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# PLANNING

Planning is a Division of the Department of Planning & Development Services

## ACCESSORY BUILDINGS & STRUCTURES

### *What is an accessory building or structure?*

An accessory building is a secondary building that may be detached from the primary structure, or physically attached to the primary structure. Residential storage buildings, detached garages, carports, etc. fall under this definition.

### *What are the setbacks for an accessory buildings or structures?*

Please see diagrams on page three for clarification. For placement other than what is illustrated, please contact us.

*Note: Except for carports addressed in section 513 of the Zoning Ordinance, **NO** accessory buildings or structures, either attached or detached, will be allowed within the minimum front yard required on the lot (beyond the front building line).*

### *Are there restrictions on the size of accessory buildings/structures as they relate to the primary residence?*

Yes, the restrictions are:

- In residential zoning districts (**RS-1, RS-2, RS-3, RM-1, RM-2**), the total of all accessory buildings/structures on the lot cannot exceed 600 square feet **OR** half (50%) of the total square footage of the primary residence, whichever is greater.
- In the Ranch & Estate zoning districts (**R&E**), the total of all accessory buildings/structures on the lot cannot exceed 100% of the total of the primary residence. See Figure A.

### *Are there restrictions on the size of accessory buildings/structures as they relate to the size of the lot?*

Yes, there are limitations to the amount of space on a lot that accessory buildings/structures may occupy. The Floor Area Ratio (**FAR**) establishes the maximum lot coverage allowance, and varies depending on the zoning district.

### *How is the FAR calculated?*

- This is calculated by determining the total square footage of all existing buildings on the property, and adding the square footage of any proposed accessory building/structure (i.e. "A" = house + detached garage + proposed shed = 3000sqft). Then, divide this number by the total square footage of the lot ("B" = 10000sqft) which equals ("C"). This number is your FAR.

$$\text{Example: } A (3000\text{sqft}) \div B (10000\text{sqft}) = C (.30)$$

The maximum FAR in each residential zoning district is as follows:

Zoning District	R&E	RS-1	RS-2	RS-3	RM-1	RM-2
FAR	0.20	0.40	0.50	0.60	0.75	1.00

**Scenario 1:** A property is 1 acre (**43,560 sqft**) in size, and zoned Ranch & Estate (R&E). The primary residence is **3,000 sqft**. The proposed detached garage is **2,000 sqft** and there are no other buildings on the property. The table above shows that R&E districts are limited to a FAR of **0.20** (or **20%**).

1. The total of all existing buildings on the lot is 3,000 sqft. The proposed detached garage is 2,000 sqft. Adding those together produces 5,000 sqft, or **"A"**.
2. 1 acre equals 43,560 sqft, so **"B"** = 43,560 sqft.
3. **A** (5,000 sqft) ÷ **B** (43,560 sqft) = **C** (0.114, or 11.4%).
4. The 0.114, or 11.4%, is clearly allowable within the maximum FAR for this zoning district of 0.20, or 20%. Proceed with seeking a building permit. The building permit application and handout can be found on the Permits website at [www.cosatx.us/permits](http://www.cosatx.us/permits).

Another approach is to multiply 43,560 sqft by 0.20 (the maximum FAR for this zoning district).  $43,560 \text{ sqft} \times 0.20 = 8,712 \text{ sqft}$ . Therefore, on a 1 acre lot within the R&E zoning district, no more than 8,712 sqft of buildings/structures may be permitted.

**Scenario 2:** A property is **10,000 sqft** lot in size, and zoned Single-Family Residence (RS-1). The primary residence is **2,900 sqft**, and the existing accessory building is **840 sqft**. The proposed accessory building is **1,200 sqft**. The table above shows that RS-1 districts are limited to a FAR of **0.40** (or **40%**).

