
MEETING DATE:	July 29, 2026	RECOMMENDED ACTION:	
APPLICATION:	Text Amendment – §154.105, related to Corner Lot Setbacks in Agricultural Residential Zones.		Hold a public hearing and forward a positive recommendation to the Town Council.
APPLICANT:	Fairfield (initiated by Town)	EXHIBITS:	
LOCATION:	Town-wide (Zoning Ordinance)		A. Proposed Amendment (tracked changes)
STAFF CONTACT:	Jim Spung, AICP Planning Consultant		

OVERVIEW

In accordance with Code of Ordinances §154.062, Town Administration requests that the Planning Commission review a proposed text amendment to the Fairfield Code of Ordinances to clarify how front yard setbacks are applied to corner lots. The proposed amendment establishes that, for corner lots, the required front setback applies to both street frontages.

SUMMARY

The Fairfield Code of Ordinances currently establishes minimum front yard setback requirements but does not specify how those standards apply to corner lots with frontage on two intersecting streets. This lack of direction may result in inconsistent interpretation and application during the development review and building permit process.

The proposed amendment addresses this ambiguity by clarifying that both street frontages on a corner lot are subject to the required front yard setback. This approach is consistent with common zoning practices and provides a clear, objective standard for property owners, applicants, staff, and decision-makers. The amendment only clarifies the existing setback regulations and does not modify the required setback dimensions or create new development standards. Instead, it establishes a consistent method for applying the existing standards to corner lots.

If adopted, the amendment will apply to all future development applications and building permits submitted after the effective date of the ordinance.

STAFF ANALYSIS

The proposed amendment is consistent with the Fairfield General Plan by promoting clear, predictable, and consistently applied land use regulations. Clarifying setback requirements supports orderly development, improves the administration of the Town's development regulations, and provides greater certainty for applicants and property owners.

PUBLIC HEARING & NOTICE

Staff posted and published a notice of public hearing on July 17, 2026, in accordance with the standards in Town Code and State Statute.

FINDINGS

1. This application was initiated by the Town, pursuant to the Fairfield Code of Ordinances Sections 154.012 and 154.062.
2. The Town has identified the need to clarify how the existing front yard setback requirements apply to corner lots to ensure consistent interpretation and administration of the Fairfield Code of Ordinances.
3. The proposed text amendment to Section 154.105 clarifies that, for corner lots, the required front setback applies to both street frontages.
4. The proposed amendment establishes a clear and objective standard for corner lot setbacks, improving consistency and predictability for property owners, applicants, staff, and decision-makers.
5. The proposed amendment is consistent with the Fairfield General Plan by promoting clear, predictable, and consistently applied development regulations that support orderly growth and effective land use administration.
6. Exhibit A illustrates the proposed amendments using underline and strike-through formatting to identify changes to the current code.
7. The Planning Commission is responsible for forwarding a recommendation to the Town Council, who is the final decision-making authority for amendments to the Fairfield Code of Ordinances.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommend the Planning Commission forward a positive recommendation to the Town Council.

MODEL MOTIONS

Approval:

I move that we forward a positive recommendation to the Town Council for a zoning text amendment to the Fairfield Code of Ordinances, related to corner lot setbacks in Agricultural Residential Zones, based on the findings and recommendations of this Staff Report.

Denial:

I move that we forward a negative recommendation to the Town Council for a zoning text amendment to the Fairfield Code of Ordinances, related to corner lot setbacks in Agricultural Residential Zones, based on the following findings:

- [List findings for negative recommendation]

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§ 154.105 AGRICULTURAL RESIDENTIAL ZONES.

(A) *Definitions.* For the purpose of this section, the following definitions shall apply unless the context clearly indicates or requires a different meaning.

ACCESSORY DWELLING UNIT (ADU). A secondary, self-contained residential unit located on the same lot as a primary residence. An **ADU** provides independent living facilities, including areas for sleeping, cooking and sanitation, but remains subordinate to the main dwelling.

ACCESSORY STRUCTURE. An accessory structure is a detached, subordinate building or structure located on the same lot as the primary residence or principal use. It is used for purposes incidental and customarily subordinate to the main building or land use. An **ACCESSORY STRUCTURE** is not a dwelling unit and may not be used for permanent human habitation.

