



CITY OF CHARLOTTE

Single Family Residential Design Standards

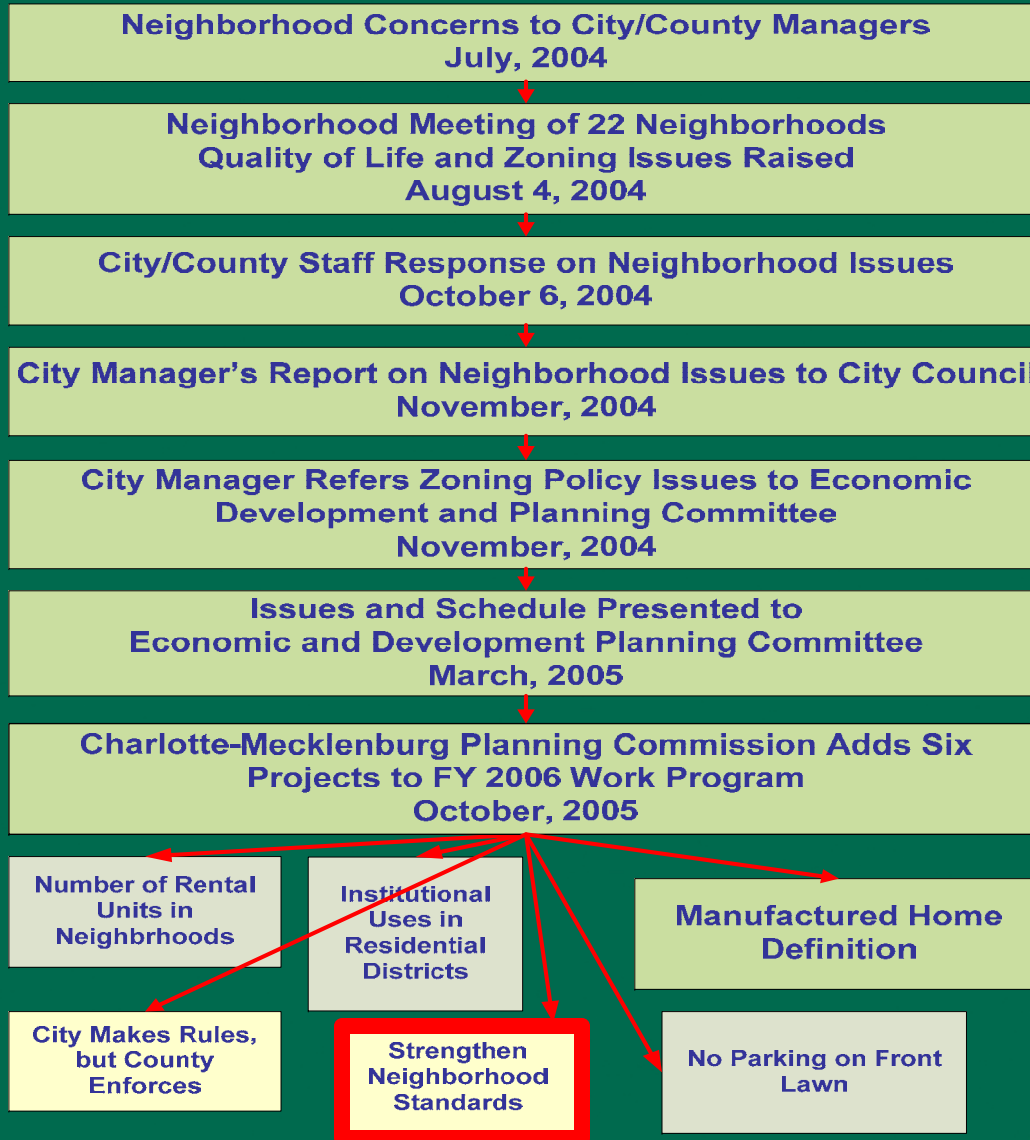
January 14th, 2010

Presented by

John Howard, Principal Planner

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Department

- Background
- Proposed Recommendations
- Overview of Neighborhood Conservation Overlays (NCO)
- Next Steps



