



**CITY OF SALINAS
FINANCE COMMITTEE**

DATE: NOVEMBER 4, 2019

DEPARTMENT: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

FROM: MEGAN HUNTER, DIRECTOR

**TITLE: ZONING AMENDMENT TO ALLOW DRIVEWAY WIDTH
MODIFICATION FOR A CUP**

RECOMMENDED MOTION:

A motion to recommend the City Council Adopt Zoning Code Amendment to allow driveway width increase without a change to the related fee schedule.

DISCUSSION:

The proposed Zoning Code Amendment would allow residential owners to legally expand their driveways through a minor exception Conditional Use Permit (CUP) process at a significantly reduced cost. The CUP would remain with the property and the property owner would only have to incur a one-time expense. The property owner would not be required to obtain a building permit or pay a fee unlike other building related work.

Although the cost may seem expensive to increase driveway width, the actual administrative cost for this process is \$1670.40. This cost estimate is extremely conservative and based upon a very streamlined administrative CUP process. Despite the fact that this cost is likely underestimated, it still represents a 48% discount from the City fee of \$869.91. In reviewing the fee schedule, it is important to note that the least expensive planning fee is the Home Occupation Permit of \$147.26. This permit is issued at the counter, and involves no review, no noticing, and no report.

Streamlining this process further to reduce costs is also problematic because there are many important considerations. The increase in driveway width could impact stormwater standards, limit fire and utility access, and affect neighboring properties. Sometimes staff will need to work closely with property owners to legalize expanded driveways, which could require some removal of existing concrete and establishing a plan to give property owners more time. The CUP will also ensure that the approval is recorded and runs with the land to assist future property transfers and create transparency with code enforcement actions.

Establishing a significant rate reduction for a limited term could also be problematic because it could encourage a rush to legalize driveways that would overburden planning staff and cause delays on processing ministerial approvals for larger economic development projects. Because of the Permit Streamlining Act, staff would have to meet mandated time frames for the driveway CUPs. Based on current code cases, we anticipate many property owners applying for this CUP.

FISCAL AND SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT:

Already the City is not recovering full costs for this Minor Exception CUPs. If ten properties applied for this CUP process, the City loses approximately \$8,000. If the City reduced the cost to \$100, the loss would almost be \$15,000. The City would not even cover out of pocket expense for mailing notices and recording documents. At such a low rate of \$100, the same as a minor citation for code enforcement, the number of applications will likely be much greater. Thus, the loss to the City could skyrocket.

Should City Council still want to offer a further discounted rate, the only other reasonable option, could be to align this cost with that of Plumbing in an Accessory Structure at the cost of \$616.88. This still would require a resolution to amend the fee schedule.

Attachment:

Cost for Minor Exception of a CUP