



CITY OF
GRAND RAPIDS
IT'S IN MINNESOTA'S NATURE

Text Amendment

Alternate Unit Calculation / Flexible Bedroom Allowance

Recommendation to City Council

June 4, 2026



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Text Amendment

Key Points from the Staff Report:

- **Recommendation to Council for text amendment originates with the Planning Commission**
- **Suitable Multifamily sites near utilities are limited**
- **Amendment is narrow – does not reduce unit size or increase total number of bedrooms allowed**
- **Balances market realities and site development requirements**



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Rationale

There is considerable demand – currently and into the foreseeable future - for multifamily housing units in Grand Rapids. The number of suitable building sites near existing sewer and water utility service is limited. The current method of determining unit count for a multifamily project tends to underutilize the potential of available building sites - creating a dynamic where demand is strong and the economics of creating multifamily housing are made especially challenging with limited unit count.





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Text Amendment

How Unit Count is Calculated in the Municipal Code

Table 2A District Development Regulations list Area S/F Unit in column 2 – this is a key factor in establishing density. R-4 Area S/F Unit is 2,500 and GB/LB is 3,000.





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How Unit Count is Calculated in the Municipal Code

Example Calculations for a 6-Acre Site:

Project A (R-4)

1. Determine Gross Area by multiplying the number of acres by square feet per acre. $(6 * 42,560) = 255,360$ Sq. Ft.
2. Divide Gross Area by Area S/F Unit. $(255,360 / 2,500) = 102.144$

Project B GB/LB

1. Determine Gross Area by multiplying the number of acres by square feet per acre. $(6 * 42,560) = 255,360$ Sq. Ft.
2. Divide Gross Area by S/F Unit. $(255,360 / 3,000) = 85.12$



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Issue

The Municipal Code considers BOTH a three-bedroom apartment and a one-bedroom apartment as one unit. Project A and B could potentially have 306 and 255 bedrooms if all units were three-bedroom. However, multifamily developments typically have a mix of unit types.





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Example

Mixed project

6 - 4 bedrooms

10 - 3 bedrooms

42 - 2 bedrooms

26 - 1 bedroom

18 - studio (count as 1 bedroom)

Total units = 102

Total bedrooms = 182

Potential bedrooms if all were three-bedroom = 306





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A Reasonable Alternative

Using a flexible bedroom allowance for multifamily unit calculations using an average – i.e.
 $4+3+2+1 = 10$

$$10 / 4 = 2.5$$





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Example Calculation

Project A (R-4)

- 1. Determine Gross Area by multiplying the number of acres by square feet per acre. ($6 * 42,560$)
= 255,360 Sq. Ft.**
- 2. Divide Gross Area by Area S/F Unit. ($255,360 / 2,500$) = 102.144**
- 3. $102.144 * 2.5 = 255.36$ bedrooms distributed across a flexible number of units.**

This is 51 bedrooms less than if all R-4 units were three-bedroom and the same number of bedrooms were less dense GB and LB district unit counts maxed out with all three-bedroom units.



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Text Amendment Recommendations

30-421 Definitions

Dwelling, multi-family, alternate unit calculation / flexible bedroom allowance means a formula for calculating a maximum number of bedrooms in a multi-family building that can be allocated to a flexible unit count instead of using the fixed Gross Area / Area Sq. Ft. Unit calculation.

Example calculation for 1 acre in R-4: $(43,560/2500) \times 2.5 = 43.56$ bedrooms.

Flexible Bedroom Allowance subject to meeting all other site development standards for the district.



Text Amendment

Text Amendment Recommendations

30-512 Table 2A District Development Regulations

Add footnote (6) to LB, GB, R-3, and R-4 under column heading **Area S/F Unit**

(6) Formula for Dwelling, multiple-family, alternate unit calculation / flexible bedroom allowance is: (Gross Area / Area Sq. Ft. per Unit) x 2.5

Example calculation for 1 acre in R-4: $(43,560/2500) \times 2.5 = 43.56$ bedrooms.

Flexible Bedroom Allowance subject to meeting all other site development standards for the district.



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Planning Commission Considerations:

PLANNING COMMISSION

Considerations

ZONING ORDINANCE AMENDMENT

1. Will the change affect the character of neighborhoods?
Why/Why not?
2. Would the change foster economic growth in the community?
Why/Why not?
3. Would the proposed change be in keeping with the spirit and intent of the ordinance?
Why/Why not?
4. Would the change be in the best interest of the general public?
Why/Why not?
5. Would the change be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan?
Why/Why not?



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Questions?