RDS Process

- Identify issues associated with single family development
- Become familiar with ordinances that regulate single family development
- Link key policy goals with zoning regulations
- Allow more flexibility for design solutions in zoning ordinance
- Focus on changes that affect the public realm
- Address needs/differences of suburban and urban areas
- Ensure recommended code changes can be enforced

1. Scale/Height

- Infill development needs to consider the context of adjacent structures

2. Setbacks

- Required setbacks are frequently inconsistent with established setbacks in older neighborhoods

3. Side Yards

- Permitted reduction of side yards to three feet creates safety and privacy issues

4. Building Walls

- Blank walls facing public ROW negatively impact the public realm



5. Auto Storage

- Wide garages in front of houses can overpower the principal structure and negatively impact the streetscape

6. Large Utility Structures

- Large utility structures located in established setbacks and required yards are incompatible with residential setting

7. Streetscape (UR Standards)

- UR zoning has one streetscape standard for all conditions and does not take context into account

8. Impervious Coverage

- Existing regulations such as PCCO do not address impervious coverage for individual lots under 20,000 sq. ft.



9. MX Zoning

- Lack of variety and mixture of uses resulting from MX zoning
- Lack of innovative design standards in MX districts

10. Infill Redevelopment

- Incompatible scale and/or design of new development with existing development pattern in older neighborhoods



Proposed Recommendations: Zoning Ordinance Text Amendments



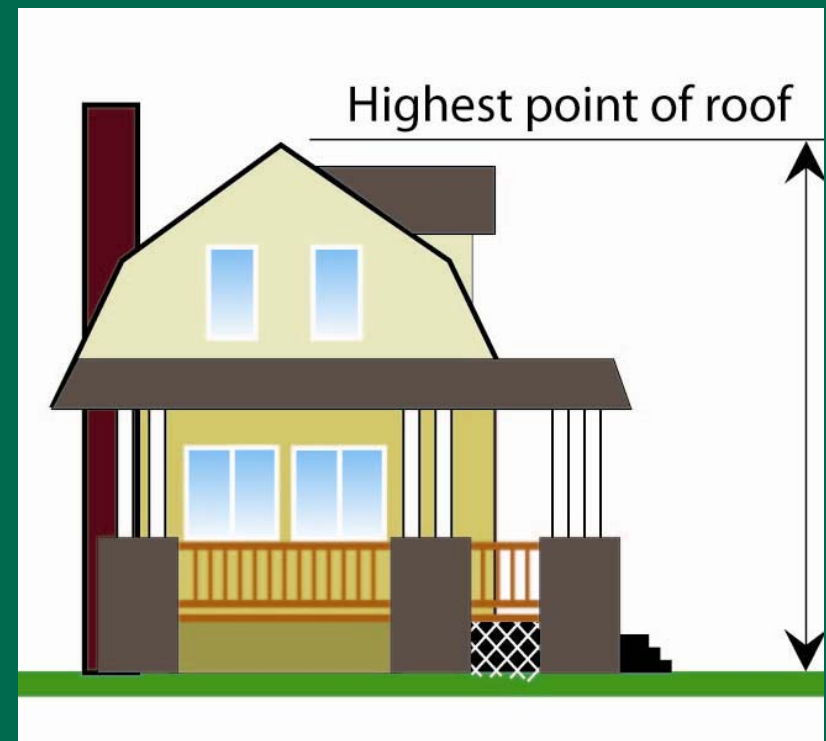
1. Height

Issue:

Existing regulations allow heights that are inconsistent with the existing neighborhood context and, at times, are excessive.

