

Burlington Planning Commission
Tuesday, October 24, 6:30 P.M.
Hybrid Meeting via Zoom and in the Bushor Conference Room
Draft Minutes

Members Present	A. Montroll, E. Malone, B. Baker, A. Friend, J. Randall
City Council Present	B. Traverse, S. Carpenter, Z. Hightower
Staff Present	M. Tuttle, S. Morgan
Public Attendance	S. Bushor, JP (consultant), E. Gould, J. Tiano, C. Larsen

I. Agenda

Call to Order	Time: 6:30pm
Agenda	No changes.

II. Committee Discussion: Neighborhood Code Core Recommendations

Name(s)	Comment
	A. Montroll: - changing the way that we decide how many units might be on a walk - people didn't have pushback at looking at units per building vs per acre - what should the rear yard setback be? - looking at the specific standards under this different way of looking at it - revisit the broader concepts - people are on board with taking a more dramatic look, being more transformational 2.1. Dimensional Standards: Lot Size, Lot Coverage, Setbacks S. Carpenter: - how does that work when you have a zero lot line building • if we decide to keep a minimum lot size, what Sarah's referring to in terms of 0 lot line buildings are things like townhouses where you actually own the land underneath the unit we would have to write standards that would enable those kinds of subdivisions even if they're smaller than our minimum lot size, which they would be in the case of a townhouse • as long as the lot had good access to public streets or you know, the utilities that were required. sometimes pushing people into a requirement to be part of an HOA instead of owning their land free and clear can be a barrier to people with certain types of financing like veterans loans - to combine lots • Future discussion topic A. Friend: - what is the purpose of the minimum lot size • as a tool for reinforcing patterns - agree with removing the minimum lot size requirement Z. Hightower: - in favor of removing the minimum lot size requirement

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J. Randall:

- agreeing with removing the minimum lot size requirement

E. Malone:

- if the city is recommending 3500 square feet, then is this like a trend for similar sized cities that are doing this kind of work or like where is that that 3500 from?

- Not an essential standard we have
- Proposing other tools to address some of the patterns discussed
- The 3500 really is working with Sarah and Megan to study what lots existed in the RL neighborhoods already. This is kind of on the this is among the smallest lots possible in RL of the existing lots in that in those neighborhoods

B. Baker:

- in favor of eliminating min lot size requirement

B. Traverse:

- is there any concern around how the setback requirements play a role in particularly small lot?

- The size of that postage stamp lot will still in some ways be directed by being able to meet lot coverage. Side setbacks will vary based on the width of the lot. As it gets narrower the setback requirement gets smaller.
- We would need to consider some exceptions to set back requirements for certain types of buildings or situations. One example is to allow townhouses to be right on a lot.

- should a part of this also be permitting folks to allow for a non-conforming use to potentially get bigger on those lines?

- To be discussed at a future meeting

- the largest hurdles that I've heard from folks in terms of being able to remodel their home to grow in place is the front yard set back

- We have not recommended a change to this, although we have talked about it a lot, a lot in our office, primarily because the front set back is one of the most observable characteristics that contribute to kind of a neighborhood's overall pattern. We don't want to implement a standard even at the RL and RM level that would cause a neighborhood to have, for example, a 20 foot front set back when a lot of the buildings are only 5 feet. From our perspective, we think that the current averaging method that allows you to meet your neighbor's set back ± 5 feet gives people flexibility but also helps contribute to that overall pattern of the neighborhood.

J. Shannon:

- eliminating the minimum lot size

- maintaining a pattern defined by the front yard set back

E. Malone:

- maintaining a side setback might be a good option for people to change up their heating systems

A. Montroll:

- the idea of the average of the front yard setback makes a lot of sense.

