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**Redevelopment
Division**

119 Fox Street
Lemoore • CA 93245
Phone • (559) 924-6701
FAX • (559) 924-9003

Staff Report

STUDY
SESSION
ITEM NO. 3

To: Lemoore City Council
From: Judy Holwell, Redevelopment Project Manager
Nancy Blum, Code Enforcement Officer
Date: April 8, 2008
Subject: Temporary Carports

Discussion:

Recently staff has received an increase in inquiries regarding temporary carports (i.e. carports that are not attached to the foundation or another structure are considered temporary.) The problem arises when these “temporary” carports remain for more than just a few days. Some stay up for months and years. These structures can become unsightly and contribute to the blight in the community. In addition, they may be safety hazards if they are knocked over by the wind or vandals. Residents sometimes try to avert this problem by securing the carports with concrete buckets and ropes, furthering the appearance of blight. Pictures of examples have been attached for your reference.

The following two sections are taken directly from the Lemoore Municipal Code:

Section 9-7B-6 Site and Structure Requirements:

D. Yard Requirements:

1. Front Yards: The minimum front yard requirement for R-1-7 and R-1-10 districts is 25 feet.
3. Side Yards: d. Garages or carports on the street side yard of a corner lot shall be set back 20 feet from the property line.
(Some instances call for only 15 feet.)

Section 9-15A-6 Developmental/Architectural Standards for One-Family Dwellings and Mobile Homes on Permanent Foundations:

B. Developmental/Architectural Standards:

2. Roofing Material: All main buildings and all detached garages and carports located on the front half of the lot shall have a roof constituted of wood shakes, asphalt, composition or wood shingles, clay, concrete or metal tiles, slate or of built-up materials.

The 2030 Lemoore General Plan states that carports should be restricted so that they are not highly visible from public streets and that portable carport covers should be prohibited.

Other cities have reported similar complaints and those that are proactive in the enforcement of carports use the setback requirements as the basis for violation. This has led to public outcry in some cities, such as Selma, where residents depend on the carports to protect their vehicles from the weather. The Selma Planning Commission is currently holding public workshops on the subject. The consensus so far is to only allow aluminum-covered carports and require that residents obtain a building permit prior to installation. This will reduce blight caused by tattered canvas covers.

Historically, staff has not interpreted the setback requirements as applying to these “temporary” structures as long as they were not attached to the foundation or another structure. The use of these structures has also not required any permits or inspections. Considering the codes that are currently in place, Council has a variety of options to consider:

- 1) Let the interpretation remain the same and do not take enforcement action against residents with carports unless they become broken or tattered and are a property maintenance violation;
- 2) Direct a reactive code enforcement approach to issue violations to residents that have carports located within the required set back areas or have roofing materials which do not meet the architectural standards only when complaints are received;
- 3) Direct a proactive code enforcement approach to issue violations to residents that have carports located within the required set back areas or have roofing materials which do not meet the architectural standards;
- 4) Adopt an ordinance, which would further clarify the issue, set out clear guidelines for allowable and non-allowable uses and require building permits be obtained prior to installation.

Budget Impact:

None at this time.

Recommendation:

That Council review the information presented and direct staff accordingly.