



Date: October 13, 2023
To: Planning and Zoning Commission Members
From: Patrick R. Zenner, Development Services Manager
Re: Residential Cottage (RC) Zoning District

The staff is prepared to re-engage in the discussion of revisions to the UDC to complete the outline and structure for the RC zoning district. As previously discussed, the primary impetus for this endeavor was to create a more streamlined and predictable approach when a property owner sought to develop their land with a “cottage-style” development. The current process requires a property to already be zoned or obtain R-2 zoning and then be granted authorization by the Board of Adjustment to use the “optional dimensional standards” for cottage housing.

Prior discussion on this matter identified the opportunity to reduce processing time to obtain necessary approvals by eliminating the Board of Adjustment from the review process. Doing so result in the staff and Commission discussing the option of creating an entirely new zoning district that would be called RC (Residential Cottage). The new district’s underlying “by-right” dimensional standards were discussed as being consistent with those presently allowed in the R-2 district for “cottage” development following the Board of Adjustment’s approval. While these standards were discussed there were concerns expressed that utilizing them without possible adjustments or additional evaluation criteria may result in development outcomes that were not optimal in both “infill” as well as “greenfield” development setting.

Given these concerns, Commission Loe began collecting information on the lot inventory within the City to assist the staff and Commissioners with understanding the unique attributes that substandard lots within the community have. To date, Commissioner Loe has identified approximately 1300 lots that are either substandard in lot width, lot area, or both. The spreadsheet containing these 1300 lots is attached for the Commission’s review.

It should be noted that staff has added several columns of additional data to Commissioner Loe’s research. The information added provides the developable lot area on each identified property after deducting the standard setbacks from the property, the maximum % of lot coverage on each property that would be possible, and for selected street frontages (presently Aldeah and Garth) the actual % of lot coverage based on current site improvements (i.e. structure footprints). Graphics showing staff’s calculations of the actual % of lot coverage are attached.

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Staff is supportive of creating a streamlined approach to allowing cottage-style lots to be developed within the City. To ensure progress is made to bring the desired changes to fruition and to guide the staff in preparing a regulatory document the Commission can review, answers to the following “outcome” questions are sought at the next work session:

1. Does the Commission desire to utilize the existing reduced setbacks and lot area presently permitted following Board of Adjustment approval for new RC development as the minimum requirements? If not, what considerations should be explored or evaluated to identify alternatives?
2. Does the Commission desire to establish lot coverage requirements for new RC development? If so, what would be the basis of the lot coverage, i.e. existing coverage of substandard lots, or another source?
3. Should dimensional standards (i.e. lot area, setbacks, coverage) be varied based on “infill” or “greenfield” development scenarios?
4. What types of development quality or quality of life matters should be considered as possible “use-specific standards” that could become the basis of evaluating future rezoning requests to the RC district or approving RC district development plans?

Understanding what the Commission’s desired outcomes are for the RC district will enable staff to more efficiently prepare an ordinance for future review. The questions presented above are not intended to be exhaustive with respect to this topic. If a Commissioner believes additional considerations should be explored please be prepared offer them as part of the upcoming work session discussion.

