

City of Savannah

Code Compliance Department



Department Overview & Proposed Ordinance Changes



Establishing the *new* Code Compliance Department

Year One Reorganization Goals
and Achievements to Date

Reorganization Goals

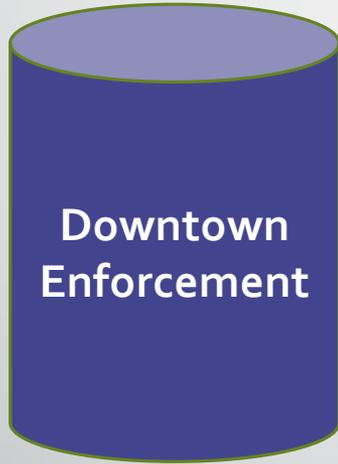
- Move all enforcement operations under the control of one department to assure more effective, uniform, and consistent code enforcement across the city.
- Consolidate physical office location of department.
- Update and unify staff uniforms and department vehicles.
- Cross-train and certify all enforcement staff for enforcement of all housing, property maintenance, sanitation, and zoning codes.
- Complete reclassification of all positions to ensure consistency in position titles and pay.

Before Reorganization

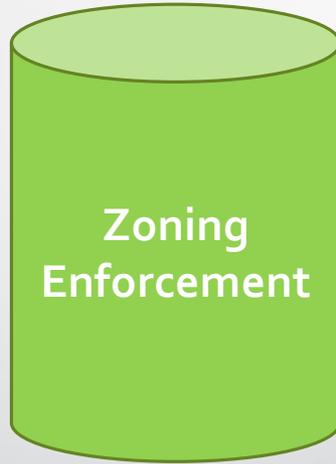
**Sanitation
Bureau**



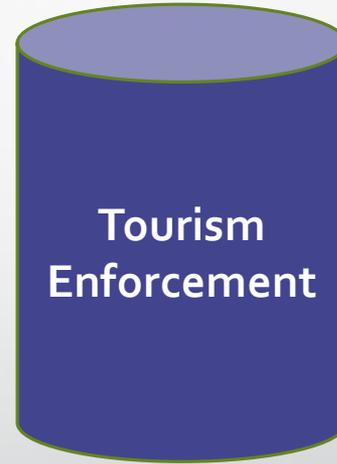
**Tourism
Office**



**Development
Services**



**Tourism
Office**



**Mobility
Services**



After Reorganization

New “Code Compliance Department”



Property
Maintenance

Downtown
Enforcement

Zoning
Enforcement

Tourism
Enforcement

Taxi
Enforcement



Mission

To promote a safe, clean and healthy environment through community outreach, education and enforcement of the City of Savannah's housing, property maintenance, sanitation and zoning codes.

Goals

- Provide prompt, courteous, and professional service
- Seek voluntary compliance with the provisions of the City Code
- Improve both the appearance and value of residential & business property
- Encourage responsible property maintenance
- Ensure properties are used in accordance with adopted Zoning Ordinances
- Ensure Tourism, Taxi, Pedicab, and Wrecker businesses comply with applicable City Ordinances
- Maintain open communications and continuing education with the community

Transition Plan: Cross Training/Certification

- **December, 2019:** All Code Compliance Supervisors and Officers become both IPMC and IZC certified.
- **In the Interim:** Existing Zoning Inspector serves as “Zoning Advisor” to our traditional Property Maintenance Teams as they take on more zoning functions
 - Alcohol License Business Inspections
- **January, 2020 forward:** Once certifications are complete, the City moves from two Zoning Inspectors to 29 Zoning and Property Compliance Officers

Significant Accomplishments to Date

- Operated as a unified team, under central leadership for the St. Patrick's Day Festival
- All Enforcement Officers now wearing the same uniform
- Thousands of “snipe” and Realtor signs removed from City Right of Ways
- Moved entire team from Gamble Building to 1700 Drayton
- Standardized Citations
- Implemented enforcement of Shopping Cart Ordinance
- Implementing significant changes to Records Court in cooperation with the City Attorney’s Office and the Clerk of Court



Achieving Code Compliance

General timeframes to achieve compliance when a violation has been cited.

