



Legislation Text

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AN ORDINANCE AMENDING SECTIONS 50-24, PARKING AND LOADING; 50-35, PROCEDURES SUMMARY TABLE; AND 50-37, REVIEW AND APPROVAL PROCESS

CITY PROPOSAL:

The city of Duluth does ordain:

Section 1. That Section 50-24.5 of the Duluth City Code be amended as follows:

**50-24.5 Calculation of parking spaces.**

The following rules shall apply to calculation of the number of required parking spaces:

- A. Floor area shall mean the gross floor area of the specific use;
- B. Requirements for a fraction of a parking space shall be ignored;
- C. The parking space requirement for a use not specifically listed in Table 50-24-1 shall be the same as for the most similar use listed in that table, as determined by the land use supervisor;
- D. Whenever a building or use is enlarged to the extent of 25 percent or more in floor area or in the site area used, the building or use shall be required to (a) retain any on-site parking existing prior to the expansion, and if that is not sufficient to comply with the parking required for the use as expanded, then (b) to comply with the requirements in Table 50-24-1 for the expansion area.
- E. Required off-street parking for one-, two-family, townhouse, multi-family, and live-work dwellings may be located in a garage or carport.

Section 2. That Section 50-24.6 of the Duluth City Code be amended as follows:

**50-24.6 Location of parking spaces.**

- A. On site location and exceptions.
  1. All required parking spaces shall be located on the same lot with the principal building or the primary use served; except as provided in subsection 2 below;
  2. If an increase in the number of parking spaces is required by a change or enlargement of any use the increased parking requirement may be satisfied by utilizing:
    - (a) Primary use parking lots or parking structures located and maintained up to 500 feet from the lot containing the change or enlargement, or
    - (b) Accessory parking lots that existed on November 18, 2010, were composed of hard-surfaced, dust-free material such as concrete, bituminous, or pervious paving materials, and that are located and maintained up to 500 feet from the lot containing the change or enlargement.
  3. Where required parking spaces are not provided on site, a written agreement assuring the continued availability of the parking spaces for the uses they serve shall be required on a form approved by the city and shall be filed with the application for a building permit;
  4. Parking located in a public street right of way pursuant to a concurrent use permit or other public grant shall not be used to satisfy off-street parking required by Chapter 50.

B. Parking location within the site.

~~Unless a front yard parking permit was issued for the property on or before June 1, 2009, required~~ Parking spaces for all motorized vehicles and trailers shall only be provided on those portions of the lot indicated in Table 50-24-3. See Attachment A

C. Optional pedestrian walkways within parking areas.

For parking areas within mixed use and special purpose districts identified in Table 50-24.3, buildings or projects may locate up to 60 percent of off-street accessory parking within the front yard if a pedestrian walkway is provided. The pedestrian walkway shall:

- Include pedestrian-scaled lighting;

- Be raised or otherwise designed to encourage run-off and limit ponding during wet weather;
- Be visually recognizable to both pedestrians and motorists;
- Include trees and other landscaping along the length of the walkway, this landscaping can also be used to meet parking lot landscaping requirements in Section 50-25.4;
- Be at least eight feet wide; and
- Include well-marked crossings where the walkway intersects with private vehicle drives.

Section 3. That Section 50-24.7 of the Duluth City Code be amended as follows:

**50-24.7 Parking lot design standards.**

A. General standards.

The design of ~~required off-street parking areas and spaces, drive aisles, and driveways~~ shall meet the standards shown in Table 50-24-4; See Attachment B

B. Parking lot and driveway entrances..

All parking lot and driveway entrances must conform to the design specification regulations of the city engineer

C. Snow storage areas.

A portion of each accessory surface parking area shall be designated for snow storage. The areas required to meet the minimum parking requirements of this Section 50-24 shall not be used for snow storage. Snow storage areas may be landscaped if the vegetation is selected and installed so as not to be harmed by snow storage. Snow storage areas shall not count towards those landscape areas required by Section 50-25 unless it they are integrated with a side or rear buffer required by Section 50-25

D. Parking lot walkways.

Each surface parking area that (a) serves a multi-family residential, commercial, public, institutional, civic, or mixed use, and (b) contains 50 or more parking spaces, and (c) contains any parking spaces located more than 300 feet from the front façade of the building shall contain at least one pedestrian walkway from allowing pedestrians to pass from the row of parking furthest from the primary building façade to the primary building entrance or a sidewalk allowing the pedestrian to reach the primary building entrance without crossing additional driving spaces or aisles. The required walkway must be at least five feet wide, shall not be located within a driving aisle, and shall be located in a landscaped island running perpendicular to the primary building façade if possible. If located in a landscaped island, the minimum width of the island shall be increased by five feet to accommodate the walkway without reducing the amount of landscaped area. If any parking space in the parking aisle located furthest from the primary structure is more than 200 feet from the walkway, additional similar walkways shall be required within 200 feet of those spaces. If there is a public sidewalk along the street frontage located within 50 feet of any required walkway, the walkway shall connect to that sidewalk

E. Tandem or in line parking

Tandem or in-line parking, or other similar arrangements that involve the placement of two or more parking spaces in a row directly behind one another so that one parking space is blocking access for other parking spaces, is not allowed for ~~required off-street parking spaces~~ required by Chapter 50, but is allowed to meet off-street parking required in Chapter 29A. This provision does not apply to required off street parking spaces within enclosed structures, such as garages or parking structures.

Section 4. That Section 50-35 of the Duluth City Code be amended as shown in Attachment A, Table 50-35-1: Procedures Summary Table.

