

17.42.125 Cottage housing projects.

A. Purpose. The purpose of this section is to set forth the city council's discretion to allow for a specific residential development type ("cottage housing") featuring modestly sized single-family detached or attached residences with commonly held community amenities oriented around commonly held open space areas. Cottage housing developments require an increase over the maximum density of the underlying zoning district. The city council shall have the sole authority to grant an increase in maximum density to allow development of cottage housing in recognition of its reduced land use and environmental impacts versus typical single-family residential development. This housing type is intended to achieve the following objectives:

1. Promote a variety of housing choices to meet the needs of a population diverse in age, income, household composition, and individual needs;
2. Provide opportunities for more affordable housing choices within single-family neighborhoods and the community;
3. Encourage creation of functional usable open space in residential communities;
4. Promote neighborhood interaction and safety through design;
5. Ensure compatibility with neighboring land uses and surrounding properties; and
6. Provide opportunities for infill development that support the city's growth management goal of more efficient use of land.

B. Applicability. The requirements of this section shall apply to all proposed cottage housing developments. The requirements of this section shall not apply to any housing development proposed at a density allowed by the underlying zoning district. A cottage housing proposal is subject to the city council's discretionary approval of the cottage housing development plan pursuant to Chapter [17.22](#) (Allowable Land Uses), and shall be considered in combination with the standards for the applicable zoning district in Article 2 (Community and Project Design), Article 3 (Site Planning, Design, and Operational Standards) and those in Articles 4 (Standards for Specific Land Uses) and 5 (Resource Management) of this title. If there is a conflict between standards, the provisions of this section shall control over other provisions of Article 4, the provisions of Article 4 control over Articles 2 and 3, and the provisions of Article 5 control over Articles 2, 3, and 4.

C. Cottage Housing Development Approval. Cottage housing developments are subject to the city council's discretionary approval of a cottage housing development plan in conformance with this section. A cottage housing development shall not be an allowable use in any zoning district unless the city council approves the cottage housing development plan.

D. Subdivisions. Discrete ownerships may only be created through the subdivision process pursuant to Article 7 (Subdivisions) of this title and the Subdivision Map Act. Where a conflict exists with Article 7, the provisions of this section shall have control; provided, that there is no conflict with the Subdivision Map Act. Individual lots created as part of an approved cottage housing development shall not be required to have street frontage and shall not be limited to minimum lot size or frontage dimensions.

E. Location Criteria. Cottage housing projects shall be subject to the following locational requirements:

1. The city council shall have sole discretion to approve a cottage housing development plan for projects in the NL (neighborhood, low density), NM (neighborhood, medium density), and NU (neighborhood, urban) zoning districts. The provisions of individual zoning districts shall be applicable to an approved cottage housing development; provided, that where a conflict exists, the provisions of this section shall have control.
2. The minimum area for a cottage housing development must accommodate at least four cottage units, which may include more than one contiguous lot.

F. Density.

1. The city council shall have sole discretion to approve an increase in maximum density for a cottage housing development not to exceed two times the maximum density allowed in the underlying zoning district. The minimum allowable density shall be the maximum allowable density of the underlying zoning district plus at least one unit.
2. Existing residential structures may remain on site and may be nonconforming with respect to the standards of this section. However, nonconforming residential structures are permitted to remain within a cottage housing development at the discretion of the review authority. The extent of the nonconformity shall not be increased.
3. Cottage housing developments may include accessory dwelling units (ADUs) and junior accessory dwelling units (JADUs) if approved as part of the cottage housing development plan. ADUs and JADUs shall not be included in the density calculations for the cottage housing development.

G. Cottage Housing Design Standards. A cottage housing development is expected to reflect a coherent and high-quality design concept and include architectural elements that ensure compatibility with the surrounding neighborhood and community character. The following design elements are intended to provide compatibility with existing residential environments. Alternative designs may be submitted for review and approval, but the review authority must find that any such concepts meet or exceed the design quality of the objective design standards and fulfill the stated purpose and intent of this section.

