
**Board of Adjustment
June 9, 2026
Staff Report**

Application Summary –

A request of Caleb Colbert (attorney), on behalf of Lake Bradley, LLC (owner), seeking approval to use “cottage” optional development standards on property addressed as 301 E. Old Plank Road so as to allow for development of a 18-lot cottage subdivision to the known as “Old Plank Cottages” as required by Section 29-6.4(j) of the Unified Development Code.

Site Characteristics

The applicant is seeking approval to use the optional development standards such that a 18-lot cottage subdivision on a 3.68-acre tract of land located on the north side of E. Old Plank Road approximately 515-feet east of its intersection with S. Bethel Church Road and Blue Ridge Road can be constructed. The proposed subdivision, to be known as “Old Plank Cottages”, is shown on the attached preliminary plat and includes 17 “cottage-sized” lots and 1 lot devoted to stormwater detention. The subject 3.68-acres was recently rezoned to R-2 (Two-family Dwelling).

The attached preliminary plat was reviewed by the Planning Commission on June 4 and is pending introduction to City Council based on the Board’s action relating to this request. The preliminary plat cannot be introduced to City Council without authorization to allow usage of the optional development standards. If such approval is not granted by the Board, the preliminary plat will be required to be modified to conform to standard single-family lot standards applicable to the R-2 zoning district.

The production of “cottage” sized lots is a goal and objective of the recently completed Boone County/City of Columbia Housing Study and is a goal and objective of the City’s adopted Comprehensive Plan. The creation of these types of lots allows for alternative housing types to be integrated into the existing land use context which leads to greater housing diversity within the community, more efficient use of limited land resources, and reduced expenditures in the provision of infrastructure services given more compact development. Furthermore, “cottage” size lots create opportunities to provide housing that may be more attainable for residents who otherwise may not qualify for housing that is traditionally constructed within the Columbia/Boone County market.

If approved, the proposed acreage would be permitted to be developed with single-family detached structures using reduced dimensional standards (i.e. setbacks and lot area). The subject parcel is located within an environment surrounded by other two-family dwellings (to the north, east, and south) and is bounded on the west by the Bethel Baptist Church which is the parent parcel from which the subject acreage was created. The surrounding zoning is R-2 to the north, east and west. PD zoning is to the south of E. Old Plank Road. residential Aside from the smaller proposed lots, this request would result in single-family home construction being facilitated in a development that is required to be fully compliant with the city’s subdivision requirements.

The property is presently unimproved and as noted was previously part of the Bethel Baptist Church acreage. In 2025 the acreage, along with the church, was annexed into the city and zoned R-2. The attached preliminary plat illustrates the proposed property line that will be created between the church and the subject acreage and also shows the installation of a fully code compliant public street providing access to the newly created lots. No lots will have direct driveway access to E. Old Plank Road. The newly created public road generally bisects the property in half and affords the opportunity to “double-load” the street. The design of the proposed subdivision is compliant with the standards of the UDC and all lots shown conform to the minimum dimensional requirements for “cottage” lots. The applicant’s attached correspondence indicates that on-site/off-street parking will be meet through provision of code

compliant on-site/off-street parking (minimum two parking spaces) per lot and the proposed housing will consist of 2- or 3-bedroom dwellings with a one- or two-car garage. Compliance with this requirement will be confirmed at the time of individual building permit submission.

Authorization Sought and Purpose

The applicant is seeking authorization to utilize the optional development standards associated with the development of a “cottage” subdivision to be known as Old Plank Cottages. The optional cottage standards are shown in Sec. 29-4.1(a), Table 4.1-1 of the UDC and are only applicable to property that is zoned R-2. Per Sec. 29-6.4(j) of the UDC, authorization to permit an applicant to use these standards requires Board of Adjustment approval following findings that the request meets three review criteria.

The applicant’s correspondence (attached) indicates that authorization is sought to allow “smaller lots to be developed over that of a conventional R-1 or R-2 development.” If this request is approved, the site would be authorized to be improved with 17 detached single-family homes on lots smaller than and with less significant setbacks than would otherwise be required within a conventional R-1 or R-2 development. The following dimensional summary table to illustrates the differences between conventional R-1, R-2, and R-2 “cottage” development dimensional standards and that proposed for the Old Plank Cottages subdivision.

	<i>R-1</i>	<i>R-2 Current</i>	<i>R-2 Cottage</i>	<i>Old Plank Cottages*</i>
Minimum Lot Area	7,000 SF	5,000 SF	3,000 SF	4,000 SF
Minimum Lot Width at Building Line	60 feet	60 feet	30 feet	38 feet
Minimum Depth of Front Yard	25 feet	25 feet	10 feet	20 feet
Minimum Width of Side Yard	6 feet	6 feet	6 feet	6 feet
Minimum Depth of Rear Yard	25 feet	25 feet	10 feet	20 feet
Maximum Building Height	35 feet	35 feet	35 feet	35 feet

** While the request is for R-2 Cottage Standards, the dimensions listed under the Old Plank Cottages are for reference only based on anticipated dimensions for this development.*

Authorization Analysis –

Summary and Impacts

The applicant is seeking authorization to use optional development standards to facilitate development of an 18-lot cottage-style single-family subdivision. If authorized, 17 single-family homes would be permitted on lots as small as 4,000 square feet with reduced lot frontages (minimum 38-feet) and reduced setbacks from those typically allowed in the R-2 district (see above table).

