



# City of Gainesville

Department of Sustainable  
Development

**TO:** City Plan Board  
**FROM:** Department of Sustainable Development

**DATE:** June 6<sup>th</sup>, 2022

**SUBJECT:** City of Gainesville. City initiated petition to amend the Comprehensive Plan's Future Land Use Element to revise the Single-Family (SF) land use category to include small-scale multi-family development up to four (4) units per building and rename the category as Neighborhood Residential (NR), amend the Land Development Code to consolidate single family zoning districts into Neighborhood Residential zoning district, introduce single-family detached and small-scale multi-family as uses in Neighborhood Residential zoning districts; amend setback, lot size dimensions, remove occupancy limits, amend bedroom limit within the UF Context Zone, amend compatibility requirements, and amend lot split and minor subdivisions regulations.

**Applicant:** City of Gainesville

## Discussion

The City of Gainesville is currently experiencing a period of housing instability that has resulted in unequal housing outcomes for its residents. Per the Exclusionary Zoning and Inclusionary Housing Study done by HR&A, there are three primary issues driving the current housing situation in Gainesville: Housing access and quality, housing cost burden and racial segregation.

Access to housing is severely limited in Gainesville. A total of 63% of residential parcels are zoned single family residential and only allow for the construction of one house. 42% of the single family residential zones are RSF-1 which has the lowest density within all residential zones of 3.5 units per acre along with some of the most generous setback and lot size requirements. This results in a significant amount of land devoted to the construction of single family homes thus restricting the opportunity of diversification of home types needed to meet the needs of all Gainesville residents. This is not consistent with the City's Comprehensive plan Objective 1.2 which is designed to "Provide a variety of housing types and densities for moderate-income, low-income, very low-income, and extremely low-income people." Aside from the zoning restriction of single-family homes, development requirements such as lot sizes and setbacks result in the creation of larger lots within single-family zoning thus further restricting the potential of housing development. Furthermore, large lots, large setback requirements, and the restriction to one single family occupancy attribute to a higher cost for home construction and land ownership. This further restricts who can afford to purchase a home in Gainesville.



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With fewer homes available for purchase, Gainesville residents' alternative for housing is renting. 61% of households in the City are renters. Furthermore, the student housing market is the strongest rental market in the City which makes it more difficult for non-students to access rental housing. According to the HR&A Exclusionary Zoning/Inclusionary Housing Study, student renters make up 36% of the total Gainesville population but make up 50% of the population living in housing built after 2000. Consequently, student renters are the primary beneficiaries of new rental housing development in Gainesville.

Aside from the restriction of housing availability, the cost of housing in Gainesville adversely impacts most of Gainesville residents. It's estimated that a household income of \$40,000 is needed to afford the average rent per unit in Gainesville. However, Gainesville's median household income is only \$37,000 with Black households only making 73% of the median. This cost burden is exacerbated by the lack of a diverse housing stock coupled with a significant demand for housing.

The lack of housing access and quality along with the cost burden of housing disproportionately affects Gainesville's Black and minority citizens. Data shows that white households are more likely to live in single family homes while the Black population occupies "missing middle" housing, or buildings that have 2-4 units. Furthermore, only white and Asian households earn consistently above Gainesville's median household income making the average rental unit only affordable to the typical white household.

Furthermore, Gainesville's growth trend is outpacing new housing construction. According to the Bureau of Economics data, Gainesville's population growth has increased by roughly 4.5% within the past five (5) years and will continue to grow at around this rate within the next five (5) years. It's projected that by 2025, Gainesville's population will increase by 6,542. However, according to Census data only 6,036 housing units were added in ten (10) years between 2010 to 2020.

To address the concerns stated above, staff is proposing amending the Comprehensive Plan and the Land Development Code to provide the opportunity for more equitable development while promoting a diversification of Gainesville's housing stock and eliminating restrictive Land Use and zoning regulations. This petition is initiated by the City of Gainesville and proposes several amendments. The amendment discussed in this report pertains to the consolidation of single family residential zone districts along with the amendments to developments standards



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associated with setbacks and site dimensions as well as the inclusion of neighborhood scale multi-family as a permitted use.