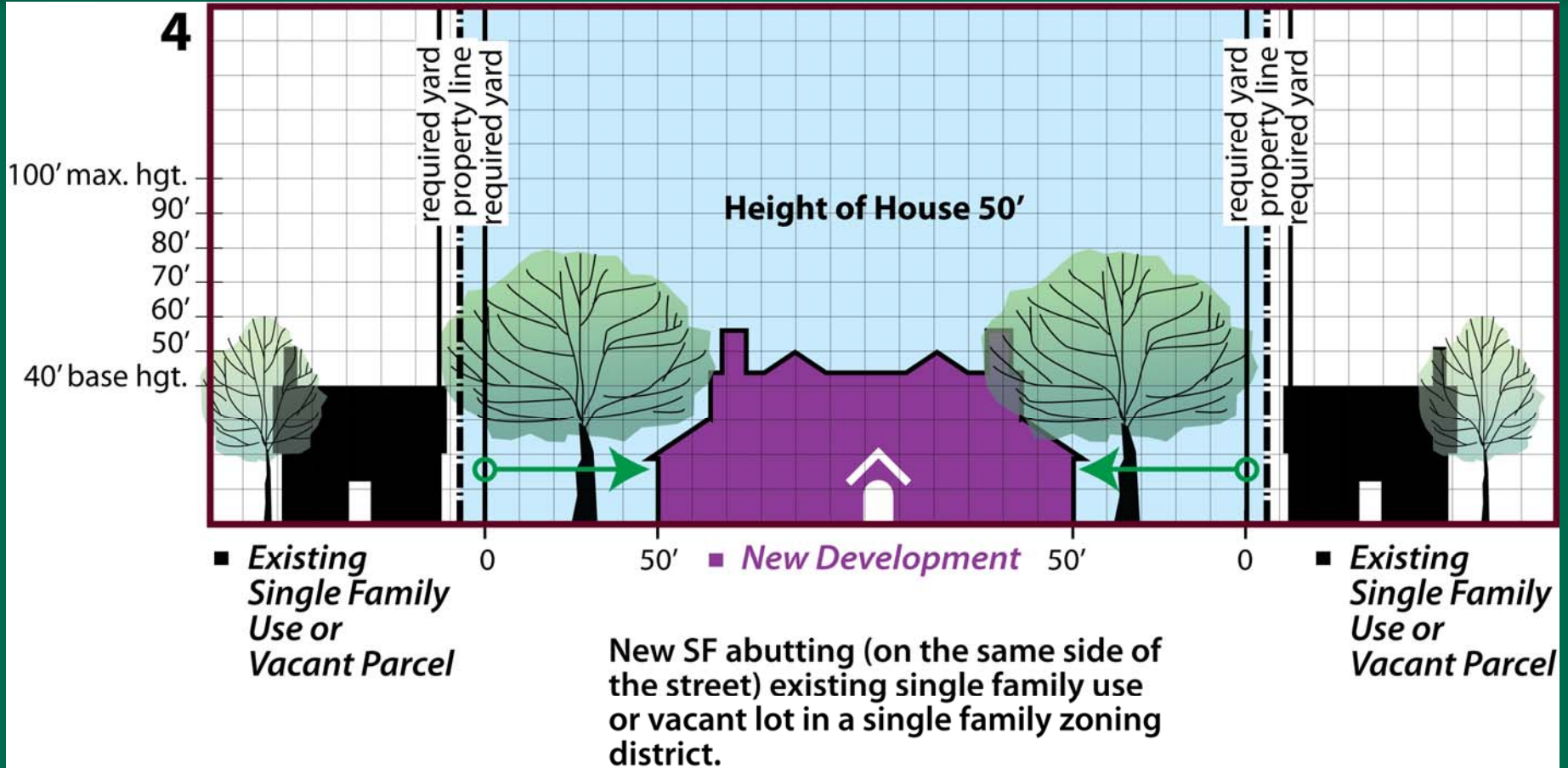
Recommendations:

1. When abutting single family use or vacant lot in single family district, increase side yard by 5 feet for every foot increase in height over 40 feet. ***Height in Residential Districts text amendment recommendation.***
2. Neighborhood Conservation Overlay option





1. Height



FRONT ELEVATION NEW Single Family

2. Setbacks

Issue:

Required setbacks are frequently inconsistent with established setbacks in older neighborhoods.

