

Proposed Hybrid Framework for Managing Residential Heights

Goal: To eliminate consensus “problem” homebuilding design issues currently allowed by the City of Rollingwood’s homebuilding ordinances without creating negative unintended consequences on other Rollingwood property owners.

Proposed Framework:

- The standard maximum height: The standard maximum height of a home shall be the two-dimensional horizontal plane 35 feet above the reference point over the entirety of the building area.
- The reference point: The reference point for determining the standard maximum height of a home shall be the average elevation at grade level beneath the home’s frontmost or rearmost exterior wall, whichever is higher in elevation.¹ “Grade level” means the lower of natural or finished grade.
- The “tent”: No portion of a home or structure may be more than 35 feet above the natural or finished grade, whichever is lower, at any point within (1) 20 feet of a property boundary; (2) 15 feet of a rear setback; or (3) 10 feet of the frontmost exterior wall of the home.

Notes:

- The idea of this framework is to eliminate the consensus “problem” higher-than-35-foot front facades, side walls, and rear walls sometimes permitted under the current code while not severely limiting buildable volume on sloped lots. This approach is therefore a hybrid of the current code (which, on some sloped lots, allows higher-than-35-foot exterior facades and walls) and the circulated “35 feet above grade at all points” approach (which, on sloped lots, limits buildable volume and incentivizes increased impervious cover). This hybrid approach also eliminates the current code’s arbitrary differentiation between sloped lots with more or less than a 10-foot change in elevation.
- The numbers used in this proposed framework, other than the standard maximum height, serve mostly as placeholders and are intended as a starting point for discussion. For example, the height restrictions in the restricted “tent” could be lower than 35 feet or vary by restricted area. Likewise, the size of the restricted areas should be collectively evaluated.
- The goal of disseminating this proposed framework is to allow it to be evaluated as an option to eliminate consensus “problem” building issues permitted under the current code.
- This proposed framework is intended to avoid unnecessarily negatively impacting owners of slope-affected lots, common to Rollingwood, that often do not conform well to a “one-size-fits-all” approach to height restriction.

¹ The “reference point” is intended to approximate the natural ground level at the front door or backdoor of the home.