



**CITY COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM**

**To:** Mayor Graham and City Council

**From:** Ted Shekell, Planning Director  
Walter Denton, City Administrator

**Date:** September 4, 2007

**Subject:** Ordinance No. \_\_\_\_\_: An Ordinance Amending the Zoning Code of Ordinances to increase lot coverage in the Single-Family Residence Zoning Districts) – **First Reading**

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**List of committees that have reviewed:** The Community Development Committee reviewed and unanimously recommended to approve the Zoning Code Text Amendment to allow an increase in lot coverage of 5% in the SR-1, SR-1B, and SR-2 zoning districts at its August 30, 2007 meeting.

**Project Summary**

This proposed zoning ordinance text amendment recommends making allowance for an increase of 5% in the maximum lot coverage in Single Family (SR) zoning districts, for a total maximum lot coverage of 30%. This is in response to internal concerns that (1) the zoning code may not be properly aligned with current market conditions and (2) requests from local homebuilders stating that the current lot coverage cap is limiting homeowners' ability to fully utilize their property. The current lot coverage maximum for the SR districts has been in place since the city adopted zoning in 1971, although the zoning ordinance was amended a couple of years ago to increase the lot coverage maximum for SR-3 lots (minimum 6,000 sq. ft. lots), from 25% to 30%, which has been working out very well. This change was in part a response to several variance requests we received concerning the addition of accessory structures that were proposed above the 25% restriction.

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This zoning amendment request is based essentially on similar rationale. The City has had 23 lot coverage variance requests in the 5 previous years, and these typically involve a homeowner or builder requesting a variance to lot coverage for addition of accessory structures such as pools, decks, sheds, detached garages, etc. In general, what we are seeing in development trends is more of a move to ranch style homes which have larger footprints on a lot, thereby reducing the amount of the lot that can be devoted to accessory structures. For example, on a 10,000 sq. ft. lot, you could build a ranch home with up to 2,500 sq. ft., which is not uncommon, however, this lot would have 25% lot coverage which would consequently not allow for any accessory structures such as a porch, deck, pool, shed, etc. These are amenities that many homeowners seek to add to their homes but are either unable to because of the lot coverage cap or they are forced to seek a variance to the ordinance.

We are seeing an increasing number of new homes being built that are pushing the 25% limit on just the principal structure, with accessory structures not being proposed as part of the initial construction permit. The unfortunate thing for many of the homeowners is that after they move into their new home, when they come at a later date for a permit for a pool, deck, shed, or other accessory structure, they find they are unable to add these structures because of the maximum lot coverage of 25%. Consequently, they are requesting variances for these additional structures.

For your background information, the Zoning Ordinance defines Lot Coverage and Accessory Building in Article 1 as follows:

*“Lot coverage: The percentage of a lot or parcel which is, or will be, covered by the principal structure(s) and accessory structure(s). Lot coverage shall include all uses governed by a building permit, including but not limited to, above ground pools, in-ground pools, decks, covered patios, garages (detached and attached), sheds, car ports, porches and other similar items. Uncovered patios, driveways, sidewalks, retaining walls and play areas shall not be included as lot coverage. For purposes of this Chapter, “lot coverage” is measured from a horizontal plane from the outermost edges of eaves, cornices, overhangs or areas covered by a weather-tight roof and shall be expressed as a percentage of total lot area.”*

*Accessory building or structure: A subordinate building or structure, the use of which is incidental to and customarily in conjunction with the main building or use and which is located on the same lot as the main building or use. Accessory structures shall include sheds, detached garages, decks, pools and covered patios. A structure housing an accessory use is considered an integral part of the main building when it has any part of a wall in common with the main building, or is under an extension of the main roof and designed as an integral part of the main building.*

### **Applicable Ordinances, Documents and Reports**

**Zoning Ordinance:** The proposed text amendment is to Column “K” in the Area-Bulk table found in Section 2.04(e) of the Zoning Ordinance, which presently shows maximum lot coverage of 25% for the following zoning districts: SR-2, SR-1B, and SR-1, and shows 30% for SR-3.

**Legal Considerations, if any:** None

**Budget Impact:** none

**Staff Recommendation:** Staff recommends approval of the Zoning Code Text Amendment to allow an increase in lot coverage of 5% in the SR-1, SR-1B, and SR-2 zoning districts, for a total lot coverage of 30%.

**Attachments:**

1. City of O'Fallon Area and Bulk Regulations
2. Chart of comparable communities' lot coverage and setback requirements