacant lot housing infill (page 16).

One of the City Council Policy Statements as outlined in the Salt Lake City Community Housing Plan on page eleven, states, *"The City Council supports policies and programs that preserve or replace the City's housing stock, including the requirement of, at a minimum, a unit-for-unit replacement of a monetary*

contribution by developers to the City's Housing Trust Fund in lieu of replacement." Slightly relaxed parking requirements may make it more feasible for a developer to achieve some residential infill development and subsequently increase the City's housing stock.

Finding: The proposed text change is consistent and does not conflict with the purposes, goals, objectives, and policies of the adopted Capitol Hill Master Plan, the Salt Lake City Futures Commission, the Salt Lake City Strategic Plan, and the Salt Lake City Community Housing Plan.

B. Whether the proposed amendment is harmonious with the overall character of existing development in the immediate vicinity of the subject property.

Discussion: The proposed amendment is not site specific, but would apply to all residential districts across the City.

Finding: The proposed amendment will benefit local neighborhoods and the City as a whole by allowing options for some expanded, yet limited, off-street parking in the front or corner side yard area for existing and new single-family residential development.

C. The extent to which the proposed amendment will adversely affect adjacent properties.

Discussion: The proposed standards are designed to limit adverse affects to adjacent properties. Parking in the front or corner side yard will be limited to one (1) additional parking space of specific dimensions (9' x 20'), yet will allow some flexibility for a residential property owner to obtain some additional off-street parking. This parking space in a required yard will also have to be located in a driveway leading to a properly located parking space as noted in the above proposed criteria.

Finding: The proposed regulations will substantially limit adverse affects.

D. Whether the proposed amendment is consistent with the provisions of any applicable overlay zoning districts which may impose additional standards.

Discussion: Additional off-street parking in residential zones in the front yard will be subject to the provisions of any applicable overlay zoning district.

Finding: The proposed amendment is consistent with the provisions of any applicable overlay zoning districts which may impose additional standards.

E. The adequacy of public facilities and services intended to serve the subject property, including but not limited to roadways, parks and recreational

facilities, police and fire protection, schools, storm water drainage systems, water supplies and wastewater and refuse collection.

Discussion: This petition is not site specific, however the criteria is valid. The Public Services Division and the Police Department note in their comments that a provision to provide for off-street parking in residential areas is positive. From a Police perspective, cars parked off the street are safer in terms of burglary, theft and vandalism. The Public Services Division notes that fewer cars parked in the streets is beneficial in terms of street maintenance, waste collection, snow removal, and neighborhood cleanup.

Finding: This petition is not site specific, however this criteria is applicable. The Police Department and the Public Services Division note that the ability to decrease on-street parking in residential neighborhoods is advantageous.

RECOMMENDATION:

Based on the comments, analysis, and findings of fact noted in this staff report, Planning Staff recommends that the Planning Commission forward a favorable recommendation to the City Council to adopt text amending the Salt Lake City Code concerning “tandem parking” in required yards for existing and new single-family residential development.

Attachments:

- Exhibit 1 – Revised Table 21A.44.050 – Parking Restrictions Within Yards – Residential Districts
- Exhibit 2 – Definition – Tandem Parking
- Exhibit 3 – Department/Division Comments
- Exhibit 4 – TAB Board Comment and Planning Staff Response
- Exhibit 5 – Public Comment
- Exhibit 6- Transportation Comments