

Cottage Cluster Housing

20.950.010 Purpose.

These standards are intended to allow groups of small-scale cottages around common areas in single or multi-family zoning districts in a manner promoting accessible housing and community interaction. The individual homes are smaller and shorter than what is allowed in the underlying zoning district, but they may be built at a higher density.

20.920 Applicability.

A. Permitted zones and required minimum project size. Cottage Cluster housing developments shall be allowed on properties 20,000 square feet or larger in size, in the R-17, R-9, R-6, R-4 and R-2 zoning districts.

B. Permitted Uses. Cottage Cluster development uses shall be limited to attached and detached single family homes and associated outbuildings, public or private open space, and parking areas. Duplexes or attached single family homes may constitute no more than 20% of the total number of units. Home Occupations pursuant to VMC 20.860 shall be permitted only if there are no employees residing off-site. Accessory dwelling units pursuant to VMC 20.810 shall be permitted only if located entirely within the single family homes.

C. The narrow lot development standards in VMC 20.927 and R-17 zoning district standards of VMC 20.410 shall not apply to cottage housing developments.

20.930 Site Development and Design Standards

A. General Standards.

1. Cottage housing developments may be allowed at up to two hundred percent (200%) of the maximum density of the underlying zone, including any accessory dwelling units.

2. Cottage housing developments shall contain a minimum of four (4) and a maximum of twelve (12) units in a cluster; provided, that a cottage development may contain up to two (2) clusters.

3. Each single-family cottage shall not exceed 1,600 square feet in total floor area, and each duplex cottage 3,000 square feet. Floor areas of attached or detached garages and outbuildings shall count towards these size limits, with the exception of the first 200 hundred square feet of garage or outbuilding per single family cottage, or 400 square feet per duplex.

4. Building heights may not exceed 25 feet within 50 feet of the project site perimeter, and 30 feet elsewhere in the site. Roofs higher than 18 feet shall be pitched at a ratio of at least 6:12.

5. Covered porches shall be at least 60 s.f., with no dimension less than 5 feet

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6. Buildings shall be set back at least 10 feet from the nearest public or private road, and at least five feet from other buildings. Building setbacks to exterior property lines shall be that of the underlying zoning district.

B. Cottage Orientation. Cottages must be clustered around a common courtyard and must meet the following standards.

1. At least 75% of the cottage units shall be located within 25 feet of a common courtyard, and shall have covered porches and main entries which face the common courtyard.
2. The Planning Official may grant exceptions for as needed to allow cottages abutting a public street at the site perimeter to face the street.

C. Common Courtyard Design Standards. Each cottage cluster must share a common courtyard in order to provide a sense of openness and community of residents. Common courtyards must meet the following standards.

1. The common courtyard must contain a minimum of 200 square feet of usable open or congregating space per cottage units within the associated cluster.
2. The common courtyard must be generally square or round, and no narrower than 15 feet wide at its narrowest dimension.
3. The common courtyard shall be developed with a mix of landscaping, lawn area, pedestrian paths, and/or paved courtyard area, and may also include recreational amenities. Impervious elements of the common courtyard shall not exceed 50 percent of the total common courtyard area.
4. Pedestrian paths must be included in a common courtyard. Parking areas, required setbacks, and driveways do not qualify as part of a common courtyard.

D. Required Parking and Parking Design

1. Required spaces. Each dwelling unit shall include at least one parking space within the project area. On street parking spaces abutting the project area may be counted towards this requirement.
2. Common Parking Areas. Parking may be located adjacent to an individual unit or in a common parking area. Common parking areas are subject to the following standards.
 - a. Cottage cluster projects with fewer than 12 cottages are permitted parking clusters of not more than 5 contiguous spaces.
 - b. Cottage cluster projects with 12 cottages or more are permitted parking clusters of not more than 8 contiguous spaces.
 - c. Parking clusters must be separated from other spaces by at least 4 feet of landscaping.
 - d. Clustered parking areas may be covered.
3. Parking location, access and screening.
 - a. Off-street parking areas with 5 or more spaces shall not be located within 20 feet from any property line that abuts a street other than an alley;
 - b. No off-street parking space or vehicle maneuvering area is permitted between a property line that abuts a street (other than an alley) and the front façade of cottages located closest to that property line.
 - c. No off-street parking space is permitted within 10 feet of any other property line external to the cottage cluster, except property lines abutting an alley. Driveways and drive aisles are permitted within 10 feet of other external property lines.