Code Compliance Enforcement Process & General Timeframes

ABANDONED VEHICLE – Enforcement Steps*	PUBLIC Property	PRIVATE Property
Initial Inspection, vehicle tagging (Notice to Correct) and Police Dept. notification for SPD Officer to run vehicle tag number onsite	1-3 days	1-3 days
Open new case file	1 day	1 day
Time period to correct conditions	5 days**	30 days**
Re-Inspection	1-2 days	1-2 days
Assign City Towing Contractor <i>Inspector issues request, Technician compiles and orders are assigned to City Contractor daily</i>	1-2 days	1-2 days
Time period for Contractor to tow vehicle	3 days	3 days
Re-Inspection	1-2 days	1-2 days
Close Case	1 day	1 day
Approximate timeframe	14-19 days	39-44 days

**Local ordinance does not address abandoned vehicles.*

***Timeframes derived from OCGA 44-11-1.*

Code Compliance Enforcement Process & General Timeframes

DERELICT VEHICLE – Enforcement Steps	PUBLIC Property	PRIVATE Property
Initial Inspection & Tag Vehicle (Notice to Correct)	1-3 days	1-3 days
Open new case file	1 day	1 day
Time period to correct conditions	10 days*	30 days*
Re-Inspection	1 day	1 day
Issue Court Summons		1 day
Time period before court case is heard (20 cases per a.m./p.m. docket)		7-14 days
Recorder's Court appearance #1		1 day
Time period to correct conditions (Staff recommends, Judge sets time)		7-14 days
Re-Inspection		1 day
Assign City Towing Contractor <i>Inspector issues request, Technician compiles and orders are assigned to City Contractor daily</i>	1-2 days	1-2 days
Time period for Contractor to tow vehicle	3 days	3 days
Re-Inspection – Verify vehicle has been removed	1-2 days	1-2 days
Close Case	1 day	1 day
Approximate timeframe	19-23 days	56-74 days

**Timeframes derived from Sec. 9-2009*

Code Compliance Enforcement Process & General Timeframes

OVERGROWTH – Enforcement Steps	OCCUPIED Property	VACANT Property	
Initial Inspection	1-3 days	1-3 days	
Open new case file	1 day	1 day	
Issue Notice to Correct Conditions <i>(Vacant: certified letter & ad in local paper)</i>	2 days	7 days	
Time period to correct conditions	15 days*	15 days*	
Re-Inspection	1-2 days	1-2 days	
Extensions to correct conditions <i>(up to 3 extensions, 5 day increments)</i>	5-15 days		
Issue Court Summons	1 day		
Time period before court case is heard <i>(20 cases per a.m. or p.m. docket)</i>	7-14 days		
Recorder’s Court - Appearance #1	1 day		
Time period to correct conditions <i>(Staff recommends, Judge sets time)</i>	Up to 14 days		
Re-Inspection & Recorder’s Court - Appearance #2	1 day		
Property Compliant – Close Case	1 day		
Assign City Mowing/Clearing Contractor <i>Inspector issues request, Technician compiles and orders are assigned to City Contractor daily</i>			1-2 days
Time period for Contractor to correct conditions <i>(7/2018: Reduced from 10 to 3 days)</i>			3 days
Contractor submits invoice & photos of completed work			5 days
Technician updates case files and marks work order as completed		2-3 days	
Re-Inspection		1-2 days	
Code Officer approves contractor’s work and closes case		1 day	
Approximate timeframe		50-70 days	38-44 days

*Timeframes derived from Sec. 9-3003

Code Compliance Enforcement Process & General Timeframes

UNSAFE/UNSECURE STRUCTURE – Enforcement Steps	VACANT Property
Initial Inspection	1-3 days
Open new case file	1 day
Title Search	1-2 days
Placard Structure	1-2 days
Advertise violation in local paper/send certified letter to correct conditions	7 days
Time period to correct conditions	5-10 days
Re-Inspection	1-2 days
Assign City Contractor to secure structure	1-2 days
Time period for Contractor to secure structure	5-7 days
Contractor submits invoice, photos of completed work	10 days
Technician updates case file and marks work order as completed	2-3 days
Re-Inspection	2-3 days
Code Officer approves contractor's work and closes case	1 day
Approximate Timeframe	38-53 days

Code Compliance Enforcement Process & General Timeframes

HOUSING VIOLATION – Enforcement Steps	OCCUPIED Property	VACANT Property
Initial Inspection	1-3 days	1-3 days
Title Search (Good for 1 year, not mandatory)		1-2 days
Open new case file	1 day	1 day
Issue Notice to Correct Conditions <i>(Vacant: certified letter)</i>	1-2 day	7 days
Time period to correct conditions <i>(Vacant: certified letter signature not required)</i>	30 days	30 days
Re-Inspection	1 day	1 day
Extensions to correct conditions (up to 3; in 5 day increments)	5-15 days	
Issue Court Summons	1 day	90 days
Time period before court case is heard (20 cases per a.m. or p.m. docket)	7-14 days	
Recorder's Court - Appearance #1	1 day	1 day
Time period to correct conditions (Staff recommends, Judge decides)	30-90 days	30-90 days
Re-Inspection & Recorder's Court - Appearance #2	1 day	1 day
Property Compliant – Close Case	1 day	1 day
Approximate Timeframe	80-160 days	164-222 days

CODE COMPLIANCE CHALLENGE

The court summons is only valid if signed and served in person. If the owner cannot be located or does not appear in court, the violation remains an open case, and the City has no further recourse to address housing conditions until further deterioration occurs and the property is deemed unsafe. Once the title search reaches one year, the City repeats the process.