1. Site Design Standards.

a. **Clustered Housing.** Cottages within a cottage housing development shall be clustered around common open space(s), with allowable cluster sizes ranging from a minimum of four units to a maximum of twelve units. More than one cluster may be permitted per project; however, each cluster shall be distinct and create its own sense of intimacy and community. Changes in allowable cluster size may be considered due to site constraints or to preserve environmental or historical resources.

b. **Setbacks.** Cottage housing developments shall conform to the following setback standards:

i. Cottage housing developments shall have the same setback requirements as the underlying zoning district. The setbacks are applied at the property lines of the development area and not to the individual structures within the development, which are instead controlled by the building separation standards.

ii. ADUs and accessory structures sixteen feet in height or less shall be set back at least four feet from rear and interior side property lines. ADUs or accessory structures less than sixteen feet in height may be constructed in the front setback or a street side setback if the review authority finds the location of the ADU or accessory structure(s) contribute to the communal benefits and aesthetic appeal of the project design.

iii. Parking areas, driveways, and internal roadways may be permitted in the rear and side setback areas provided a minimum five-foot-wide landscape area is maintained between the parking or roadways and the property line.

c. **Building Separation.** Individual structures shall be separated by at least eight feet. Building separation may be reduced to six feet provided the area saved by such a reduction is used to increase the central common open space.

d. **Lot Coverage.** Impervious surfaces shall not exceed the maximum allowable lot coverage that is permissible in the underlying zoning district. Lot coverage shall be calculated for the overall cottage housing development, not for individual lots. Pathways to accommodate pedestrian and bicycle uses within the development shall not be counted in lot coverage calculations. To the extent feasible, all driveways, parking areas and pathways shall be constructed with pervious materials.

e. **Open Space.** Cottage housing developments shall comply with the following private and common open space requirements:

i. A minimum of five hundred square feet of common open space shall be provided per cottage dwelling unit. ADUs and JADUs are not subject to the common open space requirements. The common open space area(s) shall be centrally located within the development.

ii. A minimum of four hundred square feet of private open space shall be provided per dwelling unit. Private open space may include porches and patios. Private open space shall be located adjacent to the common open space and provide a transition between the common open space and the residential units. Cottage housing projects located in the NU (neighborhood, urban) zoning district are not required to provide private open space. ADUs and JADUs are not subject to private open space requirements.

iii. At least seventy-five percent of the units shall abut the primary common open space area(s). Exceptions may be considered due to parcel shape or to preserve environmental resources and avoid site constraints such as historic structures or features, existing trees, slopes exceeding ten percent, wetlands, streams and other sensitive habitats.

iv. The primary common open space area(s) shall have dwelling units abutting at least two sides.

v. Dwelling units not oriented toward a roadway shall have the front of the unit oriented towards the common open space.

vi. No dimension of a common open space area used to satisfy the minimum square footage requirement shall be less than ten feet unless part of a pathway or trail.

vii. Common open space shall be improved or preserved for passive or active recreational use. Examples may include, but are not limited to, courtyards, orchards, playgrounds, swimming pools, natural or landscaped picnic areas, gardens, preserved wetlands, tree clusters or other natural features existing on site. Common open space shall include amenities for residents, such as seating, landscaping, trails, gazebos, barbecue facilities, covered shelters or water features.

viii. Storm water management facilities may be commonly held, but generally shall not be counted toward meeting the common open space requirements unless integrated into a larger communal amenity or preserved feature.

ix. Roadways, driveways, parking areas, private open space and refuse bin storage areas do not qualify as common open space area.

x. Landscaping and amenities located in common open space areas shall be designed to allow for easy access and use by all residents and to facilitate maintenance needs. Existing mature trees shall be preserved and retained where feasible.

f. Pedestrian Pathways.

i. Within the confines of the cottage housing development a network of pedestrian pathways shall be provided. Walkways into and through the cottage housing development may be limited to residents and their guests.

ii. Pedestrian and bicycle connections to the surrounding neighborhood and downtown area shall be made where appropriate.

g. Slope Protection. Siting of dwelling units on slopes exceeding fifteen percent is prohibited. Siting of dwelling units on slopes between ten and fifteen percent is discouraged. Dwelling units shall not be placed in such areas if extensive use of retaining walls is necessary to create building pads or open space areas. Siting certain common features such as garden row plantings or vines, walking trails or seated communal gathering areas may be allowed on slopes exceeding the above limits, provided the slope integrity is maintained and storm water run-off is adequately controlled.