Section 5. That Section 50-37.1 of the Duluth City Code be amended as follows:

**50-37.1 Common procedures and requirements.**

A. Pre-application meetings.

A pre-application meeting is an informal discussion between a potential applicant, interested citizen, city staff and the heritage preservation commission (if applicable) regarding a possible project subject to this Chapter. The purpose of the pre-application meeting is to assist the applicant by identifying the types of approval needed to complete the project, application material and impact studies required, applicable comprehensive plan provisions and applicable review criteria. A pre-application meeting may include a site visit at the request of the city. Pre-application meetings are required for the following types of applications:

1. UDC zoning map amendment;

2. District plan adoption or amendment;
3. Subdivision concept plan;
4. Vacation of street;
5. Concurrent use of streets permit.
6. Historic resource designation;
7. Special use or interim use permit;

B. Authority to file applications.

1. A property owner or a contract purchaser may apply for any type of permit or approval unless a more specific application is stated in this Section 50-37.1.B or in sections 50-37.2 through 16 below. In the event of a conflict between the provisions of this Section 50-37.1.B and the provisions of sections 50-37.2 through 16, the provisions of sections 50-37.2 through 16 shall govern;

2. An agent of the property owner, or a resident of the property, may apply for any type of permit or approval provided the agent or resident has written authority of the property owner to do so;

3. Applications for designation of a historic resource are governed by Section 50-37.8;

4. Any person may request an interpretation of this Chapter, and the land use supervisor may issue interpretations of this Chapter as needed and shall post issued interpretations on the city web site;

C. Application materials and fees.

1. Each application for a permit or approval, or for a modification of a permit or approval, pursuant to this Chapter, shall include all those application materials listed for that type of application or modification listed in the UDC application manual for this Chapter and a fee in the amount listed for that type of application or modification shown in the latest schedule of fees approved by council;

2. The city may reject applications not meeting the requirements of this Chapter, the UDC application manual, or as required or authorized by MSA 15.99;

3. Any and all representations made by the applicant to the city on the record during the application process, whether written or verbal, shall be deemed a part of the application and may be relied upon in good faith by the city;

4. The schedule of fees shall be adopted from time to time by the council by resolution, pursuant to Section 31-6 of the Code, to defray estimated staff costs and expenses of processing applications;

5. The schedule of fees may provide for additional fees if an applicant submits more than two applications that are incomplete, pursuant to Section D below, for the same proposed development;

6. All fees are non-refundable regardless of whether the applicant withdraws the application prior to a decision or whether the application is approved, approved with conditions or denied;

D. Determination of completeness.

A determination of completeness shall be made for each application pursuant to MSA 15.99;

E. Inactive complete applications.

If an application has been determined to be complete, but review of the application reveals possible additional impacts on the surrounding area, any request by the city for additional materials necessary to evaluate those impacts shall comply with the provisions of MSA 15.99;

F. Withdrawal of applications.

An applicant may withdraw an application at any time prior to a decision by the city by filing a written request to withdraw the application with the city. Any resubmission is subject to the provisions of subsection 50 37.1.G below. If the application is later resubmitted, it shall be treated as a new application for purposes of review and scheduling. Any fees paid for a withdrawn application shall not be refunded;

G. Successive applications.

If an application pursuant to this Chapter has been denied by the city, an application requesting the same or essentially the same approval shall not be accepted during the next 12 months;

H. Public notice.

1. Types of notice.

The city uses one or more of the following methods to notify the public about pending applications where there is an opportunity for public comment on the application. The type(s) of notice provided for different types of applications are shown in Table 50-35-1.

- (a) Newspaper notice means the publication of one notice in a newspaper of general

circulation within the city at least ten days before the date of the public hearing, except in the case of amendments to the text of this Chapter or zoning map, in which case the notice shall be published at least once each week for three successive weeks before the date of the public hearing;

(b) Mailed notice means a letter mailed by first class mail to property owners within 350 feet of the applicant's parcel at least ten days prior to the date of the public hearing. In the case of an application for vacation of a street, the notice shall be mailed to the owners of all properties abutting (a) the portion of the street proposed to be vacated, and (b) the portion of that street extending 350 feet from the ends of the portion proposed to be vacated. In the case of an application for rezoning an area of five acres or less, the notice shall be mailed to each property owner in the area to be rezoned and each owner of property located partly or entirely within 350 feet of the area to be rezoned. Failure to give mailed notice as required by this Section or any defect in the notice given shall not invalidate any action of the planning commission or council, provided that a bona fide attempt to comply with this Section has been made;

(c) Sign notice means a sign with minimum dimensions of 24 inches by 30 inches posted as close as reasonably possible to each street frontage on the applicant's property with the text between three and five feet above grade level, with a title line reading "Zoning Notice" in letters at least three inches tall, and with the remainder of the text in letters at least 1/2 inch tall. Each sign must be posted at least two weeks before the date of the public hearing, and must remain in place and legible through the date of the public hearing as shown on the sign. If the sign will not be legible at the stated height due to snow accumulations it may be placed higher, but at the lowest elevation that will be legible to the public. If snow obscures the sign during the posting period, the snow shall be removed and/or the sign shall be relocated so as to be legible within 24 hours after snowfall ends. Evidence produced at or before the public hearing that one or more of the required signs were not in place or legible throughout that period shall be grounds for postponement of the public hearing and a requirement to repost the property. Required signs may not be posted in any portion of the public right-of-way;

2. Content of notice.

Each required notice shall include the following information:

- (a) The name of the applicant;
- (b) The address of the property;
- (c) A narrative description of the project including the proposed land uses, size (in square feet) and height (in feet and stories) of any proposed buildings or building expansions;
- (d) The type of permit or approval being sought;
- (e) Contact information where additional information can be obtained from the applicant (which may be an address, telephone number, web site, or e-mail address or other electronic site or method);
- (f) Contact information for the assigned city staff member;
- (g) The date, time and place of the public hearing;

