

**COUNCIL ACTION FORM**

**SUBJECT: ZONING TEXT AMENDMENT RELATED TO PRIVATE GARAGES AND ACCESSORY BUILDINGS, IN PARTICULAR, MAXIMUM CUMULATIVE GARAGE DOOR OPENING WIDTH**

**BACKGROUND:**

On December 12, 2017, the City Council directed staff to prepare a text amendment to increase the cumulative dimensional standard for garage door opening width from twenty-seven (27) feet to thirty (30) feet width for single-family homes and to allow under certain circumstances, additional garage door width to exceed the maximum cumulative dimension when they are not generally parallel to and not viewable from the street.

The referral was in response to a request by the chair of the Zoning Board of Adjustment to consider different standards based upon two recent variance requests. Although the existing standard appears workable for most people, two variance requests came before the Zoning Board of Adjustment during 2016-2017. One was for a second garage not visible from a street and the other was for a three-door garage that would be thirty (30) feet wide and exceed the of twenty-seven (27) feet total width limit. Although each request was not incompatible with the surroundings, neither could be considered a “hardship” and therefore, the variances could not be granted.

Increasing the cumulative garage door opening width to thirty (30) feet for single-family homes would allow wider three-car garage door designs. A thirty (30) foot width would provide greater ease in entering and exiting of the garage and better accommodation of larger, wider vehicles. Although larger doors would increase the visual dominance of the garage when street-facing doors are visible from the street frontage, the increase is insignificant given the entire frontage of a home and the current 27-foot allowance. Utility roll-up doors of less than eight (8) feet would continue to be exempt from the calculation to total width.

The current standards also restrict single-family homes to no more than a three-car garage door design regardless of lot configuration, placement of the garage on the lot, or visibility of the garage from the street frontage. The current standard is applied the same to all single-family lots and is inflexible for addressing larger lots or unique situations where someone could accommodate additional garages, without impacting the street frontage. **Therefore, a second change is proposed to allow for additional garage door openings to exceed 30 feet for a home when the door openings do not have a visual impact on the design of the home as viewed from the street. The proposed standard is to allow only twenty (20) feet of garage door width located parallel and visible from the adjoining street when the total garage door opening**

**width exceeds thirty (30) feet.** Attachment 1 includes diagrams illustrating allowed and not-allowed configurations.

**In addition to adjusting the garage door width standard, staff proposes to consolidate all of the garage standards together and add language that clarifies that alley access standards from other parts of the Zoning Ordinance apply to all garages.** The alley access standards are a setback of a minimum of eight feet or more than 20 feet. This allows for the minimum backup maneuvering area needed to convenient access to a garage and to ensure if a vehicle is parked in the driveway they would not overhang into an alley. These standards exist in other parts of the zoning ordinance, but are not restated in the accessory garage section of Article IV.

On January 17, 2018, the Planning and Zoning Commission reviewed the amendment and voted 4-0 in support of the changes to garage standards of the Zoning Ordinance.

### **ALTERNATIVES:**

1. The City Council can approve on first reading the proposed ordinance related to private garages and accessory buildings as attached.
2. The City Council can recommend alternative language for the proposed text amendment.
3. The City Council can request additional information and defer making a recommendation.

