



COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

CITY COUNCIL of SALT LAKE CITY

TO: City Council Members

FROM: Brian Fullmer
Policy Analyst

DATE: July 18, 2023

**RE: Sight Distance Triangle Text Amendment
PLNPCM2023-00054**

Item Schedule:

Briefing: July 18, 2023

Set Date: July 18, 2023

Public Hearing: August 8, 2023

Potential Action: August 15, 2023

The Council will be briefed about a proposal initiated by the Administration to amend the zoning ordinance related to the sight distance triangle, which is the area at street, alley, and driveway intersections where views of approaching traffic should not be obstructed. The purpose of sight distance triangles is to allow drivers, pedestrians, and users of other transportation modes to see each other and stop safely.

Chapter 21A.62.040 of *Salt Lake City Code* measures sight distance triangles as a triangular area formed by a diagonal line connecting two points. The code establishes a distance of 30 feet for corner lots and at the intersection of streets and large truck driveways, and a distance of 10 feet for passenger vehicle and light truck driveways crossing a sidewalk.

The current code is silent on intersections of alleys and sidewalks and alleys and streets. The proposed amendment adds these intersections, as they have similar risks. In addition, the proposal adds sight distance triangle standards to *Salt Lake City Code* chapters 21A.36.020 applying to principal buildings and 21A.40.050 related to accessory structures respectively. The images below provide a representation of the proposed changes.

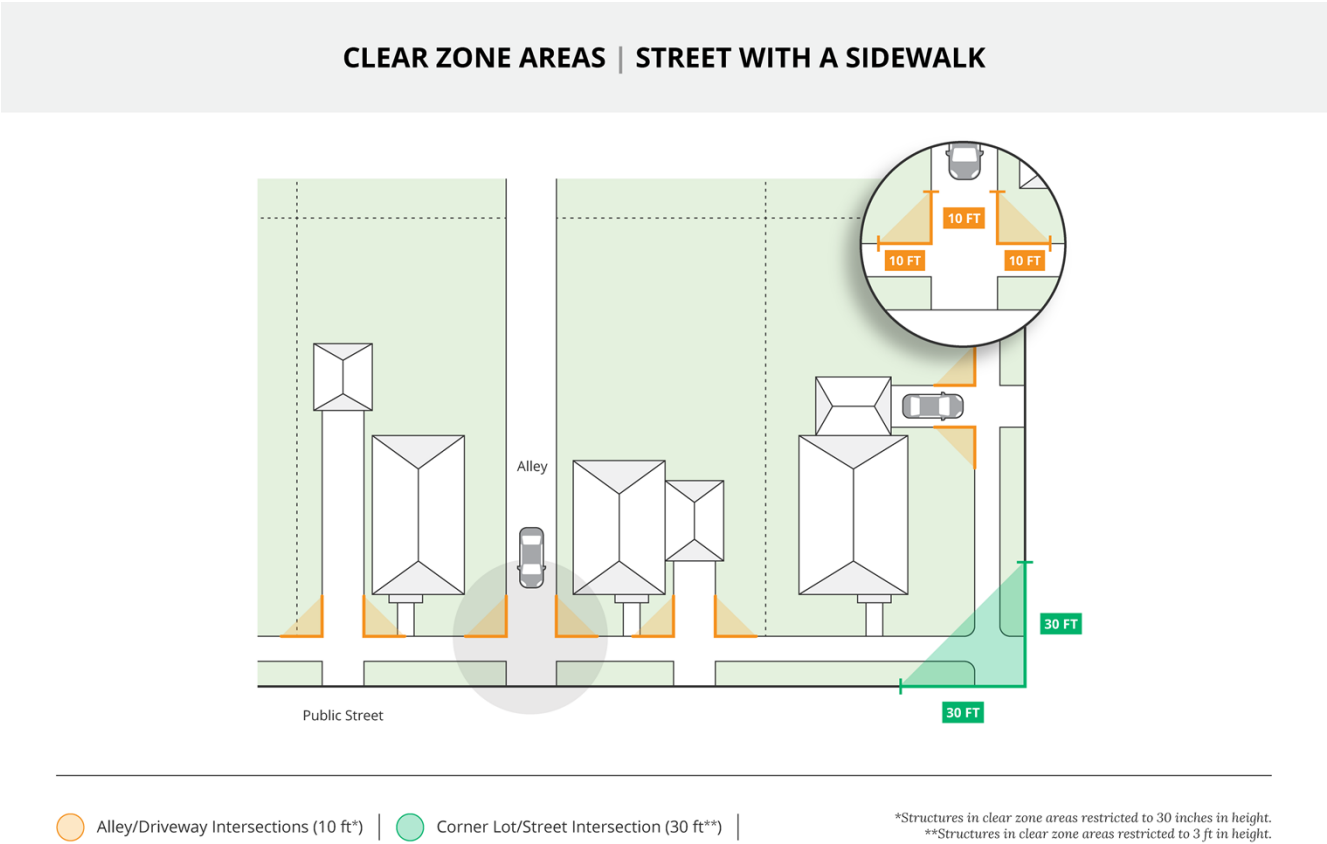
Other minor changes are also proposed in the text amendment. These generally clarify fence regulations and add driveway distance requirements from a street intersection to all zoning districts. Under the proposal fences, walls, and hedges on developed properties without a principal structure would be limited to four feet in the front yard area, and six feet in the rear or side yard areas. Hedges are considered fences for zoning purposes and are included in the proposed amendment. The current proposal does not include landscaping and locations of trees. Heights of other plants within the sight distance triangle is included in a separate text amendment and will be consistent with current standards and the proposed amendment.



