



Technical Memo

To City of Ruston Planning Commission

From: Kirsten Peterson, Consultant Planner

Date: February 5, 2025 Planning Commission Meeting

Subject Updated Middle Housing Code Amendments

BACKGROUND

During the previous two Planning Commission meetings, the materials were provided related to the “middle housing” requirements for Tier 3 cities.

As a reminder, “Middle housing” means buildings that are compatible in scale, form, and character with single-family houses and contain two or more attached, stacked, or clustered homes including duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, fiveplexes, sixplexes, townhouses, stacked flats, courtyard apartments, and cottage housing.

As a Tier 3 city, Ruston is required to allow a density of two units per lot, and will be updating the development code to include the following four middle housing types as permitted uses within the residential zones:

- Duplexes
- Stacked flats
- Cottage housing
- Courtyard apartments

The attached gap analysis tracks all of the proposed amendments to the code and is included as Exhibit #1 to this report. The Draft Code Amendments are in the Word document attached as Exhibit #2. The new land use chart is included as Exhibit #3. The draft zoning map which depicts the proposed new zoning districts is Exhibit #4.

Additional edits have been made to the development code in the time period since the last PC meeting, and the updates are further described below.

SUMMARY

The following is a summary of some of the proposed changes in order of appearance in the Code amendment document:

RMC 25.01 Definitions

The definitions have been moved from this section to a new location in a new Chapter 25.99.

RMC 25.01.030 Purpose of Zones

The list of zones has been updated in subsection (b) and the new zoning map will be provided in subsection (c).

The use classifications of each zoning district needs be clarified

RMC 25.01.030 Residential RES Zone

This section has been updated to remove RES from the title and in a) the description has been updated to clarify that the Residential and Stacked Hill Districts are the two zones designated as primarily residential zones.

Subsections (b) through (d) have clarifying language specific to the term residential. A new subsection (e) includes new language regarding unit density, as required by State law. Subsection (h) provides a required descriptor on the amount of open space required for cottage housing.

RMC 25.01.040(h) Accessory Dwellings

This subsection has been updated since the last review to incorporate all language required by House Bill 1337. This will be further reviewed with the Planning Commission during the meeting.

RMC 25.01.050 Commercial (COM) zone

This zoning district has been relabeled as the Pearl District zone.

RMC 25.01.051 The COM P zone

This section is proposed for deletion, as it has been merged into the new Pearl District. The two zones had the same development standards with the exception of the height limit. The current COM district has a 25 foot height limit. The current COM-P zone has a height limit of 35 feet. A decision will need to be made on the height limit for the Pearl District.

RMC 25.014.060 Master planned development zone (MPD) zone

No work has been completed in this section, but it is anticipated that this section will be deleted and new subsections headers will be added for each of the new zoning districts.

RMC 25.01.051 Point Ruston MDP

It is anticipated that this section of code will be eliminated and replaced with descriptors for the appropriate new zoning districts.

RMC 25.01.080 Parking requirements

This section has been further revised since the last review to be in compliance with the requirements of RCW 36.70A.635(6).

RMC 25.06.040 Building architectural standards

This section is being revised to include design standards for residential development. This section was proposed by city staff. This is allowable per state so long as the requirements for middle housing are not more restrictive than the standards for all other residential housing types.

RMC 25.07 Land Use Matrix

This chart has not been modified since the last review. Several amendments have been made to this matrix, including the elimination of the three existing zoning districts (RES, COM and COM-P), and the addition of several new zoning districts. New housing types have been included as new rows within the chart. The housing types required to be allowed by the State are depicted as Permitted uses. The other new housing types are depicted as allowable only through approval of a Conditional Use Permit.

- Please note that the Use Chart is currently attached as a separate document, Exhibit #3

RMC 25.99 Definitions

This is the new location for the definition section. New or modified definitions have been provided for the following. The definitions in red are required for compliance with the middle housing mandates.

- Administrative Design Review
- Dwelling, Cottage Housing
- Dwelling, Courtyard Building
- Dwelling, duplex-stacked
- Dwelling, duplex – side by side
- Dwelling, fourplex
- Dwelling, fiveplex
- Dwelling, high-rise multifamily
- Dwelling, rowhouse
- Dwelling, triplex
- Live-Work Unit
- Major Transit Stop
- Marine-Related Uses
- Middle Housing
- Mixed Use Building
- Mobile Food Vending
- Sales Level 1
- Chapter 29.02.030 – New section for Unit Lot Subdivisions

RMC 29.02 Plats and Subdivisions

This section has been updated since the last review to include new requirements pertaining to Unit Lot Subdivisions. This additional section is also mandated to be incorporated as an option for subdividing land. This

additions to this section include more “Notes” that should be added to the face of plats approved unit lot subdivisions.

At the next meeting, additional language will be incorporated to include allowance for Zero Lot Line Subdivisions. The Commission will also begin reviewing new sections of code being developed for each of the new zoning districts.

Staff and the consultants look forward to reviewing the above items with the Planning Commission and receiving feedback on various topics.

Attachments:

Exhibit #1 – Gap Analysis in MS Excel format

Exhibit #2 – Draft Code amendments in MS Word

Exhibit #3 – Draft Updated Land Use Chart

Exhibit #4 – Draft Zoning Map