UPDATING URBAN RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS

STEPHEN A. FESLER, SENIOR PLANNER
PDS PERMITTING
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Overview

Goals of the briefing:

- Provide background on the project
- Highlight key policies issues contained in the draft proposal
  - Enhancing design
  - Increasing flexibility and removing barriers
Purpose of Project

Consider a variety of changes to the County’s urban residential development regulations that may:

- Reduce barriers, incentivize, and enhance quality of development
- Provide additional flexibility in the design of urban residential developments
- Establish an alternative residential development type combining townhouses and other single-family housing types (“mixed townhouse development”)
- Expand unit lot subdivision provisions to allow fee simple lots for mixed townhouse developments
- Modify approach to determining average final grade as it relates to building height
Policy Support

**Housing Policy 2.B.1**: “The county shall encourage a variety of housing types and densities in residential neighborhoods.”

**Land Use Policy 2.A.4**: “UGAs shall provide opportunities for a mix of affordable housing types (e.g. small lot detached, townhouses, duplex, triplex, 6 to 8 unit apartment and small group housing units) within designated residential areas.”

**Land Use Objective 4.A**: “Improve the quality of residential, commercial, and industrial development through comprehensive design standards and a design review process.”
Outreach

- Recurring themes of townhouse-related issues, such as:
  - Setbacks, height, design quality, flexibility, and vehicular conflicts
  - Desire to create fee simple lots (referred to as unit lots) for mixed residential developments

- Targeted review of urban residential development standards

- Broad set of stakeholders
  - Developers, architects, land use consultants, environmentalists, and County staff
  - Multiple rounds of outreach and engagement with stakeholders conducted

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<th>Sampling of Feedback</th>
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<td>Encourage townhouse orientation toward common open space</td>
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<td>Provide additional incentives for townhouse development</td>
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<td>Address vehicular conflicts associated with short driveways</td>
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<td>Encourage parking within structures</td>
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Defining “Townhouse”

A townhouse is a type of single-family residential structure

- Consists of three or more attached single-family dwelling units under one roof
- Each dwelling unit occupies the whole space from foundation to roof
- Units are physically separated by vertical internal dividing walls
Townhouse Regulations

- Allowed in the R-7,200, T, LDMR, MR, NB, PCB, CB, GC, and UC zones
- Subject to Urban Residential Design Standards (URDS) (Chapter 30.23A SCC) requirements (except in UC zone), which include:
  - Architectural design requirements
  - Compatibility with residential uses
  - Building orientation and entrance requirements
  - Other site layout controls (e.g., landscaping, open space, and parking)
- Requires administrative site plan approval under URDS
- May be subdivided, usually using unit lot subdivision provisions
Other Types of Single-Family Housing

- **Single-family detached**
  - Single-unit structure on an individual lot or site

- **Duplexes**
  - Two-unit structure on the same lot
  - Units can be stacked

- **Single-family attached**
  - Two-unit structure where each unit sits on its own lot
  - Units are not stacked
Enhancing Design

- Vehicular Conflicts
- Building Transparency
- Building Orientation
- Primary Pedestrian Entrances
- Landscaping
Vehicular Conflicts

**Issues**
- Short driveways between road network elements and garages
- Driveway parking blocking sidewalks and road network elements
- Safety and circulation issues

**Proposed Code Amendment**
- Add standard to SCC 30.23A.050 (townhouse provisions under URDS) requiring garages entrances to be setback a maximum and minimum distance from an adjacent road network element. Either:
  - 6 feet or fewer
  - 18 feet or more
Vehicular Conflicts: Comparison

Existing

No Regulation Today

Proposed

Proposed Regulation
Building Transparency

**Issues**
- Many townhouses have large blank facades and little transparency on public-facing streets and spaces
- Lack of transparency reduces curb appeal and “eyes on the street”

