

Memorandum



Date: March 4, 2026

To: Planning Commission Members

From: Kristen Gundersen, Planning and Community Development Director

Subject: **Discussion #1 - Unified Development Code – Section 71-16G Corner lot clear sight lines, 71-27 Parking and Loading and Planned Unit Developments**

Background

As staff continues to use the new Unified Development two areas found within the document need additional review – Section 71-16.G Corner lot clear sight lines and Section 71-27 Parking and Loading. Staff believes there are changes that could be made to make the sections more user friendly and to improve the intent of the language. Attached are the excerpts from the UDC for the two areas.

In addition, the UDC removed the ability for an applicant to request a planned unit development and relies on the use of Neighborhood plans found in Section 7-15. However, to request a neighborhood plan that is only reviewed by city staff the parcel must be a minimum of three-acres in size. This minimum threshold can be a problem for some properties and staff believes allowing requests for planned unit development should be incorporated back into the regulations.

Next Steps

Staff would like to begin work drafting changes associated with the areas referenced for review at a future Planning Commission meeting.

Sec. 71-10 Applicability

Conflicting ordinances. This article supersedes Chapter 90, Article III as it applies to Neighborhood Plans (NP), see [Sec. 71-15 Neighborhood plans](#).

Sec. 71-11 Street, block, and lot standards

A. Street network. Layout and design of streets must:

1. Be dedicated for public use.
2. Extend existing streets into the proposed project where they terminate at the bounds of the proposed subdivision.
3. Provide stub streets to the boundary of the subdivision where conditions permit the later extension of thoroughfares into adjacent areas.
4. Ensure both ends of every street terminate at intersections and form a network of streets composed of lots and blocks. Network density should equal or exceed 150 per square mile.
5. Alleys are required for neighborhood plans. Alleys are not mandatory where the rear lot lines are at the edge of the site to be subdivided or where the block has been previously subdivided.
6. New streets must meet the requirements of [Table 71-A](#).
 - a. Street trees are required to be planted an average of 40 ft. on center.

TABLE 71-A RIGHT-OF-WAY DIMENSIONS

Criteria	Medium Intensity (NP-M)	High Intensity (NP-H)
Travel lane width		
Mixed Use	10 ft., 11 ft. if on bus route	10 ft., 11 ft. if on bus route
Residential	9 ft.	9.5 ft.
Parallel parking lane width		
Mixed Use	8 ft. max.	
Residential	7.5 ft. max.	8 ft. max.
Curb return radii	15 ft.	
Sidewalk width		
Mixed Use	8 ft. min.	10 ft. min.
Residential	5 ft. min.	5 ft. min.
Planter type		
Mixed Use	Tree wells	Tree wells
Residential	Continuous	Continuous or tree wells

B. Block standards.

1. Block perimeters are defined by rights-of-way or pedestrian ways.
2. Rectangular block perimeters at a ratio of at least 1.25:1 are limited to 1,500 feet in length. Square blocks are limited to a perimeter of 2,000 feet. Exceptions are as follows:

- a. Blocks containing more than 50% civic space are exempt;
 - b. Blocks at the perimeter of the application area may be exempt if connections cannot be made to adjacent properties; and
 - c. Blocks abutting natural waterways and slopes greater than 10% are exempt.
3. Blocks with a perimeter exceeding 2,000 feet must include a pedestrian way traversing the block from the facade of greatest length.
- C. Lot standards. All developable land must be subdivided into lots. The following standards do not apply to lots platted before the effective date of this ordinance.
1. Lot widths must meet the following width requirements for each zoning district.
 - a. Natural (N) – Not applicable
 - b. Neighborhood Edge (NE) – 60 ft. min., 200 ft. max.
 - c. General Neighborhood (GN) – 20 ft. min., 100 ft. max.
 - d. Neighborhood Center (NC) – 20 ft. min., 180 ft. max.
 - e. Downtown (D) – Not applicable
 - f. Suburban Commercial (SC) – 50 ft. min.
 - g. Industrial (I) – 60 ft. min.
 - h. Neighborhood Plan, see [Sec. 71-15 on page 09](#):
 - i. Medium Intensity (NP-M) – 20 ft. min., 100 ft. max.
 - ii. High Intensity (NP-H) – 16 ft. min., 200 ft. max. Existing lots designated as NP-H may exceed the 200 ft. max. lot width.
 2. Lots containing only civic uses may exceed maximum lot size requirements.

