

# REAR YARD SETBACK REGULATIONS FOR ACCESSORY STRUCTURES IN SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL ZONES

FEBRUARY 4, 2025

CITY COUNCIL MEETING



# BACKGROUND

- June 18, 2024:

City Council requested item to be discussed at a future meeting

- Provisions allowing zero setbacks for accessory structures in the rear yard of single-family residential properties



# GOVERNING REGULATION

## MBMC Section 10.52.050(D) - Relation to Property Lines

An accessory structure, any portion of which is located within a required rear yard, shall be located on a rear or interior side property line, or shall be not less than three feet from said property line(s). (See Section 10.64.110; Aisle Dimensions, for exceptions applicable to detached alley-accessed garages). Building projections within the required setback area as prescribed in this section are permitted in accordance with Section 10.60.040; Building projections into required yards or open space.

Exception: Where a fence, wall, or retaining wall is located on an interior side or rear property line, the setback for an accessory structure to the property line may be between zero and three feet, providing there is zero clearance between said fence, wall or retaining wall and accessory structure.

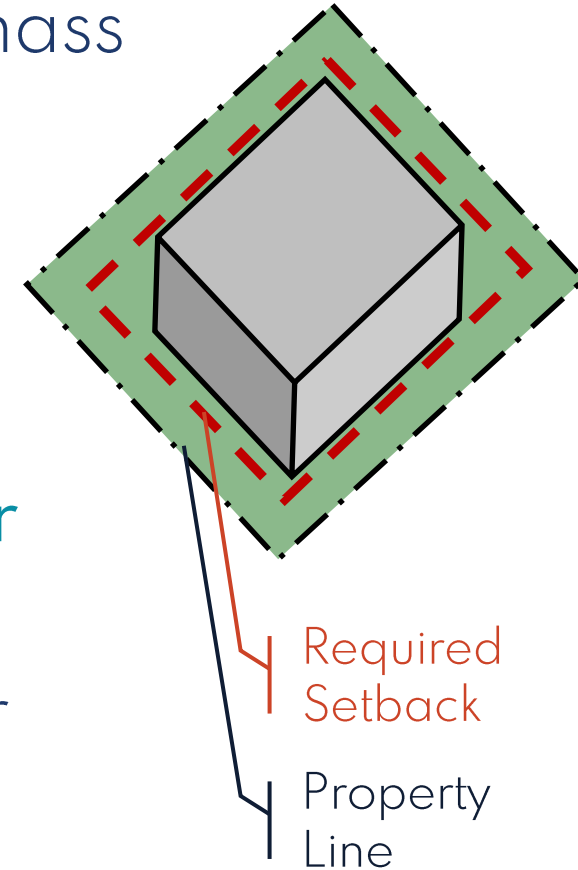


# PURPOSE OF SETBACKS

- Reduce visual impact of building mass
- Incorporate open space between structures to allow for light and air
- Ensure adequate space for access

## Zero-foot rear and side setbacks for accessory structures:

To maximize private open space for light, privacy, and enjoyment, as most lots in the City are small



# ORDINANCE HISTORY

- **At least since 1958**

Zero foot accessory structure setbacks have been in place (Incl. setbacks for rear alley accessed detached garage and building separation)

