

OVERVIEW

The Comprehensive Residential Code Review Committee (CRCRC) was created to gather public opinion in response to recent building trends and to evaluate Rollingwood's aging building codes for current fitness. This survey will dig into code related issues and attempt to assess the public's appetite for change, if any. Its focus is driven by over 75 recent constituent emails and by responses from the 2021 Comprehensive Plan Taskforce survey. After reviewing the results of this survey, the committee will analyze and discuss options before presenting them back to the public for further review.

Thank you for your thoughtful participation.

Q1: Are you generally comfortable with the trend of new construction in Rollingwood?
Please mention what you do and/or don't like about building trends, be specific.

Yes

No

Comments

Q2: Do you think Rollingwood should consider changes to its building codes?
Please mention what you do and/or don't like about building codes, be specific. If you are not sure, the rest of the survey may help clarify current codes.

Yes

No

Need more info

Comments

BUILDING HEIGHT

Sec. 107-71. - Maximum permissible height

No portion of any building or structure (except a chimney, attic vent, lightning rod, or any equipment required by the city building code) may exceed 35 feet in height. Except as may be required by applicable codes, no chimney, attic vent, lightning rod or required equipment may extend more than three feet above the highest point of the following: the coping of a flat roof, the deck line of a mansard roof, or the gable of a pitched or hipped roof.

Q3: Is Rollingwood maximum residential building height:

Too high

Not high enough

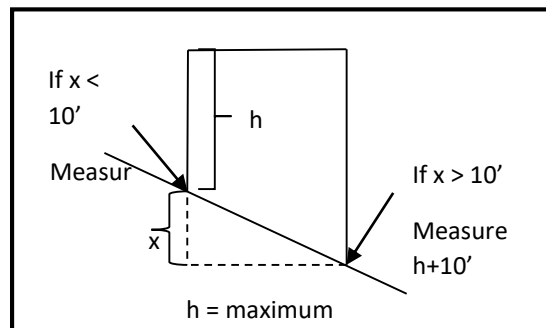
About right

Comments:

Rollingwood's recently revised (5-17-23) code measures building height as follows:

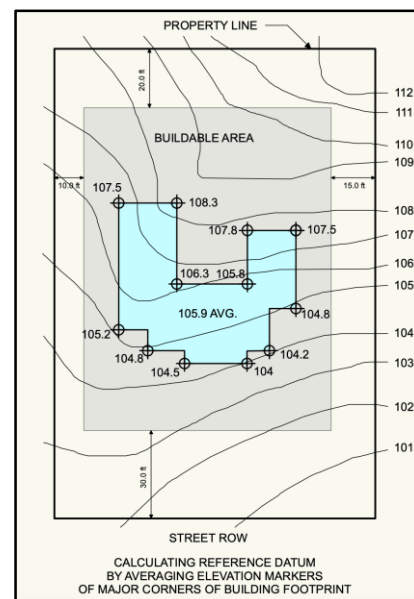
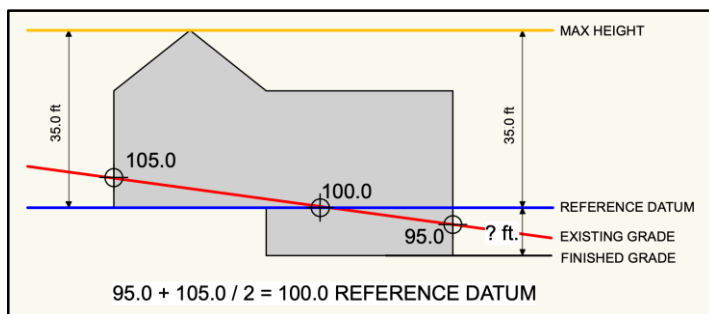
*Building height, residential, means the vertical distance above a **reference datum** measured to the highest point of the building. The **reference datum** shall be selected by either of the following, whichever yields a greater height of the building:*

1. *The elevation of the highest adjoining original native ground surface to the exterior wall of the building when such original native ground surface is not more than ten feet above the lowest adjoining original native ground surface; or*
2. *An elevation of ten feet higher than the lowest adjoining original native ground surface when the highest adjoining original native ground surface (described in subsection (1) of this section) is more than ten feet above lowest adjoining original native ground surface-*
3. *The original native ground surface shall be determined as the existing grade on the lot prior to development of the residential building as may be shown on approved building plans or survey of the property.*