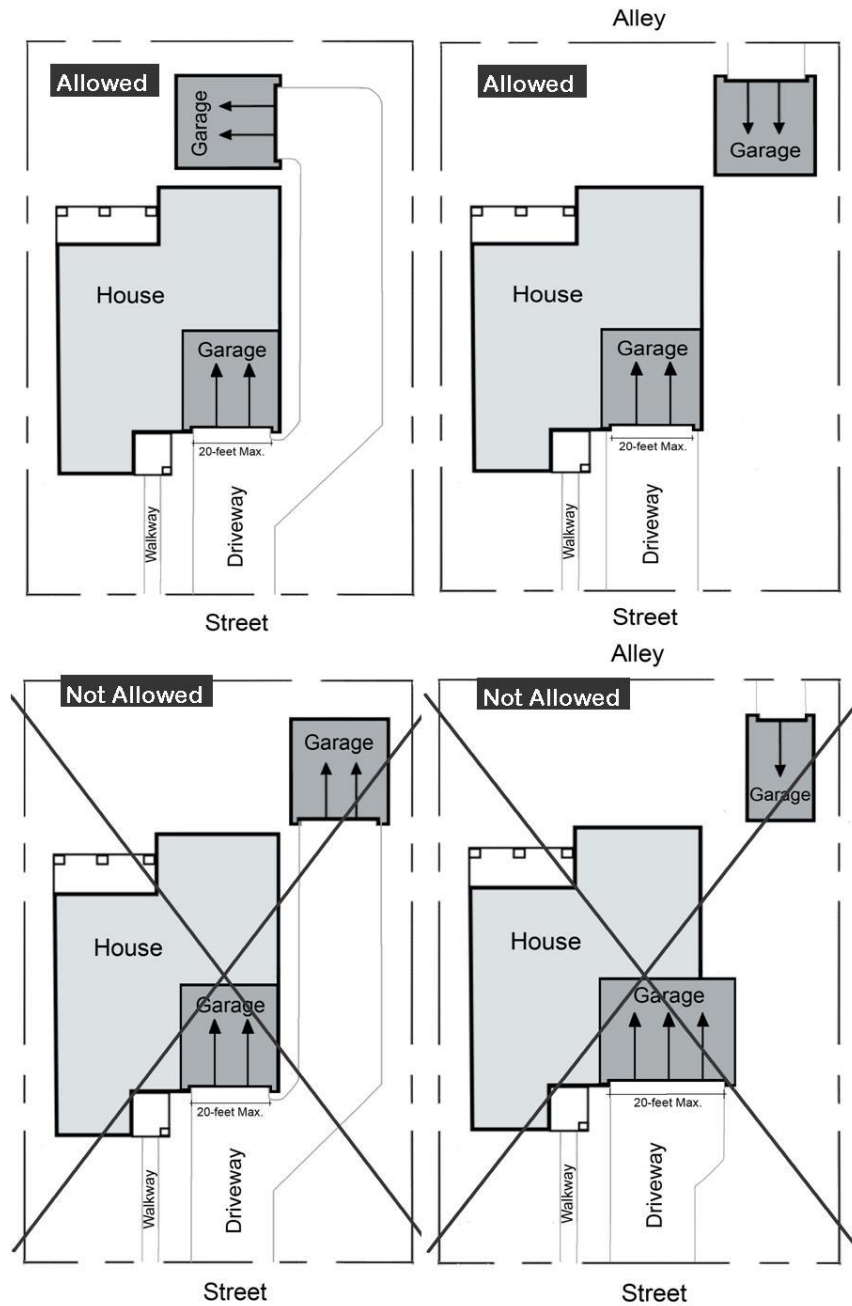
### **CITY MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

The proposed amendment is a reasonable revision to the garage door opening width standard and would permit the wider garage doors requested in each of the two variance cases during 2016-2017. The proposed changes do not change typical construction requirements for a standard three-car garage, but do provide more options for configuring larger garages on a site. Under the attached ordinance, it will now be possible for property owners to construct parking for four or more cars when the garage opening do not have a visual impact towards the street.

