

**TO:** Knoxville-Knox County Planning Commission  
**FROM:** Lindsay Crockett, AICP | Principal Planner/Design Review Program Manager  
**DATE:** September 28, 2023  
**SUBJECT:** 8-D-23-OA Agenda Item #25

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## **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends denial of amendments as proposed to the City of Knoxville Zoning Code, Article 11.

As proposed, the elimination of residential parking requirements would apply to all zoning districts throughout the City. Further evaluation and public input would be needed to avoid unintended consequences.

## **BACKGROUND**

The attached amendment (Exhibit A) to the City of Knoxville Zoning Code, Article 11 was proposed by Mr. R. Bentley Marlow in August 2023.

At the August 10, 2023 meeting, the Planning Commission recommended zoning code amendments to enable middle housing in the City follow the process of implementation as defined in the September 2022 Missing Middle Housing (MMH) scan and the Missing Middle Housing book and the applicant appealed the recommendation to the Knoxville City Council. At its September 5, 2023 meeting, City Council referred the ordinance back to the Planning Commission for further for review and consideration. The proposed amendments are summarized below.

## **SUMMARY OF PROPOSED AMENDMENTS**

### **Article 11.3.C, Off-Street Parking Location, Interior Side Setbacks:**

1. Adds a provision waiving an interior side or rear setback in cases where the C-N is used exclusively for residential uses (1F, 2F, TH, and detached MF) and abuts residential districts.

### **Article 11.4, Table 11-2, Required Off-Street Parking:**

1. Removes parking requirements for almost all residential uses (ADUs, manufactured homes, multifamily developments, townhouses, single-family dwellings, and two-family dwellings), retaining parking requirements for dwellings above the ground floor.

### **Article 11.4.B, Exemptions and Flexibilities:**

1. Adds a provision reducing the minimum number of vehicle parking spaces required to 1 space per dwelling unit in any commercial district when it is within ¼ mile of a transit route.
2. Adds a provision eliminating the required minimum parking when adequate street parking exists in front of the property.

## STAFF ANALYSIS

### Article 11.3.C

- “Detached multi-family” is an incomplete definition and should not receive parking-related exemptions until further defined.
- Elimination of interior side or rear setbacks for parking lots conflicts with utility and drainage easement requirements in the Subdivision Regulations.
- In situations where a C-N district contains only residential uses, it would function like a residential zone. All residential zones have interior side setbacks, so this provision creates a different standard for residential areas in C-N districts.
- The [Missing Middle Housing \(MMH\) Scan](#) recommends revising multi-family parking area setbacks from 10’ to 5’ to allow for a landscape planter; it does not recommend removing setbacks entirely.

### Article 11.4, Table 11-2

- The MMH Scan states “for MMH developments within 0.25 of a transit stop or combination of amenities, reduce to one space/unit. For MMH developments within 0.25 of a transit stop with service every 15 minutes, eliminate requirement entirely” (p. 63).
- Elimination of parking for multifamily developments would require all residents to park on the street. This may not be feasible in areas where sight distance is an issue, creating safety issues for pedestrians, or where street parking is not possible due to street width or some other physical condition.
- Additionally, depending on the size of the multifamily development, there may not be enough parking spaces on the block to accommodate all residents, and this would not account for guest parking.
- Eliminating parking requirements for almost all residential uses in every zoning district throughout the City could create unintended consequences, as not all of Knoxville’s neighborhoods are developed “within short walking distance of amenities,” per the MMH Scan. The MMH Scan notes that while the City’s current parking requirements are “understandable for typical multifamily development that isn’t in a walkable neighborhood, a different approach is needed for MMH” (p. 62).

### Article 11.4.B

- Article 11.4.B.3 allows a 30% reduction from the minimum requirements for properties within ¼ mile of a transit route. For example, for a multifamily development, this reduction would yield a requirement of 0.3 spaces per 1 bedroom unit, 0.375 spaces per 2-bedroom unit, and 0.45 spaces per 3 bedroom unit, and 0.6 spaces per 4 bedroom unit, in addition to guest parking.
- “Adequate on-street parking” is a subjective concept which would require additional analysis and definition. A comprehensive city-wide parking analysis would need to be undertaken to further quantify and define “adequate.”



**TO:** Knoxville-Knox County Planning Commission  
**FROM:** Lindsay Crockett, AICP | Principal Planner/Design Review Program Manager  
**DATE:** September 28, 2023  
**SUBJECT:** 8-B-23-OA Agenda Item #23

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## **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends denial of amendments as proposed to the City of Knoxville Zoning Code, Article 5.

