

Code Refresh
High Quality Places Working Group
Meeting #2 – June 12, 2025 (Module 1)

TABLE 1 (Marianne)

- 1. Residential Cottage District: The R-C Residential Cottage zoning district is proposed to replace the existing R-MH Mobile Home District but could be used for other forms of small home development. What are your thoughts on the district standards and the potential for this district?**

Tool in areas that are not popular now -> upgrade

Landscaping & architecture important not containers

- Trees required

Need to handle parking appropriately

- 2. Alley Development: How should the zoning ordinances address development on alleys? What zoning requirements should be incorporated to address any concerns related to alley development?**

Two types of alleys- large lots mid of block alley development may be appropriate

Width of alley is important, use of alleys

ADUs are allowed on alleys now

- Need to look closer at ADU standards for the alley

SUP required for alley development

- Depends on alley- width, paved/not, one-way/two-way

- 3. Setbacks: The draft zoning code allows buildings to be built closer to the street, and in some cases right up to the property line. What are your thoughts on the proposed building setbacks? Do the proposed setback requirements adequately accommodate space for streetscape elements (such as street trees, sidewalks, bike racks, and utility wires) when the right-of-way is limited, especially in mixed-use districts?**

Why do the code writers hate yards

Alley setbacks- concern with buildings near alleys

- Need room for bulk pick up

Require existing range in RAs & RDs

More setbacks as you transition from R to RX & MX

RX & MX if back up to residential property there needs to be a setback- 20 ft

Buffer taller buildings abutting residential

3 stories max abutting residential

- Require step backs & setbacks

Parking excluded from setbacks

- 4. Building Articulation: Form-based zoning codes regulate the bulk of design of buildings and can break up building masses into more human-scale forms. The draft ordinance addresses horizontal articulation (differences in façade as you look across) through building width limitations on blank wall width, and window requirements. Are there other requirements that should be included to address horizontal articulation and additionally vertical articulation (difference in base, middle and top as you look up)?**

Support requiring articulation

Need articulation lower down

Inclined plane created vertical articulation if used correctly

Step backs

Holding the corner

Limitations on blank wall width

TABLE 2 (LaJuan)

- 1. Residential Cottage District: The R-C Residential Cottage zoning district is proposed to replace the existing R-MH Mobile Home District but could be used for other forms of small home development. What are your thoughts on the district standards and the potential for this district?**

Spot zoning for developers to consolidate lots?

- Require location near transit, schools

Community-based driven/developers usually (in other cities generally)

- Well intentions

Quality

- Must outline the standards (courtyard community aspect)

Reduce limitations??:

- Size
 - o increase to 2 units
- Height
 - o increase to 2 floors, consistency with neighborhood
 - o because MH uses pre-fab trusses (which makes it look taller)
- concerned about lot size requirement (20,000 SF)
- replace floor area w/ maximum individual building footprint

excellent option for little senior community

can't just be for mobile homes

previous projects had to go through SUP

- make it administrative review (cheaper, faster)
- eden village (proposed)

- must find Richmond examples where this **already** exists!!

Opportunity for downsizing within neighborhood

2. Alley Development: How should the zoning ordinances address development on alleys? What zoning requirements should be incorporated to address any concerns related to alley development?

Make sure we build in flexibility

Allow commercial?

- Coffee shops
- Flower shop
- Office/shared workspace
- Must be owner-occupied
- The form requirements will limit what people do
- Relate to adjacent zoning and only allow if commercial corridor abuts the alley

Concerns:

- Parking
 - Trash
 - Stormwater flooding
 - Infrastructure in place
 - Require improvement to the alley paving (brick/pervious) and driveway apron
- 3. Setbacks: The draft zoning code allows buildings to be built closer to the street, and in some cases right up to the property line. What are your thoughts on the proposed building setbacks? Do the proposed setback requirements adequately accommodate space for streetscape elements (such as street trees, sidewalks, bike racks, and utility wires) when the right-of-way is limited, especially in mixed-use districts?**

Make sure sidewalks are ADA compliant!