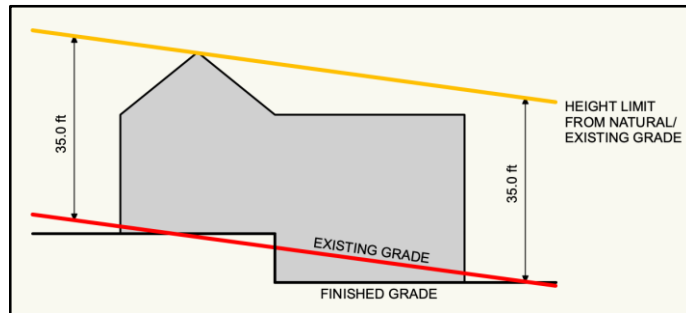


This measurement approach was adopted in the 1980's when the public desire for higher ceilings drove a change to the measurement process. It has resulted in the building of some exterior walls that measure upwards to 45 feet.

There are many ways to determine a **reference datum** to establish building height on a sloped lot, and many cities use either an average of the slope, or the average elevation of building footprint:



Another approach to managing buildable height is to not allow any part of a building to exceed the maximum height from a parallel line to existing grade:



Q4: Should we look at alternate ways to calculate the **reference datum** to establish building height measurements?

Yes

No

Need more info

Comments:

Q5: Should we measure the maximum height of a home with a flat roof differently from one with a pitched roof?

Yes

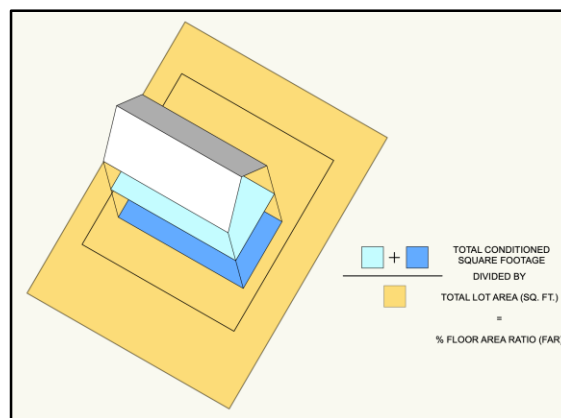
No

Need more info

Comments:

FAR

The Floor to Area Ratio (FAR) of a building is a measure of a building's mass relative to its lot size, and can reveal the built intensity of a property. It is calculated by dividing the total square footage of the home by the square footage of the lot.



The ratio of building footprint to lot size is another way to measure what percentage of a lot is occupied by a building.

Q6: Should we consider adding FAR and/or building footprint to lot size ratio to Rollingwood's building code?

Yes

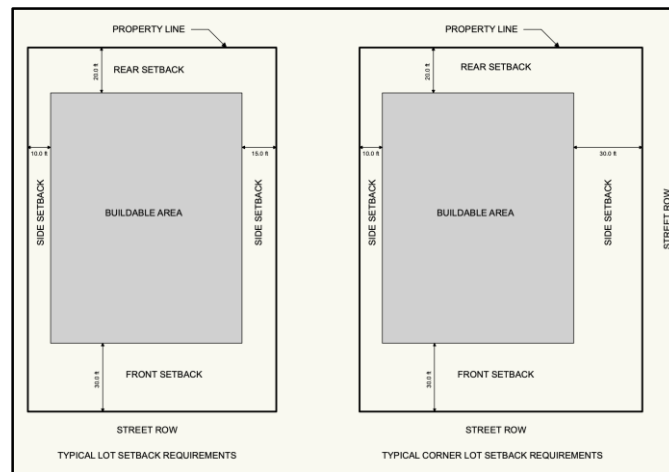
No

Need more info

Comments:

SETBACKS

A building setback is the distance (measured in feet) a house or structure must be from the front, side, and rear property lines.



