

Memorandum

TO: City Council Workshop
FROM: Niki Hill, AICP , Assistant Community Development Director
DATE: June 16, 2025
SUBJECT: Development code update
ITEM NUMBER: 1.a
SECTION: GENERAL BUSINESS

REQUESTED MOTION

INTRODUCTION

Staff has recently restarted the Development Code update process. As part of this renewed effort, staff has held several workshop discussions with the planning commission to review and reassess the residential section of the draft code. Besides making the code more clear and understandable, staff is also proposing several more significant revisions based on changes in the housing market, evolving preferences, and broader development trends. While the planning commission generally supports the code changes being proposed, staff would like to review these possible revisions to receive your input and make sure there is support from the city council before moving forward with incorporating them into the revised draft.

DISCUSSION

Background

The city began updating Development Code in 2019 through a collaborative effort involving staff, consultants, and the planning commission. Although a final draft was approved in early 2021, the process for public engagement and formal approval was disrupted from moving forward due to the pandemic, planning staff changes, and a major development project. Staff is now reviewing the draft to ensure it still aligns with city goals, and any significant changes will be brought to the planning commission and city council for discussion. The delays, while unfortunate, also provides an opportunity to not only review the original draft code update but allows for incorporating additional changes to reflect current goals and more recent trends.

To assist the city council—particularly newer members—staff has included an updated overview of the development code’s relationship to the city’s comprehensive plan (see attached).

Proposed Changes

As stated above, staff has recently restarted the development code update process and, as part of this effort, held several workshops with the planning commission. These initial discussions have focused on three significant proposed changes:

- removal of the RE40 Residential Estate District;

- a reduction in the minimum lot dimensions for single-family homes from 75 feet in width and 10,000 square feet to 65 feet in width and 7,000 square feet in total area; and
- the introduction of both duplexes and accessory dwelling units (ADUs) as permitted uses on single-family lots.

The proposed changes are driven by shifting housing preferences and an ongoing housing shortage. These updates aim to support more diverse and attainable housing options by introducing greater flexibility within traditional neighborhoods. By allowing for smaller lot sizes and a broader range of housing types, Shoreview can begin to address the “missing middle” housing gap and better meet the needs of current and future residents seeking alternatives to large-lot single-family homes or high-density apartments.

In tandem with these development code changes, we are also likely looking at comprehensive plan changes to density. Currently our density levels are:

- Low Density: 0-4 Units Per acre
- Medium Density: 4-8 Units per acre
- High Density: 8-20 Units per acre

Staff will be proposing to increase our allowable densities as part of this project. This includes increasing low density to a maximum of 5 or 6 units per acre, medium density to 6-12 units per acre, and high density to 12-45 units per acre. If supported, staff will be recommending these changes be formally incorporated into the comprehensive plan as part of the development code update, and not wait until the adoption of the 2050 comprehensive plan.

Staff feels these proposed changes are necessary due to evolving housing needs and development trends. With the proposed reduction in single-family lot sizes and the allowance of additional units—such as duplexes and ADUs—in the R1 zoning district, the city’s development code must be updated to reflect a more realistic range of residential densities. Additionally, the current maximum of 20 units per acre, historically considered high density, no longer aligns with market realities. In recent years, every apartment development approved in Shoreview has relied on the mixed-use land use designation to achieve densities up to 45 units per acre, as the 20 units per acre cap is often financially unfeasible for developers. These updates will ensure the city’s code remains responsive, relevant, and supportive of diverse housing options.

Technical Assistance

Lastly, we have re-engaged the planning consulting firm HKGi to assist with certain segments of the development code update. They will be assisting with:

- Reformatting of the code as the original was formatted pre-Municode
 - Formatting and updating numbering and references in the draft code
 - Updating code text to reflect advancements in best practices and changes to state statute requirements and case law. This includes but is not limited to adjustments to definitions, allowable uses, signage, landscaping, and parking.
- Evaluating and potentially updating the shoreland ordinance
- Prepare and facilitating community engagement, including:
 - Creating and updating an online storymap to share summarize notable changes
 - Posting full drafts of the code online for review and comment by the public, city council, and planning commission
 - Preparing materials for one open house for members of the public to learn about

the project and provide input

- Incorporating feedback from the public into the public hearing draft of the ordinance
- Preparing public hearing and city adoption drafts of the code

HKGi had assisted city staff during the initial first phase of the development code update and with our 2040 comprehensive plan. This proposed consulting work has been included in the department budget.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff would like to provide the city council with a general update on the development code project and specifically the major modifications to ensure there is clear support for the direction being proposed before incorporating these impactful changes into the revised draft code ensure they are in alignment with the council's vision and priorities.

ATTACHMENTS

[Comprehensive Plan Relationship to the Development Code](#)