h. Refuse and Recycling. Refuse and recycling containers shall be covered, screened from view by landscaping or architectural screening and shall not be located in the front or street side setback area or in locations where odors may be offensive to adjacent properties.

i. Fencing

i. Solid interior fencing over forty-two inches in height is not permitted within a cottage housing development except to screen parking areas, mechanical equipment, refuse bins and secured areas not generally accessible to residents of the development. Solid interior fencing shall not exceed six feet in height.

ii. Solid or decorative open fencing, not exceeding forty-two inches in height, may be used to delineate private yards and spaces but shall not interfere with the intent to create an internally open community.

iii. Solid perimeter fencing, not exceeding seven feet in height, is permissible except along public roadways. Eight-foot-high perimeter fencing may be allowed provided the top one foot is open design, such as wire, iron work or lattice.

2. Building Design Standards.

a. Cottage Size. Individual cottage units shall contain at least five hundred and no more than one thousand five hundred square feet of gross floor area. The floor area and number of bedrooms within individual cottage units shall be varied within a development to accommodate households of different sizes.

b. Individual dwelling units within the cottage housing development may be attached or detached structures; however, no single structure shall contain more than four attached units (a fourplex).

c. Building Height. Structures within a cottage housing development are subject to the following height limits:

i. The maximum building height for dwelling units, ADUs constructed above garages and community buildings shall be twenty-eight feet.

ii. The maximum building height for detached accessory structures, including garages, is sixteen feet.

iii. Cottages shall be a maximum of two stories. Two-story structures shall be designed to reduce building massing as much as possible. The upper story of a two-story structure shall have less floor area than the lower floor.

d. Entries and Porches.

i. Each cottage housing unit in the NL or NM zoning district shall have a primary entry and usable covered porch that is a minimum of eighty square feet in size and eight feet in depth.

ii. Cottage housing units located in the NU (neighborhood, urban) zoning district shall be provided with a minimum forty-eight-square-foot covered porch or deck.

iii. ADUs and JADUs are not required to have covered porches or decks.

e. Solar Requirement. Cottage housing developments shall install solar photovoltaic system(s) with sufficient capacity to support fifty percent of the total anticipated electrical demand generated by the residential units.

f. ADU and JADU Development.

i. The total gross floor area of all ADUs and JADUs within a cottage housing development shall not exceed fifty percent of the total gross floor area of all the primary cottage units within the development.

ii. No individual ADU may exceed eight hundred square feet of gross floor area if less than two bedrooms, or one thousand square feet of gross floor area if two bedrooms or more.

iii. ADUs may be constructed above garages.

iv. JADUs must be constructed within the walls of a primary cottage unit, shall not exceed five hundred square feet of gross floor area, and shall not result in a combined floor area that exceeds one thousand five hundred square feet.

v. All ADUs and JADUs shall comply with the ADU and JADU provisions set forth in Section [17.42.170](#). Where a conflict exists, the provisions of this section shall have control.

vi. Each ADU and/or JADU must be associated with a primary cottage dwelling unit. ADUs and JADUs shall not be sold separately from the associated primary dwelling unit. If the cottage housing development is subdivided into individual lots, the ADU shall be located on the same lot as the associated primary dwelling unit.

g. A community building may be provided for the residents of the cottage housing development and counted toward the open space requirements. Architectural themes, materials and colors shall be consistent with the dwelling units within the cottage housing development.

