



# Single Family Residential Design Standards

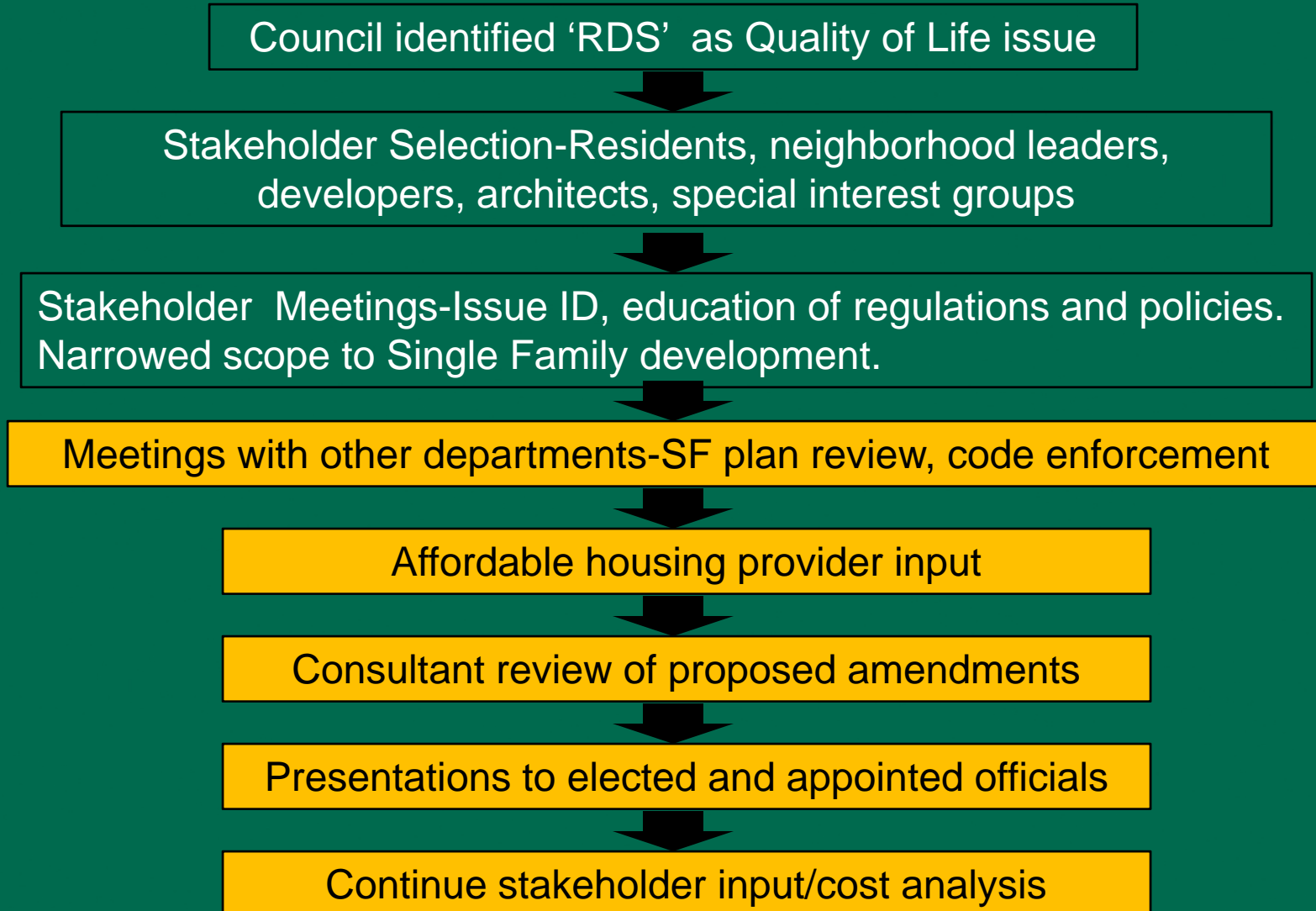
December 9, 2010

Presented by  
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Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Department

- Introduction
- Background
- Proposed Recommendations-Revised.  
Revised recommendations are underlined  
and highlighted.
- Discussion
- Next Steps



# RDS Process



# Purpose of Residential Design Standards

- Enhance the public realm (high visibility areas)
- Encourage visual variety and architectural styles
- Provide design flexibility
- Protect and enhance the character of existing neighborhoods



