

MEMBRANE STRUCTURES

Planning Commission- July 11, 2011

Background

- The intent of the regulation is to beautify and clean up the appearance of residences in Oregon City by requiring removal of membrane and fabric structures that are visible from the abutting public right-of-way.
- The new regulation will also help to reduce the accumulation of outdoor junk, inappropriate storage, and solid waste in residential areas, a common nuisance. The regulation ensures that new accessory structures will be compatible with residential structures.
- The regulation does not apply to membrane covered areas displayed for garden or other active outdoor uses.

Code Adoption Process

- Initiated by Planning Commission
- Approved as part of the last round of code updates (July 2010)
- Planning Staff , City Attorney, Code enforcement and Planning Commission worked on code language over numerous worksessions.
- Notice was sent to CIC and Neighborhood Associations. No formal comment on proposed code was received by the community.

What is a Membrane or Fabric Covered Storage Area?

The definition of Membrane or Fabric Covered Storage Area is provided in OCMC 17.04.743:

Membrane or Fabric Covered Storage Area - An area covered by a tarp or tensioned metal or fabric membrane that is either attached to a rigid framework, natural feature or some other structure that is used for storage. It is not intended to include the weather proofing of a vehicle, boat or other individual item by a tarp or other type of covering as long the covering is attached directly to and covers only the particular item.

OCCMC 17.54.010(b)4 – Membrane Structures

- *Membrane or Fabric Covered Storage Area. All membrane and fabric structures:*
 - *Shall be located behind the front building line of the primary structure.*
 - *Shall not be visible from the abutting Right-of-Way when viewed at pedestrian level.*
 - *Exceptions to these standards may be made by the Community Development Director for temporary storage of materials as long as the membrane or fabric covered storage area is removed within 10 days, is not erected for more than 20 days in one calendar year and is not seen as a nuisance to the city.*
 - *This section shall be effective on January 1, 2011. This section shall apply to all membrane or fabric covered storage areas in place before, on, or after the effective date of this section.*
 - *This prohibition does not apply to membrane covered areas displayed for garden or other active outdoor uses. (Ord. No. 10-1003, § 1(Exh. 1), 7-7-2010).*

Considered Membrane Structures



Not a Membrane Structure*



*When used for intended purpose

Code Enforcement Examples













Before



After



Before



After





Before



After

How will the regulation be enforced

The regulation is enforced on a complaint basis by the Oregon City Code Enforcement Division. The complaint hotline is (503)496-1559 or online at www.orcity.org/codeenforcement/code-enforcement. Once a complaint is received, the property owner will be requested to remove the offending structure. Continuing violations will be resolved through a civil court action.

Code Enforcement Comments

- The code enforcement department believes the code is working well so far.
- We have residents that want to debate their structures at the commission level, that is their right to do so. I do not believe the city wants to enter the debate of which property has a nice structure and which does not, which should be grandfathered or not.
- Metal structures rust, there is no guarantee that the current or new property owner will maintain in the future. Fabric structures are appealing until the first windstorm; there are also no guarantees the new or existing property owner will maintain those structures. The majority of fabric structures are recovered/patched with what is available (tarps and duct tape are what we generally see).

Code Enforcement Comments

- Membrane structures create walls which conceal criminal behavior from public view, and may obstruct the view of the ROW from the primary structure or vice versa creating potential hazards.
- Garages and sheds can generally withstand the elements, may be secured to prevent entry and meet some type of setback requirement.
- Clean well-maintained properties, free of obstructions including vegetation, promote healthy neighborhoods; neighborhoods where citizens can feel safe and criminals don't.