

STAFF REPORT ON PETITION FOR LAND SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS TEXT AMENDMENT

**SRA 2017-4: AMENDMENT TO ARTICLE 6 TO UPDATE STANDARD
CROSS SECTIONS TO REFLECT ON-STREET PARKING LIMITATIONS AND
TO DELETE NEO-TRADITIONAL STANDARDS**

REQUESTED BY: Lexington-Fayette Urban County Council

PROPOSED TEXT: See attached

STAFF REVIEW:

On October 12, 2017, the Lexington-Fayette Urban County Council passed a resolution to initiate modifications to the LFUCG Land Subdivision Regulations. The changes include: updating the street cross-sections to match the current Engineering Manuals, restricting on-street parking on local streets less than 30-feet wide, deleting all references to neo-traditional design standards and the cross-section currently listed for “residential local for 15 or less units,” and adding references to traffic calming (aka speed reduction) techniques for Lexington-Fayette County.

The Land Subdivision Regulations, adopted in the 1930s, create the guidelines by which land is developed and subdivisions are created. Article 6 of the Subdivision Regulations include basic standards for streets, including width right-of-way for various types of streets, sidewalk location and width, allowable slopes, alignment and curvature, and intersection and access spacing.

Most local residential streets constructed over the past twenty years are between 27 and 30 feet in pavement width, although for streets with fewer than 15 units or where lots have 100 feet of frontage, some have been constructed with only 22 feet of pavement width. The Land Subdivision Regulations have also allowed more flexibility to developers to create local streets of varying widths in the Expansion Area to accommodate greater density, improve the residential streetscape and reduce development costs. Within these residential neighborhoods, some local streets have been constructed with 24 feet of pavement. Lastly, the current Subdivision Regulations also provide for neo-traditional streets that can be as narrow as 20 feet of pavement; although these standards have only been utilized a few times since implemented.

The reduced and/or varied street widths, along with increased desire for residents to utilize on-street parking, and the increased size of vehicles that need to traverse these local streets on a regular basis (such as school buses, fire trucks and solid waste vehicles), began to create some concern about 15 years ago. The local government made a policy decision to address the issue post-development; that is, if large vehicles were hampered in traversing a local street, that on-street parking would be restricted on one or both sides.

While this approach has generally worked to address existing streets, the Division of Fire and Emergency Services has requested that Article 6 of the Land Subdivision Regulations be amended to prevent problems before they arise in the development process. However, the Division of Traffic Engineering has expressed concern about creating streets that are too wide, because they can encourage speeding. Over the past year, the Divisions of Fire and Emergency Services and Traffic Engineering have worked together to develop a compromise; one that maintains between 16 and 20 feet of vehicle clearance on all local streets by restricting on-street parking for streets that are less than 27 feet wide. The proposed text amendment also eliminates the ability to construct neo-traditional streets by deleting these regulations completely.

Residential neighborhood speeding is an everyday occurrence and a common complaint within the community. In order to minimize the potential for neighborhood speeding on local streets with on-street parking restrictions, traffic calming (also known as speed reduction techniques) should be utilized at the time of street construction. The text amendment initiated by the Urban County Council had a placeholder for text related to this concept in Section 6-9 (to replace the neo-traditional standards). At this time, the staff recommends including specific language in the Subdivision Regulations to address traffic calming, and such text is reflected in the attached text amendment.

Traffic calming techniques are already outlined in the Division of Traffic Engineering's *Neighborhood Traffic Management Manual* and may include shorter block lengths, bump-outs/curb extensions, change in paving materials, roundabouts and/or traffic circles, raised intersections and raised crosswalks. Such traffic calming measures should be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Division of Traffic Engineering, with recommendations being shared with the Division of Planning and/or the Planning Commission, as necessary. Integrating traffic calming measures will not impair emergency response times, but rather strive to improve overall public safety of streets by ensuring safe operating speeds. The traffic calming measures will also help to facilitate context sensitive design that results in a safe multi-modal street network.

The proposed text amendment will maintain standard right-of-way widths, but restrict on-street parking to maintain necessary vehicle clearance within residential subdivisions. In this regard, the public health, safety and welfare of the community is preserved and the general intent, stated in Article 1 of the regulations, to "encourage the development of sound, healthful and economically stable residential ... areas; to provide for safe, convenient and efficient traffic circulation; ... and to provide for the overall harmonious development of the community in accordance with the adopted Comprehensive Plan" is upheld.

The Staff Recommends: Approval of the Staff Alternative Text, for the following reasons:

1. The proposed text amendment to Article 6 of the Land Subdivision Regulations will maintain standard right-of-way widths, but restrict on-street parking to maintain large vehicle clearance within residential subdivisions. In this regard, the public health, safety and welfare of the community is preserved and the general intent of the regulations to "encourage the development of sound, healthful and economically stable residential ... areas; to provide for safe, convenient and efficient traffic circulation; ... and to provide for the overall harmonious development of the community in accordance with the adopted Comprehensive Plan" is upheld.
2. The proposed text amendment to Article 6 will allow for traffic calming measures in accordance with the LFUCG *Neighborhood Traffic Management Manual* to be integrated into all street designs in order to improve overall public safety by ensuring safe operating speeds. Traffic calming measures will also help to facilitate context sensitive design that results in a safe multi-modal street network.