## **Consolidating Single Family Residential Zoning and Amending the List of Uses**

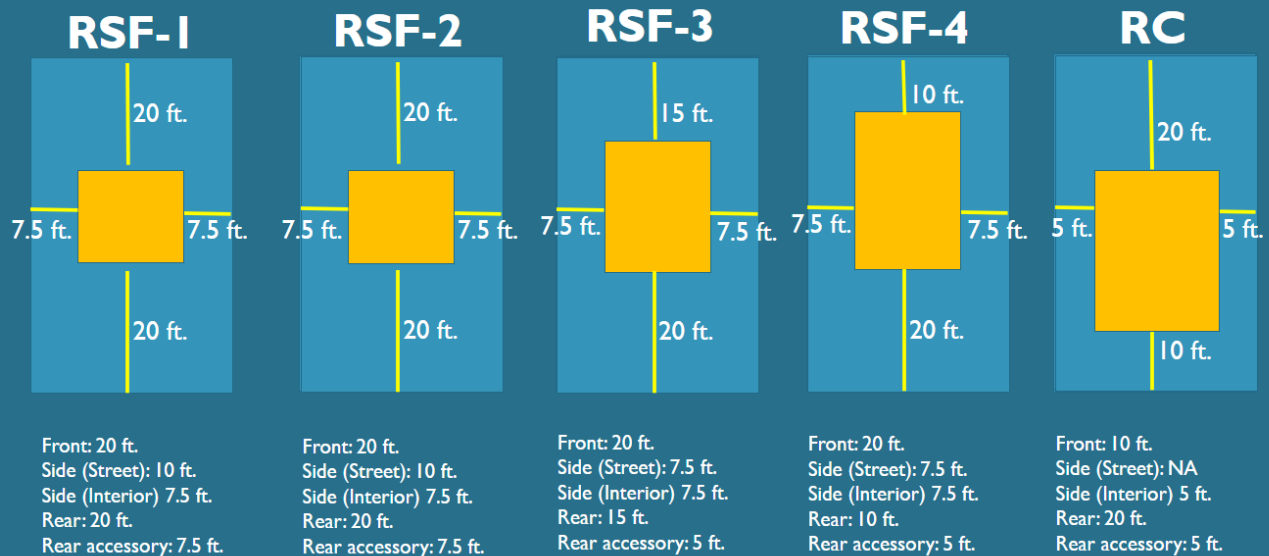
This amendment involves consolidating all Single-Family Residential zones (RSF zones) into one (1) Neighborhood Residential zone (NR) while amending the list of uses to include NSMs. The consolidation will address existing arbitrary regulations concerning property setbacks and dimensions as well as provide amended standards for a more efficient use of land. Currently the City of Gainesville has four (4) Single Family Residential Zones which are RSF-1, RSF-2, RSF-3, and RSF-4. These zoning districts are characterized by varying regulatory degrees of dimensional standards, their exclusion of multi-family and housing diversity, low density, and excessive lot size and set back requirements. The differentiating dimensional standards such as lot sizes and setbacks between RSF zones lack a rational nexus and present arbitrary, complex and burdensome restrictions which limit use opportunities for home and property owners. This is particularly manifested when a homeowner desires the opportunity to divide their property but is limited by lot size requirements or is presented with varying limitations for principle and accessory structure placements.



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## Existing Setbacks In Single Family and RC Zones