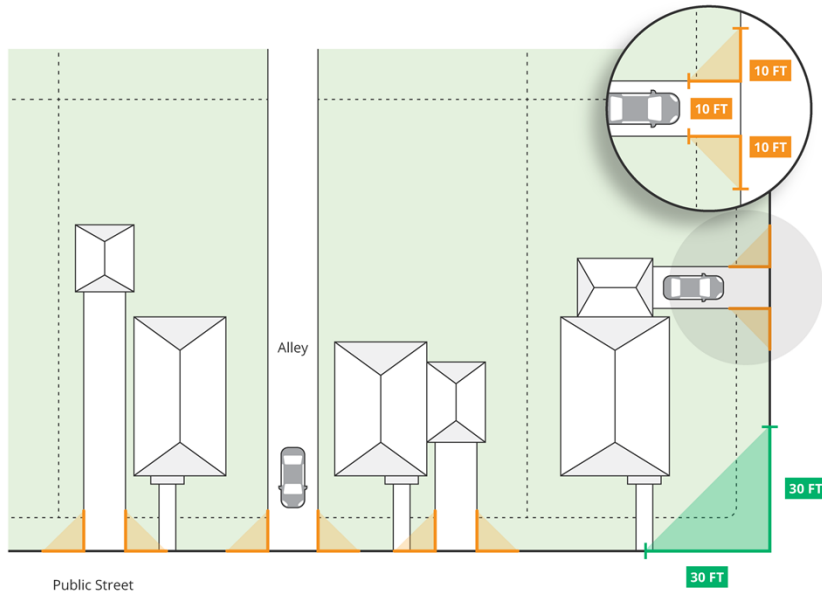
Driveways for single- and two-family dwellings would be required to be a minimum of 20 feet from street corner property lines, and driveways for all other uses would need to be at least 50 feet from street corner property lines.

The Planning Commission reviewed this proposal at its May 10, 2023 meeting and held a public hearing at which no one spoke. The Commission voted unanimously to forward a positive recommendation to the City Council.

Images courtesy of Salt Lake City Planning Division



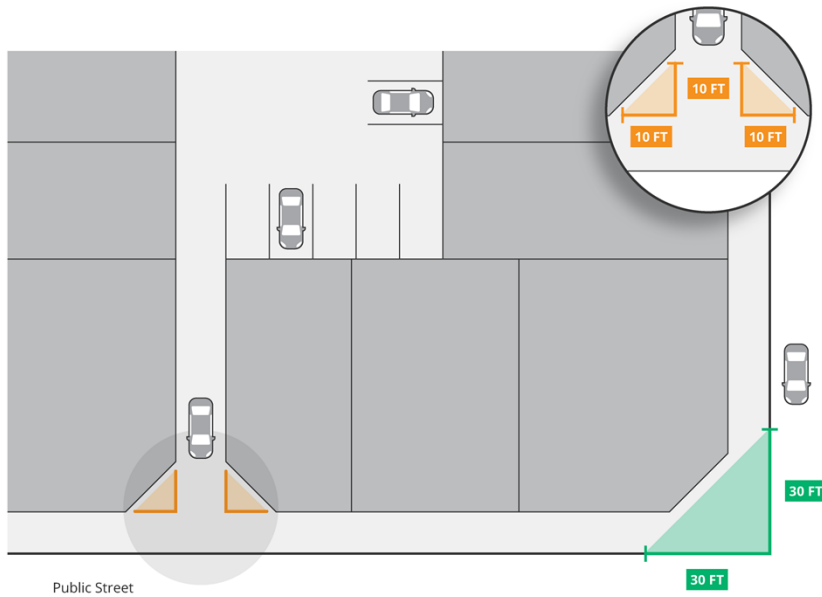
CLEAR ZONE AREAS | STREET WITHOUT A SIDEWALK



○ Alley/Driveway Intersections (10 ft*) | ● Corner Lot/Street Intersection (30 ft**)

*Structures in clear zone areas restricted to 30 inches in height.
**Structures in clear zone areas restricted to 3 ft in height.

