

## Chapter 20.927 NARROW LOT DEVELOPMENTS

Sections:

[20.927.010 Purpose.](#)

[20.927.020 Applicability.](#)

[20.927.030 Narrow Lot Development Approval Criteria.](#)

[20.927.040 Narrow Lot Development Standards.](#)

[20.927.050 Incentives for Providing Alleys.](#)

### **20.927.010 Purpose.**

The purpose of this chapter is to provide additional approval criteria and development standards for land divisions with narrow lots in order to: 1) eliminate conflicts between the design and location of driveways with public and private utilities, on-street parking and other common features such as street trees, street lights and signs, fire hydrants, common mailboxes, etc.; 2) provide for adequate guest parking; 3) ensure adequate access for solid waste and recycling collection vehicles; 4) minimize the dominance of garages on narrow lots; and 5) provide incentives for lots which utilize alleys for access. (Ord. M-3778, Added, 12/04/2006, Sec 2)

### **20.927.020 Applicability.**

The approval criteria and development standards of this chapter shall apply to any residential short subdivision or subdivision, including infill development, which has one or more narrow lots, defined as a lot with less than 40 feet in width, exclusive of flag lots. Compliance with applicable standards shall be determined at the time of preliminary plat approval, in accordance with VMC [20.320](#), Subdivisions. (Ord. M-3778, Added, 12/04/2006, Sec 2)

### **20.927.030 Narrow Lot Development Approval Criteria.**

Approval criteria. In order for the City to grant approval of a preliminary short subdivision or subdivision, the applicant shall demonstrate compliance with the following criteria, which shall be in addition to the preliminary subdivision approval criteria of VMC [20.320.040](#) A-G:

A. Conflicts on narrow lots shall be eliminated. The development has been designed to eliminate conflicts between on-site and off-site improvements and features associated with narrow lots. Specifically, the location, size, and design of features including driveways, public and private utilities (water, fire hydrants, sewer, roof infiltration, gas, cable, phone, electricity, etc.), on-street parking spaces, street trees, existing trees, light poles, common mailboxes, street signs, etc., shall be considered in the design of the development and coordinated to eliminate conflicts with one another and meet minimum spacing requirements.

B. Adequate guest parking shall be provided. The development has been designed to provide for at least one guest parking space for every three narrow lots in the development. Such spaces may be located on-street (on local access or loop classification roadways only) or in common parking areas subject to the development standards of [20.927.040](#)A2.

C. Solid waste and recycling collection and access shall be provided. The development shall be designed to provide for safe access and maneuvering by solid waste and recycling collection vehicles to designated collection points for each lot. (Ord. M-3778, Added, 12/04/2006, Sec 2)

## 20.927.040 Narrow Lot Development Standards.

A. *Implementation of Performance Standards.* Various design options may be proposed to address the approval criteria of Section [20.927.030](#) A-C. For example, the use of alleys, narrow driveways, or shared driveways – either separately or in combination – are considered to be effective solutions to many identified conflicts. In addressing the above criteria, the following development standards shall apply:

1. *On-site and off-site improvements plan required.* A development plan that demonstrates that utilities, driveways, street trees, etc., have been located and designed to minimize conflicts with one another shall be submitted with the preliminary land division application and incorporated into the civil engineering plan set. Such plan shall, at a minimum, show all of the following features:

- a. Proposed location and width of streets, sidewalks, and landscape strips;
- b. Proposed location, species, and size of required street trees;
- c. Proposed guest parking spaces as required by VMC [20.927.030\(B\)](#) and [20.927.040\(A\)\(2\)](#);
- d. Proposed location of other infrastructure including light poles, fire hydrants, and community mailboxes (may be reserved areas) and existing overhead lines;
- e. Proposed location and width of driveways (narrow lots only);
- f. Proposed location of public water line, water meter, and sewer line to serve each narrow lot;
- g. Proposed location and dimensions of areas reserved on each narrow lot for private utilities (phone, cable, gas, electric, etc.) and roof infiltration systems;

2. Standards for guest parking in common areas.

- a. Common areas reserved for guest parking shall have no more than five (5) parking stalls in each area unless applicant demonstrates required parking cannot otherwise be provided.
- b. Common guest parking areas shall be improved to City parking lot standards including a permanent surface, striping, curbing, 3' tall screening, and treatment of storm water runoff. Use of pervious paving is encouraged.
- c. Such spaces may be designed to allow for backing movements directly into local access or loop streets only.
- d. Common parking areas shall be maintained by a homeowners' association according to a maintenance agreement to be recorded with the plat.

3. Standards for solid waste and recycling access and collection.

- a. An access plan for solid waste and recycling collection service to all lots in the development shall be submitted with the land division application.
- b. The access and collection plan shall show a designated collection point for each lot or solid waste enclosure areas and the ability of collection vehicles to maneuver safely to all points of collection, ~~based on a 35' long by 10' wide vehicle.~~
- c. All circulation and turnaround designs must meet the requirements of VMC 11.80.070 and the Transportation Standard Details and be feasible using City-provided solid waste truck turning modelling templates and truck specifications. Collection vehicles shall be able to circulate the development and service receptacles with minimal backing required.
- d. Where collection is not feasible on each lot, a designated common collection point to serve up to four lots, located no further than 150 feet from any lot it serves shall be provided. Common collection points shall be shown on the solid waste and recycling plan, and sized to accommodate the carts and bins associated with the city's garbage, yard debris and recycling

collection system. System specifics may be obtained from the City's Solid Waste Services department.

e. Collection vehicle turnaround must be provided in cases where more than 4 lots are sharing a grouped set-out or if the distance from the grouped set-out to a lot is greater than 150'.

f. Designated collection points shall be located adjacent to alleys or streets but shall not obstruct sidewalks, bike lanes, or vision clearance triangles.

g. Collection points shall be illustrated on plans and show footprints of all intended carts using dimensions from City-provided solid waste receptacle standards.

h. Each lot must have storage space outside of the right-of-way for carts when not set out for collection day.

