

City of Minneapolis
Request for Committee Action

RCA #: RCA-2026-00943

TO COMMITTEE(S):

#	Committee Name	Meeting Date	Submission Deadline
1	Business, Housing & Zoning Committee	Sep 8, 2026	Aug 20, 2026

FROM: Community Planning & Economic Development

LEAD STAFF: Sara S.W. Roman, Senior Planner **PRESENTED BY:** Sara S.W. Roman, Senior Planner

SUBJECT:

Fence regulations ordinance amendment

ACTION ITEM(S)

#	File Type	Subcategory	Item Description	Public Hearing
1	Ordinance	Code Amendment	Passage of Ordinance amending Title 20, Chapter 550 of the Minneapolis Code of Ordinances relating to Zoning Code: Development Standards, amending fence regulations.	No

PREVIOUS ACTIONS

WARD / NEIGHBORHOOD /ADDRESS

#	Ward	Neighborhood	Address
1.	All Wards		

BACKGROUND ANALYSIS

The intent of the proposed zoning code text amendment is to modify fence regulations to allow flexibility for fences constructed in corner side yards and front yards and to introduce a provision related to distances between fences and entry doors in interior side yards. The proposed zoning text amendment would provide additional options for residents to construct fences that are consistent with the purpose of the fence ordinance, to promote public health, safety, and welfare, encourage an aesthetic environment and allow for privacy while maintaining access to light and air. The proposed provision related to distances between fences and entry doors in interior side yards serves a public safety purpose.

At the public hearing on August 10, 2026, the City Planning Commission adopted findings to amend Title 20 of the Minneapolis Code of Ordinances as follows:

A. Text amendment to Title 20, Zoning Code, to amend fence regulations

Recommended motion: The City Planning Commission recommends that the City Council **approves** the text amendment to amend fence regulations. Chapter 550 related to the Zoning Code: *Development Standards*

Fence Amendment Staff Report

Staff presentation by Sara Roman, Senior City Planner with Community Planning & Economic Development (CPED).

The public hearing was opened. There were no people wishing to speak.

The public hearing was closed.

Meyer moved to adopt staff findings. On voice vote the motion passed.

Action Taken: Approved

Racial Equity Impact Analysis (REIA)

SECTION 1: BACKGROUND

DOES THIS IMPACT ONE OF THE CITY'S GOAL AREAS?

Policy Goals

- BUILT ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORTATION

Operational Goals

- DATA

DESCRIBE THE IMPACT ON SELECTED GOAL AREAS.

The proposed zoning code text amendment, introduced by Council Members Vetaw and Palmisano, would amend the regulations for fences. The amendment is intended to increase flexibility for fences constructed in corner side yards and front yards and to introduce a provision related to distances between fences and entry doors in interior side yards for safety.

Fence regulations play a role in the built environment as fences can impact the quality of streetscapes in both positive and negative ways. Fence regulations allow for privacy while minimizing conflicts among land uses. However, tall fences can also prevent "eyes on the street," a Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principle that enhances safety by designing spaces so that residents and passersby can naturally observe public areas, deterring crime through increased visibility. Tall fences adjacent to sidewalks can also detract from the pedestrian experience and opaque fences can make snow storage adjacent to sidewalks challenging.

WHO PARTICIPATED IN COMPLETING THIS ANALYSIS?

CPED Code Development staff

SECTION 2: DATA

LIST THE SPECIFIC GEOGRAPHIES THAT WILL BE IMPACTED AND THE RACIAL DEMOGRAPHICS OF CONSTITUENTS IN THOSE AREAS:

The text amendment includes regulations that apply city-wide and will impact all communities within the city, as well as regulations that apply to one or more zoning districts specifically. According to the US Census (2020), the City of Minneapolis population is 429,954 and includes:

- Black and African American (18.5%).
- American Indian and Alaskan Native (1.2%);
- Asian (5.2%);
- Hispanic or Latino (9.9%); and
- two or more races (7.8%).