## What site or architectural elements are usually included in residential design standards?

- Yards
- Setbacks
- Impervious coverage
- Building variety
- Scale/height
- Tree preservation
- Garage design/location
- Walls
- Materials



## Auto Storage

- Require alleys in certain conditions
- Reduce % of impervious area (driveway/parking)
- Reduce % of façade occupied by garage

## Building Coverage

- Revise 'Open Space' text amendment
- Consider FAR
- Regulate impervious coverage

## Landscaping

- Plant a diversity of tree types
- Blend new trees with older ones

## Scale

- Height should be relative to surrounding structures
- Impose maximum height
- Require open space relative to height
- Scale/height should be regulated by lot size



## Yards

- Rear yards should be the same for abutting properties

## Variety

- Require a mix of housing choices (size, materials, etc.)
- Mix price points for new neighborhoods
- Allow duplexes and quads in single family neighborhoods

## Sustainability

- New construction should outlast the mortgage
- Too many poor quality, auto dependent neighborhoods in suburbs
- Build with quality materials
- Provide incentives for sustainable housing

## Tree Canopy

- Preserve landscaping, no clear cutting
- Require % of trees in setback

## Side Yards

- Fire safety issues with 3' side yards
- Side yard reduction is an incentive for tree save and open space

## Auto Storage

- Limiting garage impact supports concept of neighborhood interaction
- Allowable width should be less than 50%
- Not reasonable for small lots
- Will negatively impact affordable housing
- Will result in elimination of side by side garages on small lots

## Blank Walls

- Recommendation would enhance the streetscape
- Could improve safety with windows facing the street
- Adds cost without benefit
- Negatively affects affordable housing

## Large Utility Structures

- Houses should not be built near these structures
- This is a buyer's choice





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# Proposed Recommendations

## Land Development

### 1. Setbacks

- Setback consistency of infill development

### 2. Side Yards

- Safety and privacy issues with 3' side yards

### 3. Streetscape Design

- Flexibility in Urban Residential zoning district

### 4. Utility Structures

- Impact of large utility structures in front of houses





## Architecture

### 5. Building Walls

- Impact of blank walls facing public ROW

### 6. Auto Storage

- Impact of front loading garage design on streetscape
- Allow breezeway connection between detached, rear yard garage and principal dwelling

### 7. Infill Redevelopment\*

- Incompatible scale and/or design of new development with established neighborhoods-Neighborhood Conservation Overlay zoning