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- d. Sight-obscuring landscaping, fencing, or walls at least three feet tall shall separate clustered parking areas and parking structures from common courtyards and property lines external to the cottage cluster.

E. Pedestrian Access.

1. A pedestrian path must be provided that connects the main entrance of each cottage to the following:

- a. The common courtyard;
- b. Shared parking areas;
- c. Common solid waste storage areas;
- d. Community buildings; and
- e. Sidewalks in public rights-of-way abutting the site or rights-of-way if there are no sidewalks.

2. The pedestrian path must be hard-surfaced and a minimum of 3 feet wide.

F. Community Buildings. Cottage cluster projects may include community buildings for the shared use of residents that provide space for accessory uses such as community meeting rooms, guest housing, exercise rooms, day care, community eating areas, community gardens, or picnic shelters. Community buildings must meet the following standards.

1. Each cottage cluster is permitted one community building.
2. The community building shall have a maximum floor area of 1,200 sf.

G. Maintenance of Common Areas. The development application shall include a plan for ongoing maintenance of shared or common areas, including a mechanism for ensuring that the maintenance plan will be implemented.

H. Solid Waste and Recycling Access and Collection.

1. An access plan for solid waste and recycling collection service to all dwellings in the development shall be submitted with the application.

2. The access and collection plan shall show either a designated collection point for each lot or a common solid waste storage area for use by all lots and the ability of collection vehicles to maneuver safely to all points of collection. All circulation and turnaround designs must meet the requirements of VMC 11.80.070 and the Transportation Standard Details and be feasible using City provided solid waste truck turning modelling templates and truck specifications. Collection vehicles shall be able to circulate the development and service receptacles with minimal backing required.

3. Collection points and common solid waste storage areas shall be accessible to collection vehicles without requiring backing out of a driveway onto a public street. If only a single access is available to the storage area, adequate turning radius shall be provided to allow collection vehicles to safely exit the site in a forward motion.

4. Where collection is not feasible on each lot, one or more designated common solid waste storage areas, located no further than 150 feet from any dwelling it serves, shall be provided.

a. Common outdoor solid waste storage areas must have a smaller gate, door or open walkway entrance for residents in addition to and separate from the service gate(s).

b. The dimensions of the common solid waste storage area shall accommodate receptacles consistent with current methods of local collection and allow for pedestrian (driver and residents) access between receptacles. Plans shall show footprints of all intended receptacles using dimensions from City provided solid waste receptacle standards.

c. Outdoor common solid waste storage areas shall be enclosed by a screen comprised of a sight-obscuring wall, fence and/or vegetation. Service gate(s) shall allow access to haulers; it shall be capable of being secured in fully closed and open positions.

d. Solid waste storage receptacles shall be clearly labeled to indicate the type of materials accepted.

e. Common outdoor solid waste storage areas shall not be located in a side or rear yard setback that abuts property that is not within the same development, i.e. impacts of the location on neighboring

properties is an important consideration. Every effort should be made to locate outdoor garbage and recycling areas so as to minimize their impacts on existing neighboring residential properties.

6. Designated collection points shall be located adjacent to alleys or streets but shall not obstruct sidewalks, bike lanes, or vision clearance triangles.

7. Maintenance of any private streets or alleys used for solid waste collection service shall be the responsibility of the property owners, and a maintenance agreement shall be recorded with the plat.

8. Each lot must have adequate storage space for carts when not set out for collection day. If lots do not have garages, driveways, or other suitable features for storing carts, individual or shared enclosure areas must be provided and shown on plans. Receptacles and common storage areas must be screened from view and not located in the right of way or adjacent to existing neighboring properties.

20.940 Approval Process.

Cottage Cluster housing projects shall be reviewed under VMC 20.320, subdivision, where individual lots are proposed to be owned separately, or as a Type II review subject to VMC 20.270, Site Plan Review, where common ownership of lots is proposed.