

## Garage Placement – Zoning Text Amendment

Staff Report: Lee Jones  
Application #: ZTA20-06

City Council COW Meeting Date: January 4, 2021  
Applicant: City of Gulf Shores

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STAFF RECOMMENDATION: APPROVE THE ZONING TEXT AMENDMENT

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### SUMMARY OF REQUEST

The City of Gulf Shores seeks to amend the Garage Setback standards in Article 6-3, as well as affected area and dimensional requirements in Table 7-1B. The proposal also contains a housekeeping amendment to the Maximum Density permitted within the R-1-5 Zoning District.

### BACKGROUND

- August 27, 2020 Planning Commission Meeting – The Commission deferred application #ZTA20-06 to give staff additional time to meet with stakeholders, gather input, and revise the proposed text amendment based on feedback received. Staff held multiple meetings with homebuilders, developers, engineers, and surveyors to review and discuss the amendment. Significant revisions were made to the draft as a result.
- December 15, 2020 Planning Commission Meeting - The Planning Commission recommended disapproval of the motion to approve the amendments with the addition of a grandfathering clause exempting lots with preliminary plat or master plan approval and providing those applicants the option to choose the standards of the proposed amendment or the standards that were in place at the time of preliminary plat approval.

### PROPOSAL

REMOVE

**ARTICLE 6-3.I. Garage Setbacks for Dwellings on Narrow Lots.**

*For Dwellings with Lot Widths of fifty (50) ft or less, whether attached or not, enclosed garages that face the front of the Lot shall be set back behind the Front Building Line no less than five (5) ft.*

ADD

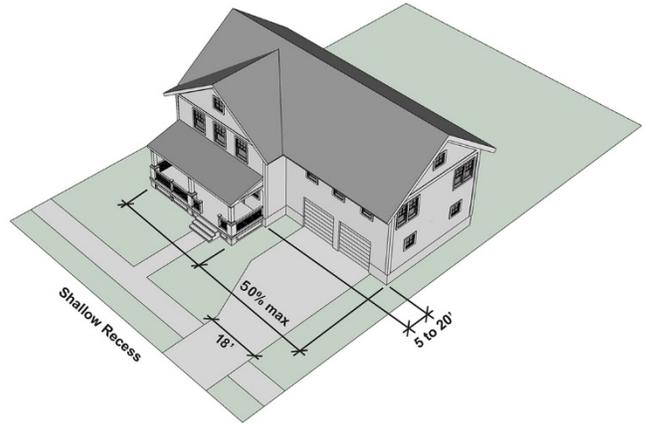
**ARTICLE 6-3.I. Garage Setbacks for Dwellings on Smaller Lots.**

*Wherever a conflict exists between the provisions of this section and any applicable regulation of this Zoning Ordinance or any other applicable regulation, the standards within this section shall govern.*

1. **Applicability.** *The following standards and options for garage placement shall apply to dwellings and structures on lots zoned R-1-4 or R-1-5.*
2. **Driveways.** *Driveways shall be limited to 18 feet in width where they cross the front property line.*
3. **Garage Location.** *Setbacks shall meet Area and Dimensional Regulations for the R-1-4 or R-1-5 Zoning District (Table 7-1B) unless garage located as follows.*

**A. Recessed Garage.** Garage doors are oriented toward the street.

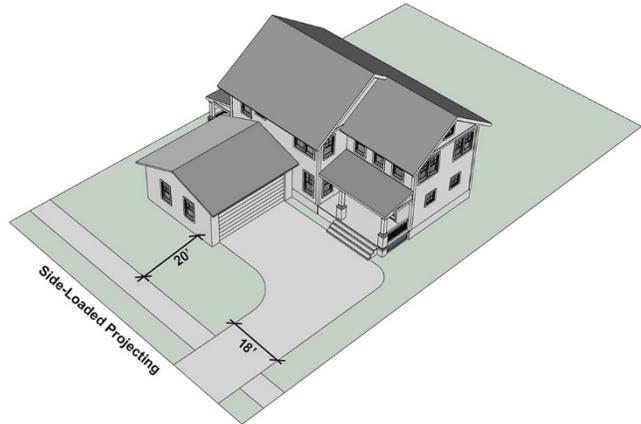
- 1) Garage doors must be positioned between 5 and 20 feet behind the front wall plane of the house. The front wall plane is the principal building facade facing the primary street right-of-way.
- 2) Garage width shall extend no more than 50% of the width of the house.
- 3) No individual garage door may exceed 12 feet in width.
- 4) The minimum Front Yard Setback for the garage shall be 40 feet.
- 5) The minimum Front Yard Setback for the Principal Structure may be reduced to 20 feet.
- 6) The minimum Rear Yard Setback may be reduced to 25 feet.



**B. Side-Loaded Projecting.**

Garage doors are oriented perpendicular to the front wall plane. Garage is located entirely in front of the house.

- 1) The minimum front yard garage setback may be reduced to 20 feet when windows are provided in the street-facing garage façade.
- 2) The minimum Rear Yard Setback may be reduced to 25 feet.



REVISE

**Table 7-1B. Area and Dimensional Regulations for Residential Districts.**

1. Correct Max. Density (DU/ac) for R-1-5 by changing from 7.0 to 5.0.
2. Change Max. Bldg. Coverage for R-1-5 from 35% to 40%.
3. Change Min. Front Yard for R-1-4 and R-1-5 from 35ft to 40ft. Properties zoned R-1-5 with preliminary or final plat approval prior to January 1, 2021 may reduce the rear yard setback to 25ft. Properties zoned R-1-4 with preliminary or final plat approval prior to January 1, 2021 may reduce the rear yard setback to 35ft.

**ANALYSIS**

**Current Garage Setback Standard**

The garage setback standard was added to the Zoning Ordinance in 2010. This was done to minimize the impacts of garages and parked automobiles in new subdivisions within the R-1-5

Zoning District. At that time, the minimum lot width for the R-1-5 Zoning District was 50 feet. Ordinance #1915, adopted in February of 2019, increased the minimum R-1-5 lot width from 50 feet to 60 feet, therefore the standard is no longer applicable.

### **Proposed Garage Setback Standards**

The reason for the proposed setback standards is two-fold. First, many of the vehicles parked in tandem do not fit within the current 35ft setback. Increasing the Min. Front Yard for R-1-4 and R-1-5 from 35ft to 40ft will allow most vehicles to park in tandem within the setback, and they will not overhang the sidewalk. Secondly, the proposed text amendment provides options for single family building designs on smaller lots that will minimize the impact of garages and parking aprons on the streetscape.

### **Article 6 Supplementary Regulations**

The purpose of Article 6 of the Zoning Ordinance is to establish supplementary regulations for specific land uses and zoning districts established by the Ordinance. Standards within Article 6 are intended to serve as minimum requirements to supplement and not replace the provisions established elsewhere within the Zoning Ordinance. These standards are expected to achieve a desired character that is reflective of Gulf Shores.

The garage placement options proposed in the text amendment will provide greater flexibility in the placement of homes, as well as increased buildable area if the applicant opts to construct the garage in a configuration that lessens its impact on the pedestrian environment. By choosing to bring habitable spaces closer to the street or by turning prominent garage doors away from the street, builders can increase pedestrian comfort and help create a stronger sense of community and walkable neighborhoods as envisioned by the Vision 2025 Future Land Use Plan.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends the City Council approve the amendment as proposed.