

## PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION MEMORANDUM

**FROM:** Planning & Zoning Department    **DATE:** October 16, 2025  
**SUBJECT:** Discussion regarding possible updates to regulations regarding rear-yard open space standards  
**PRESENTER:** Cori Reaume, Director of Planning

### **GENERAL DESCRIPTION:**

In an effort to continue refining the City's Code of Ordinances in the spirit of clarity and efficiency, this ordinance update is being proposed by staff for consideration.

The definition for rear yard open space from the city's zoning ordinance is listed below:

*Rear yard open space means an area reserved as an open space in the rear portion of a yard which extends from one side property line to another side property line and abutting the rear property line. The rear yard open space shall not protrude beyond the two most extreme corners of the main structure and no part of a residential dwelling unit may be constructed so as to occupy any portion of the rear yard open space.*

The requirements for rear yard open space are outlined within the various zoning districts' "Lot and Area Requirements," along with building setbacks, minimum lot size, etc.

Section 118-718 (Accessory Buildings and Structures) includes references indicating that accessory structures, including sheds, carports, etc., would have no impact on the calculation of rear-yard open space.

It would seem that the rear yard open space requirement was introduced to ensure that when a lot is developed, a portion (typically around 20%) would remain open and not be covered by the primary structure (home). However, this regulation doesn't restrict how homeowners use their backyards. Since accessory structures like sheds and carports are excluded from the requirement, it appears the intent was to preserve open space during initial development, while still allowing residents to fully use their yards for outdoor amenities and personal enjoyment.

On quick review, it seems most of our comparison cities utilize a maximum lot coverage (or impervious coverage) percentage rather than the rear yard open space calculation.

During the meeting, staff will present some findings and lead a discussion about possible alternatives.