

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

**ADMINISTRATIVE
POLICY/CODE**

INTERPRETATION #: CI-104

MUNICIPAL

CODE SECTIONS: 4-2-115

REFERENCE: RMC 4-2-115E.1, and 4-2-115E.3

SUBJECT: Recessed Garage and Primary Entry

BACKGROUND:

In applying the Residential Design Standards, staff has determined the Residential Design Standards (RMC 4-2-115E.1) Garages standard 1., Recessed from the front of the house and/or front porch at least eight feet (8') and the standard for an offset of the third car garage by 2 feet, are not implementing the intent of the Guidelines of the code.

4-2-115E.3 requires either a "stoop" or a "porch" for R-4, R-6, R-8, R-10, and R-14 residential houses. The minimum sizes for stoop and porch are similar and there is confusion as to what constitutes a stoop or a porch.

JUSTIFICATION:

4-2-115E.1 contains a series of standards to provide options for single family home builders that are intended to implement the Guidelines of the standard. One option to meet the Garage Standard is to recess the garage from the front of the house and/or front porch at least eight feet (8'). Additionally the code requires an offset for a third car garage by two feet (2'). The garage Guideline states "The minimization of the visual impact of garages contributes to creating communities that are oriented to people and pedestrians, as opposed to automobiles". The Guidelines further state "The visual impact of garages shall be minimized, while porches and front doors shall be the emphasis of the front of the home. Garages shall be located in a manner that minimizes the presence of the garage and shall not be located at the end of view corridors..." When the above standards are used in practice, the garage remains in front of the homes entry and main façade. The porches have a tendency to meet the minimum standard of five feet (5') in width and extended eight feet (8') in front of the garage so the home complies with the prescriptive standards of the code. The end result is a front "porch" that acts as a dark hallway to the front door. Overall, the design does not minimize the

visual impact of the garages; in fact the design achieves the opposite. To ensure the prescriptive standards of the residential design standards result in an outcome that implements the intent of the Guidelines, staff recommends amending the Garage standard 1. to require a minimum width of twelve feet (12') and reduce the required projecting in front of the garage to five feet (5'). These two minor changes would eliminate the dark hallway feel that has been created by the five foot (5') width and eight foot (8') projection standard. To increase options for development, staff recommends adding an additional prescriptive standard to the code which would allow for decorative garage doors. With respect to the third car garage door offset, the two foot (2') modulation does not reduce the bulk of the three car garage. Increasing this to four feet (4') would bring three car garage homes closer to compliance with the Guidelines by providing increased modulation along the front façade.

4-2-115E.3 defines a stoop as, "minimum size four feet by six feet (4' x 6') and minimum height twelve inches (12") above grade" and a porch as, "minimum size five feet (5') deep and minimum height twelve inches (12") above grade." These two definitions are essentially the same and for clarity it will be beneficial to require the same measurement for either a stoop or a porch.

DECISION: Amend RMC 4-2-115E.1 to include a greater range of options to give greater emphasis to porches and front doors.

Amend RMC 4-2-115E.3 by changing the two definitions of stoop and porch to one combined definition of, "minimum size five feet (5') deep and minimum height twelve inches (12") above grade."

**ADMINISTRATOR
APPROVAL:**

C. E. "Chip" Vincent

EFFECTIVE DATE:

**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:**

**4-2-115 RESIDENTIAL DESIGN AND OPEN SPACE STANDARDS:
E. REQUIREMENTS:**

1. Site Design:

GARAGES: The minimization of the visual impact of garages contributes to creating communities that are oriented to people and pedestrians, as opposed to automobiles.

Standards:

R-4, R-6, and R-8

If an attached garage is wider than twenty six feet (26'), at least one garage door shall be recessed a minimum of four feet (4') from the other garage door.

Additionally, one of the following is required ; the garage is:

1. Recessed from the front of the house and/or front porch at least eight feet (8') The front porch projects in front of the garage a minimum of five feet (5'), and is a minimum of twelve feet (12') wide, or
2. The located so that the roof extends a minimum of five feet (5') (not including eaves) beyond the front of the garage for at least the width of the garage plus the porch/stoop area, or
3. The garage is alley accessed, or
4. The garage Located so that the entry does not face a public or private street or access easement, or
5. The garage width Sized so that it represents no greater than fifty percent (50%) of the width of the front facade at ground level, or
6. The garage is detached, or
7. The garage doors contain a minimum of thirty percent (30%) glazing, architectural detailing (e.g. trim and hardware), and are recessed from the front facade a minimum of five feet (5'), and from the front porch a minimum of seven feet (7').

The portion of an attached garage wider than twenty six feet (26') across the front shall be set back at least an additional two feet (2').

R-10 and R-14

Garages may be attached or detached. Shared garages are also allowed, provided the regulations of RMC 4-4-080 are met. Carports are not allowed.

One of the following is required; the garage must be:

1. Recessed from the front of the house and/or front porch at least eight feet (8') The front porch projects in front of the garage a minimum of five feet (5'), and is a minimum of twelve feet (12') wide, or
2. The garage is detached and set back from the front of the house and/or porch at least six feet (6').

Additionally, all of the following is required:

1. Garage design shall be of similar design to the homes, and
2. If sides of the garage are visible from streets, sidewalks, pathways, trails, or other homes, architectural details shall be incorporated in the design.

If shared garages are allowed, they may share the structure with other homes and all of the following is required:

1. Each unit has garage space assigned to it, and
2. The garage is not to be located further than one hundred sixty feet (160') from any of the housing units to which it is assigned, and
3. The garage shall not exceed forty four feet (44') in width, and shall maintain an eight foot (8') separation from any dwellings.

3. Residential Design:

PRIMARY ENTRY: Homes with a visually prominent front entry foster the sense that the community is oriented to pedestrians. Features like porches and stoops at the front entry provide opportunity for social interaction and can contribute to a sense of place for residents. Additionally, porches work to minimize the appearance of bulk by breaking up the facade.

Standards:

R-4, R-6, and R-8

~~One of the~~ The following is required:

- ~~1. Stoop: minimum size four feet by six feet (4' x 6') and minimum height twelve inches (12") above grade, or~~
- ~~2. Porch: Porch or stoop: minimum size five feet (5') deep and minimum height twelve inches (12") above grade."~~

R-10, and R-14

1. The entry shall take access from and face a street, park, common green, pocket park, pedestrian easement, or open space, and
2. The entry shall include ~~one of~~ the following:
 - ~~a. Stoop: minimum size four feet by six feet (4' x 6') and minimum height twelve inches (12") above grade, or~~
 - ~~b. Porch: Porch or stoop: a minimum five feet (5') deep and minimum height twelve inches (12") above grade."~~

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