Long-Term Housing Code Violations



- June 29, 2017 – Initial inspection, exterior housing code violations
- July 14, 2017 – Housing Code Violation Letter mailed
- July 24, 2017 – Property owner receives notification letter
- October 18, 2017 – Subpoena Issued
- November 6, 2017 – Recorders Court
- December 2017, February & April 2018 – defendant fails to appear
- May 7, 2018 – Recorders Court
- July 18, 2018 – Recorders Court
- August 22, 2018 – Recorders Court – Judge orders defendant to secure property and keep the lot mowed. Exterior housing code violations remain. Case closed without compliance.

Properties deteriorated to the degree that demolition can be considered.

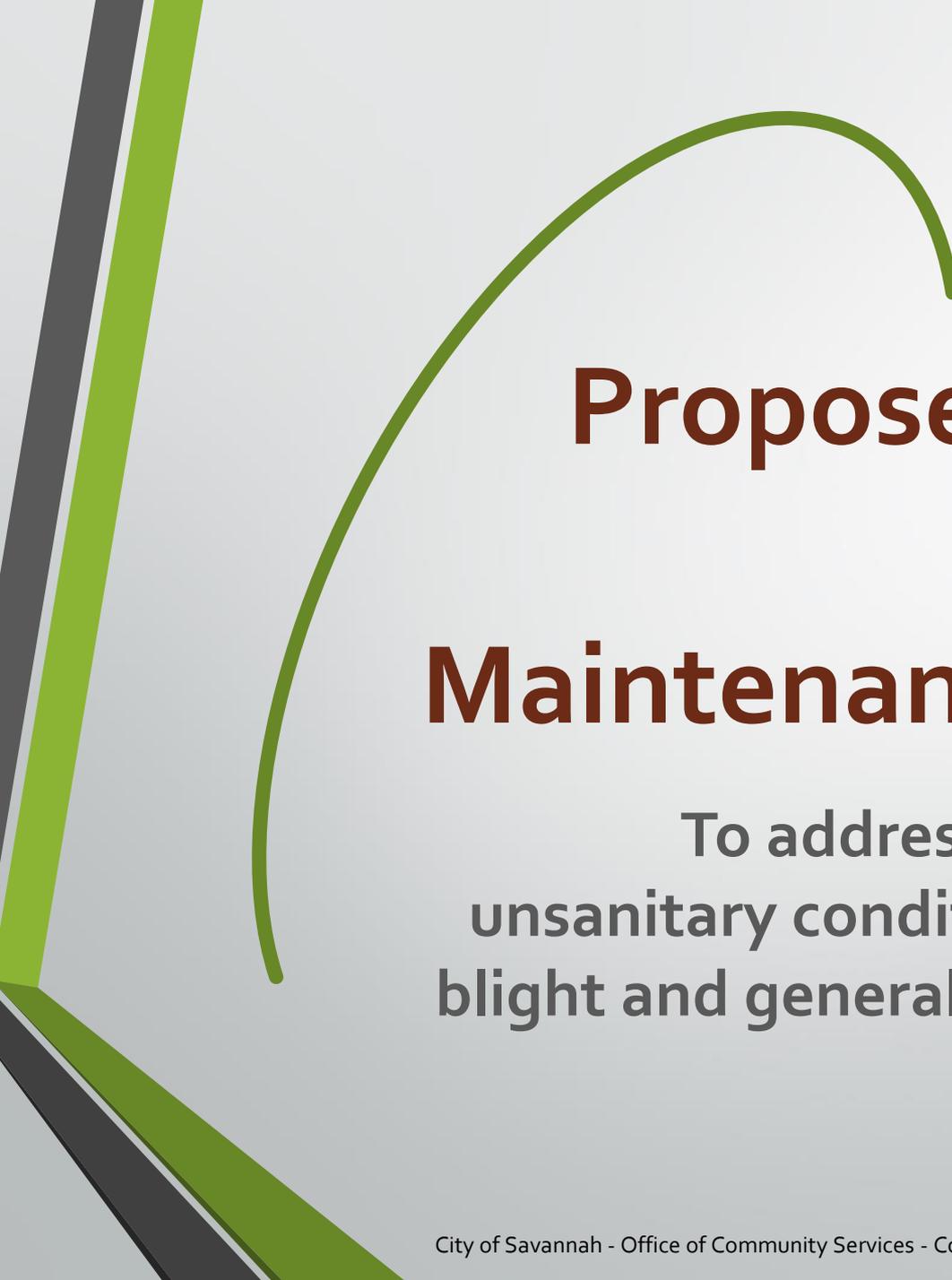


SUMMARY CHART: General Timeframes to achieve Compliance

ABANDONED VEHICLE	PUBLIC Property	PRIVATE Property
Approximate timeframe	14-19 days	39-44 days
DERELICT VEHICLE	PUBLIC Property	PRIVATE Property
Approximate timeframe	19-23 days	56-74 days
OVERGROWTH	OCCUPIED Property	VACANT Property
Approximate timeframe	50-70 days	38-44 days
HOUSING VIOLATION	OCCUPIED Property	VACANT Property
Approximate Timeframe	80-160 days	164-222 days
UNSAFE/UNSECURE STRUCTURE		VACANT Property
Approximate Timeframe		38-53 days

