



Staff Report

City Council

Item No. {{section.number}}.B

Meeting Date: January 8, 2025

From: John A. Corella, Director of Public Works and Andrew Firestine, AICP,
Director of Community and Economic Development

Title: Second Reading of an Ordinance to Amend Zoning Code to Add Driveway Width Standard, Allow a Greater Percentage of Front Yard to Be Improved as a Driveway, Introduce Civil Fines for Parking Violations, and Prohibit Parking in Front of a Mailbox.

RECOMMENDATION:

To waive reading beyond the title; provide second reading by title only; and adopt an ordinance to amend Title 9 and Title 12 of the Cathedral City Municipal Code by amending Chapters 9.12, 9.14, 12.12, and 12.32. The proposed changes will revise sections relating to driveway width and guidelines for the percentage of the front yard that can be improved as a driveway, introduce civil fines for parking violations, and amend areas designated as no parking areas to include restrictions for parking in front of a mailbox.

BACKGROUND:

In 1989, Ordinance No. 256 and 263 established the current residential development standards, including the parking standards for the Single Family Residential (R1), Residential Estate (RE), and Multiple Family Residential (R2) zoning districts. In 1990, Ordinance No. 307 amended these standards to allow the R1 and RE parking restrictions to be exceeded through a conditional use permit. These regulations are codified in the Cathedral City Municipal Code (CCMC) Sections 9.12.100 Access to Parking (Driveways), 9.14.090 Parking, and 9.14.100 Access to Parking (Driveways). Excerpts of the current CCMC for are provided for reference in Attachment 1.

The CCMC parking standards were developed for traditional single-family residential developments consisting of a home with a garage and a driveway, and a maximum percentage of a front or street side yard that may be improved as a driveway or open parking area. These current standards reinforce historic development patterns that restricted parking and promoted front yard landscaping. Since the parking standards were last amended in 1989 and 1990, several variables have changed that have affected the demand for parking. The city receives about seven to eight complaints monthly of vehicles and trailers parked on landscape surfaces, and complaints and code violations are found to be most frequent when the property fronts a major corridor or a street with no on-street parking.

Related to the above is on-street parking in residential neighborhoods. In much the same way that parking spills over from driveways onto landscape surfaces, it also affects the availability of on-street parking and at times creates conflicts with mail service delivery when a mailbox is blocked by a parked vehicle. While the list of no parking areas is extensive in the CCMC, the city does not have an ordinance that specifically states that vehicles cannot be parked in front of a mailbox. The current verbiage of section 12.32.080 of the CCMC is included in Attachment 1 for reference.

The city has received five complaints year-to-date for vehicles blocking a mailbox through the My Cathedral City app and one during the public comment section of the September 11, 2024, City Council meeting, including those that have reported the refusal of the USPS to deliver mail when a vehicle is parked in front of a mailbox.

Furthermore, the CCMC currently only has language regarding who can issue parking violation fines. There is no established fine schedule that could be used as a tool to limit parking offenses. Adding language for civil fines could give city parking enforcement officers a tool to use, and a fine schedule with increased fines for multiple offenses could deter repeat offenders.

At the September 25, 2024, City Council Study Session, city staff recommended an amendment to the zoning code to allow a greater percentage of the front yard or street-side yard to be improved as a driveway or open parking area for lots fronting certain roadway classifications. Staff also proposed an amendment to municipal code to prohibit parking in front of mailboxes. The City Council gave guidance and expressed support at the September 25, 2024, Study Session to proceed with drafting amendments to the CCMC.

On November 20, 2024, during a Public Hearing, the Planning Commission adopted a resolution to recommend that the City Council adopt the proposed ordinance that is attached to this staff report.

At the December 11, 2024, City Council meeting, the first reading of the proposed ordinance was presented at a Public Hearing. No comments from the public were received. City Council approved the first reading of the ordinance.

DISCUSSION:

To complete the amendment to the zoning code to improve front and side residential yards to increase the availability of parking, CCMC Title 9 Planning and Zoning, specifically Chapter 9.12 RE Residential Estate District and Chapter 9.14 R1 Single-Family Residential District required review. Additionally, to initiate the amendment to CCMC to prohibit parking in front of a mailbox and establish civil fines for parking violations, CCMC Title 12 Vehicles and Traffic, specifically Chapter 12.12 Enforcement-Obedience and Chapter 12.32 Parking required review.

Review of CCMC Title 9 Planning and Zoning, Chapter 9.12 requires one (1) amendment. Chapter 9.14 requires two (2) amendments.

To be amended:

- Section 9.12.100 Access to Parking (Driveways)
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- Section 9.14.090 Parking
- Section 9.14.100 Access to Parking (Driveways)

The amendment to Section 9.12.100 updates the minimum and maximum width allowed for driveways in the RE District and includes the addition of more materials allowed for driveways and parking areas. The amendment is as follows:

All parking spaces and structures shall be served by a driveway that meets the following standards:

- A. Minimum width of driveway: 16 feet,*
- B. Maximum width of driveway: 36 feet,*
- C. Driveways and open parking areas shall be constructed of Portland cement concrete or similar durability material approved by the City Engineer; and*
- D. Driveways and open parking areas shall not cover more than thirty percent of the required front or street side yard area.*

The amendment to Section 9.14.090 subsection D updates the allowed materials that can be used for driveways and parking areas in the R1 District. The amendment is shown in the relevant excerpt as follows:

D. Vehicles shall not be parked or stored in any front or street side yard area except on driveways or open parking spaces constructed of Portland cement concrete or similar durability material approved by the City Engineer. Driveways and improved parking areas shall not cover more than fifty percent of the required front or street side yard area.