WHAT DOES AVAILABLE DATA TELL YOU ABOUT HOW CONSTITUENTS FROM BIPOC COMMUNITIES CURRENTLY RELATE TO THE DESIRED OUTCOME COMPARED TO WHITE CONSTITUENTS?

Available data does not identify differences in how residents from BIPOC communities relate to current fence ordinances compared to white residents. Available fence data includes number of zoning citations issued for noncompliance with fence regulations and variance requests made to the Board of Adjustment. However, zoning compliance inspections are primarily complaint driven and therefore do not necessarily reflect the prevalence of noncompliance. Staff note that complaint-based enforcement data is affected by multiple factors, including reporting behavior, neighborhood expectations, or patterns of interaction with city government.

- 22 fence height variances were requested between 2023 and today
- Over 100 fence violations were issued for fence height during the same period

WHAT DATA IS UNAVAILABLE OR MISSING? HOW CAN YOU OBTAIN ADDITIONAL DATA?

The city does not currently collect demographic information related to land use processes at the City of Minneapolis, including land use applications such as variance requests, or fence-related variance approvals. Similarly, code enforcement matters including citation issuance does not include demographic information.

Data related to the types of fences installed in different parts of the city is not readily available but could be collected.

SECTION 3: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

USING THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (IAP2) [PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SPECTRUM](#), WHICH PARTICIPATION STRATEGY(S) WAS USED WHEN ENGAGING THOSE WHO WOULD BE MOST IMPACTED?

- INFORM

DESCRIBE THE ENGAGEMENT AND WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED?

Minneapolis residents, business/property owners, and the development community influence proposed regulations through the public hearing process. CPED staff has issued a notice regarding this zoning code text amendment to all neighborhood groups and published a notification in Finance and Commerce for the public hearing scheduled for the August 10, 2026, City Planning Commission meeting.

CPED staff also provided communications to stakeholders via the City's website and LIMS. The amendment was presented to the City Planning Commission – Committee of the Whole on May 21, 2026 and to the Zoning Board of Adjustment on July 23, 2026.

SECTION 4: ANALYSIS

HOW DOES THE OUTCOME FOR THIS ORDINANCE, AMENDMENT, OR POLICY HELP THE CITY ACHIEVE RACIAL EQUITY?

While there may not be explicit evidence that fence regulations create or increase racial disparity, providing additional flexibility within the code and reducing the need for costly and time-intensive land use applications benefits all residents. Additional flexibility also supports the City's goal of eliminating disparities between different communities within the city, as more flexible regulations encourage consistent and equitable outcomes across the city, rather than a reliance on less formal and more subjective processes, such as land use applications.

Historically, wealthier, more organized, and whiter communities have had a stronger political infrastructure and more time to dedicate to local development oversight and have historically been more successful at pushing for higher-quality development. Codifying standards creates more consistent and equitable outcomes rather than results based on the expectations of the most active residents.

SECTION 5: EVALUATION

HOW WILL IMPACTS BE MEASURED? WHAT ARE THE SUCCESS INDICATORS AND PROCESS BENCHMARKS?

CPED staff can measure impact of the amendment by tracking the following:

- Number of citations issued by Zoning Inspectors related to noncompliance with fence regulations.
- Number of fence variances requested at the Board of Adjustment or City Planning Commission

Other success indicators of the amendment could include:

- Feedback from stakeholders, such as neighborhood groups or 311 callers, indicating that fence regulations feel more navigable and flexible

HOW WILL THOSE WHO ARE IMPACTED BE INFORMED OF PROGRESS OVER TIME?

Adopted zoning code text amendments are published in the Minneapolis Code of Ordinances. City staff will communicate applicable fence regulations to members of the public through the 311 Service Center over the phone and through e-mail, in-person services at the Minneapolis Service Center and through other applicable methods, including meetings with staff.

Public fence handouts will be updated to reflect adopted changes and to be more user-friendly. The handouts are available on the city's website. Planning staff will work with Communication and Marketing staff to develop a plan to share information with the public.