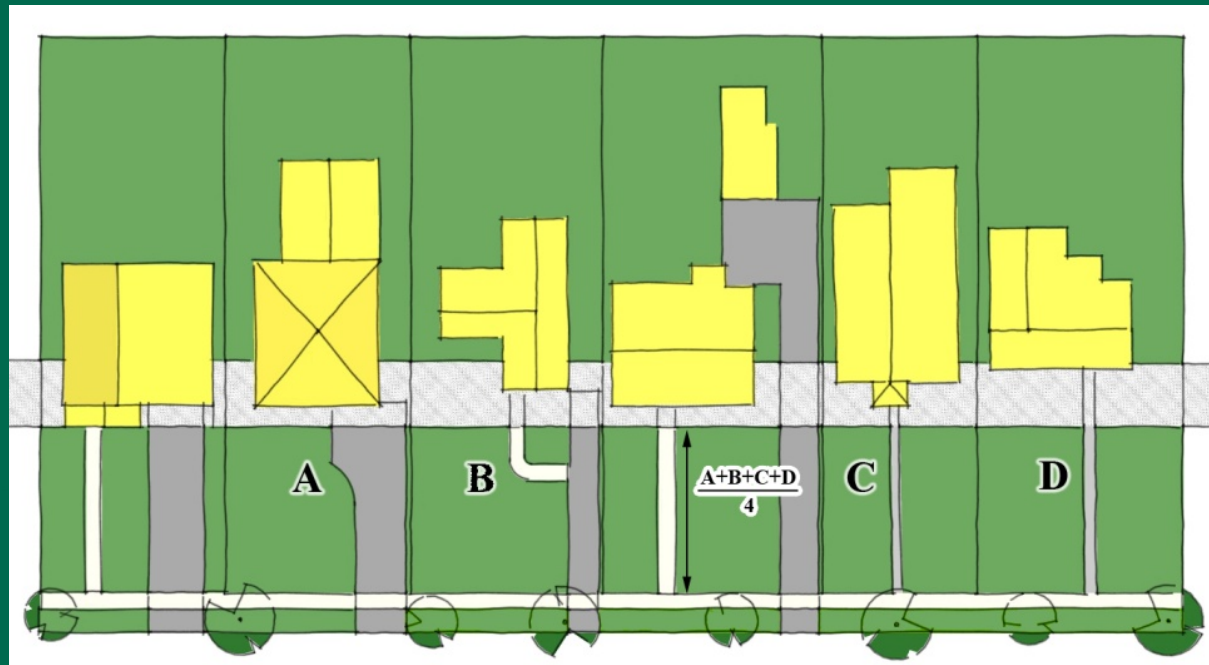
Recommendations:

1. Zoning text amendment to allow setback consistency (averaging)
2. Neighborhood Conservation Overlay option



Proposed Design Standard-Setback Averaging:

1. Setback averaging is allowed but not required.
2. The minimum setback is an average of the established setback for the four closest developed lots.
3. The block must be at least 50% developed and have at least four dwellings.
4. Setback average is allowed for no more than three contiguous lots.



