

ITEM: Garages in R-4 properties with alleys

SUBMITTED BY: Deborah Jones, Zoning and Planning Director

REVIEWED BY: Justin Miller, City Administrator

Background:

In February the Planning Commission studied the issue of parking and garages on those R-4 multifamily properties that have alleys. These 9 buildings are among the oldest multi-family buildings in Falcon Heights. None of them have enough land to provide two parking spaces per unit, as required by the city's present day code. The code also requires at least half the parking to be enclosed. These properties are also subject to a 10 foot side setback, 30 feet on a side abutting a street.

All of the properties under discussion are legally non-conforming and may maintain their status quo. However, when owners seek to demolish or replace existing garages or build new ones, their options are extremely limited. Parking spaces and covered parking spaces cannot be further reduced without variances. New garages cannot be constructed closer to the side lot lines than 10 feet, if not more, without variances. New garages that reduce the total amount of on-site parking cannot be built without variances. In many cases there is no possible change to parking or accessory structures than can be done without variances, leaving rebuilding on existing footprints as the only option. The Commission was asked to consider whether the zoning code might be amended to provide more permitted options to these owners without negative impacts on parking capacity and neighborhood character.

The Commission discussed the issue in workshop and came to the consensus that the only zoning code change they would recommend at this time is to remove the enclosed parking requirement for the apartment buildings with alleys. This provides one additional option to owners, the option of reducing the amount of existing enclosed parking. Commissioners did not favor a reduction in the setback requirements and would prefer that any requests for reduced setback be handled case by case through the variance process.

Commissioners instructed staff to prepare an ordinance amending the code for hearing at the following meeting.

Attachments:

- Proposed ordinance amending Section 113-310(2)(e) of the Falcon Heights City Code to make R-4 multifamily properties exempt from the enclosed parking requirement if they abut an alley.
- Published notice of the public hearing
- Letter sent to owners and neighbors of affected properties.
- Parking data for apartment buildings on alleys
- 2006 aerial photo of the block of Larpenteur between Arona and Pascal

Commissioners may also wish to consult Section 113-176 of the city code as well as the additional maps provided in February.

Actions Requested:

- Hold a public hearing on the proposed code amendment.
- Discuss the proposed amendment.
- Vote on a recommendation to the City Council.

ORDINANCE NO. ____

CITY OF FALCON HEIGHTS
RAMSEY COUNTY, MINNESOTA

AN AMENDMENT TO CHAPTER 113, THE ZONING ORDINANCE,
OF THE FALCON HEIGHTS CITY CODE
CONCERNING GARAGES IN THE R-4 DISTRICT

THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF FALCON HEIGHTS ORDAINS:

SECTION 1. Section 113-310(2)(e) of the Falcon Heights City Code is amended to read as follows:

Off-street parking spaces required (one space equals 350 square feet) shall be as follows for: Multiple-family dwellings. At least two parking spaces per dwelling unit except that 2 1/2 parking spaces per dwelling unit are required for multiple units of ten or less that abut no parking (on street curb) zones. At least one-half of the required spaces shall be enclosed unless the property abuts an alley. (Garage requirements may be waived for apartment projects designed and intended for occupancy by low-income families.)

SECTION 2. EFFECTIVE DATE: This ordinance shall take effect from and after its passage.

ADOPTED this _____ day of _____, 2009, by the City Council of Falcon Heights, Minnesota.

CITY OF FALCON HEIGHTS

BY: _____
Peter Lindstrom, Mayor

ATTEST:

Justin Miller, City Administrator/Clerk

Aerial Photo Unselected - R-4 with alleys

Falcon Heights



DISCLAIMER: This map is neither a legally recorded map nor a survey and is not intended to be used as one. This map is a compilation of records, information and data located in various city, county, state and federal offices and other sources regarding the area shown, and is to be used for reference purposes only.