CLEAR ZONE AREAS | EXAMPLE OF CITY BLOCK WITH BUILDINGS



○ Alley/Driveway Intersections (10 ft*) | ● Corner Lot/Street Intersection (30 ft**)

*Structures in clear zone areas restricted to 30 inches in height.
**Structures in clear zone areas restricted to 3 ft in height.

Goal of the briefing: Review the proposed text amendment, determine if the Council supports moving forward with the proposal.

POLICY QUESTION

1. Are Council Members supportive of the proposed text amendment?

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Planning staff identified three key considerations related to the proposal which are found on pages 3-5 of the Planning Commission staff report and summarized below. For the complete analysis, please see the staff report.

Consideration 1-Adding New Language and Clarifying Existing Language

As discussed above, intersections of alleys with sidewalks and streets are being added as part of the proposed text amendment. In addition, language restricting principal and accessory buildings is being added to the for consistency in how the requirement is applied.

Consideration 2-Noncomplying Fences and Structures

Under the proposed amendment, continued use of legally existing noncomplying structures such as fences, buildings, and driveways would be allowed. They could be altered, expanded, and in some cases, replaced. The proposed addition of alley intersections with sidewalks and streets would also not impact these structures. Driveways closer to street intersections than allowed under the proposal would also be allowed to remain and be repaired.

Noncomplying structures could be modified provided the changes do not make them more noncompliant. If a noncomplying structure is voluntarily removed or destroyed, a replacement structure would need to comply with the then current standards.

Consideration 3-How the proposal helps implement City goals and policies identified in Plan Salt Lake

Planning staff referenced the transportation and mobility guiding principle in Plan Salt Lake which says in part “a transportation and mobility network that is safe, accessible, reliable, affordable, and sustainable, providing real choices and connecting people with places.” The sight distance triangle’s purpose is to improve safety by providing unobstructed sightlines at intersections of streets, driveways, sidewalks, and alleys. Incorporating language that includes all types of intersections, transportation modes, and structures will ensure consistent application of requirements and reduce potential for accidents.

Additionally, Planning found that the proposed amendments support transportation and mobility initiatives found in Plan Salt Lake, and in particular, *Initiatives 5 and 3* which are respectively “*Make walking and cycling viable, safe, and convenient transportation options in all areas of the City*” and “*Create a safe and convenient place for people to carry out their daily lives.*”

Planning further noted the proposal is in line with guiding principle 1 of *Plan Salt Lake* “*Neighborhoods that provide a safe environment, opportunity for social interaction, and services needed for the wellbeing of the community therein.*”

Planning staff stated “*...the purpose of this proposal is to increase safety for all modes of transportation at all points of potential conflict.*”

ZONING TEXT AMENDMENT STANDARDS

Planning staff reviewed the proposed text amendment against the following criteria *City Code* says the City Council should consider. Please see Attachment B (pages 10-11) of the Planning Commission staff report for additional information.

Factor	Finding
Whether a proposed text amendment is consistent with the purposes, goals, objectives, and policies of the City as stated through its various adopted planning documents.	Complies
Whether a proposed text amendment furthers the specific purpose statements of the zoning ordinance.	Complies
A proposed text amendment is consistent with the purposes and provisions of any applicable overlay zoning districts which may impose additional standards.	Complies
The extent to which a proposed text amendment implements the best current, professional practices of urban planning and design.	Complies

PROJECT CHRONOLOGY

- January 27, 2023 - Application accepted.
- January 30, 2023 - Petition assigned to Madison Blodgett, Associate Planner.
- October 2022 - Petition reviewed internally, and staff drafted language to support goals of the February 2023 petition.
- February 15, 2023-Notice mailed to all community councils.
- February 15, 2023-Application posted for the online open house.
- March 20, 2023-Planning staff presented the proposal at the Sugar House Community Council.
- April 27, 2023-Planning Commission agenda posted to the website and emailed to the listserv.
- May 10, 2023-Planning Commission meeting and public hearing. The Planning Commission voted unanimously to forward a positive recommendation to the City Council.
- May 17, 2023-Ordinance requested from Attorney's Office.
- May 23, 2023-Planning received signed ordinance from the Attorney's Office.
- May 30, 2023-Transmittal received in City Council Office.