

Fire Lanes in NIII and NIV

When discussing parking in NIII and NIV, the inevitable questions are: *“Why can’t I park behind my garage?”*; *“What is a fire lane and why are all of our private streets designated as fire lanes?”*

The answers are a bit complex.

First, Pioneer Hills was planned in the early 2000’s. The actual design of the community, for a total of 300 plus homes, was presented to the City for approval by Colonnade Homes and was approved. As with all builders, Colonnade maximized the number of units allowable on the project footprint by minimizing the size of landscaped areas, streets, sidewalks, parking, parks, etc.

So that a city does not become blocks and blocks of big buildings, they set forth minimal requirements including: the minimum number of parking spaces in a neighborhood; minimum access in and out of the neighborhood; minimum street lighting; minimum numbers and locations of fire hydrants; minimum amount of turf, trees, and bushes versus hardscape; and minimum amount of open space.

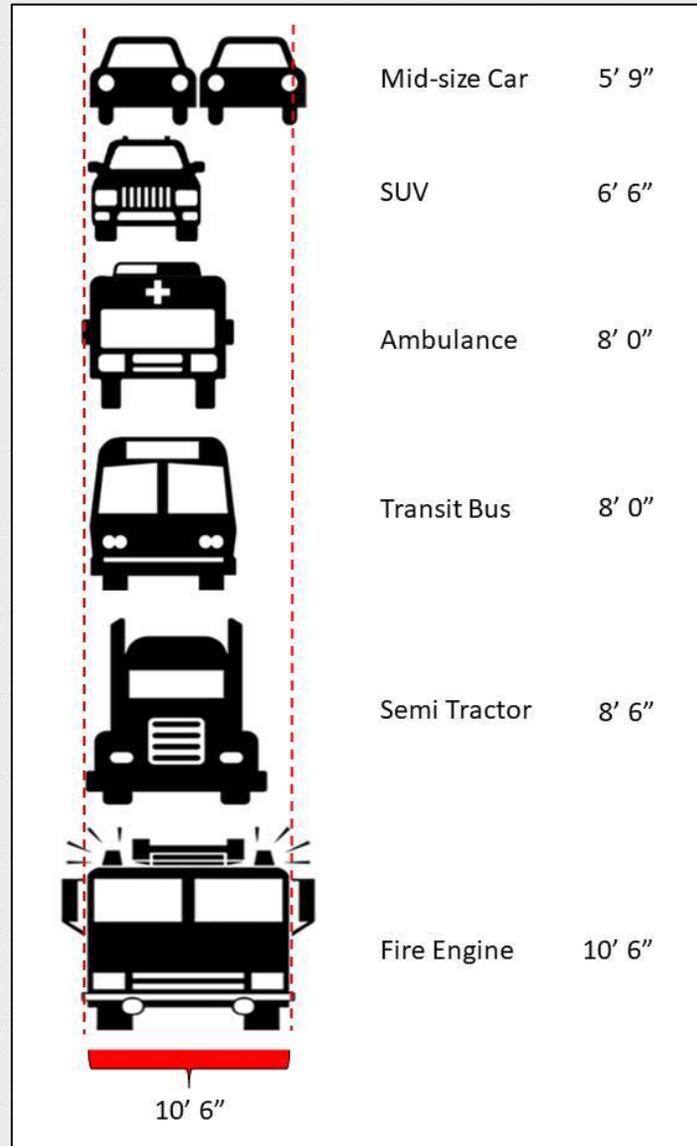
As a business decision, Colonnade’s plan called for all private streets to be twenty-three feet (23’) wide which met with the current life safety requirements, while minimizing saleable ground lost to streets. Ryland Homes (now CalAtlantic Homes) inherited the design plan, including the 23’ streets, when they acquired the project after Colonnade collapsed amid the banking/mortgage fallout in the mid-2000’s.

Life safety is an integral part of approving any development plan. Every home must be reachable by emergency vehicles, including police, fire and ambulance, When the Colonnade plan was reviewed, the City made sure all life safety minimum requirements were met – including the directions, terminations, and size of and address numbering on the streets.

