

Residential Neighborhoods

Garage Entry and Location

- Sections 27-307 (NX1) & 27-308 (NX2/NX3)

Current Code: Requires Garage entry from side or rear and located in the rear half of the principal structure



Side-by-side multifamily in Billings

Front load garages – NX and other N zones

The Code update in 2021, included siting and building standards for neighborhood districts that specified where attached garage door openings can be placed in relation to the exterior property lines. The N districts all allow garage door openings to face the front street but limit the percentage of garage door opening on the street-facing building façade. This is to ensure we have “eyes on the street” for public safety and to increase the walkability of neighborhood streets. Streets that are merely lined with garage doors – and no living spaces – are uninviting places to walk and can be dangerous for vulnerable pedestrians such as young children or older adults. The NX – Mixed Residential – zone districts and all of the commercial Mixed Use districts require the attached garage entrance to be on the side, side adjacent or rear façade of the structure. Parking lots and detached parking structures are also required to not face front streets. There are some local examples of side-by-side attached dwellings with street facing garage doors that exhibit designs that meet the intent of the new zoning code – ensuring safety and walkability of local neighborhood streets. Other jurisdictions with codes that limit garage door openings on front streets have some flexibility built into the code to allow for some use along front streets.

Recommended Solution:

Allow limited numbers and widths of front façade attached garages in the NX zones. The code can be

amended to allow a limited number or width of front-load attached garages. Here is some draft language:
“Where no alley or rear access system exists or is planned, a single-wide garage entry door of 10 feet in width or less, per dwelling unit facing the front street is allowed in the NX1 and NX2 zone districts with the following limitations:

- 1) The garage door entry is setback least eight feet or more from the front façade of the living area of the dwelling; and
 - 2) No more than two 10-foot wide garage doors are side-by-side; and
 - 3) Side-by-side garage entries shall share one driveway no more than 25 feet in width; and
 - 4) Shared driveways for side-by-side garage entries will be spaced at least 40 feet apart.
- In the NX3 zone district a single-wide garage entry door of 10 feet in width or less per dwelling unit facing the front street is allowed only for side-by-side units in one principal structure and only for side-by-side unit structures with 12 or fewer units. The same limitations in 1 through 4 apply.”



Example of side-by-side units with shared driveways and side-by-side single garage doors between units. The attached garages are setback further than the front façade about 8 to 10 feet.

Here is an example of what we do not want to encourage:



These are five side-by-side units. You cannot see the front door of the townhomes from the street and if you leave the garage door open accidentally, you would never know.



These are several duplexes on a cul-de-sac

All of these townhomes were built during the same time period 2006-2007. The townhomes with garage dominate front facades appraise much lower than the non-dominate garage townhomes.