

Off-Street Parking in Residential Areas

History

On May 14, 2001, the city council adopted an ordinance about parking in residential areas. The city council adopted this ordinance because of strong support and interest in this issue.

In March 2000, the city council asked staff to review city regulations about parking in residential areas. They also directed staff to seek public input on this issue. Before writing any new ordinances, staff and the city council felt that it would be beneficial to hear from the community and see how it feels about the issue. As such, we had information published in the Maplewood Review and the Maplewood in Motion. The majority of the people that commented supported code changes as outlined by staff.

Our goal was to develop an ordinance that balances the interest of private property rights with one that provides more control and order to the parking of trucks, cars and recreational vehicles. The ordinance puts into writing the direction the city council gave to city staff after they considered the testimony of the interested parties.

THE ORDINANCE READS AS FOLLOWS:

Section 36-22(j)

(1) Purpose

The purpose of this Article of the City Code is to control, through nuisance and zoning regulations, certain land uses and activities that have a direct and detrimental effect on the character of the City's residential neighborhoods. As such, the Maplewood City Council finds that, in order to accommodate the off-street parking needs of residents while protecting the interests of the public, regulations and performance standards are desirable and necessary for off-street parking areas in residential zoning districts.

(2) Findings

To the purposes listed above, the Maplewood City Council finds that the use and possession of vehicles are an important factor in the lives of many residents of Maplewood. The city council also finds that the number of vehicles, the improper storage of vehicles and the parking of and storage of excessive numbers of vehicles can be a nuisance and can affect the neighborhood character as well as the public health, safety and welfare, property values and the reasonable use and enjoyment of neighboring properties. The city council further finds that the establishment of these regulations further the goals in the Maplewood Comprehensive Plan relative to the establishment and enhancement of residential neighborhoods and similar goals. In making these findings, the city council accepts the recommendations of city staff and the planning commission that have studied the experiences of other suburban cities that have reviewed and regulated off-street parking in residential areas. The Maplewood City Council establishes these regulations as a means to balance the interests of the owners of vehicles, nearby residents and the public.

(3) Goals

Goals in adopting this ordinance include the following:

- a. Preserving neighborhood character, public health, safety and welfare and property values.
- b. Allowing all residents a reasonable use of and a chance to enjoy their property.
- c. Minimizing the nuisances and the adverse effects of off-street vehicle parking through careful site design standards.
- d. Requiring the owners and builders of residential driveways and parking areas to design and build them to reasonable standards.
- e. Avoiding nuisances and potential damage to adjacent properties from off-street vehicle parking and parking areas through design standards and setback requirements.

(4) Off-Street Parking Standards for Single and Two-Family Dwellings

The following standards shall apply to off-street parking for single and two-family residential properties in the RE-40, RE-30, RE-20, F, R-1 (S) and R-2 zoning districts:

- a. **Vehicle parking in the front yard setback area (the area between the front of the residential structure and the street right-of-way line) of single and two-family residences shall only be on a hard surface driveway or on improved and designated parking areas. Such a hard surface shall include bituminous, concrete, brick, gravel or crushed rock or another hard surface approved by city staff.**
- b. **The city prohibits vehicle parking or storage in the front yard on grass, unimproved areas or areas without a hard surface.**
- c. Driveways and parking areas shall be at least five feet from a side property line and parking areas shall not be in the street right-of-way or on other public property.
- d. No owner or operator shall park a vehicle that would block a sidewalk.
- e. **All vehicles parked or stored outside on a residential property shall not be abandoned (as defined in Section 19-28), shall have a current license and registration and shall be in operable condition. (Also see Sections 19-28, Definitions and 19-29, Violation.)**
- f. The total area in the front yard setback area of a single dwelling lot improved for parking and driveway purposes shall not exceed forty (40) percent of the front yard setback area.

The total area in the front yard setback area of a duplex or double-dwelling lot improved for parking and driveway purposes shall not exceed fifty (50) percent of the front yard setback area.

- g. The city may approve an increase in front yard driveway coverage, a different driveway setback or a different coverage, a different driveway setback or a different driveway surface for a single or double dwelling by administrative review of minor construction plans as outlined in Section 25-65 of the city code. The city may approve an increase in front yard driveway coverage, a different driveway setback or a different driveway surface where such approval would meet the standards required by code for unique circumstances and where the above ordinance standards do not fit or where they would create a hardship for the property owner.

As part of such an approval, the city may require the property owner or applicant to add screening next to or around the parking area or driveway. The city may require such screening to help hide the parking area and vehicles from the view of adjacent residential properties or from the view from the public street. The property owner or applicant may use a privacy fence, additional landscaping or other means to meet the screening requirement. City staff shall approve and inspect all such screening.

This ordinance took effect on August 1, 2001. If you have any questions about this ordinance, please call code enforcement at (651) 249-2633.