

## **ZNA PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT**

to replace current SF-2, SF-3, SF-4A&B, SF-5, SF-6, and some multifamily districts;  
a simplified alternative to CodeNext 3 Division 23-4D-2 Residential House-Scale Zones R2A-E, R3A-D, R4A-B

Draft April 6, 2018, prepared by Zilker Neighborhood Association Zoning Committee

*Here's how the introduction for the proposed residential zoning districts might read in the new code.*

### **PURPOSES OF THE RESIDENTIAL ZONING DISTRICTS**

The purposes of the residential district designations are:

- (1) to reserve areas for residential occupancy and provide for a broad range of residential densities and variety of housing types consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and standards of public health, safety, and welfare;
- (2) to ensure adequate light, air, privacy, and open space for each dwelling;
- (3) to encourage compatibility between residential uses and other land uses;
- (4) to facilitate the planning for and provision of infrastructure improvements to serve anticipated population, dwelling unit density, traffic generation, and public service requirements; and
- (5) to promote energy conservation, reduce impervious cover, increase the tree canopy, and prevent flooding.

### **RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT DESIGNATIONS GENERALLY**

Three general zones are limited to residential use only:

- I. Residential districts for low-density rural and suburban areas. *[Not covered in ZNA proposal.]*
- II. A residential district for existing urban neighborhoods (Urban House-scale zoning).
- III. Residential districts for higher density apartment complexes. *[This might not be relevant here.]*

The designation for a proposed use is based on:

- (1) environmental conditions
  - a. impervious cover limit determined for the watershed
  - b. tree canopy
  - c. public infrastructure
- (2) lot size
- (3) building height as it relates to neighborhood character, density, and compatibility
- (4) population density within the Comprehensive Plan
- (5) other factors determined to be relevant by the City Council.

*Here's how the introductory material applies to the Zilker neighborhood.*

The second (II) designation, called Urban House-scale zoning, could apply to all of Zilker, except for the properties with frontage on South Lamar or within the Waterfront Overlay. It addresses the following conditions within Zilker's residential areas:

(1) Environmental conditions

- a. Impervious cover limits in Zilker watersheds range from 15% in the Barton Springs Recharge Zone to 45% in the Lady Bird Lake Watershed. Conditions within the Barton Springs contributing areas and West Bouldin Creek and Lady Bird Lake watersheds, including the Watershed Department's designation of three areas where local flooding is a problem, suggest that it would be wise to reduce the average impervious cover for Zilker to less than 45%. The first step would be to limit new residential development to 35% impervious cover. Exemptions would be allowed for existing dwellings, up to a maximum of 45%.
- b. Our target for Zilker's urban forest is to increase the tree canopy to cover more than 50% of the neighborhood.
- c. Zilker's residential core cannot support the proposed density (see item 4 below) without updated water, drainage, and transportation infrastructure, including sidewalks. Our proposal restricts parking reductions to sites that have adequate infrastructure.

(2) Lot size. A minimum lot width of 50 feet and minimum lot size of 5,750 sf for a single dwelling, 7,000 sf for two dwellings, and 10,000 sf for three or more dwellings. Exemptions would still be allowed for existing dwellings on lots 3,500-5,750 sf.

(3) Building height. Zilker's housing stock is predominantly one- or two-story houses under 30 feet, mixed with three-story structures on multi-dwelling sites. Along South Lamar and Barton Springs Road, the buildings are typically under 60 feet, with residential compatibility setbacks. We propose to apply the two-story (32 feet) height limit in CodeNext 3 to all residential lots under 10,000 sf. A similar but slightly higher height limit (35 feet) would allow three-story structures on lots larger than 10,000 sf.

(4) Density. We propose a target density for Zilker of 10 dwellings/acre or 20 persons/acre (more than double Zilker's population density in the 2010 Census). ZNA's density ranking, based on 2010 Census data, was 28th out of 103 Neighborhood Reporting Areas (with 7.7 persons per acre living in 4.8 housing units per acre). For comparison, Downtown Austin was ranked 44th, with 6.8 persons per acre, and West University was first, with 35 persons per acre. Recent counts indicate that the Zilker area may have added more than 3,000 housing units to those reported in 2010, increasing the total from 3,652 to about 6,900. We do not know how that has affected our density ranking, but measures of storm sewer capacity and recent flood events suggest that Zilker may be exceeding the capacity of its infrastructure to serve the proposed density.

