

PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION MEMORANDUM

FROM: Planning & Zoning Department **DATE:** January 15, 2026
SUBJECT: TR25-07, Public hearing and consideration regarding possible updates to Chapter 118 related to implementing maximum lot coverage requirements in lieu of rear-yard open space requirements (Continued from December 11, 2026)
PRESENTER: Cori Reaume, Director of Planning

GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

In an effort to continue refining the City's Code of Ordinances in the spirit of clarity and efficiency, this ordinance update is being proposed by staff for consideration.

The definition for rear yard open space from the city's zoning ordinance is listed below:

Rear yard open space means an area reserved as an open space in the rear portion of a yard which extends from one side property line to another side property line and abutting the rear property line. The rear yard open space shall not protrude beyond the two most extreme corners of the main structure and no part of a residential dwelling unit may be constructed so as to occupy any portion of the rear yard open space.

As the City continues to build out remaining residential lots and the existing neighborhoods continue to mature/redevelop, there are some challenges that arise from operating within the existing definition and requirement (typically a 20% rear-yard open space requirement for typical single family districts).

The original consideration for a proposed revision to this code stemmed from primarily existing residences looking to build additions and/or to attach previously-detached accessory structures to the primary structure.

After beginning review and discussion of possible changes, additional concerns were heard from the residential builder/developer side that they occasionally have some difficulty ensuring the lot's open space is positioned in a way that meets the 20% rear-yard open space requirement.

Based on this additional feedback, the alternatives below were presented for discussion and consideration by the Planning and Zoning Commission in December:

- Replacement of rear yard open space with maximum lot coverage
- Application of rear yard open space requirement only to new homes
- Replacement of rear yard open space with broader "usable open space"



- Hybrid approach – modification of rear yard requirement to allow for other “excess” open space in the front or side yard to credit a portion of the rear-yard open space.

Following discussion with the commission and home builders, staff are prepared to recommend the hybrid approach listed above.

To encourage flexibility in site design, **Usable Excess Yard Area** – defined as any open space within the front or side yards beyond the minimum required setbacks – may be credited against the required **Rear Yard Open Space** on an equivalent square footage basis. This credit shall not permit the reduction of the Rear Yard Open Space to an area smaller than ten percent (10%) of the total lot area.

This allows the City to continue developing under regulations that have generally worked well for NRH while providing flexibility that may be needed as the City receives additional infill residential project submissions, and residents look to revise their aging properties.

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve TR25-07.