3. Parking and Driveway/Roadway Standards.

a. Parking areas and garages shall be located so their visual presence is minimized (shared access drives are encouraged) and associated noise or other impacts do not intrude into public spaces. These areas shall also maintain the single-family character along public streets. To the extent feasible, driveways and surface parking areas shall be constructed with permeable materials.

b. One and three-quarters parking spaces shall be provided for each unit with seven hundred square feet or less of gross floor area. Two parking spaces shall be provided for each unit that exceeds seven hundred square feet of gross floor area. At least one parking space per unit shall be covered by a garage or carport. An additional fifteen percent of the total required parking spaces for the dwelling units shall be provided for guests and may be uncovered.

c. One parking space per ADU shall be provided and may be uncovered. Parking for ADUs may not be required if the project is consistent with the ADU parking exemptions set forth in Section [17.42.170\(D\)](#). Parking is not required for JADUs.

d. On-street parking provided within the development may be counted towards minimum parking requirements if the approval authority finds that such parking configuration will result in adequate parking and is compatible with the character and context of the surrounding area. On-street parking located outside the boundaries of the cottage housing development shall not be counted towards the minimum parking requirements.

e. Surface parking areas may not be located in clusters of more than eight spaces. Clusters must be separated and distinct from one another and include landscaping and tree shading consistent with Section [17.34.050\(D\)](#). Exceptions to these limits may be approved by the review authority to reduce internal roadways or to provide for greater amounts of common open space.

f. Parking areas shall not be located between the dwelling units and the common open space.

g. At least fifty percent of guest parking spaces within a cottage housing development shall be provided with conduit and infrastructure necessary to support future electric vehicle (EV) charging stations. A minimum of twenty percent of the guest parking spaces within a cottage housing development shall include publicly available and operational electric vehicle charging stations. One hundred percent of assigned/dedicated parking spaces for housing units shall be wired and ready to receive a wall mounted or equivalent charging device. The conduit and infrastructure shall support a minimum of two hundred twenty volts (forty amp minimum) charging at all charging devices.

h. Garages and Carports. Garages and carports within a cottage housing development shall comply with the following standards:

i. The vehicle parking area of an individual garage or carport shall not exceed four hundred forty square feet per dwelling unit. Designated storage areas and bicycle parking shall not be included in the parking area calculations.

ii. Garages or carports may be combined into one structure; however, the floor area designated for vehicle parking shall not exceed four parking spaces or one thousand seven hundred sixty square feet in size. Designated storage areas and bicycle parking shall not be included in the parking area calculations.

iii. The design of garage structures, including materials and roof lines, shall be similar and compatible to the dwelling units within the development.

iv. Garage doors located within eighty feet of a public street shall not be oriented towards the street, except when facing an alley.

i. Roadway Width. Internal roadways shall be minimized. The maximum roadway width shall be the minimum width necessary to comply with parking space aisle standards and accommodate emergency vehicle access.

j. Emergency Vehicle Access. Adequate emergency vehicle access shall be required, as determined by the fire marshal. In areas where roadways are required solely for emergency vehicle access, alternative surface materials that are permeable and support low-lying vegetation shall be utilized where feasible. Use of alternative surface materials for emergency vehicle access shall require the approval of the fire marshal.

H. Common Area Maintenance. Cottage housing developments shall be required to implement a mechanism, acceptable to the approval authority, to ensure the continued care and maintenance of all common areas and amenities including common open space, parking, surface water management facilities and any other common area or shared facilities.

I. Modifications to Standards. Applicants may request modifications to the open space, design standards, setbacks and parking provisions. The planning commission and/or city council may grant exceptions from the above referenced provisions of the cottage housing regulations if any of the following apply:

1. The site is constrained due to unusual shape, topography, easements or sensitive environmental areas, and the alternative design would serve to protect sensitive natural resources;
2. The modification will not result in a project that is less compatible with neighboring land uses and character of the surrounding neighborhood than would have occurred under strict adherence to the provisions of this section; or
3. The planning commission and/or city council find the alternative design concept provides a high level of design quality and compatibility with the character of the surrounding neighborhood and generally meets the intent of the above regulations.

J. Post-Approval Additions and Modifications.

1. The community development director may, without a public hearing, approve requests for additions and modifications to an approved or constructed cottage housing development provided the proposed additions or modifications do not:

- a. Include a change in density or changes in the number of ADUs/JADUs;
- b. Include a subdivision;

c. Request a major variance or modification of the development standards set forth in subsection G of this section or any other applicable development standard of this title; or

d. Conflict with any prior condition of approval.

2. The community development director may, at their discretion, defer any proposed action and refer the request to the planning commission and/or city council for a decision. (Ord. 902 § 5, 2021).