



office memorandum

TO: City of Norman Business & Community Affairs Committee

FROM: Jane Hudson, Planning Director

DATE: January 7, 2026

RE: Discussion for Determining Direction for Future Development Code Regulations (Chapters 30 and 36) ("Previously Minimum Lot Size Discussion")

Background

The City of Norman Business & Community Affairs Committee has directed staff to investigate the potential of reducing or eliminating minimum lot size requirements, and related development standards such as building setbacks, in the R-1, R-1-A, R-2, RM-2, RM-6, and R-3 zoning districts. Staff presented their findings at the December 4, 2025, Business & Community Affairs Committee meeting. In addition to presenting precedents of other municipalities that have greatly reduced (but not entirely eliminated) minimum lot size requirements in residential districts, staff presented scenarios of what smaller lot sizes might look like in Norman, as well as potential implications for administration and services.

Following further discussion with Council regarding additional amendments to bulk standards, including building setbacks, staff conducted further review of development regulations that have come before Council in the last 20 years.

Planned Unit Developments

Staff have reviewed several recent PUDs with adjusted residential setbacks and lot coverage requirements. These bulk standards represent deviations from the existing development regulations that were requested by the market and approved by City Council.

While some PUDs do not explicitly require minimum lot sizes, certain bulk standards such as lot width and depth, and building setbacks, ultimately determine the shape and size of lots within these developments.

Many of the setbacks in these PUDs are smaller than those found in the adopted Zoning Ordinance. Front-yard setbacks range from 0' to 20', with 14' to 15' being the most common. Several PUDs feature greater setbacks for the house's garage than the rest of the structure. Side yard setbacks are commonly 5' in the PUDs reviewed, with some allowances for zero side lot lines, and the most common rear yard setback is 10'.

Lot coverage maximums in these PUDs range from 65% to 75%. In each instance, drainage plans were submitted as part of the development's platting process to accommodate the allowed lot coverages.

Other Opportunities for Creative Development

Existing tools allow for the creative subdivision and development of land for infill developments, as well. The short form plat process allows larger lots in the urbanized area to be subdivided to allow for additional residential development, albeit subject to existing bulk standards.

Initial Legal Considerations

The changes discussed thus far by Council prompt several legal issues for further discussion. First, where area development standards are eliminated or made recommendation-only, the impact upon the scope and authority of the Board of Adjustment, which has its principal function in considering variances to these area standards, should be considered and the BOA's continued future function carefully planned. Additionally, the removal of standards and City Council review could also eliminate zoning enforcement due to the fact that administrative review and approval cannot create an enforceable zoning standard. Further, to ensure adequate protection of the City's interests, and to safeguard the public health, safety and welfare, and it is recommended that any standard that is replaced with a recommendation-only be accompanied by language setting clear guidance on how administrative processing of building permits will be achieved, and what factors will be considered by City staff during this process.

Identifying Priorities

Staff requests that the Business & Community Affairs Committee identify its top priorities for bulk development standards. These priorities will be communicated to Clarion Associates, the consultant performing the upcoming update of the Zoning and Subdivision Codes. Clarion Associates will provide best practice approaches to addressing these identified priorities through development regulations.

Conclusion

Given the broadening scope of the discussion surrounding minimum lot sizes and related development regulations, staff has identified existing tools that allow for creative development. A review of PUDs from the last 20 years was conducted to understand recent market requests for bulk standard amendments. Therefore, Staff asks the Business & Community Affairs Committee for top priorities which to deliver to Clarion Associates, so that they may be addressed in future development regulations.