Total Active Cases (July, 2018): 2,265

Numbers expected to increase as staff attains zoning certification.



Proposed changes to the Property Maintenance Ordinance

To address unsafe, unsightly and unsanitary conditions that contribute to blight and general neighborhood decline.

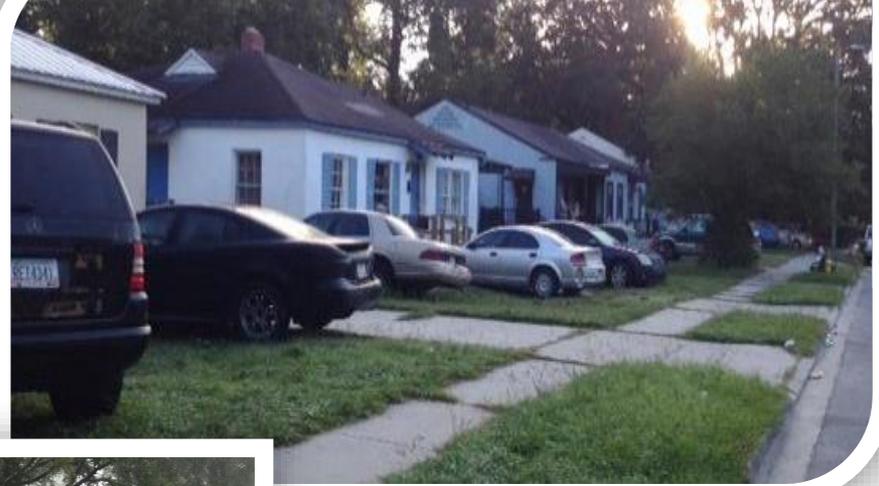
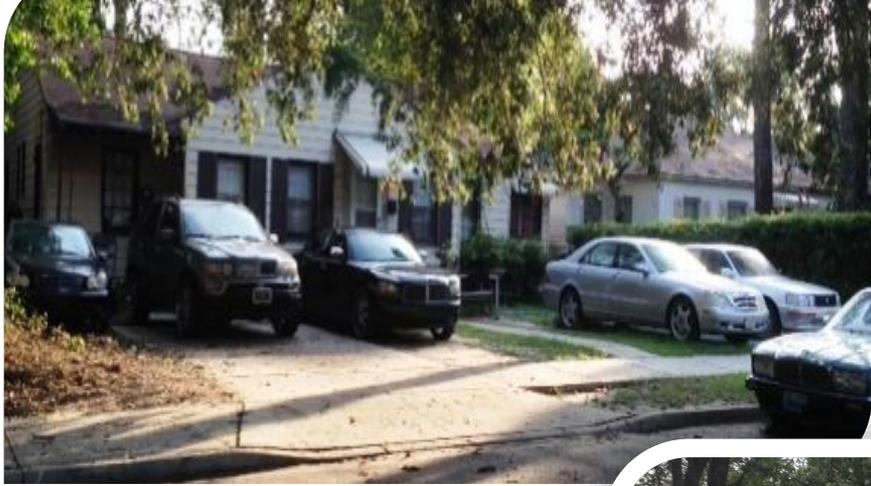
Proposed Property Maintenance Ordinance Changes

1. Parking in Residential Areas
2. Exterior Property Maintenance
3. Tree Lawn Maintenance
4. Abandoned and Derelict Motor Vehicles

Section 8-1003. Parking in Residential Areas

1

- Provides for the proper placement of certain vehicles in residential areas to eliminate blight and improve health and public safety.
- Adds Sec. 7-1016 to Sec. 8-1003 with proposed revisions