### 8. Mixed Use Zoning (MX)\*

- Update the MX zoning District







# Setbacks

## Issue:

- Existing setback regulations do not allow flexibility in certain conditions

## Recommendations:

1. Text amendment to allow setback flexibility below minimum
2. Neighborhood Conservation Overlay option





# Setbacks

## Revised Recommendation

### Reduced Minimum Setback:

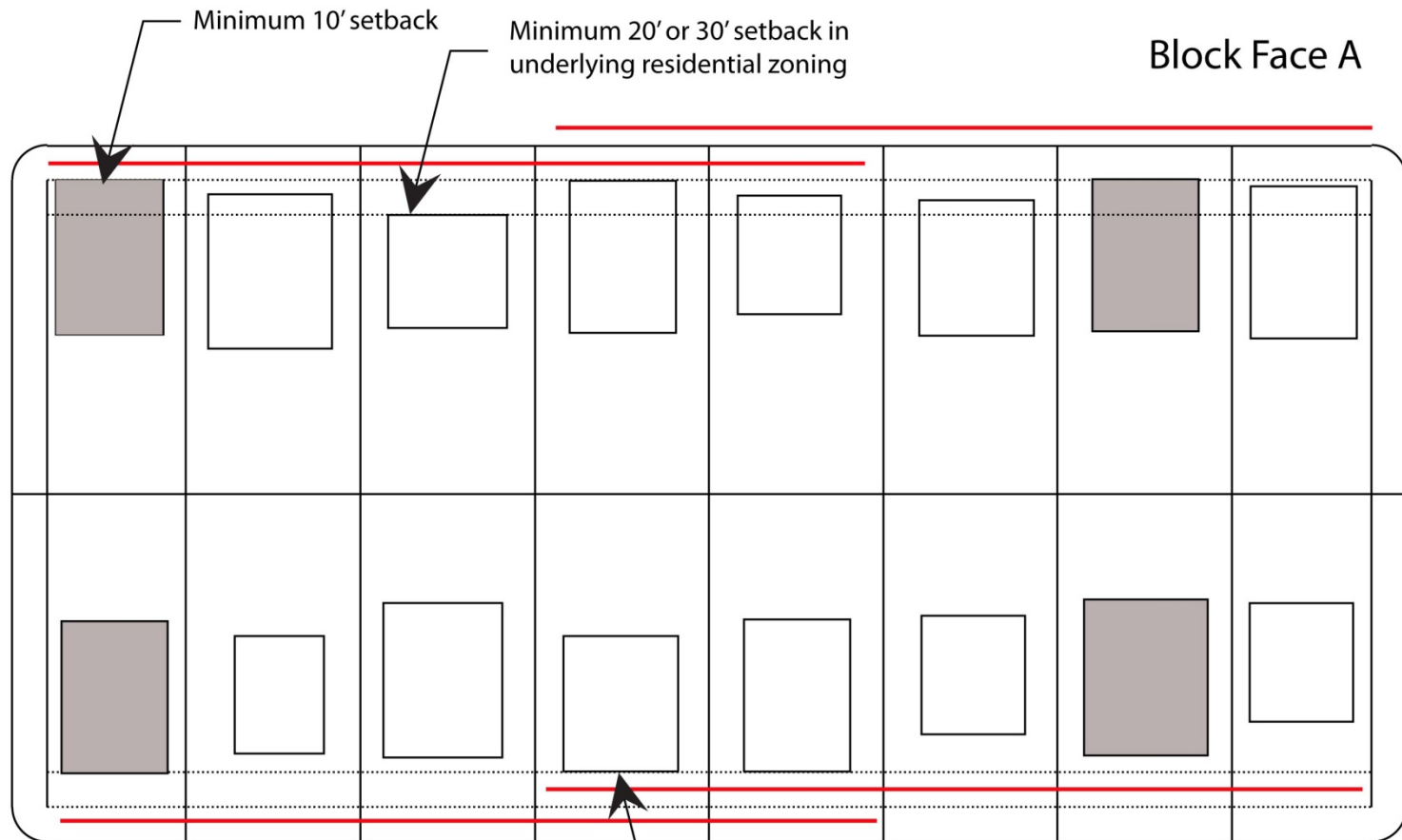
1. Allowed but not required
2. The minimum setback is based on closest setback of the adjacent four houses
3. The absolute minimum setback is 10 feet; 20 feet for a front loading garage
4. The block face must be at least 50% developed and have at least four dwellings



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# Setbacks

## Revised Recommendation






Block Face A

Block Face B

*The setback of infill structures on Block Face B cannot be reduced below the underlying zoning setback.*

Minimum 20' or 30' setback in underlying residential zoning

-  Existing Structure + Established Setback
-  Infill Structure + Proposed Setback
-  Adjacent Four Structures





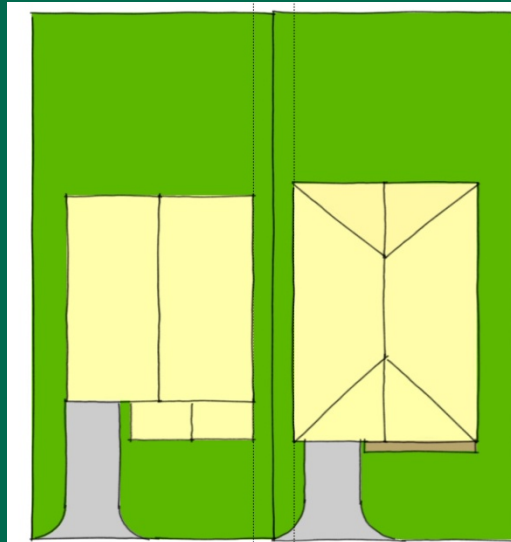
# Side Yards

## Issue:

- Permitted reduction of side yards to three feet creates safety and privacy issues

## Recommendation:

1. Text amendments to remove allowances for reducing side yards to three feet (Zoning and Tree Ordinance)
2. Resulting minimum separation is 10 feet
3. Front and rear yard reductions are still allowed



10' Minimum



## Issue:

- Urban Residential zoning does not allow streetscape modification based on context.

