

R-7 Text Amendment Alternatives

The following is an analysis by Planning Division staff of potential changes that could be made in the R-7, University Residential zoning district to encourage reuse of existing buildings, and to help ensure that any new construction is compatible with the neighborhood.

Each section below presents a series of options, starting from a “no change” option and then presenting more open and permissive alternatives.

General Approach to R-7 Properties

The R-7 has several different building types: fraternities and sororities, rooming and boarding houses, and religious institutions. Changes made to the district could take these different uses into account, or they could treat them all the same.

Alternative 1 (No Change):

Continue to treat all R-7 properties the same, regardless of their use or physical characteristics. All properties would be subject to any of the changes proposed in the following sections.

Staff Analysis: All properties, regardless of building type or use, or parcel size and configuration, would be treated the same way. This would be a less-nuanced approach that would continue to subject an old boarding house that was once a single-family home to the same rules as a palatial sorority house on a large lot that may have housed 50 people at one point.

Alternative 2:

Treat R-7 properties differently based on their current and historical uses. Properties could be subject to different changes proposed in the following sections, to help address the challenges in redeveloping different types of properties.

Staff Analysis: Sorority and fraternity (“Greek”) houses are inherently different than boarding and rooming houses. Approaching them differently would make sense, in that regulations could be tailored to better preserve the more architecturally significant Greek houses, while allowing for more flexibility to redevelop boarding and rooming houses. Such tailored regulations could, for example, allow boarding and rooming houses to be rezoned to another district, such as the Mixed-Office Residential district, while reserving and altering the R-7 district (and any associated changes) to help preserve Greek houses and significant religious institutions. It may also be possible to retain the R-7 zoning for all parcels, while still treating parcels differently based on their present use. That would likely be the creation of an overlay district, which would require significantly more staff time to develop, and would be more cumbersome to deal with than simply rezoning some parcels.

Development Regulations

Development regulations are a series of zoning rules designed to regulate the size of lot, and the size and location of buildings on a lot, by specifying maximum building heights, maximum floor area, minimum open space on a site, and minimum front, rear, and side yards. Many of the properties in the R-7 district do not meet current development regulations for a variety of reasons.

Alternative 1 (No Change):

Make no changes to existing development regulations.

Staff Analysis: This alternative would require any new development to comply with the existing development regulations for R-7. In many cases, since existing development exceeds what is currently allowed, this acts as a disincentive to demolishing an existing building to put up

something new. The current development regulations match what is allowed in the R-4, Medium Density Multiple-Family Residential zoning district. Making no changes to the development regulations would continue to disincentive new construction, which helps preserve existing buildings; that is a good thing when considering the many Greek houses in the R-7 district, but it could be problematic when some of the declining rooming houses need to be replaced. It also would limit the possibility of adding compatible additions onto existing

buildings, which could otherwise increase their long-term economic viability.

Alternative 2:

Make no changes to existing development regulations for *new* building construction; require special provisions to allow additions in the R-7 district.

Staff Analysis: Proposing “no change” to the development regulations for new construction will restrict any new development from exceeding the existing development regulations, which are comparable to the R-4, Medium Density Multiple Family Residential zoning district. Several existing buildings are legally nonconforming, so any addition to the building would likely bring it further out of compliance with the development regulations. This alternative would allow for additions onto existing buildings, regardless of whether they meet the development regulations or not. However, since all proposed additions would be subject to review by the Design Review Board, this would ensure that they are compatible with the existing building and surrounding area.

Development Regulations: R-7, University Residential								
Zone	Min. Lot Size	Min. Lot Width	Max. Height	Max. FAR	Min. OSR	Min. Front Yard (feet)	Min. Side Yard (feet)	Min. Rear Yard (feet)
R-7	6,000	60	35	0.50	0.35	15	5	10

Allowed Uses

Alternative 1 (No Change):

Make no changes to the allowable uses in the R-7 district.

Principal Uses	R-7	REFERENCE
Residential		
Boarding or Rooming House	P	
Bed and Breakfast, Owner-Occupied	C	
Dormitory	P	
Dwelling, Community Living Facility, Category I, II or III	P	
Dwelling, Home for Adjustment	S	
Dwelling, Multiple-Unit Common-Lot-Line	P	
Dwelling, Single-Family	P	
Dwelling, Single-Family (Extended Occupancy)	P	
Dwelling, Transitional Home, Category I	C	
Dwelling, Transitional Home, Category II	S	
Residential Planned Unit Development	PUD	XIII-3
Commercial		
Mixed-Use Planned Unit Development	PUD	XIII-3
Public & Quasi-Public		
Church, Temple or Mosque	S	

Staff Analysis: This alternative would result in no change to the existing Table of Uses for existing buildings and new construction in the R-7 district. New and existing buildings are limited to one of six “by right” uses. As dormitories and boarding/rooming houses become less popular amongst today’s college students, it is increasingly difficult for properties in the R-7 district to be used as they historically have. This makes their long-term viability questionable, which would be harmful to the neighborhood and to property owners. This has been the most restrictive piece of the R-7 zoning regulations and was the impetus for staff to embark on this project to change zoning regulations in the district. Staff recommends Alternative 2, below.

Alternative 2:

Make no changes to the allowable uses for *new* buildings in the R-7 district (see table above). Allow the same uses that are permitted in the Mixed Office Residential (MOR) district for existing buildings and additions in the R-7 district (see table below).