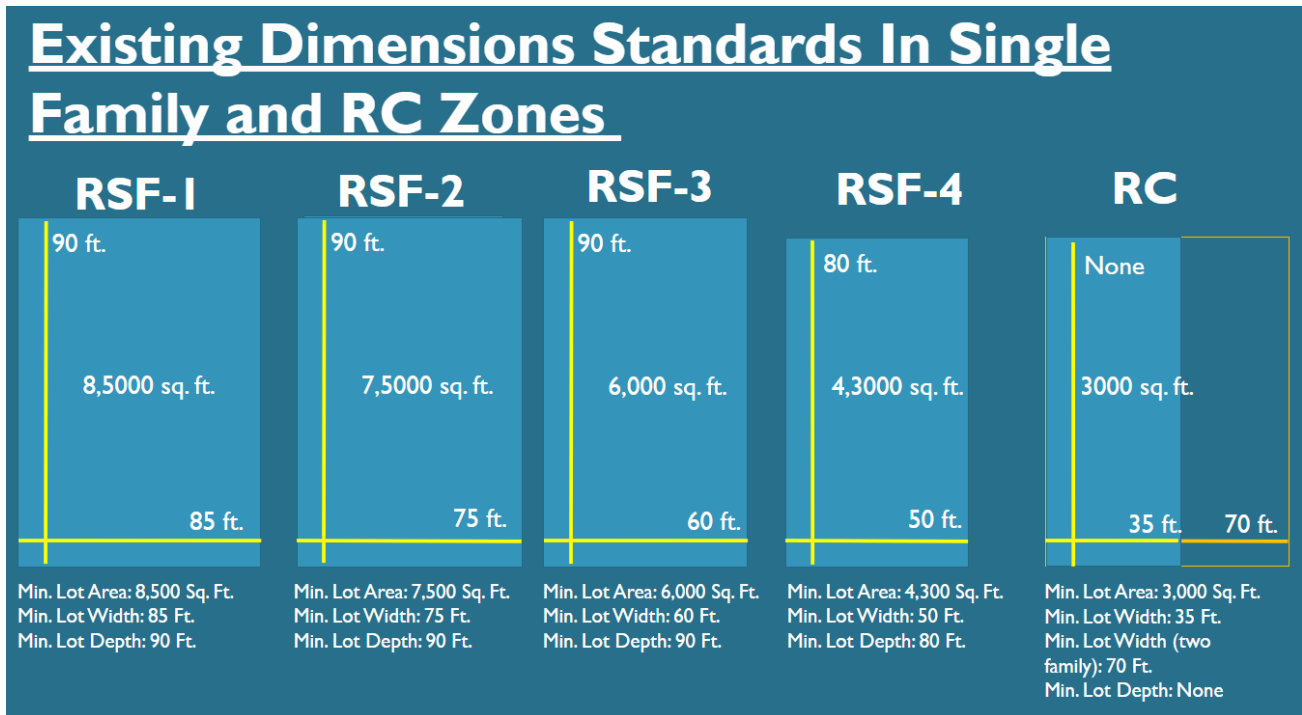


An analysis of current setback regulations shows that single family residential zones RSF-1 through RSF-4 are similar except for their rear setback. RSF-1 and RSF-2 have the same setback regulations while RSF-3 and RSF-4 differ by a decrease of five (5) feet where RSF-3 has a rear setback of 15 feet and RSF-4 has a rear setback of 10 feet. No evidence exists to qualify the differences other than aesthetic values. Furthermore, when compared to the Residential Conservation (RC) zoning district which is designed primarily for single family and two-family developments, it's evident that the setback allotments in RSF-1 through RSF-4 zoning districts exceeds the space needed for development.



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When considering the current lot sizes, RSF-1 through RSF-4 have decreasing lot size requirements with RSF-1 requiring the largest amount of land for development at 8,500 square feet and RSF-4 requiring the least amount of land for development at 4,300 square feet. However, when compared with the Residential Conservation zoning district at 3,000 square feet, it's evident that the current lot size dimensions far exceed space requirements for development. Furthermore, no evidence exists to qualify the current lot size requirements but rather, evidence points to an arbitrary designation for lot size that is solely aesthetically driven.

The arbitrary nature of existing single family zoning district setback and lot size dimension requirements fail to provide a proper rationale nexus. Furthermore, when compared to more conservative lot size and setbacks found within Residential Conservation it is evident that current Single family residential dimension and setback standards do not provide the most efficient use of land.

