

TA #20-05 Amend Article 3.2.1(d) Rural (R) District

PART 1: DESCRIPTION

TA- 20-05 Is a request by Blue Heel Hollins Grove to reduce the lots sizes in the rural zone to allow more flexibility in site design **but not increase the density.**

PART 2: BACKGROUND

The Rural zone currently allows a range of density options with greater density allowed with more open space provided.

Rural Density	Minimum Open Space
Under .3 un/ac	0% Open Space
3 un/ac	25% Open Space
.9 un/ac	45% Open Space

Further, the average lot size is 18,000 sq. ft. and the minimum lot size is 15,000 sq. ft.. For reasons stated in the application, the applicants have proposed to amend Section 3.2.1(d) in order to change the average lot size to 15,000 sq. ft. and the minimum lot size of 8,000 sq. ft. The applicant has also proposed to change the avg./min. lot width and setbacks.

Below is a table showing the current standards, applicant’s original proposal, and staff’s initial recommendation and the recommendation from the Huntersville Ordinances Advisory Board now supported by the applicant and staff. Also included is the TR standards for comparison purposes

RURAL ZONING DISTRICT	CURRENT STANDARD	ORIGINAL APPLICANT PROPOSAL	ORIGINAL STAFF RECOMMENDATION	HOAB RECOMMENDATION (Applicant/Staff Support)	TR ZONING DISTRICT (For Reference Only)
Average Lot Area	18,000 sq. ft.	15,000 sq. ft.	11,000 sq. ft. or less (same % reduction allowed in TR in 2017)	11,000 sq. ft.	7,500 sq. ft.
Minimum Lot Area	15,000 sq. ft.	8,000 sq. ft.	8,000 sq. ft. or less; Agree with applicant	8,000 sq. ft.	6,000 sq. ft.
Setbacks	25’ front; 12’ side; 25’ rear	25’ front; 6’, 7’, 8’, 9’ & 10’ side depending on lot width; 25’ rear	Agree with applicant front and rear but one side yard setback (7’)	25’ front; 25’ rear; 7’ side yard	6’ side
Average Lot Width	100’	80’	70’	70’	60’
Minimum Lot Width	80’	60’	60’; Agree with applicant	60’	50’
Require Variation of Lots	None	2 different widths 50 or less lots; 3 different widths +50 lots	2 different widths between 10-50 lots; 3 different widths +50 lots	N/A	2 different widths 50 or less lots; 3 different widths +50 lots

The Planning Department recommends a lower average lot size and lower average lot width than requested by the applicant. This would allow greater flexibility in subdivision design providing more opportunity to preserve larger areas of open space and protection of natural resources (see attachment D-Open Space Criteria). The Planning Department also recommends establishing one side yard setback standard to simplify requirements. The below comparison illustrates the concept how sensitive environmental areas can be protected with greater flexibility in lot sizes.

Comparison



Current Policy:
206 Lots
45% OS
Largest Contiguous Open Space: 19 Acres
50-100 ft Stream Buffer

Alternative Policy:
206 Lots
50%+ OS
Largest Contiguous Open Space: 50 Acres
150-300 ft Stream Buffers

The Huntersville Ordinances Advisory Board reviewed the proposed amendment at their May 7, 2020 meeting and recommended approval of the Planning Staff proposal (8-1) **with the exception that no lot variation be required**. The HOAB believed decisions on lot size variation should be up to the developer. The applicant and Planning Department support the amendment as recommended by the Huntersville Ordinances Advisory Board.

PART 3: RELEVANT HUNTERSVILLE 2030 COMMUNITY PLAN AND APPLICABLE LONG RANGE PLAN SECTIONS

The following are examples of relevant plans and polices from the 2030 Huntersville Community Plan that may be incorporated into the Board's statement of consistency for approval or denial of the request.

Policy H-7: Housing Affordability Support appropriate mix of housing for all income levels. *Staff Commentary:* Reducing the average lot size but keeping the density in the R the same CAN allow for varied lot sizes and therefore varied housing price points.

Policy H-8: Development in the Transitional and Rural Areas Maintain the development standards in the Transitional and Rural zones and consider adjustments if warranted by changes in the housing market. *Staff Commentary:* *Allowing smaller lot sizes in the R zone MAY be more appealing to people aging who want to maintain a smaller yard.*

Policy E-1: Preservation and Enhancement Support the preservation and enhancement of the natural environment, along with its scenic and cultural assets. *Staff Commentary: Keeping the R density the same but reducing average lot sizes will allow for more open space and therefore provide more opportunity to avoid sensitive environmental areas such as steep slopes or significant stands of vegetation, as well as reduce the amount of impervious coverage. It will also provide more flexibility to avoid scenic views and cultural assets.*

Policy E-2: Location of New Development Avoid locating new development in areas of significant environmental, scenic or cultural resources. *Staff Commentary: Keeping the R density the same but reducing average lot sizes will allow for more open space and therefore provide more opportunity to avoid sensitive environmental areas such as steep slopes or significant stands of vegetation, as well as reduce the amount of impervious coverage. It will also provide more flexibility to avoid scenic views and cultural assets.*

PART 4: STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff supports amending Article 3.2.1(d) Rural (R) District as recommended by the Huntersville Ordinances Advisory Board based on:

- Consistency with policies of the 2030 Huntersville Community Plan listed above.
- Amending the Zoning Ordinance for reduced lot size and width average/minimums, and side yard setback in the R zone is reasonable and in the public interest because overall density per acre is not being increased and subdivision design flexibility is provided allowing for varied lot sizes, reduced development costs, more opportunity to avoid sensitive environmental cultural and scenic resources and the ability to protect more open space.

PART 5: PUBLIC HEARING

The Public Hearing was held on June 1, 2020. Bruce Anderson voiced his opposition to the amendment (Attachment C).

PART 6: PLANNING BOARD RECOMMENDATION

The Planning Board meeting is scheduled for June 23, 2020.

PART 7: ATTACHMENTS AND ENCLOSURES

Attachment A: Text Amendment Application and Amendment Requested by Applicant

Attachment B: Proposed Ordinance with Amendment endorsed by the HOAB, Planning Staff and Applicant

Attachment C: Information from Bruce Anderson opposed to the amendment

Attachment D: Open Space Intention & Locational Criteria