Aurora Fire Rescue (AFR) follows the International Fire Code (IFC) standards by which fire lanes are defined and established and followed by the City. Pursuant the IFC, streets that are 23’ wide are categorized as fire lanes. All streets have been designated **“public access fire lane easements”** since the original plan and must be free of vehicles and all other obstructions so as to meet the City’s codes for fire lanes.

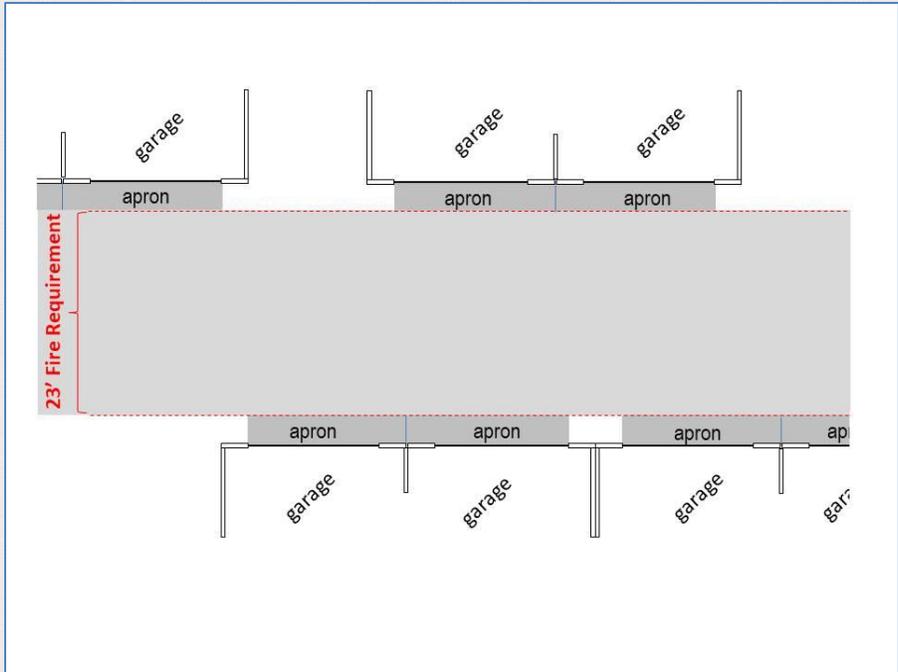
So, *“Why is 23’ a magical number to render a street a fire lane?”*

It has everything to do with vehicle size. An average car is five and three quarter’s feet (5’9”) in width. An SUV is six and a half feet (6’6”) in width. Police vehicles are typically sedan or SUV sized. Ambulances are a bit wider (8’0”). The width of a transit bus is eight feet (8’) and the width of a semi-tractor-trailer is eight and a half feet (8’6”). Fire apparatus is extremely large. In addition to simply being long, most fire engines (whether a pumper truck, a ladder or snorkel truck, a hazmat truck, etc.) are on average ten and a half feet (10’6”) wide.

