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**RESOURCE STEWARDSHIP DEPARTMENT**

*Creating Solutions for Our Future*

Cliff Moore  
Director

Memorandum

To: Thurston County Planning Commission

From: Tony Kantas, Resource Stewardship

Date: February 16, 2011

Subject: 2009-2010 Development Code Docket A-13: Cottage Housing Update

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At an October 6, 2010 work session, a drafted cottage housing chapter for the Lacey, Tumwater, and Olympia Urban Growth Area Zoning Ordinances was introduced to the Thurston County Planning Commission. The drafted cottage code was written by a Green Building Stakeholders group with intent to maximize infill opportunities, while providing more affordable and energy efficient dwellings by means of their maximum size and being constructed in accordance with a green building certificate program. The Planning Commission expressed some concern of the drafted code at the October 6<sup>th</sup> work session meeting.

On December 15, 2010 staff presented information with respect to the concerns that were pointed out at the October 6<sup>th</sup> meeting regarding setbacks, density, privacy, parking, and height limitations to cottage housing developments. Also, seven different cottage site developments that have been designed and constructed within the Puget Sound region were provided as visual examples of cottage developments.

The drafted code was sent to the City of Lacey, Olympia, and Tumwater for comment. The City of Tumwater provided comment to the drafted County Cottage Code and made some minor amendments through their Planning Commission and City Council Sub Committees review processes. The City of Tumwater had planned to adopt the Cottage Housing Chapter that is provided below at their February 1, 2011 Council Meeting, but chose to postpone adoption and contract with the Cottage Company to review the drafted code and possibly provide additional design criteria within the standards.

The following is the drafted Cottage Housing Code with respect to the modifications that the City of Tumwater has provided:

Deleted Text: ~~Strikethrough~~ Proposed Changes: Underlined  
Staff Comments:       Italics                               Unaffected Omitted Text: (...)

## **Chapter XX.XX - COTTAGE HOUSING**

### **Sections:**

XX.XX.010 Intent

XX.XX.020 Where permitted

XX.XX.030 Development Standards

### **XX.XX.010 Intent.**

It is the intent of this chapter to:

- A. Provide an opportunity for small, detached housing types, clustered around an open space.
- B. Provide traditional cottage amenities and proportions to ensure that cottage housing developments contribute to the overall community character.
- C. Provide centrally located and functional common open space that fosters a sense of community.
- D. Provide semi-private area around the individual dwellings to enable diversity in landscape design and foster a sense of ownership.
- E. Ensure minimal visual impact from vehicular use and storage areas for residents of the cottage housing development as well as adjacent properties, and to maintain a single-family character along public streets.
- F. Take advantage of existing natural features on the site including topography and vegetation, where desirable.
- G. Provide the opportunity for more affordable housing units.
- H. Promote conservation of natural resources by clustering smaller dwelling units on lots.
- I. Provide energy efficient dwelling units.
- J. Provide more opportunity for infill development.
- K. Provide incentives for green certified building and low-impact development.

**XX.XX.020 Where permitted.** Cottage housing development shall be permitted in the following land use districts, consistent with the development standards in this chapter:

*Lacey:*

- A. Low Density Residential 3-6 District.
- B. Moderate Density Residential District.
- C. High Density Residential District.
- D. Cottage housing developments are intended to be integrated with other housing types.

*Tumwater:*

- A. Single Family Low Density Residential (SFL 4-7 dwellings per acre).
- B. Single-Family Medium Density Residential (SFM 6-9 dwellings per acre).

- C. Multi-Family Medium Density Residential (MFM 9-15 dwellings per acre).
- D. Mixed Use (MU).

**XX.XX.030 Development standards.**

A. Conflicts. In instances where the development standards of this chapter conflict with other County requirements, the requirements within this this chapter shall prevail.

1. Planned Unit Development (PUD. If the cottage housing development is processed as a PUD, the standards for open space, parking, setbacks, and minimum distance between structures as specified in this chapter shall apply.

~~BA.~~ Density. The density of the underlying zone governs unless a density increase is granted as provided in this chapter.

~~1. B Density increases. in the Low Density Residential (3-6) and Moderate Density Residential Districts. The County may allow Ceottage housing developments may exceed to increase the density of the underlining zone by 50 percent when the development is in compliance with all standards of this chapter. The cottage housing development may double increase the density of the underlying zone an additional 50 percent if all dwellings are constructed in accordance with a green building certificate program such as LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design.~~

C. Cottage Clusters. Developments shall contain a minimum of two and a maximum of twelve dwellings located in a cluster to encourage a sense of community among the residents. A development site may contain more than one cluster. The density bonus for clustering found in the underlying zone districts shall not apply to cottage developments.

