

**Department of Community and Economic Development
Planning Division**

ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY/CODE INTERPRETATION

MUNICIPAL

CODE SECTION: RMC 4-11-040 Definitions D

SUBJECT: Clarification of the definition of “Density, Net” when fractions result from calculating minimum and maximum.

REFERENCE: N/A

BACKGROUND: RMC 4-2-110A, 4-2-120A, 4-2-120-B, and 4-2-120E list minimum and maximum densities for zoning designations including RC, R-1, R-4, R-8, R-10, R-14, RM, CN, CV, CA, CD, COR, UC-N1, and UC-N2. [There is no minimum density in the RC, R-1, and R-4 zones.] Minimum and maximum densities are defined as net densities which deduct area for public streets, private access easements and critical areas from the gross site area prior to calculating density. Such densities are expressed in whole numbers (without the use of fractions). For example, in the R-8 Zone the minimum density is 4 dwelling units per acre (du/ac) and the maximum density is 8 du/ac. These numerical digits have long been interpreted by the City of Renton to mean a minimum density of 4.0 du/ac and a maximum density of 8.0 du/ac.

Applicants for land use actions which involve residential developments, on occasion, present projects which have the potential of maximizing the use of their properties as well as being economically justifiable, but fall within a net density range which is less than the minimum allowable net density or greater than the maximum net density for any given zoning designation. In the R-8, R-10, R-14, and RM zones minimum densities may be lowered through the use of Condition “1.” in RMC 4-2-110D. By way of example, an applicant may be considering a project in the R-8 zone which has a net density of 8.01 du/ac. Because the net density for this project is greater than the maximum allowable net density (8.0 du/ac) for this zone, the applicant would be prevented from submitting an approvable proposal for the project.

The City of Renton practice does not currently allow the rounding of fractions when they involve density calculations. An addition to the Renton Municipal Code allowing the rounding of fractions in calculating net density would not substantially alter the number of dwelling additions to the City's housing stock. The following addition to the definition of "Density, Net" would enable the rounding of fractions in net density calculations:

All fractions which result from net density calculations shall be truncated at two numbers past the decimal (e.g. 4.5678 becomes 4.56). Calculations for minimum or maximum density which result in a fraction that is 0.50 or greater shall be rounded up to the nearest whole number. Those density calculations resulting in a fraction that is less than 0.50 shall be rounded down to the nearest whole number.

JUSTIFICATION: Density standards are intended to match housing density with the availability of services and with the carrying capacity of the land. Maximum densities aid in ensuring that the number of lots created does not exceed the intensity planned for the area, while minimum densities ensure that enough dwelling units can be developed to meet the projected need for housing. Establishing rules for rounding fractions when they involve net density calculations would not substantially alter the number of lots planned for any given area of the City of Renton nor reduce the number of dwelling units necessary for meeting projected housing demands.

DECISION: For purposes of calculating net density: All fractions shall be truncated at two numbers past the decimal. Should a calculation result in a fraction of a dwelling unit that is 0.50 or greater, the fraction shall be rounded up to the nearest whole number, for example, 4.56 dwelling units becomes 5.0. Should a calculation result in a fraction that is less than 0.50, the fraction shall be rounded down to the nearest whole number, for example, 4.49 dwelling units becomes 4.0 dwelling units.

PLANNING DIRECTOR

APPROVAL:

C. E. "Chip" Vincent

DATE: October 21, 2010

APPEAL

PROCESS: To appeal this determination, a written appeal--accompanied by the required filing fee--must be filed with the City's Hearing Examiner (1055

South Grady Way, Renton, WA 98057, 425-430-6515) no more than 14 days from the date of this decision. Your submittal should explain the basis for the appeal. Section 4-8-110 of the Renton Municipal Code provides further information on the appeal process.

**CODE
AMENDMENT
NEEDED TO
IMPLEMENT**

DETERMINATION: RMC 4-11-040 Definitions D to read as shown on Attachment A.

Subsection 4-11-040 Definitions D, Density, Net of Chapter 11, Definitions, of Title IV (Development Regulations) is hereby amended to read as follows:

DENSITY, NET: A calculation of the number of housing units and/or lots that would be allowed on a property after critical areas, i.e., very high landslide hazard areas, protected slopes (except evaluate on a case-by-case basis those protected slopes created by previous development), wetlands, Class 1 to 4 streams and lakes, or floodways, and public rights-of-way and legally recorded private access easements are subtracted from the gross area (gross acres minus streets and critical areas multiplied by allowable housing units per acre). Required critical area buffers, streams that have been daylighted including restored riparian and aquatic areas, and public and private alleys, and trails, shall not be subtracted from gross acres for the purpose of net density calculations. All fractions which result from net density calculations shall be truncated at two numbers past the decimal (e.g. 4.5678 becomes 4.56). Calculations for minimum or maximum density which result in a fraction that is 0.50 or greater shall be rounded up to the nearest whole number. Those density calculations resulting in a fraction that is less than 0.50 shall be rounded down to the nearest whole number.

