

Department of Community and Economic Development
Planning Division
ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY/CODE INTERPRETATION

**MUNICIPAL
CODE SECTIONS:**

RMC 4-11-050, RMC 4-11-190 and RMC 4 -11-250, Definitions of Easement, Access, Setback and Yard, Side Yard Along-a-Street.

REFERENCE:

RMC 4-11-190 states in part that for lots containing private access easements, setbacks are the minimum required distance between the building footprint and the access easement. RMC 4-11-250 states that a side yard along a street is a yard that is neither a front yard nor a rear yard, yet it abuts a street right-of-way or private access easement.

SUBJECT:

Applicable building setbacks from shared driveways

BACKGROUND:

Several platted lots contain easements that provide access to multiple lots. Some of these easements include shared private driveways and private streets. Per RMC 4-6-060K, a shared private driveway may be permitted for access up to a maximum of four lots. Up to three of the lots may use the driveway as primary access. RMC 4-6-060J states private streets are allowed for access to six or fewer lots, provided at least two of the six lots abut a public right-of-way. Setbacks are intended to separate buildings from property lines and access easements, as access easements carry traffic and therefore are more akin to a street. However, shared private driveways do not have the same character of a private or public street, as the number of residences that can use for primary access are limited, therefore they do not require the same level of separation and should be treated differently. An appropriate setback from these types of easements should be the interior side yard setback for the respective zone.

JUSTIFICATION:

Setbacks are intended to separate buildings from other structures, property lines, and streets. Access easements should be treated like streets where automobile traffic is generated. Primary access is limited to three lots for shared private driveways and does not meet the definition of a street where automobile traffic is accommodated. Buildings should be permitted to adhere to the interior side yard setback from a private shared driveway, based upon the interior side yard setback requirement for the respective zone.

DECISION:

Revise the definitions of Setback to clarify that only public and private streets require a side yard along a street setback. Shared private driveways require an interior side yard setback.

**ADMINISTRATOR/
PLANNING DIRECTOR
APPROVAL:**

C. E. "Chip" Vincent

DATE: September 10, 2012

**APPEAL
PROCESS:**

To appeal this determination, a written appeal--accompanied by the required filing fee--must be filed with the City's Hearing Examiner (1055 South Grady Way, Renton, WA 98057, 425-430-6515) no more than 14 days from the date of this decision. Your submittal should explain the basis for the appeal. Section 4-8-110 of the Renton Municipal Code provides further information on the appeal process.

**CODE
AMENDMENTS
NEEDED TO
IMPLEMENT**

DETERMINATIONS: Section 4-11-190 of the Development Standards will need to be amended to read as shown:

4-11-250 DEFINITIONS Y:

YARD REQUIREMENT: An open space on a lot unoccupied by structures, unless specifically authorized otherwise. The ~~Development Services~~Planning Division shall determine the various requirements for uniquely shaped lots and pipestem lots. (See also SETBACK.)

A. Front Yard: The yard requirement which separates the structure(s) from public right-of-way or private access easement. For through lots, corner lots, and lots without street frontage, the front yard will be determined by the ~~Development Services~~Planning Division Director.

B. Side Yard along a Street: The yard requirement which is neither a front yard nor a rear yard, yet it abuts a street right-of-way or private ~~access easement~~street.

C. Rear Yard: The yard requirement opposite the front yard. Where a lot abuts an alley, the rear yard shall always be the yard abutting the alley. For irregularly shaped lots, the rear yard shall be measured from an imaginary line at least fifteen feet (15') in length located entirely within the lot and farthest removed and parallel to the front lot line or its tangent.

D. Side Yard: The yard requirement which is not a front yard, a side yard along a street, or a rear yard.