

Scale of Single Family
Dwellings

&

Combination of
Single Family Lots

Background

- In August 2014, the City Council directed staff and the Planning Commission to review the standards regulating the scale of new single family dwellings.
- The Planning Commission reviewed the recent single-family infill projects and determined that height and massing, not setbacks or design, were the main concerns to be studied further.

Background

- Based on their review of the recent single-family developments, the Planning Commission and staff developed recommended standards that would slightly scale back some of the larger homes that have been recently constructed.
- Before making any decision, the City Council wants your feedback on this issue.

Background

Adopted Policies in the Comprehensive Plan Include:

- Review and implement land use and design controls to maintain appropriate levels of building mass, scale and height in all residential and commercial areas.
- Promote private reinvestment in the city's single family housing stock.
- Research and adopt regulations to control the development of large, out-of-scale homes in neighborhoods.

Background

The increasing size of houses continues to be a national phenomenon.

- In 1950, average floor area was 1,000 square feet
- In 1970, average floor area was 1,500 square feet
- In 2004, average floor area was 2,349 square feet
- In 2013, average floor area was 2,701 square feet

Identified Issues - Height

- Current maximum height limits are too high. The newly constructed homes built within the past three years could be, on average, 9 feet higher than they were built. Houses built to our current maximum height limit would then appear to be out of scale with the existing Excelsior homes.
- The current height limits would also allow a full three story house with a gabled roof facing a street. Excelsior currently doesn't have any three-story houses facing a street.

Identified Issues - Mass

- Many cities similar to Excelsior have a maximum building footprint, and a few have no limit on the total amount of impervious surface (i.e. building footprint plus driveways, patios and walkways). Excelsior only has a maximum total impervious surface.

	Existing Excelsior	Chaska	Hopkins	Minneapolis	St. Louis Park	Wayzata
Building Coverage	None	30%	35%	50%	35%	30%
Total Impervious Surface Coverage	35% but up to 51% if the difference met the BMP	None	None	65%	None	35%

- Having just a maximum impervious surface gives builders an incentive to maximize the size of the house and limit driveways, pushing attached garages as close to the street as possible.
- Having just a maximum total impervious surface requirement penalizes those lots with detached garages who may want to expand their house.
- Most of the homes that the Planning Commission believed to be out of scale used the Best Management Practices (rain barrels, rain gardens, cisterns), which allows houses to cover up to 35% of the lot.

Proposed Solutions - Height

- Reducing the maximum height limit to be in line with the houses that are being built.
- Include a height exception for houses on lots which have houses on both sides that exceed the proposed height limits.

Proposed Solutions - Mass

- The proposed building coverage limits allow for a larger building lot coverage as the height of the house is lowered. This is similar to the historic development of single-family residences in Excelsior and elsewhere.

	Building Coverage	Total Impervious Surface Coverage with Attached Garage (additional 15%)	Total Impervious Surface Coverage with Detached Garage (additional 20%)
1 –Story	30%	45%	50%
1 ½ Story	25%	40%	45%
2 Story	20%	35%	40%