The setback requirements in Rollingwood are:

- Front - 30ft plus 10ft right-of-way (ROW)
- Side – min. 10 ft. with a cumulative minimum requirement of 25 feet
- Corner lots, street facing side - 30ft plus 10ft right-of-way (ROW)
- Rear - 20ft., including pools (but not pool decking)

Q7: Are Rollingwood's current setbacks:

Too large

Too small

About right

Comments:

A recently passed (4-5-23) amendment to Rollingwood's residential building ordinances sets limits on projections into setbacks, as follows: roof overhangs may encroach into front and rear yard setbacks up to 5 feet, and into side yard setbacks up to 33% of their maximum width. Projections that include chimneys and bay windows may encroach only 2 feet into setbacks on all sides. Prior to this amendment, the code excepted these types of building extensions from setback limits, thus allowing unlimited encroachment of projections into setbacks.

Q8: Are the setback projection limits described above:

Too much
Comments:

Too little

About right

Residents have written emails about the impacts of buildings along the setbacks including:

- Building to the allowable max. height of 35ft., and up to 45ft. on sloped lots;
- Building along the entire length of setbacks, including to the max. height;
- Minimal side articulation by building flat walls and roof without variation or changes in building form or material;
- Foundation Height - allowable to any height within overall maximum building height

Q9: Should we consider any limitations on what can be built along a setback?

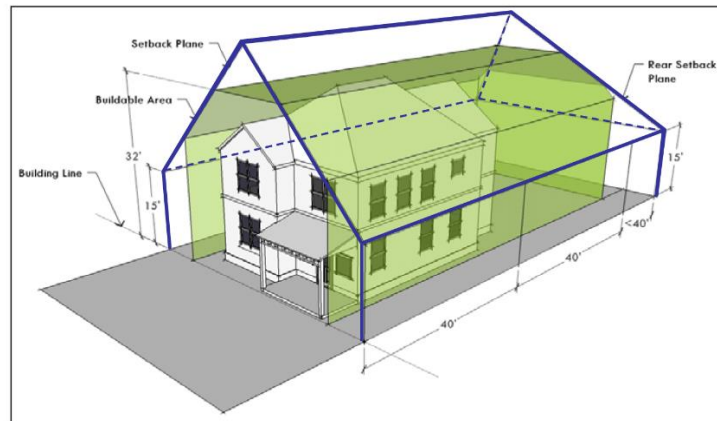
Yes

No

Need more info

Comments:

Like building heights and setbacks, buildable area can be restricted using a set of angled plane geometric constraints known as “tenting”. Tenting serves as the core basis for city of Austin’s ordinances whose intent is to harmonize new development with existing residences.



Q10: Should we develop a set of “tenting” rules for Rollingwood that restrict building height along a setback?

Yes

No

Need more info

Comments:

NUMBER OF STORIES

Rollingwood has a few 3 and 4 story homes that are built, or in permitting, some with an additional rooftop lookout, still within the maximum allowable height requirements. Some residents have asked for a limit on the number of stories.

Q11: Should we limit the number of allowable stories

Yes - limit residences to _____ stories

No - no limit to the number of stories provided that the residence meets all other code requirements

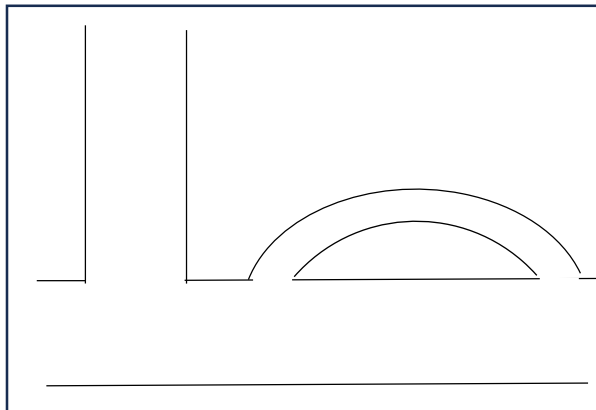
Need more info

Comments:

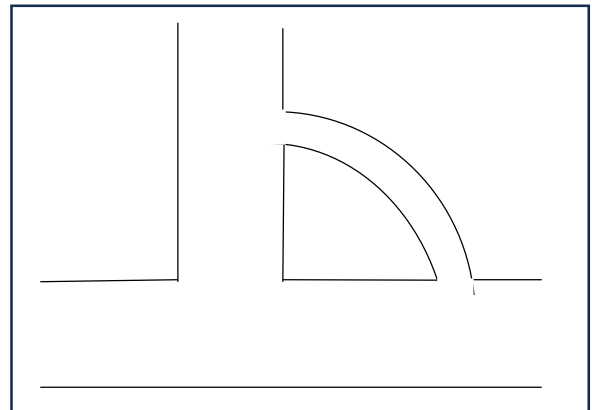
CIRCULAR DRIVEWAYS

The current code allows for a circular driveway provided that both driveway ends terminate on the same street. A driveway that cuts across corner lots from one street to the intersection street is not allowed.

