



CITY OF TUALATIN

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

THROUGH: Sherilyn Lombos, City Manager

FROM: Aquilla Hurd-Ravich, Community Development Director
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At the January 21, 2026, meeting, the Planning Commission discussed policy questions related to the Clear & Objective Code Update project and potential amendments to the Tualatin Development Code (TDC). The discussion focused on whether to revise the current two-track development review system, how to address multifamily development standards, and whether certain multifamily and retirement housing developments should be allowed by right in lower-density residential zones. The following summarizes the Planning Commission feedback organized by each policy question.

SUMMARY:

Policy Question 1: Should the TDC be revised from a “two-track system” for certain application types to a single set of development standards, with new options for flexibility?

Policy Question 2: If retaining the two-track approach, should a new two-track system of standards and guidelines be crafted for multi-family housing?

Discussion Themes

- Commissioners emphasized the importance of maintaining some level of discretionary review.
- Some Commissioners questioned whether the existing system should be changed if it is not demonstrably “broken,” while others noted that the lack of use suggests the current system may not function as intended. Overall, the Commission favored incremental, targeted changes rather than a complete overhaul.
- Many Commissioners expressed interest in replacing or supplementing variances with an administrative adjustment process, particularly for multifamily development. An adjustment process was viewed as a lower-level, staff-administered option that still provides discretion without requiring a public hearing.
- Commissioners noted that the current variance process is burdensome, time-intensive, and rarely used.
- Staff indicated that applicants historically do not pursue the discretionary track.
- Several Commissioners supported applying an adjustment process only to multifamily initially, with the option to expand later.
- Adding or updating purpose statements for development standards was viewed positively as a long-term improvement.

Commission Outcomes

- There is an interest in developing an adjustment process rather than creating new multifamily-specific guidelines.
- There is a preference for a targeted or phased approach to introducing an adjustment process, focusing first on multifamily development rather than revising the entire two-track system at once.
- The Planning Commission recognized that broader structural code changes may need to be addressed in future updates outside of the scope of the Clear & Objective Code Update project.

Policy Question 3: Should the TDC be revised to allow certain multi-family and retirement housing developments by right, or should they be prohibited in lower-density residential zones?

Discussion Themes

- Commissioners generally supported regulating multifamily retirement housing in the same manner as other multifamily housing.
- Several Commissioners cautioned against creating separate or unequal standards for retirement housing, emphasizing the importance of consistent treatment to avoid segregation or unintended exclusion.
- Concerns were raised about allowing multifamily or retirement housing by right in RL zones without adequate controls on scale and density. Commissioners noted that state law has already increased allowable density in these zones.
- Some Commissioners were in favor of allowing retirement housing if a density and size limit were applied to ensure that retirement housing remains functionally similar in size and density to other allowed housing types.
- Commissioners questioned the current demand for retirement housing and suggested that incentives, rather than additional density allowances, may be a more appropriate tool.
- There was consensus that adding new density beyond existing allowances is likely outside the scope of the current project. Broader changes related to upzoning, transportation, and community access were identified as topics for future planning efforts with greater public engagement.

Commission Outcomes

- The Commission supported treating multifamily retirement housing consistently with other multifamily uses.
- The Commission cautioned against allowing additional density by right in lower-density zones beyond what is already permitted.
- The Commission is interested in revisiting broader zoning and retirement housing strategies in a future, more comprehensive planning process.
- The Commission concluded to prohibit multi-family housing in the Low Density Residential (RL) zone. The Commission determined that the middle housing allowances provide enough housing options under the current TDC.

Overall, the Planning Commission expressed interest in improving the clarity, usability, and effectiveness of the Tualatin Development Code while remaining mindful of the limited scope of the Clear & Objective Code Update project. The Commission preferred to pilot the adjustment process for multifamily development rather than broad code changes. The Commission recommended prohibiting multifamily and multifamily retirement housing in the RL zone and concluded that changes related to zoning, housing mix, and community infrastructure were identified as topics better suited for future planning efforts with expanded public engagement.