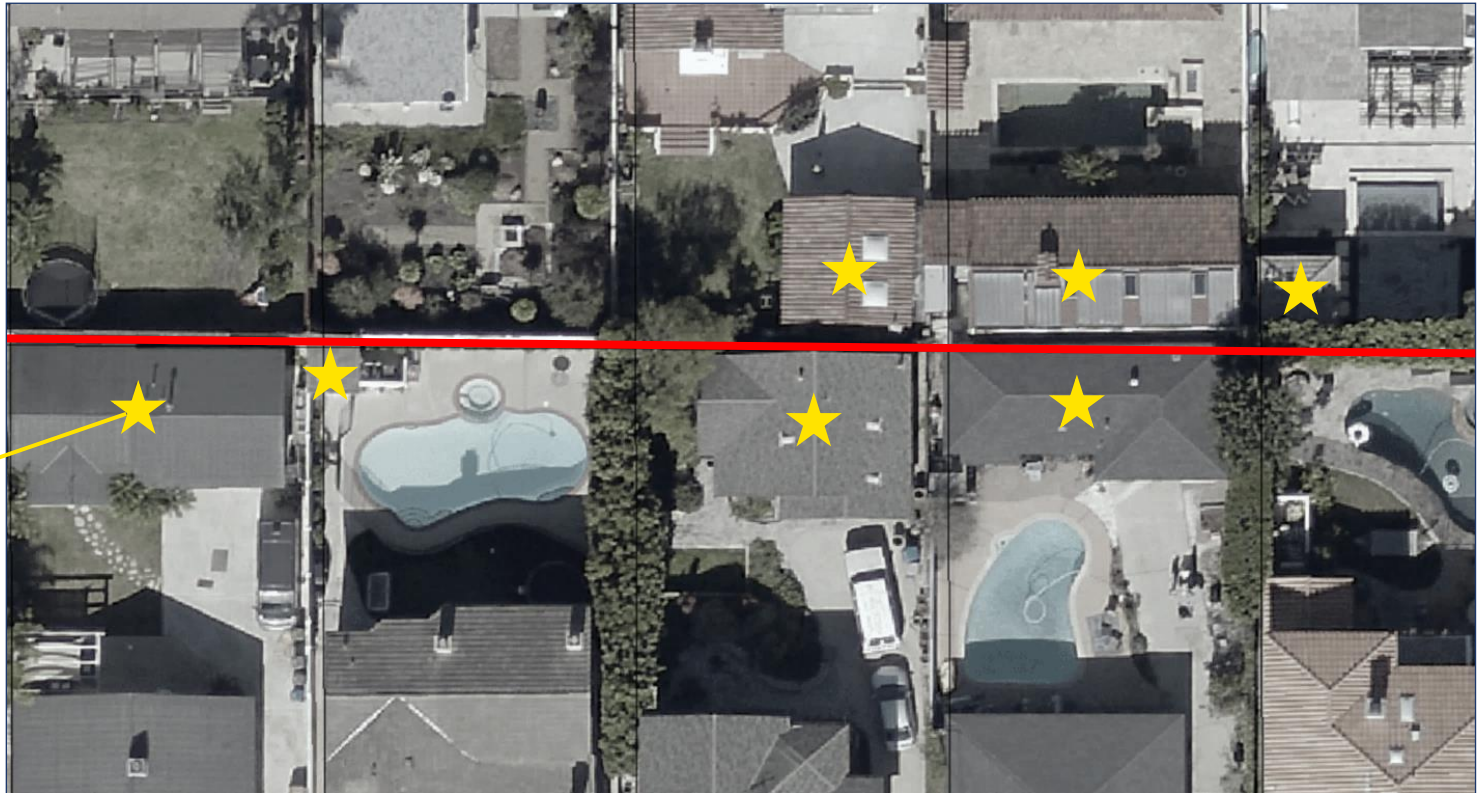
- **1976 – 1993**

Four minor amendments were made to clarify the provision



# EXISTING DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS

Accessory structures on the side and/or rear property lines in the rear yard are common