3. Special notice provision for appeals.

In the case of an appeal to the planning commission or council pursuant to Section 50-37.1.O, mailed notice shall be provided to any interested parties that were notified of the original application and the right to receive notice of any appeal, and who have notified the city in writing that they would like to receive notice of the appeal;

I. Public hearings.

1. Public hearings before the planning commission and public hearings before the council on matters related to this Chapter shall be conducted pursuant to rules and practices established by each of those bodies and in compliance with state law;

2. Attendance shall be open to the public;

3. All hearing and decision timeframes shall comply with MSA 15.99;

J. Review criteria.

1. The planning commission shall approve or recommend approval of an application if it makes a written finding that:

(a) The application is consistent with the adopted comprehensive land use plan, as that plan may have been amended after adoption;

- (b) The application complies with all applicable requirements of this Chapter, as those requirements may have been varied through a variance approved pursuant to Section 50-37.9;
- (c) The application complies with all additional approval criteria listed in Section 50-37.2 below;

2. If the planning commission determines that the criteria in subsection 1 have not been met, the commission shall deny or recommend denial of the application or approve it with conditions to bring the application into conformance with the above criteria;

3. The council is encouraged, but not required, to make decisions on applications under this Chapter pursuant to the criteria listed in subsection 1. In no case may the city's final action result in the approval of a use variance;

4. The applicant bears the burden of proof that an application complies with all applicable standards and criteria in this Chapter;

K. Conditions on approval.

1. As an alternative to denying an application, the building official and the land use supervisor are authorized to approve applications with conditions necessary to bring them into compliance with the requirements of this Chapter or with any previously approved district plan for the property;

2. As an alternative to denying an application, the planning commission is authorized to recommend or impose conditions on approvals that it determines are necessary to (a) bring the application into compliance with the requirements of this Chapter, the purposes of the zone district where the property is located or any previously approved district plan for the property, or (b) prevent or minimize adverse effects upon surrounding areas or upon public facilities and services;

3. All conditions imposed on approved applications shall be reasonably related to the anticipated impacts of the proposed development or land use and to the purposes of this Chapter;

4. In the case of decisions made by the planning commission or council, where mitigation of the impacts of a proposed plan or development requires an applicant to dedicate land or pay money to a public entity in an amount that is not calculated according to a formula applicable to a broad class of applicants, any condition imposed shall be roughly proportional both in nature and extent to the anticipated impacts of the proposed development, as shown through an individualized determination of impacts;

5. Any conditions on approved applications shall be listed in or attached to the approval document, and violation of any approved condition shall be a violation of this Chapter;

L. Administrative adjustments.

Where an application concerns development or redevelopment of a lot and the applicant demonstrates practical difficulty in designing the redevelopment to comply with all requirements of this Chapter, the land use supervisor is authorized to approve applications that diverge from the requirements of this Chapter in up to two of the following ways:

1. The front, side or rear setbacks of a new or modified structure is one foot smaller than the minimum setbacks required by this Chapter;

2. For properties zoned Residential-Traditional (R-1) or Residential-Urban (R-2), and have a lot frontage of 40 feet or less, the corner side yard setback is no less than five feet smaller than the minimum setback required by this Chapter;

3. The front, side or rear setback for a new or modified city operated utility structure on existing utility lines is no less than five feet;

4. The height of a new or modified structure is no more than two feet taller than the maximum allowed by this Chapter;

5. For properties where Section 50-24 requires more than three off street parking spaces, and the property does not contain a single-family residential structure (regardless of the use of that structure) the site may contain one less parking space than is required, or may contain one more parking space than the maximum allowed in Section 50 24.4;

6. Handicap accessibility structures can encroach into the yard setbacks when such structures comply with the Minnesota State Building Code;

7. For properties where Section 50-21.2 requires improved street frontage, exceptions limiting the street improvement to no more than 50 feet in length may be granted if the land use supervisor

determines that further extension of the street is not anticipated due to topography, comprehensive land use plan or utility availability;

8. For properties where Section 50-21.2 requires that not more than 30 percent of the rear yard be occupied by any one accessory structure, exceptions may be granted for an accessory structure to occupy up to 40 percent of the rear yard;

9. The area of a new or modified sign is no more than ten percent larger than the maximum allowed by Section 50-27;

10. Where the Land Use Supervisor determines that a residentially-zoned property meets the eligibility requirements for a variance in Section 50-37.9.G.1.A, an administrative adjustment may be granted to allow parking to encroach into the front yard where parking is prohibited by Table 50-24-3 with the following conditions:

(a). The adjustment shall allow parking to encroach up to 4 feet into the front yard where parking is prohibited by Table 50-24-3;

(b). A wall, fence or dense vegetative screen at least 3 feet tall and at least 75% opaque must be provided to screen parked vehicles from view of abutting properties and the street, where screening the street view is possible;

(c). Barriers must be installed to prevent vehicles from overrunning the parking and driveway areas; such barrier may be a fence, wall or raised curbing (or concrete parking bumpers when secured to the underlying pavement);

(d). A placard with a diagram no less than 5 inches by 7 inches showing the location and arrangement of parking spaces shall be visible at all times from the exterior of the dwelling; such placard shall be on all-weather media and installed on the front exterior door at an elevation of between 2 feet and 6 feet above the threshold;

M. Modifications of approvals.

1. Application.

An applicant who has received a permit or approval from the city pursuant to this Chapter may apply to modify that approval pursuant to this Section 50-37.1. An application for a modification shall be made to the building official, who shall determine whether it requests a minor or major modification pursuant to the criteria in subsections 2 or 3, as applicable;

