

Low-Density Residential Land Use Goals

Issue: The City is made up of several distinct neighborhood areas, each with somewhat different physical characteristics such as age of housing, street configuration, and structure and lot sizes. Much of the City's overall image and identity is due to the unique character of its neighborhoods, and these distinguishing features should be preserved.

Goal 1: Neighborhood Conservation

The attractive appearance and environmental quality of existing low-density residential neighborhoods should be protected and improvements made where necessary in order to maintain the value of properties and enhance the quality of life.

Policy 1.1: Public Improvements -

Existing public facilities shall be well maintained to help protect developed stable neighborhoods from deterioration and to preserve them as desirable places to live. Overall environmental and public improvements should be undertaken where necessary.

Policy 1.2: Protect the Existing Housing Stock -

Preserve and protect existing housing through code enforcement and preventive maintenance.

Policy 1.3: Encourage Compatible Infill Development -

The physical form and pattern of existing, established low-density residential neighborhoods should be maintained to the greatest extent possible. Infill design should incorporate the following principles:

- a. Building orientation should reflect the predominant neighborhood pattern. The front-to-front, back-to-back relationships of typical residential neighborhoods establish security, privacy, and a very identifiable streetscape that should be maintained.

- b. Vehicular and pedestrian circulation patterns should be maintained by infill or redevelopment projects.
- c. Neighborhood open space patterns, and side, front, and rear yards should be visually preserved. The yard spacing of infill units should generally reflect the yard spacing of existing homes in the neighborhood.
- d. Building height should be compatible with the average height of homes in the neighborhood with particular attention paid to contiguous parcels.
- e. The architectural design of infill development should strengthen the existing forms of the neighborhood. Architecturally, infill development should reflect:
 - (1) Compatible building silhouette or form
 - (2) Compatible roof types, slope, and overhang
 - (3) Compatible horizontal and vertical proportions
 - (4) Compatible exterior materials, finishes, and details
 - (5) Minimized emphasis on garages
- f. Lot widths for new development should reflect the established pattern of lot widths in the existing neighborhood.

Policy 1.4: Minimize Traffic Impact -

The negative impact of traffic should be minimized through buffers and discouraging the diversion of commercial, office, and industrial traffic into and through residential neighborhoods.

Policy 1.5: Minimize Encroachment of Nonresidential Uses -

The negative impact of nonresidential encroachment into existing low-density residential neighborhoods should be minimized.

Policy 1.6: Promote Neighborhood Identity -

Encourage the formation of neighborhood identity.

Policy 1.7: Promote Neighborhood Associations -

The City shall actively encourage the involvement of citizens in their neighborhoods and the forming of neighborhood organizations to promote city/resident partnerships taking responsibility for neighborhood stability.

Issue: Guidelines are needed to provide direction on where and at what scale low-density residential developments are appropriate.

Goal 2: Criteria for the Location of Low-Density Residential Development

Adopt criteria that will help form neighborhoods that are stable, safe and aesthetically pleasing.

Policy 2.1: Consider Land Use Relationships -

The relationship of land uses should reflect consideration of existing development, environmental conditions, and service and access needs.

Policy 2.2: Protect Areas Planned for Low-Density -

Avoid reducing low-density residential areas as shown on the Future Development Plan Map by allowing encroachment of higher density residential, unless part of a larger Planned Residential Neighborhood, or by allowing nonresidential land uses which are not customarily allowed in low-density residential districts.

Policy 2.3: Reserve Suitable Sites -

Reserve suitable land areas of adequate size to accommodate a number of subdivisions in order to facilitate well-planned orderly development with better coordination of public services and facilities.

Policy 2.4: Limit Premature Development -

Encourage development only in or adjacent to existing growth centers and corridors in order to reduce the cost and extent of public services.

Policy 2.5: Ensure Adequate Infrastructure Facilities -

Ensure that new housing development occurs in areas that can be adequately and efficiently served by infrastructure facilities.

Policy 2.6: Provide for Open-Space Subdivisions -

Allow the use of open-space subdivisions as an option in low-density residential areas where flexibility in subdivision design is necessary to preserve nature features or stream corridors, provide for greenway linkages, and avoid floodplains.

Issue: Guidelines are needed to allow for the provision of low-density development that is safe, attractive, and accessible to necessary facilities and services.

Goal 3: Create a Functional and Aesthetic Living Environment

Create and maintain living environments that are aesthetically pleasing as well as functionally efficient and practical.