In evaluating what the applicant is requesting in the way of setbacks, it is important to note that each lot will maintain a minimum 20-foot front yard setback and double the allowed rear yard setback from 10-feet to 20-feet. Staff finds that these setbacks are appropriate given the development proposed and will afford adjacent development with adequate separation from a more compact development form.

In 2017 when the UDC was adopted, the “cottage” development standards were created such that applicants would have the ability to create smaller-footprint detached single-family home subdivisions as a means of increasing housing diversity, income integrated neighborhoods, and affordable housing

options that did not exist in previous zoning and subdivision codes. The creation of the “cottage” category was also viewed as a means of ensuring fulfillment of the Comprehensive Plan’s Livable and Sustainable Neighborhood goals and objectives. The desire to increase the production of “cottage” lots is further supported by the 2024 Boone County/City of Columbia Housing Study for many of the same reasons that resulted in its initial creation.

The subject 3.68-acres was rezoned to R-2 through a deliberate public hearing process that not only involved permanently assigning R-2 zoning to the property, but also annexing the acreage into the city’s corporate limits. Should approval be granted, any conditions the Board may place upon this development would be shown on the attached preliminary plat prior to it being considered for final passage by the City Council. Should the Board approve the use of the optional development standards and the Council approve the preliminary plat, a final plat consistent with the approved preliminary plat will be required to formally create the 17 “cottage” lots and 1 common lot. At this time the applicant has not submitted a final plat for review.

The concept of introducing smaller lots within the existing developed environment permits an opportunity for those desiring a smaller footprint single-family homes on an individual lot an option not presently available within the area. The current built environment is comprised of generally duplex rental housing to the north east, and south which are connected to public services. The size of the proposed lots and resultant dwelling units are seen as a means of providing an opportunity to add housing diversity into built environment and will afford and opportunity for more affordable single-family housing construction given the costs of infrastructure will be spread over a greater number of lots that possible within a traditional R-2 subdivision. This potential cost reduction may create housing that is more attainable to a broader economic demographic.

The ability to offer such an option is consistent with the Livable and Sustainable Neighborhood goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan and would be supportive of the Council’s action to rezone the subject site to R-2. Furthermore, approval of development on parcels surrounded by existing public utility infrastructure (i.e. “infill” development) is generally considered less costly and more environmentally appropriate than the development of outlying “greenfield” sites. This reduction in environmental impact is also supportive of several land use and environmental protection goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan as well as the city’s Climate Action and Adaptation Plan.

Compliance with Optional Development Standard Criteria

Staff has reviewed the “Criteria for Approval” of the “optional development standards” articulated in Section 29-6.4(j)(3)(i-iii), of the UDC and finds that:

- i. The subject site is located within a “Residential” district as shown on the City’s Future Land Use Plan. This designation supports the construction of diverse and inclusive housing options. Proposing development using the optional development standards would be consistent within this designation and is seen as furthering the broad goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan. The land use character surrounding the subject site is predominately two-family detached housing to the north, east, and south. Immediately to the west is Bethel Baptist Church, the parent parcel from which the subject acreage has come from.

As stated in the applicant’s correspondence (attached), approval of the optional development standards will allow “a slightly different type of development, it is still very much neighborhood and community oriented.” The applicant’s correspondence further states how authorization will meet the Comprehensive Plan’s objectives for supporting infill development and meeting several other Livable and Sustainable Communities goals and objectives such as offering opportunities for

diverse and inclusive housing, creating opportunities for “affordable” housing, addressing the desired housing vision, and promoting growth management principles.

- ii. Authorization to utilize the optional development standards does not relieve the applicant of meeting other regulatory requirements of the UDC. This criterion seeks to determine if adequate parking will be provided for the proposed development. Per the UDC, a single-family detached dwelling is required to provide two on-site parking spaces. Based on the lots shown on the preliminary plat and statements within the applicant’s attached correspondence, a minimum of 2 on-site parking will be provided on each lot. Prior to issuance of a building permit, a final compliance check will be performed to ensure the applicant has met all applicable UDC on-site parking standards.
- iii. The authorization of the optional development standards not unlike any other development within this location may increase the amount of traffic traveling along E. Old Plank Road and S. Bethel Church Road. A comprehensive review of the preliminary plat did not identified concerns with the 17-lot development generating traffic impacts incapable of being handled by existing street network. Furthermore, the City’s traffic engineer did not find that the development warranted a traffic impact study.

Sidewalks along the proposed new public street and site’s existing E. Old Plank Road frontage will be required upon development of the site. No additional right of way for E. Old Plank Road will be required.

Potential Board Action

Should the Board determine that compelling testimony has been provided and the standards of Section 29-6.4(j)(3)(i-iii) have been met, it would then be appropriate to offer a recommendation to authorize the use of the “optional development standards” on the subject lot. However, if a determination is made that such request is not supported by the testimony given or the standards of Section 29-6.4(j)(3)(i-iii) having been met, then a recommendation of denial would be appropriate.

For the purposes of establishing a “complete” public record, Board justification supporting authorization or denial of authorization to use the “optional development standards” as defined in Section 29-6.4(j)(3)(i-iii) shall be stated within the public record prior to a final decision being rendered.