

OVERVIEW

The Comprehensive Residential Code Review Committee (CRCRC) was created to review our building codes and gather public opinion in response to current building trends. This survey will dig deeper into these issues and attempt to assess the public's appetite for change. Once we review the responses, we will then spend time analyzing and discussing options before presenting these ideas back to the public for further review.

According to the 2021 Comprehensive Plan Strike Force survey responses from over 300 people, about 75 recent emails, and public comments to the CRCRC, most people welcome thoughtful new development, provided it maintains some amount of context and scale, preserving the "rolling" and the "wood". About 30% of responses on the 2021 Strike Force residential Survey Q3 specifically cited concerns over new building trends, versus 1% of responses in favor of current building trends, the remaining addressed other concerns. More recently, Council, P&Z, and the CRCRC have received emails regarding potential building code changes, with 47% in favor of changes, 28% asking for a limited or careful study, 15% preferring no changes, 10% N/A.

Q1: Are you generally happy 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

Not sure

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

Not sure

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: Should we change our maximum building height?

Higher

Lower

No change

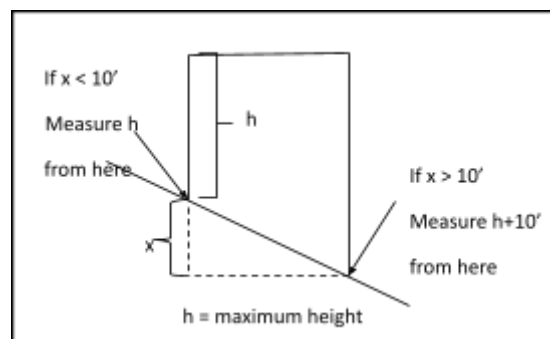
Other factors have more significance than height

Please Explain

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

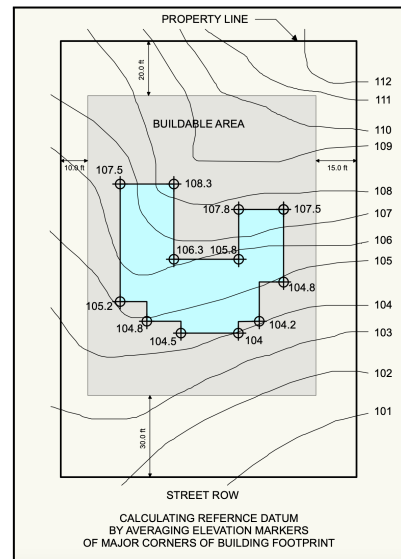
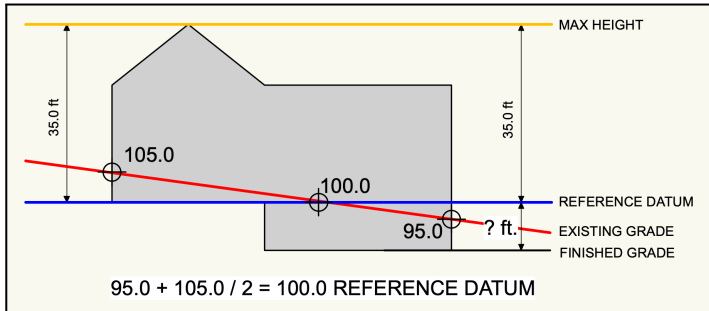
*Building height, residential, means the vertical distance above a **reference datum** measured to the highest point of the building. The **reference datum** shall be selected by either of the following, whichever yields a greater height of the building:*

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.*

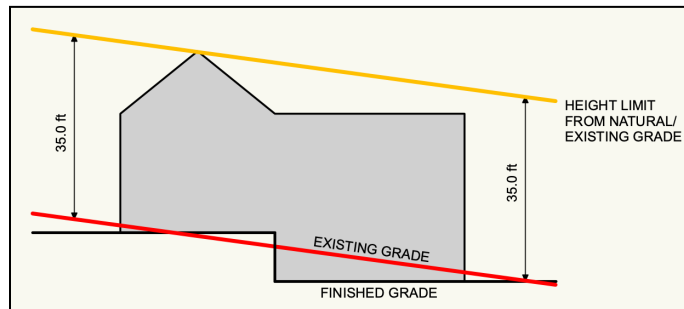


This measurement approach was adopted in the 1980's when house sizes were limited by septic fields, thus allowing lots with steeper topography, and limited buildable area, to build an additional 10 feet of maximum height, up to 45 feet.

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:



Others use an approach that will 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

Not sure

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

Yes

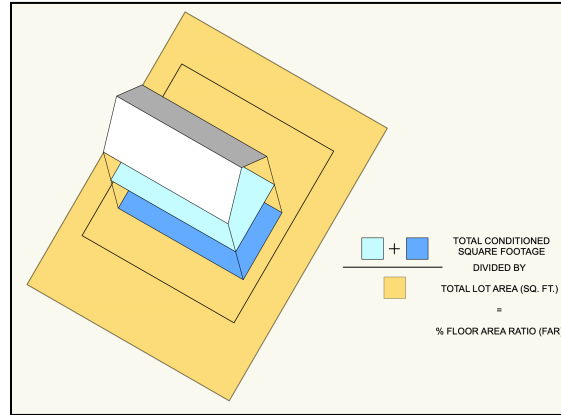
No

Not sure

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 FAR and/or building footprint to lot size ratio into Rollingwood's building code?

