

MEMO

DATE: April 30, 2021

TO: Planning Commission Members

FROM: Clint Smith, Senior Planner

Re: Obstacles to Small Lot Development

Two Planned Development requests have come before the Planning and Zoning Commission recently that led to discussions on minimum lots sizes, residential density, and lot coverage regarding single-family residential construction. Specifically, Case #61-2021 Midland PD, which was a single-family attached development that was ultimately not approved by the City Council, and Case #201-2020 The Cottages of Northridge PD, which was a single-family detached development that was approved by Council.

Both locally and nationally, there has been heightened focus on the high-cost of housing. This can be a complex issue, and there are many ideas on ways to combat the issue (e.g. the concept of the missing middle housing). Another possible avenue to explore would be the construction of smaller houses on smaller lots, and the UDC permits the creation of lots as small as 3,000 sq.ft. This topic ties into Columbia Imagined as well; one of the specific actions under *Policy One: Support diverse and inclusive housing options* is creating zoning that encourages a variety of housing options.

Chairperson Loe has compiled research on how other communities address the idea of small lot development, and what development controls they use to administer the creation of these lots, such as minimum lot sizes, setbacks, maximum lot coverages, and other considerations. The information is provided within the report titled “Lot Coverage Comparisons”. She reviewed several other municipalities’ codes and reviewed how they address these issues.

The Unified Development Code also permits a variety of lot sizes, and Chairperson Loe has provided a narrative with an overview of how the UDC administers the creation of smaller lots. The narrative provided by the Chairman includes four sections. **Section one includes an**

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overview of the some of the development controls within the UDC (lot sizes, density bonuses), and also some working concepts to discuss during the work session. It concludes with a question on facilitating single-family development on lots less than 7,000 square feet for consideration during the work.

Section two summarizes the different zoning districts that allow single-family dwellings, both detached and attached, and each setback within that district, providing an **overview of the different options for constructing a single-family house**. A summary of the UDC's two **density bonuses**, the solar orientation and rural cluster density bonus, are covered in Section three.

Section four provides an overview of **lot coverage**, touching on research into other communities' use of lot coverage maximums, which is typically defined as a percentage of a lot that may include a principal structure, although what counts towards the coverage can vary. Section four includes graphic representation of different scenarios involving the City R-1 and R-2 zoned lots, and how much of each lot can be utilized for a single-family house. It concludes with notes on the lot coverage research as a whole.

This information is presented for discussion during the work session, with the goal of reaching a consensus among the Commission on potential text amendments that should be reviewed further by staff.

Attachments

- Lot Coverage Notes
- Lot Coverage Comparison Table
- 29-4.1 Dimensional Tables
- 29-4.2(b)(2 &3) Density Bonus
- Midland and Northridge PD Plans