Policy 3.1: Preserve and Protect the Environment -

Encourage the preservation and protection of trees, natural vegetation, wetlands, stream corridors, and environmentally sensitive areas in low-density developments to serve as site amenities.

Policy 3.2: Encourage Proper Lot Orientation -

Encourage subdivision design in which peripheral lots face inward toward the neighborhood of which they are a part, especially those lots which are adjacent to collectors or thoroughfares. No home shall front on a designated thoroughfare.

Policy 3.3: Provide for Extra Buffering in Special Circumstances -

Encourage subdivision design that provides extra buffering between homes and adjacent freeways or thoroughfares. Extra buffering can be accomplished by using any of the following methods or a combination thereof:

- a. Berms
- b. Landscape screening
- c. Fences
- d. Extra lot depth
- e. Front homes on a parallel residential street with a landscape screen between the street and the adjacent freeway.

Policy 3.4: Ensure Adequate Ingress and Egress -

Encourage the provision of adequate ingress and egress for subdivisions. Unless other factors prevail, a subdivision containing more than two hundred homes should provide at least two access points.

Policy 3.5: Ensure Convenient and Logical Street System Design -

Ensure that adequate public access is provided to and between each existing and future subdivision and that the proposed street pattern within a subdivision connects to that of surrounding areas.

Policy 3.6: Provide Continuous Pedestrian Networks -

Provide for safe, continuous pedestrian networks to promote direct pedestrian access to neighboring residential, non-residential, and public uses.

Policy 3.7: Provide Access to Parkland -

Encourage subdivision design that provides sufficient access to any City parkland or greenway adjacent to the subdivision.

Policy 3.8: Provide for Extension of Greenway Linkages -

Encourage subdivision design that provides for the extension of the City's greenway linkages through either dedication of land and/or easement for a bike/hike trail or landscape easement or dedication of extra right-of-way along a collector street for a bike/hike trail/landscape easement.

Issue: Guidelines are needed to allow for a compatible transition from low-density residential neighborhoods to other more intensive land uses (medium- and high-density residential, office, commercial, industrial). These guidelines are needed for application throughout the City including in both established low-density areas and those currently developing.

Goal 4: Compatible Transition from Low-Density Residential Development to More Intensive Uses

Ensure compatible transition from low-density development to more intensive residential and nonresidential land uses.

Policy 4.1: Use Appropriate Transitional Methods -

Appropriate transitional methods should be considered at all locations where the development or expansion of nonresidential and medium- or high-density residential land uses abut low-density residential property (either built or zoned). In general, transitions between different types of intensities of land use should be made gradually, particularly where natural or man-made buffers are not available. (See the City's Commercial and Office Land Use Goals).

The City strives to meet the following additional objectives when compatible transition is necessary:

a. Building Relationships:

- (1) A back-to-back relationship is preferable between low-density residences and other more intensive residential uses.
- (2) More intense residential uses should not have lesser setbacks than abutting low-density residential uses.

b. Land Features:

- (1) Promote the retention of stands of trees, natural vegetation, wetlands, stream corridors, and environmentally sensitive areas whenever possible to separate low-density residential developments from other more intensive land uses.
- (2) Where possible, use existing differences in topography to naturally separate low-density developments and other more intensive land uses.

c. Buffering and Landscaping:

- (1) Encourage the creative and extensive use of landscaping and berming techniques for effective buffering of low-density residential uses.
- (2) Avoid the use of fences as a sole means of providing screening and buffering.
- (3) Promote the use of existing land features, vegetation such as stands of trees and hedgerows, and stream corridors as natural buffers.
- (4) Encourage the use of high quality materials in the construction of fencing and landscaping to decrease long-term maintenance costs and to make it less likely that neglected, unsightly areas will occur.

Policy 4.2: Higher-Density Residential as Transitional Use -

Promote the use of higher density residential development as a transitional land use between nonresidential developments and surrounding low-density residential neighborhoods.

Issue: A need is recognized that low-density residential development should comply with other pertinent City land use policy guidelines.

Goal 5: Compliance with Other City Land Use Policy Documents

Ensure that low-density residential developments comply with the guidelines of other pertinent City land use policy documents such as City Council and Planning Commission Resolutions, special area plans, the Multifamily Residential Design Guidelines and Standards, Infill and Redevelopment Design Guidelines and Standards, Overland Park Architectural Design Standards, and Overland Park Site Design Standards.