2. Minor modifications.

Minor modifications are those that (a) relate to redevelopment of a single building on one or more existing platted lot(s), (b) qualify as administrative adjustments pursuant to subsection 50-37.1.L or (c) that the city determines are otherwise consistent with any district plan approved for the zone district where the property is located. Applications for minor modifications may be approved by the city if it determines that the applicant would have practical difficulties designing or constructing the project without the minor modification. However, the city may require that an application meeting the criteria for a minor modification be treated as an application for a major modification if it determines that the application raises a significant public controversy on which numerous parties other than the owner of the property may want to offer testimony;

3. Major modifications.

Major modifications are those that do not qualify as administrative adjustments pursuant to subsection 50-37.1.L or minor modifications pursuant to subsection 2 above. Applications for major modifications shall be treated as a new application for an approval of the same type being modified. However, if the city determines that an application for modification is not consistent with a district plan applicable to the property, and that the inconsistency may materially and adversely affect other property owners subject to the same district plan, the city may require that the applicant obtain approval of a revised district plan instead of a major modification. In the case of a major modification involving a natural resources permit, the city may require additional reports and data necessary to evaluate the impacts of the modification;

N. Lapsing of approvals.

Some permits and approvals issued pursuant to this Chapter shall lapse and be of no further force or effect if the action approved in the permit or approval does not begin within a specific period of time, as listed below:

1. Approved preliminary plats for subdivision shall lapse unless a complete application for

a final plat of at least 50 percent of the land covered by the preliminary plat is submitted within one year of the preliminary plat approval. Approved final subdivision plats shall lapse unless the approved final plat is recorded within two years after approval;

2. Approved minor subdivisions and boundary line adjustments shall lapse unless recorded within 180 days of approval;

3. Approved vacations of streets shall lapse unless a plat showing the vacation is recorded with the office of the county recorder within 90 days after final approval;

4. Approved planning reviews, zoning permits, special use permits, interim use permits, concurrent use of street permits, sidewalk use permits and variances shall lapse if the project or activity authorized by the permit or variance is not begun within one year of the permit date. The building official may extend this period one time for a period of up to one year if the property owner presents a written request showing the reasons for the delay was outside the owner's control;

5. Erosion and sediment control permits (ESCP) shall lapse one year after approval if all construction activities are not completed or the entire site is not fully stabilized with 70 percent successful establishment of vegetation. In case of a lapse of the ESCP, a new permit shall be obtained;

6. Approved building permits shall lapse one year after issuance unless construction has begun by that date;

7. The MS-4 statement of compliance and accompanying drainage report will be valid for two years from the date of approval. If permanent stormwater facilities (BMPs) are not fully constructed and operational within two years, and extension of one year may be granted if a written request is submitted and approved by the city engineer. The written request should document the reasons for the extension and the current state of completion of the project;

O. Appeals.

This Section is intended to comply with the provisions of MSA 462.357 and MSA 360.068 as amended, and shall be interpreted to comply with those provisions wherever possible.

1. General provisions for appeal to planning commission.

(a) Except as noted in subsection 2, any person aggrieved by, or any department of the city affected by, any decision of any city official engaged in the administration or enforcement of this Chapter may appeal that decision to the planning commission. The appeal must be filed within ten days after the decision by filing with the building official a written notice of appeal addressed to the commission and specifying the grounds of the appeal;

(b) If the appeal relates to a decision regarding the zoning of an airport or the Airport Overlay district, any person aggrieved by the decision, any taxpayer affected by the decision and any governing body of a municipality, county or airport zoning board, that believes the decision is an improper application of this Chapter as it concerns that governing body or board may appeal that decision to the airport board of adjustment. The appeal must be filed within ten days after the decision by filing with the building official a written notice of appeal addressed to the board and specifying the grounds of the appeal. If the appellant is a person aggrieved or a taxpayer affected by the decision regarding the zoning of an airport or the Airport Overlay district, the applicant shall submit an appeal to the city clerk in the manner set forth in Minnesota Statutes 360.068, Subdivision 2. All appeals shall be pursuant to and consistent with the procedures in the Duluth International Airport Zoning Ordinance adopted by the city and four other jurisdictions, and in the event of an inconsistency between that Airport Zoning Ordinance and this Chapter, the provisions of the Airport Zoning Ordinance shall govern;

(c) The building official shall promptly transmit to the commission, or to the airport board of adjustment, as applicable, the documents and records related to the decision being appealed;

(d) A timely appeal shall stay all proceedings involved in the appeal; and no appeal shall be deemed to permit the appellant to do or to continue doing, directly or indirectly, any act or thing prohibited by the decision being appealed. However, if the building official notifies the planning commission in writing that a stay would cause imminent peril to life or property, and provides written reasons for that opinion, the planning commission may order that proceedings not be stayed pending appeal;

(e) The commission shall fix a time for a hearing on the appeal, shall provide notice of the hearing pursuant to Section 50-37.1.H, and shall hold a public hearing pursuant to Section 50-37.1.I;

(f) Any party may appear at the hearing in person, by agent or by attorney. Notice of the decision of the board shall be mailed to the appellant;

(g) If the appeal alleges that the boundaries of a wetlands or shorelands area on the Natural Resources Overlay map in Section 50-18.1 are in error, the appellant shall bear the burden of proving the map erroneous by the production of clear and convincing technical evidence;

2. Exceptions.

(a) An appeal from any decision regarding the interpretation or application of sign regulations in subsections 50-27.1.I, No safety obstructions, 50-27.1.L, Attachment to buildings, 50-27.1.M, Wind pressure design, 50-27.1.N, Electrical wiring, or 50-27.1, Certification of structural engineer, must be taken to the state building official as provided in the State Building Code;

(b) An appeal from a decision regarding a building permit must be taken to the building appeals board created in Article IV of Section 10 of the City Code or to the state building official;