## Recommendation:

- Zoning text amendment to allow flexibility with Urban Residential (UR) streetscape standards



## Issue:

- Large utility structures located in established setbacks and required yards are incompatible with residential setting

## Recommendation:

1. Zoning text amendment to restrict locating large utility structures within the established setback, and within the required front yard of residential dwellings
2. Exemption for 'lots of record' on or before a certain date



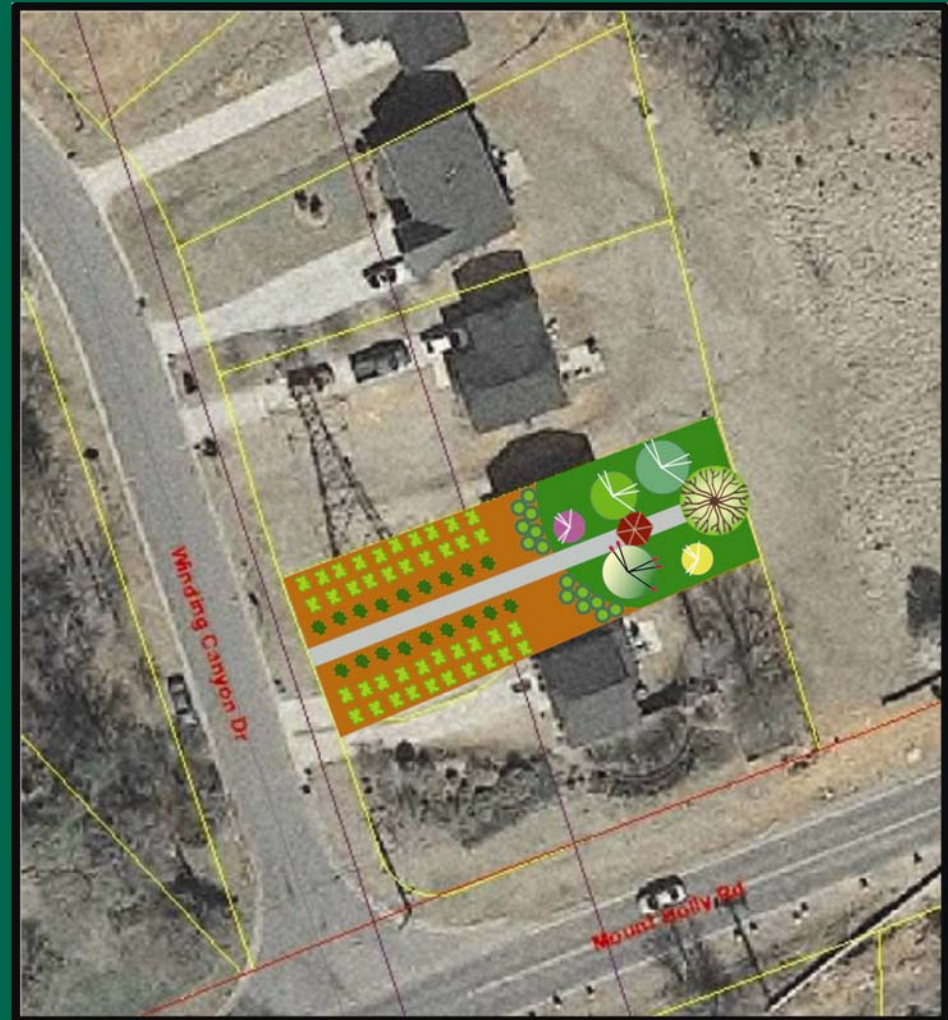




# Utility Structures

## Options:

- Utility ROW can be used for gardens and walking trails as neighborhood amenities.
- Utilities own the ROW



# Blank Walls

## Revised Recommendation

### Issue:

- Blank walls facing public ROW negatively impact the public realm.

