



PREPARED FOR THE PLAN COMMISSION

Proposal: **Zoning Text Amendment**

Legistar File ID #: [46056](#)

Prepared By: Planning and Zoning Staff

The following is a summary of the proposed zoning text amendment related to revising the definitions of Lot Line, Rear & Setback, Rear Yard, for Plan Commission consideration.

[46056](#) **Revising the definitions of Lot Line, Rear & Setback, Rear Yard (substitute)**

This amendment changes the definition of *Lot Line, Rear* and *Setback, Rear Yard* as they relate to triangular, gore-shaped, and irregularly shaped lots. The amendment clarifies the procedure for determining the rear lot line on a triangular or gore-shaped lot, which is unchanged but currently only outlined in the definition of *Setback, Rear Yard*. The amendment changes the procedure for determining the rear lot line or lines on an irregularly shaped lot, requiring the Zoning Administrator to “select a line or lines generally opposite the front lot line for the purpose of providing a rear lot line across the entirety of the lot.” The amendment adds the same language for determining a rear lot line on irregularly shaped lots to the *Setback, Rear Yard* definition.

Currently, the rear lot line of any irregularly shaped lot is determined by the same method as a triangular or gore-shaped lot: *By selecting a line ten feet in length entirely within the lot, parallel to and most distant from the front lot line.* This language is complicated and frequently results in rear yard setback areas that do not span across the entirety of lots. In some cases, like stepped or L-shaped lots, the current language designates only the single line most distant from and parallel to the front lot line as the rear lot line, making all other lines side lot lines. This incentivizes the creation of irregular lots with artificially deep rear lot lines, leading to a larger building envelope area, which is generally inconsistent with the intent and purpose of establishing setback requirements. This also creates a disparity between the relative size of the rear yard setbacks of irregular lots, typically found on cul-de-sacs and streets with curves in more suburban areas, as compared with regular rectangular lots.

The Plan Commission should be aware that this definition change will result in smaller building envelopes on most irregular lots, and make some existing structures nonconforming. This may require the owners of these properties to seek zoning variances for additions or expansions to existing principal structures. The Plan Commission should carefully consider whether the potential reduction of certain building envelopes is outweighed by the benefit of increased clarity and consistency for rear yards across the city.

This amendment includes language consistent with the concept for revisions to the rear yard setback definition, as discussed at a Plan Commission work session in the fall of 2015.

A substitute was prepared to clarify some language and to include example diagrams of front, side, and rear yards on various lot types.

Staff supports this amendment.