



Community & Economic Development Department

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Planning Division

PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING: MAY 23, 2024

AGENDA ITEM NO.: 7

DISCUSSION ITEM

Case Number	PR-2024-001678 (AMD) – Residential Infill Development and Small Lot Subdivision Ordinances
Request	City Planning Commission Workshop to discuss and provide input on potential Zoning Code amendments to Title 19 (Zoning) of the Riverside Municipal Code (RMC), including but not limited to Articles V (Base Zones and Related Use and Development Provisions) and Article IX (Land Use Development Permit Requirements/Procedure) intended to implement a Residential Infill Development Ordinance and a Small Lot Subdivision Ordinance as directed by the City Council Housing and Homelessness Committee. The proposed amendments are intended to: 1. Streamline development standards for existing, undersized lots within the Single Family (R-1) Residential Zones and Multi-Family (R-3 & R-4) Residential Zones; 2. Amend the existing Planned Residential Development (PRD) Permit process to implement three new PRD permits as part of a Residential Small Lot Subdivision Program; and 3. Clarify other minor, non-substantive changes and technical corrections as required to implement the Infill Development and Small Lot Subdivision Ordinance.
Project Location	Citywide
Wards	All
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RECOMMENDATION

Conduct a workshop to discuss and provide input on the draft Residential Infill Development and Small Lot Subdivision Ordinances as directed by the City Council Housing & Homelessness Committee (Committee).

BACKGROUND

On July 24, 2023, staff presented six strategies to promote residential infill development to the City Council Housing and Homelessness Committee for consideration and feedback. The strategies presented were included as implementation actions for 6th Cycle Housing Element of the General Plan 2025 adopted by the City Council in November 2021. Staff presented a comparison of the advantages, disadvantages, and potential outcomes of each strategy (Exhibit 1). After discussion, the Committee asked staff to return with additional information on:

1. A Small Lot Subdivision policy for the Committee's consideration;
2. Best practices from existing Density Transfer Programs within the region for the Committee's consideration; and
3. A draft Infill Development Ordinance for the consideration and recommendation of the City Planning Commission.

On August 17, 2023, staff presented the same development strategies to the City Planning Commission at a workshop for consideration and feedback. The Planning Commission's feedback was in alignment with Committee discussion and no further direction was provided (Exhibit 2).

On November 27, 2023, staff presented an update on the infill strategies previously identified by the Committee, which included several options for a Small-Lot Subdivision Ordinance; best practices and additional information on a potential Density Transfer Program; and a full draft of a proposed Residential Infill Development Ordinance to streamline infill development on existing undersized lots (Exhibit 3). Following discussion, the Committee directed staff to prepare a Small Lot Subdivision Ordinance with streamlined development options within single- and multi-family residential zones; and to submit drafts of the Infill Development Ordinance and Small Lot Subdivision ordinance to the City Planning Commission for consideration.

On February 13, 2024, staff held a virtual workshop with key stakeholders with recent or current residential development experience in order to assess challenges and opportunities and obtain general feedback on residential infill and small lot subdivision development. The workshop was attended by 15 participants. A summary of the stakeholder feedback is summarized in Exhibit 4.

The discussion below provides an overview of the draft Residential Infill Development and Small Lot Subdivision Ordinances. Each section provides a summary of the identified Zoning Code amendments; current policy or Zoning Code requirements; proposed Zoning Code amendments; and identifies areas where Planning Commission feedback is needed.

DISCUSSION

DRAFT RESIDENTIAL INFILL DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE

Staff, with support from Sagecrest Planning (Consultant), have drafted substantive amendments to the following chapters:

- Chapter 19.100 – Residential Zones (RA-5, RC, RR, RE, R-1-½ ACRE, R-1-13000, R-1-10500, R-1-8500, R-1-7000, R-3-4000, R-3-3000, R-3-2500, R-3-2000, R-3-1500, R-4); and
- Chapter 19.580 – Parking and Loading

Minor, non-substantive amendments throughout the Riverside Municipal Code are also proposed to ensure consistency with the draft ordinance.

