



# MAYOR & COUNCIL COMMUNICATION

**DATE:** May 20, 2014  
**CONSENT**  
**ITEM #** 8  
**ORDINANCE 08-109**

**AGENDA ITEM:** City Code Amendment – Driveway Width Perfecting Amendment

**SUBMITTED BY:** Nick M. Johnson, City Planner

**THROUGH:** Dean Zuleger, City Administrator

**REVIEWED BY:** Kyle Klatt, Community Development Director  
Jack Griffin, City Engineer  
Rick Chase, Building Official  
Greg Malmquist, Fire Chief

**SUGGESTED ORDER OF BUSINESS (if removed from the Consent Agenda):**

- Introduction of Item .....Community Development Director
- Report/Presentation.....Community Development Director
- Questions from Council to Staff..... Mayor Facilitates
- Call for Motion ..... Mayor & City Council
- Discussion..... Mayor & City Council
- Action on Motion..... Mayor Facilitates

**POLICY RECCOMENDER:** Staff is recommending approval of a perfecting amendment to the City’s driveway standards related to minimum and maximum driveway width in residential districts. Updating the driveway width standards should allow for more safe and efficient ingress and egress traffic movements out of residential driveways.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** None

**SUMMARY AND ACTION REQUESTED:** The City Council is asked to approve a perfecting amendment to the City’s driveway standards to update the minimum and maximum width of driveways in residential districts. Staff is recommending that the minimum driveway width be increased from ten (10) to twelve (12) feet, and the maximum driveway width in the public right-of-way be increase from twenty-two (22) to twenty-six (26) feet.

*Staff is recommending that the City Council approve Ordinance 08-109 to update the City’s driveway standards related to driveway width in residential districts as part of the Consent*

*Agenda. If removed from the Consent Agenda, Ordinance 08-109 can be approved through the following motion:*

***“Move to approve Ordinance 08-109, updating the City’s driveway width standards in residential districts to provide safe and adequate access to residential homes.”***

### **LEGISLATIVE HISTORY/BCKGROUND INFORMATION:**

In December of 2013, the City updated its driveway provisions as part of general updates and continuous improvement to the City Code. As part of that update, the City carried forward the existing standard of using twenty-two feet as the maximum width of driveways in the public right-of-way. While sufficient for residential properties in the rural zoning districts, twenty-two feet is not considered a safe and sufficient standard for urban residential properties, particularly for homes with three-car garages that are closer to the street. In reviewing the standards of other communities (Attachment #2), staff has found that the maximum driveway widths in the right-of-way of other communities all exceed the City’s current standard of twenty-two feet. In consulting with the City Engineer and Building Official, staff determined that twenty-six feet is a sufficient width, while at the same time promoting good access management principles by limiting curb-cuts to 26 feet, creating greater space between curb cuts/access points on residential streets. Allowing for the increased width of 4 feet (22 to 26 feet) will allow for improved safety of turning movements in an out of urban residential properties, while at the same time still limiting the curb cut width to promote good access spacing.

In addition to the maximum driveway width, staff also reviewed the minimum width to ensure that the City was promoting a standard that was sufficient for emergency vehicle access. In reviewing the standard of ten feet, the Fire Chief noted that the width of typical fire trucks while in operation (cabinets opened, all equipment being accessed) are close to ten feet in width. Add to this consideration that during the winter months, many driveways become more narrow due to snow storage. For these reasons, staff is recommending increasing the minimum driveway width from ten (10) to twelve (12) feet.

Finally, Staff would also recommend striking subsection c related to increased width for the curb cut in residential districts. With increasing the maximum width in the public right-of-way, Staff no longer thinks that the increase curb cut is necessary. All single family residential and rural districts should be able to meet the necessary driveway curb cut within 26 feet. The only exception where increased width/curb cut would be necessary relates to active agricultural properties. Language has been added to the ordinance to account for this scenario.

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION (SWOT):**

**Strengths:** Proceeding with the perfecting amendment to the driveway ordinance will allow for safer traffic movements in and out of residential driveways, particularly in urban residential districts. In addition, increasing the driveway minimum to 12’ feet ensures that the access to residential properties can properly accommodate emergency service vehicles in the event of an emergency.

**Weaknesses:** None

**Opportunities:** Updating the width standards should improve safety and access of residential properties in all single family districts of Lake Elmo. Also, allowing for a greater width in the right-of-way should allow additional vehicle to be parked on driveways as opposed to on-street parking.

**Threats:** Maintaining the 22-foot standard for urban residential properties will allow less for safe in and out turning movements of residential driveways. Also, 10 feet is not an adequate standard for emergency service vehicle access in the judgment of the Building Official and Fire Chief.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

*Based on the aforementioned, Staff is recommending that the City Council approve Ordinance 08-109 to update the City's driveway standards related to driveway width in residential districts as part of the Consent Agenda. If removed from the Consent Agenda, Ordinance 08-109 can be approved through the following motion:*

***“Move to approve Ordinance 08-109, updating the City's driveway width standards in residential districts to provide safe and adequate access to residential homes.”***

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Ordinance 08-109
2. City's Existing Driveway Ordinance (§93.26)
3. Metro Driveway Width Standards Chart