

**Date:** January 14, 2024  
**To:** Planning and Zoning Commission Members  
**From:** Patrick R. Zenner, Development Services Manager  
**Re:** Small Lot Standards Text Change

Following the December 21, 2023 work session, the staff has been performing analysis to generate what it believes are reasonable limitations on new lot types (small and medium) that can be integrated into the R-1, R-2, and R-MF zoning districts as a means of promoting greater lot diversity for the potential construction of small footprint homes. A concern that has been expressed throughout the discussion on this topic has been the potential for abuse of the reduced setbacks by the construction of a single-family dwellings significantly larger than those permitted within the current “base” zoning districts when existing dimensional standards are applied.

Table 1 provides a summary of what the current zoning districts permit in the way of footprint and maximum structure size for single-family **detached** dwellings based on the existing dimensional standards. It should be noted that for calculation purposes staff has identified the “optimal” lot characteristics (width & depth) that produce the largest possible building envelopes.

Table 1 - Single-family Detached Yield (Footprint & Structure Size)				
	Zoning District			
	R-1	R-2	Cottage	R-MF
Lot Area (min)	7000	5000	3000	5000
<b>Setback Loss</b>	<b>3800</b>	<b>3400</b>	<b>1719</b>	<b>3400</b>
Bldg. Envelope (max)	3200	1600	1281	1600
<b>Structure Size (max)</b>	<b>9600</b>	<b>4800</b>	<b>3843</b>	<b>4800</b>

Based on these values, staff proposes to approach integrating small and medium lots into the R-1, R-2, and R-MF districts by utilizing a combination of strategies that first establish a “footprint” maximum and second govern overall structure size by use of a Floor Area Ratio (FAR).

The first strategy recognizes that when setbacks are reduced the overall building envelope of a lot (regardless of size) will increase. This increase is a concern given it could result in a dwelling that covers all of its reduced buildable area leading to disproportionate lot coverage which several Commissioners have expressed concern about. The second strategy is proposed as a way of addressing the amount of living area a dwelling would be permitted to construct on lots that are in some instances (particularly in the R-1 district) significantly smaller than those already existing on larger lots. Staff believes that the combination of these strategies creates a hybrid approach that will permit small and medium lots to be integrated into the existing zoning structure with the least amount of confusion.

Building off discussion at the conclusion of the December 21, 2023 work session, staff has prepared revised dimensional standards for both small and medium-sized lots. Small lots (3000 to 4999 sq. ft.) are to be added to the R-1, R-2, and R-MF districts and would **only** permit single-family **detached** dwellings. Medium lots (5000 to 6,999 sq. ft.) are to be added to the R-1 zoning district **only** and would **only** permit single-family **detached** dwellings. Given the R-2 and R-MF districts already have standards for single-family **detached** dwellings 5000 sq. ft. or larger the proposed medium lot provisions were not added to those districts. The focus of this amendment is to add to lot diversity below established minimum lot area. Adding medium lot standards to R-2 or R-MF districts, in staff's opinion, goes beyond the scope of this current discussion.

Table 2 shows the dimensional standards for the proposed small and medium lots. As can be seen, the table is broken into "General Standards" and "Special Standards". This differentiation was believed necessary such that levels of development intensity with respect to FAR and ground floor square footage could be clearly expressed. Table 2 will need to be integrated into Articles 2 and 4 of the UDC prior to final consideration.

**Table 2 - Proposed Dimensional Standards**

	Small Lot	Medium Lot
	R-1/R-2/R-MF	R-1
<b>General Requirements</b>		
<b>Lot Area (Min/Max)</b>	<b>3000/4999</b>	<b>5000/6999</b>
Lot Width (Min)	30-feet	30 feet
<b>Front Setback</b>	<b>20-feet</b>	<b>20-feet</b>
Side Setback	6-feet	6-feet
<b>Rear Setback</b>	<b>10-feet</b>	<b>10-feet</b>
Building height (Max)	35-feet	35-feet
<b>Special Requirements</b>		
<b>Floor Area Ratio</b>		
3000 to 5499 sq. ft	0.45	0.45
<b>5500 to 5999 sq. ft</b>		<b>0.46</b>
6000 to 6499 sq. ft		0.47
<b>6500 to 6999 sq. ft</b>		<b>0.48</b>
<b>Ground Floor Sq. ft (Max)</b>		
3000 to 3499 sq. ft	1000	
<b>3500 to 3999 sq. ft</b>	<b>1100</b>	
4000 to 4499 sq. ft	1300	
<b>4500 to 4999 sq. ft</b>	<b>1450</b>	
5000 to 5499 sq. ft		1600
<b>5500 to 5999 sq. ft</b>		<b>2000</b>
6000 to 6499 sq. ft		2400
<b>6500 to 6999 sq. ft</b>		<b>2800</b>

In an effort to illustrate how the maximum ground floor footprint and FAR impact future dwelling unit construction on the range of lot sizes identified in Table 2, staff has performed an analysis of potential lot configurations. Table 3, attached to this report, provides an analysis for lots ranging from 3000 sq. ft. to 7000 sq. ft. at 500 sq. ft. intervals. This analysis matches the ranges of lot sizes shown within Table 2, above.

