

Proposed Property Conservation Code Amendments

City Council Workshop
May 27, 2014



WORKSHOP AGENDA

1. Workshop purpose
2. Background
3. Examples of conditions of concern
4. Proposed code standards
5. Schedule and next steps

WORKSHOP PURPOSE

- Review draft code amendments
- Review public comments concerning draft amendments
- Provide direction to staff regarding proposed amendments

BACKGROUND

- The City receives many complaints about conditions that are not violations of City codes. Examples: landscaping, vehicle and RV storage, and appearance of homes.
- November 2013 – Sparks City Council holds workshop and directs staff to work on a limited set of property conservation code changes.

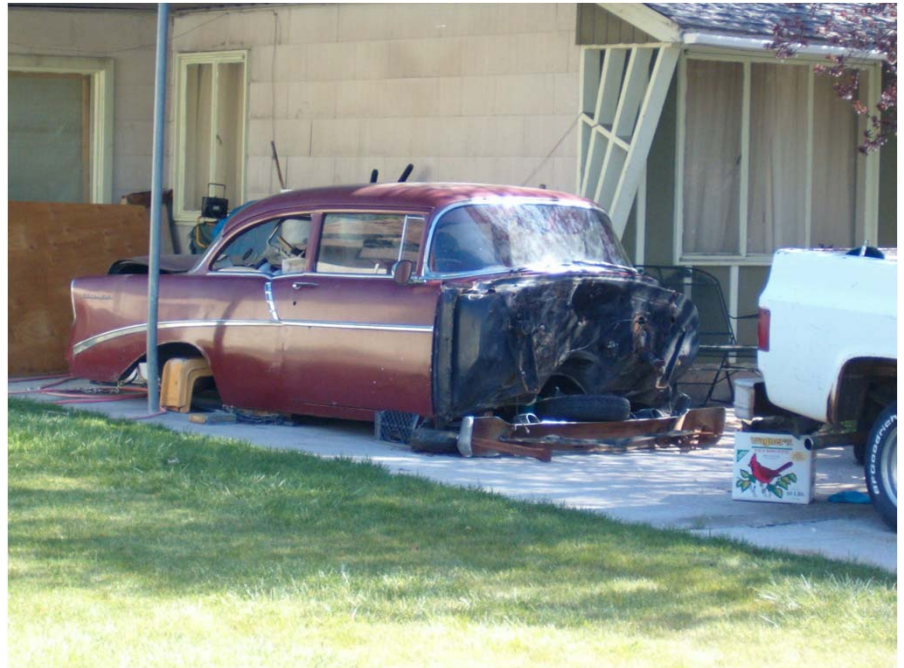
Vehicle storage





Visible vehicle storage in a side yard

Inoperable vehicle



RV storage



Lack of landscaping or ground covers

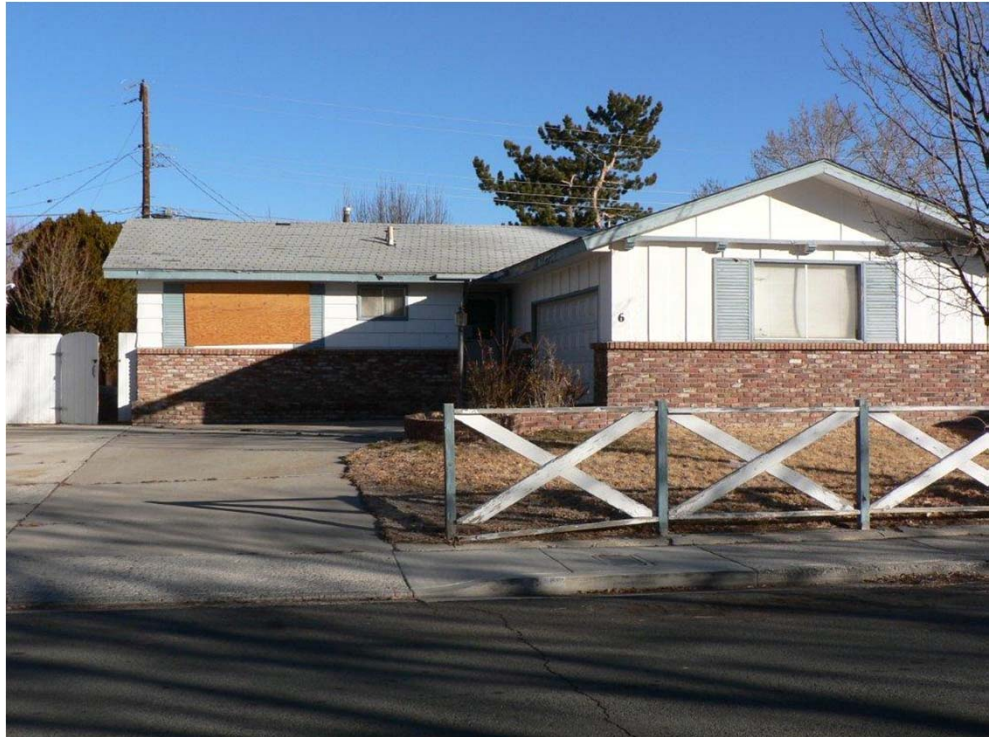


Dead Landscaping





Boarded-up windows



MINOR VEHICLE REPAIR

“Minor vehicle repair work” is defined and allowed but limited to regular maintenance items such as:

- Engine tune-ups, oil changes, fluid replacements, brake replacement and tire changes.

Work may only be performed on vehicles registered to an occupant of the residential address where the work is being performed.

MAJOR VEHICLE REPAIR

Code change defines “major repair work” as including but not limited to major mechanical or body repairs, replacements and/or dismantling of any motorized or non-motorized vehicles, boats, campers or trailers

Major repair work is categorized as a nuisance.

WRECKED & JUNKED VEHICLES

Code change defines “wrecked and/or junked items/vehicles”

Allowed if stored:

- In a conforming, completely enclosed structure.
- In the rear yard out of public view – i.e., behind a six foot high opaque fence or comparable landscaping – and if it does not create a health or safety hazard.

INOPERABLE VEHICLES

Code change defines “inoperable vehicles”

Permitted if stored:

- In a conforming, completely enclosed structure.
- In front yard if vehicles are screened from public view with an opaque cover manufactured specifically for the purpose, on a solid surface area and subject to paving limitations (permitted driveways and area between driveway and side lot line.)

INOPERABLE VEHICLES

Inoperable vehicles may be stored (cont.):

- In rear & side yards if vehicles are screened from public view with an opaque cover manufactured specifically for the purpose, or behind a six foot high opaque fence or comparable landscaping.

RECREATIONAL VEHICLES

Recreational vehicle" is redefined to mean:

- Boats and other watercraft;
- all-terrain vehicles;
- motorbikes for off-road use;
- motor homes and camper homes, snowmobiles; and
- similar types of motorized machinery for similar recreational purposes.

RECREATIONAL VEHICLES

Recreational vehicle storage is permitted:

- In a conforming, completely enclosed structure.
- In front yard the total number of recreational vehicles may not exceed 2. May only be parked in the driveway and/or the area between the driveway and the nearest side lot line, provided this area is paved.

RECREATIONAL VEHICLES

Recreational vehicles may be stored
(cont.):

- In side or rear yard: outside storage of up to two (2) recreational vehicles is permitted in the side or rear yard. Additional recreational vehicles are permitted in side or rear if screened from public view with a six-foot-high opaque fence or six foot high landscaping providing comparable sight obstruction.

STRUCTURES

Structures with unsecured windows and doors that fail to prevent trespassing:

- Windows in public view must be covered with carbonated clear plastic or plywood painted to match dominant exterior color of façade.
- Doors in public view must be secured with wood painted to match dominant exterior color of façade.

YARDS

Fences and similar structures that are in an unsafe condition or in disrepair are defined as a nuisance.

Bare dirt on more than 25% of the front yard (and exterior side yards of a corner lot) on a developed residential lot is defined as a nuisance.

YARDS

Ground covers are to be applied to bare dirt in the front yard or front and exterior side yards on lots with more than one frontage:

- 75% of the front yard to be covered in living and/or non-living ground covers.
- Living plants include ground covers, shrubs, vines hedges and trees that are drought tolerant and low-water use varieties.
- Non-living ground covers include rock, bark and decomposed granite.

SOME CONSIDERATIONS

- City code enforcement officers would gain ability to address additional complaints and problems.
- Adding property maintenance requirements means that certain conditions that are not currently a code violation would become code violations.
- Need for community buy-in.

SOME CONSIDERATIONS

- Possible allowance for hardship cases (i.e., lack of financial capacity to correct violations).
- Possibly differentiate between owner-occupied and rental properties.
- Allow for a phase-in of code changes.

OTHER CHANGES

Addition of a Civil Citation Process

- The City Council also directed staff to develop procedures and code changes to grant City's code enforcement officers the ability to write civil citations.
- This will need to include an appeal mechanism – the addition of a hearing officer is proposed – before the property owner could seek judicial review.

SCHEDULE

<u>Task or step</u>	<u>Target date</u>
Prepare draft set of code amendments	April 30
Seek public input regarding draft amendments	May 19
Revise draft amendments & review with City Council (workshop)	May 27
First and second readings of ordinance amending SMC	July 28
Public education campaign targeting property owners & property managers	October 30
Effective date of new property conservation code provisions	December 1