The C-N zone has not been evaluated in relation to the creation of middle housing forms. As permitting for residential uses in the C-N zone occurs within Plans Review and Inspections, Planning staff do not evaluate residential development in this zone and further analysis would be needed from both departments. Additionally, setback reductions based on housing forms are incorporated into the City's proposed Middle Housing standards.

## **BACKGROUND**

The attached amendment (Exhibit A) to the City of Knoxville Zoning Code, Article 5 was proposed by Mr. R. Bentley Marlow in August 2023. At the August 10, 2023 meeting, the Planning Commission recommended zoning code amendments to enable middle housing in the City follow the process of implementation as defined in the September 2022 [Missing Middle Housing \(MMH\) scan](#) and the Missing Middle Housing book, and the applicant appealed the recommendation to the Knoxville City Council. At its September 5, 2023 meeting, City Council referred the ordinance back to the Planning Commission for further for review and consideration. The proposed amendments are summarized below.

## **SUMMARY OF PROPOSED AMENDMENTS**

### **Article 5.3, Table 5-1, Commercial and Office Districts Dimensional Standards:**

1. Establishes a new setback standard in cases where the C-N zone features a residential use and abuts residential districts, in which case the minimum interior side setback along shared lot lines with residential districts would be 10 ft or 20% of the lot depth, whichever is less.
2. Eliminates the minimum corner side setback in the C-N zone except when sight distance cannot be achieved, in which case, the minimum would be 15 ft.
3. Reduces the minimum rear setback from 20 ft to 10 ft unless the property abuts a residential district, in which case the rear setback would be 20 ft or 20% of the lot depth, whichever is less.

## **STAFF ANALYSIS**

### **Article 5.3, Table 5-1**

- The MMH Scan did not evaluate the C-N district. Setbacks in the C-N district were not identified as a barrier to Middle Housing.

- The City’s proposed Middle Housing Standards incorporates interior side, rear, and corner side setback reductions for Middle Housing forms. The setback reductions correspond to the scale of the proposed form and are intended to ensure compatibility with the neighborhood context.
- Eliminating minimum corner side and reducing rear and interior side setbacks could result in the construction of buildings which are out of scale with the surrounding neighborhood and could lead to overcrowding if multiple buildings are constructed.
- Allowing the City Engineering Department to “set the setback” during permitting would create a situation in which applicants could submit plans that were not approvable due to the uncertainty of the setback standards. This could cause possible modifications to site plans and delays in receiving permits.



### 5.3 DIMENSIONAL STANDARDS

- A. Table 5-1: Commercial and Office Districts Dimensional Standards establishes the dimensional standards for the office and commercial districts, with the exception of the DK District. The dimensional standards for development for the DK District are found in Sections 5.5 below. These regulations apply to all uses within each district unless a different standard is listed for a specific use.
- B. In the C-N District, and in the O District when the lot abuts a single-family residential district, nonresidential development is limited to the maximum gross floor area indicated in Table 5-1. Additional gross floor area may be permitted if, during site plan review, it is found that the development meets all of the following standards. If the development is being approved in conjunction with a special use, then a request for increased floor area will be reviewed as part of the special use, rather than site plan review.
1. The development maintains the privacy of adjacent residential lots through techniques such as decreased height, additional landscape and screening measures, building massing and design to mitigate adverse impacts of noise and lighting, and increased setbacks above those required from adjacent residential lots.
  2. Building design elements incorporate pedestrian-scale features, such as awnings and storefront windows.
  3. The design of the site's circulation system provides adequate and safe access for both motor vehicles and alternate modes of transportation, including pedestrians and bicyclists. The design must minimize potentially dangerous traffic movements and points of conflict between vehicles and pedestrians or bicyclists.

Table 5-1: Commercial and Office Districts Dimensional Standards

	C-N	C-G-1	C-G-2	C-G-3
<b>Bulk</b>				
Minimum Lot Area	None	None	None	None
Minimum Lot Width	None	None	None	None
Maximum Gross Floor Area (Nonresidential Uses Only)	5,000 sf unless meeting the standards of 5.3.B	N/A	N/A	N/A
Maximum Building Height	45'	45'	70'; however, structures must set back an additional 1' for every 2' of height over 45' from any required setback abutting a residential district lot line	Unlimited; however, structures must set back an additional 1' for every 2' of height over 45' from any required setback abutting a residential district lot line

