

ZONING FROM A TO Z

Residential Districts – Part 5 (Chapter 17-2)

Parking Standards

The first installment of this series explained the use of floor area ratio (FAR) as the primary means for differentiating the zoning categories of residential (“R”) districts, while the second reviewed limitations such as height restrictions and setbacks for front, side, and rear yards and some minimal character standards. The third explained additional requirements designed to preserve open space in rear yards, and the fourth reviewed uses other than residential allowed in R districts.

Residential districts also are subject to parking standards. The same easy-to-navigate chart that outlines the possible uses allowed in residential districts referenced in the fourth installment contains the applicable parking standard for each district. Descriptions of the parking standards are contained in Chapter 17-10 of the new code, along with standards for bike parking.

As explained in earlier installments, most housing in the Sheffield neighborhood is designated RT4, although there are a few pockets of lots zoned RS3 in the western portion of Sheffield. In RT4 districts, the code requires one parking space per unit; however, off-street parking is not required for detached houses or two-flats on lots that are 33 feet or less in width if the lot does not have access to an improved alley. Note that most lots in Sheffield are 24 or 25 feet wide.

In contrast, in RS3 districts, the code requires two parking spaces per unit for detached houses and 1.5 spaces per unit for two-flats. Again, off-street parking is not required for detached houses or two-flats on lots that are 33 feet or less in width if the lot does not have access to an improved alley. In addition, the Zoning Administrator may authorize one space per unit if the change will result in more usable open space on the lot.

As one might expect, there are no requirements for bike parking in either RT4 or RS3 districts.

For the few “multi-unit” buildings in Sheffield that contain three or more residential units, the code requires one parking space per unit. In buildings containing 8 or more units, bike parking must be provided at the ratio of one per 2 auto spaces.

In all R districts except RS1 and RS2, off-street parking must be accessed off the abutting alley except where there is no alley access, when the street leads to a common parking area for townhouses, or when the street leads to a multi-level parking garage in a multi-unit building.

In those cases where individual garages or parking spaces must be accessed directly from the street, they must be set back at least 20 feet from the front property line to prevent obstruction of the sidewalk.

This is the fifth in a series of articles designed to educate the community about the basics of the new zoning code adopted in late 2004. If you would like to learn about a particular topic, contact the Association by calling 773-929-9255 or by sending an e-mail message to sheffieldneighborhoodassociation@hotmail.com; please be as specific as possible when describing your topic or question. Electronic copies of previous installments also are available by request via the SNA email address.