~~D. C. Maximum Gross Floor Area. The maximum allowed gross floor area is 1,200 1,500 square feet per dwelling. The maximum gross floor area for the ground floor or main floor is 1,000 square feet per dwelling. Floor area does not include covered porches. Floor area does not include covered porches, garages, or accessory structures.~~

~~E. D. Platting. A cottage development may be completed through a land division and a Planned Unit Development. subdivision plat, short plat, or condominium provided the county has adopted an ordinance providing this option.~~

1. Covenants, conditions and restrictions (CC&Rs) shall be submitted shall be submitted at the same time and in the same manner as required of any land division. In addition, CC&Rs for cottage developments shall address ownership and maintenance responsibilities, including but not limited to the following: the common open space areas, common drainage facilities, parking areas, and private roads. They shall also reflect the regulatory requirements regarding the minimum spacing requirements between structures (both primary and accessory) in effect at the time of final approval of the land division.

~~F. E. Design. Cottages are subject to the design criteria in this Chapter 21.70. Where there are conflicts between Chapter 21.70 and the standards, in this chapter, the standards herein shall apply. Cottage housing developments are subject to the following design review requirements:~~

~~1. Variety in Building Design. A variety of building elements and treatments of cottages and accessory structures must be incorporated. Variety in building design may include~~

any of the following: change in materials or texture, windows, façade, colors, or other architectural feature as shown in the codes design standards of Chapter 21.70. No blank walls are allowed.

2. Five-foot-wide pedestrian pathways (sidewalks) must be included to provide for movement of residents and guests from parking areas to homes and other amenities.

G. Open Space. Cottage developments shall provide “common open space” and “private open space”. These two types of open space shall count towards the 10-percent open space required of land divisions in Title 18.

1. ~~F.~~ ~~Minimum~~ Common Space. The minimum common space required is three hundred square feet per dwelling. The common open space shall be configured so that, at a minimum:

a. ~~1.~~ The common open space abuts at least 50  ~~fifty~~ percent of the cottages in a cottage housing development.

b. ~~2.~~ Cottage clusters must abut at least two sides of the common open space.

c. ~~3.~~ Cottages are oriented around the open space with an entry facing the common open space.

d. ~~4.~~ Cottages should be within 60  ~~sixty~~ feet walking distance of the common open space as measured along accessible pathways as specified in subsection (F)(2).

e. ~~5.~~ Area required to meet minimum private open space, setback, and parking requirements may not be used in the calculations for common open space.

f. ~~6.~~ Common open space shall be accessible to all cottage residents in the applicable cluster and maintained by the development’s homeowners association.

g. Common open space shall be usable (not within a critical area or critical area buffer per Title 17.15.

2. ~~G.~~ ~~Minimum~~ Private Open Space. The minimum private open space required is 200  ~~two hundred square~~ feet per dwelling. The private  ~~Required~~ open space shall be adjacent to each dwelling unit and for the exclusive use of this unit  ~~the cottage resident(s).~~ The private space shall be:

a. ~~1.~~ Usable (not within a critical area or critical area buffer per Title 17.15. on a steep slope).

b. ~~2.~~ Oriented toward the common open space as much as possible.

c. ~~3.~~ No less than eight feet in dimension on any side. ~~A desirable configuration for this private open space is an area between the dwelling unit and the common open space, similar to what’s shown in the examples in~~ *Table ?*

d. ~~4.~~ Front yard porch area may be included as private open space area.

H. Facades and Porches.

1. Cottages facing the common open space or common pathway must feature a roofed porch at least eighty square feet in size with a minimum dimension of eight feet on any side.

2. Cottages ~~abutting fronting on~~ a street shall provide a covered entry feature with a minimum dimension of six feet by six feet facing the street. This is in addition to the porch requirement, where the cottage is adjacent to a common open space or pathway.

~~3. All facades facing common open space, pathways, and streets shall comply with Architectural Details and Windows and Transparency design criteria specified in Section 14.23.072(C) and (D), respectively.~~

I. Maximum Height for Cottages.

1. The maximum height for cottages is 25 ~~twenty five~~ feet. ~~All parts of the roof above eighteen feet shall be pitched.~~

2. The maximum height for all accessory structures is 18 ~~eighteen~~ feet.

J. Setbacks.

1. Front Yards. The minimum front yard shall be ~~ten~~ (10) feet.

a. Cottage housing developments shall be exempt from the front yard driveway length requirement found in underlying zone districts.