Setbacks				
Minimum Front Setback	None, unless average of adjacent lots is 15' or greater, then 15'	None	Build-To Zone: 0' to 20'	Build-To Zone: 0' to 20'
Minimum Build-To Percentage	N/A	N/A	50%	70%
Minimum Interior Side Setback	None, unless abutting a residential district, then 20' When C-N is exclusively residential setback abutting residential district is TEN FEET (10'), or 20% of lot depth, whichever is less	None, unless abutting a residential district, then 20'	None, unless abutting a residential district, then 20'	None, unless abutting a residential district, then 20'
Minimum Corner Side Setback	<del>15'</del> None, unless sight (visibility) triangle is adversely impacted, Department of Engineering shall set the setback, no greater than FIFTEEN FEET (15')	None	Build-To Zone: 0' to 10'	Build-To Zone: 0' to 15'
Minimum Build-To Percentage	N/A	N/A	30%	60%
Minimum Rear Setback	<del>20'</del> 10', unless abutting a residential district, then <del>30'</del> 20' or 20% of lot depth, whichever is less. When C-N is exclusively residential setback abutting residential district is TEN FEET (10'), or 20% of lot depth, whichever is less	None, unless abutting a residential district, then 20'	None, unless abutting a residential district, then 20'	None, unless abutting a residential district, then 25'

Table 5-1: Commercial and Office Districts Dimensional Standards

	C-H-1	C-H-2	C-R-1	C-R-2
<b>Bulk</b>				
Minimum Lot Area	10,000 sf	10,000 sf	15,000 sf	15,000 sf
Minimum Lot Width	60'	60'	80'	80'
Maximum Gross Floor Area (Nonresidential Uses Only)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Maximum Building Height	45'	90'; however, structures must set back an additional 1' for every 2' of height over 45' from any required setback abutting a residential district lot line	50'	90'; however, structures must set back an additional 1' for every 2' of height over 45' from any required setback abutting a residential district lot line
<b>Setbacks</b>				
Minimum Front Setback	20'	20'	20'	20'
Minimum Interior Side Setback	10', unless abutting a residential district, then 30'	10', unless abutting a residential district, then 35'	10', unless abutting a residential district, then 30'	10', unless abutting a residential district, then 35'
Minimum Corner Side Setback	20'	20'	20'	20'
Minimum Rear Setback	10', unless abutting a residential district, then 30'	10', unless abutting a residential district, then 30'	10', unless abutting a residential district, then 30'	10', unless abutting a residential district, then 30'

Table 5-1: Commercial and Office Districts Dimensional Standards

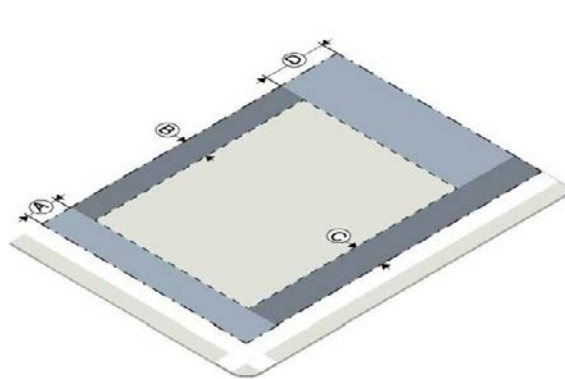
	O	OP
<b>Bulk</b>		
Minimum Lot Area	10,000 sf TH: 3,000 sf/du MF—Up to 6 du: 2,000 sf/du	20,000 sf
Minimum Lot Width	60'	80'

Created: 2023-09-05 13:43:32 [EST]

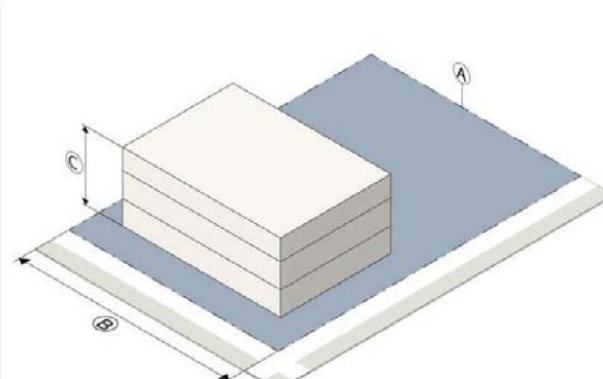
(Supp. No. 75)

Maximum Gross Floor Area (Nonresidential Uses Only)	5,000 sf when the lot abuts a single-family district unless meeting the standards of 5.3.B	N/A
Maximum Building Height	45'	50'
<b>Setbacks</b>		
Minimum Front Setback	15'	25'
Minimum Interior Side Setback	15', unless abutting a residential district, then 20'	20', unless abutting a residential district, then 35'
Minimum Corner Side Setback	15'	25'
Minimum Rear Setback	20', unless abutting a residential district, then 30' or 20% of lot depth, whichever is less	20', unless abutting a residential district, then 35'

#### COMMERCIAL DISTRICT DIMENSIONAL STANDARDS



*A – Front Setback  
B – Interior Side Setback  
C – Corner Side Setback  
D – Rear Setback*



*A – Lot Area  
B – Lot Width  
C – Building Height*

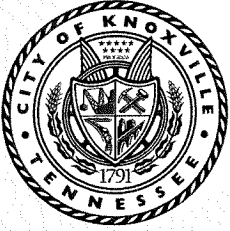




## 8-B-23-OA

### Article 5.3 Table 5-1


- I don't have any concern with the proposed reduction in the minimum interior side setback or the rear setback for C-N.
- Reducing the corner side setback from 15 to zero feet conflicts with the utility and drainage easement requirements in the subdivision regulations.