I. 2003 Infill Development Strategy

Current Infill Policy – Financial Incentives for Infill Development

In 2003 the Riverside City Council adopted a Residential Infill Strategy which provides financial incentives in the form of certain fee reductions to developers who initiate residential development on eligible infill sites (Exhibit 5). Various fee adjustments were approved to reduce development costs including but not limited to building plan check review, water and electric service connection charges and grading plan check review. Eligibility is limited to existing, legally established, vacant parcels within single-family residential zones in 16 of the City's 28 neighborhoods. Newly created parcels are not eligible for the program.

Fee reductions can be an effective strategy at incentivizing infill development, but more flexible development standards were never introduced along with the strategy. Applicants are required to adhere to the development standards of the underlying zoning designation of the infill development site. Eligible infill sites are often small or irregularly shaped, sometimes including remnant parcels from highway or rail improvement projects. This can result in requests for variances from inflexible standards or otherwise limit the viability of developing the site as permitted by the Zoning Code. Without more flexible infill development standards, many existing substandard lots may remain vacant and underutilized.

II. Chapter 19.100 – Residential Zones

Proposed Amendments – Development Standards for Substandard Lots

New provisions within Chapter 19.100 apply to existing, legally created substandard (i.e., smaller than required by current Zoning) lots and include two new sections.

- §19.100.065 – Regulations for infill development on undersized lots in the R-1 Zones
- §19.100.075 – Regulations for infill development on undersized lots in the R-3 and R-4 Zones

Infill Development Standards for Single Family (R-1) Residential Zones

Section 19.100.065 is a new section that provides development standards tailored to existing substandard lots including setbacks, building heights, lot coverage, parking and landscaping. The new development standards apply to existing, legally established undersized lots within any Single-Family Residential Zone (R-1) excluding the Residential

Conservation (RC) and Residential Agricultural (RA-5) zone. The ordinance allows the application of appropriate R-1 development standards to lots that do not meet the minimum lot size requirement of their current zone. For infill lots larger than 5,500 square feet, new development will meet existing development standards depending on the lot size. New development standards were created for lots less than 5,500 square feet which offer increased flexibility optimized for compatible development.

The table below provides a general overview of the proposed development standards. Exhibit 6 contains a full draft of the code amendments.

PROPOSED R-1 INFILL DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS					
Residential Zone	Minimum Lot Size (current)	Infill standards apply to lots under:	Setback Provisions	Landscaping	Privacy
R-1-1/2 Acre	21,780 square feet	<18,000 square feet	Reduced for lots 5,500 – 18,000 sq. ft.	Front and side yard required if adjacent to street	No change
R-1-13000	13,000 square feet	<10,500 square feet	Reduced for lots 5,500 – 10,500 sq. ft.		No change
R-1-10500	10,500 square feet	<8,500 square feet	Reduced for lots 5,500 – 8,500 sq. ft.		No change
R-1-8500	8,500 square feet	<7,000 square feet	Reduced for lots 5,500 – 7,000 sq. ft.		No change
Any R-1 Lot < 5,500 sq. ft.	N/A	<5,500 square feet	Reduced setbacks for lots 1,500 – 5,499 sq. ft.		Privacy provisions for window placement & second story features

Infill Development Standards for Multi-Family (R-3 & R-4) Residential Zones

Section 19.100.075 is a new section that provides development standards appropriate for substandard multi-family lots including setbacks, building heights, privacy considerations, common and privacy open space and landscaping requirements. To be eligible, the parcel must be zoned R-3 or R-4 and be less than 21,780 square feet where the current minimum lot size for R-3 and R-4 lots is 30,000 square feet. The development standards are flexible depending on the size of the lot; smaller sized parcels are generally given greater flexibility compared to larger sized infill parcels.

Exhibit 6 contains a full draft of the development standards.

III. Chapter 19.580 – Parking and Loading

Proposed Amendments – Parking Requirements for R-1, R-3 and R-4 Infill Lots

Table 19.580.060 (Required Spaces) is amended to reflect two new parking requirements for single-family dwellings on residential infill lots.

- For R-1 lots between 3,500 to 5,499 square feet, two covered parking spaces are required either in a carport or garage.
- For R-1 lots less than 3,499 square feet, one covered space and one uncovered space is required. Tandem parking is also permitted to satisfy this requirement.

All other R-1 infill lots will adhere to the existing single-family dwelling parking requirement of two parking spaces within a private garage.