(c) An appeal from any decision under the housing code provisions in Section 50-32 of this Chapter must be taken to the building appeals board;

(d) If an applicant believes that the decision of staff regarding compliance with the requirements of the SP-O zone district is incorrect or deprives the applicant of the reasonable use of his or her property, or is unreasonable given the size and shape of the property and its orientation to the protected views, the applicant may request review of the decision by the planning commission. The planning commission's review shall be based on the purpose and standards of this Section, but may authorize variations to those standards, in accordance with the procedures in Article V of this Chapter, if unusual site conditions not generally shared along Skyline Parkway make compliance with the standards unreasonable or ineffective to protect the intended views of Lake Superior, the St. Louis River and the harbor;

3. Powers of planning commission on appeal.

(a) The planning commission shall consider the record of the application and any testimony presented at the hearing regarding the application of this Chapter to the application and shall affirm, modify or reverse the decision appealed, and may make any orders, requirements, decisions or determinations that the building official or land use supervisor could have made regarding the application;

(b) In hearing permitted appeals of decisions regarding the sign regulations in Section 50-27, the planning commission shall have only the power to affirm, reverse or modify the decision of the building official;

(c) In the case of an appeal regarding the application of the NR-O Natural Resources Overlay district, no relief shall be granted that violates the limitations on variances applicable to that district;

(d) The decision of the planning commission shall be final unless a further appeal is filed pursuant to subsection 4 below;

4. Appeals of planning commission decisions to council.

(a) Except as provided in subsection 5 below, any person aggrieved by, or any department of the city affected by, any decision of the planning commission on an appeal pursuant to subsection 1 above may appeal that decision to the council;

(b) Any appeal must be filed within ten days after the planning commission's decision by filing with the city clerk a written notice of appeal addressed to the council and specifying the grounds for the additional appeal;

(c) The filing of a notice of appeal shall stay all proceedings in furtherance of the decision appealed from. However, if the building official notifies the council in writing that a stay would cause imminent peril to life or property, and provides written reasons for that opinion, the council may order that proceedings not be stayed pending appeal;

(d) The council shall hear the appeal at the next scheduled meeting with time available, and may affirm, modify or reverse the board's decision, and may make any orders, requirements, decisions, or determinations it deems appropriate regarding the appeal;

(e) No decision on an appeal or variance shall have the effect of allowing a use that is not a permitted or special use in the zone district where the property is located;

(f) If the appeal is regarding an application in any district where the approval of a

district plan is required or requested prior to development, the council shall only approve development plans if it finds that the requirements for the district plan in that district will be satisfied;

5. Appeal of planning commission decisions to the courts.

(a) In the case of an appeal regarding the zoning of an airport or an Airport Overlay district, the appeal shall proceed pursuant to applicable state law and shall be perfected within 60 days after the decision appealed from is filed in the office of the planning commission;

(b) In case of decisions appealable to the district court pursuant to MSA 462.361, the appeal shall be perfected in 60 days after the decision appealed from is filed in the office of the planning commission;

(c) All other appeals not otherwise provided for above shall be pursuant to MSA 606.01;

6. Appeals of heritage preservation commission decisions to council.

Where applicable, subsection 50-37.1.O.4 shall apply of heritage commissions decisions, when appealable to city council;

P. Security for improvements.

1. If the provisions of this Chapter or conditions attached to a permit or approval under this Chapter require the applicant to construct or make improvements to the property, to protect the city or adjacent property owners from injury or damage, or to return the property to a stated condition following the completion of operations or construction, and those actions have not been completed, then the city shall require the applicant to post security to ensure that those improvements are made in a timely manner, and that if the applicant fails to make those improvements the city will have adequate funds on hand to complete the improvements at the applicant's expense;

2. Security shall be posted in a form acceptable to the city, which may include but are not limited to cash, a promissory note, a letter of credit issued by a financial institution acceptable to the city, or a performance bond issued by a financial institution acceptable to the city. The security shall be in an amount equal to 110 percent of the estimated cost for the city to complete the improvements;

3. The city shall release posted financial security upon confirmation by the building official that the required improvements have been constructed in accordance with all applicable design and construction standards. In the case of any improvements to be dedicated to the city, the city shall release posted financial security upon acceptance of the improvements by the city. At the discretion of the building official, partial releases of financial security may be made after construction or dedication of some but not all of the required improvements, but financial security equal to 110 percent of the estimated cost of for the city to complete the improvements shall be retained;

4. As an alternative to requiring the posting of financial security, the city may authorize the issuance of a temporary certificate of occupancy for the property, provided that the applicant signs a development agreement with the city agreeing to pay the city a specific financial penalty per month if the required improvements are not constructed by a certain date. The amount of the penalty shall be calculated so that if the applicant does not construct the improvements within one year after the required date the penalties will equal at least that amount set in accordance with Section 31-8 of this Code of the estimated cost for the city to complete the improvements.