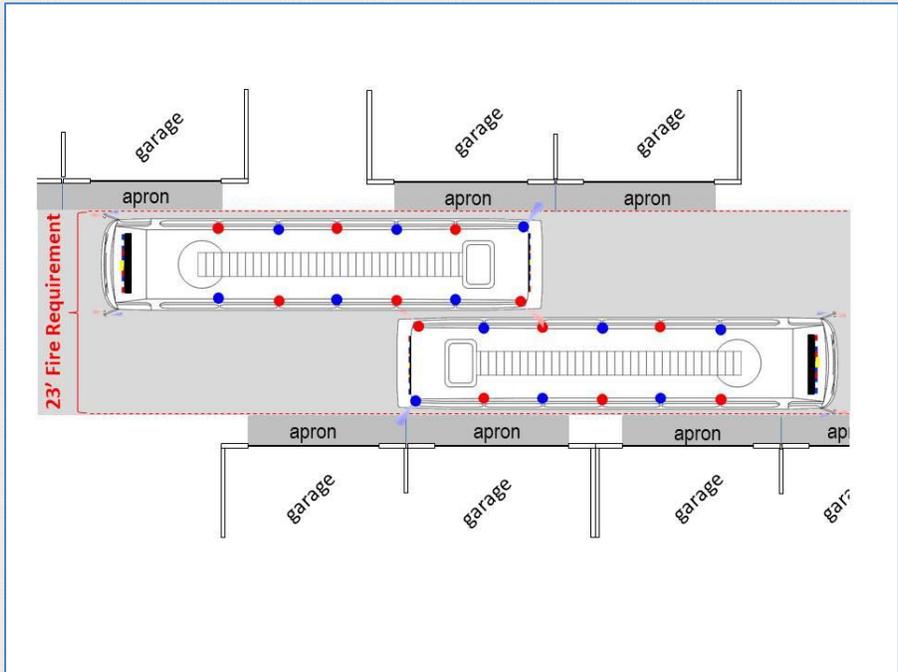


The rationale behind 23' is the ability for an engine to pass another engine (relocate) on the same street. Two engines occupy an average of 21', thus on a 23' foot wide street they have but eight inches (8") clearance between them. That leaves very little room for error moving these huge vehicles.

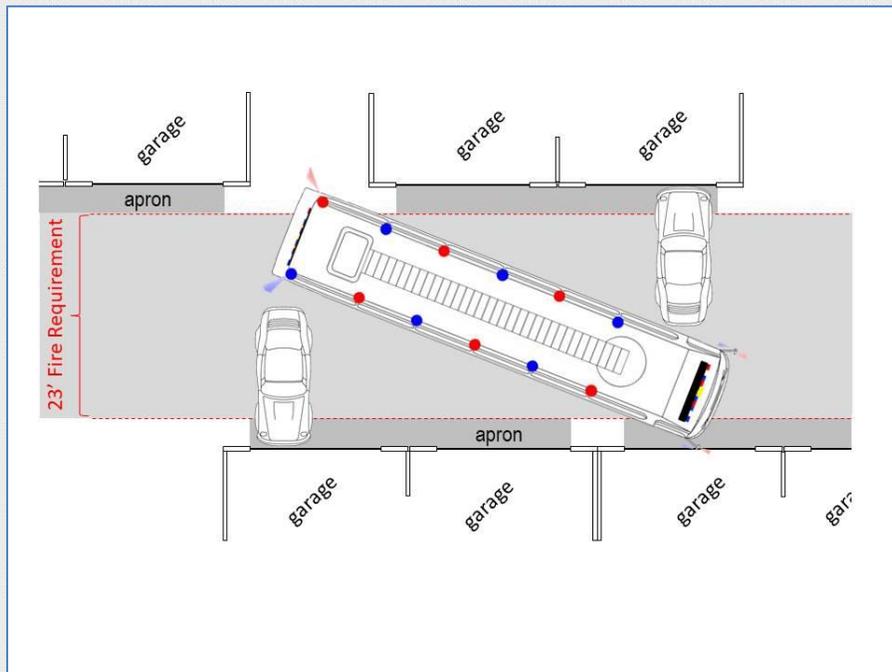
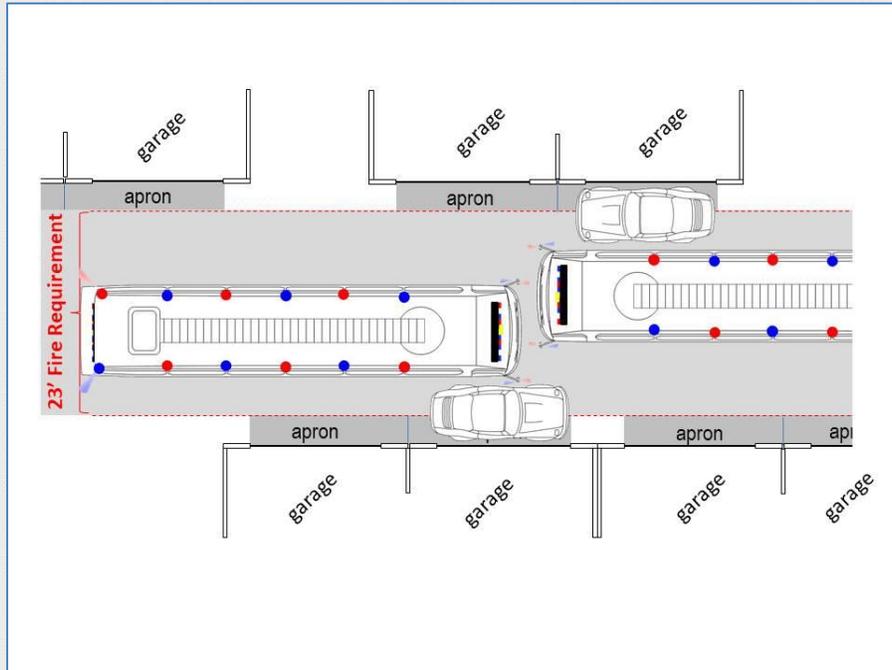
Consider our streets . . .