- in neighborhoods where there is a huge front yard setback, to have that moving closer to the street, give more flexibility

- a walkable city especially along the corridors

J. Shannon:

- the front setbacks do become less meaningful as those front yards get deeper
B. Baker:

- Important to discuss setbacks because: You need to have a walkway, you need to have a handicap entrance, you need to have steps to 1st floor entries.
- Preserve the step back the way we want it, but we get some limited exceptions that allow for development to occur

J. Randall:

- the consideration for exceptions for front setbacks is going to be important for the corridor district

- goal for the corridor spaces to be as pedestrian oriented as possible

- The need to introduce a standard for setback for the corridors
- Averaging would not work for these places
- Proposing to just say that the front set back could be flexible between 5 and 20 feet
- Future topic meeting – setback exceptions

Lot coverage

J. Randall:

- should we consider a slightly higher lot coverage percentage for RL given that we are thinking about eliminating the minimum lot size because now that we'll be allowing you know smaller lots to in that area that may actually like 45% may not be viable for those lots.

- To be looked into by the team

A. Montroll:

- the distinguish between coverage like a structure and coverage like a driveway or walkway

- The purpose of lot coverage requirements are really twofold: One is both the sort of visual appearance of intensity of buildings themselves. Two is storm water management and other environmental benefits
- Exceptions to lot coverage

Z. Hightower:

- preserving green spaces on lot coverage

J. Randall:

- Colorado example dealing with this as 2 separate things: having a requirement % or max % for building coverage and having a max percentage for impervious surface

- is there opportunity to encourage more forms of pervious surfaces like a bonus

- Construction zone issue to come back to later – how to help convert open space to more productive storm water management infrastructure

E. Malone:

- agree with Julia that I think that we should consider parking and limitations to what percentage could be like a pавable surface

- The team will look into this

2.2. Building Massing Standards: Building Footprint & Height
Footprint

A. Montroll:

- Every lot is a different size. Especially when we're looking to say, you know, we want some units to be able to fit maybe 4 units in it that why would we artificially limit the size of a footprint on a larger lot when we don't have to? Or is there a reason that we do want to make that limit?

- The main outcome that we're hoping to help guide here is when we think about larger lots that are really deep instead of like wide and deep. Trying to help kind of guide new or infill buildings that would be in that context into an overall size that just helps reinforce that pattern.
- Enabling more flexibility with big lots through the PUD

Height

A. Montroll:

- If we are transitioning to using it in this way, like the 2 1/2 or 3 1/2 story building, is there an explanation in the code that will describe what that means?

- We have not arrived at whether we would scrap the like a numerical height limit Altogether
- It's a somewhat separate idea from number of stories versus height, although they definitely relate to each other. So as far as the slopes of hills and making sure basements don't count, we're not changing anything there
- A lot of this has to do with whether it's important to regulate the top like the way the mass of the building at the top is in, especially how it relates to RL. 2 ½ stories means diminished mass at the top – a sloped roof or a setback
- Basement story wouldn't count as a story

- is it possible to come up with similar diagrams on either side of the street with the slope?

- TBD. We could pull out some sections of our ordinance to talk about how you measure height because we do have some diagrams and ordinance that look at that right now.)

S. Carpenter:

- allowing taller heights on the corridors

A. Friend:

- having a mix of shapes through a combination of step backs, Gable roofs, you know, slanted roofs, so you have a nice variety and it diminishes the massing at the top, so it decreases the overall effect of the increased height.

Z. Hightower:

- interested to see more of what's included in the half story

J. Randall:

- Whether underground parking counts as a story here or whether it just applies to habitable floors?

- We wouldn't count subsurface floors as a floor
- in favor of having the height provided to allow for flexibility
 - to discuss the number of units in the number of buildings presented

B. Baker:

- is there a provision in the code that allows you to build on the same lot in addition or an additional building as high as an existing structure on the lot?

- Yes

2.3. Allowable Housing Types: Number of Units Per Building

A. Friend:

- What is the current limit in RM now?

- Depends on how big your lot is. The short answer is if you have a lot smaller than about 9000 square feet, 4 units would be your maximum anyways, which is the vast majority of lots in RM.

J. Randall:

- minimum dwelling unit size as a regulation
- is the 4 unit max per structure the best way to encourage unit variety?
 - Buildings can have up to 4 units and that units have to be a minimum of 350 square feet. That as sort of a minimum standard and then allowing up to 4 units in a building actually gives people the flexibility to decide how big is the building, how many units do they ultimately want to fit? How big are the units themselves?
 - If the committee feels like more flexibility is appropriate, you could remove that limit and just stick with the overall building footprint limits.