Section 6. That Section 50-37.1 of the Duluth City Code be amended as follows:

**50-37.7 Concurrent use of streets permit.**

This Section applies to all applications for construction of a skywalk and to any other application requesting that the city approve the concurrent use of the street surface, right-of-way or the air rights above the street or the land beneath the street, but shall not apply to the following:

1. Use of a portion of a public sidewalk for a café, eating area, transit shelter or bench, or bicycle parking area, or

2. An awning, canopy, marquee or wall sign extending not more than 18 inches into the public street right-of-way, or an awning or canopy of canvas, canvas-like material, nylon or vinyl-coated fabric extending into the public street right-of-way, up to the limits established by Section 50-27;

A. Application.

An application for concurrent use of streets shall be filed pursuant to Section 50-37.1.B;

B. Procedure

1. Review and recommendation.

The planning commission shall review the petition, conduct a public hearing on the application pursuant to Section 50-37.1.I, with public notice as required by Section 50-37.1.H and make a recommendation to council based on whether the application meets the criteria in subsection C below;

2. Council decision.

Upon receipt of the planning commission recommendation, the council shall make a decision to approve, approve with modifications or deny the application, in whole or part, based on the criteria in subsection C below. The council action shall be by ordinance;

C. Criteria

The planning commission shall review the application, and council shall approve the application or approve it with modifications, if it determines that:

1. The proposed concurrent use will not harm or inconvenience the health, safety and general welfare of the city;

2. Any proposed skywalk will significantly improve the circulation of pedestrians in the city without exposure to weather conditions;

3. No portion of a public easement proposed for use is being physically used or occupied by the public.

4. For requests for off-street parking in a public street right of way, a concurrent use permit may be granted in the following circumstances:

(a) Where overnight on-street parking is prohibited within that portion of the street frontage abutting the property; and

(b) Where the distance between the principle structure and the public street right of way is 18 feet or less; and

(c) Where access to the side or rear yard is not possible due to the presence of the principle structure and the lack of an improved alley; and

(d) Where a site plan has been submitted showing the arrangement of parking, landscaping, and pedestrian access to the property meeting the following standards:

(i) The parking area must be at least 9 feet wide by 17 feet deep, including any extension of the parking space from the public right of way into the abutting private property, and must not block existing or proposed public improvements such as sidewalks or streets;

(ii) The parking area width must not exceed 55% of the lot width;

(iii) The parking area must be improved with bituminous, concrete, or similar materials or pervious paving system;

(iv) A paved walkway at least 3 feet wide must be provided that links the front entrance of the dwelling and the street;

(v) A wall, fence or dense vegetative screen at least 3 feet tall and at least 75% opaque must be provided to screen parked vehicles from view of abutting properties;

(vi) Barriers must be installed to prevent vehicles from overrunning the parking and driveway areas, such barrier may be a fence, wall or raised curbing (or concrete parking bumpers when secured to the underlying pavement);

(e) A placard with a diagram no less than 5 inches by 7 inches showing the location and arrangement of parking spaces shall be visible at all times from the exterior of the dwelling; such placard shall be on all-weather media and installed on the front exterior door at an elevation of between 2 feet and 6 feet above the threshold;

(f) The applicant must sign a document acknowledging that private improvements installed in the public right of way may be removed by the City if needed for installation or repair of public improvements or if the applicant violates the terms of the permit.

Section 7. That Section 50-37.9 of the Duluth City Code be amended as follows:

**50-37.9 Variance.**

This Section applies to applications for a variance from the terms and provisions of this Chapter.

Different types of variances are subject to differing criteria for approval, and in many cases are also subject to limitations on the types of variances that can be granted.

A. Application

An application for a variance shall be filed pursuant to Section 50-37.1.B;

B. Procedure.

The planning commission shall review the application, conduct a public hearing on the application pursuant to Section 50-37.1.I, with public notice as required by Section 50-37.1.H, and shall make a decision on the application based on the criteria in subsections C through M below, as applicable to the specific type of variance being requested. The planning commission may grant a different variance or different form of relief than that requested by the applicant if it determines that the alternative relief better meets the criteria in subsections C through M below. The commission may impose appropriate conditions and safeguards to protect adjacent properties and the public interest, including but not limited to financial security pursuant to Section 50-37.2.P or a development agreement regarding the design, construction and operation of the project, to protect the comprehensive land use plan, to conserve and protect property and property values in the neighborhood and to ensure that all conditions of the variance will continue to be met. Constructing any improvement or beginning any activity authorized by the variance shall constitute the applicant's agreement to conform to all terms and conditions of the permit;

C. General variance criteria

Unless different or inconsistent criteria or limitations are stated in subsections D through M below for the specific type of variance being requested, the planning commission shall approve an application for a variance, or approve it with conditions, if it finds that the proposed variance meets the following criteria. If there is a direct conflict between a provision or criteria in subsections D through M below and the general criteria in this subsection C, the provisions in subsections D through M shall govern:

1. Because of the exceptional narrowness, shallowness or shape of the applicant's property, or because of exceptional topographic or other conditions related to the property, the strict application of the requirements of this Chapter would result in practical difficulties to the property owner;
2. The plight of the property owner is due to circumstances unique to the property, and not created by the property owner or the property owners predecessors-in-interest.
3. The special circumstances or conditions applying to the building or land in question are peculiar to such property or immediately adjoining property, and do not apply generally to other land or buildings in the vicinity;
4. The property owner proposes to use the property in a reasonable manner not permitted by this code;
5. The relief will not impair an adequate supply of light and air to adjacent property or unreasonably increase the congestion in public streets or the danger of fire or imperil the public safety or unreasonably diminish or impair established property values within the surrounding areas or in any other respect impair the health, safety or public welfare of the inhabitants of the city;
6. The relief may be granted without substantially impairing the intent of this Chapter and the official zoning map;
7. The relief does not allow any type of sign that is not allowed in the zone district where the property is located, pursuant to Section 50-27;
8. The relief complies with any additional limitations or criteria applicable to that variance in subsections D through M below;
9. Economic considerations alone shall not constitute a practical difficulty;

D. No use variances.

No variance may be permitted to allow any use that is not listed in Table 50-19.8 as a permitted or special use in the zone district where the property is located, or Table 50 27.4 for a permitted sign in the district where the property is located;

E. Variances to lot size in unsewered areas.

A variance from the minimum lot size in unsewered area shall not be granted without presentation of a permit or letter of intent to issue a permit for onsite sewerage treatment from the county.