Sec. 71-12 Civic space standards

Civic spaces permanently dedicated as public open space are required for each neighborhood plan.

- A. A minimum of 5% of the developable land within each neighborhood plan must be assigned to civic space.
- B. The design, programming, and landscaping of all civic space must comply with the following:
 1. Size – 2,000 sq. ft. min.
 2. Proportion – The longest side of the civic space may be no more than five (5) times the shortest side.

3. Edge condition – street, path, or sidewalk required on one side, min. but are required at all rights-of-way adjacent to the civic space.
4. Surface – 30% max. paved
5. Landscape – 20% mature canopy required

ARTICLE III. ZONING

Sec. 71-14 Zoning districts

The zoning districts listed in [Sec. 71-5 Zoning districts established](#) are created by this chapter. [Table 71-B](#) indicates the consolidation of zoning districts upon adoption of this chapter.

- A. Official zoning map. The location and boundaries of each of the districts are shown on the official zoning map and the map is a part of this code, see [Figure 71-A Buchanan Zoning Map](#). Whenever amendments or changes are made in district boundaries, the amendments or changes must be made by ordinance and recorded on the official zoning map. The official zoning map located in the office of the planning department is the final authority in determining current zoning status.
- B. Zoning districts summary table. [Table 71-B](#) generally shows the City of Buchanan’s previous zoning districts in relation to this chapter’s zoning districts.

TABLE 71-B ZONING DISTRICT SUMMARY			
Previous district		New district	
R1-A	Single-family residential	NE	Neighborhood edge
R1-B	Single-family residential	GN	General neighborhood
R-2	Two-family residential		
R-3	Multi-family residential		
R-4	Multi-family senior residential	NC	Neighborhood center
C-1	Neighborhood commercial		
C-2	Commercial	SC	Suburban commercial
C-3	Central business	D	Downtown
I-1	Light industrial		
I-2	Heavy industrial	I	Industrial
PUD	Planned unit development	Archived	
		NP	Neighborhood plan
CD	Cluster residential	Deleted	

Sec. 71-15 Neighborhood plans

A neighborhood plan is a regulatory category that defines the physical form, intensity, character, and size of the application area.

- A. Each plan must include a combination of two intensities as described below and regulated by this section.
 1. Medium intensity (NP-M): Medium intensity consists of a mix of uses but is primarily blended density residential. It contains a wide range of building types: houses, cottages, townhouses, duplexes, triplexes, small apartment buildings, and live-work units. NP-M must comply with the GN standards, see [Table 71-D](#) and [Table 71-J](#).

- 2. High Intensity (NP-H): High intensity consists of higher density mixed-use buildings that accommodate retail, offices, institutions, and apartments. NP-H must comply with the NC standards, see [Table 71-E](#) and [Table 71-J](#).
- B. A neighborhood plan is available by-right on any parcel three acres or greater, regardless of the underlying zoning.
- C. Neighborhood plans are subject to the standards of [Article II. Subdivision](#), in addition to this article.

St. Joseph River

Sec. 71-16 General requirements

The following requirements apply to all zoning districts and neighborhood plans.

- G. Corner lot clear sight lines. New buildings, signs, and trees higher than 30 inches above grade may not be located within a triangle formed by the intersection of the streets and a line drawn between points along the two street lines 30 feet from the intersection. Controlled intersections do not require clear sight lines. See [Figure 71-B Clear Site Lines](#).