Infill sites zones R-3 and R-4 will adhere to the existing multi-family parking requirements of 1.5 spaces per dwelling unit with one bedroom and two parking spaces per dwelling units with two or more bedrooms. Exhibit 7 contains the full text amendment.

IV. Planning Commission Feedback

The draft ordinance is provided for any general feedback on the standards.

DRAFT SMALL LOT SUBDIVISION ORDINANCE

Staff have drafted amendments to several provisions within Title 19 (Zoning) of the RMC to allow the subdivision of large, underdeveloped residential properties into smaller lots for the development of for-sale single-family homes consistent with existing allowed density. Substantive proposed amendments will affect the following chapters:

- Chapter 19.150 – Base Zones Permitted Land Uses; and
- Chapter 19.780 – Planned Residential Development Permit

Minor changes elsewhere in the RMC are also proposed to ensure consistency with the proposed Small Lot Subdivision Ordinance.

I. Chapter 19.780 – Planned Residential Permit

Current Code – Existing Residential Subdivision Process

Overview

The Zoning Code currently permits Planned Residential Developments (PRDs) to allow for flexibility and creativity in design for large tracts of single-family residential development. Planned Residential Developments (PRD) are allowed in single-family residential zones except for the Residential Agricultural (RA-5) Zone and require the granting of a PRD permit in addition to approval of a Tentative Parcel or Tract Map pursuant to Title 18 (Subdivision Code) of the RMC and the State Subdivision Map Act (Government Code §66400 et seq.). PRDs are not permitted in multi-family zones.

PRD projects are eligible for modified development standards such as smaller internal lot dimensions, reduced interior setbacks and increased lot coverage in exchange for providing enhanced on-site amenities and privately maintained streets and common open space. While not required, PRDs are also eligible for bonus density in exchange for meeting a minimum number of superior design standards.

Approval Process

PRD projects are processed in accordance with the discretionary permit processing provisions within Title 19 requiring approval from the City Planning Commission. Applicants must prepare a Tentative Tract Map in accordance with the Subdivision Code.

The current PRD requirements lend themselves to larger-scale subdivision development. Of recent PRDs processed in the City, the average project site is 16.8 acres, and the average number of units is 70.

For PRD projects in this typical size range, the approval process and enhanced amenity and design requirements are often feasible. However, market conditions, project design constraints, and the existing approval process often do not support the development of smaller-scale PRD projects that could provide missing-middle housing. Without an option for an administrative or streamlined PRD process in place, infill sites which are otherwise good candidates for subdivision may remain underutilized or vacant. As part of the draft ordinance, the Committee directed staff to explore language which allows smaller-scale PRDs and provides opportunity for a streamlined approval process and development standards.

Proposed Amendment – Administrative & Streamlined PRDs

The draft ordinance introduces three new PRD permit types intended to promote small-lot subdivisions and provide streamlined approval for smaller PRD projects in single family and multi-family zones. Chapter 19.780 is amended to reflect:

In Single Family Zones (R-1, RR and RE Zones excluding the RC and RA-5 zone):

- [Minor Planned Residential Development Permit \(Minor PRD\)](#): Intended for projects in single-family residential zones consisting of 16 or fewer dwelling units.
- [Administrative Planned Residential Development Permit \(Administrative PRD\)](#): Intended for projects in single-family residential zones consisting of four or fewer parcels.

In Multi Family Zones (R-3 zones excluding the R-4 zone):

- [Small Lot Subdivision Planned Residential Development Permit \(Small Lot PRD\)](#): Intended for 16 or fewer dwelling units within Medium-High Density or High-Density (R-3) multi-family residential zones.

To read the full draft text amendment, see Exhibit 8.

[Minor PRD & Administrative PRD Permits](#)

Both the Minor and Administrative PRD share similarities with the existing PRD permit's general processing and approval requirements. The intent is to provide flexible standards for Minor PRDs and Administrative PRDs without sacrificing superior design and to ensure compliance with the General Plan and the California Subdivision Map Act (Government Code §66400 et seq.). For Administrative PRDs specifically, a tentative parcel map for 4 or fewer lots can be processed without the need for discretionary review as it is considered an administrative action pursuant to Section 18.140.040 of the Subdivision Code. The Minor PRD will require a Tentative Tract Map, approved by the Planning Commission, but will still benefit from more flexible setbacks, parking, open space and superior design standard requirements.

