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Residential Front Yard Guidelines

We've all heard about "Curb Appeal" from realtors; this phrase refers to the appearance of the front yard and what is noticeable from the street view on a property. Curb appeal is where a realtor makes their first impression as to a property value and should be where a property owner shows visitors the pride, care and love they place in their property. Homeowners are always encouraged to invest in their front "public yard" to improve their and their neighbor's property values. We encourage all property owners to follow the guidelines below for private walkways, and sidewalks, driveways, curbs/curb cuts, and shade trees in the public right-of-way.

❖ **Walkways:** All property owners are required to provide private walkways from their front door to the public sidewalk in the right-of-way. Property owners outside of historic districts are not required to obtain permits to install walkways. Property owners in historic districts must submit a development permit application for walkways in order to ensure use of appropriate material.



❖ **Sidewalks:** All property owners are required to contact the Engineering Division (City Hall 2nd Floor Room 204; (908) 226-2514) to obtain a Street Opening Permit prior to the removal of any sidewalk, or the under taking of any other work in the public right-of-way. All sidewalks outside of historic districts are to be constructed of concrete. Sidewalk replacement/reconstruction in historic districts is subject to Section **17:10-4**. Slate/bluestone sidewalks in historic districts must be replaced with slate/bluestone sidewalks. Where bluestone, slate, or other non-concrete sidewalk slabs are to be replaced with bluestone/slate, property owners can contact the Department of Public Works (908) 753-3427 for availability of bluestone or for the removal of bluestone slabs to the DPW yard from properties outside of historic districts.

- ❖ **Driveway Use:** No driveways are permitted to serve any use other than the permitted use on a lot on which the driveway is located, unless a shared driveway exists.
- ❖ **Driveway Location:** All residential driveways shall be located a minimum of two (2) feet from property lines. Front yard parking is prohibited in all residential zones. All driveways must lead to garages.



- ❖ **Driveway Width:** Driveways for one-car garages shall be a minimum of ten (10) feet wide with a maximum width of twelve (12) feet with curb cuts at a maximum of fourteen (14) feet wide. Driveways for two-car garages shall be a maximum of twenty (20) feet wide with curb cuts at a maximum of twenty-six (26) feet wide.

- ❖ **Driveway Material:** Driveways are to be constructed of durable and dustless asphalt or cement surface material, except that driveways for one and two-family dwellings may be decorative stone or pavers. Road and/or quarry stone are not decorative and are not permitted.
- ❖ **Curbs/Curb Cuts:** All property owners are required to contact the Engineering Division (City Hall 2nd Floor Room 204; (908) 226-2514) to obtain a Street Opening Permit prior to the repair, installation or removal (cutting) of curbs in the public right-of-way.
- ❖ **Shade Trees:** Front yard landscaping and shade trees can add considerable value to a private property. No permits are required for any landscaping on private property, but plantings are subject to site triangle unobstructed view regulations at driveway/sidewalk and corner intersections. No plantings should obstruct drivers' views at these dangerous conflict points. Shade trees in the public right-of-way fall under the jurisdiction of the Plainfield Shade Tree Commission. Residents should contact the Planning Division (908-753-3421) if they want to have a tree removed from, or planted in the public right-of-way in front of their homes.
- ❖ No permit is required to construct a private walkway from a front door to a sidewalk unless steps are involved. No zoning or building permits are required to install a public sidewalk, but see above for Street Opening Permits, which are required. For those improvements that do require permits applicants may obtain them at the Planning Division City Hall, Room 202 or on the city website www.plainfieldnj.gov. The link to the Development Application can be found by clicking on "All Downloads" and "Forms".

Please Note: Applicants must have a copy of their property survey in order for their application to be reviewed. Property Surveys should be found with the deed of the applicant's home. City Hall does NOT have property surveys.

We hope this notice is beneficial to residents who have concerns or are interested in improving their front yard "curb appeal". We hope that this notice helps reduce some of the confusion, and time spent being sent from office to office. Please do not hesitate to contact the Plainfield Planning Division (908-753-3664) if there are any further questions or the need for any additional information.