

# Lot Dimensions and Density



### Single Family Detached House

A single-family detached house is located on an individual lot with yards on all four sides of the house. Vehicular access can take place from the front, side, or rear of the lot.



|            |         | Minimum Lot Area |          | Minimum Lot Width |          |
|------------|---------|------------------|----------|-------------------|----------|
|            |         | Current          | Proposed | Current           | Proposed |
| Urban Tier | RS-20   | 20,000           | 20,000   | 100               | 100      |
|            | RS-10   | 10,000           | 8,000    | 75                | 60       |
|            | RS-8    | 8,000            | 5,000    | 60                | 45       |
|            | RS-M    | 5,000            | 3,500    | 35                | 35       |
|            | RU-5    | 5,000            | 3,500    | 45                | 35       |
|            | RU-5(2) | 5,000            | 3,500    | 45                | 35       |
|            | RU-M    | 3,500            | 3,000    | 35                | 35       |
|            | RC      | 5,000            | 3,500    | 35                | 35       |

### Zero Lot Line House

A zero lot line house is a single-family detached house positioned on one lot line without any setback from that lot line, with yards on the other three sides of the building including a wider side yard on one side.



|            |         | Minimum Lot Area |          | Minimum Lot Width |          |
|------------|---------|------------------|----------|-------------------|----------|
|            |         | Current          | Proposed | Current           | Proposed |
| Urban Tier | RS-20   | —                | —        | —                 | —        |
|            | RS-10   | 10,000           | 8,000    | 75                | 60       |
|            | RS-8    | 8,000            | 5,000    | 60                | 45       |
|            | RS-M    | 5,000            | 3,500    | 35                | 35       |
|            | RU-5    | 5,000            | 3,500    | 45                | 35       |
|            | RU-5(2) | 5,000            | 3,500    | 45                | 35       |
|            | RU-M    | 3,500            | 3,000    | 35                | 35       |
|            | RC      | 5,000            | 3,500    | 35                | 35       |

### Traditional House

A traditional house is a single-family detached house that is set closer to the street than a conventional single family detached house and shall only have vehicular access from the rears. It has yards on each side of the building.



|            |         | Minimum Lot Area |          | Minimum Lot Width |          |
|------------|---------|------------------|----------|-------------------|----------|
|            |         | Current          | Proposed | Current           | Proposed |
| Urban Tier | RS-20   | 20,000           | 20,000   | 100               | 100      |
|            | RS-10   | 10,000           | 8,000    | 75                | 60       |
|            | RS-8    | 8,000            | 5,000    | 60                | 45       |
|            | RS-M    | 5,000            | 3,500    | 35                | 35       |
|            | RU-5    | 5,000            | 3,500    | 45                | 35       |
|            | RU-5(2) | 5,000            | 3,500    | 45                | 35       |
|            | RU-M    | 3,500            | 3,000    | 35                | 35       |
|            | RC      | 5,000            | 3,500    | 35                | 35       |

### Duplex

An attached duplex is a two-family dwelling in a single structure on a single lot. Individual units can be located on separate floors or on the same level. A detached duplex (proposed— see Duplex Poster) allow for two dwelling units on one lot, but in separate structures.

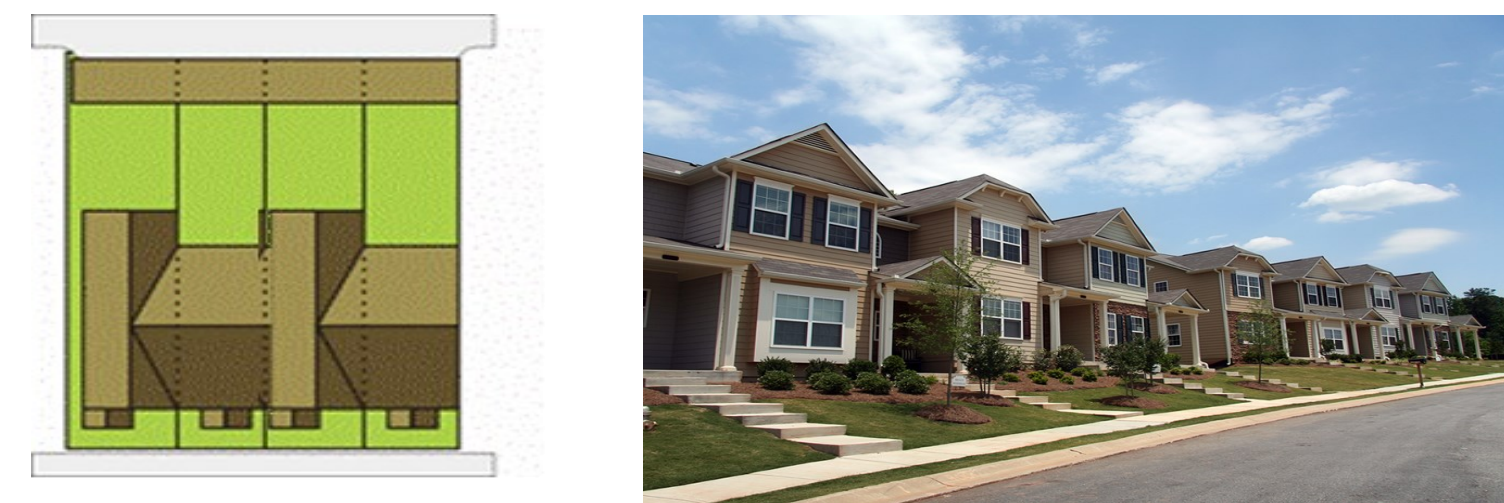


|            |         | Minimum Lot Area |          | Minimum Lot Width |          |
|------------|---------|------------------|----------|-------------------|----------|
|            |         | Current          | Proposed | Current           | Proposed |
| Urban Tier | RS-20   | —                | 20,000   | —                 | 100      |
|            | RS-10   | —                | 8,000    | —                 | 60       |
|            | RS-8    | —                | 5,000    | —                 | 45       |
|            | RS-M    | 7,500            | 3,500    | 60                | 35       |
|            | RU-5    | —                | 3,500    | —                 | 35       |
|            | RU-5(2) | 7,000            | 3,500    | 50                | 35       |
|            | RU-M    | 7,000            | 3,000    | 50                | 35       |
|            | RC      | 7,000            | 3,500    | 50                | 35       |