**Proposed Code Amendment**
- Add standard to SCC 30.23A.050 (townhouse provisions under URDS) requiring transparency on primary and secondary facades
  - Primary facade is where a primary pedestrian entrance is located (20% transparency requirement)
  - Secondary facade is any other public-realm side of a building (10% transparency requirement)
  - No blank walls greater than 20 feet
  - Windows and doors qualify as transparency
Building Transparency: Comparison

**Existing**

- Primary Facade: Ok, Transparency > 20%
- Secondary Facade: Not Ok, Transparency < 10%
- No Blank Wall > 20 Feet

**Proposed**

- Primary Facade: Ok, Transparency > 20%
- Secondary Facade: Not Ok, Transparency < 10%
- No Blank Wall > 20 Feet
Building Orientation

**Issues**

- Standards make it difficult to orient residential buildings toward common open space or internal pedestrian facility
- There is no standards in relationship to facing residences toward an internal pedestrian facility
- Some language is outdated

**Proposed Code Amendments**

- Revise standards in SCC 30.23A.070 (building orientation under URDS) to:
  - Provide more flexibility in allowing residential entrances to face common open space and internal pedestrian facilities
    - Establish general standards and specific exceptions
  - Clarify that a primary pedestrian entrance shall not be located on a road network element that only provides rear vehicular access using Director discretion
  - Update some building orientation language
Objective

- Make it easier for residential development to orient toward common open space and internal pedestrian facilities.

Example
Primary Pedestrian Entrances

**Issues**

- No standard for pedestrian entrances
- Semi-private space can serve as a “front yard” and “living room” that are passive or active spaces
- Detailed entrances can add visual interest

**Proposed Code Amendments**

- Add standard to SCC 30.23A.050 (townhouse provisions under URDS) requiring primary pedestrian entrances
  - Locate according to building orientation requirements of SCC 30.23A.070
  - Require each dwelling unit to have a minimum area of primary pedestrian entrance space (50 ft², no dimension less than 6 feet in length)
  - Require each entrance to provide at least two amenities (e.g., landscaping, usable open space, trellis, hedgerow)
  - Require entrances be visually prominent
    - Provide setback exceptions for covered porches, decks, stoops, and staircases
  - Require variety of entrance types
Primary Pedestrian Entrances: Examples and What Qualifies

**Examples**

**What Qualifies**
Landscaping

Issues

- Attached garages can create visual monotony and discontinuity urban form
- Driveways lead to significant added hard space accentuating this problem

Proposed Code Amendment

- Add standard to SCC 30.23A.050 (townhouse provisions under URDS) requiring landscaping along certain driveways
  - Landscaping varies depending upon whether the attached garage is front-load, side-load, or rear-loaded
  - The loading type is determined by a new figure
Increasing Flexibility and Reducing Barriers

- Bulk Regulations
- Development Provisions for Mixing Housing Types
- Perimeter Landscaping and Tandem Parking Standards
- Average Final Grade
Issues
- Existing regulations provide little flexibility for difficult sites
- Additional incentives needed to develop townhouses
- Bulk provisions need to be targeted toward better design outcomes

Proposed Code Amendments
- The following additional development capacity amendments would apply exclusively to townhouse and mixed townhouse development
  - 20% density bonus
  - Reduced setbacks from public roads to seven feet
  - Increase maximum lot coverage in LDMR (40%) and MR (50%) zones
- Allow residential development (except single-family detached) with a third story to apply the required extra three-foot setback from road network elements as an upper floor stepback
Issues

- Mixed townhouse development is not defined in County code
- Mixed residential developments generally cannot be subdivided into single lots for each unit
- Can be useful on challenging sites
- Can help financing a project

Proposed Policy Response

- Add new development called “Mixed Townhouse Development”
  - Predominately townhouse-oriented with limited inclusion of single-family detached, duplexes, and single-family attached units
  - Designed and processed similar to typical townhouse developments
  - Eligible to be subdivided into fee simple lots
  - Limited to R-7,200, LDMR, and MR zones
Mixed Townhouse: Example and Code Amendments