To address the observation stated above and to provide regulations for a more concise and efficient use of property, the proposal outlined in this report would consolidate RSF-1 – RSF-4 zoning districts into one Neighborhood Residential Zone district (NR) with consistent



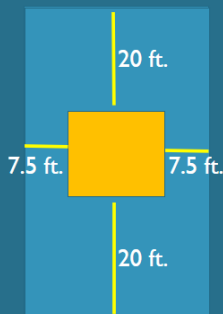
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dimensional standards that would increase the efficiency of the use of a property. The new zoning district would resemble the existing zoning district Residential Conservation (RC) in lot size and setback requirements while allowing for NSMs as defined in section B of this report. These changes would not only help to provide regulations for a more efficient use of land, but they will also help to facilitate the diversification of housing options in Gainesville to meet the increasing trend of housing demand. Furthermore, they would also provide for a more equitable development pattern in Gainesville with an increase of “missing-middle” or 2 to 4 unit housing types.

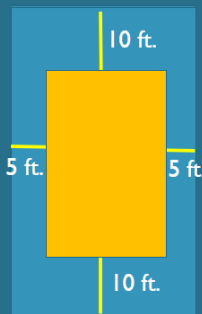
## Proposed Setbacks

### RSF-I Existing



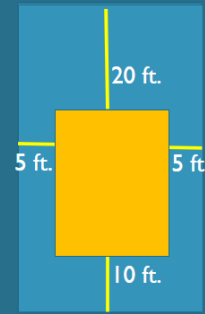
Front: 20 ft.  
Side (Street): 10 ft.  
Side (Interior) 7.5 ft.  
Rear: 20 ft.  
Rear accessory: 7.5 ft.

### NR Proposed



Front: 10 ft.  
Side (Street): 5 ft.  
Side (Interior) 5 ft.  
Rear: 10 ft.  
Rear accessory: 5 ft.

### RC Existing



Front: 10 ft.  
Side (Street): NA  
Side (Interior) 5 ft.  
Rear: 20 ft.  
Rear accessory: 5 ft.

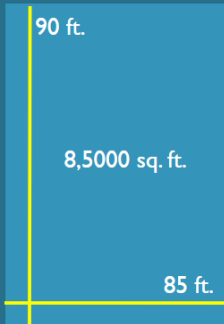


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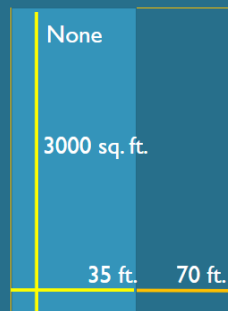
## Proposed Site Dimensions

### RSF-I



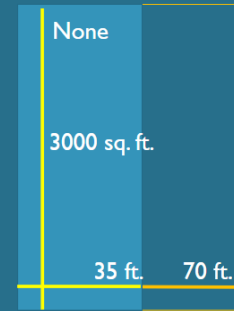
Min. Lot Area: 8,500 Sq. Ft.  
Min. Lot Width: 85 Ft.  
Min. Lot Depth: 90 Ft.

### NR



Min. Lot Area: 3,000 Sq. Ft.  
Min. Lot Width: 35 Ft.  
Min. Lot Width (NS Multi-Family): 70 Ft.  
Min. Lot Depth: None

### RC



Min. Lot Area: 3,000 Sq. Ft.  
Min. Lot Width: 35 Ft.  
Min. Lot Width (two family): 70 Ft.  
Min. Lot Depth: None

It's important to note that the NR zoning district will not eliminate single family housing from the list of permitted uses. Rather, it will allow for NSM development as defined in section B of this report. This will provide homeowners with development options that they may choose to explore at their discretion. Similarly, the new lot size requirements and setbacks associated with Neighborhood Residential zoning districts will not amend the existing lot sizes but will provide development and lot split opportunities for homeowners to explore at their discretion.



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After the consolidation of the RSF zoning district, the resulting Neighborhood Residential Zone would be consistent with the existing Residential Conservation zoning district.