AGRICULTURE. The use of land for cultivating crops, raising livestock and other agricultural operations.

ANIMAL HUSBANDRY. The practice of breeding, raising and caring for animals for agricultural, commercial or scientific purposes. This includes livestock such as cattle, sheep, goats, pigs, poultry and other domesticated farm animals. **ANIMAL HUSBANDRY** activities must comply with local zoning regulations, environmental standards and best practices for animal welfare, waste management and noise control.

CHARTER SCHOOL. A publicly funded, independently operated school that is granted flexibility in its curriculum and management. (Examples: Schools specializing in STEM, arts, language immersion or alternative learning models within the public school system.) **CHARTER SCHOOLS** are:

- (a) Free to attend but operate independently from traditional public school districts;
- (b) Governed by a charter (contract) approved by the state or a local school board;
- (c) Allowed more autonomy in curriculum, teaching methods and staffing, but must meet performance benchmarks; and
- (d) Open to all students, but enrollment may be limited based on a lottery system if demand exceeds capacity.

CHILD CARE CENTER (EIGHT CHILDREN OR LESS). A home based facility providing care and supervision for up to eight children.

CORRELATED COLOR TEMPERATURE (CCT). A measure of the color appearance of light, expressed in Kelvin (K).

FARM ANIMALS. Domesticated animals raised for agricultural purposes, including, but not

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limited to, cattle, horses, sheep, goats, pigs and poultry.

FIXTURE HEIGHT. The vertical distance from the ground to the lowest point of the light fixture.

FOOT-CANDLE. A unit of measure for light intensity, representing one lumen per square foot.

FULL-CUTOFF FIXTURE. A lighting fixture designed to emit no light above the horizontal plane.

GLARE. Excessive brightness that causes visual discomfort or reduced visibility.

HOME BASED BUSINESS. A business operated from a residential property, subject to conditions and limitations to maintain the residential character of the neighborhood.

HOUSEHOLD PETS. Domesticated animals typically kept for companionship, such as dogs, cats, rabbits and similar non-livestock animals.

ILLUMINATING ENGINEERING SOCIETY OF NORTH AMERICA (IESNA). A recognized authority on lighting recommendations and best practices.

LIGHT TRESPASS. Light that extends beyond property boundaries, causing unwanted illumination.

LUMENS. A measure of the total quantity of visible light emitted by a source.

MANUFACTURED HOME. A pre-fabricated structure built on a permanent chassis and transported to its site, meeting federal HUD standards.

MOBILE BUSINESS. A business without a fixed location that operates within the town on a temporary basis.

MODULAR HOME. A pre-fabricated building constructed in sections at a factory and assembled on-site, meeting State Building Codes.

OUTDOOR RECREATION (PARK/PLAY). Open areas intended for recreational use, such as parks, playgrounds and sports fields.

PRIVATE SCHOOL. An independent educational institution that operates without direct government funding. (Examples: religious schools, preparatory academies or independent schools that charge tuition.) **PRIVATE SCHOOLS** are:

- (a) Funded through tuition, donations and endowments rather than public tax dollars;

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(b) Allowed to set their own curriculum and admission policies, though they must still meet state education standards;

(c) Often affiliated with religious organizations or specific educational philosophies (e.g., Montessori, Catholic or preparatory schools); and

(d) Selective in admissions, meaning enrollment is not guaranteed to all students.

PUBLIC RIGHTS-OF-WAY. An area designated for public transportation or utilities, including streets, sidewalks and utility lines.

PUBLIC SCHOOL. A government-funded educational institution that provides free education to all students within a designated district. (Examples: elementary, middle and high schools operated by the town's local school district.) **PUBLIC SCHOOLS** are:

(a) Operated by state or local school districts and funded primarily through tax revenues;

(b) Required to follow state curriculum standards, teacher certification requirements and standardized testing;

(c) Open to all students residing within the district; and

(d) Governed by a school board and overseen by the State Board of Education.

PUBLIC UTILITY STATION. A facility for public utilities such as electrical substations, water treatment plants or telecommunication equipment (excluding sewer treatment).

QUASI-PUBLIC SCHOOL. A privately run educational institution serving the community in a capacity similar to public schools.

