

Supplemental Regulations for Residential Zones
Draft Legislation

This draft legislation addresses the following Infill Task Force recommendations:

- Establish average height limits (A.1.a.)
 - Encourage open front porches (D.1.)
 - Encourage detached garages in the rear yard (D.2.)
 - Allow permeable driveway in required side yard (D.3.)
 - Allow tandem parking without SUP (D.4.)
 - Require attached garages to be set back from the front face of the dwelling (D.5.)
 - Require attached garages to be side-loaded (D.6.)
 - Consider tree preservation & landscaping requirements (E.4.)
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2-148.1 Front porch. A covered landing attached to the exterior of a residential building and generally extending along a portion of or the entire length of the front building wall.

2-149 Garage, private. A building designed for the storage of not more than three motor-driven vehicles.

2-183.2 Portico. A small roof projection with or without columns or brackets above an open landing, attached to the exterior of the primary front entrance of a residential building.

7-2300 Supplemental Regulations for Certain Residential Zones.

7-2301 Applicability. Unless otherwise indicated below, the supplemental regulations in this section 7-2300 apply to all residential dwellings in the R-20, R-12, R-8, R-5, R-2-5, RA and RB zones. These regulations supplement the residential zone regulations in Article III of this zoning ordinance.

7-2302 Height in line with existing development.

(A) Whenever the major portion of a block is developed, the height of a residential building erected or altered after [effective date] shall not exceed the greater of:

(1) 25 feet, or

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- (2) The average height of the residential buildings built on that block (one side of a street between two intersecting streets or one intersecting street and a street dead end) by more than 20 percent.
- (B) A height greater than that calculated in Section 7-2302(A) may be permitted if a special use permit is approved pursuant to section 11-500 of this ordinance, and city council determines that the proposed construction will be of substantially the same residential character as adjacent and nearby properties and shall demonstrate exceptional design.
- (C) For the purposes of this section 7-2302, where the number of buildings on one side of a street between two intersecting streets or between one intersecting street and a street dead end is either fewer than five or where the distance between streets as specified above is less than 200 feet or where the number of buildings is greater than 15 or where the distance between streets as specified above is greater than 600 feet, the director may designate an appropriate block for purposes of calculating height without regard to intersecting streets subject to an administrative protocol similar to that applied in substandard lot cases, and subject to city council approval as part of the special use permit, if there is one, granted pursuant to this section 7-2302.

7-2303 Front door threshold height in line with existing development. See threshold height regulations in Section 7-1002 (B) and (C).

7-2304 Open front porches and porticos.

- (A) Ground level covered front porches and porticos constructed under the standards of this section 7-2303 shall be excluded from floor area calculated under the provisions of Section 2-145(A)(5).
- (B) Standards.
- (1) Extent of front porch exclusion. No portion of the floor area of the porch to be excluded under this section shall extend beyond the side walls of the front building façade.
- (2) Size of porch. To be excluded under this section, a porch shall be a minimum of 5 feet deep and a maximum of 8 feet deep. The maximum floor area to be excluded shall be 240 square feet.
- (3) Construction above not permitted. To be excluded under this section, no second floor balcony, deck, or enclosed construction shall be permitted above the front porch or portico.

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- (4) Must remain open. A ground level front porch or portico shall remain open and shall at no time be enclosed with building walls, glass or screens. Railings shall be permitted no higher than the minimum height required by the building code, and with balusters evenly spaced so as to leave at least 50 percent of the perimeter length of the railings open.
- (C) For front porches that cannot meet the front setback requirements, the board of zoning appeals is authorized to grant a special exception under the provisions of Section 11-1300.

7-2305 Free-standing garages to the rear of the main building.

- (A) Regardless of other regulations in this zoning ordinance, a free-standing private garage is permitted to the rear of the main building in accordance with the regulations in this section 7-2304 so long as it is the only garage on the lot or adjacent lot under common ownership. The floor area of such a garage constructed in accordance with the standards of this section will be excluded from floor area calculated under the provisions of Section 2-145(A)(6).
- (B) Standards.
- (1) Size. For lots with a minimum of 5,000 square feet and with less than 8,000 square feet lot area, the garage shall have a floor area not greater than 240 square feet and a height not greater than 10 feet. For lots 8,000 square feet or larger, the garage shall have a floor area not greater than 480 square feet and a height not greater than 12 feet.
- (2) Setback. The garage shall be set back a minimum of 3 feet from the side or rear property line if windows face the property line; otherwise the minimum setback is 1 foot.
- (3) Access. If there is no direct access to the garage from an alley, a permeable-surfaced driveway is permitted in the side yard for access to the garage. Permeable-surfaced driveways can be composed of grass with ring and grid structure, gravel or paving strips, a grid based surface, or other treatments without significant compaction of the base, but must be approved by the department of planning and zoning and the department of transportation and environmental services. Tandem parking in the driveway is permitted. Curb cuts must be approved in accordance with Section 5-2-2 of the City Code and section 8-200(C)(5) of this zoning ordinance.

7-2306 Attached garages. Private garages that are an integral part of the main residential dwelling are only permitted under the following standards.

- (A) If the lot width is 65 feet or more, an attached garage shall have the vehicle opening facing the side yard. Such a garage may be no closer to the front property line than the plane of the front entrance to the dwelling.
- (B) If the lot width is less than 65 feet, an attached garage with a vehicle entrance facing the front yard is permitted, but must be set back a minimum of 8 feet from the plane of the front entrance to the dwelling. No roof or covering is permitted in front of such a garage and any construction above shall not extend forward of the front plane of the garage. The garage door shall be compatible with the design of the residence.