Yes

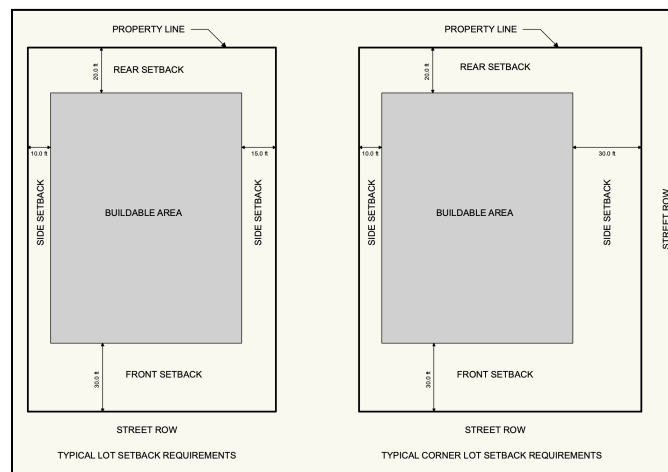
No

Not sure

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:

- o Front - 30ft plus 10ft right-of-way (ROW)
- o Side – min. 10 ft. with a cumulative minimum requirement of 25 feet
- o Corner lots, street facing side - 30ft plus 10ft right-of-way (ROW)
- o Rear - 20ft., including pools

Q7: Are Rollingwood’s current setbacks:

Too large

Too small

Just right

Not sure

Comments:

A recently passed (4-5-23) amendment to Rollingwood’s building ordinances allows for roof overhangs to encroach into front and rear yard setbacks by 5 feet, and into side yard setbacks up to 33% of their maximum width. In addition, projections that include chimneys and bay windows can encroach 2 feet into setbacks on all sides. Prior to this amendment, there were no code provisions for encroachment into setbacks.

Q8: Are the setback projection limits described above:

Too much

Too little

About right

Not sure

Comments:

Residents have written emails about the following impacts from buildings along the setbacks:

- 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;
- Tree removal - currently no additional restrictions on removal of trees in setbacks;
- 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, including tree removal?

Yes

No

Not sure

Comments:

Q10: If we do consider restrictions along a setback, would that be enough to leave our setback distances, height, and potential FAR restrictions unchanged?

Yes

No

Not sure

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.

Q9: Should we limit the number of stories, or just limit the volume of the upper levels by some percentage, relative to the lower levels?

Yes- limit the stories to _____stories

Limit the percentage of the overall

Doesn't matter if no one can see it

No limits

Not sure

Comments:

LIGHT POLLUTION

In April 2019, Girl Scout Troop 844, fifth grade students at Eanes Elementary, gave a presentation to the City Council, providing education and awareness of the Night Skies. They made a request at that time for council to consider an ordinance to preserve the night sky. 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.

Q10: Should we examine some aspects of a Dark Sky initiative in our residential code that may include Street Lighting, Exterior and Landscape Lighting, etc.?

Yes

No

Not sure

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.

Q11: How much of a priority to you are the trees in Rollingwood on a scale of 0 to 5, 5 being the highest priority?

0 1 2 3 4 5

Q12: Is our current tree ordinance doing enough to save protected trees?

Yes

No

Not sure

Comments:

Q13: 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

Not sure

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.

Q13: Should we consider separate zoning districts for unusual lots with an application driven process for assignment?

Yes

No

Not sure

Comments:

FENCES

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

Q14: Should there be a limit on side and backyard fences?

Yes

No

Not sure

Comments:

CODE ENFORCEMENT

Residents who identify a possible code issue may contact City Hall in person or by phone for support or they can go to the City of Rollingwood website and fill out a Code Complaint Form:

<https://www.rollingwoodtx.gov/planning-development/webform/code-complaint-form>

Q15: Is this process adequate for handling code enforcement issues?

Yes

No

Not sure

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 limits 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>

Q16: 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 QUESTIONS are optional:

Q17: Have you built a home in RW in the last 10 years?

Yes

No

Q18: What year did you build your home?

Q19: Were the applicable building permit rules understandable?

Yes

No

Not sure

Comments

Q20: How did you feel about the process efficiency, ease or difficulty of communication with city personnel, adequacy of feedback, and other issues?

Comments

Q21: Do you feel the processes strike the right balance between builders and residents, and if not, what would you change?

Yes

No

Not sure

Comments

Q22: What else, if anything, would you change?

Comments

Q23: Have you lived near a recent build?

Yes

No

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

Yes

No

Not sure

Comments

Q25: Did you have an opportunity to comment on the permit?

Yes

No

Not sure

Comments

Q26: What concerns did you have and/or what issues were important to you as a nearby neighbor?

Q27: What else, if anything, would you change?