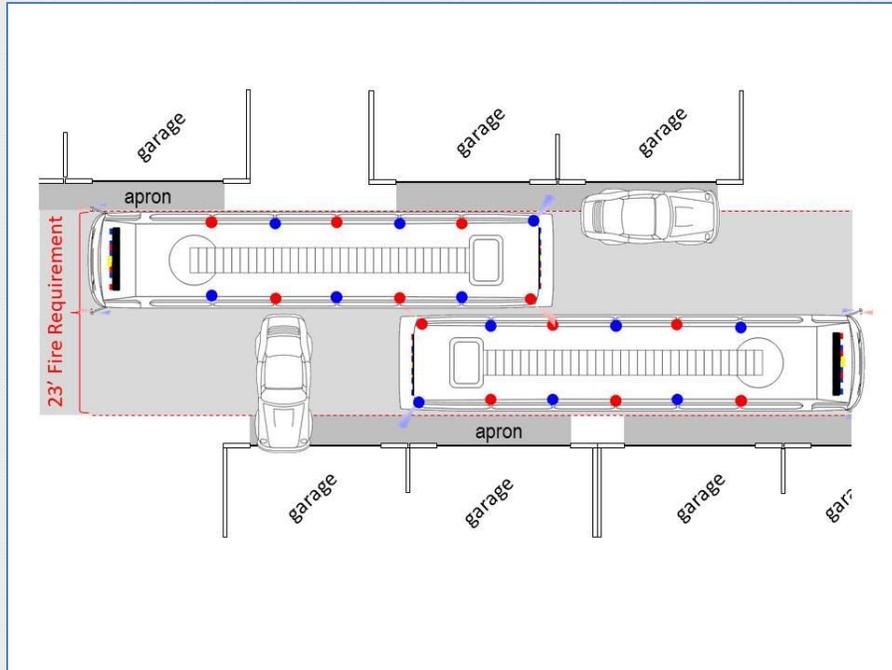


... and now with two fire engines.



If vehicles are parked behind garages . . .





. . . it becomes incredibly difficult for a single engine and virtually impossible for two engines to maneuver.

With any emergency vehicle, time is of the essence. They need immediate and unencumbered access to a unit in a time of emergency. There is no time for assessing a different route. Some vehicles will be pushed out of the way with the emergency vehicle if necessary.

“I have a large apron between the 23’ street and my garage door. I have room to park my car/motorcycle there. Why can’t I?”

AFR will determine if there can be any exceptions to the entire length of our streets being marked as fire lanes. Until such exception is made, all aprons are considered as no parking.

“Why are the streets not marked? Where are the signs?”

The installation of fire lane parking signs is in the works and are mandatory when the construction is complete, NO PARKING–FIRE LANE signs will be phased into Pioneer Hills over the next few weeks/months ahead of full project completion.



The location(s) and placement of the signs in will be determined by Aurora Fire Rescue Life Safety. Although these roadways are private streets which belong to the HOA, City code mandates and directs the signage. The signs will be placed along Poundstone Place, Poundstone Drive, Crestridge Drive, Crestridge Place, Dearborn Court, Elkhart Court, and Fairplay Court. (Map follows)

The fact that there are few signs today does not absolve homeowners of their responsibility to follow the rules regarding parking in these areas. Multiple emails, postings, Board meeting minutes, etc. have been extended to the homeowners. With the exception of Crestline Drive (which is a City street and is not designated a fire lane) parking anywhere along Pioneer Hills' streets in NII, NIII or NIV is prohibited.

Stopping in front of a garage for the sole purpose of loading/unloading is permissible only temporarily.



November 14, 2017

Easements

 Fire Lane Easement



City of Aurora
City of Aurora 2016

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