



REPORT TO CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Dorothy Ann David, City Manager

DATE: December 15, 2017

SUBJECT: CB 2017-235, Maximum Floor Area Ratio for Narrow Lots

A. Introduction: On the December 5th, 2017, City Council Meeting, City Council approved a continuation of Council Bill 2017-235 to the December 19th, 2017 City Council Meeting. Council Bill 2017-235 was a proposed amendment to the Champaign Municipal Code to increase the maximum Floor Area Ratio for lots less than 60 feet wide, zoned Single Family Residential, on lots subdivided prior to 1965. Members of City Council wanted additional time to consider the impacts of the text amendment prior to making a final consideration.

AN ORDINANCE

AMENDING SECTION 37-204 CHAPTER 37 OF THE CHAMPAIGN MUNICIPAL CODE,
1985, AS AMENDED
(Zoning – Development Standards – Special Yard Requirements for Certain Lots of Record and
In-Town Uses)

WHEREAS, a notice of public hearing before the Plan Commission was published in the
Champaign *News Gazette* on October 29, 2017; and

WHEREAS, the Zoning Ordinance text amendment set forth in this Council Bill was the
subject of a public hearing before the Plan Commission as Case PL17-0052 on November 15,
2017; and

WHEREAS, the Plan Commission unanimously voted to recommend approval of said
text amendment.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY
OF CHAMPAIGN, ILLINOIS, as follows:

Section 1. That §37-204 of Chapter 37 of the Champaign Municipal Code, 1985, entitled
“Side yards on lots less than sixty feet wide.” is hereby amended to read as follows:

Sec. 37-204. - Development provisions for lots less than sixty feet wide.

On lots less than sixty (60) feet wide, and of record as of the effective date of the
Amended Zoning Ordinance of 1965, the required development provisions shall be:

- a. The side yards may be reduced one and one-half (1½) inches for each foot such
lot is less than sixty (60) feet in width, with a minimum side yard dimension of
three (3) feet.
- b. The maximum Floor Area Ratio may be increased up to .50 in the SF1 Zoning
District.

Section 2. That the City Clerk is hereby directed to publish this Ordinance so that its effective date is December 19, 2017.

Section 3. If any section, paragraph, or provision of this Ordinance is held to be invalid or unenforceable, such invalidity or unenforceability of such section, paragraph, or provision shall not affect any of the remaining provisions of this Ordinance, or the provisions of the Code.

Section 4. The provisions of this Ordinance shall take precedence and be interpreted as superseding any other ordinance or statute in conflict with the provisions of this Ordinance.

COUNCIL BILL NO. 2017-235

PASSED:

APPROVED: _____
Mayor

ATTEST: _____
City Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

City Attorney



REPORT TO CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Dorothy Ann David, City Manager

DATE: December 1, 2017

SUBJECT: EXPLANATION OF COUNCIL BILL 2017-235

A. Introduction: The purpose of this Council Bill is to amend the text of the Champaign Zoning Ordinance as it pertains to the maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR) on narrow lots in the SF-1, Single Family Residential Zoning District.

B. Recommended Action: The Administration recommends approving this Council Bill.

C. Previous Council Action:

- City Council adopted, CB 96-0271, on November 19, 1996, which adopted a comprehensive re-write of Chapter 37, which is the Zoning Ordinance.
- City Council adopted, [CB 2011-036](#), on March 1, 2011, which approved, the City of Champaign's Comprehensive Plan, *Champaign Tomorrow*.
- City Council adopted, [CB 2015-121](#), on July 14, 2015, which approved an increase to the Floor Area Ratio in the SF2, Two Family Zoning District.