Parking allowed under the 2017 Residential Yard Parking Ordinance



Contributed to yard erosion, storm water run-off and general blight



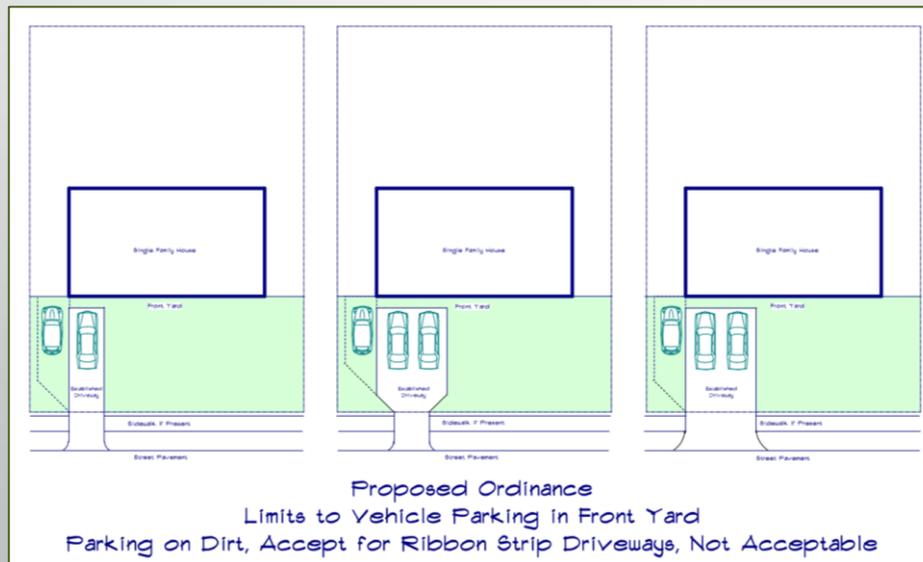
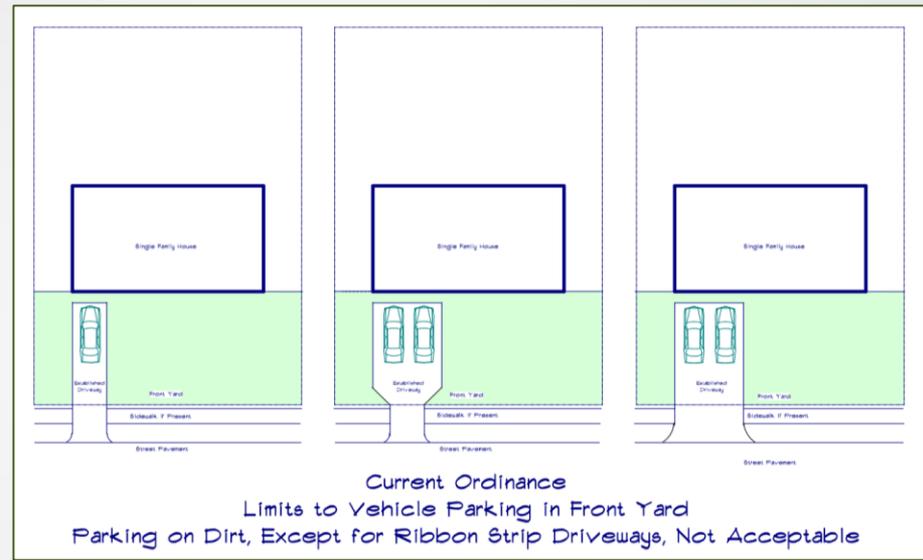
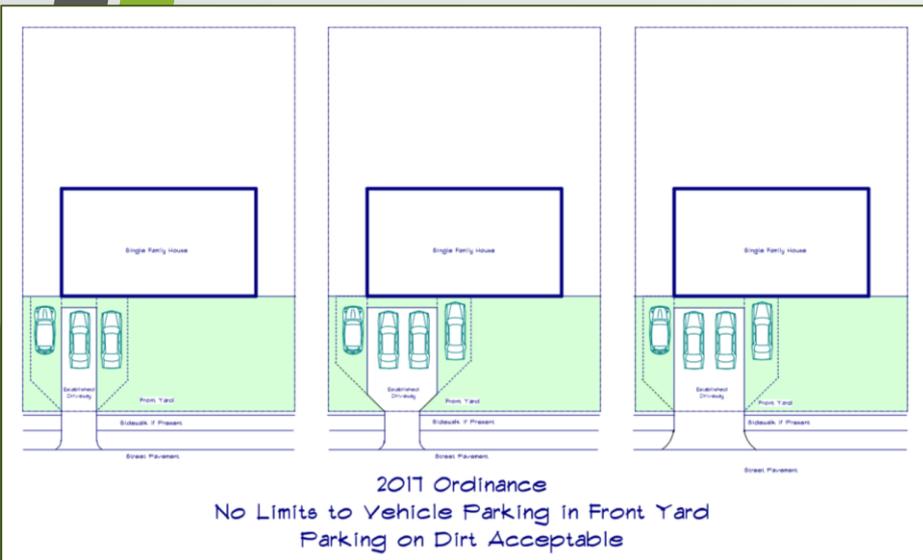
Summary Comparison: Parking in Residential Areas

