

NOKOMIS CENTER REVITALIZATION

Project: Flexible Side-Yard Setbacks for Affordable Housing Design (NH-2)

Project Type: County and Community

Project and Background Description:

Allow flexibility of side-yard setback requirements for affordable housing designs on parcels with substandard lot sizes within the Residential, Combination (RC) Zone District located along and east of River Boulevard. Flexibility in the side-yard setback requirement will allow the construction of conventional width housing structures that will blend in with the larger lot housing in the area. This project cannot be implemented where water lines are extended into the area.

The Nokomis Center includes one of the largest areas zoned RC in Sarasota County. The RC district was developed to recognize residential areas which contain a mix of conventional single family and mobile homes. Many of the lots in the district are 50 feet by 100 feet wide and do not meet the 75 feet minimum required parcel width. Well over half of the dwelling units in the RC district are mobile homes and all are on well and septic tank. Existing densities are approximately 7 to 8 dwelling units per acres, not 4.5 dwelling units per acre as allowed in the district. There are similarly sized lots in the Nokomis Center that are zoned RSF-3 and RMF-1, including parcels located west of U.S. 41 and north of Dona Bay. These areas should also be considered for flexible side-yard setback requirements.

The Sarasota County Zoning Regulations require side-yards within the RC district to be no less than fifteen feet (combined). Within the RSF and RMF districts, the minimum side-yards vary, but in no case may the combined side-yards be less than fifteen feet. On narrow lots, these minimum side-yard requirements substantially inhibits infill development at a scale in keeping with surrounding residential structures. A typical home on a fifty-foot lot in the RC Zone District is approximately thirty feet wide by fifty feet long, or approximately 1,750 square feet in size. The County can encourage large home construction and affordable housing design by reducing the side-yard setback by three feet from 9' to 6' (i.e., 12 feet combined), requiring garages to be located in the rear and allowing driveway construction in the side-yard. This flexibility will allow construction of a thirty-four or thirty-five foot wide house. Front yard setbacks can be reduced if sewer service becomes available in the future, but should be not less than 20' to ensure adequate area for the driveway.

Preliminary Cost Estimates: Soft costs only (in-house staff project) and advertising costs.

Potential Funding Source(s): Not applicable.

Implementation Time Frame: Short-term, 18 – 36 months

Responsible Parties: Planning Services Center and property owners.

Steps Required to Implement:

- Amend the Zoning Ordinance to allow for flexibility in side-yard setbacks within appropriate sections of the Residential, Combination Zone District. C
- Coordinate with the current County contract to update the Zoning Ordinance.
- Prepare the amendment to Sarasota County Zoning Regulations and impact analysis
- Hold required Planning Commission and BCC public hearings
- BCC adopts Zoning Regulations amendment
- Process a one-group rezone petition to add the new residential overlay district to existing zoning.

Issues Requiring Further Analysis/Action:

1. Coordinate with health officials to determine safe minimum required distance between structures for fire safety.