D. Summary:

- The Floor Area Ratio is the total floor area of a building divided by the total lot area.
- The maximum FAR in the SF-1 district is 0.35 while the maximum in the SF-2 district is 0.50. This amendment would allow the FAR in the SF-1 district to be increased up to 0.50 for narrow lots.
- The Zoning Ordinance currently allows a reduction in side yard setbacks for lots that are narrower than 60 feet that were legal lots of record prior to 1965. This accommodation recognizes that when the lot is narrow, the lot owner is further restricted in what they can build by the standard setback requirements.
- While the Zoning Ordinance allows the side yard setbacks to be reduced for narrow lots, it does not allow the maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR) to be increased. Adjusting these two standards together allows for a more reasonable approach for regulating the size of a structure on a lot.
- The change is only proposed for the SF-1, Single-Family Residential Zoning District because it has the most restrictive FAR standard.
- The City adopted a similar change in the code in 2015. After the minimum lot sizes in the SF2, Two Family Residential Zoning District were decreased. The FAR needed to be

increased because as lots become smaller there is a minimum amount of square footage for a home to make it marketable.

E. Background:

1. Existing Provisions in the Ordinance. The Zoning Ordinance currently allows a reduction in the side yard setbacks for lots less than 60 feet in width. Sixty-six feet was the standard width for lots that were subdivided prior to 1965. When lots were less than 60 feet in width, the ordinance allowed a reduction in the side yard setbacks to give these smaller lots more flexibility in their development. Below is the existing language in the code:

“Sec. 37-204. - Side yards on lots less than sixty feet wide.

On lots less than sixty (60) feet wide, and of record as of the effective date of the Amended Zoning Ordinance of 1965, the required side yard may be reduced one and one-half (1½) inches for each foot such lot is less than sixty (60) feet in width, with a minimum side yard dimension of three (3) feet.”

2. Issues Being Addressed. The intent of the Floor Area Ratio is to regulate the bulk and mass of a building. This provision regulates the size of buildings and keeps them from being out of scale with the neighborhood. When a lot is less than 60 feet in width, the structure can encroach into the side yard setbacks. However, there is no provision that the floor area of the structure can be increased relative to the area of the substandard lot. This is important, so homes built on such lots are allowed to be similar in size to those built on standard lots in that district. This is mostly an issue with the SF1, Single-Family Residential Zoning District because the FAR is most restrictive. Currently, in the SF1 Zoning District, the maximum FAR is 0.35, which would allow a 1,750-square foot house on a 5,000-square foot lot ($5,000 \times 0.35 = 1,750$).

In 2015, the City increased the FAR in the SF2, Two Family Residential Zoning District to 0.50 with the same premise. This amendment would make single family dwellings built on small lots in the older part of town, which are zoned SF1, consistent in size with larger lots that are zoned SF2 in some of the newer subdivisions. In 2004, the minimum lot sizes in SF2, were reduced, but the maximum FAR was never subsequently increased, making developable square footage for new structures proportionately smaller on smaller lots. This was addressed through a subsequent text amendment increasing the FAR in the SF2 District approved in July 2015.

3. Proposed Standards. The proposed amendment would increase the maximum FAR from 0.35 up to 0.50 on lots narrower than 60 feet for lots of record prior to 1965. If a lot was 50 feet wide and 100 feet deep, this would result in a 5,000-square foot lot which would allow a building with a maximum floor area of 2,500 square feet. This would allow an extra 750 square feet of home on a 5,000-square foot lot.

The proposed language is:

Sec. 37-204. - ~~Side yards on~~ Development provisions for lots less than sixty feet wide.

On lots less than sixty (60) feet wide, and of record as of the effective date of the Amended Zoning Ordinance of 1965, the required development provisions shall be:

- a. The side yards may be reduced one and one-half (1½) inches for each foot such lot is less than sixty (60) feet in width, with a minimum side yard dimension of three (3) feet.
- b. The maximum Floor Area Ratio may be increased up to 0.50 in the SF1 Zoning District.

4. Comprehensive Plan. This increase in the FAR on these narrow lots is consistent with the City’s goals as identified in the City’s Comprehensive Plan, *Champaign Tomorrow*, for infill development. Many of the larger homes with modern amenities may be located on the fringe of the community. However, some home buyers who may want a home with a larger square footage and with modern amenities may want to live in the core of the community. This will allow home buyers to invest in the redevelopment of properties in the core of the community, rather than pushing some home buyers to the fringe.

