

CITY COUNCIL MEMORANDUM

FROM: The Office of the City Manager **DATE:** January 13, 2025
SUBJECT: Discuss regulations related to off-street parking spaces and carports.

PRESENTER: Clayton Comstock, Managing Director of Development Services

SUMMARY:

At the work session, staff will present information regarding carports in North Richland Hills. The North Richland Hills Zoning Ordinance (Chapter 118 of the City Code) defines a carport as “a roofed structure open on two or more sides and designed to provide shelter for an automobile.”

The presentation will review the following:

1. Current local regulation related to carports, including how and where they are permitted today and the process for seeking variances to any of the existing standards.
2. How other North Texas communities permit and regulate carports.
3. Examples of carports in North Richland Hills and neighboring communities.
4. Issues related to carports specific to front yards, including use of garage space and on-street parking impacts.
5. Seek City Council direction on any next steps, if any.

A few important contextual references when discussing carports are off-street parking requirements and front building lines.

[Section 118-833 of the Zoning Ordinance](#) (Schedule of minimum number of parking spaces) requires that all single-family dwellings have at least four (4) off-street parking spaces, at least two of which must be covered and enclosed behind the front building line.

Also, a *front building line* is defined as “a line located a minimum horizontal distance from a front lot line parallel thereto, over which no part of a building shall extend, unless otherwise permitted in [Chapter 118].” Front building lines (i.e. setbacks) are established by both zoning district standards and a subdivision’s plat. They create a predictable and consistent development pattern for a zoning district and neighborhood, ensuring that the general style and character of a neighborhood remains after an investor purchases a

home. Front building lines provide safety, privacy, air circulation, fire prevention, and proper access for emergency vehicles, among other things.

When applied to garages, carports, and other accessory structures, front building lines are intended to emphasize the human scale and orientation of a neighborhood by highlighting front doors, front porches, and front yard space and deemphasize driveways and automobiles. In North Richland Hills, single family homes are also required to have at least one large tree located in the front yard space.

Section 118-718(d) of the zoning ordinance provides standards for carports. While the current standards were adopted in March 1993 (Ordinance 1874), front building line and carport standards go back further. A few highlights regarding the below standards:

1. Carports are limited to 360 square feet in area. A standard parking space is 9 feet by 18 feet, or 162 square feet. This maximum area allows for a structure up to 19 feet by 19 feet.
2. Carports are permitted in side yards, rear yards and front yards when not encroaching into the required building lines (setbacks).

[Section 118-718\(d\) - Carport Regulations.](#)

- (1) Property location criteria: A carport shall be located on the same tract or lot as the primary structure.
- (2) Applicable zoning districts: A carport shall be allowed in any zoning district.
- (3) Front building line: A carport shall not extend beyond the front building line.
- (4) Side building line: Side yard setback shall be the same as for the primary structure.

Exception: In the R-1, RE-1, RE-2, R-2, R-3, R-4-D, and R-8 districts, side yard setback shall be as follows:

- a. Interior lots: six feet.
- b. Corner lots:
 1. Six feet on the interior side.
 2. Same as the primary structure for the side yard adjacent to the street.
- (5) Rear building line: Ten feet rear yard setback the same as for the primary structure.
- (6) Maximum height: 15 feet.
- (7) Maximum size: 360 square feet.

Exception: In the R-7-MF district there shall be allowed a maximum of 180 square feet per covered parking space.

(8) Maximum number allowed: One.

Exception: In the R-7-MF district: unrestricted.

(9) Vehicle parking surface: A carport shall be on concrete and have concrete access to a public street.

(10) Effect on rear yard open space: A carport shall have no effect in calculating the rear yard open space requirement.

(11) Use: A carport shall not be used for business or dwelling purposes in any residential zoning district.

(12) Carport entry distance: Minimum distance between a side or rear property line and a carport entry shall be 22 feet.

(13) Design criteria:

- a. Pitch of roof: Flat or nearly flat roofs are not permitted. The pitch of the roof shall be a minimum of at least four vertical to 12 horizontal (4:12) on each sides of the ridge, or be architecturally designed so as not to appear flat.
- b. Posts: Common metal posts are not permitted. The structure shall have masonry or other alternative architecturally enhanced materials.