7-2307 Tree coverage requirement.

- (A) For all construction that requires a grading plan, trees must be planted or existing trees preserved to provide a minimum of 25 percent canopy cover over the site. Refer to the City of Alexandria Landscape Guidelines to determine tree crown coverage allowances.
- (B) The department shall approve this requirement as part of the grading plan.

7-100 Accessory uses and structures.

Accessory uses and structures are permitted, but only in connection with and incidental to a permitted principal use or structure and in compliance with the restrictions of this section 7-100.

7-101 *Permitted accessory uses.* Permitted accessory uses and structures shall be limited to the following and any additional use or structure which the director finds is similar to those listed in scope, size and impact, is customarily associated with residential dwellings, and is otherwise in compliance with this ordinance:

- (A) Private garage;
- (B) Private greenhouse;
- (C) Private tennis or outdoor recreational court;
- (D) Above ground deck;
- (E) Private swimming pool;
- (F) Storage structure;

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- (G) Freestanding air conditioning machinery;
- (H) Fence or wall;
- (I) Guest house, accessory to a single-family dwelling, provided it is used by temporary guests or occupants of the main residence, contains no kitchen facilities and is not rented or otherwise used as a separate dwelling;
- (J) Gazebo or treehouse;
- (K) Home occupation, subject to section 7-300;
- (L) Child or elder care home, subject to section 7-500.

7-102 *Prohibited accessory uses.* Prohibited uses accessory to residential dwellings include, but are not limited to:

Outdoor storage; provided that a reasonable amount of cut fire wood for personal use and building materials on a temporary basis for use on site may be stored on a residential lot.

7-103 *Use limitations.* The following limitations apply to accessory uses and structures:

- (A) No accessory use or structure shall be located forward of the front building line, except as provided in section 7-202(A).
- (B) No accessory use or structure shall be located in a required rear or side yard, except as provided in sections 7-202 and 7-2305.
- (C) Accessory structures shall be included in the calculations required by this ordinance for the purpose of complying with height and bulk regulations, except as provided in sections 7-2304 and 7-2305.
- (D) An accessory use or structure shall be located on the same lot as the principal structure or use served, except where it is located on an adjoining lot which contains no principal building and which is adjacent to and in common ownership with the lot on which the principal building which it does serve is located or as otherwise expressly authorized by the provisions of this ordinance.

7-200 Permitted structures in required yards.

7-201 *General prohibition.* Every part of a required yard shall be open and unobstructed from the lowest point to the sky except as may be permitted in section 7-202.

7-202 *Permitted obstructions.* The following obstructions shall be permitted when located in a required yard and placed so as not to obstruct light and ventilation and when otherwise permitted by law:

- (A) In all yards:

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- (1) Open fences which do not exceed three and one-half feet in height.
 - (2) Awnings or canopies provided they do not project more than five feet in depth from the existing building face.
 - (3) Bay or display windows, projecting 20 inches or less into the yard and gutters, eaves, cornices or window sills projecting 12 inches or less into the yard.
 - (4) Chimneys projecting 30 inches or less into the yard, provided that such projection does not reduce the width of the remaining side or rear yard to less than five feet.
 - (5) Arbors and trellises.
 - (6) Flag poles which do not exceed 15 feet in height.
 - (7) Open stairs, provided that the stairs do not reduce a side or rear yard to less than five feet.
 - (8) Ramps and similar structures necessary to provide access for the handicapped.
 - (9) Porticos, provided that they do not extend more than six feet from the main building wall, do not extend more than and nine feet in length, which dimensions include any roof overhang, and provided further that they remain open.
- (B) In any yard except a front yard:
- (1) Sandboxes, swings and other small items of childrens' play equipment.
 - (2) Clotheslines.
 - (3) Open and closed fences which do not exceed six feet in height.
 - (4) Small sheds, doghouses, dollhouses and structures used for storage, provided:
 - (a) On land zoned R-20, R-12, R-8, R-5 or R-2-5 and used for single-family dwellings, such structures may not exceed 80 square feet in floor area in the aggregate and eight feet in height when measured at the structure's highest point.
 - (b) On land zoned and used for semi-detached or townhouse dwellings, such structures may only be placed in the rear yard

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at the rear property line, may not exceed 50 square feet of floor area in the aggregate and seven feet in height when measured at the structure's highest point.

- (5) Freestanding air conditioning machinery, provided it can be demonstrated to the director that it will not exceed a noise level of 55 decibels (55 dB(A)) when measured at any property line of the lot, and provided it is placed in a location which has the least adverse impacts to adjoining lots of those locations available.
- (6) Open terraces and decks not over two feet above the average level of the adjoining ground and two feet above ground at any property line of the lot but not including a roofed-over terrace or porch.

(7) Free-standing private garages to the rear of the main building in accordance with section 7-2305.

- (C) In the Old and Historic Alexandria and the Parker-Gray Districts, the requirement of sections 7-202(A)(1) and 7-202(B)(3) may be waived or modified by the board of architectural review where the board finds that a proposed fence would be architecturally appropriate and consistent with the character of the district.
- (D) In any residential zone a ground level covered open front porch is permitted to project a maximum of eight feet from the front building wall into the required front yard, or primary front yard if a corner lot, of a single-family, semi-detached, duplex or townhouse dwelling; provided that a special exception under section 11-1302 of this ordinance is approved.

8-200 General parking regulations.

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(C) *Location of parking facilities.*

- (1) For all single-family detached and two-family residential dwellings, required off-street parking facilities shall be located on the same lot as the main building. Tandem parking is permitted.