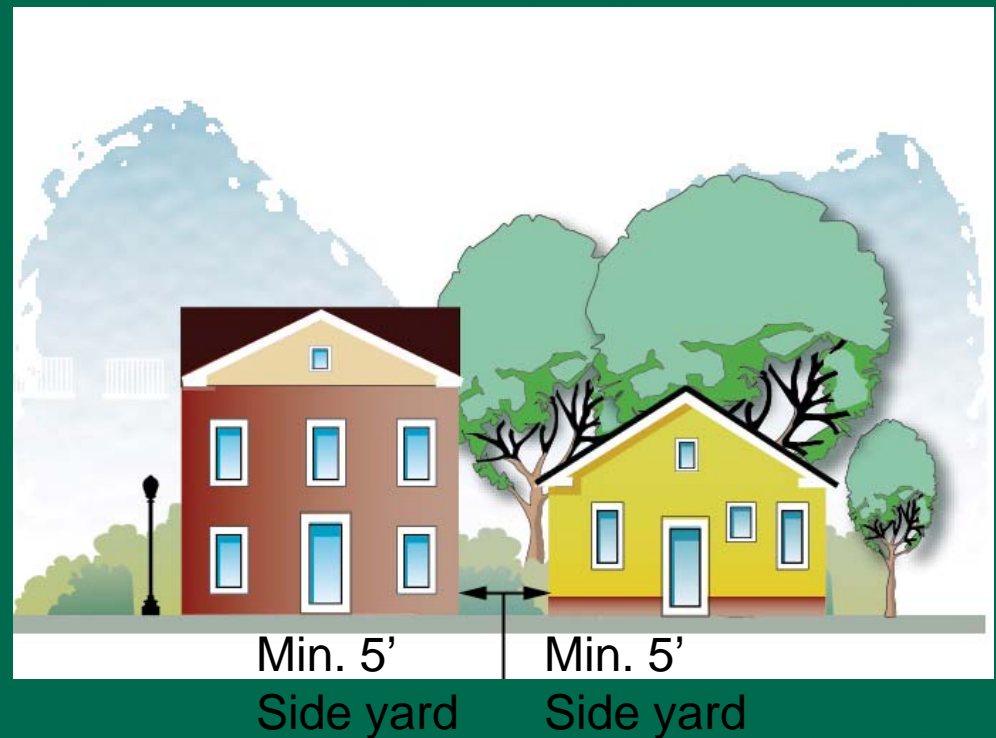


Issue:

- Permitted reduction of side yards to three feet creates safety and privacy issues.

Recommendation:

- Text amendments to remove allowances for reducing side yards to three feet (Zoning and Tree Ordinance)





4. Building Walls

Issue:

Blank walls facing public ROW negatively impact the public realm.

Recommendations:

1. Zoning text amendment to reduce expanse of blank walls facing public rights-of-way
2. Neighborhood Conservation Overlay option



Proposed Design Standard:

1. Expanses of blank walls on the principal structure and facing public rights-of-way (streets, greenways, parks) shall not exceed 10 linear feet on any story.
2. One or more of the following design elements shall be used to break up blank walls into segments of no more than 10 linear feet: windows, doors, porches/stoops, materials variation and/or wall plane variation.



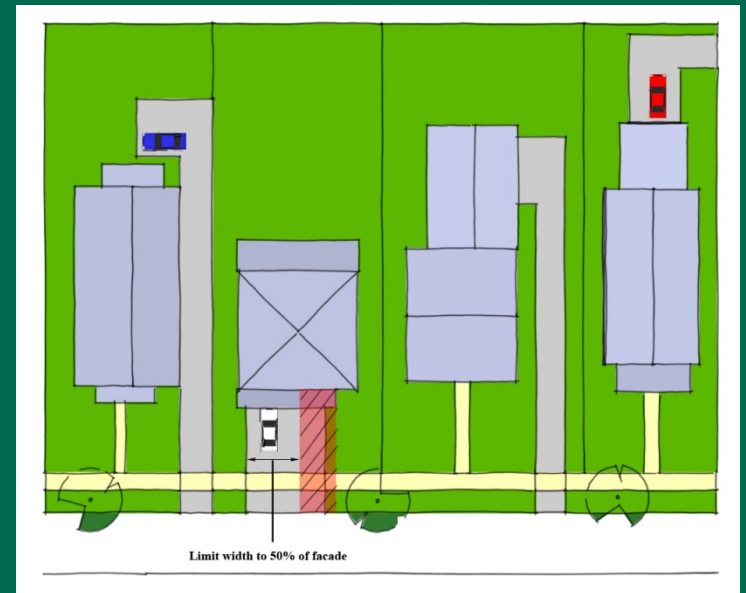
5. Auto Storage

Issue:

Wide garages in front of houses can overpower the principal structure and negatively impact the streetscape.

Recommendation:

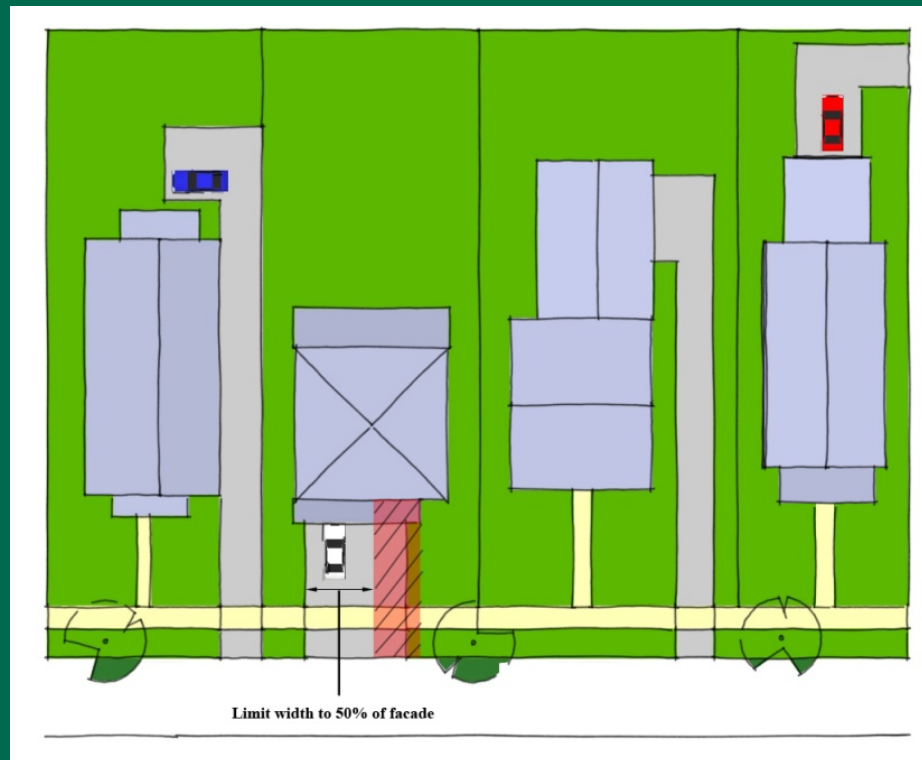
1. Zoning text amendment to limit width of front loading garages
2. Neighborhood Conservation Overlay option



5. Auto Storage

Proposed Design Standard:

For attached front loading garages extending beyond the living area toward the street, the width of the garage shall not exceed 50% of the front façade width.



These homes would not meet the 50% rule...



Garage width in front of living area is greater than 50% of the facade

5. Auto Storage

These homes would meet the 50% rule...



Issue

- Large utility structures located in established setbacks and required yards are incompatible with residential setting

Recommendation

- Zoning text amendment to restrict locating utility structures within the established setback, and within the required side and rear yard of residential dwellings



7. Streetscape (UR Standards)

Issue:

- Urban Residential zoning does not allow streetscape modification based on context.

Recommendation:

- Zoning text amendment to allow flexibility with streetscape standards



8. Impervious Coverage

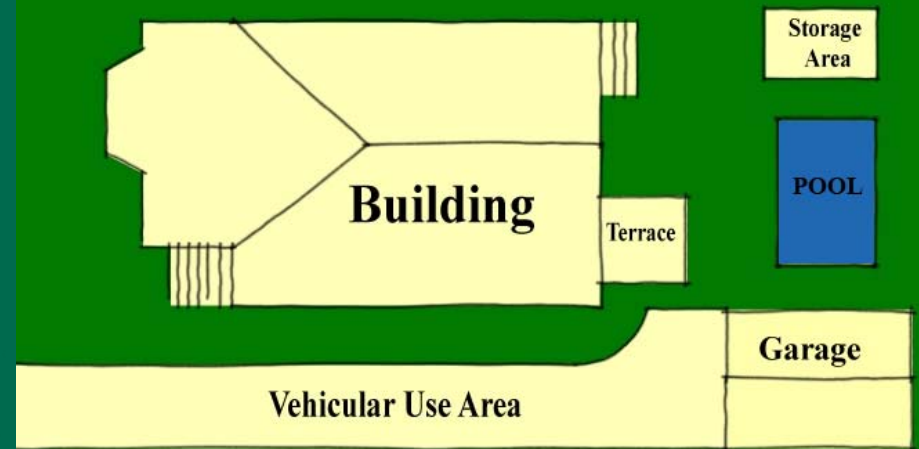
Issue:

- Existing regulations do not address impervious coverage for individual lots under 20,000 sq. ft.