SHIELDED LIGHTING. Fixtures designed to direct light downward and prevent glare or uplighting.

SPECIAL EVENT VENDOR. A business or individual participating in a single-event marketplace, such as fairs or town-sponsored events, which requires temporary licensing.

STABLE. A facility or structure used for housing, breeding and caring for horses or other livestock. This may include boarding stables, riding schools or private equestrian facilities.

TEMPORARY BUSINESS. A business operating in the town for a limited duration, typically associated with seasonal events, festivals or short-term commercial activities.

TEMPORARY BUSINESS LICENSE. A special permit issued for businesses that do not operate year-round and are subject to different requirements and fees than standard business licenses.

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UPLIGHTING. Any light fixture that directs illumination upwards, typically used for aesthetic purposes.

WATER RIGHTS. The legal entitlement of individuals, organizations or governments to use water from a specific source, such as a river, lake, stream, groundwater or other bodies of water. These rights determine who can use water, how much they can use, when they can use it and for what purposes, such as irrigation, industrial use or household consumption.

(B) *Purpose.*

(1) *Purpose.* To maintain rural agricultural and residential areas with low-density development while preserving the community's rural character. These zones accommodate a range of lot sizes from one to 40 acres, allowing flexibility for agricultural and residential uses.

(2) *Zone classifications.* This section applies to the following Agricultural Residential Zones:

- (a) AR-1: minimum lot size of one acre;
- (b) AR-5: minimum lot size of five acres;
- (c) AR-10: minimum lot size of ten acres; and
- (d) AR-40: minimum lot size of 40 acres.

(C) *Land use table.* The table below defines permitted and special uses within the AR-1, AR-5, AR-10, AR-40 Zone. Uses not listed are prohibited.

<i>Land Uses</i>	<i>Permitted</i>	<i>*Special Use</i>
Accessory dwelling unit (subject to ADU ordinance)	X	
Accessory structures	X	
Agriculture	X	
Animal husbandry/farm animals	X	
Child care center		X
Church	X	
Commercial greenhouse		X
Home based business (subject to Chapter 112 of this code)	X	
Household pets	X	
Manufactured home	X	

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Modular home	X	
Outdoor rec-park-play	X	
Public rights-of-way	X	
Residential, single-family	X	
Schools, public, private and charter		X
Stables	X	
Notes to Table:		
*Special uses must comply with standards listed in §§ 154.150 to 154.168 and require a special use permit.		

(D) *Area requirements.*

(1) All developments must comply with parking, landscaping, utilities and site plan regulations.

(2) A master site plan, including stormwater retention plans, is required for all developments.

(3) All development in this zone must connect to the town's culinary water system unless necessary for a type of business.

(4) All developments must secure and transfer the required water rights to the town before a building permit is issued, ensuring adequate water resources for sustainable growth.

(5) The owner must demonstrate sufficient water rights to meet demand before receiving development approval.

(6) All developments must undergo a septic feasibility study through the County Health Department before any approvals are granted.

(7) Septic system approval is required prior to issuing any permits for buildings, subdivisions or complexes. Businesses generating high wastewater volumes may be restricted based on septic system limitations.

(8) All roadway, drainage, construction and infrastructure improvements must comply with the most current APWA (American Public Works Association) standards as adopted by the town.

(E) *Setbacks, building height, lot size, frontage, parking.*

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<i>Requirement</i>	<i>AR-1</i>	<i>AR-5</i>	<i>AR-10</i>	<i>AR-40</i>
Frontage	125 feet	250 feet	300 feet	300 feet
Lot area	1 acre	5 acres	10 acres	40 acres
Maximum building height	35 feet	35 feet	35 feet	35 feet
Road type	Local	Rural/local	Rural	Rural
*Setbacks (accessory structures)	Street 25 feet	Street 25 feet	Street 25 feet	Street 25 feet
	Side/rear 5 feet	Side/rear 5 feet	Side/rear 5 feet	Side/rear 5 feet
*Setbacks (residential buildings)	Front 25 feet	Front 25 feet	Front 25 feet	Front 25 feet
	Side 15 feet	Side 15 feet	Side 15 feet	Side 15 feet
	Rear 40 feet	Rear 40 feet	Rear 40 feet	Rear40 feet
<u>*For corner lots, the required front setback shall apply to both street frontages.</u>				