2. Rear yards. The minimum rear yard shall be 5 ~~ten~~ (10) feet.

3. Side yards. The minimum required side yard shall be ~~five~~ (5)-feet.

K. Minimum Distance Separating Structures. The minimum required distance separating structures (including accessory structures) is 10 ~~ten~~ feet.

L. Parking Requirements.

1. The minimum required number of parking spaces is one and one-half spaces per dwelling.

a. Mixed use developments shall provide no less than one parking space per dwelling.

2. Parking shall be located on the same property as the cottage development.

3. Parking and vehicular areas shall be screened from public streets and adjacent residential uses by landscaping or architectural screens.

~~4. Parking shall be located in clusters of not more than five adjoining uncovered spaces (except where parking areas are adjacent to an alley).~~

~~4.5. Parking is prohibited in front and interior yard setback areas.~~

~~6. All detached parking structures shall have a pitched roof design.~~

~~5. 7. Garages or carports may be attached to individual cottages provided all other design standards have been met. and the footprint of the ground floor, including the garage, does not exceed 1,000 square feet. Such garages or carports (either attached or detached) shall be located away from common open spaces. to the extent possible.~~

~~8. At least fifty percent of the required parking spaces shall be enclosed. Such structures shall be designed consistent with the cottage architecture. This includes similar building materials, rooflines, and detailing.~~

6. If covered parking is provided, such structures shall be designed consistent with the cottage architecture. This includes similar building materials, rooflines, and detailing.

7. 9. Parking between structures is only allowed when it is located toward the rear of the principal structure and is served by an alley or private driveway.

8. ~~10.~~ Impervious surface parking lots shall be broken into sub-lots of no more than eight 10 parking spaces. These rows shall be separated by landscape islands a minimum of 12 feet in width. These islands shall either be landscaped in accordance with TCC 22.47 or utilized as part of a low-impact development design in accordance with the adopted Drainage Design and Erosion Control Manual. Sub-lots shall be separated by landscaped bulb-outs a minimum of 12 feet in width.

a. Pervious surface parking lots are not required to utilize landscape islands.

9. 11. ~~Surface parking lots of more than two spaces, visible from a public right-of-way (not including alleys) or adjacent single-family uses or zones shall be screened by landscaping and/or architectural features. pursuant to the landscape requirements to separate conflicting uses.~~

M. Utility elements. Utility meters and heating/cooling/ventilation equipment shall be located/designed to minimize visual impacts from the street and common areas.

N. Low impact development. Cottage developments shall utilize Low Impact Development techniques to accommodate and treat stormwater as on-site conditions allow, as determined by the director. Examples include the use of pervious pavement for walkways, patios, and vehicle access areas, directing runoff from roofs and other impervious areas to landscaped beds, green or living roofs, and the use of rain barrels.

O. Existing nonconforming structure and accessory dwelling units.

1. On a lot to be used for a cottage housing development, an existing detached single-family residential structure, which may be nonconforming with respect to the standards of this chapter, shall be permitted to remain, provided the house and any accessory structures are not enlarged and the development meets the standards herein. The existing dwelling shall be included in determining the allowable density for the site.

2. ~~For any cottage development containing an existing house and an accessory dwelling unit, the accessory dwelling unit shall be counted as a cottage for the purposes of determining allowable density for the site.~~

P. ~~Clustering Groups. Developments shall contain a minimum of four and a maximum of twelve dwellings located in a cluster group to encourage a sense of community among the residents. A development site may contain more than one cluster. Moved to Sect .030(C)~~

P. Accessory dwelling units.

1. There shall be no more than one accessory dwelling unit for every five primary dwelling units.

2. An accessory dwelling unit may be attached to or detached from a new or existing primary single-family dwelling unit.

3. The accessory dwelling unit will require one parking space, which is in addition to any off-street spaces required for the primary single-family dwelling unit.

4. The primary entrance to an accessory dwelling unit shall not be visible from the yard on the same side of the lot on which the primary entrance to the primary single-family dwelling unit is located.

5. To ensure that the accessory dwelling unit is clearly secondary to the primary dwelling unit, the floor area for the accessory dwelling unit shall in no case exceed 500 square feet, and the accessory dwelling unit shall contain no more than two bedrooms.