**CITY OF KNOXVILLE, TENNESSEE  
OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL**

**Memorandum**

**To:** Amy Brooks, Executive Director  
Knoxville-Knox County Planning Commission

**From:** Will Johnson, City Recorder 

**Date:** 9/7/2023

**Re:** File Numbers 8-A-23-OA, 8-B-23-OA, 8-C-23-OA, 8-D-23-OA

At its September 5, 2023 meeting, the Knoxville City Council remanded or referred the above ordinances back to the Planning Commission and Staff for their review and consideration.

Please contact me if you require additional information.





# Development Request

## DEVELOPMENT

- ☐ Development Plan  
☐ Planned Development  
☐ Use on Review / Special Use  
☐ Hillside Protection COA

## SUBDIVISION

- ☐ Concept Plan  
☐ Final Plat

## ZONING

- ☐ Plan Amendment  
☐ SP ☐ OYP  
☐ Rezoning

R. Bentley Marlow

Applicant Name

Affiliation

22 June 2023

10 August 2023

Date Filed

Meeting Date (if applicable)

File Number(s)

8-A-23-OA,  
8-B-23-OA,  
8-C-23-OA,  
8-D-23-OA,  
8-E-23-OA

## CORRESPONDENCE

All correspondence related to this application should be directed to the approved contact listed below.

- ☒ Applicant ☒ Property Owner ☐ Option Holder ☐ Project Surveyor ☐ Engineer ☐ Architect/Landscape Architect

R. Bentley Marlow

Name

Company

322 Douglas Avenue

Knoxville

Tenn.

37921

Address

City

State

ZIP

865-607-4357

rbentleymarlow@gmail.com

Phone

Email

## CURRENT PROPERTY INFO

Marlow Properties, LLC

322 Douglas Avenue

865-607-4357

Property Owner Name (if different)

Property Owner Address

Property Owner Phone

Property Address

Parcel ID

KUB

KUB

N

Sewer Provider

Water Provider

Septic (Y/N)

## STAFF USE ONLY

General Location

Tract Size

☒ City ☐ County

District

Zoning District

Existing Land Use

Planning Sector

Sector Plan Land Use Classification

Growth Policy Plan Designation

May 1, 2023

**DEVELOPMENT REQUEST**

- ☐ Development Plan   ☐ Use on Review / Special Use   ☐ Hillside Protection COA  
☐ Residential   ☐ Non-Residential

Home Occupation (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Related City Permit Number(s)

**SUBDIVISION REQUEST**

Proposed Subdivision Name \_\_\_\_\_

Unit / Phase Number   ☐ Combine Parcels   ☐ Divide Parcel   Total Number of Lots Created \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_☐ Attachments / Additional Requirements \_\_\_\_\_

Related Rezoning File Number

**ZONING REQUEST**☐ Zoning Change

Proposed Zoning \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Plan Amendment Change

Proposed Plan Designation(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Pending Plat File Number

Proposed Density (units/acre) \_\_\_\_\_

Previous Rezoning Requests \_\_\_\_\_

☒ Other (specify) Ordinance Amendment (change zoning text) - Proposed changes attached.**STAFF USE ONLY****PLAT TYPE**☒ Staff Review   ☐ Planning Commission**ATTACHMENTS**☐ Property Owners / Option Holders   ☐ Variance Request**ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS**

- ☐ Design Plan Certification (*Final Plat*)  
☐ Use on Review / Special Use (*Concept Plan*)  
☐ Traffic Impact Study  
☐ COA Checklist (*Hillside Protection*)

Fee 1		Total  \$5,000.00
1203	\$5,000.00	
Fee 2		
Fee 3		

**AUTHORIZATION**☒ I declare under penalty of perjury the foregoing is true and correct:

1) He/she/it is the owner of the property AND 2) The application and all associated materials are being submitted with his/her/its consent

  
Applicant Signature

R. Bentley Marlow

26 June 2023

Please Print

Date

865-607-4357

rbentleymarlow@gmail.com

Phone Number

Email

  
Property Owner Signature

R. Bentley Marlow / Marlow Properties, LLC

SG,07/07/2023

Please Print

Date Paid