For each analysis there are possible lot configurations (width x depth) based on 5-foot width increments. Additionally, staff has shown what the building envelope (i.e. footprint) and maximum building size would be for each of the possible lot scenarios using **both** the reduced setbacks (shown in Table 2) and standard setbacks presently established in the UDC which are 25' (front & rear) and 6' (side). Where applicable and permitted, the analysis of lots using standard setbacks also included reduced rear setbacks to ensure accuracy of the building envelope. This comparative analysis has been provided to show the impact of setback reductions related overall ground floor coverage.

The highlighted/bolded line of text within each analysis represents the “optimally” sized lot within that category. The analysis that have “tan” and “green” segmented results (standard setbacks scenarios) are intended to distinguish the breakpoint between what would be a permitted lot (green values) given their lot size and those lots that would be permitted (tan values) if this amendment were passed and standard setbacks were chose to be used instead of the reduced setbacks. **Please note** all values shown in Table 2 are based upon small and medium lots using the reduced setbacks as previously discussed.

The maximum ground floor area shown within Table 3 for each reduced setback lot scenario was arrived at after considering what the standard setback building envelope was for a 60-foot wide optimized lot within each lot size scenario from 5000-7000 sq. ft. Staff choose to use this methodology since a 60-foot wide lot is the current legal minimum lot width. For lots within the 3000-5499 size scenarios, the maximum ground floor limitation was determined by using the optimized R-2 building envelope (32%) and multiplying each category of lot size by 0.32. The resultant calculation was established as the maximum ground floor area.

In most instances, utilizing this methodology will prohibit construction covering an entire building envelope and promote dwelling unit diversity by requiring multi-story construction to maximize allowable FAR. It should be noted that while this limitation may be valuable on the smallest of the proposed lots, it may be necessary to consider alternatives to allow for larger single-story construction when building envelopes increase with respect allowable FAR. Such an alternative could allow greater ground floor coverage if traditional setbacks are applied to the lot and only a certain percentage increase in ground floor coverage is permitted.

Table 3 also illustrates the maximum floor area ratio (FAR) being established for each lot scenario. ***A floor area ratio is the relationship between the total amount of usable floor area that a building has, or has been permitted to have, and the total area of the lot on which the building stands.*** Staff believes a FAR should be established as a mechanism to control the perceived scale that a building constructed on a small or medium-sized lot will have upon not only the lot itself, but also the built environment in which it is located. This is especially important given the focus of this amendment is on **integrating** these new lot types into the existing zoning districts - not creating a new zoning that would be required to be sought for these types of lots.

As Table 3 shows, the FAR proposed for the different lot ranges begins at 0.45 (3000-5499 sq. ft.) to a maximum of 0.48 (6500 to 6999 sq. ft.). The variable nature of the FAR accounts for the increase in building envelope as lot size increases. It is worth noting that in no instances will a future building on a small or medium-sized lot every be able to exceed an existing permitted lot's building size. Based on the FAR factor's chosen, maximum building sizes on small or medium lots would be 2 to almost 3 times smaller in area than if no FAR were applied.

Finally, it is important to remember that this proposed amendment would not permit an individual to automatically create a development utilizing these lot standards. Such action would require the approval of a new subdivision plat. A subdivision with new public infrastructure requires approval of a preliminary plat (Commission/Council action) and the division of an existing platted lot would require approval of a resubdivision/replat (Council action) after consideration of specific criteria relating to possible detrimental impacts to surrounding development and/or infrastructure.

As previously discussed, it is possible that additional revisions to the subdivision standards of the UDC may be necessary to not only integrate small and medium lots into the developed environment, but also to mitigate their possible negative impacts. With that said, the first step is to agree on the zoning framework. It is staff's hope that the preceding description of the proposed regulations and the attached analysis offer sufficient evidence to move forward in deciding on that framework.

Staff looks forward to our discussion on this topic at its January 18 work session. Please contact me if you have questions.