(F) *Development standards.*

(1) *Building design and appearance.*

(a) *Primary structures.* Must complement the rural character of the area. Exterior materials such as wood, stone and natural finishes are encouraged. Highly reflective or modern materials are discouraged;

(b) *Accessory structures.* Must comply with § 154.084 and match or complement the primary building; and

(c) *Landscaping requirements.*

1. All yards visible to the public must have an area the same size as the square footage of the home that is improved, groomed and maintained;

2. Natural vegetation should be preserved where possible; and

3. Water-wise landscaping, including native plants and xeriscaping, is encouraged.

(2) *Fencing standards.* Fences on residential lots must not obstruct road visibility for drivers and must comply with the following height limits:

(a) *Front yards.* Maximum height of four feet, ensuring clear sightlines for traffic and pedestrians;

(b) *Side and rear yards.* Maximum height of six feet, ensuring clear sightlines for traffic

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and pedestrians;

(c) *Farm use exception.* Agricultural fencing necessary for livestock containment or crop protection may exceed these limits, provided it does not impair road visibility or create a traffic hazard;

(d) *Barbed wire and electric fences.* Allowed only for agricultural purposes; and

(e) *Animal enclosures.* Must be secure and well-maintained.

(3) *Animal husbandry/farm animal standards.*

(a) *Proper animal husbandry practices.* All farm animals kept within the town must be maintained in a humane and responsible manner. Owners are required to:

1. Provide adequate food, water and shelter appropriate for the species;
2. Maintain clean and sanitary living conditions that prevent disease and odor issues;
3. Ensure that enclosures, fences and pastures are appropriately sized and well-maintained for animal health and safety; and
4. Prevent excessive noise, nuisances or environmental damage caused by improper livestock management.

(b) *Compliance with water rights for livestock use.*

1. All livestock and farm animals must be provided with sufficient water in compliance with state water rights laws;
2. Water usage for animals must be within the approved water rights allocations associated with the property;
3. Any livestock watering beyond standard residential water allotments must be supported by appropriate stock watering rights or additional water sources; and
4. Unauthorized diversion or excessive use of water beyond permitted rights is prohibited.

(c) *Limits on farm animals per acre.* To ensure sustainable land use and responsible animal management, farm animal allowances shall follow animal unit guidelines based on property size:

1. One acre or less: up to three animal units;
2. Two to five acres: up to six animal units; and

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3. More than five acres: subject to agricultural zoning regulations.

<i>Animal Unit Equivalents</i>		
One cow or horse	=	One animal unit
Five sheep or goats	=	One animal unit
25 chickens, ducks or similar fowl	=	One animal unit
Other species will be evaluated based on equivalent water and space requirements		

(d) *Enforcement and compliance.* Violations of this standard, including neglect of animals or unauthorized water use, may result in penalties or corrective actions as determined by the town. Property owners must demonstrate compliance upon request by town officials or water authorities.

(4) *Outdoor lighting standards.*

(a) Lighting must be downward-directed and shielded to prevent light pollution.

(b) No light should spill onto adjacent properties.

(c) Motion-activated security lighting is encouraged.

(d) Must follow the town's lighting ordinance.

(5) *Parking standards.*

(a) *Residential lot.* A minimum of two off-street parking spaces per dwelling unit;

(b) *Accessory structures used for home based businesses.* Must provide additional parking;

and

(c) *Agricultural vehicles and trailers.* Must not block public rights-of-way.

(6) *Road and access requirements.*

(a) All new developments must have direct access to a public road that meets town standards.

(b) In AR-40 Zones, shared driveways may be permitted with Planning Commission approval.

(7) *Renewable energy system standards.*

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(a) *Residential solar panels.*

1. Roof-mounted solar panels are permitted on all homes.

2. Ground-mounted systems must comply with accessory structure setbacks and must not exceed ten feet in height.

(8) *Compliance and enforcement.*

(a) Special uses are subject to periodic inspections.

(b) Violations may result in fines, suspension or revocation of the special use authorization.

(Ord. 2025-02, passed 1-19-2025) Penalty, see § 154.999