## Proposed Neighborhood Residential Zoning District (NR):

	<del>RSF-1</del>	<del>RSF-2</del>	<del>RSF-3</del>	<del>RSF-4</del>	<u>NR</u>	RC	MH	RMF-5	RMF-6	RMF-7	RMF-8
<b>DENSITY/INTENSITY</b>											
<b>Residential density (units/acre)</b>											
Min.	None	None	None	None	<u>None</u>	None	None	None	8 <sup>1</sup>	8 <sup>1</sup>	8 <sup>1</sup>
Max. by right	<del>3.5</del>	<del>4.6</del>	<del>5.8</del>	<del>8</del>	<u>8</u>	12	12	12	10	14	20
With density bonus points	-	-	-	-	<u>-</u>	-	-	-	See Table V-6	See Table V-6	See Table V-6
Nonresidential building coverage	<del>35%</del>	<del>35%</del>	<del>40%</del>	<del>40%</del>	<u>40%</u>	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%
<b>LOT STANDARDS</b>											
Min. lot area (sq. ft.)	<del>8,500</del>	<del>7,500</del>	<del>6,000</del>	<del>4,300</del>	<u>3,000</u>	3,000	3,000	3,500	None	None	None
Min. lot width (ft.)											
Single-family	<del>85</del>	<del>75</del>	<del>60</del>	<del>50</del>	<u>35</u>	35	35	40	40	40	40
Two-family <sup>2</sup>	<del>NA</del>	<del>NA</del>	<del>NA</del>	<del>NA</del>	<u>70</u>	70	NA	75	40	40	40
Other uses	<del>85</del>	<del>75</del>	<del>60</del>	<del>50</del>	<u>35</u>	35	35	85	85	85	85
Min. lot depth (ft.)	<del>90<sup>4</sup></del>	<del>90<sup>4</sup></del>	<del>90<sup>4</sup></del>	<del>80<sup>4</sup></del>	<u>None</u>	None	None	90	90	90	90
<b>MIN. SETBACKS (ft.)</b>											
Front	<del>20<sup>4</sup></del>	<del>20<sup>4</sup></del>	<del>20<sup>4</sup></del>	<del>20<sup>4</sup></del>	<u>10<sup>5</sup></u>	10 <sup>5</sup>	15	10 min. 100 max.	10 min. 100 max.	10 min. 100 max.	10 min. 100 max
Side (street)	<del>10</del>	<del>10</del>	<del>7.5</del>	<del>7.5</del>	<u>5</u>	NA	NA	15	10 <sup>3</sup> /15	10 <sup>3</sup> /15	10 <sup>3</sup> /15
Side (interior) <sup>6,7</sup>	<del>7.5</del>	<del>7.5</del>	<del>7.5</del>	<del>7.5</del>	<u>5</u>	5	5	10	5 <sup>3</sup> /10	5 <sup>3</sup> /10	5 <sup>3</sup> /10
Rear <sup>7,8</sup>	<del>20</del>	<del>20</del>	<del>15</del>	<del>10</del>	<u>10</u>	20	15	10	10	10	10





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Rear, accessory	<del>7.5</del>	<del>7.5</del>	<del>5</del>	<del>5</del>	<u>5</u>	5	5	5	5	5	5
<b>MAXIMUM BUILDING HEIGHT (stories)</b>											
By right	<del>3</del>	<del>3</del>	<del>3</del>	<del>3</del>	<u>3</u>	3	3	3	3	3	3
With building height bonus	NA	NA	NA	NA	<u>NA</u>	NA	NA	NA	5	5	5

## Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan

The proposed amendments to the LDC are consistent with Gainesville’s Comprehensive Plan as demonstrated below:

### Consistency with the Future Land Use Elements

Policy 1.1.3 *Neighborhoods should contain a diversity of housing types to enable citizens from a wide range of economic levels and age groups to live within its boundaries.*

### Consistency with the Housing Element

Policy 1.1.4 *The City shall review and evaluate zoning and other regulations that pertain to housing to insure that requirements continue to be reasonable and do not unduly limit opportunities for lower income groups to secure housing in desirable locations.*

Objective 1.2 *Provide a variety of housing types and densities for moderate-income, low-income, very low-income, and extremely low-income people.*

Objective 1.3 *The City shall allocate sufficient acreage in appropriate locations to meet the housing needs of the City’s residents.*

Policy 1.5.1 *The City shall seek innovative ways to encourage affordable housing, which could include use of alternative building materials, reduced lot size requirements, design competitions for affordable housing, and a design advisory committee to advise housing providers on the development of affordable housing designs.*

Policy 3.5.1 *The City shall develop recommendations on increasing the desirability of owner-occupancy in the University Context Area.*



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Respectfully submitted,

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Planner III