



CITY OF RAPID CITY

RAPID CITY, SOUTH DAKOTA 57701-2724

Growth Management Department

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Planning Commission

FROM: Vicki L. Fisher, Planning Manager

DATE: August 20, 2010

RE: Parking of recreational vehicles in a front yard

In 1968, the City adopted an ordinance regulating the parking of recreational vehicles, travel trailers and hauling trailers in residential zoning districts. Chapter 17.50.280 currently states the following:

A. *Allowed storage.* Vehicles and trailers of all types, including commercial, travel, boat, camping, storage and hauling, shall not be parked or stored on any lot occupied by a dwelling or on any lot in any residential or commercial district except in accordance with the following provisions and with § [10.40.200](#):

1. Stall Location. All recreational vehicles, travel trailers and hauling trailers shall be parked or stored behind front yard setback line(s) when they are to remain stationary for more than 72 hours. The vehicle(s) and trailer(s), when combined with the principal and accessory buildings, shall not occupy more of the lot than allowed for under the district lot coverage provisions. Further, vehicle and/or trailer parking/storage pads shall be graveled or hard surfaced to eliminate dust, mud or weeds. Vehicles which are to remain stationary for more than 72 hours shall not serve as temporary or permanent sleeping quarters for any person.

2. Parking Conflicts. Off-street parking stalls required for passenger vehicle shall not be occupied by recreational vehicles, travel trailers or hauling trailers, resulting in increased on-street parking.



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3. Clear Sight Triangle. At no time shall a motor vehicle, recreational vehicle, travel trailer or hauling trailer be parked in the boulevard, across a sidewalk, or within the 10-foot clear sight triangle as described in § [17.50.270](#).

In 2005, Edward and Arlene Holcomb residing at 801 Holcomb Avenue requested the City to amend the Zoning Ordinance to allow a recreational vehicle to be stored in front yards. The Planning Commission and the City Council reviewed the request and determined that the Zoning Ordinance should not be amended as requested.

At the July 8, 2010 Planning Commission meeting, Marie Tucker, 135 Nebraska Street, requested that the Zoning Ordinance be amended to allow recreational vehicles to be parked in front yards for more than 72 hours. The Planning Commission has subsequently requested that staff again review Chapter 17.50.200 regarding the parking of recreational vehicles in front yards.

Staff has subsequently reviewed a number of ordinances from other communities to identify options for regulating the parking of recreational vehicles on residential lots. Most all communities preclude the parking of recreational vehicles in front yards:

Billings, Montana allows the parking of recreational vehicles in a front yard if access to a back yard cannot be obtained. The parking pad must be concrete or paved and must not interfere with required passenger vehicle parking.

Sioux Falls, South Dakota is currently considering amending their Ordinance to allow a Variance to be obtained from the Zoning Board of Adjustment to allow recreational vehicle parking within a front yard when a physical hardship exists precluding parking within a rear yard.

Fort Collins, Colorado allows for a recreational vehicle to be parked in the front yard but the parking space must be hard surfaced and may not interfere with the required passenger vehicle parking.

Based on this research, staff has identified the following options:

1. Amend the Ordinance to allow recreational vehicles to be parked in the front yard when access to a back yard cannot be obtained. If access to the back yard cannot be obtained, than a recreational vehicle may be parked in the front yard subject to all the other standards;
2. Amend the Ordinance to allow the parking of a recreational vehicle in one of the front yards on a corner lot contingent upon the recreational vehicle being parked within the front yard that abuts the lesser order street subject to all the other standards;
3. Make no changes to the Ordinance precluding the parking of recreational vehicles in front yards.

Concerns exist with parking of recreational vehicles in front yards since it creates safety issues along the adjacent street rights-of-way. In particular, the size and design of recreational vehicles creates a visual barrier limiting visibility along the street. In addition, many recreational vehicles are larger than the parking apron located within the front yard resulting in an encroachment into the adjacent sidewalk which, in turn, creates a pedestrian safety issue within a residential area. The parking of recreational vehicles in front yards also creates an aesthetic issue within a residential district and limits the neighboring properties view from their front yards. In addition, parking recreational vehicles in the front yard compromises fire and emergency access to the residence.

Based on these concerns and since the existing Zoning Ordinance currently allows recreational vehicles to be parked on a residential lot within a side or rear yard, staff recommends that no changes to the Zoning Ordinance be made. Please note that under the current Zoning Ordinance, the applicant may request a Variance from the Zoning Board of Adjustment to allow recreational vehicle parking in a front yard. However, before the Zoning Board of Adjustment may grant the Variance, the Board must determine that all criteria for granting a Variance are met, including depriving the applicant of any reasonable use of his or her property. Since the existing residence located on the property allows the applicant reasonable use, it may be difficult to obtain a Variance.

Staff Recommendation: That no changes to the Zoning Ordinance be made precluding the parking of recreational vehicles in front yards.