Key Features	2017 Ordinance	Current Ordinance	Proposed Ordinance
Definitions of Terms	No	No	Yes
Requires residential property owners (owner-occupied or rental) to ensure compliance	No	No	Yes
Approved Parking Surfaces	Paved Graveled Areas bare of vegetation (dirt)	Paved/Pavers Contained Gravel or Stone Ribbon Strips Other approved materials	Paved/Pavers Contained Gravel or Stone Ribbon Strips Other approved materials
Contributes to front yard erosion, dirt yards, storm water run-off	Yes. Allowed parking on areas bare of vegetation.	No. Limits parking to approved surfaces.	No. Limits parking to approved surfaces.
Driveway aprons and curb cuts	Yes, for established driveways connecting to a public or private street.	Yes, for established driveways connecting to a public or private street and no wider than 24 feet	Yes, for established driveways connecting to a public right of way.

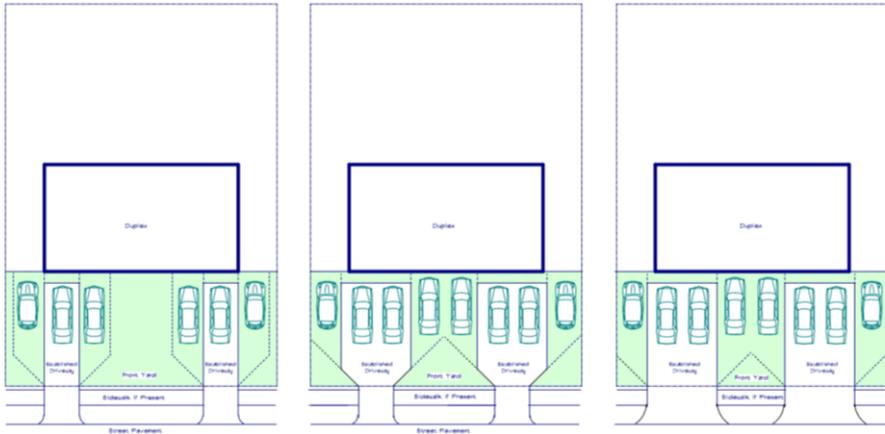
Summary Comparison: Parking in Residential Areas

Key Features	2017 Ordinance	Current Ordinance	Proposed Ordinance
Allows parking for operable motor vehicles, boats, trailer-type vehicles	<p>Yes. Unlimited.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> on an established driveway; within 5 feet of the driveway, including dirt; or enclosed in a legal accessory building in a side or rear yard. 	<p>Yes. Restricted.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> on an established driveway; or enclosed in a legal accessory building in a side or rear yard. 	<p>Yes. Restricted.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> on an established driveway within 5 feet of a driveway on the side nearest to the side yard property line; enclosed in a legal accessory building; or in an area screened from public ROW view or neighboring property.
Restricts placement of inoperable motor vehicles, boats or trailer-type vehicles	<p>Yes. Must be enclosed in a legal accessory building located in a side or rear yard</p>	<p>Yes. Must be enclosed in a legal accessory building located in a side or rear yard.</p>	<p>Yes. Must be enclosed in a legal accessory building.</p>
Lists vehicles prohibited from parking in residential areas	N/A	Yes	Yes. Combines Sec. 7-1016 with Sec. 8-1003
Allows requests for variances	N/A	No	Yes. Property owner may request a variance through the Code Compliance Department.

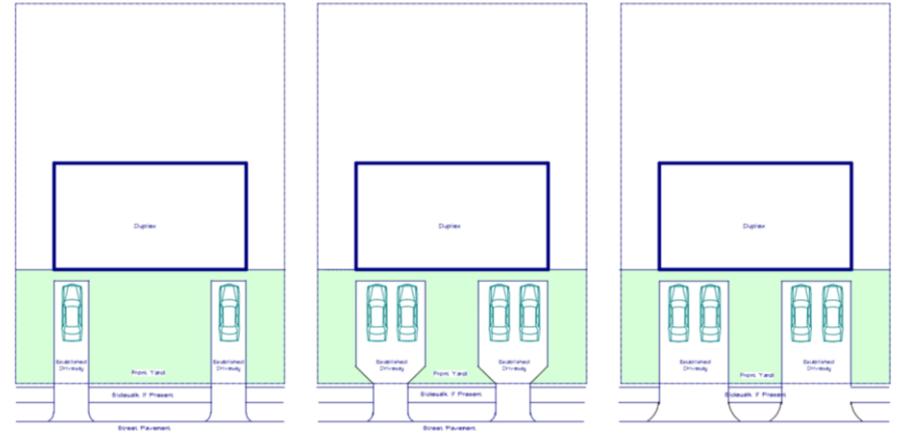
Comparison: Parking in Front Yards (Single Family Residential)