Principal Uses	R-7	REFERENCE
Agriculture		
Garden Shop	P	
Plant Nursery or Greenhouse	P	
Business – Food Sales and Services		
Bakery (Less than 2,500 square feet)	C	
Banquet Facility	C	
Café or Deli	P	
Catering Service	C	
Confectionery Store	P	
Convenience Store	P	
Meat and Fish Market	S	
Restaurant	C	

Business – Miscellaneous		
Day Care Facility (Non-Home Based)	P	
Mixed Use Planned Unit Development	PUD	XIII-3
Business – Personal Services		
Barber/Beauty Shop	P	
Health Club/Fitness	P	
Massage Therapist	P	
Mortuary	P	
Pet Care/Grooming	P	
Shoe Repair Shop	P	
Tailor and Pressing Shop	P	
Business – Professional and Financial Services		
Bank/Savings and Loan Association	P	
Check Cashing Service	P	
Copy and Printing Service	P	
Professional and Business Office	P	
Vocational, Trade or Business School	P	
Business – Recreation		
Athletic Training Facility	P	
Dancing School	P	
Lodge or Private Club	C	
Pool Hall	P	
Private Indoor Recreational Development	P	
Theater, Indoor	P	
Business – Retail Trade		
Antique or Used Furniture Sales and Service	P	
Art and Craft Store and/or Studio	P	
Bicycle Sales and Service	P	
Clothing Store	P	
Drugstore	P	
Electronic Sales and Service	P	
Florist	P	
Hardware Store	P	
Jewelry Store	P	
Music Store	P	
Office Supplies/Equipment Sales and Service	P	
Pet Store	P	
Photographic Studio and Equipment Sales and Service	P	
Shoe Store	P	
Sporting Goods	P	
Stationary, Gifts or Art Supplies	P	
Tobacconist	P	
Variety Store	P	
Video Store	P	
All Other Retail Stores	C	
Public and Quasi-Public		
Church, Temple or Mosque	P	
Institution of an Educational or Charitable Nature	P	
Library, Museum or Gallery	P	
Municipal or Government Building	P	
Park	P	
Principal Use Parking Garage or Lot	S	
Residential		
Assisted Living Facility	P	

Bed and Breakfast Inn	P	
Bed and Breakfast, Owner-Occupied	P	
Boarding or Rooming House	P	
Dormitory	P	
Dwelling, Community Living Facility, Category I, II or III	P	
Dwelling, Duplex	P	
Dwelling, Duplex (Extended Occupancy)	P	
Dwelling, Home for Adjustment	S	
Dwelling, Loft	P	
Dwelling, Multifamily	P	
Dwelling, Single-Family	P	
Dwelling, Single-Family (Extended Occupancy)	P	
Dwelling, Transitional Home, Category I	C	
Dwelling, Transitional Home, Category II	S	
Dwelling, Two-Unit Common-Lot-Line	P	
Residential Planned Unit Development	PUD	XIII-3

Staff Analysis: This alternative would adopt the permitted, conditional and special uses of the MOR, Mixed-Office Residential district for existing buildings (and additions) in the R-7, University Residential district. The MOR district allows for limited commercial, public/quasi-public and residential uses. This alternative would provide flexibility to preserve and reuse existing buildings in the R-7 district, while keeping in place the disincentives against demolishing buildings and building new ones in their place. This change could allow some unique and creative adaptations of Greek houses in the future.

Parking

Alternative 1 (No Change):

Parking would be required for new uses in existing buildings, and for new buildings and/or additions, at the rates provided in Zoning Ordinance Table VIII-7.

Staff Analysis: This alternative would likely require additional on-site parking for changing the use of any existing building, which could make it difficult to preserve these buildings. Many of the existing properties in the R-7 district are non-conforming for various reasons, e.g. they have less parking than currently required, buildings are larger or taller than currently allowed, they don't have as much open space as currently required, the buildings encroach into required yards, etc. Requiring the amount of parking that the zoning ordinance requires for any new use of a building or any proposed addition would likely limit the possible reuse options for existing buildings, as there is not much additional space for on-site parking for many of the R-7 properties.

Alternative 2:

No additional parking would be required for new and existing uses in existing buildings. If a new building or addition is proposed, additional parking would be required at the rates provided in Table VIII-7.

Staff Analysis: This alternative would allow existing buildings, regardless of how they are used, to continue to use the parking that is already on-site, without requiring any additional parking. Any new buildings or additions would require additional parking, at the rate required by Table VIII-7 for the new use. 54This would create flexibility and make it easier for existing buildings to house new uses, without the burden of additional required parking. For property owners interested in building on additions, parking would be required specifically for the space added, at the rate required by the zoning ordinance. This alternative operates on the assumption that the provided parking has satisfied the needs of the existing building, and for proposed additions, additional parking would be required to meet the needs of the added space.

Alternative 3:

No additional parking would be required for new and existing uses in existing buildings. If an addition is proposed, no additional parking would be required. For new buildings, parking would be required at the rate established for the new use, per Zoning Ordinance Table VIII-7.

Staff Analysis: This would be the least restrictive of the three parking alternatives. No new parking would be required for new uses in existing buildings, or proposed additions on existing buildings. The building and use would simply use the existing parking on-site, and rely on on-street parking or nearby parking for any overflow. This alternative could lead to an increased demand for on-street parking, depending on a building's use. However, it would also allow for the most flexibility for existing or new buildings and uses. New buildings would be required to provide parking for the proposed use, as required by Table VIII-7.