



Driveway Approach Design & Construction Requirements

PUBLIC WORKS

Engineering Services Division

pwecips@cityofpaloalto.org 650.329.2496 ext. 8

The following are City of Palo Alto requirements and standards for the design and construction of driveway approaches for single family and two-family residential uses. A driveway approach in this handout (herein called "driveway") is defined as the concrete structure located in the public right-of-way between the public street and a driveway or parking area on private property. These requirements and standards are from the Palo Alto Municipal Code (PAMC) section as indicated.

DESIGN REQUIREMENTS

- (1) **STANDARD** All driveway approach work shall be designed and constructed in accordance with the "City of Palo Alto, California, Department of Public Works Standard Drawings and Specifications" [PAMC 12.08.060(a)1].
- (2) **MATERIALS** No sidewalk or driveway approach shall be constructed other than of concrete unless special permission therefore has first been obtained from the City Engineer [PAMC 12.08.060(a)].
- (3) **TREES** Unless authorized by a permit, it is unlawful to place concrete or other pavement within a distance of ten feet of the center of the trunk of any street tree [PAMC, 8.04.020 (a)1]. Any exceptions to this requirement must be obtained from PWE with the written approval of the CPA Arborist [PAMC 8.04.015].
- (4) **LOCATION AND DESIGN DETAILS** In addition to the requirements of the Public Works Department Standard Specifications, all driveways shall be constructed in accordance with the following Specifications [PAMC 12.08.060(9)]:
 - (a) The distance between driveways, measured from the radius return, shall not be less than 20 feet.
 - (b) No more than fifty percent of the frontage upon any street of the lot or lots or parcel of land to be served thereby shall be devoted to driveways, nor shall any driveway exceed 35 feet in width.
 - (c) No driveway shall be located so as to interfere with intersecting sidewalks, crosswalks, traffic signals, lampposts, fire hydrants, or other public improvements or facilities. A clear distance of thirty inches shall be maintained between a driveway and any such installation.
 - (d) The driveway preferably should be installed perpendicular to the street, otherwise the maximum angle to the street is 75° [PAMC 18.54.070, Table 6].
- (5) **ABANDONMENT** When the use of an existing driveway approach is being discontinued, it must be replaced with curb, parkway and sidewalk as previously existed. The City Engineer shall have the power and authority to determine that the use for which a driveway was constructed has been abandoned [PAMC 12.08.090].
- (6) **DIMENSIONS** See Table 1 of this handout for information regarding dimensions for designing driveways.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS

- (1) **PERMIT REQUIRED** It is unlawful for any person, to perform any work within the right-of-way of any street in the City, without first obtaining a permit to do so from the City Engineer. All driveway approach work shall be done by a licensed contractor [PAMC 12.08.060(a)1].
- (2) **STREET TREES** No trimming of street trees or street tree roots is allowed without the permission of the CPA Arborist [PAMC 8.04.015].
- (3) **INSPECTION** All prepared subgrades and surfaces shall be Inspected and approved by the city before any concrete is poured. All completed work shall be subject to approval by the City [PAMC12.08.060(2)].
- (4) **UTILITY ADJUSTMENTS REQUIRED** The necessary adjustments to utility facilities, light standards, fire hydrants, catch basins, street or railway signs, signals or other public improvements or Installations shall be accomplished without cost to the city [PAMC12.08.060(5)].
- (5) **ON SITE DRIVEWAY PAVING REQUIRED** For properties located in the R-1 zoning district, gravel and similar loose materials shall not be used for driveway or parking surfaces within 10 feet of the public right of way. Construction of driveway approaches within the public right of way shall conform to the latest version of the City of Palo Alto Public Works Department Standards and Specifications. [PAMC 18.12.0G0 (b)]

TABLE 1

Driveway Dimensions (feet) for single-family and two-family residential uses [PAMC 18.54.070, Table 6]

		Urban (ft.)	Rural (ft.)
Width, excluding flares ^a			
	Min. paved width	8	8
	Total width ^b	10	10
	Maximum	20	30
Angle ^c		75°	75°

a. Minimum driveway widths for flag lots in "Urban" and in "Rural" areas shall be 15 feet.

b. The total width shall be free of obstructions to vehicular and pedestrian use.

c. Minimum acute angle measured from edge of pavement.

This publication is intended to be an informal means of informing the public about a City process. Although it is assumed the information provided is accurate, the sheet is not intended to create any sort of legal obligation on the City's part. The actual process is governed by City ordinances, regulations and procedures, and the reader should make specific inquiry to the City for specific cases.

Fee is based on the current year's Municipal Fee Schedule. For the current Fiscal Year Adopted Municipal Fee Schedule, please see <https://cityofpaloalto.org/gov/depts/asd/budget.asp>