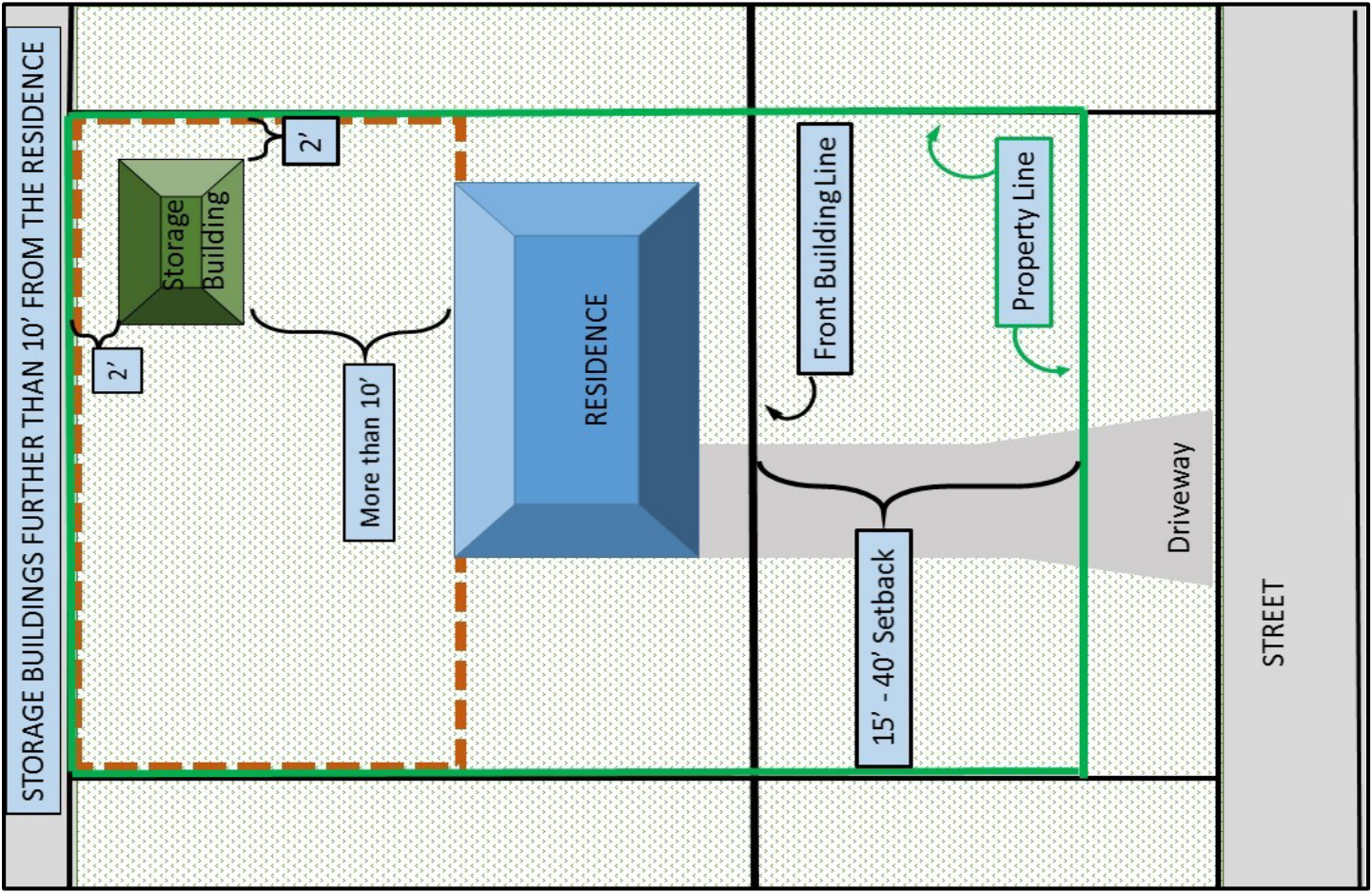
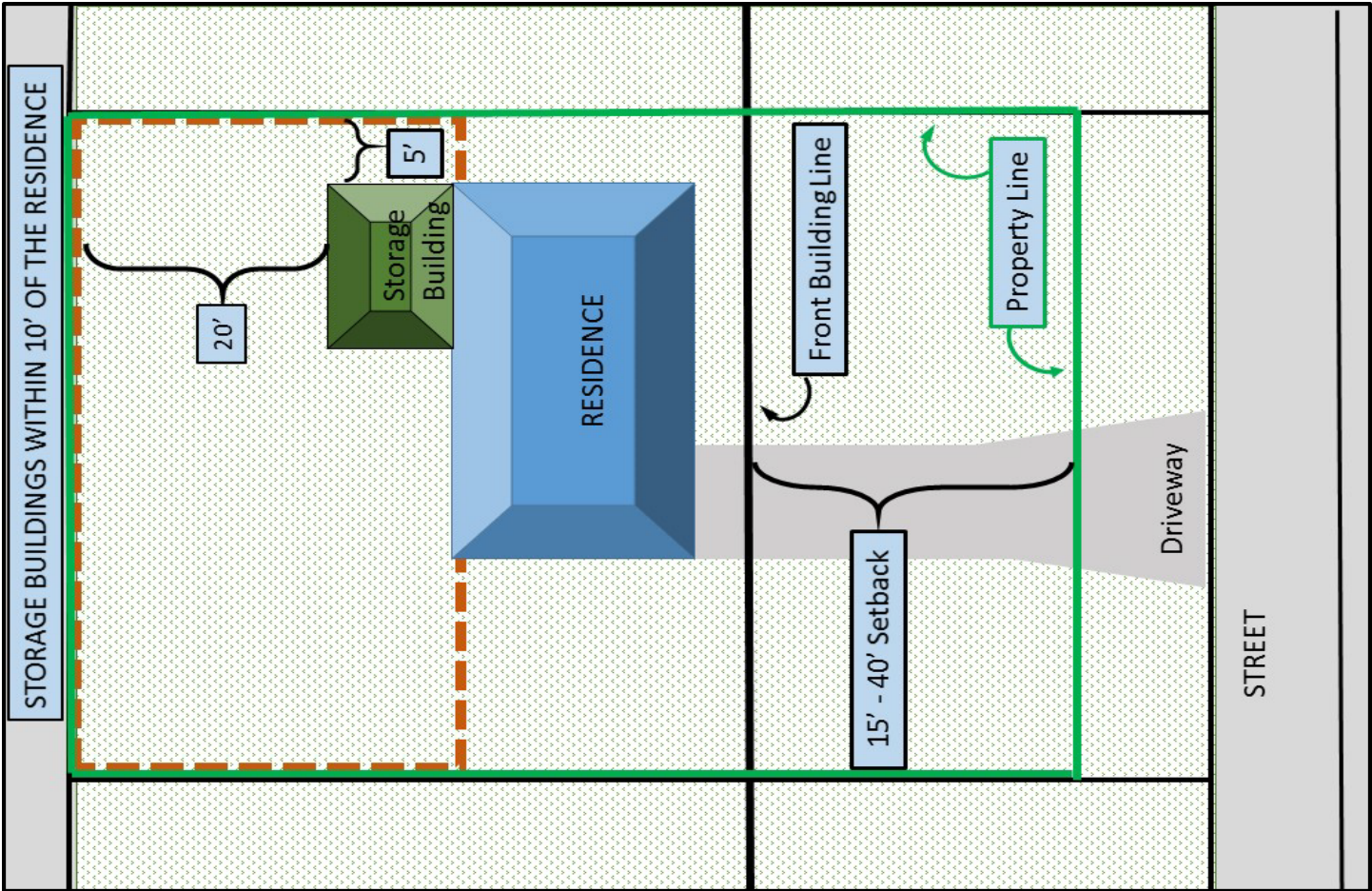
1. The total of all existing buildings on the lot is 3,740 sqft. The proposed accessory building is 1,200 sqft. Adding those together produces 4,940 sqft, or **"A"**.
2. The size of the lot is 10,000 sqft, so **"B"** = 10,000 sqft.
3. **A** (4,940 sqft) ÷ **B** (10,000 sqft) = **C** (0.494, or 49.4%).
4. The 0.494, or 49.4%, is clearly **NOT** allowable within the maximum FAR for this zoning district of 0.40, or 40%. The proposed accessory building must be downsized before proceeding to seek a building permit. The building permit application and handout can be found on the Permits website at [www.cosatx.us/permits](http://www.cosatx.us/permits).

Another approach is to multiply 10,000 sqft by 0.40 (the maximum FAR for this zoning district).  $10,000 \text{ sqft} \times 0.40 = 4,000 \text{ sqft}$ . Therefore, on a 10,000 sqft lot within the RS-1 zoning district, no more than 4,000 sqft of buildings/structures may be permitted.

***Are there specific buildings/structures that are prohibited for use?***

Shipping crates, railroad cars, truck or bus bodies, and other similar containers are prohibited as accessory buildings/structures in **ANY** residential district.







**Figure A**

The Proposed 500 SqFt Storage building could be approved because combined with the existing 500 SqFt Detached Garage adds up to half of the 2000 SqFt Primary Residence/Structure.