Space for greenery

- Small hanging greenery, rooftops, planters

Require all these streetscaping elements and whatever space is left becomes buildable

Ascent building on Lombardy (terraced landscaping)

Require developer to incorporate public spaces/greenery areas

Flexibility with trees vs small/columnar plants

- Trees= leaves, pollen, sap
- Ok to have other greenery options

Primary streets should be really wide

Base the setback and streetscape requirements on the street classification / primary / secondary

4. Building Articulation: Form-based zoning codes regulate the bulk of design of buildings and can break up building masses into more human-scale forms. The draft ordinance addresses horizontal articulation (differences in façade as you look across) through building width limitations on blank wall width, and window requirements. Are there other requirements that should be included to address horizontal articulation and additionally vertical articulation (difference in base, middle and top as you look up)?

Can be useful in reigning in uninspired architecture

Maybe the 1st and 2nd floor

Only impose this requirement on large boxy buildings of a certain size threshold

Gives an attractive artistic vibe

How does it address residential adjacent?

- Step it back
 - o Stepbacks are more important than articulations on the rear

Hesitant to say the building should look this way (especially rooflines)

- Would raise the cost of construction

Not desired but a tool to note: design review board (subjective) for styles that don't meet requirement

R300 NODES

- Needs to be a tie-in with the zoning

The feel of buildings' interiors

- Human environments

TABLE 3 (Brian)

1. Residential Cottage District: The R-C Residential Cottage zoning district is proposed to replace the existing R-MH Mobile Home District but could be used for other forms of small home development. What are your thoughts on the district standards and the potential for this district?

Name sounds very appealing

Feels neighborhoody

Needs sidewalks to connect to neighbors

Public and semi-public spaces need

- Feel safe
- High connectivity
- High visibility

Make sure greenery/landscaping

Minimum lot size 10-15k or none

Attached should be allowed

Putting a cap is good for floor area

Smaller setbacks 5 feet?

HOA a possibility?

2. Alley Development: How should the zoning ordinances address development on alleys? What zoning requirements should be incorporated to address any concerns related to alley development?

Some want by right, some SUP

Need parameters to make sure utilities are there & fire, emergency service access, trash pickup

Hard to do by-right

Good with density, but concerns with access, utilities, trash pickup

3. Setbacks: The draft zoning code allows buildings to be built closer to the street, and in some cases right up to the property line. What are your thoughts on the proposed building setbacks? Do the proposed setback requirements adequately accommodate space for streetscape elements (such as street trees, sidewalks, bike racks, and utility wires) when the right-of-way is limited, especially in mixed-use districts?

Support for existing range for front yard setback

Keep 3' setback for rear unless attached

Small commercial- front yard setback if abutting residential

Large commercial- require 5' minimum

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Support for building step backs

Break up ground floor façade too

Focus mostly on ground scale

Don't want every building to look what was provided on screen

Screen parking lots

Maybe a culture issue instead of regulation

TABLE 4 (Josh)

1. Residential Cottage District: The R-C Residential Cottage zoning district is proposed to replace the existing R-MH Mobile Home District but could be used for other forms of small home development. What are your thoughts on the district standards and the potential for this district?

Huge opportunity, affordable scale

Land ownership & affordability

Only through SUP

Quality of product

Maintenance

All homes on individual lots- SUP, not by right

Development built all at once, cohesive, not like trailer park

Some prefer multifamily, creates more density

2. Alley Development: How should the zoning ordinances address development on alleys? What zoning requirements should be incorporated to address any concerns related to alley development?

Require SUP, many supportive under SUP

Concerns over shade

Done with overlays

Hard to deal with generalizations

Should be allowed

As much by right into the ordinance as possible

SUPs are great

3. Setbacks: The draft zoning code allows buildings to be built closer to the street, and in some cases right up to the property line. What are your thoughts on the proposed building setbacks? Do the proposed setback requirements adequately accommodate space for streetscape elements (such as street trees, sidewalks, bike racks, and utility wires) when the right-of-way is limited, especially in mixed-use districts?