Recommendation:

- Neighborhood Conservation Overlay option



Issues:

- Lack of mixture of uses and housing types with some MX developments
- Misuse of 'innovative' development standards

Recommendations:

1. Update the MX zoning districts to reflect stated purpose and to include best development practices
2. Include residential design standards in MX districts
3. Update to MX zoning will occur as a separate project





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Questions



10. Neighborhood Conservation Overlays (NCO's)

Local Historic District

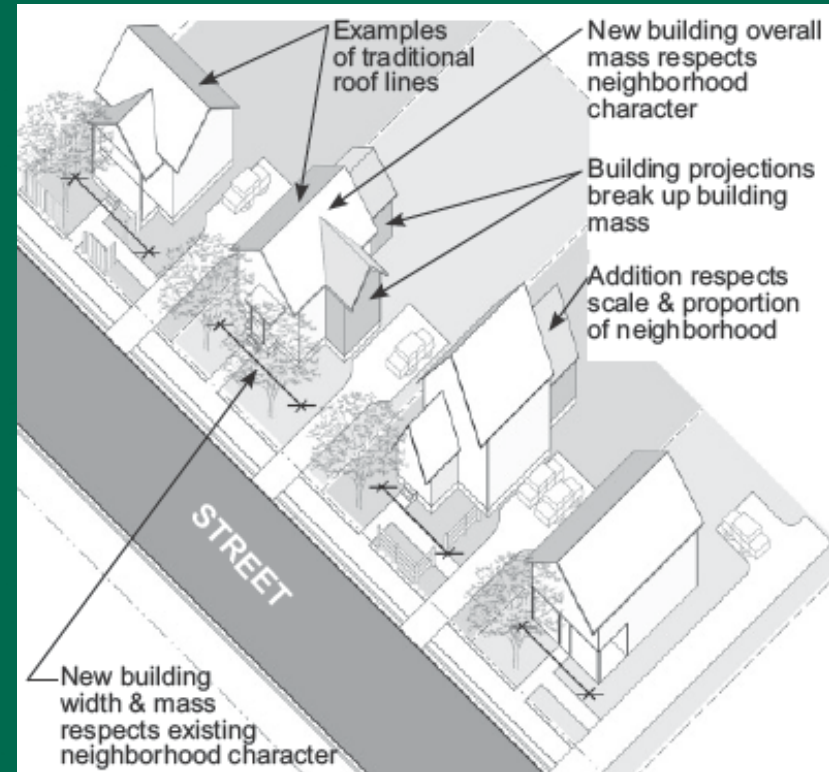
- All properties are included in the district
- Requires Historic District Commission approval for new construction and major work
- Quasi-judicial process
- Based on adopted design policies

National Register Historic District

- Only contributing structures are impacted
- Does not contain regulations for most property owners
- Qualifies most properties for federal or NC preservation tax credits
- Based on federal preservation standards

Overview

- Designed to preserve unique neighborhood characteristics
- Designated as an overlay zoning district. In overlay districts, the base zoning (R-3, etc.) remains. The 'overlay' is an additional set of standards.
- NCO's typically regulate some or all of the following:
 - building form (massing, height)
 - building design (garages/parking, blank walls)
 - site design (lot size, lot coverage)
 - building placement (setbacks, yards, orientation)
- NCO project review is administrative.



Implementing a Neighborhood Conservation Overlay

- NCO zoning district adopted into Zoning Ordinance
- Typically neighborhoods request NCOs
- NCO standards developed by staff with input from neighborhood stakeholders

Qualifying criteria may include:

- Age of the neighborhood
- Size (acreage) of the neighborhood
- Minimum percentage of developed property
- Neighborhood is primarily residential in use and character
- NCO is supported by majority of property owners



Most Restrictive



Least Restrictive

Local Historic District

Neighborhood Conservation
Overlay District Option

Base single family zoning

1. If a neighborhood is eligible for National Register Historic District status should it qualify for a NCO?
 - Why or why not?

2. If a neighborhood is eligible for Local Historic District status should it qualify for a NCO?
 - Why or why not?



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Next Steps

- 1. Present recommendations to stakeholders in early January 2010 and receive feedback**
2. Make revisions to recommendations and hold final stakeholder meeting by mid-February
3. Complete final staff "report" by mid-February
4. Present recommendations to Planning Commission at March meeting and request to file initial text amendments
5. Present staff "report" to Council in March
6. File initial text amendments in March, with decisions in July
7. Initiate processes to update MX districts and develop NCO by Summer 2010