

From Policy to Reality

Updated
^ Model Ordinances for Sustainable Development



2000
Environmental
Quality Board

2008
Minnesota Pollution
Control Agency

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Community
Resources

INTRODUCTION

This ordinance would be appropriate for a community with a small center, typically unincorporated; sometimes called a townsite, village or hamlet. Many such centers have grown up around a church, school, manufacturing enterprise or crossroads tavern, usually surrounded by a cluster of predominantly single-family homes on small lots. Many county zoning ordinances recognize the existence of several such communities through a Village or Rural Townsite district. The ordinance could also be tailored to meet the needs of a small downtown or commercial node within an incorporated city. Most centers of this type lack central utilities, but some have community systems for water or wastewater service. Therefore, this ordinance includes dimensional standards for uses with or without central utilities.

- I. **Purposes** - The Village Mixed Use District is designed to recognize and enhance the vitality of Model Community’s village center by allowing and encouraging retail, service, residential and civic uses that are compatible with the scale and character of the village center. The VMU District regulations specifically implement the following goals from the Comprehensive Plan:
 - A. **Goal** – Maintain and enhance Model Community’s village center as an activity center and community gathering place.
 - B. **Goal** – Encourage the concentration of convenience retail and services and employment opportunities in the village center.
 - C. **Goal** – Encourage the development of compatible new housing in the village center as opposed to scattered site development in agricultural protection areas.
 - D. **Goal** – Encourage provision of community wastewater treatment and water services to serve the village center and allow it to expand.



The nature and intensity of agricultural uses allowed in a village center will depend on local context and preferences. Typically, feedlot operations would be restricted.



II. **Use Regulations** - The following table indicates allowed land uses with the following abbreviations: P for Permitted Use, C for Conditional Use, N for Not Permitted.

	VMU
Agricultural Uses	
Agricultural operations, not including animal agriculture	P
Expansion of existing animal agricultural operations	C
Seasonal farm stand	P
Residential Uses	
Single-family dwelling	P
Two-family dwelling	C
Townhouse, rowhouse	C
Dwelling unit located at ground floor	C
Dwelling unit located above ground floor	P
Secondary dwelling	C
Community residential facility	P
Live-work space	P
Civic and Semi-Public Uses	
Libraries, museums, community centers	P
Religious assemblies	P
Schools, public and private	P
Day care centers	P
Parks and recreation facilities	P
Clinics, nursing homes	C
Bed and breakfast	C
Commercial Uses	
Retail sales and service establishments	C
Services such as beauty shops, barbershops, and dry-cleaning establishments.	P

	VMU
Professional business and general offices such as banks, offices, clinics, medical, dental and doctor’s offices, government and public utility office buildings, post offices, opticians’ offices and similar uses.	P
Restaurants including open air or sidewalk cafes	P
Food and beverage sales	P
Taverns, lodges or private clubs	P
Art and craft galleries and studios	P
Farmers’ markets	P
Agriculturally-oriented business	P
Mixed-use developments or multi-use developments containing more than one permitted use	C
Drive-through facilities in conjunction with a permitted use	C
Automotive service stations, including convenience stores with fuel sales	C
Automobile sales and service	C
Outdoor sales and storage in conjunction with a permitted use	C
Existing industrial or manufacturing uses; except that additions or expansions of such uses shall be treated as a conditional use.	P
Any use of land which is consistent with the purpose of the VMU district and not expressly prohibited, and which, by its nature, does not constitute a public or private nuisance.	C

This ordinance allows additional land uses to be considered as conditional uses. This level of flexibility may be appropriate in a small rural community.

- A. **Maximum Floorplate** - Commercial uses listed as “permitted” in Table ___ shall not exceed 5,000 square feet of gross floor area on the ground floor, except by conditional use permit. The maximum size and floorplate of conditional nonresidential uses shall be as determined by conditional use permit.
- B. **Nonresidential Use Locations** - New nonresidential or mixed uses shall be restricted to lots adjacent to existing commercial or industrial uses or lots at corner locations.

Placement of nonresidential uses is restricted in order to reinforce the existing pattern of land uses. If a master plan for the area has been developed, that plan would typically establish locations for nonresidential uses.

III. Dimensional Standards

Minimum Lot Area	On-site utilities	Centralized Utilities
Single-Family Dwelling	1 acre[1]	10,000 sf
Attached Dwelling	n/a	7,500 sf/unit
Nonresidential or mixed use	1 acre[1]	10,000 sf
Minimum Lot Width		
Single-Family Dwelling	75 feet or based on block context	50 feet or based on block context
Attached Dwelling	n/a	25 feet
Nonresidential or mixed use	75 feet or as determined by CUP	75 feet or as determined by CUP
Maximum Impervious Coverage		
Single-Family Dwelling	40%	
Attached, nonresidential, mixed-use	50%	
Minimum Front Yard Setback		
Residential	20 feet or based on block context	
Nonresidential, mixed-use	None[2]	
Minimum Side Yard Setback		
Residential	10 feet	
Nonresidential, mixed-use	6 feet, except for commercial buildings that share a party wall	
Minimum Rear Yard Setback	40% of lot depth	
Maximum Height	35 feet	

- [1] Minimum lot area must be adequate for on-site wastewater treatment and may need to be increased to meet this requirement.
- [2] Establishing a build-to line that places building facades within a specified distance from the sidewalk, is also an option (similar to the Downtown Mixed-Use District).

IV. Design Standards

- A. **Scale of Construction** - The scale of new construction shall be consistent with that of surrounding buildings. Specifically, buildings shall not exceed the average façade length or area (height times length) of buildings within 200 feet by more than 50%, except by conditional use. Building orientation, height to width ratio, and placement of door and window openings should be proportional to those of surrounding storefront buildings, where present.
- B. **Design Standards for Dwellings** - New dwellings shall be designed with similar or compatible materials, roof forms, orientation and scale to existing residential buildings on the same block face. Off-street parking shall not be located within the front yard, except for driveways leading to an attached or detached garage. Front-loaded garage doors shall be located no closer to the street than the dwelling’s front façade. Side-loaded garages, or detached garages in rear yards, are encouraged.
- C. **Accessory Buildings** - Detached accessory buildings must utilize similar or compatible materials to the principal structure.
- D. **Street Connectivity** - New or extended streets within the district shall connect to at least two other streets unless physical barriers or sensitive natural resources preclude such connection. Cul-de-sac streets are not permitted except as temporary street-ends.
- E. **Sidewalks Required** - Sidewalks shall be provided along both sides of all streets, except where streets abut a park or other public space with entrances and pathways in other locations.
- F. **Parking Location** - Off-street parking is not permitted between the front façade of a building and the primary street. Parking may be located to the rear or side of a building, provided that no more than 35 percent of the lot frontage along the primary street is devoted to parking or drives.

Another option would be to reference some or all of the Pedestrian-Oriented Design Standards in this section.

