

# Medium- and Higher-Density Residential Land Use Goals

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

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## **Goal 1: Create a Functional and Aesthetic Living Environment**

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

### **Policy 1.1: Ensure Quality Development -**

Encourage emphasis on open space, access to light and air, pedestrian access and connectivity, and the provision of amenities generally associated with and available to low-density residential development in all medium- and higher-density residential developments.

### **Policy 1.2: Preserve and Protect the Environment -**

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

### **Policy 1.3: Provide for Extra Buffering in Special Circumstances -**

Encourage project design that provides extra buffering between structures and adjacent freeways or thoroughfares and increases the distance of structures from such uses to reduce the impact of off-site noise. Extra buffering can be accomplished by using any of the following methods or a combination thereof:

- a. Berms
- b. Landscape screening
- c. Solid walls

- d. Clubhouses, recreation areas, carports and garages

**Policy 1.4: Provide Continuous Pedestrian Networks -**

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

**Policy 1.5: Provide Open Space -**

Encourage the purposeful integration of common open space on site by clustering buildings to minimize the creation of narrow strips of unusable open space in front of and between buildings.

**Policy 1.6: Provide Access to Parkland -**

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

**Policy 1.7: Provide for Extension of Greenway Linkages -**

Encourage development 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.

**Policy 1.8: Consider Appropriate Density -**

The number of dwelling units per acre in any residential category should be viewed as representing a density range rather than a maximum allowable density. The exact density of a specific tract is to be determined at the time of rezoning based on the following:

- a. All multifamily developments shall demonstrate compliance with the Overland Park Architectural Design Standards and Overland Park Site Design Standards. Only those projects that incorporate site layout and building design features above the standard requirements shall be considered for densities above the attainable density range.

**Policy 1.9: Provide for Variety in Housing Types -**

Encourage the use of a variety of housing types, including townhomes, patio homes, duplexes, zero lot line homes, cluster housing, garden apartments and retirement housing.

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

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**Goal 2: Criteria for the Location of Medium- and Higher-Density Residential Development**

Adopt criteria that will ensure that livability, property values, open spaces, safety and the general welfare are sustained.

**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.

- a. No higher-density development (more than 12.4 units per net acre) shall have a property line common with properties zoned and or designated as Very-Low- or Low-Density Residential on the Future Development Plan unless such low-density property is used for a nonresidential land use such as a church, school or park. The exception would be projects granted density bonuses under the Overland Park Architectural Design Standards and Overland Park Site Design Standards.
- b. High-density residential developments (more than 16.4 units per net acre) should not be located within the interior of square mile sections, which are generally reserved for low-density land uses. Exceptions to this are those properties adjacent to major highways such as U.S. 69 Highway and I-435 or projects granted density bonuses under the Overland Park Architectural Design Standards and Overland Park Site Design Standards.

**Policy 2.2: Consider Access -**

Higher-density residential developments shall have frontage and main access directly on major thoroughfares unless part of a larger Planned Residential Neighborhood.

**Policy 2.3: Protect Areas Planned for Medium- and Higher-Density Residential Developments -**

Avoid reducing medium- and higher-density residential areas as shown on the Future Development Plan Map by allowing encroachment of nonresidential land uses, which are not customarily allowed in residential districts.

**Policy 2.4: Reserve Suitable Sites -**

Reserve suitable land areas of adequate size to accommodate medium- and higher-density residential development near or adjacent to employment centers.

**Policy 2.5: 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 2.6: Ensure Adequate Infrastructure Facilities -**

Ensure that new medium- and higher-density development occurs in areas that can be adequately and efficiently served by infrastructure facilities.

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**Issue:** Guidelines are needed to allow for a compatible transition from medium- and higher-density residential neighborhoods to both more intensive and less intensive land uses. These guidelines are needed for application throughout the City including in both established medium- and higher-density residential areas and those currently developing.

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### **Goal 3: Compatible Transition from Medium- and Higher-Density Residential Development to Both More Intensive and Less Intensive Uses**

Ensure compatible transition from medium- and higher-density residential developments to nonresidential or low-density residential land uses.

#### **Policy 3.1: Use Appropriate Transitional Methods -**

Appropriate transitional methods should be considered at all locations where the development or expansion of either more or less intensive land uses abut medium- and higher-density residential property (either built or zoned), except in the case of a larger Planned Residential Neighborhood. 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, Office and Low-Density Residential Land Use Goals).

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

#### **a. Site Orientation:**

- (1) Site design should be oriented so that less compatible uses such as recreational facilities are located in the interior of the development and not adjacent or in close proximity to low-density residential neighborhoods.
- (2) Site access should be off of collector or thoroughfare streets.
- (3) Where appropriate, streets may be used as boundaries between different intensities of land uses.