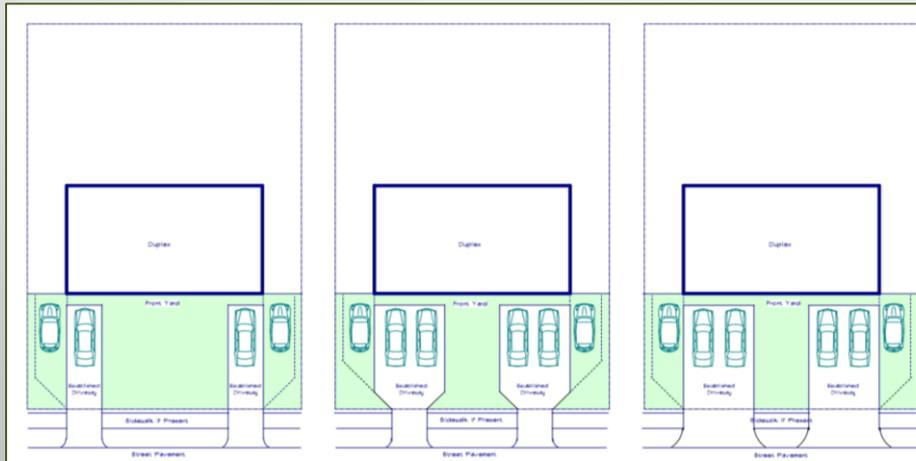
Comparison: Parking in Front Yards (Duplex Residential)



2017 Ordinance
 No Limits to Vehicle Parking in Front Yard
 Parking on Dirt Acceptable



Current Ordinance
 Limits to Vehicle Parking in Front Yard
 Parking on Dirt, Except for Ribbon Strip Driveways, Not Acceptable



Proposed Ordinance
 Limits to Vehicle Parking in Front Yard
 Parking on Dirt, Except for Ribbon Strip Driveways, Not Acceptable

Section 8-1004. Exterior Property Maintenance

2

- Replaces “Chapter Six” of the City’s former local Property Maintenance Code which was not included when the City adopted the International Property Maintenance Code in 2003.
- Addresses minimum standards for maintenance of exterior property including prohibited objects, litter, garbage, rubbish, animal excrement, vegetation, grass, weeds, stagnant water, and other unsightly, unsafe or unsanitary matter.

Section 8-1004. Exterior Property Maintenance

Restores the City's ability to address....



Section 8-1004. Exterior Property Maintenance

Key Definitions:

Debris	The remains of something broken down or destroyed, such as fallen trees, tree limbs, materials, or objects not a part of land, existing at random or in a disorderly manner and constituting a health or safety hazard.
Garbage	The animal or vegetable waste resulting from the handling, preparation, cooking and consumption of food.
Litter	Manmade or man-used solid waste material, such as paper, garbage, cardboard boxes, cans, leaves, limbs, cigarette butts or other trash, which is not placed or stored properly in an approved trash container or bag.
Objects	Any item of personal property; other than a vehicle, boat, trailer, or children's toys in good repair. Includes junk materials, machinery, equipment, appliances, household items and indoor furniture, lumber and building materials, sand, fill rock, stone, downed trees, fallen tree limbs or other material(s) not forming part of the natural landscape or a structure.
To place	To establish the presence of an object on a piece of property which: (1) Is not affixed to the real property and is capable of being moved or removed and (2) Is present for a period of five consecutive days on a piece of property, regardless whether the location of the object has moved.
Unsafe Tree	The condition of a tree which presents a foreseeable danger of inflicting damage that cannot be alleviated by treatment or pruning. A tree may be dangerous when likely to injure people or damage vehicles, structures, or development such as sidewalks or utilities.

Section 8-1004. Exterior Property Maintenance

Maintenance of Exterior Property

It shall be unlawful for the owner or occupant of a premises to have or to place any of the following on the premises to the extent and in a manner that could endanger public health, safety or welfare or could adversely affect/impair the economic value of an adjacent property.

- Accumulation of litter, debris, rubbish, garbage or animal excrement on any portion of the property, on any porch, or underneath or inside any structure or accessory structure.
- Any object or objects, as defined, on the front, side or rear yard, or front, side or rear porches, or underneath or inside any structure or accessory structure that is visible from the street, lane or neighboring property unless screened as to not be visible from the street, lane, or neighboring property.
- Any accessory building on the front yard or any accessory building in the side or rear yard which is dilapidated or in a state of disrepair.

Section 8-1004. Exterior Property Maintenance

Maintenance of Exterior Property (Continued)

- Any broken, discarded or abandoned appliance in the front, rear or side yard, porch, or unsecured garage on premises used as a residence or on any vacant lot.
- Any clothesline in the front yard, or on front or side porches.
- Vegetation, grass, or weeds in excess of a height of 10 inches; debris, any dangerous or unsafe tree, stagnant water, and all other objectionable, unsightly or unsanitary matter.
- Owners have 15 days to correct conditions. If compliance is not reached in this time, the City can assign a contractor to correct conditions and bill the owner for the expenses or charges of removal, including: inspection, advertising, labor and equipment costs.

