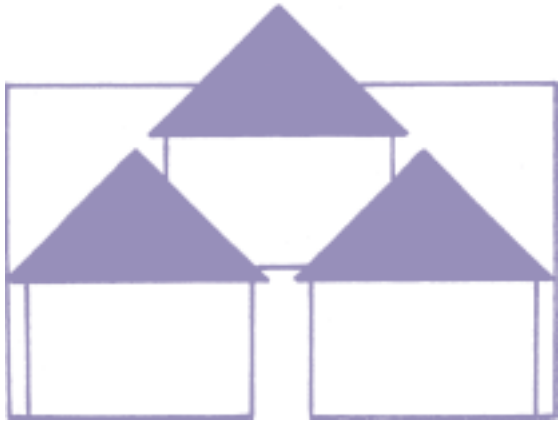


Design for Higher Density and Planned Communities



City of Raleigh Development Plans Review Center

Alternative Development Options:

The City of Raleigh offers design options in addition to traditional single family and townhouse subdivision development to provide for mixed uses, achieve higher densities, and preserve open space. The following list provides a general description of these development alternatives.

Cluster Unit Development (CUD):

This type of permit allows smaller lot sizes (60% of the normal allowable lot size within the zoning district) in exchange for setting aside a minimum of 10% common open space for the residents of the development. This enables the subdivision to concentrate the development into a smaller area, thereby limiting the impact on environmentally sensitive areas as well as minimizing the developer's cost for public street construction and utility extensions. Residential density can be located as desired within the CUD, but the overall density yield may not exceed that permitted within the zoning district. For instance, 10 acres of R-6 property continues to maintain a maximum yield of 60 dwelling units).

In order to apply for a cluster unit development, a minimum gross land area is required. The minimum gross land area for Rural Residential, R-2 and R-4 is 20 acres. The minimum gross land area for all other residential zoning districts is 10 acres.

Planned Development District:

Through a master plan and conditional use zoning process, this type of subdivision permits the property owner to develop a range of land uses that may not otherwise be permitted; increase densities up to 40 units per acre; and decrease minimum lot sizes, lot dimensions and building setbacks. Additionally, public street widths may be reduced and alternate designs to normal curb and gutter and sidewalk construction may be approved. In exchange, the subdivider must devote 15% of the area of the master plan to common open space and provide a unified approach to landscaping, signage, parking, driveways, and pedestrian circulation. This process requires a City Council zoning hearing and can be accomplished in 3 months. Once approved, no further City Council approval of site plans is necessary.

Downtown Residential:

Upon City Council approval of the subdivision plan, minimum lot size, lot width and lot depth dimensions may be reduced within the downtown area and Pedestrian Business overlay districts. This approval also entitled the development to exceed the density otherwise permitted in the underlying zoning district.

For example, a Residential Business zone carries a density of 10 units per acre and a minimum lot size for single family dwellings of 5,000 square feet as well as a minimum lot size for duplex dwellings of 8,712 square feet. Within the downtown area, the City Council may approve a subdivision for single family dwellings which proposes 2,500 square foot lots (17 units per acre) or a subdivision for duplexes which proposes 3,000 square foot lots (28 units per acres).

The City Council may also approve dwelling densities up to 40 dwelling units per acre, and up to 320 units per acre if certain standards are met.

The downtown area is generally defined as being bordered by Peace Street to the north, Person Street and East Street to the east, South Street to the south, and West Street and St. Mary's Street to the west.

Special Setbacks:

The City's Zoning Code has been revised to require less lot area to be devoted to yard area setbacks. This change was directly related to the desire to accommodate smaller lots, allowing houses close to the street to create an urban atmosphere. In most residential zoning districts, front yard and rear yard setbacks were reduced to 20 feet. In addition, on a new residential street, front yard of 10 feet are permitted in the Special R-6, R-6, R-10, R-15, R-20, R-30, and 20 feet within the R.R., R-2 and R-4 districts (must accommodate parking pads off the right-of-way).

Also along new residential streets, in order to create a more usable side yard for single family residences within the Special R-6, R-6, R-10, R-15, R-20, and R-30 districts, no minimum building setback is required on one side when the aggregate side yard requirement is met. If this side yard reduction is used, a 5-foot maintenance easement must be recorded on the adjoining lot.

Streets:

Private streets are permitted in townhouse, apartment or condominium projects. Private streets are not allowed to serve single family dwellings or duplexes, although private alleys can be built along the rear of houses that front on public streets. The City has adjusted its public street standards to accommodate single-family communities where certain design objectives are desired.

The City allows the use of minor residential (26'bb) streets (50' ROW, or 45' ROW without sidewalk) serving 40 or fewer houses, and residential streets (31'bb) serving 150 or fewer houses. "Rolled" or "valley" curbs are allowed in addition to the standard curb section. If alternative road surface treatments to the standard bituminous concrete are desired, they can be allowed if the City determines maintenance is feasible, and the developer contributes a fee to the City representing the extra cost of long-term maintenance.