Additionally, this amendment will allow home owners to have the square footage of living space to meet their needs without requiring a larger lot, thereby aligning with the City’s overall sustainable development objectives. This also provides more affordable housing choices by reducing the cost of additional lot size for added living space. The City of Champaign’s Comprehensive Plan supports measures to provide more choice in housing. National housing trends demonstrate a higher demand for smaller lot sizes as new generations of homeowners seek lower maintenance properties.

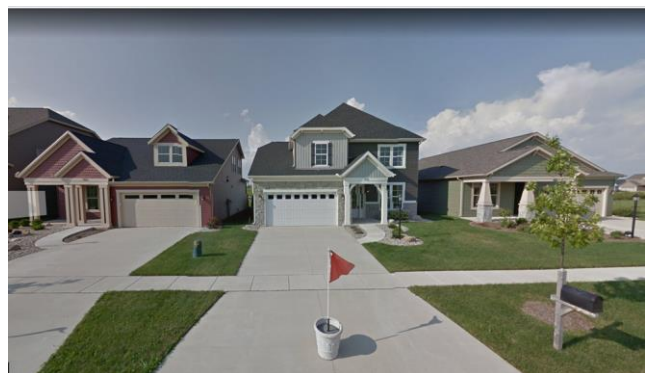
5. Impact. This regulation will only apply to subdivisions created prior to 1965, and it will only apply to lots less than 60 feet in width. The majority of lots that were subdivided prior to 1965 had standard lot widths of 66 feet. This amendment will likely have a minimal impact on the community as a whole; however, it will help encourage infill and achieve a goal for the City. This amendment would apply only in the older parts of the City; an example is the areas around Westview and Southside Schools.

52.67	52.67	52.67	52.67	52.67	52.67
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William St					
2.67	52.67	52.67	52.67	52.67	52.67
256-005	201 256-006	200 256-007	199 256-008	198 256-009	197 256-010 132
<i>Chamber of Commerce Add</i>					

(Left) There are 52.67 foot wide lots near the SE Corner of James and Williams St.

James St



(Right) A photo of a house with a .41 FAR recently constructed in SF2 Zoning

6. Plan Commission Action. The Plan Commission heard this text amendment at its November 15, 2017 Plan Commission Meeting. The commissioners voted unanimously to approve it 7-0 (Dudley, Cole, Carlson, Reynolds, Bryan, Kroencke, Trautman, Wakefield and Elmore).

F. Alternatives:

1. Approve this Council Bill amending the text of the Champaign Municipal Code.
2. Defeat this Council Bill.

G. Discussion of Alternatives:

Alternative 1 would approve the Council Bill and amend the Champaign Municipal Code to increase the maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR) for lots narrower than 60 feet to 0.50 FAR.

a. Advantages

- Allows more infill opportunities for residents.
- Allows residents who may want to live in homes with more square footage a housing option that does not necessarily also have a large lot.
- Allows more sustainable development patterns.
- Reflects national trends towards smaller lot sizes.
- Consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

b. Disadvantages

- Potential for a home to be out of character with the neighboring properties.

Alternative 2 would defeat the Council Bill and preserve the existing FAR for narrow lots.

a. Advantages

- Would reduce the chance of a home being out of character compared to its neighboring properties due to an increase in square footage.

b. Disadvantages

- Inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan.
- Inconsistent with sustainable development principles.
- May require added staff time for reviewing variation requests.
- Does not allow more housing choices for Champaign residents.
- Does not facilitate additional infill development.

H. Community Input: A public hearing was advertised in the *News-Gazette* on October 29, 2017. Additionally, agendas for City Council Meetings are advertised in the *News-Gazette*, and

are available on-line. At the time of this writing, no comments have been received regarding this amendment.

I. Budget Impact: There are no significant budget impacts associated with this action.

J. Staffing Impact: Approximately 4 hours of staff time has been spent preparing this text amendment, and drafting reports.

Prepared by:

Jeff Marino, AICP
Senior Planner

Attachment: Strike-out Code Revision Sheet

Reviewed by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bruce A. Knight". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Bruce A. Knight, FAICP
Planning and Development Director

Code Revision Sheet

Sec. 37-204. - ~~Side yards on~~ Development provisions for lots less than sixty feet wide.

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