Rear PL

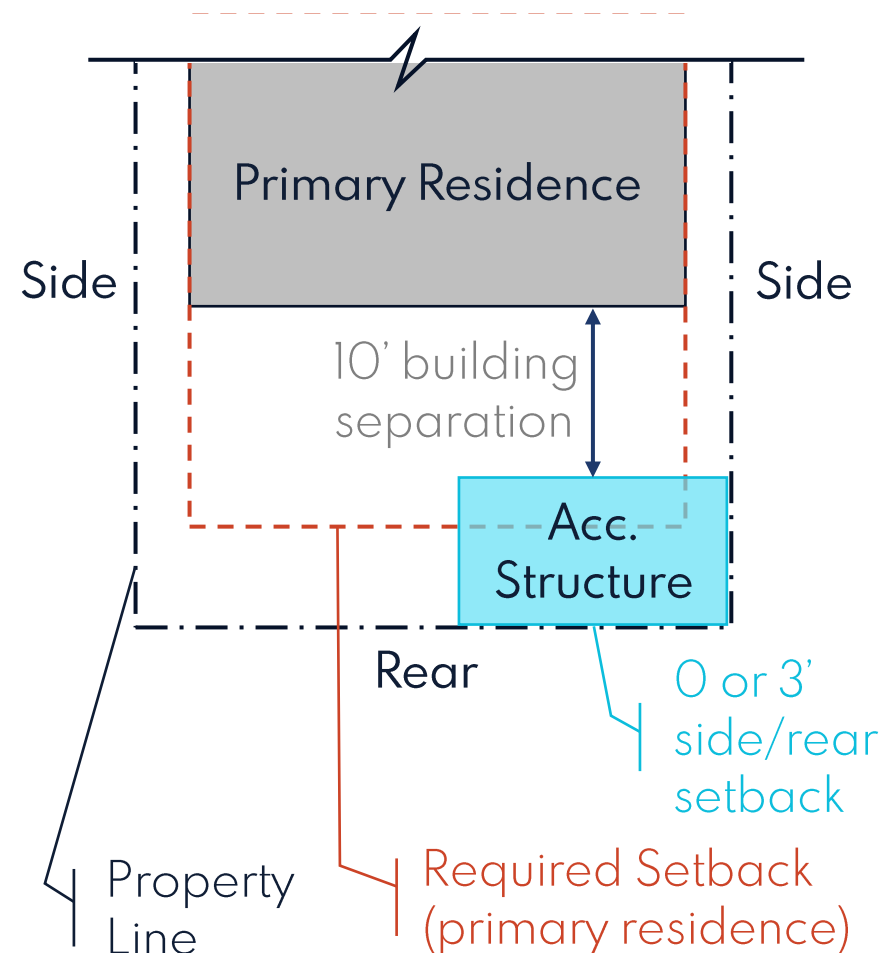
Accessory Structure



# EXISTING DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS

## Area District I & II

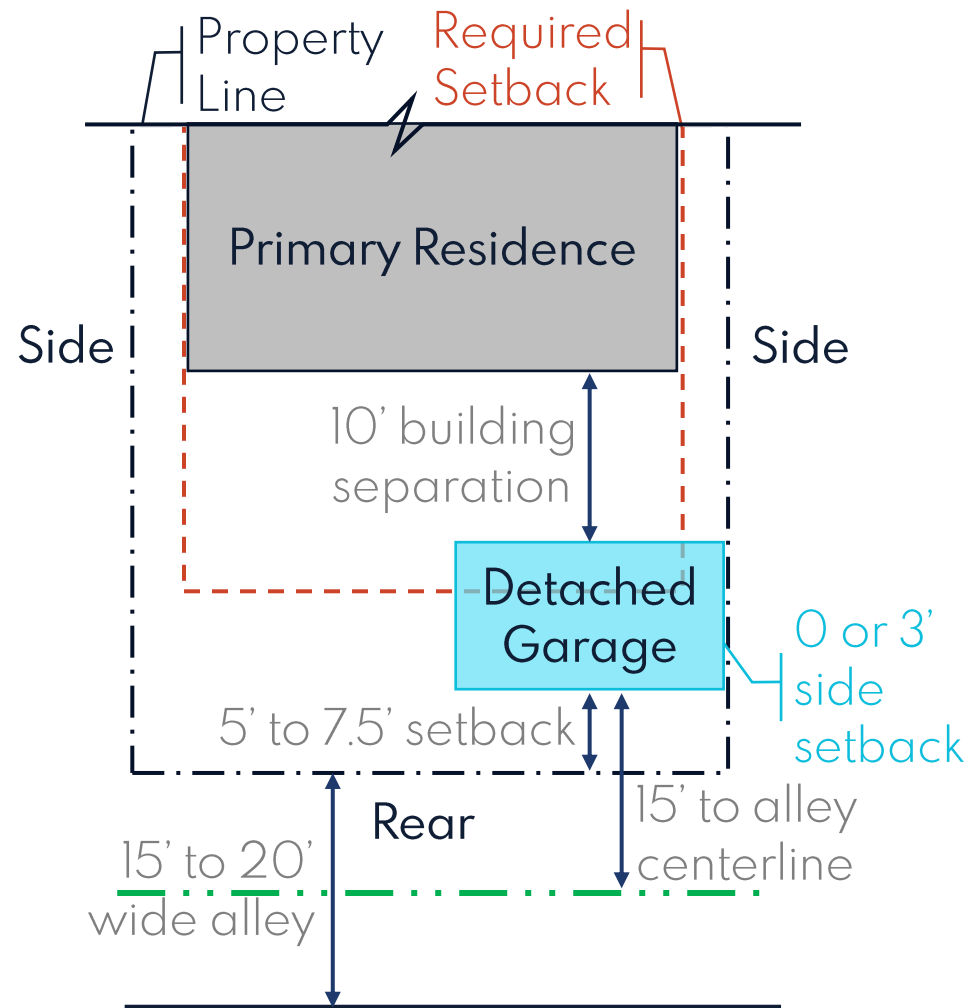
- Higher concentration of accessory structures with zero setbacks
  - Lots are larger which can accommodate both primary residence and accessory structure



# EXISTING DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS

## Area Districts III & IV

- Characterized by smaller lots; frequently include walk streets and alleys
- Common for older developments to have a detached garage setback off an alley





# ELIMINATION OF PROVISION

- Will create a significant number of nonconforming properties:
  - Limitations to future changes or expansions  
(May be subject to a *Minor Exception*)
  - Less flexibility to maximize layout and use property



# CONCLUSION

Staff recommends that the City Council discuss and provide direction