F. Variances for two-family dwellings in the R-1 district.

The commission shall not grant any variance from the requirements for the allowance of two-family dwellings within the R-1 zone district except:

1. A variance from the required front yard setback;
2. A variance reducing the minimum dimensional requirements by up to ten percent;
- G. Variances from parking and loading regulations.
  1. Residential districts.

(a) A variance may be granted to allow parking on a portion of a lot in an R-zone a residential district where parking is not permitted by Section 50-24.6.B in the following two cases for lots meeting all the following:

- (1) The distance between the dwelling and the public right of way exceeds 18 feet; and
- (2) The position of the principle structure on the lot does not permit access to the side or rear yard; and
- (3) There is no improved alley or street providing access to the side or rear yard; and
- (4) There is no permitted overnight parking on any street within 150 feet of the property;

(i) ~~On any non-corner lot in an R district where the permitted parking area as shown in Table 50-24-3 is of insufficient size or configuration to allow for compliance with the off street parking requirements of this Chapter, and the applicant demonstrates hardship;~~

(ii) ~~On any corner lot in an R district where the R district parking area is of insufficient size or configuration to allow for compliance with the off street parking requirements of this Chapter, without a showing of hardship;~~

(b) The variance shall be subject to the following conditions, and any other conditions determined by the commission to be reasonable and necessary to protect the interests of the abutting property owners and the residential character of the surrounding neighborhood:

- (1) The maximum variance that can be granted shall not exceed 55% of the lot width;
- (2) A paved walkway at least 3 feet wide shall be provided that links the front entrance of the dwelling and the street;
- (3) A wall, fence or dense vegetative screen at least 3 feet tall and at least 75% opaque must be provided to screen parked vehicles from view of abutting properties and the street, where screening the street view is possible;
- (4) Barriers must be installed to prevent vehicles from overrunning the parking and driveway areas; such barrier may be a fence, wall or raised curbing (or concrete parking bumpers when secured to the underlying pavement);
- (5) A placard with a diagram no less than 5 inches by 7 inches showing the location and arrangement of parking spaces shall be visible at all times from the exterior of the dwelling; such placard shall be on all-weather media and installed on the front exterior door at an elevation of between 2 feet and 6 feet above the threshold;

(i) ~~On a non-corner lot with frontage of less than 50 feet, only one parking area may be located outside the R district parking area;~~

(ii) ~~On a corner lot with frontage of less than 50 feet, the variance may allow for compliance with the off street parking requirements of this Chapter;~~

(iii) ~~On a corner or non-corner lot with frontage of 50 feet or greater, no variance may allow a parking area, including any driveway area leading to it, to exceed an additional 30 percent of the front yard;~~

(iv) ~~The proposed parking area shall be entirely located on the applicant's lot and shall not encroach across any abutting lot line unless such abutting lot and the subject lot are under the same ownership and the abutting lot is not occupied by a dwelling unit;~~

(v) ~~Where the proposed parking area will encroach into any unimproved area of a street, the variance shall expire upon improvement of the street;~~

(vi) ~~Economic considerations, in whole or part, shall not constitute a hardship;~~

2. Reducing required parking spaces.

Except as provided in 50 37.9.G, variances from the minimum amount of off-street parking required may be approved if a smaller amount of off-site parking will be adequate to meet the needs of the facility because the facility is restricted to occupancy or use by populations with documented lower vehicle uses, such as the elderly or disabled;

3. Exceeding required parking spaces.

Variances from the maximum parking limits provided in 50-24.4 shall not exceed 200 percent of the minimum requirement provided in Table 50-24.1. In addition to meeting the general variance criteria in 50-37.9C, a parking study that provides justification for the number of off-street parking spaces proposed is required. It must include estimates of parking demand based on recommendations of the Institute of Traffic Engineers (ITE), or other acceptable estimates as approved by the City Engineer and should include other reliable data collected from uses or combinations of uses that are the same as or comparable with the proposed use. Comparability will be determined by density, scale, bulk, area, type of activity, and location. The study must document the source of data used to develop the recommendations.

H. Variances to reduce setbacks.

When the application is for the reduction of a required front, rear or side yard setback, the commission may require the submission of a landscaping and buffering plan, and may require that all required landscaping or buffering, or landscaping and buffering of equal effectiveness, be installed within the reduced setback area. Decorative fencing and decorative wall structures may be proposed where more intense vegetated landscaping will not provide adequate mitigation of impacts on adjacent properties. The commission shall only approve the variance if the landscaping and buffering will mitigate impacts on adjacent properties as effectively as those required by Sections 50-25 and 50-26 of this Chapter;

I. Variances in the MU-C district.

1. Within the MU-C district, the only variances that may be approved are variations in any dimensional standard in Sections 50-15.3 and 50-21 by no more than ten percent. However, if the need for a variance is the result of a government taking pursuant to eminent domain powers, then (a) the limits of this subsection I.1 shall not apply and (b) all or part of the required landscaping and buffering may be placed in the public right-of-way if the property owner executes a perpetual maintenance agreement with the owner of the right-of-way;

2. In the case of a setback reduction variance, the landscaping and buffering in any reduced setback area shall be at least four feet in height and screen out at least 50 percent of the view of any parking area, unless the setback is reduced to less than five feet, in which case it shall screen out at least 75 percent of the view of the parking area;

J. Variances in A-O airport overlay district.

Variances shall be pursuant to and consistent with the procedures in the Duluth International Airport Zoning Ordinance adopted by the city and four other jurisdictions, and in the event of an inconsistency between that Airport Zoning Ordinance and this Chapter, the provisions of the Airport Zoning Ordinance shall govern;

K. Variances from flood plain regulations.

Variances to the flood plain regulations in Section 50-18.1.C shall only be granted in compliance with the limitations in this subsection K.