#### **b. Building Relationships:**

- (1) When multifamily developments abut uses of higher or lower intensity, buildings should be sited with a perpendicular orientation or additional setbacks provided to minimize any negative impacts.

- (2) Medium-density residential uses should not have lesser setbacks than abutting low-density residential uses.
- (3) The height and bulk of a medium-density residential buildings and accessory structures (clubhouses, satellite dishes, etc.) should be oriented away from low-density residential neighborhoods to avoid creating a negative visual effect.
- (4) Encourage the location of smaller buildings or one-story end units to transition to adjacent low-density residential areas.

**c. Land Features:**

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

**d. Buffering and Landscaping:**

- (1) Encourage the creative and extensive use of landscaping and berming techniques for effective buffering between differing intensities of land uses and to increase neighborhood privacy and security.
- (2) Discourage the use of fencing around the perimeter of multifamily developments. Where fencing may be necessary, it should be used in combination with landscaping and berming.

- (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.

e. Lighting:

- (1) Any lighting used to illuminate parking areas, signs or other structures shall be arranged so as to deflect light away from any adjoining property or from public streets through fixture type, height, and location.
- (2) Exterior lighting of buildings shall be limited to low level incandescent spotlights and similar illuminating devices hooded in such a manner that the direct beam of any such light source will not glare upon adjacent property or public streets.

**Policy 3.2: Ensure Compatible Infill Development -**

Encourage investment in new and existing medium- and higher-density residential development that maintains similar setbacks and building orientation to surrounding land uses. Buildings should be designed to respect the mass and scale of adjacent low-density residential areas.

**Policy 3.3: Screen Unsightly Views -**

Ensure adequate screening of unsightly views (carports, trash containers, satellite dishes, etc.) through the use of extensive landscaping, berms, fencing, architectural design, open space, setbacks, building orientation or any combination of these methods.

**Policy 3.4: Allow the Option of Medium-Density Residential as a Transitional Use -**

Allow the use of medium-density residential as a transitional land use between low-density residential and other more intensive uses.

**Policy 3.5: Allow the Option of Parks, Recreation and Open Space as a Transitional Use -**

Allow the use of medium- to low-intensity recreation facilities such as neighborhood parks, bike/hike trails, and natural areas as a transitional land use into medium- and higher-density residential neighborhoods. (See Parks, Recreation and Open Space Land Use Goals)

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**Issue:** Traffic concerns continue to be of major importance with much of the concern focused on ensuring safe and effective access to all types of land uses.

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**Goal 4: Transportation Considerations**

Promote a transportation system which provides or improves access and circulation within and adjacent to medium- and higher-density residential areas.

**Policy 4.1: Avoid Exceeding Street Capacity -**

Discourage the expansion of existing or the inclusion of new medium- and higher-density residential development in areas where, even with street and traffic signal improvements, the additional traffic generated by such development would exceed the handling capacity of the street system.

**Policy 4.2: Avoid Reliance on Speculative Traffic Improvements -**

An evaluation of the traffic impacts of a project on the surrounding area should consider existing and projected traffic conditions and be based on anticipated traffic system improvements, not on speculative traffic system improvements.



**Policy 4.3: Avoid Diversion of Traffic -**

Discourage the diversion of traffic to or from medium- and higher-density residential developments onto local residential streets through low-density residential neighborhoods.

**Policy 4.4: Ensure Adequate Ingress and Egress -**

Ensure adequate ingress to and egress from medium- and higher-density residential developments via thoroughfares and/or collector streets. Unless other factors prevail, all medium- and higher-density developments should provide at least two access points.

**Policy 4.5: Limit Access -**

Limit the number of driveways or private streets onto thoroughfares and collectors and coordinate their locations with adjacent developments.

**Policy 4.6: Provide Vehicular Circulation -**

Ensure adequate vehicular circulation within medium- and higher-density developments.

**Policy 4.7: Provide Pedestrian Access -**

Provide pedestrian access linking dwelling units to neighborhood facilities while ensuring adequate physical separation from vehicles along both public and private streets and within parking areas.

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**Issue:** A need is recognized that medium- and higher-density residential developments should comply with other pertinent City land use policy guidelines.

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**Goal 5: Compliance with Other City Land Use Policy Documents**

Ensure that medium- and higher-density residential developments comply with the guidelines of other pertinent City land use policy documents such as City Council and Planning Commission Resolutions, Overland Park Architectural Design Standards, Overland Park Site Design Standards, and special area plans such as the K-150 Corridor Design Guidelines.