

**Department of Community and Economic Development
Planning Division
ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY/CODE INTERPRETATION**

**MUNICIPAL
CODE SECTIONS:**

RMC 4-11-040D, RMC 4-11-190S, and RMC 4-2-020K and M. Definitions of Net Density, Shopping Center, and the Purpose and Intent of Commercial Zoning Districts.

REFERENCE:

RMC 4-11-040D states that for the purpose of calculating net density for residential development, private access easements shall be subtracted from the gross site area. RMC 4-11-190S defines a Shopping Center as: "A group of buildings, structures and/or uncovered commercial areas, or a single building containing four (4) or more individual commercial establishments, planned, developed and managed as a unit related in location and type of shops to the trade areas that the unit serves." RMC 4-2-020K and M include high-density residential development as an intended use in commercial zoning classifications.

SUBJECT:

Net density calculations for multi-family residential development in shopping centers.

BACKGROUND:

The purpose of the net density calculation is to allow staff to calculate how many dwelling units are available to be constructed on a site after the areas specified in RMC 4-11-040D have been deducted from the gross site area. This definition attempts to link the resulting density, of proposed developments, to the net developable area after excluding areas used for access and critical area protection. However, in a Shopping Center access easements may be provided across a large portion of the site for required parking areas and cross access to adjacent properties/businesses. The required deduction of the access easement area is substantially reducing the number of dwelling units available for higher density multi-family residential/mixed-use developments. The requirement for the deduction of the access easement area, within Shopping Centers, for the purpose of calculating net density has become onerous. It does not comply with the purpose and intent of the commercial zoning classifications and may discourage property owners from providing access across parking areas to adjacent properties. Therefore, access easements across shopping centers should not be deducted from gross site area for the purpose of calculating net density.

JUSTIFICATION:

The purpose and intent of the commercial zoning classifications is to encourage high-density residential development. The deduction of the area within access easements across required parking areas reduces the

density available for residential development on the project site and potentially discourages properties from providing access to adjacent properties and businesses if the area within the access easement would reduce the number of dwelling units available on the project site. Therefore, shopping centers should not be required to subtract the area within an access easement for the purpose of calculating net density.

DECISION: Revise the definition of net density to exempt shopping centers from the requirement to deduct the area within access easements for the purpose of calculating net density.

**ADMINISTRATOR
APPROVAL:**

C. E. "Chip" Vincent

DATE: April 2, 2014

**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
AMENDMENTS
NEEDED TO
IMPLEMENT**

DETERMINATIONS: Section 4-11-040D of the Development Regulations will need to be amended to read as shown:

4-11-040D DEFINITIONS D:

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). Developments meeting the definition of a Shopping Center are not required to deduct areas within access easements from the gross site area for the purpose of calculating net density. Required critical area buffers, streams that have been daylighted including restored riparian and aquatic areas, 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 (2) 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.