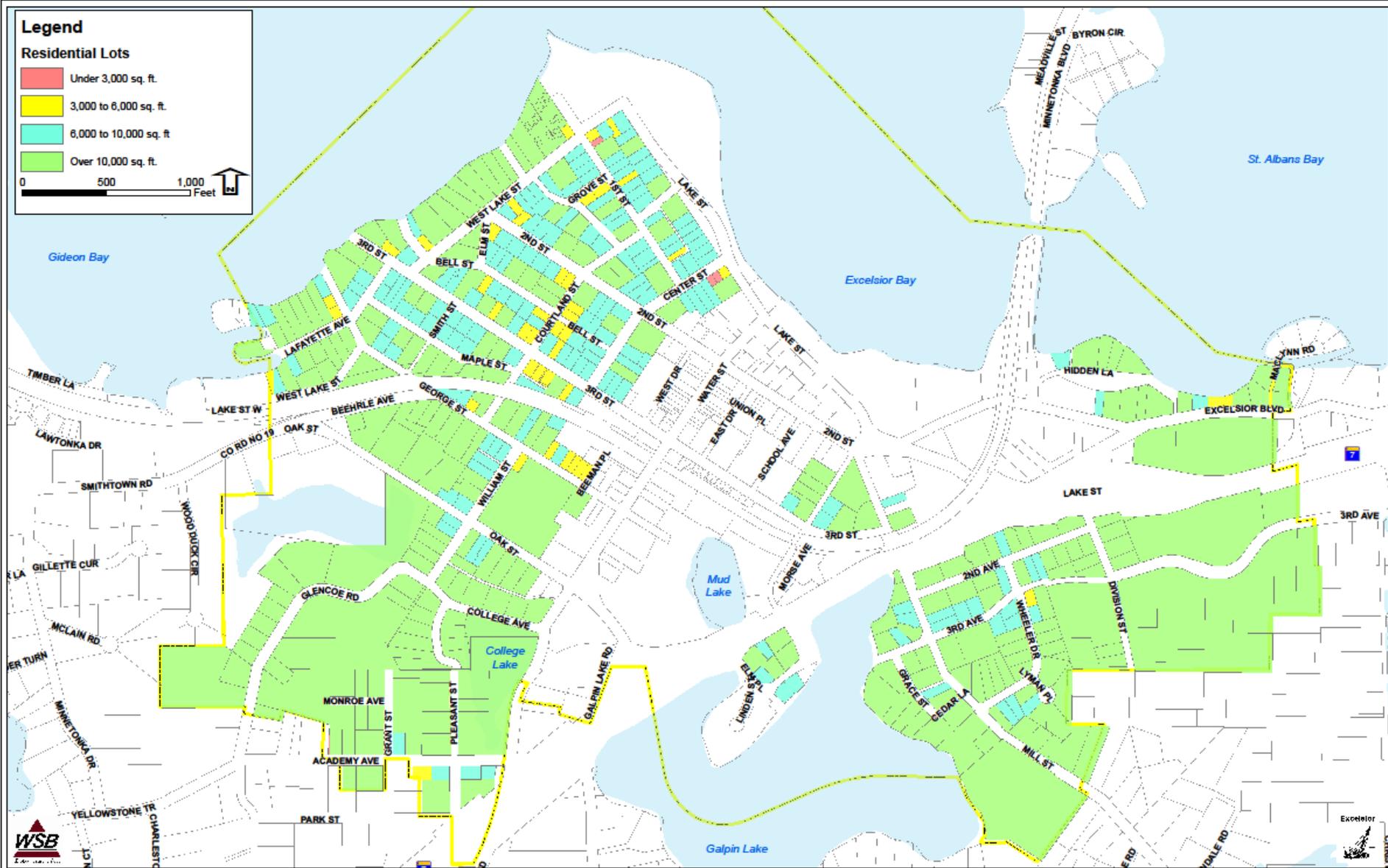
Possible Solutions - Mass

- Require a maximum building lot coverage and total impervious lot coverage in order to control building mass.
- Because detached garages and open front porches do not contribute to the “massing” of a house, the first 500 square feet of any detached garage or first 240 square feet of a porch would not be included in lot coverage.

Single Family Lot Combination

- A policy of the Comprehensive Plan is to “discourage combinations of parcels which reduce the number of single family units in the community.”
- However, there is nothing in the zoning ordinance or subdivision ordinance that prohibits combining two single family lots.
- The Council would like your feedback if this should be allowed or not.

There are 41 lots under 6,000 square feet. These smaller lots are more likely to be combined.



How to Stay Informed

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receive updates on
the project, please
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address to the email
list on the table**

Thank You

Thank you for taking the time
to come to the Open House