1. In a floodway:

(a) No variance shall be granted that would result in any increase in flood levels during the base flood discharge;

(b) No variance shall authorize the placement of a manufactured home, dwelling unit or any structure designed for human habitation;

(c) No variance shall be granted authorizing a lesser degree of floodproofing or flood protection than is required by Section 50-18.1.C;

(d) Variances shall be limited to giving the applicant a minimal reasonable use of the site;

2. In a flood fringe:
  - (a) No variance shall authorize a lesser degree of floodproofing or flood protection than is required by Section 50-18.1.C;
  - (b) Variances shall not produce any adverse effects to the flood capacity or efficiency of the watercourse;
3. Flood insurance notice and recordkeeping.

The building official shall notify the applicant for a variance that:

  - (a) The issuance of a variance to construct a structure below the base flood level will result in increased premium rates for flood insurance up to amounts as high as \$25 for \$100 of insurance coverage; and
  - (b) Construction below the 100 year or regional flood level increases risks to life and property. Such copy notification shall be maintained with a record of all variance actions. The building official shall maintain a record of all variance actions, including justification for their issuance, and report such variances issued in its annual or biennial report submitted to the administrator of the national flood insurance program;
4. General considerations.

The city shall consider the following factors in granting variances and imposing conditions on permits and variances in flood plains:

  - (a) The potential danger to life and property due to increased flood heights or velocities caused by encroachments;
  - (b) The danger that materials may be swept onto other lands or downstream to the injury of others;
  - (c) The proposed water supply and sanitation systems, if any, and the ability of these systems to minimize the potential for disease, contamination and unsanitary conditions;
  - (d) The susceptibility of any proposed use and its contents to flood damage and the effect of such damage on the individual owner;
  - (e) The importance of the services to be provided by the proposed use to the community;
  - (f) The requirements of the facility for a waterfront location;
  - (g) The availability of viable alternative locations for the proposed use that are not subject to flooding;
  - (h) The compatibility of the proposed use with existing development and development anticipated in the foreseeable future;
  - (i) The relationship of the proposed use to the comprehensive land use plan and flood plain management program for the area;
  - (j) The safety of access to the property in times of flood for ordinary and emergency vehicles; and
  - (k) The expected heights, velocity, duration, rate of rise and sediment transport of the flood waters expected at the site;
5. Submittal of hearing and decision notices to the DNR.
  - (a) The planning commission shall submit to the commissioner of the DNR a copy of the application for proposed variance sufficiently in advance so that the commissioner will receive at least ten days' notice of the hearing. Such notice shall specify the time, place, and subject matter of the hearing and shall be accompanied by such supporting information as is necessary to indicate the nature and effect of the proposed use. The notice may be sent by electronic mail or U.S. mail to the respective DNR area hydrologist;
  - (b) A copy of all decisions granting variances shall be forwarded to the commissioner of the DNR within ten days of such action. The notice may be sent by electronic mail or U.S. mail to the respective DNR area hydrologist;
6. Additional federal emergency management agency conditions.

The following additional conditions of FEMA must be satisfied:

  - (a) Variances shall only be issued upon (i) a showing of good and sufficient cause,

(ii) a determination that failure to grant the variance would result in exceptional hardship to the applicant, and  
(iii) a determination that the granting of a variance will not result in increased flood heights, additional threats to public safety, extraordinary public expense, create nuisances, cause fraud on or victimization of the public, or conflict with existing local laws or ordinances;

(b) Variances shall only be issued upon a determination that the variance is the minimum necessary, considering the flood hazard, to afford relief;

7. Conditions attached to variances,

Upon consideration of the factors listed above and the purpose of this Section, the planning commission may attach such conditions to the granting of variances and permits as it deems necessary to fulfill the purposes of this Section. Such conditions may include, but are not limited to, the following:

(a) Modification of waste treatment and water supply facilities;

(b) Limitations on period of use, occupancy, and operation;

(c) Imposition of operational controls, sureties, and deed restrictions;

(d) Requirements for construction of channel modifications, compensatory storage, dikes, levees, and other protective measures; and

(e) Floodproofing measures, in accordance with the State Building Code and this chapter. The applicant shall submit a plan or document certified by a registered professional engineer or architect that the floodproofing measures are consistent with the regulatory flood protection elevation and associated flood factors;

L. Standards for variances in shorelands.

No variance shall be granted that compromises the general purposes or intent of Section 50-18.1.D or results in adverse consequences to the environment. Variances shall include a requirement for the applicant to mitigate the impacts of the variance on shoreland areas;

M. Reconstruction of a nonconforming building.

A variance may be granted to permit the reconstruction of a nonconforming building that has been damaged from any cause or has deteriorated to the extent of more than 60 percent of its assessed market value as determined by the city assessor, if the commission determines that it is necessary for the preservation and enjoyment of a substantial property right and is not detrimental to the public welfare of the city.

Section 8. That this ordinance shall take effect 30 days after its passage and publication.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE: This ordinance implements text amendments to chapter 50 of the City Code, known as the Unified Development Chapter (UDC). Amendments address where parking is allowed within a site and how the parking surface is to be improved. It establishes variance criteria and standards for parking in residential districts, adds an administrative adjustment for minor encroachments of parking into a front yard, and provides guidance on reviewing requests by abutting property owners for private parking within the street right of way via a concurrent use permit. The ordinance also amends the public notification process for preliminary plats, minor subdivisions, and Comprehensive Plan amendments.

The planning commission held a public hearing and considered the changes at their April 11, 2017 regular meeting and at an April 25, 2017 special meeting. At the April 25, 2017 meeting they voted 4-3 to recommend that the city council approve these ordinance changes.