### Recommendations:

1. No more than 15' linear feet of blank wall facing public rights-of-way
2. Neighborhood Conservation Overlay option





# Blank Walls

## Revised Recommendation

- Examples of blank wall planes facing public ROW that exceed 15 linear feet





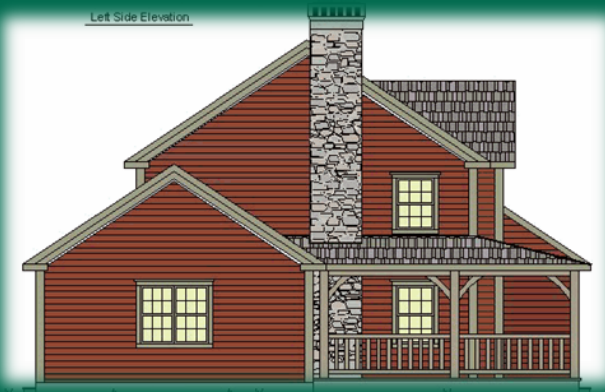


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# Blank Walls

## Revised Recommendation

- Blank walls can be articulated with windows, doors, chimneys, porches, wall offsets, change in materials, and garages/car ports or other methods
- Landscaping and fencing are not recommended methods for treating blank walls



# Garages

## Revised Recommendation

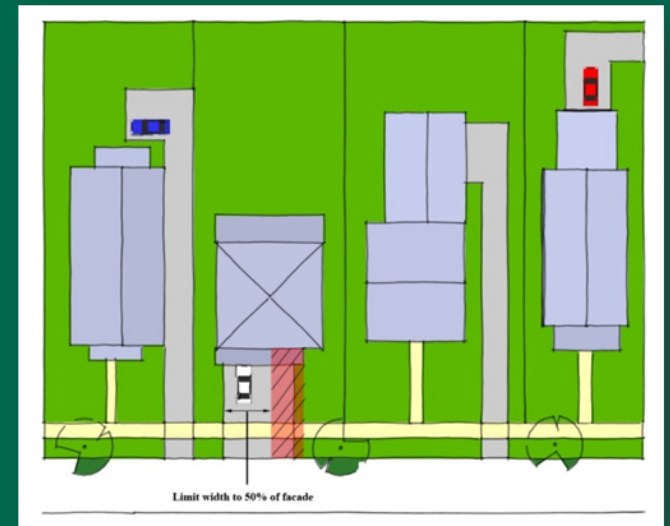
### Issue:

- Wide garages in front of houses can overpower the principal structure and negatively impact the streetscape



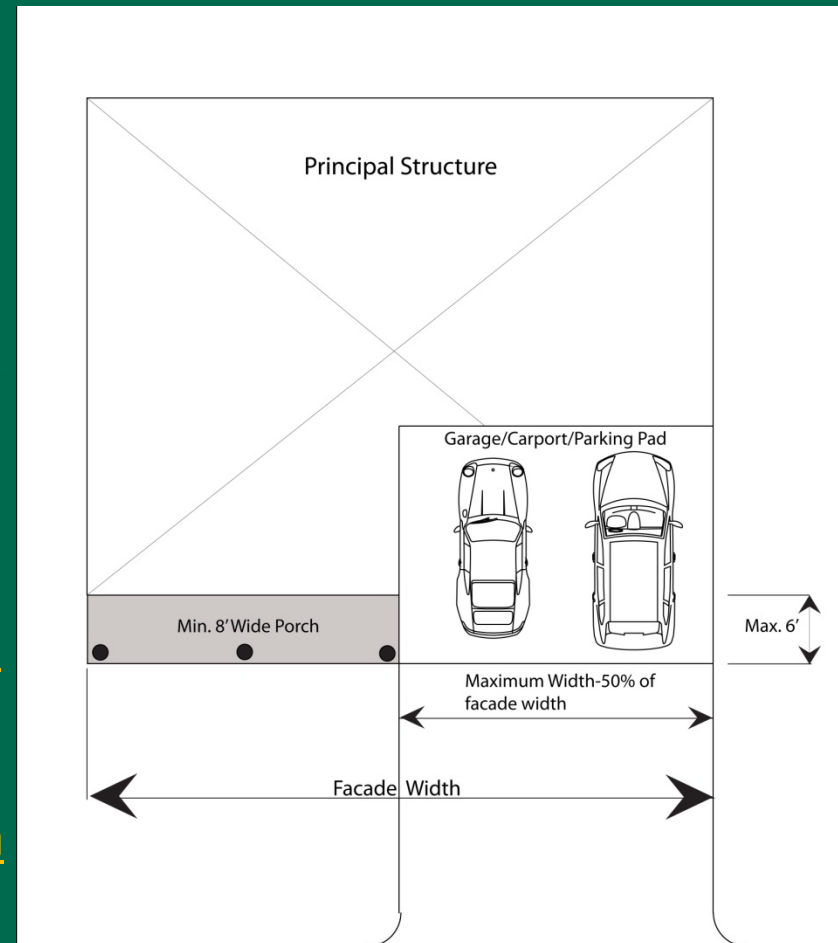
### Staff Recommendation:

1. Limit width and extension of front loading, attached garages
2. Provide standards for garage types (Attached, Detached/Accessory)



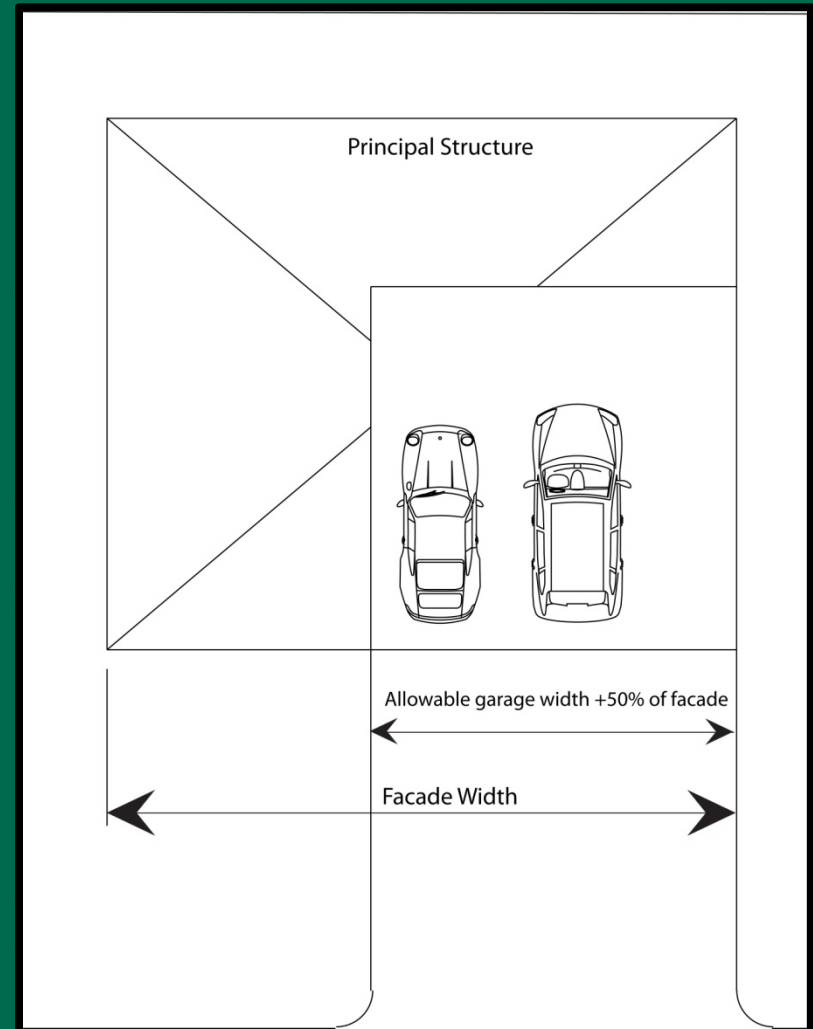
### Attached: Front Loading and Extended

1. Front loading garages extending beyond the façade cannot exceed 50% of the façade width
2. Such garages shall not extend more than 6 feet in front of the wall plane
3. Extensions of 4 feet must or more must include a porch of the same depth
4. Porches must be at least 8 feet in width



