

Department of Community and Economic Development
Planning Division

ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY/CODE INTERPRETATION

**MUNICIPAL
CODE SECTIONS:**

RMC 4-2-110A, Development Standards for Residential Zoning Designations (Primary and Attached Accessory Structures).

REFERENCE:

Ordinance #5518, adopted December 14, 2009.

SUBJECT:

Clarification of applicable setbacks in the R-10 and R-14 Zones.

BACKGROUND:

Recent amendments to the residential development standards require clarification for consistent implementation.

JUSTIFICATION:

Upon review of the newly amended residential regulations, it was determined that in order to ensure consistency in implementation among the various City staff dealing with the standards, clarification of some of the provisions were necessary.

The “Front Yard” setback is stated for 3 street types. However, this does not cover all street types or cover those instances where a lot has *no* street frontage at all. This could result in the interpretation that, in these instances, no front setback at all is required. Consideration should be given to selecting a non-street type basis for determining the required front yard setback to make the code easier to explain and administer.

The provisions go on to stipulate a *lesser* setback for the primary structure than the setback required for porches and ‘stoops’. Additionally, setback provisions intended to relate to “Side Yards *Along a Street*” are incorrectly located within the “Side Yard” Section. The “Side Yard Along a Street” Section says merely “N/A”. This could also be interpreted as not requiring *any* street setback and this is not as intended.

Another area in need of consistency relates to method of determining the required front yard setback in the R-10 and R-14 Zones. Section 4-11-190, Definitions, of the Renton Municipal Code defines ‘*setback*’ as follows: “The minimum required distance between the building footprint and the *property line and any private access easement . . .* “. However, the new code language in the R-10 and R-14 Zones states that the front yard is determined by measuring to “*back of curb or to any sidewalk or*

pathway” creating a conflict with the actual definition of the term “setback”.

Another issue relating to the front yard and side yard along a street setbacks is the inadvertent removal of a greater setback for attached garages and carports. In the R-8 Residential Zone, the front yard setback is now 15 feet for both the house and any attached garages and carports. This would be a consistent standard for the R-10 and R-14 Zones as well and would reduce the possibility of sidewalk impediment when a vehicle is parked in front of a garage/carport.

The “Rear Yard” setback of the R-10 and R-14 Zones has proven to be confusing to customers with its choice of two standards: 4 feet or 12 feet. The standard varies depending on ownership/use of the abutting property. In order to make the code as user friendly as possible for the majority of users, the provision to allow a reduced setback for those properties abutting common open space should be located in the footnote area, where it will still be applicable, but may be bypassed by the majority of users.

DECISION: The minimum *front yard* and *side yard along a street* setback in the R-10 and R-14 Zones shall be 10 feet, however, garages/carports shall have a setback of 15 feet. The minimum rear yard setback in R-10 and R-14 Zones shall be 12 feet for most properties. However, there will remain a provision for front yards and rear yards that abut common open space in these zones to have a reduced setback of 4 feet.

**PLANNING DIRECTOR
APPROVAL:**

C. E. “Chip” Vincent

DATE: August 10, 2010

**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
AMENDMENT
NEEDED TO
IMPLEMENT
DETERMINATION:**

Various subsections of Section 4-2-110A of the Development Standards for Residential Zoning Designations (Primary and Attached Accessory Structures) will need to be amended to read as shown on the attached Attachment A.