



DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Planning Division

m e m o r a n d u m

TO: The Urbana Plan Commission

FROM: Jeff Engstrom, Planner I

DATE: September 4, 2009

SUBJECT: Plan Case No. 2113-T-09: Request by the Zoning Administrator to amend Table VIII-3 and Section VIII-4 of the Urbana Zoning Ordinance to allow access drives serving individual townhouse units to be up to 18 feet wide or 45% of the lot width, whichever is greater.

Introduction and Background

Plan Case No. 2113-T-09 was originally presented to the Plan Commission on August 20, 2009. Staff has revised the proposed text amendment in response to comments from the Plan Commission as follows:

TABLE VIII-3. WIDTHS FOR ACCESS DRIVES

	<i>Minimum Width (in feet)</i>		<i>Maximum Width (in feet)¹</i>	
	One-Way	Two-Way	One-Way	Two-Way
Single-family and duplex buildings	9	9	Primary drive - 35 feet. Secondary drive - 15 feet	
<u>Rowhouse or townhouse unit with individual access drive</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>35 feet</u>	
<u>Lots with three or more dwelling units without individual drives</u>	12	20	24 feet, or one-third of the minimum lot width for the zoning district, (as specified on Table VI-3), whichever is greater If a zoning lot has a linear street frontage greater than 150 feet, the maximum width shall be 50 feet.	
<u>Public and quasi-public, business, commercial and industrial uses</u>	12	22		

Notes: 1) Per VIII-4.F.1, access drives serving single-family homes and duplexes, ~~duplexes and individual townhomes~~ shall not exceed 45% of the total lot width. Access drives serving individual townhomes shall not exceed 45% of the total lot width or 18 feet, whichever is greater.

Section VIII-4.F *Parking in a Required Yard is Prohibited Except as Follows:*

1. Access drives clearly serving single-family dwelling units, individual townhouses or duplex dwelling units may contain required parking for licensed passenger vehicles in the required front or side yard, ~~except that~~. Such area devoted to parking and access thereto shall not exceed 45% of the total lot width for single-family or duplex dwelling units. Drives serving individual townhouse units shall not exceed 45% of the total lot width or 18 feet, whichever is greater. Such spaces may be stacked. Accessory spaces provided pursuant to Section VIII.4.J shall not be located in a required front yard.

Issues and Discussion

At the August 20, 2009 meeting of the Plan Commission, staff was directed to address some additional issues with the proposed text amendment. The first issue has to do with the phrasing of the clause that allows access drives serving individual townhouse units to be more than 45% of the width of the total lot width. For improved clarity, staff is proposing the following wording: “Drives serving individual townhouse units shall not exceed 45% of the total lot width or 18 feet, whichever is greater.” This wording matches the intent of the Zoning Ordinance text amendment: that driveways for townhouses may be at least 18 feet wide, even if 18 feet is wider than 45% of the total lot width. Another issue brought up by the Plan Commission is that while there is a relative limit of 45% of the lot width for drives serving individual townhouses, there is no absolute maximum in feet. Staff is proposing that the maximum limit for townhouses be set at **35 feet**, which is the same limit for primary driveways at single-family and duplex residences in Table VIII-3.

Plan Commission also questioned whether access drive widths should to be controlled by the actual width of the garage door. Some communities, such as the City of Champaign, do allow for access drives to be wider than the nominal maximum width, up to the width of the garage door. In the context of this text amendment, staff recommends that access drive widths not be tied to the width of the garage door. For townhouse units, access drives are typically the same width as garages. Tying access widths to garage door sizes would allow for access drives to be wider than 18 feet for garages larger than two cars, which would result in larger paved areas in front of the units. Staff considers 18 feet to be an adequate width for townhouse lots, which is typically in the range of 30 to 40 feet. There is concern that a wider limit would take up too large a percentage of the lot width.

Finally, the Plan Commission had inquired whether the proposed amendment would apply to two-unit common-lot-line townhouses. Upon further review it is apparent that the proposed language will allow for two-unit common-lot-line townhouses to have access drives up to 18 feet wide. Duplex units on a single lot will remain unaffected by the proposed amendment, as they are usually built on lots that are at least 80 feet wide.

Staff Recommendation

Based on the evidence presented in the discussion above, and without the benefit of considering additional evidence that may be presented at the public hearing, staff recommends that the Urbana Plan Commission recommend **approval** of the proposed text amendment to the Zoning Ordinance, as presented herein.