RD-B- greater front yards or force them to line up

Need trees and lawns for high quality spaces

RX-4- larger front yards, line up with neighbors- critical zone bridges SF, Commercial zones

Wider setbacks for larger sidewalks, trees, tree canopy, bike parking

Talk to arborist

Good tree canopy through setbacks

MX make buildings line up

5' to narrow for trees & sidewalk

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horizontal articulation and additionally vertical articulation (difference in base, middle and top as you look up)?

Not what happened on Arthur Ashe Blvd

Sun light access

Low height

What will they look like in 20 years?

Durable materials

We like differences in facades, differences in blocks

Set backs as buildings get taller

After 4 stories there should be consideration as to how the sun hits the street/property adjacent to residential specifically

TABLE 5 (Erica)

1. Residential Cottage District: The R-C Residential Cottage zoning district is proposed to replace the existing R-MH Mobile Home District but could be used for other forms of small home development. What are your thoughts on the district standards and the potential for this district?

Smaller lots with shared green space allow for intentional community fostering living

Inspire creative development

Could be great for senior living

- Walkable commercial throughout and surrounding should be considered
 - o However, need to realize the financing may be restrictive surrounding housing that is specifically for seniors

Small amount of community serving commercial

- Greater density in housing with allow this type of development to be expanded upon

What is the aesthetic outcome if mobile homes are allowed to continue

- No window requirement could impact aesthetics

Examples of others

Building height: 2 would be ok, 1.5 does not make sense and 2 is easier to enforce

Parking- how to make sure it is not in the front. Requires more paving for it to be elsewhere.

- Driveway width
- If you have alley you can't put alley
- Consider provision

Dependent on site but essentially entrances fronting main street

- Don't want to be locked into permanent infrastructure for something flexible and likely to change later on

2. Alley Development: How should the zoning ordinances address development on alleys? What zoning requirements should be incorporated to address any concerns related to alley development?

PB:STR

PB: busier alleys feel safer

Setbacks/not close to other buildings>form based

If district allowed 4 story by right? Should it also be in alley?

- Lighting-safety
- To build things have to be torn down so might be bad for surrounding if they're not as high

Lot frontage requirement

- Predominately open
- Make height subordinate to what district creates on main street, which cumulately should result in something like 3 stories max

? condition

- If its an alley then ... however, need to consider ground level parking
- 3 stories in an alley in an area like the fan doesn't seem too bad

Trash collection is an issue when considering infill development

- 3. Setbacks: The draft zoning code allows buildings to be built closer to the street, and in some cases right up to the property line. What are your thoughts on the proposed building setbacks> Do the proposed setback requirements adequately accommodate space for streetscape elements (such as street trees, sidewalks, bike racks, and utility wires) when the right-of-way is limited, especially in mixed-use districts?**

Creates a mostly uniform HQP with some options for spontaneity

Helps to maximize use of lot space without having properties clustered and encourages pedestrian activity and walkability

Richmond has very narrow sidewalks so there's not a lot of space for trees in some areas

Narrow sidewalks with tall buildings isn't ideal

Consider development standards/requirements for sidewalks, landscaping, etc

- Dictating the public ROW vs private is different

No qualms about zero setbacks as long as were finding a way to accommodate ped amenities, landscaping, etc in denser corridors focused on turnout

Intentional setbacks for a plaza/public space or realm incentives

- Other incentives people are looking at?
- Max setback but also may be case specific

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horizontal articulation and additionally vertical articulation (difference in base, middle and top as you look up)?

Material variation to breakup façade- textures

Focus on pedestrian public realm

From sidewalk, streets, and places where public see they should have major consideration

Design standards are different for commercial and residential

Do we want to carry on west of the blvd overlay design

Porches for new development where it is already exists FB

Use design overlay district more so than zoning district requirement

Important particularly in commercial areas than residential