

## ORDINANCE AMENDMENT REVIEW SHEET

**AMENDMENT:** C2o-07-022

**DESCRIPTION:**

Amend Sec. 25-4-151 (Street Alignment), Sec. 25-4-153 (Block Length), and Sec. 25-4-157 (Subdivision Access Streets) to encourage shorter blocks and to increase pedestrian and vehicular connections within subdivisions.

**BACKGROUND:**

This amendment was initiated by the Planning Commission to change the design of residential subdivisions. The proposed changes will encourage shorter blocks, more interconnected streets, and more pedestrian and bicycle access between subdivisions.

**CURRENT AND PROPOSED REGULATIONS:**

Sec. 25-4-151 (Street Alignment) presently requires that streets in new subdivisions be aligned with existing streets. The proposed amendment would clarify the language to specify that streets connect with existing streets unless approved by the Land Use Commission.

Sec. 25-4-153 (Block Length), which presently states that residential blocks may be up to 1,200 feet long, would be revised to require a mid-block pedestrian access if block length is greater than 900 feet.. If parallel and adjacent to an arterial street, a residential block could be 1,500 feet long, but an additional pedestrian walkway would have to extend from the end of the cul-de-sac to an adjacent street. The Director may waive the block length requirement if the proposed block length meets requirements of traffic circulation, utilities, topography, and the Comprehensive Plan.

Sec. 25-4-157 (Subdivision Access Streets) presently requires that each new subdivision have access to two external streets except in certain circumstances. The proposed amendment allows pedestrian access to be considered, in addition to vehicular access, in determining whether one access point is sufficient.

**ISSUES:**

As originally proposed, this amendment would have required that all subdivisions be designed with shorter blocks and increased connectivity of public streets. This would have resulted not only result in additional street pavement but also additional curb ramps, sidewalks, and utilities. Concerns were raised by the development community that this ordinance will increase the cost of developing new subdivisions and thereby affect housing affordability. The current draft recommended by the Planning Commission only requires that additional pedestrian connections be provided if blocks are longer than 900 feet, which should significantly reduce the additional costs. As a further incentive to encourage shorter blocks, staff is processing a change to the Transportation Criteria Manual to allow narrower pavement widths on residential streets for subdivisions that are designed for increased connectivity. The proposed changes will reduce the pavement on local residential streets from 30 feet to 28 feet and on collector streets from 40 feet to 36 feet when short blocks and interconnected streets are provided.

**DEPARTMENTAL COMMENTS:**

An affordability impact statement from the Neighborhood Housing and Community Development Department is attached.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends approval of the ordinance.

**BASIS FOR RECOMMENDATION:**

The proposed ordinance will encourage pedestrian and bicycle travel by providing more connections within and between neighborhoods. It will promote transit usage by improving pedestrian access from transit routes to residential areas. It will also encourage shorter travel distances and thereby reduce vehicular trip lengths.

**PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION:**

The Planning Commission recommended the ordinance amendment on December 11, 2007 (7-0).

**CITY COUNCIL ACTION:**

**ORDINANCE READINGS:**

1<sup>st</sup>

2<sup>nd</sup>

3<sup>rd</sup>

**ORDINANCE NUMBER:**

**ASSIGNED STAFF:**

George Zapalac, 974-2725