### Townhouse

A townhouse is a building made up of three or more attached dwelling units (except where otherwise allowed), where each unit is on an individual lot and the units are lined up in a row and share side walls.

Lot Area and Lot Width are not specified but are instead determined by building size, setbacks, and other site development standards like parking.



|         | Permitted Housing Type |          |
|---------|------------------------|----------|
|         | Current                | Proposed |
| RS-20   | —                      | *1       |
| RS-10   | —                      | *1       |
| RS-8    | —                      | *1       |
| RS-M    | *                      | *        |
| RU-5    | *1,2                   | *1,2     |
| RU-5(2) | *                      | *        |
| RU-M    | *                      | *        |
| RC      | *                      | *        |

1 Allowed as part of a Cluster Subdivision (Sec 6.7)  
2 Allowed as a Townhome as a Transitional Use (Sect. 6.4.3B)

## Additional Information

- **Patio Homes** are proposed to be removed and replaced with the new **Small House/Small Lot** Housing Type (detailed on the Small House/Small Lot poster)
- There are no proposed changes to the **Semi-Attached Single Family** Housing type— Current lot width and area requirements are in line with proposed changes to the other single-family housing types
- There are no proposed changes to the lot width or area requirements for the **Apartment** Housing Type
- For **Multiplexes**, the only proposed change is a lot width reduction from 70 feet to 50 feet in the Urban Tier. In the Suburban Tier, it would remain 70 feet.
- Several options already exist for limited lot area reduction. They include:
  - Affordable Housing Bonus Program
  - Lot Averaging
  - Cluster Subdivisions
  - Conservation Subdivisions



# Lot Dimensions and Density



## Opportunities and Challenges

- The cost of land is a significant driver of development costs and affordability. Allowing for smaller lots could reduce overall expense for new dwellings.
- Large lots can provide space for mature trees, wildlife, permeable surfaces and can contribute to the character of many neighborhoods
- Durham’s relatively large lot pattern offers possibilities for creative infill
- There is concern that reducing minimum lot area will compel property owners to subdivide their land into two lots, which could lead to more teardowns

## Lot Dimensions: Area and Width

The UDO establishes the minimum size and lot width of platted lots in order to ensure sufficient space on the site for the intended land use, and to create a consistent character of development. In Durham’s UDO, lot area and widths are dependent on both the zoning district and the housing type (see tables on next board).

## Setbacks

Few adjustments to minimum setbacks (or as the UDO refers to them, “minimum yards”) or other related dimensional standards are proposed. Those include:

- Deletion of “total side yards” from Urban Tier requirements. Individual side yard requirements are maintained.

Example: A house may have a 6 foot individual, and 15-foot total, side yard requirement. This means one side must be at least 6 feet and the other 9 feet.

This allows a little more room on one side without sacrificing current side-by-side building separation. Also, many older houses do not conform to the current total side yard requirements, and currently nonconforming lots do not have to comply with total side yard requirements.

- Adjust duplex yard requirements to align with single-family standards (also see the Duplex posters)
- Delete the building separation requirement from shared parking for townhouses, multiplexes, and apartments. This allows more space on the lot devoted to the housing and not the parking.

## Density

In planning and development, residential density refers to the number of dwelling units per acre. It is a measure of development intensity, but does not necessarily determine design. For example, a building with 12 dwelling units on a quarter-acre of land equals a density of 48 dwelling units/acre, and a 300-unit apartment complex on 6 acres comes in at 50 dwelling units/acre. In Durham's UDO, each zoning district (Downtown excluded) establishes a maximum residential density.

Although a subdivision may propose lots that meet dimensional standards, the subdivision must also meet density allowances. Thus, density limits can limit the number of lots for a subdivision.

The proposed density limits are revised in conjunction with revised lot area and widths, but are also consistent with adopted future land use designations within the *Comprehensive Plan*, which designate most residential areas within the Urban Tier as either 6-12 dwelling units/acre or 8-20 dwelling units /acre.

Maximum Residential Density by Zoning District

|                           | Current                          | Proposed                         |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <b>RS-20 (Urban Tier)</b> | 2                                | 2                                |
| <b>RS-10 (Urban Tier)</b> | 4                                | 6                                |
| <b>RS-8 (Urban Tier)</b>  | 5                                | 9                                |
| <b>RS-M (Urban Tier)</b>  | 8 <sup>1</sup> /18 <sup>2</sup>  | 12 <sup>1</sup> /20 <sup>2</sup> |
| <b>RU-5</b>               | 8                                | 12                               |
| <b>RU-5(2)</b>            | 8                                | 12                               |
| <b>RU-M</b>               | 12 <sup>1</sup> /20 <sup>2</sup> | 12 <sup>1</sup> /20 <sup>2</sup> |
| <b>RC (Support)</b>       | 20                               | 20                               |
| <b>RC (Core)</b>          | 53                               | 53                               |

1. Without a Development Plan  
 2. With a Development Plan