The amendment to Section 9.14.100 updates the minimum and maximum width allowed for driveways in the R1 District and includes the addition of more materials allowed for driveways and parking areas. The amendment is as follows:

All parking spaces and structures shall be served by a driveway that meets the following standards:

- A. Minimum width of driveway: 16 feet;*
- B. Maximum width of driveway: 36 feet;*
- C. Driveways and open parking areas shall be constructed of Portland cement concrete or similar durability material approved by the City Engineer; and*
- D. Driveways and open parking areas shall not cover more than fifty percent of the required front or street side yard area except where a property fronts onto a major or arterial street classification. For properties fronting onto a major or arterial street classification, up to seventy-five percent coverage may be allowed where the City Engineer determines that a turnaround or circular driveway is required or where on-street parking adjacent to the property is prohibited.*

Review of CCMC Title 12 Vehicles and Traffic, specifically Chapter 12.12 Enforcement-Obedience, requires one (1) addition. Chapter 12.32 Parking requires one (1) amendment.

To be added:

- Section 12.12.130 Civil Fines

To be amended:

- Section 12.32.080 No Parking Areas

The amendment of Section 12.32.080 with the addition of subsection J updates the list of areas in which a vehicle cannot park or be left stopped to include restrictions for parking in front of a mailbox. The following relevant excerpt shows the amendment to the section:

J. In front of, or within ten (10) feet of, any individual mailbox, community mailbox, cluster of mailboxes, or United States postal receptacle available to the public during the hours of eight

a.m. to seven p.m. of that same day (except Sundays and federal holidays). The length of time a vehicle is permitted to stop in front of any individual mailbox, community mailbox, cluster of mailboxes, or United States postal receptacle available to the public shall be limited to the time a person is involved in the act of depositing and/or collecting mail in the applicable receptacle.

Clarifying Edits (Since First Reading)

The addition of Section 12.12.130 Civil Fines adds guidelines to issue fines for any parking violation. The fines for violations in this section are redundant with the offense outlined in Section 1.04.060 Civil Fines, as well as other sections of the CCMC. The addition states as follows:

Each separate parking citation or notice of violation, related to charging violations of local or Vehicle Code regulations governing the parking or standing of vehicles, shall be subject to: (a) a fine in an amount not to exceed two hundred fifty dollars for a first violation; (b) a fine in an amount not to exceed five hundred dollars for a second violation of the same offense within a twelve-month period of the date of the first; and (c) a fine in an amount not to exceed seven hundred fifty dollars for the third violation of the same offense within a twelve-month period of the date of the first. The fine for a fourth and subsequent violations of the same offense within a twelve-month period of the date of the first offense shall be one thousand dollars.

Since the first reading of the ordinance, the City Attorney's office has made minor clarifying edits to the section 12.12.130. These edits replace references to the word "conviction" with "citation" and replace the word "infraction" with "violation" throughout section 12.12.130. These edits are intended merely to clarify that a violation of the ordinance would be considered an administrative violation and not a criminal offense. These edits do not constitute a substantive change to the ordinance. The attachment "CCMC Altered after Introduction REDLINE" shows the edits made to Section 12.12.130 after the first reading on December 11, 2024, only.

Staff is requesting that the City Council approve the amendments to Title 9 and Title 12 of the Cathedral City Municipal Code by amending Chapters 9.12, 9.14, 12.12, and 12.32. The proposed changes will revise sections relating to driveway width and guidelines for the percentage of the front yard that can be improved as a driveway, introduce civil fines for parking violations, and amend areas designated as no parking areas to include restrictions for parking in front of a mailbox.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no anticipated fiscal impact of an amendment to the CCMC to amend Title 9 and the zoning district regulations to modify the parking standards on residentially zoned property or to amend Title 12 to add civil fines for parking violations and to amend the parking regulations to prohibit parking in front of a mailbox, other than the staff time necessary to prepare an ordinance and staff report.

The regulation of on-street parking would increase the city's enforcement responsibilities. If the city continues to receive a small number of these complaints annually, their enforcement can be managed on a complaint basis and in a reactive manner with existing resources. Should the city receive a substantial increase in complaints or if there is a desire for proactive

parking enforcement, a reprioritization of existing resources or an allocation of new resources may be required.

FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN:

Goal F: Embracing, Inclusive Community Objective:

Cathedral City is valued and respected as a community that welcomes and embraces diversity, has an abundance of high quality and affordable housing options and vibrant businesses. Our neighborhoods are attractive, well-maintained, and issues surrounding homelessness have been compassionately addressed with thoughtful, coordinated, and collaborative programs.

This ordinance will specifically address Action F-2: Prioritize updating the zoning code regarding residential parking and paving provisions, research and give recommendations on enabling parking prohibitions in front of mailboxes.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Current CCMC Referenced Sections
2. CCMC Altered Section 12.12.130 after Introduction REDLINE
3. CCMC Title 9 and Title 12 REDLINE
4. Ordinance No. _____