Note: This section does not apply to construction material for premises, providing construction activity is being diligently pursued and complies with applicable ordinances and codes.

Section 8-1004. Exterior Property Maintenance

Charging Expenses and Placing Liens*

The City shall notify the owner or occupant of the property to cut or remove such items within fifteen (15) days.

If compliance is not achieved after fifteen (15) days, the City may:

- authorize a contractor to cut and/or remove prohibited materials
- charge the expenses of the removal to the owner
- enforce the collection of the charges when unpaid after thirty (30) days
- place a lien upon the premises and, when recorded in the general execution docket of Chatham County, Georgia, shall be a lien upon all of the property of the defendant in execution from the date of the record.

**Source: Appendix I(32) of City Charter*

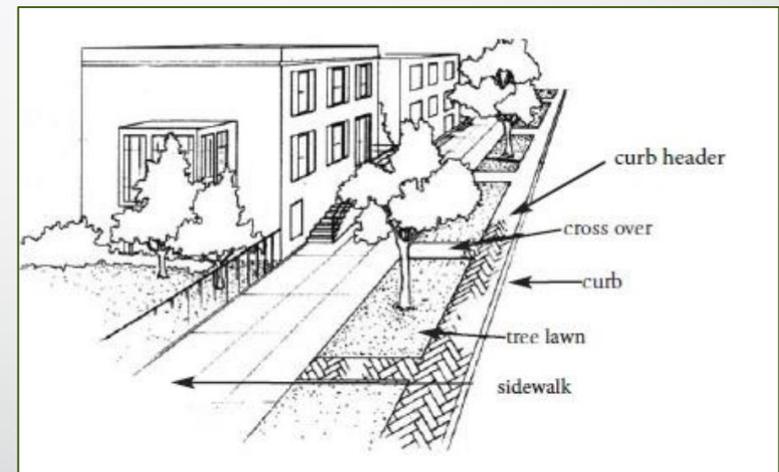
Section 8-1005.

Occupants to maintain tree lawns, keep streets and sidewalks free of litter

3

Addresses long-standing concerns regarding the care and maintenance of tree lawns by:

- Codifying party responsible for providing ongoing maintenance of tree lawns
- Providing minimum standards for tree lawn care and maintenance



Section 8-1005.

Occupants to maintain tree lawns, keep streets and sidewalks free of litter

Existing Ordinance Text:

The occupants or owners of property abutting a street, sidewalk or lane shall maintain and keep the portion of the street, sidewalk or lane on which such property abuts clean and free of litter, debris and overgrown vegetation. (existing ordinance)

Additional Proposed Text:

- The occupants or owners of property in which a tree lawn is present shall be responsible for mowing grass, mulching, picking up litter, removing dead vegetation, keeping tree lawns clean, and maintaining the height of plantings to 36 inches or less.
- The planting or maintenance of trees or shrubs on the right-of-way must adhere to Section 8-12005.

Section 9-2009 to 9-2013. Abandoned and Derelict Motor Vehicles

4

- Adds “Abandoned Vehicles” to the City’s Ordinance on Derelict Motor Vehicles
- Updates definitions of key terms such as: abandoned motor vehicle, derelict motor vehicle, owner, public property, private property, and real property
- Reduces the time period for motor vehicle owners to correct conditions and comply with the code.



Section 9-2009 to 9-2013. Abandoned and Derelict Motor Vehicles

- **Abandoned motor vehicles** left unattended on a public street for not less than **five (5) days** on public property or not less than **thirty (30) days** of private property constitute a health hazard or unsightly nuisance.
- **Derelict motor vehicles** left unattended on a public street for not less than ~~ten (10) days~~ **three (3) days** on public property or not less than ~~thirty (30) days~~ **two (2) days** on private property constitute a health hazard or unsightly nuisance.
- A City code officer or peace officer shall prepare and affix a notice to the vehicle designating it as abandoned or derelict, stating the time limit to remove the vehicle, and notifying the owner/public the vehicle will be removed by the City pursuant to this ordinance.

Section 9-2009 to 9-2013.

Abandoned and Derelict Motor Vehicles

- After vehicle removal and placing in an impounding area, the owner of the vehicle shall be notified of its removal, impounding and right of reclamation, providing the owner's name and address can be determined with reasonable diligence.
- After expiration of the holding period, the vehicle may be sold, destroyed, dismantled or otherwise disposed of at public or private sale by designated City or a third party contractor, if the motor vehicle has not been claimed by its owner.
- Any funds received by the City from the disposal of any abandoned or derelict motor vehicle shall be paid to the general fund of the City.



**Thank you for your time
and consideration**

Any final questions or comments?