**Proposed Code Amendments**

- Amend Chapter 30.91M SCC to add a definition for “mixed townhouse development”
  - Generally, 80% of the dwelling units must be townhouse units
  - Remaining 20% of dwelling units may be single-family detached, single-family attached, or duplex
- Provide options under URDS for exceptions to the 80/20 rule for small projects
- Amend SCC 30.41A.205 and SCC 30.41B.205 to permit unit lot subdivision of mixed townhouse developments
Mixed Townhouse: Exception Example

Features

- Two lots, two separate townhouse-oriented projects
- Each lot has a three-unit townhouse structure and one duplex
- Townhouse units face a public road and have frontyard, but have rear vehicle loading via drive aisle
- Duplex units face drive aisle and have vehicle loading on the same face; duplex units have a backyard
- Shared common open space
- Internal pedestrian facilities
- Subsequently subdivided into unit lots
Perimeter Landscaping and Tandem Parking Standards

**Issues**
- Townhouse and mixed townhouse developments are less intensive than multi-family development, but have the same perimeter landscaping buffer standards
- Mixed townhouse is similar to townhouse development, but is not listed in the tandem parking provisions

**Proposed Code Amendments**
- Amend SCC 30.25.020 to require 10-foot Type B (R-9,600 and R-8,400), 5-foot Type B (R-7,200), and 15-foot Type A (All Other Zones) buffers for townhouses
- Amend SCC 30.26.025 to allow 100% tandem parking for mixed townhouse development consistent with townhouse development
Two keys issues related to average final grade:

- Calculating the average final grade for single-family attached structures
- Restricting the use of fill to modify the average final grade when adjacent to a property with an existing dwelling unit
Average Final Grade: How It Works

Average Final Grade

- Average final grade is one of two key inputs to determine building height
- Determined by:
  - Drawing the smallest rectangle around a building
  - Finding the elevation mid-point for each side
  - Averaging the mid-point elevations

Existing Method
**Average Final Grade: Single-Family Attached Housing**

### Issues

- Standard approach can reduce or constraint development options
- Can result in bulkier building designs

### Proposed Code Amendment

- Amend SCC 30.23.050(4) to permit an alternative method of determining average final grade
  - Use the same average final grade approach, but assess based upon sections of a single-family attached structure
  - Qualifying structures would have to have individual dwellings fully separated from other dwelling units by walls dividing them from ground to sky
  - The design of such structures would largely be stair stepped as opposed to flat roofed
Average Final Grade: Existing and Alternative Method

**Existing Method**

- (Shaded Area = Building Area)
- Minimum height rectangle
- (mid-point eave/ridge)
- Building Height (average final grade)

**Proposed Alternative Method**

- Shaded area is the building footprint
- Smallest rectangle around building
- Dashed line is the dividing section chosen by the applicant, which is coterminous with the dividing wall between Units 2 and 3.
- Smallest rectangle around selected section
Average Final Grade: Stair-Stepping

**Benefits**
- Creates added visual interest
- Reduces building bulk
- Allows better use of existing development capacity

**Visualizing Stair-Stepping**
Issues

- Restriction broadly applies to all development
- Provision exists to address compatibility issues with new development (e.g., overlooking and building bulk)
- URDS, bulk regulations, and landscaping standards as well as engineering requirements largely make provision redundant for residential development

Proposed Code Amendment

- Modify SCC 30.23.050(5) to exempt residential projects subject to URDS or cottage housing chapter from the restricted fill provision

Existing Standard

Note: Structures on Parcel D within 50 feet of the property lines of Parcels A and C are not subject to the requirements of SCC 30.23.050(5). However, in a select area of Parcel D within 50 feet of a dwelling on Parcel B, fill for structures would be subject to the requirements of SCC 30.23.050(5).
Next Steps / Q&A

- At the discretion of the Planning Commission, a hearing is tentatively scheduled for June 27th
- Continue to keep stakeholders updated on opportunities for public input
- Questions, comments, or feedback?