**Therefore, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council approve Alternative #1 as described above.**

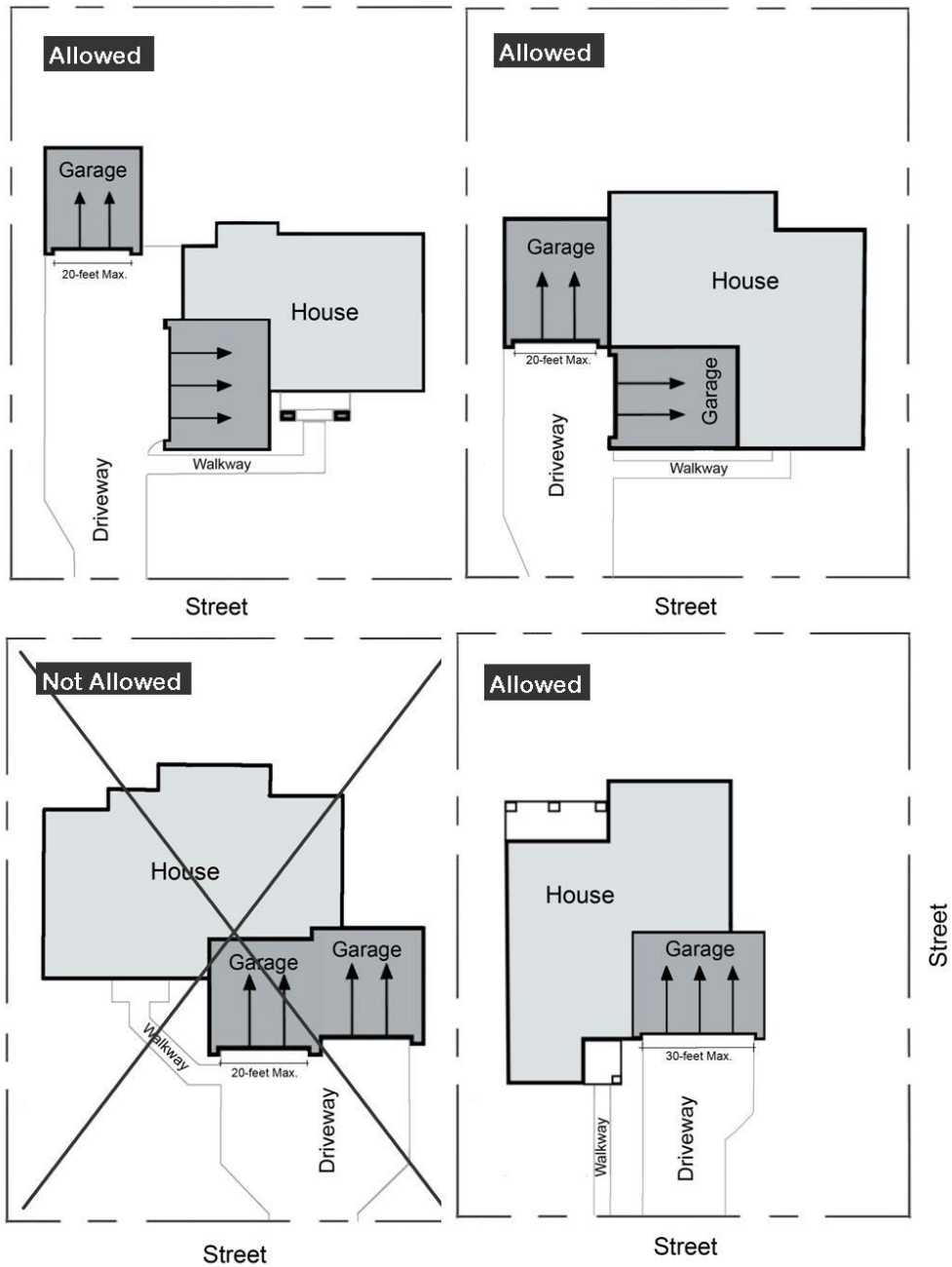
## Attachment 1

### Text Amendment for Increasing Garage Door Opening Widths



## Attachment 1

### Text Amendment for Increasing Garage Door Opening Widths



**ORDINANCE NO. \_\_\_\_\_**

**AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE MUNICIPAL CODE OF THE CITY OF AMES, IOWA, BY REPEALING SECTION 29.408(7)(a), (iii)(c), (iv)(b), AND ENACTING A NEW SECTION 29.408(7)(a)(i)(d)(e),(iii)(c)(i)(ii) (d), (iv)(b), THEREOF, FOR THE PURPOSE OF REPEALING ANY AND ALL ORDINANCES OR PARTS OF ORDINANCES IN CONFLICT TO THE EXTENT OF SUCH CONFLICT; AND ESTABLISHING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.**

**BE IT ENACTED**, by the City Council for the City of Ames, Iowa, that:

Section One. The Municipal Code of the City of Ames, Iowa shall be and the same is hereby amended repealing Section 29.408(7)(a), (iii)(c), (iv)(b), and enacting a new Section 29.408(7)(a)(i)(d)(e),(iii)(c)(i)(ii) (d), (iv)(b) as follows:

**“Sec. 29.408. OTHER GENERAL DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS.**

**(7) Requirements for Private Garages and Other Accessory Buildings.**

(a) The following requirements apply to private garages and accessory buildings in Agricultural, Residential and Hospital/Medical districts:

- (i) Location within Setbacks.
- ...

d. In cases in which the rear yard of a lot abuts the front yard of an adjoining lot, a detached garage or accessory building in the rear yard shall be not less than 6 feet from the adjoining property line for the distance of the required front yard setback on the adjoining lot.

e. In no case shall a detached garage or an accessory building in the rear yard be placed closer than 15 feet to any lot line that abuts a street.

...

- (iii) Size.
- ...

c. In any Agricultural or Residential district the cumulative garage door opening width shall not exceed 30 feet for a Single Family Dwelling. Doors less than 8 feet in width, such as for lawn and garden equipment, are exempt. A cumulative width of all garage door openings exceeding 30 feet may be approved if

(i) the cumulative garage door openings that are generally parallel to and visible from the street are 20 feet in width or less, and

(ii) the additional garage door openings are located generally perpendicular to the street or are not visible from the street.

d. Two Family Dwellings are limited to a garage door width of 20 feet per dwelling unit. Doors less than 8 feet in width, such as for lawn and garden equipment, are exempt.

- (iv) General Requirements.
- ...

b. Driveways to alleys. The driveway leading from an alley to the entrance of a detached or attached garage shall be either 8 feet from the alley or 20 feet or more from the alley.

...”

Section Two. All ordinances, or parts of ordinances, in conflict herewith are hereby repealed to the extent of such conflict, if any.

Section Three. This ordinance shall be in full force and effect from and after its passage and publication as required by law.

Passed this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Diane R. Voss, City Clerk

\_\_\_\_\_  
John A. Haila, Mayor