SOURCES: Ramsey County (February 2, 2009), The Lawrence Group:February 2, 2009 for County parcel and property records data; February 2009 for commercial and residential data; April 2006 for color aerial imagery;

Falcon Heights Planning Commission
February 24, 2009

Apartments with Alleys: Larpenteur Avenue from Pascal to Arona
Lot coverage allowed in R-4: 75%

Address	Year Built	Units	Lot size/ Lot width	Corner	Required Parking		Existing Parking		Nearby On-street
					Total	Covered	Total	Covered	
1466 Larpenteur	1964	8	12196.8 100'	Yes	16	8	14	6	Larpenteur, Pascal, California
1472 Larpenteur	1948	10	12196.8 100'	No	20	10	10	0	Larpenteur, Pascal, California
1486 Larpenteur	1948	10	12196.8 100'	No	20	10	10	0	Larpenteur
1490 Larpenteur	1946	5	5662.8 50'	No	10	5	5	2*	Larpenteur
1496 Larpenteur	1946	8	5662.8 50'	No	16	8	5	2*	Larpenteur
1504 Larpenteur	1946	10	12196.8 100'	No	20	10	10	1*	Larpenteur, Arona, California
1510 Larpenteur	1946	10	12196.8 100'	Yes	20	10	9	9	Larpenteur, Arona, California
1688 Arona	1949	10	7405.2 58.9'	Yes	20	10	14	0	Larpenteur, Arona, Crawford
1511 Larpenteur	1949	10	9583.2 76.4'	No	20	10			Larpenteur, Arona, Crawford (no street parking adjacent to building)

* This represents the size of an existing garage and is included in the total. It has not been determined if this garage space is available to tenants for parking.

CITY OF FALCON HEIGHTS, MINNESOTA

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, that the Falcon Heights Planning Commission will meet on March 24, 2009, at approximately 7:00 p.m. at the Falcon Heights City Hall Council Chambers, 2077 Larpenteur Avenue West, Falcon Heights, Minnesota 55113, to consider proposed changes to the Zoning Chapter of the Falcon Heights City Code regarding garage requirements in Residential Districts. All persons who desire to speak on this issue are encouraged to attend and will be given an opportunity to be heard at this meeting. Additional information can be obtained by contacting the City of Falcon Heights at (651) 792-7600.

This matter will be scheduled for the next appropriate City Council meeting following the Planning Commission meeting.

Dated: March 5, 2009.



Justin Miller, City Administrator/Clerk
City of Falcon Heights, Minnesota



CITY OF
FALCON HEIGHTS

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Phone - (651) 792-7600
Fax - (651) 792-7610

March 17, 2009

Dear Property Owner:

On Tuesday, March 24, at 7:00 p.m., the City Planning Commission will hold a public hearing on a new ordinance amending the city code regarding parking requirements for some apartment buildings. A written notice is not required in this case, but because your property is one of those affected or is across the alley from an affected property, we want to make sure you know about the hearing.

The city code presently requires R-4 apartment buildings to have at least 2 parking spaces per unit, of which half must be covered (carport or garage). The code amendment will remove the covered parking requirement for R-4 apartment buildings that are adjacent to alleys.

This change will only affect the nine apartment buildings on Larpenteur Avenue between Arona and Pascal Streets. All of these buildings were constructed before the present zoning code was written, and none of them have room to meet the parking requirements. All of these properties are considered legally non-conforming.

The Planning Commission has proposed this change in order to give apartment owners the option of removing existing garages that are in poor condition and replacing them with surface parking instead of new garages, without a variance. In some cases this would increase the net amount of off-street parking available to tenants on blocks where street parking is scarce. New apartment garages would still have to abide by the zoning code; any variances requested would continue to be handled on case by case basis.

If you have any questions, or if you are unable to attend the hearing and wish to comment, please contact me at deb.jones@falconheights.org or at 651-792-7613.

Sincerely,

Deborah Jones
Director of Zoning and Planning