Some residents who live on the corners of busy intersections are concerned that they do not have the latitude to design a driveway that provides the safest means for their driver-age children or their guests to enter or exit.



OK



NOT OK

Q12: Should we reconsider code limitations placed on driveways in general and the rule that disallows a corner lot circular driveway that connects two streets in particular?

Yes

No

Need more info

Comments:

LIGHT POLLUTION

A number of respondents from the Comprehensive Plan Task Force, as well as recent emails to CRCRC, have indicated an interest in some codified lighting standards to reduce light pollution and trespass (when lights from one property are cast into another).

The International Dark Sky Association, along with the Illuminating Engineering Society of North America, designed a Model Lighting Ordinance (MLO) template to help municipalities develop outdoor lighting standards according to the sensitivity of the area, as well as accommodating community intent.

Q13: Should we examine some aspects of a Dark Sky initiative in our residential code that may include Exterior and Landscape Lighting, etc.?

Yes

No

Need more info

Comments:

TREES

Rollingwood passed a tree ordinance in February 2019. Its PURPOSE states:

The tree code regulations protect the health, safety, and general welfare of the citizens of the city. In doing so, the appearance of the city is enhanced and important ecological, cultural, and economic resources are protected for the benefit of the city's residents, businesses, and visitors.

Q14: How much of a priority to you are the trees in Rollingwood on a scale of 0 to 5, with 5 being the highest priority?

0

1

2

3

4

5

Q15: Is our current tree ordinance doing enough to save protected trees?

Yes

No

Need more info

Comments:

Q16: Should we consider a plan sponsored by the city, or private donations, to plant additional trees, with owner approval, in public ROW (refer to setback graphic above)?

Yes

No

Comments:

ZONING BY TOPOGRAPHY

Rollingwood has a complex topography that affects lot types, lot shapes, right of way restrictions, drainage concerns, adjacencies to natural areas and creek frontage, and heritage trees. Yet, all lots have the same rules, i.e. setback limitations, building heights, drainage considerations, etc. Property owners with unusual lots have little recourse other than to address those requirements through appeal to the City Council or the Board of Adjustment.

Q17: Should we consider the creation of special zoning districts for unusual lots?

Yes

No

Need

Comments:

FENCES

There is no limit to the height of side and backyard fences. Front yard fences may not exceed 36 inches.

Q18: Should there be a height limit on side and backyard fences?

Yes

No

Comments:

IMPERVIOUS COVER / DRAINAGE

Impervious cover is any type of human-made surface that doesn't absorb rainfall including: rooftops; patios; driveways, paved and unpaved; sidewalks. The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) has impervious cover restrictions designed to limit the run-off from one property to a neighboring property and that must be addressed before construction can begin anywhere within the Edwards Aquifer Recharge Zone (Rollingwood is entirely on this

zone). The City of Rollingwood has its own, more restrictive impervious cover requirements built into its Drainage Ordinance - adopted in 2016. Those requirements are thoroughly discussed in the Drainage Criteria Manual found at this site:

<https://www.rollingwoodtx.gov/building/page/rollingwood-drainage-criteria-manual>

Q19: Should more be done to limit the amount of impervious cover on a building lot?

Yes

No

Not sure

Comments

- END OF SURVEY -

The following questions regarding **BUILDING PROCESS & PERMITTING** are optional:

Q20: Have you built a home in RW in the last 10 years?

Yes

No

Comments

Q21: Were the applicable building permit rules understandable?

Yes

No

Comments

Q22: Did you find working with the City easy and efficient? What if anything would you change?

Yes

No

Comments

Q23: Have you lived near a recent build?

Yes

No

Q24: Did you receive adequate notice of the building permit?

Yes

No

Comments

Q25: What concerns did you have and/or what issues were important to you as a nearby neighbor?