



Applicability of Carports When Calculating Floor Area for Design Review of Single Family Dwellings

Background: Section 10-2.4.1203.1 of the Zoning Ordinance lists several different thresholds for when Design Review is required for single family dwellings. Several of these thresholds refer to the gross floor area or Floor Area Ratio of the “dwelling and proposed addition (including any garage or other buildings on the lot)” or the “principal structure (including garage)”.

The definition for “Floor Area Ratio (FAR)” (Section 10-2.1.303 of the Zoning Ordinance) is “the ratio of developed gross floor area to net lot area, both expressed in square feet.”

The definition for “gross floor area” (§10-2.1.303) includes an exception for “crawl spaces, garages, carports, breezeways, attics without floors, and open porches, balconies and terraces,” but then goes on to state that for the purposes of determining the requirement for Design Review for single family dwellings that it shall include “garages and all buildings on a lot.”

The definition for “building” (§10-2.1.303) includes “any structure having a roof supported by columns or walls”.

A strict reading of the code could infer that a carport meets the definition for a building and therefore is included in the calculation of gross floor area for the purpose of determining the requirement for Design Review under the “oversized home” regulations. However, the definition for gross floor area exempts garages and carports but then specifically includes only garages in determining the requirement for Design Review for single family dwellings. Additionally, it was the intent of the Planning Commission and City Council to only regulate buildings that contribute to the mass of a dwelling, rather than open structures such as carports, under the “oversized home” regulations.

Action: Carports will not be included in calculating gross floor area for the purpose of determining the requirement for Design Review under the “oversized home” regulations. **Note:** The Planning Manager will, however, retain the ability to modify this determination for carports whose design does contribute to the mass of the single family dwelling (such as carports with three walls).