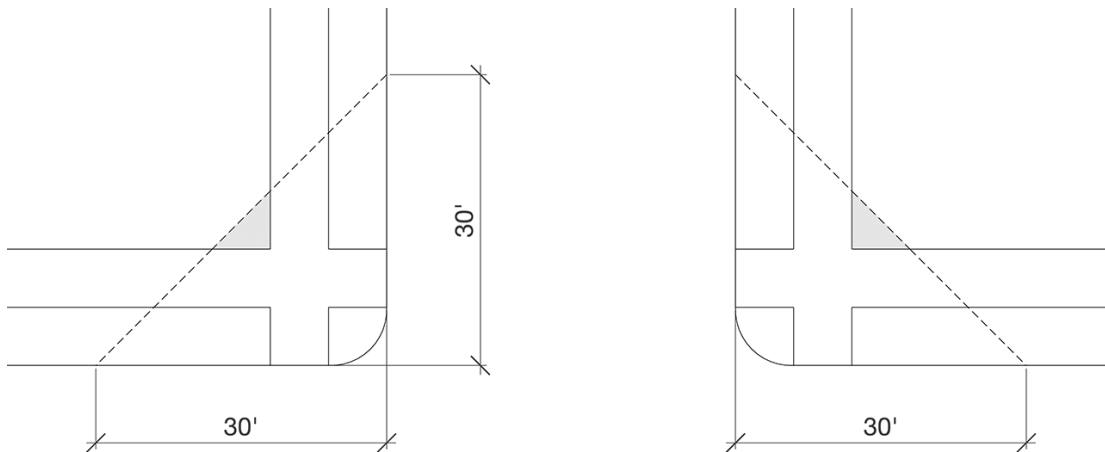


Figure 71-B Clear Site Lines

Sec. 71-27 Parking and loading standards

Off-street parking must be provided according to the requirements of this section, with the exception of the Downtown (D) district. It is exempt from parking quotas, but is subject to the parking location requirements of subsection §F.

- A. Automobile parking is required in the amount specified in [Table 71-N](#) and as follows:
 - 1. All uses are added to determine the minimum required parking;
 - 2. When requirements result in a fractional number, fractions are rounded down; and
 - 3. Uses within buildings less than 30 feet in depth and no more than two stories are exempt from required parking.
- B. One automobile parking space may be reduced for every four bicycle parking spaces provided.
- C. Required parking for residential uses may be adjusted downwards by 50% where spaces serve state licensed assisted living and senior independent living facilities.
- D. Required automobile parking may be fulfilled in the following locations:
 - 1. Within the same lot;
 - 2. On-street parking spaces located along lot lines;
 - 3. Within an adjacent shared parking lot; and
 - 4. Within a shared parking facility located within 600 feet of the use.

TABLE 71-N PARKING REQUIREMENTS						
	N	NE	GN	NC	SC	I
Civic Space	No minimum					
Commercial	N/A	3 / 1,000 sq. ft.		2.5 / 1,000 sq. ft.	3 / 1,000 sq. ft.	1 / 1,000 sq. ft.
Entertainment	N/A			1 / 6 fixed seats or patrons		
Industrial & Manufacturing	Not applicable					1 / 2 employees
Institutional	N/A	1 / 4 fixed seats or patrons		1 / 8 fixed seats or patrons	Not applicable	
Lodging	N/A	1 / room		0.5 / room	Not applicable	
Residential						
Home occupations	N/A					
Accessory dwellings	N/A	1 / ADU			N/A	
per dwelling unit	N/A	2 / unit	1.5 / unit	1 / unit	N/A	

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- E. Shared parking.
 - 5. Shared parking reductions are available for the NC district and Neighborhood Plans. Required parking may be adjusted downward by shared parking according to [Table 71-O](#). Shared parking is determined as follows:
 - a. Shared parking is available for two or more uses on one lot or within one block.
 - b. Parking facilities may utilize shared parking for uses within 500 feet of the facility.
 - c. Step 1. Calculate the parking required by each use in [Table 71-N](#) and sum the total.
 - d. Step 2. The gross minimum number of parking spaces from Step 1. is multiplied by the “occupancy rate” as determined by [Table 71-O](#), for each use for the weekday night, daytime and evening periods, and weekend night, daytime and evening periods respectively.
 - e. The gross minimum numbers of parking spaces for each of the purposes referred to for each time period must be added to produce the aggregate gross minimum numbers of parking spaces for each time period.
 - f. The greatest of the aggregated gross minimum numbers of parking spaces for each period will be the parking minimum.
 - g. [Table 71-O](#) defines the percent of the basic minimum needed during each time period for shared parking. (M-F = Monday to Friday)

TABLE 71-O PARKING OCCUPANCY RATES						
USES	M – F	M – F	M – F	SAT & SUN	SAT & SUN	SAT & SUN
	8 AM–6 PM	6 PM–12 AM	12 AM–8 AM	8 AM–6 PM	6 PM–12 AM	12 AM–8 AM
Residential	60%	100%	100%	80%	100%	100%
Office/ Warehouse/ Industrial	100%	20%	5%	5%	5%	5%

TABLE 71-O PARKING OCCUPANCY RATES						
USES	M – F	M – F	M – F	SAT & SUN	SAT & SUN	SAT & SUN
	8 AM–6 PM	6 PM–12 AM	12 AM–8 AM	8 AM–6 PM	6 PM–12 AM	12 AM–8 AM
Commercial	90%	80%	5%	100%	70%	5%
Hotel	70%	100%	100%	70%	100%	100%
Restaurant	70%	100%	10%	70%	100%	20%
Theater	40%	80%	10%	80%	100%	10%
Entertainment	40%	100%	10%	80%	100%	50%
Institutional	100%	20%	5%	10%	10%	5%
Religious	10%	5%	5%	100%	50%	5%