*Here's how the introductory page for the proposed residential zoning district II (replacing SF-2, SF-3, SF-4A&B, SF-5, SF-6, and some MF) might read in the new code.*

## **II. URBAN HOUSE-SCALE DISTRICT DESIGNATION**

This is the designation for moderate-density residential use. The regulatory standards provide for new development of housing on sites that are 5,750 square feet or larger and for the preservation and remodeling of existing houses on lots as small as 3,500 sf.

For the purposes of this zoning district, “dwelling unit” is defined as a living area larger than 400 sf that provides complete facilities for one or more persons, including permanent provisions for living, sleeping, eating, cooking, and sanitation. An otherwise complete living area on a residential site will not be classified as a dwelling unless it has its own utility meters or is larger than 400 square feet.

For example: If a dwelling unit within this district is built with a detached garage apartment or an attached granny flat, the additional living area will not count as a dwelling unit and will not require parking as long as the living area does not exceed 400 sf and does not have utilities metered separately from the rest of the site. On a site that is more than 7,000 square feet, two dwellings may be built, attached or detached, and each of those dwellings could include a granny flat or garage apartment of 400 sf, as long as the total impervious cover does not exceed 35% and the other site development standards are met.

(The term “accessory dwelling unit” does not apply in this zoning district; it will be defined and used only in relation to commercial zoning districts.)

Lots zoned residential Urban House-scale shall comply with the requirements of this subsection as established in the following table. Where these site development standards or other requirements differ from an approved neighborhood plan or small area plan, development shall comply with the requirements of the approved plan.

Here's how the table of site development standards for the proposed urban residential zoning district might look in the new code.

### Urban House-scale Site Development Standards

New Construction		Number of Dwelling Units <sup>1</sup>		
		1	2	3 or more
Lot size	Minimum site area	5,750 sf	7,000 sf	10,000 sf
	Minimum lot width	50 feet		
Maximum impervious cover <sup>2</sup>		35%		
Height <sup>3</sup>	Overall maximum height	32 feet		35 feet
	Maximum to top plate	22 feet		32 feet
Building placement <sup>4</sup>	minimum front setback	25 feet		varies, depending on form
	minimum side street setback	15 feet		
	minimum side setback	5 feet		
	minimum rear setback	10 feet		
Required parking	parking spaces per dwelling	2		
	on sites <sup>5</sup> with uninterrupted sidewalks to a major corridor	1		
Existing Structure, Remodeling Within Existing Footprint		Number of Dwelling Units <sup>1</sup>		
		1	2	3 or more
Lot size	Minimum site area	3,500 sf		
	Minimum lot width	?		
Maximum impervious cover <sup>2</sup>		45%		
Height <sup>3</sup>	Overall maximum height	32 ft		35 ft
	Maximum to top plate	22 ft		32 ft
Existing Structure, Additions to Existing Footprint		Number of Dwelling Units <sup>1</sup>		
		1	2	3 or more
Lot size	Minimum site area	3,500 sf		
	Minimum lot width	?		
Maximum impervious cover <sup>2</sup> (Must maintain existing height; impervious cover cannot increase outside building footprint)		45%		
Height of addition	Maximum overall	24 ft		
	Maximum to top plate	14 ft		
Building placement <sup>4</sup> and parking <sup>5</sup> requirements are the same as New Construction				

<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this zoning district, "dwelling unit" is defined as a living area larger than 400 sf that provides complete facilities for one or more persons, including permanent provisions for living, sleeping, eating, cooking, and sanitation. An otherwise complete living area on a residential site will not be classified as a dwelling unless it has its own utilities or is larger than 400 square feet.

<sup>2</sup> An increase in impervious cover, from 35% up to a maximum of 45%, may be allowed to preserve an existing residence within the existing footprint. Note, however, that the maximum impervious cover may not be attainable due to site characteristics, such as trees, waterways, and steep slopes. Where necessary, the development must reduce the impervious cover to comply with other requirements of this Title.

<sup>3</sup> See Building Height Diagrams [similar to table (D) in 23-4D-2120 and 3060].

<sup>4</sup> See Building Form Diagram [similar to tables (C) and (E) in 23-4D-2120] for allowed encroachments and required building articulation. For sites with 3 or more dwellings, see applicable code for specific building form and compatibility requirements. [The ZNA Zoning Committee has no recommendation, so far, on the CodeNext 3 encroachment allowance for porches. They have recommended against the other encroachments in CodeNext 3.]

<sup>5</sup> This parking reduction does not apply to sites on collector streets. [For example, Kinney Avenue or Bluebonnet Lane in Zilker.]