3. *Standards for alleys and lots with alley access.* Lots with access from side or rear alleys are highly effective in addressing conflicts at the front street. Where provided, alleys and lots served by alleys shall meet the following standards:

a. Alleys shall consist of 16' paved width within a 20' public right-of-way or private easement, and shall be constructed in accordance with approved City standards. Width of alleys designated as fire apparatus access lanes shall be as approved by the Fire Marshal.

b. All lots adjacent to an alley, existing or proposed, shall provide access to the garage or parking space from the alley, not the adjacent street. Residences with access from alleys shall be oriented to face the public or private street, not the alley.

c. Alleys shall connect with a public or private street at both ends, unless otherwise approved by the Transportation Manager.

d. Maintenance of private alleys shall be the responsibility of the homeowner's association, and a maintenance agreement shall be recorded with the plat.

e. Subdivisions which provide access from alleys to at least 50% of lots shall be eligible for modifications to certain development standards, as specified in VMC [20.927.050](#).

4. *Shared driveways.* Where provided for narrow lots, shared driveways shall meet the following requirements:

a. Shared driveways serving two adjacent lots shall be no wider than 30', measured at the driveway throat, unless the applicant demonstrates on the development plan that a wider driveway will not result in conflicts.

b. Shared driveways which provide access to more than two lots shall be no wider than 18', measured at the driveway throat, and shall be within a 20' minimum wide easement.

c. Only one curbcut is permitted per shared driveway.

d. Shared driveways shall be constructed in accordance with approved shared driveway standards.

e. Garages accessed from shared driveways shall be either single car-width and located no closer to the street than the front wall (not porch) of the residence or, if wider than a single car garage, set back at least 5' from the front wall (not porch) of the residence.

5. *Narrow driveways.* Where provided for a narrow lot, narrow driveways shall meet the following requirements:

a. Narrow driveways shall be no wider than 10' measured at the driveway throat, unless the applicant demonstrates on the development plan that a wider driveway will not result in conflicts.

b. Where possible, narrow driveways on adjoining lots shall be grouped in close proximity to create space along the frontage for parking, trees, utilities, etc.

- c. Narrow driveways shall be constructed in accordance with adopted narrow driveway standards.
- d. Garages accessed from narrow driveways shall be either single car-width and located no closer to the street than the front wall (not porch) of the residence or, if wider than a single car garage, set back at least 5' from the front wall (not porch) of the residence. (Ord. M-3778, Added, 12/04/2006, Sec 2)

### **20.927.050 Incentives for Providing Alleys.**

Any development subject to this chapter which provides alley access to at least 50 percent of the total number of lots shall qualify for the following modifications to development standards:

- A. The development plan required by Section [20.927.040A1](#) is not required to include items d-g.
- B. The maximum lot coverage may be increased as follows:
  - 1. In lower density residential districts, maximum lot coverage shall be 55%.
  - 2. In higher density residential districts, maximum lot coverage shall be 65%.
- C. If an alley is to be privately-owned within a public easement, the area which extends across individual lots may be included in the minimum required lot area and counted when calculating maximum lot coverage.
- D. For lots which obtain access from a rear alley, decks constructed above the driveway shall not be counted toward the maximum lot coverage.
- E. If an alley is to be publicly-owned, the alley area may be subtracted from the overall area used to calculate required on-site tree density.
- F. Minimum setbacks may be reduced as follows:
  - 1. No additional side or rear setback is required for increase in building height above 20'.
  - 2. Minimum rear yard setback from edge of alley pavement to garage or carport may be either 4' or at least 18'. Uncovered parking spaces may be set back 4' from the edge of the alley pavement.
  - 3. Covered porches which consume at least 40% of the front width of the residence may encroach up to 6 feet into the required front setback.
- G. Large species street trees (trees maturing at 45' in height listed on the City's Street Tree Selection List) may substitute for a portion of required on-site tree density. If the minimum on-site tree density pursuant to VMC [20.770.080](#) cannot be met either on individual lots or in a common tract, the Planning Official may allow a .5 tree unit credit for every large street tree if provided within 8-foot wide minimum landscape strips or planter areas throughout the development.
- H. Deciduous trees of 2" minimum caliper that are planted in an alley right-of-way or alley easement may be counted toward the minimum required on-site tree density.
- I. *Alternative surface water treatment.* The Public Works Director may approve alternative methods for treatment and disposal of surface water from alleys, as appropriate, including: the use of pervious paving, or other BMP's approved by the Western Washington Stormwater Manual.
- J. Streets may be constructed to one of the approved narrow lot neighborhood street standards of VMC Title [11](#), as approved by the Transportation Manager. (Ord. M-3778, Added, 12/04/2006, Sec 2)

**The Vancouver Municipal Code is current through Ordinance M-4359, passed December 20, 2021.**

Disclaimer: The city clerk's office has the official version of the Vancouver Municipal Code. Users should contact the city clerk's office for ordinances passed subsequent to the ordinance cited above.

**Note:** This site does not support Internet Explorer. To view this site, Code Publishing Company recommends using one of the following browsers: Google Chrome, Firefox, or Safari.

[City Website: www.cityofvancouver.us](http://www.cityofvancouver.us)

City Telephone: (360) 487-8711

[Code Publishing Company](#)