



**Planning Division**

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**What is Single-Family Zoning?**

The Zoning Ordinance Title 14 of the San Rafael Municipal Code establishes standards and procedures so that development is consistent with San Rafael’s General Plan 2020. San Rafael is divided into Zoning Districts as shown on the zoning maps, which includes the allowable uses and construction requirements for single-family lots. There are six single-family residential (R) districts:

- R2a** Min. lot size 2 acres
- R1a** Min. lot size 1 acre
- R20** Min. lot size 20,000 sq. ft.
- R10** Min. lot size 10,000 sq. ft.
- R7.5** Min. lot size 7,500 sq. ft.
- R5** Min. lot size 5,000 sq. ft.

A “single-family use” is typically a house on a lot with front, side and rear yards. The Zoning Ordinance defines *dwelling unit* as “one or more rooms designed, occupied or intended for occupancy as separate living quarters for the exclusive use of one household, with a kitchen, sleeping facilities, and sanitary facilities.” A summary of the R zoning district Development Standards are provided on the next page.

In addition to single-family residences, the following uses are permitted in the R Districts:

- home occupations
- parks
- public schools
- small (up to 8 children or adults) family day care
- second dwelling units

In R Districts, except for R2a, R1a and - H (Hillside Overlay), the following uses are allowed with the approval of a Use Permit:

- churches, places of worship (e.g., assembly halls)
- day care centers (15 or more children or adults)
- large (8 to 14 children or adults) family day care
- private schools

A complete list of uses that may be allowed in the R districts can be found in the zoning ordinance land use tables. See the ‘Single-Family Zoning Additional Standards’ handout for requirements for ancillary structures or uses.

**Where Can I View or Buy a Copy of the Zoning Ordinance?**

Copies of the Zoning Ordinance are available for review at the Planning Division (3<sup>rd</sup> floor), the City Clerk’s Office (Room 209) at City Hall, 1400 Fifth Ave., and at the San Rafael Public Library. The Ordinance can also be accessed online by clicking on the link for the Zoning Ordinance at: <http://www.cityofsanrafael.org/>



## SINGLE-FAMILY ZONING

### Residential (Single-Family) Property Development Standards

	R2a	R1a	R20	R10	R7.5	R5	Additional Standards
Minimum Lot Area (sq. ft.)	2 acres	1 acre	20,000	10,000	7,500	5,000	(A)
Minimum Lot Width (ft.)	150	150	100	75	60	Corner lot: 6,000 50 Corner lot: 60	
Minimum Yards:							
Front (ft.)	20	20	20	20	15	15	(B), (C)
Side (ft.)	15	15	12'6"	10	6	10% of lot width, min. 3', max. 5'	(D), (E)
Rear (ft.)	25	25	10	10	10	10	
Maximum Height of Structure (ft.)	30	30	30	30	30	30	(F)
Maximum Lot Coverage	20%	25%	30%	40%	40%	40%	
Maximum upper story floor size	Lots less than 5,000 sf – 50% of max. lot coverage; Lots greater than 5,000 sf – 75% of max. lot coverage						(G)
Parking Requirement:	2 covered spaces for a primary single family residence, measuring 20' by 20' interior clear space for a garage and 19' by 19' for s carport						

(A) Second dwelling units shall not be added if the lot is less than 5,000 square feet.  
 (B) Where two or more lots in a block have been improved with buildings, the minimum required shall be the average of improved lots on both sides of the street for the length of the block.  
 (C) Where there is a driveway perpendicular to the street, any garage built after January 1, 1992, shall be setback 20 feet.  
 (D) On a reverse corner lot, the rear 20 feet of the street side yard shall have a 15-foot setback.  
 (E) In the R7.5, R10 and R20 districts, where two or more lots in a block have been improved with buildings, the minimum required shall be the average of improved lots within the same district on both sides of the street for the length of the block.  
 (F) In the –EA Combining District, maximum height of seventeen feet (17') to peak and one habitable floor.  
 (G) For design criteria for upper-story construction, see Section 14.25.050(F)(6), Upper-Story Additions.  
 See the Hillside Overlay (–H) District for requirements that apply to lots located within designated hillside areas or with slopes over 25% grade.

**Exclusions to the Maximum Height Requirements (§14.16.120)** Flagpoles and architectural features such as chimneys and cupolas are not included in height calculations. A *Design Review Permit* may be required.

**Exclusions to the Required Minimum Yards (§14.16.120)** Architectural features such as a fireplaces, eaves, and canopies may extend no more than 2 feet into a required yard. Uncovered porches, decks, landing places and outside stairs may project no more than 3 feet into a side or rear yard, and no more than 6 feet into a front yard.

**Lot Coverage (§14.03.030)** The portion of a lot which is covered by buildings including stairways, covered walkways, covered patios, covered parking structures, covered decks over 30 inches in height, recreational and storage structures. Ground level landscaped areas, walkways, uncovered patios and decks less than 30 inches in height, uncovered recreational areas, and uncovered parking and driveway areas are not included.

**Lot Depth (§14.03.030)** The horizontal distance from the midpoint of the front lot line to the midpoint of the rear lot line, or, where there is no rear lot line, to the most distant point.

**Lot Width (§14.03.030)** Lot area divided by lot depth.

**Reverse Corner Lot (§14.03.030)** A corner lot where the rear yard of a lot is adjacent to the side yard of an adjacent lot.

**Yard (§14.03.030)** Front, rear and side yards are open areas extending from the property boundary a specified distance into the lot, along the full width and depth of a lot.

**Parking (§14.18.240)** Where parking for an existing use is substandard, improvements to improve or upgrade the parking may also be required where feasible.

**See Also - Single-Family Zoning Additional Regulations handout**