

Residential Working Group

Initial report to Planning Commission on issues in residential zones.

- October 22, 2019

1. Accessory apartments / internal ADUs

Probably the best way to get quick, unsubsidized affordable housing

- Don't count an additional unit
- Must have internal door
- No FAR bump
- Size limit 750 sq ft?
- 1 per lot
- Exterior door encouraged?

2. Garages and parking

Some adjustments needed

- Restore 200 sq ft per unit FAR exemption – NOT unlimited.
- If you have an engaged front porch (private frontage), the garage can move forward but not encroach in front setback.
- Front yard impervious cover is currently 45%. Staff: look at need to bump front yard IC to 50%?

3. ADUs

Some adjustments to encourage them

- Direct departments that assess fees - including Parks and Recreation Department, Austin Water and Austin Energy - to reduce the cost of building ADUs through fee waivers, calculations, shorter approval times, and other means.
- External ADUs qualify for the 0.6 FAR that duplexes get.

4. Manufactured Homes

Keep current ones compliant; allow for new ones and tiny home parks/lots

- Existing zone is for parks. We need more zones.
- Redesignate current zone as MH1A (park)
- New zone MH1B (lot) for smaller manufactured home parks so existing ones aren't non-compliant.
- New zone MH2A (park) and MH2B (lot) for tiny homes (unit size cap)
- MH allowed use for one unit on an RR lot?

5. Revision to R4

Impervious cover not calibrated correctly or bonused.

- R4 base is 4 units, 50% impervious cover, 25'/35' McMansion-tent/tiered-cake
- R4 bonus is 8 units, 50% impervious cover, 35'/45' McMansion-tent/tiered-cake
- Initial feedback on bonus is that 50% is not feasible for eight units.
- Possible action:
 - 1-2 units retains 45% impervious cover
 - Bonus has 60% impervious cover to make bonus feasible
 - Commission: Should there be a middle ground for 3-4 units? Or should all increase in IC come only with bonus?

6. New Zone: Missing-Middle-In-The-Tent

New zone that allows up to 4 units for affordable housing and compatibility with adjacent R zoning. Call it R2D?

- R3 has 3 units, within the 25'/35' tiered cake/McMansion tent. 45% impervious cover.
- R4 has 4 units base, 8 units bonus, with 35'/45' tier, 50% (or 60%) impervious cover.
- We are missing a just-right bonus in the middle.
- Proposal: New R2D zone with affordable ADU bonus
 - Working group is not proposing a mapping at this point
 - Base: R2A
 - Bonus: R2B's "urban" setbacks of 10' front and 5' rear
 - Cottage court form allowed?
 - Same 25'/35' tent/tiers
 - FAR of up to 1.0, based on ratio of market rate space to affordable space (3-to-1?)
 - Up to 4 units

7. Fixes to cottage court form?

From Commissioner Kenny

- Current form requires a 1,500 sq ft. courtyard minimum, surrounded on two sides by buildings, can't be in setbacks, can't be used for parking.
- Early feedback is this is infeasible on smaller and mid-sized lots.
- Potential change:
 - 6 foot separation
 - 100 sq ft / unit private open space
 - 100 sq ft / unit of common open space
 - 2,000 sq ft. size limit on units.
 - Allow common space to be in setbacks.
 - Get rid of courtyard and diagram.

8. Fences and Private Frontages

Practical fixes that don't have a wall at the lot line

- Overall fence height of 4' within front setback (5' for slopes) – average of 4.5'
 - Restriction on portion that can be opaque?
- Private frontage
 - Allow safety rails where porch is elevated that are exempted from fence height limits

9. FAR

Putting some limits on work-arounds

- 6'8" or higher counts against FAR
- 15' counts twice

10. Double-Lot Development

Reduce cost of development on double-sized lots

- Current draft requires most double-wide R-zoned lots to be subdivided prior to development
- Subdivision process is very expensive and time-consuming
- Make allowances for double-lot development of most forms in R zones provided widths and sizes are twice the standard for single lots.

11. Unified Development of Lots

What we do when one builder is doing multiple adjoining lots

- Allow builders to waive own interior side-setback to allow more flexible placement of buildings. (As we do with townhomes.)
- Staff: Should we look at ways to make Unified Development Agreements lighter-weight? Such as allowing DSD to sign-off, not City Law?

12. F25 Sunset

Let's commit to finishing our code

- Request staff to set a timeline for incorporating F25 areas into code.
- Could be staggered with different deadlines for different F25s.

13. TDM for parking reductions beyond ¼ mi.

Procedures for the area between ¼ and ½ mile from Transit Priority Network

- Staff, should we look at establishing TDM similar to PC direction on Draft 3 for area beyond ¼ mile?

14. Shade trees for transition zones

Making walking to transit more pleasant and healthy

- Current and proposed landscaping requirements do not apply to R zones.
- Apply front yard tree planting requirements to all urban/transition zones (R2B and up).
- Need to review requirements to make sure they are oriented towards shading sidewalk (accomplish within x feet of front lot line?)
- Need administrative variances to be sensible.
- Side note: Should we really be requiring front porches in R2B?

15. R1 vs R2C

Can we get more information?

- R1 and R2C seem to be easily merged into one zone for small lots?