

SUMMARY OF LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS (LDR'S)
CHANGES PROPOSED BY THE CITY OF ST. PETERSBURG
2/15/17

There are a total of 68 changes proposed to the LDR's as part of an update and clarification process - 34 of these changes are to provide greater clarity; 34 changes are substantive, 12 of which are significant. A group of 6 traditional neighborhood representatives conducted independent research on homes recently built throughout the City's Traditional neighborhoods and have reviewed the proposed changes. We agree with many of the changes and feel they will better support the goals of our traditional neighborhoods. The following summary will focus on the 12 proposed significant changes.

1.16.20.010.5 and 16.20.020.6 Maximum Development Potential both in NT and NS districts. This addresses the size and bulk of newly constructed buildings. The proposed change is to limit the total amount of impervious surface and hardscape (Impervious Surface Ratio or ISR) for the building. Currently this figure is .65. The City is proposing a combined total of .5; how it will be divided between the building coverage and hard surfaces has yet to be determined. The City is also proposing a residential Floor Area Ratio (FAR) limit between .4 and .55 depending on the district. Slight FAR bonuses are proposed if the second floor has additional setbacks, further reducing the bulk of the house.

Analysis: The traditional neighborhoods should support the concept of reducing the ISR, pending an exact division of the total number. It is a step in the right direction.

Creating a FAR cap will address the bulk and mass of a building. Providing design bonuses if the second floor sets back from the street and side yards is consistent with the Vision 2020 process. However, the bonuses and exact numbers remain to be worked out. Also Staff is proposing to provide an exemption of approximately 550 square feet to be allocated to garage and storage. For simplicity, the working group feels that this is unnecessary and makes calculating the FAR more difficult. Building bulk is building bulk, all square footage should be calculated. This group should continue working with the City to specifically agree on details to address the concerns.

16.20.010.5 Minimum Lot Area. The current minimum required lot area in NT-1 results in 30% of existing lots being substandard in size. A code change several years ago made it necessary to get a variance to allow the development of substandard lots. The City is proposing to reduce the lot size in NT-1 to be more reflective of the existing pattern. It is also proposing to allow originally platted substandard lots that are less than the newly proposed minimum size to be developed if they are typical of the surrounding context.

Analysis: The Traditional Neighborhoods should support this.

16.20.010.11 Neighborhood Traditional Building Design and Building Style. Currently there are no requirements to prevent the development of identical houses on the same block face. The City is proposing changes that will require the use of different roof lines, window patterns, architectural styles and or materials so that identical houses cannot be built next to each other.

Analysis: The Traditional Neighborhoods should support this.

16.20.010.11 Neighborhood Traditional Building Design, Fenestration and Wall Composition.

The City believes that the amount of fenestration and windows currently required is too high for some architectural styles; the City is proposing to lower these percentages. The City also notes that homes built in the flood plain have significant blank space at the base of the building which appears awkward if there is no distinguishing of materials. The City is proposing that a different material, or some form of articulation be added to break up these otherwise blank walls.

Analysis: The Traditional Neighborhood Study Group is concerned about reduced fenestration (arrangement of doors and windows). Additional research and working with the city to develop these numbers needs to occur. It is, however, agreed that breaking up and delineation of the foundation area in buildings built within the flood plain is a good idea and should be supported.

16.20.010.11 and 16.20.020.12 Accessory Structures. A number of City residents in the NT and NS districts have raised concern about the requirement for matching materials and design for accessory structures that are over 200 square feet in size. This relates most often to the installation of carports and sheds. The City is recommending that these be exempt from this regulation if the structure is located in the rear 1/3 of the site and not visible from the street. This regulation would apply to all NT and NS districts as proposed.

Analysis: The Traditional Neighborhood Study Group would like for the various Traditional and Suburban neighborhoods to review with their membership to determine if this should only apply to all NT and NS districts or possibly only NT-1 and NS-1 districts.

16.70.040.14 & 15. Reinstatement and Redevelopment of Grandfathered units. Staff would like more latitude in reinstating units administratively and relaxing some of the requirements that are covered by the building code. The City is also proposing to look at the Redevelopment of Grandfathered Units; they are investigating lowering the allowable FAR's to be more in keeping with the scale of the surrounding neighborhood.

The Traditional Neighborhoods in the early 1990's and through the 2000's had specific concerns that these properties were poorly managed. It is not clear if this has been resolved in the last several years or continues to be a problem.

Analysis: In theory the traditional neighborhoods should support the idea of reducing the FAR for Redeveloped Grandfathered units. However much detail and clarification needs to occur with City staff and the neighborhoods. Not all traditional neighborhoods feel that they benefit from the redevelopment process. As for relaxing the reinstatement process, the neighborhoods should discuss these issues with their association before any specific regulations are adjusted.

OTHER ISSUES OF CONCERN:

- The detailed massing and scaling of front porches needs further discussion when developing the new mass and scale of buildings
- Roof structures over docks located on waterfront lots should be eliminated to preserve the public view shed.
- Many of the existing and proposed regulations would benefit from illustration or referencing the historical pattern book which is currently under development. It is proposed that pedestrian sidewalks could be eliminated and could connect to the driveway if a driveway is present in the front yard. This is not a traditional pattern and therefore this relaxation should not occur in the NT districts.
- There are a number of proposed changes to the NT-1 district to encourage redevelopment within the South Side CRA. These changes would also apply to many areas of the City currently zoned NT-1 that may have unintended consequences. The Traditional Neighborhood Study group supports the idea submitted by several Council Members to develop a zoning district specifically for areas of the CRA that allows and encourages a number of opportunities for redevelopment and affordable housing. They do not recommend that the NT-1 regulations be relaxed as this will have implications on many other areas of the City that benefit from City wide design standards.