



# CITY OF CHANHASSEN

Chanhassen is a Community for Life - Providing for Today and Planning for Tomorrow

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Planning Commission

**FROM:** MacKenzie Young-Walters, Associate Planner

**DATE:** March 2, 2021

**SUBJ:** Reconcile Residential Low and Medium Density District (RLM), Mixed Medium Density District (R-8) and High Density Residential District (R-12) Intent and Uses

### PROPOSED MOTION:

“The Chanhassen Planning Commission recommends that the City Council adopt the proposed ordinance amending Chapter 20 concerning the RLM, R-8, and R-12 districts.”

## ISSUES

The intent statement for the city’s R-8 district lists providing single-family detached housing as a function of the district, but single-family detached housing is not listed as a permitted use. Similarly, the city’s R-12 district lists two-family dwellings as a permitted use, but its intent statement only lists townhomes and multifamily residential structures. These discrepancies should be reconciled. Additionally, the intent statement for the city’s RLM district states the maximum density is eight units per acre; however, the district is intended to be used on land guided for either low or medium density, and the stated density would only be permitted on land guided medium density.

## SUMMARY

Every zoning district is prefaced by an intent statement that outlines the purpose of the district. In residential districts, this statement typically lists permitted types of housing and intended density. The subsequent list of uses and lot requirements should be consistent with the initial intent statement. In both the R-8 and R-12 districts, the intent statements do not match the list of permitted uses. In the R-8 district, the intent statement lists detached single-family homes but this style of housing is not listed as a permitted residential use. In the R-12 district, twin homes are listed as a permitted use but are not mentioned in the intent statement.

Staff examined the typical lot sizes associated with single-family homes and twin homes and determined that neither type of housing would facilitate the minimum density required for the respective zoning district. For this reason staff is proposing reconciling the discrepancy by removing single-family housing from the R-8 intent statement and removing twin homes and their associated lot standards from the R-12 district’s list of permitted uses.

Regarding the RLM district, its intent statement's clause that the district's maximum density is eight units per acre can create confusion when developers attempt to apply the district to land guided low density residential, which the Comprehensive Plan limits to a maximum density of four units per acre. Amending the intent statement to only reference the applicable land use categories would clarify that the district's densities are expected to fall within those proscribed by the city's land use plan.

### **RELEVANT CITY CODE**

Chapter 1, Section 1-2, Rules of construction and definitions: defines single-family dwelling as a detached building containing one dwelling unit, two-family dwelling as a detached building containing two dwelling units and notes that it is low density, town house dwellings as a row of at least three single-family attached dwellings where no unit is located over another unit, and multi-family dwelling as a detached building containing three or more dwelling units.

Chapter 20, Article XIV, Division 1. "RLM" Residential Low and Medium Density District: lists the intended uses, permitted uses, and standards for the RLM district.

Chapter 20, Article XIV, Division 2. "R-8" Mixed Medium Density Residential District: lists the intended uses, permitted uses, and standards for the R-8 district.

Chapter 20, Article XV, Division 1. "R-12" High Density Residential District: lists the intended uses, permitted uses, and standards for the R-12 district.

### **ANALYSIS**

When determining what zoning is appropriate for a site, the city looks to the Comprehensive Plan's land use plan. This land use plan guides various parcels for different broad categories of uses like industrial or residential. Within the residential category parcels are guided for large lot, low density, medium density, and high density uses. Each of these uses has a required density range, for example areas guided low density must develop with a density of between 1.2 and four units per acre. The city's Comprehensive Plan lists what zoning districts are permissible for what land use designations and this designation is reinforced by the each districts' opening intent statement which outlines what types of housing it is intended to accommodate.

In the case of the city's R-8 and R-12 districts, they are respectively guided for Medium/High and High density development. Areas guided medium density must develop at densities of between four and eight units per acre and areas guided high density must develop at densities of between eight and 16 units per acre, though the R-12 district is intended to have a maximum density of 12 units per acre. In order to achieve the required densities, the average lot size within a development needs to fall within a certain range as shown in the table to the right. To make sure this happens, the city's zoning districts specify minimum lot sizes that fall within these ranges. Oftentimes, different styles of housing permitted within a district have different

Average Lot Size for Unit Per Acre		
Low Density	1.2 units per acre	36,300 sq. ft.
	4 units per acre	10,890 sq. ft.
Medium Density	4 units per acre	10,890 sq. ft.
	8 units per acre	5,445 sq. ft.
High Density	8 units per acre	5,445 sq. ft.
	12 units per acre	3,630 sq. ft.
	16 units per acre	2,722.5 sq. ft.