

Residential Setbacks and Development Standards

This is a summary of general area and setback standards for the R-1 and R-2 zoning districts. The majority of residential properties located within the City of Tacoma are zoned as R-1 or R-2. These standards apply to new single-family dwellings and additions.

MINIMUM AREA AND SETBACKS

District	Lot Area*	Lot Width*	Lot Frontage	Front Yard Setback	Side Yard Setback	Rear Yard Setback
R-1	7,500 sq ft	50 ft	25 ft	25 ft	7.5 ft	25 ft
R-2	5,000 sq ft	50 ft	25 ft	20 ft	5 ft	25 ft

*Small-Lot Development for some lots may be allowed. See Tip Sheet P-145 for regulations regarding existing or proposed lots that are less than the minimum area or lot width noted above.

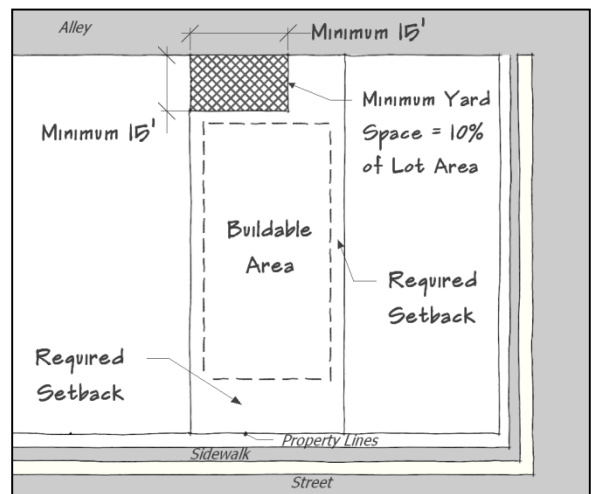
OPEN YARD SPACE

Every property must maintain open yard space. Open yard space cannot include vehicle driveway or parking areas and must:

- be located in the rear or side yard
- be equal to at least 10% of the parcel area,
- and have no dimensions less than 15 feet
- or 12 feet for parcels smaller than 3,500 sf

SETBACK LINES

Setback lines identify buildable area on a property. In most zoning districts there are minimum required front, side, and rear setbacks. Building setbacks are measured from the property lines, however, in the case of an alley abutting a rear yard, the rear setback may be measured from the centerline of the alley in the R-1 and R-2 districts.



Example of buildable area resulting from required setbacks and required minimum yard space

HEIGHT LIMITS*

District	Main Dwelling	Accessory Buildings
R-1	35 feet	15 feet
R-2	35 feet	15 feet
VSD (View Sensitive)	25 feet	15 feet

*Height is established by a plane created above four base elevation points. [Tip Sheet L-554](#) explains how to determine height.

Solar panels/collectors are allowed to exceed the maximum height limit, provided they do not extend more than 12 inches above the surface of the roof, as measured to the upper side of the solar panel, and on pitched roofs do not extend above the ridgeline.



Note: This Tip Sheet does not substitute for codes and regulations.

The applicant is responsible for compliance with all codes and regulations, whether or not described in this document.

More information: City of Tacoma, Planning and Development Services | www.tacomapermits.org (253) 591-5030

To request this information in an alternative format or a reasonable accommodation, please call 253-591-5030 (voice).

TTY or STS users please dial 711 to connect to Washington Relay Services.

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PORCH AND DECK PROJECTIONS

- Uncovered decks over 8 feet above grade may extend up to 4 feet beyond the front or rear yard setback lines and up to 2 feet beyond the side yard setback line
- Uncovered decks between 30 inches and 8 feet above grade may extend up to 8 feet beyond the front or rear yard setback lines
- Covered porches that are open on 3 sides and on the level of the first floor, may extend up to 8 feet beyond the front yard setback line
- Depending on proximity to property lines or other structures, fire protection may be required, per the Building Code

CORNER LOTS

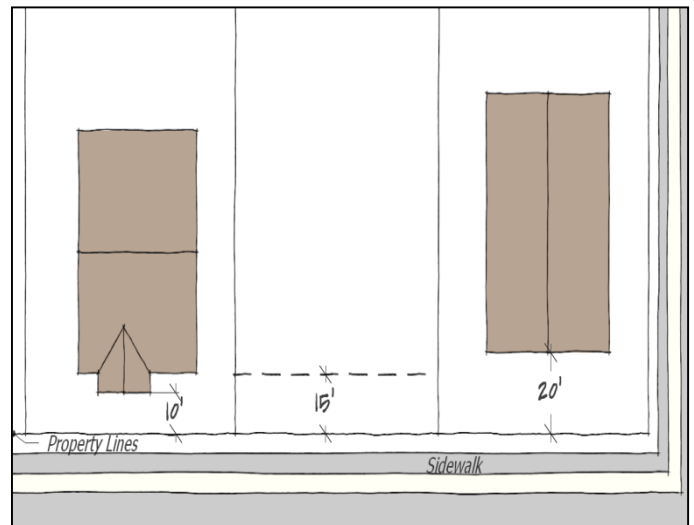
If a parcel has more than one frontage, such as in the case of corner lots, the most conforming setbacks are applied.

When the rear property line of a corner parcel abuts the side property line of a neighboring parcel, the side yard setback on the street side of the corner parcel must be equal to at least half of the front yard setback provided by the property to the rear. In no case shall a side yard setback be less than 5 feet.



FRONT YARD AVERAGING

When there are legally existing main dwellings on both neighboring properties of a parcel, the average of the front yard setbacks provided by those dwellings may be used as the required front yard setback of the subject property.



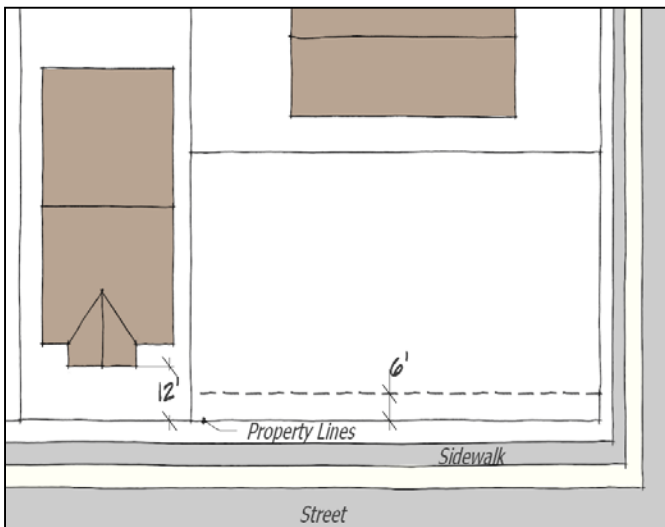
Example of front yard averaging:

In this example, there is an existing 20-foot setback on one side and a 10-foot setback on the other.

Therefore, the proposed house would have a reduced setback of 15 feet.

APPLICABLE REGULATIONS

- Tacoma Municipal Code Section: [13.06.100 - Residential Districts](#), [13.06.602 - General Restrictions](#)
- Tacoma Municipal Code Section: [2.02 - Building Code](#)



Example of corner lot side yard setback:

The side yard of the neighboring parcel abuts the rear yard of a corner parcel. There is a 12-foot front yard setback provided by the existing house.

Therefore, the proposed house on the corner lot would need a 6-foot side yard setback.



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