B. Traverse:

- Is there any certain proof or evidence to the fact that if you don't have these maximum unit limits that the tendency is just to go to the smallest common denominator and to pack as many units as possible into the four walls of a building?
- residential medium district closer to the university
 - the maximum footprint, the number of stories, the number of units and the minimum unit size are all working together to at once allow maybe that building that has a few has the four smaller units that are more student focused or studios or one bedrooms they easily fit within a smaller building that you place near the university or that same level. Those same standards allows for a building that's filled with four two-bedroom units that can accommodate for families with kids, or maybe even a three bedroom unit and three, one bedroom unit.
 - 6 units in RM
 - Going from 4 units in RL to maybe 6 units

2.4. Residential District Boundaries

A. Montroll:

- agrees with the proposed changes from RL to RM specific spots that are being recommended

E. Malone:

- why did the city choose not to bring that boundary all the way to S Prospect and these other streets to the east of it?
 - In that case, the recommendation for the change between RL and RM, basically between Union and Willard down there, again like the area we were just talking about in the old North End primarily has to do with looking at existing lots, existing lot coverage, existing number of units and feeling like that neighborhood felt like it already is RM in a lot of ways where as you as you move further E, they are not fully that level of intensity of development.
 - When you think about the area between Willard and Prospect, already with the changes to RL, you're already allowing more density in terms of number of units because those properties only allow one unit today, they would allow up to four. The main difference would be whether you want to allow up to 6 units or if you want to allow up to 60% lot coverage instead of sticking to 45.

	• A slightly higher lot coverage limit and up to 6 units instead of just up to 4 B. Traverse: - to take a closer/ in detail look at the different neighborhoods to analyze the different characteristics of each - moving the RM up to 6 units - a tiered approach - rather than aligning these corridors to the existing lots, just having sort of a certain standard footage away from these corridors that would consider you would consider to be a corridor zone which would allow opportunities for potentially lots to combine or to subdivide J. Randall: - agreeing with Ben, not just zeroing in on the names of the districts, but actually thinking about where they're placed. A. Friend: - what will changing zoning from RL to RM in these places like old North, End East or you know, Cliff neighborhood do? • It could be through a combination of interior conversion or maybe additions and if a lot is big enough, maybe adding a back lot building. • Roommate housing to be discussed at a future meeting • Focus less on to what extent it's about the homes and more about to what extent it's about the types of buildings on lots and how big those buildings can be that. 2.5. Other A. Montroll: - If there are any other of these type of topics that people want to talk about, let Megan know before the next meeting to get that on the agenda to talk about those specific ones. • Interactive map to get comments on specific locations
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III. Public Forum

Evan Gould	• Removing the minimum lot size limitations • Step down zoning along the corridors • College enrollment has fallen by 15% • Boosting height along the corridor
Colin Larsen	• The front set back discussion is good • Setting the height above 3 ½ require additional costs • If you do infill development in a backyard, does it need street access? Would you build a driveway? Width of the driveway is like 8 to 10 feet. Does that impact your ability to like actually put a unit back there? • Are we agnostic to lot coverage when it's defined as a building versus a parking lot, given that we want more buildings and less parking? Should we treat those two things as equivalent from a lot coverage perspective? ○ The 3 1/2 stories originally came as a recommendation specifically related to rear loaded townhouses. I don't think that the standards are the same in terms of the access requirements that we're talking about when you're building that type of

	building. Now that we're considering like multi-unit buildings, that's definitely a factor that we'll look into more.
Jak Tiano	• Removing setbacks altogether • Simpler rules that enable more things and not trying to just design these things around very specific outcomes that we're going for • Focusing on permeable service requirement instead of lock coverage

IV. Written Communications

Action: Accept the written communications		
Motion: A. Friend	Seconded by: E. Malone	Vote: Unanimous

V. Adjournment

Action: Adjourn	Time: 9:22	
Motion by: A. Friend	Second by: E. Malone	Vote: Unanimous