[Small Lot PRD Permit](#)

The first of its kind in the City, the Small Lot PRD permit would allow for the subdivision of multi-family (R-3) parcels. A new section within Chapter 19.780 establishes the requirements and approval findings for Small Lot PRDs. Small Lot PRDs must make the same findings as all other PRD projects:

- The properties will be well served by public infrastructure and will have access to public services;
- The project site can accommodate the anticipated traffic;
- Compliance the Citywide Design and Sign Guidelines; and
- The project will be developed in an environmentally and topographically sensitive manner to ensure compatibility with the surrounding area.

Section 19.780.055 also establishes a minimum and maximum density. A minimum density will help to ensure that properties already zoned for higher density are meeting a minimum density threshold and that Small Lot PRDs are consistent with the density set forth in the respective General Plan land use designation and any applicable Specific Plan. This helps ensure that the City's inventory of higher-density development sites are not underdeveloped at lower densities, which would reduce the City's ability to accommodate needed housing.

The development standards within Section 19.780.060 are amended to incorporate specific height limits, privacy considerations, lot size and coverage, setbacks, landscaping, open space requirements, and parking requirements. For Small Lot PRDs which abut a single-family residential zone, privacy provisions require that the windows be oriented away from the windows of the neighboring structure and ensure adequate setbacks for upper-story layouts.

It should be noted that Senate Bill (SB) 684, signed into law in 2023 and taking effect July 1, 2024, allows for the subdivision of multifamily-zoned properties through a streamlined ministerial approval process for 10 or fewer lots and 10 for-sale homes. SB 684 establishes similarly flexible development standards as it relates to lot size, coverage, internal setbacks and parking. The proposed Small Lot PRD Permit allows for larger projects, 16 or fewer dwelling units, and has more permissive minimum density standards than SB 684; however, unlike SB 684 project approval of the Small Lot PRD Permit is discretionary and requires approval of the Planning Commission.

All PRD Permits – Minor, Administrative and Small Lot

All three permit types will adhere to existing application processing, project noticing and development review procedures.

Section 19.780.070 is amended to reflect that all of the proposed PRD permits will need to submit maintenance agreements which demonstrate that the property owners agree to maintain the premises and any other improvements not dedicated to public use in lieu of formation of a Homeowners' Association, which can be cost-prohibitive for smaller subdivisions.

The table below highlights key differences between all existing and proposed PRD permit types.

PRD PERMIT COMPARISON				
Standard	PRD Permit (Existing)	Minor PRD (Proposed)	Admin PRD (Proposed)	Small Lot PRD (Proposed)
Dwelling Unit Yield	Any # (average is 70)	16 or fewer	4 or fewer	16 or fewer
Map Required	Tentative Tract Map	Tentative Tract Map	Parcel Map	Tentative Tract Map
Zoning Restrictions	Prohibited in RA-5 and Multi-family Zones	Prohibited in RA-5 & RC	Prohibited in RA-5 & RC	Multi-family zones only
Approving and Approval Authority	Planning Commission	Planning Commission	Community & Economic Development Director	Planning Commission
Superior Design Standards for Density Bonus	Must meet at least 5/11	Must meet at least 4/11	Must meet at least 3/11	N/A – no bonus proposed
Height/Stories	Per underlying zone	Maximum height of 35 feet/3 stories	Maximum height of 35 feet/3 stories	Maximum height of 35 feet/3 stories
Open Space	Common: 500 sq.ft./ du Private: 200 sq.ft./du	500 sq.ft./ du Can combine common/private space	300 sq.ft./ du Can combine common/private space	Per standards of base zone Can combine common/private space
Parking	2 fully enclosed garage spaces 1 guest parking per 3 dwelling units RV parking permitted on separate lot	1 covered, 1 uncovered space per unit 1 guest parking per 3 dwelling units RV parking prohibited	1 covered, 1 uncovered space per unit 1 guest parking per 3 dwelling units RV parking prohibited	Must meet Chapter 19.580 (Parking and Loading) RV parking prohibited

II. Chapter 19.150 – Base Zones Permitted Land Uses

Current Code – Permitted Uses Table

Chapter 19.150 – Base Zones Permitted Land Uses outlines the permit requirements for a PRD based on zoning designation. PRDs are only allowed in the following single family residential zones: Residential Conservation (RC), Rural Residential (RR), Residential Estate (RE) and R-1 zones. The Residential Agricultural Zone (RA-5) is ineligible for a PRD consistent with Proposition R and Measure C.

