



City of Blaine Anoka County, Minnesota

Blaine City Hall
10801 Town Sq Dr NE
Blaine MN 55449

Legislation Text

File #: ORD 22-2494, Version: 3

Development Business - *Sheila Sellman, City Planner*

Title Second Reading

Granting Amendments to Revise and Update Sections of the Blaine Zoning Ordinance. City of Blaine (Case File No. 21-0080/EES)

Executive Summary

The annual review of the zoning code has identified several minor changes to the zoning code to improve clarity, reduce administrative burden, and address situations not addressed by the current code.

Schedule of Actions

Planning Commission Public Hearing	12/14/21
City Council (1 st Reading)	01/03/22
City Council (2 nd Reading)	01/19/22

Background

Staff report prepared by Elizabeth Showalter, Community Development Specialist

In 2020, the City completed a major revision to the zoning code, which was the first major revision since the modern zoning code was adopted in 1984. From that process, staff observed that it would be beneficial to perform more regular updates to reduce instances of outdated or unclear code requirements. To that end, staff has begun a process to have an annual housekeeping update to the zoning code.

The attached draft ordinance includes all of the proposed changes. A summary of the changes is below.

Residential Driveways and Garages

The code requires that detached garages with doors large enough for vehicles are capable of being served by a driveway that meets the zoning code. This language is largely remaining the same, but with a few changes. The language has been modified to more clearly state the required width of the access. A requirement has been added that if the access to the detached garage is not able to be maintained as grass, it must be paved, which has been a CUP requirement for detached garages requiring CUPs in the past. Lastly, the door width allowed without an access path is being changed from five feet to six feet. This is still narrower than needed to fit a vehicle, but allows for wider doors necessary to store some lawnmowers. Additionally, many prefabricated sheds available at home improvement stores have 6 foot wide doors.

Another amendment is proposed to clarify language regarding driveway width for driveways accessing side yard parking areas or rear yard garages.

Outside Storage and Refuse

The zoning code allows for the outside storage of employee service vehicles in the B-2 and B-3 districts. The proposed amendment clarifies that these must be under a weight requirement that would prohibit box trucks and semis. It also allows for the storage of larger vehicles at loading docks. This modification aims to clarify what an employee service vehicle is, while allowing for limited storage of larger delivery vehicles where appropriate.

A revision is proposed to the trash enclosure language for all commercial and industrial zoning districts to allow for trash enclosures to be placed in the front yard upon approval of the zoning administrator. Many recent buildings have trash enclosures in areas that are technically the front yard, and in the case of lots with double frontage, there is often not an accessible space to build the enclosure outside of the front yard. This amendment would largely codify existing practice of allowing trash enclosures against the building in the front yard or on the less visible front yard when necessary.

Parking

The parking requirements have been changed to reduce the parking requirement for studio apartments. This codifies the reduced requirement that has been applied to previous projects through a staff policy interpretation. A parking requirement for senior housing has been added that is consistent with what has been required for previous projects through conditional use permits.

Overhead Doors and Loading

This section was confusing. The proposed language simplifies the code and removes requirements based on current building practices (e.g. the maximum overhead door size that is not consistent with current loading dock configurations).

Signs in Residential Districts

During the 2020 code amendments, a change was made to require that monument signs be non-illuminated at schools, churches, and similar uses in residential districts. This requirement is being removed and the text reverting back to allow illuminated monument signs. This change is being made due to the large number of existing signs with illumination that are not causing issues.

Earlier this year a CUP was issued to allow an electronic readerboard at a church. Staff believes that as long as the readerboard is on a collector or arterial road, the requirement that the sign be compatible with the neighborhood will be met and there is not a need for a CUP. By allowing these signs without a CUP when adjacent to major roads, the cost and time spent by applicants will be reduced.

Other Changes

The fence section is proposed to be changed to allow fences under 30 inches in height in the sight distance triangle. This is consistent with the language regarding the sight distance triangle in the Code of Ordinances and past permitting practice.

A typographical error is proposed to be corrected in the R-2 code section.

Strategic Plan Relationship

Many of the changes serve to meet the information needs of the community by improving the clarity of the zoning code.

Board/Commission Review

The Planning Commission voted unanimously to approve the amendments. There were no comments at the public hearing.

Financial Impact

Not applicable.

Public Outreach/Input

Notice of a public hearing were:

1. Published in Blaine/Spring Lake Park/Columbia Heights/Fridley Life.
2. Posted on the City's website.
3. Posted (sign) on the property with contact information for the Planning Department.

Staff Recommendation

By motion, approve the ordinance.

Attachment List

Zoning Ordinance

Unapproved Planning Commission Minutes 12/14/21

THE CITY OF BLAINE DOES ORDAIN : (Added portions are underscored and deleted portions are shown in overstrike.)

See attached ordinance

INTRODUCED and read in full this 3rd day of January, 2022.

PASSED by the City Council of the City of Blaine this 19th day of January, 2022.