### Attached: Front Loading and Flush or Setback

1. Garage is located at or behind the façade
2. Garage may exceed 50% of the façade width



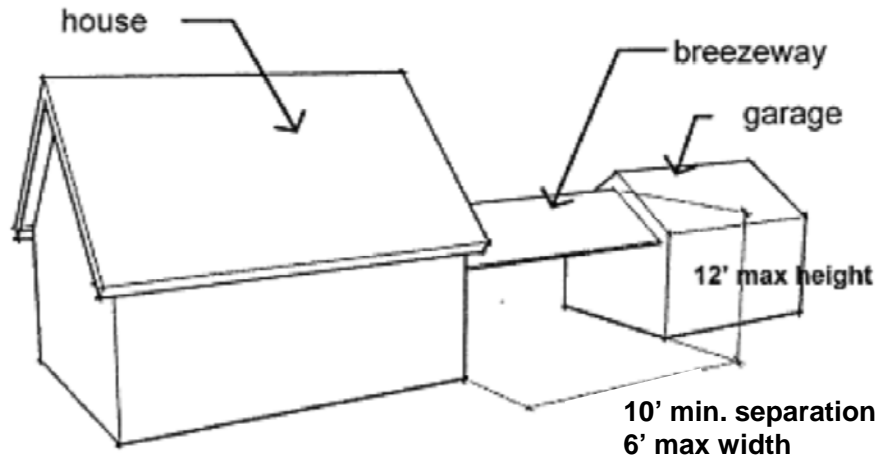


# Garages

## Revised Recommendation

### Detached Garage

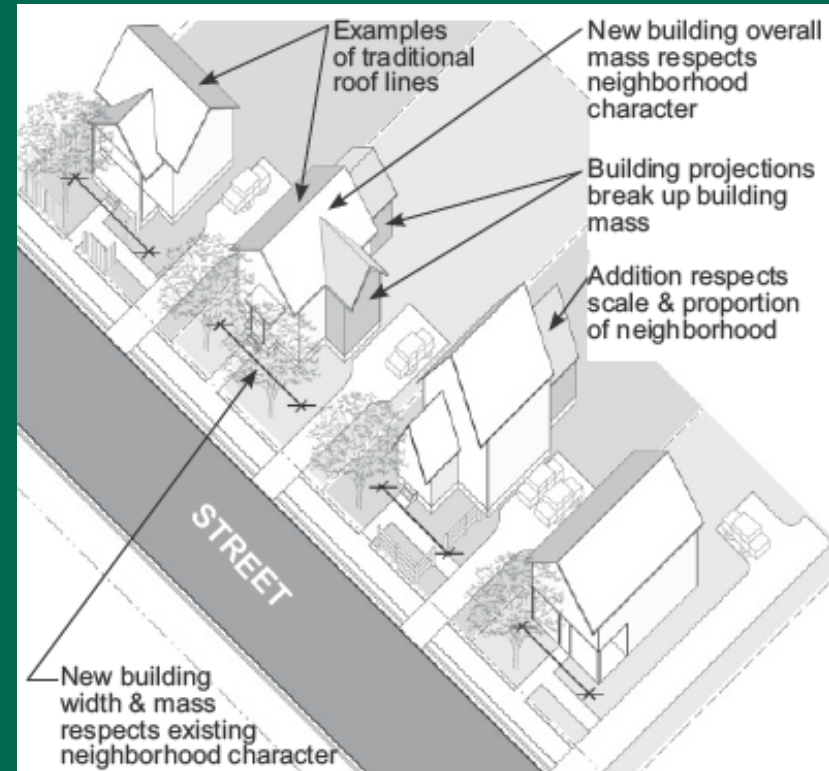
- Allow breezeway connection from rear garage to principal structure
- Would not be considered an attached structure
- Must be open air
- Other standards would remain (height)



# Neighborhood Conservation Overlay

## Overview

- Designed to preserve unique neighborhood characteristics
- Designated as an overlay zoning district. In overlay districts, the base zoning (R-3, etc.) remains. The 'overlay' is an additional set of standards.
- NCO's typically regulate some or all of the following:
  - building form (massing, height)
  - building design (garages/parking, blank walls)
  - site design (lot size, lot coverage)
  - building placement (setbacks, yards, orientation)
- NCO project review is administrative.





## 9. Mixed Use (MX) Zoning

### Issues:

- Lack of mixture of uses and housing types with some MX developments
- Misuse of 'innovative' development standards

### Recommendations:

1. Update the MX zoning districts to reflect stated purpose and to include best development practices
2. Include residential design standards in MX districts
3. Update to MX zoning will occur as a separate project



## Cost Analysis

- Purpose is to quantify proposed recommendations
- Small group of 10 volunteers (5 residents, 5 development/design professionals)
- Independent consultant will assist with analysis





# Final Steps

1. Convene cost analysis workshop-January
2. Finalize permit review recommendations
3. Stakeholder review (cost analysis, permit review process)
4. Distribute proposed text amendment to stakeholders
5. Stakeholder meeting to receive comments
6. Council's Transportation and Planning Committee
7. Planning Commission-Recommendation to file
8. File text amendment
9. City Council-Public hearing
10. Zoning Committee-Recommendation
11. City Council Decision



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# Questions and Comments