Proposed Amendment – Include New Permit Types

The table is amended to reflect the permit applicability for Minor, Administrative and Small Lot PRDs based on the respective zoning designation. Minor PRD and Administrative PRDs will be prohibited in the Residential Conservation (RC) and RA-5 single family residential zones.

To read the full text amendment see Exhibit 9.

III. Planning Commission Feedback

Stakeholder Feedback

Minor and Small Lot PRD – Maximum Allowable Units

The Minor and Small Lot PRD permit would permit 16 or fewer units within existing infill lots. This number is based on a geospatial analysis of existing, underdeveloped lots with appropriate zoning, which identified a typical size range of one-half acre to two acres. In the R-1-7000 Zone, the maximum density of a PRD is eight dwelling units per acre, so a two-acre lot could yield 16 or fewer units, thus that was the threshold chosen.

Stakeholder feedback identified that increasing the number of units may help yield greater market support. Various figures were given but no definitive number was agreed upon.

Small Lot PRD Permit Applicability – Mixed Use Zones

During stakeholder engagement, staff received questions whether Mixed-Use Zones would be eligible for a PRD permit in the draft ordinance. As proposed, Mixed-Use zones are not eligible in an effort to preserve the intent and purpose of the Mixed-Use zones consistent with the General Plan.

Small lot subdivision of Mixed-Use zoned properties is possible through SB 684 as previously discussed. Consistent with SB 684, a Mixed-Use zoned property would be ministerially approved for a subdivision of 10 units or less assuming that all other eligibility requirements are met.

Any feedback the Commission may want to provide on the proposed amendments, stakeholder feedback is welcomed.

NEXT STEPS

This item will be scheduled for a Planning Commission Public Hearing and, with the Planning Commission's recommendation, bring the draft Ordinances to City Council for consideration and adoption thereafter.

The feedback received during this workshop will help inform staff if any changes are needed.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT

This item contributes to **Strategic Priority 2 – Community Well-Being, Goal 2.1** – Facilitate the development of a quality and diverse housing supply that is available and affordable to a wide range of income levels and **Goal 2.3** – Strengthen neighborhood identities and improve community health and the physical environment through amenities and

programs that foster an increased sense of community and enhanced feelings of pride and belonging citywide.

This Project aligns with the following Cross-Cutting Threads:

1. **Community Trust** – The proposed Zoning Code amendments are presented at an open public meeting and contains transparent information on City processes and regulations.
2. **Equity** – The proposed Zoning Code amendments promote equitable development regulations which encourage much needed housing development in the region.
3. **Fiscal Responsibility** – The proposed Zoning Code amendments do not incur costs to the City.
4. **Innovation** – The proposed Zoning Code amendments incorporate new development tools intended to streamline housing production for first time homeowners in the City.
5. **Sustainability & Resiliency** – The proposed Zoning Code amendments adopt development standards which are environmentally sensitive to surrounding neighborhoods and are consistent with the objectives of the General Plan.

EXHIBITS LIST

1. July 24, 2023, Housing and Homelessness Committee Report
2. August 17, 2023, City Planning Commission Meeting Minutes
3. November 27, 2023 Housing and Homelessness Committee Report
4. February 13, 2024 – Stakeholder Feedback Summary
5. 2003 Infill Development Strategy Policy
6. Proposed Text Amendment: Chapter 19.100 – Residential Zones (RA-5, RC, RR, RE, R-1-½ ACRE, R-1-13000, R-1-10500, R-1-8500, R-1-7000, R-3-4000, R-3-3000, R-3-2500, R-3-2000, R-3-1500, R-4)
7. Proposed Text Amendment - Chapter 19.580 – Parking and Loading
8. Proposed Text Amendment - Chapter 19.780 – Planned Residential Development Permit
9. Proposed Text Amendment - Chapter 19.150 – Base Zones Permitted Land Uses

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