

Memorandum

TO: Planning Commission
FROM: Izaak Peterson , Associate Planner
DATE: October 28, 2025
SUBJECT: 4910 Larson Road - Front Setback Variance - TruNorth Contracting
ITEM NUMBER: 7.D
SECTION: NEW BUSINESS

REQUESTED MOTION

To deny the variance request submitted by TruNorth Contracting LLC for a front yard setback reduction for the property located at 4910 Larson Road, as practical difficulty is not present. The request to increase/expand the garage within the setback area is based on personal preference rather than a unique circumstance. As the criteria required for practical difficulty is not met, the variance can not be approved.

Alternate Motion of Approval:

Should the planning commission determine that a practical difficulty is present, an alternate motion of approval is listed below:

To adopt a Resolution No. 25-82, approving a variance to reduce the front yard setback to 21.2 feet, for an attached garage addition at 4910 Larson Road, subject to the following conditions:

1. The project must be completed in accordance with the submitted as part of the Variance application. Any significant changes to these plans, as determined by the Community Development Department, will require review and approval by the Planning Commission.
2. This approval will expire after one year if a building permit has not been issued and work has not begun on the project.
3. This approval is subject to a 5-day appeal period. Once the appeal period expires, a building permit may be issued for the proposed project. A building permit must be obtained before any construction activity begins.

This action is based on the following findings of fact:

(If approved, the planning commission must identify a practical difficulty with findings of fact)

INTRODUCTION

TruNorth Contracting LLC, on behalf of the property owners of 4910 Larson Road, have submitted a request to expand the existing attached garage located on the subject property. The proposed garage addition requires the following variance:

1. Variance to Development Code Section 107-67(e)(2) to decrease the required front yard

setback from 25 feet to 21.2 feet.

DISCUSSION

Site Characteristics

The property is located on the northern extent of Larson Road, and zoned within the R-1 Detached Residential zoning district. The property is surrounded by R-1 zoned property on all sides, with substandard riparian lots to the north on Larson Road.

The .40 acre property contains a single-family residence with an attached two stall 481 square foot attached garage, as well as an accessory building (shed) behind the house. The existing garage is currently setback 31.2 feet from the front property line adjacent Larson Road. The property abuts and contains a portion of a stormwater pond located on the rear of the property.

Project Description

The site has an existing two stall garage approximately 481 sf in size. The applicant would like to construct a 9x22 foot (198 square feet) addition, to the front face of the existing attached garage, which would encroach 4.8 feet within the required 25 foot front setback.

Development Code Requirements

[Section 107-67\(e\)\(2\)](#) requires that all dwellings and accessory buildings abide by a minimum front yard setback of 25-feet from a front property line. A front property line refers to the boundary of a lot which abuts an existing or dedicated public or private street. In the case of a corner lot, it shall be the shortest dimension on a public street.

Variance Review Criteria

When considering a variance request, the commission must determine whether the ordinance causes the property owner practical difficulty and find that granting the variances is in keeping with the spirit and intent of the ordinance. Practical difficulty is defined as:

1. *Reasonable Manner*. The property owner proposes to use the property in a reasonable manner not permitted by the Shoreview Development Regulations.
2. *Unique Circumstances*. The plight of the property owner is due to circumstances unique to the property not created by the property owner.
3. *Character of Neighborhood*. The variance, if granted, will not alter the essential character of the neighborhood.

Applicant Statement

The applicant states that the property's location on Larson Road is disproportionately orientated towards the property, creating a unique circumstance that disproportionately affects the property owners ability to expand the garage towards Larson Road. The applicant notes that a the size of the garage is reasonable, and that the proposed location is in-line with abutting properties, which would not negatively affect the character of the neighborhood.

Staff Review

The request was reviewed by staff in accordance with the variance criteria. Upon review, although staff appreciates that the proposed addition is a reasonable request which would not impact the character of the neighborhood, staff does not believe a unique circumstance necessitating the request is present, and therefore a practical difficulty is not present:

1. *Reasonable Manner.* Attached garages are permitted in the R1, Detached Residential District provided certain dimensional standards are met. The applicant's request to have a 679 square foot attached garage is reasonable.
2. *Unique Circumstances.* The abutting portion of Larson Road is publicly dedicated right-of-way which serves as access properties east of Larson Road, and immediately to the north. Although the right-of-way is undersized, and loaded towards the eastern properties, the size of the right-of-way impacts the subject properties front setback to the same degree as most residential properties in Shoreview. The current garage is setback 30.2 feet from the front property line, which allows for expansion of the front of the garage by 5.2 feet, by right. Given that there are alternative means to expand the garage in a manner that complies with the development code, staff does not believe that a unique circumstance is present, necessitating the request.
3. *Neighborhood Character.* Staff believes that granting the variance would not alter the essential character of the neighborhood. The proposed garage addition and setback is generally consistent with neighboring attached garages.

Public Comment

Property owners within 150' were notified of the request. At the time of this staff report, no public comments have been received.

RECOMMENDATION

While staff understands the purpose and desired need for additional garage space, it is hard to find that practical difficulty is present as there is not an evident unique circumstance that necessitates the variance as proposed. The existing garage could be expanded outside of the setback area by 5.2 feet, but not to the degree that would be preferred by the property owner.

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission deny the variance request submitted by TruNorth Contracting LLC for a front yard setback reduction for the property located at 4910 Larson Road, as practical difficulty is not present. The request to increase expand the garage within the setback area is based on personal preference rather than a unique circumstance. As the three criteria required for practical difficulty is not met, therefore, the variance can not be approved.

Alternate Motion of Approval:

Should the planning commission determine that a practical difficulty is present, an alternate motion of approval is listed below:

To adopt a Resolution No. 25-82, approving a variance to reduce the front yard setback to 21.2 feet, for an attached garage addition at 4910 Larson Road, subject to the following conditions:

1. The project must be completed in accordance with the submitted as part of the Variance application. Any significant changes to these plans, as determined by the Community Development Department, will require review and approval by the Planning Commission.
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This action is based on the following findings of fact:

(If approved, the planning commission must identify a practical difficulty with findings of fact)

ATTACHMENTS

[Location Map](#)

[Proposed Survey](#)

[Applicant Narrative](#)

[Proposed Floor Plan and Building Elevation](#)

[Alternate Draft Approval Resolution No. 25-82](#)