



MILWAUKIE

Dogwood City of the West

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From: Li Alligood, Assistant Planner

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Subject: Residential Design Standards – Review of Comprehensive Plan Policies

POLICY REVIEW

The purpose of this memo is to provide an overview of Comprehensive Plan policies related to the adoption and implementation of residential design standards. Relevant Comprehensive Plan policies are found in Chapter 4 – Land Use, which addresses specific issues of balancing land uses within the City. There are two relevant elements in Chapter 4: the Residential Land Use and Housing Element and the Neighborhood Element.

Residential land use policy in the Comprehensive Plan is based on the concept that the City is, and will continue to be, composed primarily of single family neighborhoods. The Comprehensive Plan also anticipated that most of the future development in the City would be single family and multifamily residential infill development.

Residential Land Use and Housing Element

The goal of the Residential Land Use and Housing Element is to provide direction for the maintenance of existing housing, the rehabilitation of older housing, and the development of new housing within existing residential neighborhoods. The Comprehensive Plan assumes that much of the future residential development in the city will be multifamily housing, and the policies in this element reflect that assumption by identifying appropriate locations for multifamily housing, as well as appropriate compatibility measures.

This element contains 3 relevant objectives:

Objective #2 – Residential Land Use: Density and Location

Policies to guide the location of higher density residential uses to minimize impact on established single family neighborhoods:

- Higher density housing types should be concentrated to support public transit and commercial services, and lessen impacts on existing single family neighborhoods.

- Encourages a range of housing types in all areas of the City, as long as new development fits the character of existing neighborhoods.
- Describes criteria for designation of areas as Low Density, Moderate Density, Medium Density, High Density, and Town Center Areas. The criteria relate primarily to the type and density of permitted residential development, as well as stated preferences for the types of development to occur (i.e. rehabilitation of existing residences or clearance and redevelopment).

Objective #3 – Residential Land Use: Design

Policies to minimize the impact of new construction on existing neighborhoods:

- Requires transition measures between new multifamily housing projects within 100 feet of Low and Moderate Density areas.

Objective #4 – Neighborhood Conservation

Policies designed to preserve, enhance, and reinforce the identity and pride of established neighborhoods; encourages compatible new development:

- Encourages residential infill that maintains existing heights, setbacks, yard areas and building mass.
- New construction in Low Density areas should maintain a single family building build, scale, and height when abutting existing single family areas.
- Suggests a Design Review function to interpret and enforce the policies of this element.

Although each objective has a specific focus, the policies contained in this element generally support the protection of the character of existing single family neighborhoods; encouraging a range of housing types; and adoption of City-wide design standards to ensure high-quality, compatible infill design.

Neighborhood Element

The goal of the Neighborhood Element is to support the stability and diversity of the City's neighborhoods. This element identifies neighborhood areas¹, each with a specific character to be preserved and reinforced. This element contains 2 relevant objectives:

Objective #1 – Neighborhood Character

Policies to maintain the residential character of existing neighborhoods:

- New residential development should be consistent in type, style, and density with the existing neighborhood.
- Buffers should be provided between different residential types.

Objective #2 – Neighborhood Needs

Policies to meet the needs of neighborhood areas through identification of the character of each of the neighborhood areas; generally:

- Identifies the preferred location, aesthetics, buffering, and design review process for new multifamily housing.
- Requests higher design standards for new infill housing, as well as multifamily housing and commercial facilities.

¹ The Comprehensive Plan identifies 5 “Neighborhood Areas.”

This element reflects neighborhood concerns about infill development and provides suggestions for methods to encourage or require compatible construction.

SUMMARY

Current Comprehensive Plan policies strongly support City-wide design standards for single family and multifamily residential development; ensuring development compatible with existing single family neighborhoods; and provision of a variety of housing types to meet the needs of residents.

The policies focus on the protection of the character of existing neighborhoods while providing attractive, quality housing for existing and new residents of the City by ensuring compatibility of design, scale, and massing of new development.

Although design standards have been adopted for development in the Downtown Zones and for new single family residential construction, there are currently no design standards for multifamily housing or standards guiding the compatibility of infill development. At this time, most Comprehensive Plan policies relating to compatibility and design have not yet been implemented.