- E. Off-street parking standards.
 - 1. All off-street parking spaces and aisles must meet AASHTO size and configuration standards.
 - 2. Automobile parking must be located according to [Table 71-C through Table 71-H](#).
 - 3. Off-street parking in NE and GN must be used for noncommercial passenger vehicles.
 - 4. Off-street parking must be accessed by rear alleys or rear lanes where available.

5. Where rear alleys or rear lanes are not available, off-street parking may be accessed from the following locations:
 - a. From secondary facades driveways should be located near the rear lot line; and
 - b. Where secondary facades are not available, parking may be accessed from the primary facade.
6. Driveways.
 - a. Driveways providing access to off-street parking are limited to 10 feet in width for one-way access, and 20 feet in width for two-way access.
 - b. A hardscape apron is required where the driveway meets the public street, from the edge of pavement to the front lot line.
 - i. The apron must be constructed using concrete or asphalt.
 - ii. A standard curb cut is required unless the public works department approves a different method.
 - iii. The apron must be built to keep gravel, crushed stone, or other loose materials off the public street and sidewalk.
 - c. The portion of the driveway beyond the apron, located on private property, may use concrete, asphalt, gravel, crushed granite, or similar materials.
 - d. Loose surface materials are allowed only when:
 - i. The surface is installed over a professionally compacted base that's appropriate for the material.
 - ii. The driveway includes an engineered edge, or another approved edge restraint, to keep the surface in place and prevent it from spreading.
 - iii. The materials and installation are consistent with those typically used in professional residential construction, including high-end homes.
 - e. The driveway must be maintained in good condition so that no loose material washes or moves into the public right-of-way.
 - f. If gravel or other loose material causes problems in the street or drainage system, the city may require the property owner to repair or replace the driveway.
 - g. All driveways and aprons must follow city engineering standards and are subject to inspection and approval by the zoning administrator or their designee.
7. Parking lots must be screened along front and side street lot lines by one or more of the following methods:
 - a. Buildings. A minimum of 70% of parking lot width must be screened;
 - b. A masonry wall no less than 4 feet in height; or
 - c. A metal fence with a hedge or other landscape element no less than four feet in height.

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F. Bicycle parking standards.

1. Bicycle parking is required in the Downtown zone as specified in [Table 71-P](#) and as follows:
 - a. Enclosed spaces for multi-family residential must be located at ground level.

TABLE 71-P DOWNTOWN BICYCLE PARKING REQUIREMENTS			
USES	MINIMUM SPACES	ENCLOSED SPACES	ON-STREET SPACES
Residential			
Over 4 dwellings per lot	.5 / unit	25% min.	25% max.
Commercial			
Food & beverage	.5 / 1,000 sq. ft.	n/a	100% max.
Other	.2 / 1,000 sq. ft.	n/a	100% max.
Institutional			
All assembly uses	.2 / 1,000 sq. ft.	n/a	100% max.
Other			
All other uses	No minimum requirements.		

G. Loading standards.

1. Loading facilities must be provided for commercial uses in NC, D, SC, and I districts according to the following requirements:
 - a. Location of loading facilities must comply with the setbacks according to [Table 71-C through Table 71-H](#). No loading bay for vehicles over a two ton capacity may be closer than 50 feet to a NE or GN lot unless completely enclosed by a building.
 - b. Off-street loading and refuse collection must be located and screened so it is not visible from adjacent streets, or residential uses.
 - c. Loading bays must be a minimum of 10 feet wide by 25 feet long, exclusive of aisle and must have a vertical clearance of 14 feet.
 - d. Loading facilities may not satisfy the requirements for off-street parking.
 - e. Loading bays in the NC and D districts may be located off an adjacent alley.
2. Required loading area. On-site loading must be provided for all buildings greater than 50,000 square feet as follows:
 - a. Loading bays are required in the amounts specified below:
 - i. 50,000 sq. ft. - 160,000 sq. ft.: 1 bay
 - ii. 160,000 sq. ft. - 320,000 sq. ft.: 2 bays
 - iii. Over 320,000 sq. ft. 1 per 180,000 sq. ft.