

MEMORANDUM

TO: City Planning Commission, Committee of the Whole

FROM: [Aaron Hanauer](#), Senior City Planner, (612) 673-2494
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DATE: May 12, 2016

SUBJECT: Proposed zoning code text amendment: Revising minimum lot area requirements for two-family dwellings in the R2 and R2B zoning districts

On April 15, 2016, Council Members Bender and Reich introduced the subject matter of an ordinance amending the zoning code as it relates to the minimum lot area requirements for two-family dwellings in the R2 and R2B Two-Family Districts. The following chapters were introduced:

Chapter 525: Administration and Enforcement
Chapter 546: Residence Districts

The proposed amendment is intended to reduce the minimum lot area required for a two-family dwelling unit. Currently, the minimum lot area to establish a two-family dwelling is 12,000 square feet in the R2 Two-Family District and 10,000 square feet in the R2B Two-Family District.

From 1963 to 1994, two-family dwellings in the R2B District required a minimum lot area of 2,500 square feet per dwelling unit. In 1994, a zoning code text amendment increased that minimum lot area to 10,000 square feet. The minimum lot area for two-family dwelling units in the R2 District from 1963 to 1999 was 6,000 square feet per dwelling unit. In 1999, this minimum lot area in the R2 District for a two-family dwelling unit was amended to 12,000 square feet. As noted above, these regulations remain in place today.

Current proposal for amendment. Staff is currently proposing that the minimum lot area for two-family dwelling units be reduced to 6,000 square feet in the R2 District and 5,000 square feet in the R2B District. An authorized variance which allows the minimum lot area of newly constructed two-family units in the R2B District to be varied up to 55 percent would be eliminated. The minimum lot area could be varied up to 30 percent as is possible in all other districts.

Peer cities research. Staff has conducted initial peer cities research and found that the City of Minneapolis is fairly restrictive in its approach to two-family dwelling units in two-family districts. Most peer cities that have a comparable percentage of two-family homes as an overall percentage of their housing stock to Minneapolis have a minimum lot area requirement between 4,000 and 6,000 square feet for two-family dwelling units in two-family districts. In addition, many other cities in Minnesota also have smaller minimum lot area requirements for two-family dwelling units than Minneapolis.

Feedback requested. The draft ordinance text is provided which would reduce the minimum lot area for two-family dwelling units in both the R2 and R2B Districts. Feedback is requested from the Planning Commission regarding the proposed text amendment.

**AN ORDINANCE
of the
CITY OF
MINNEAPOLIS**

By Bender and Reich

**Amending Title 20, Chapter 525 of the Minneapolis Code of Ordinances relating to Zoning Code:
Administration and Enforcement**

The City Council of the City of Minneapolis do ordain as follows:

Section 1. That section 525.520 (2) b. of the above-entitled ordinance be amended to read as follows:

525.520. Authorized variances.

Variances from the regulations of this zoning ordinance shall be granted by the board of adjustment, city planning commission, or city council only in accordance with the requirements of section 525.500, and may be granted only in the following instances, and in no others:

- (1) To vary the yard requirements, including permitting obstructions into required yards not allowed by the applicable regulations.
- (2) To vary the lot area or lot width requirements up to thirty (30) percent, except for the following uses, where the maximum variance of thirty (30) percent shall not apply.
 - a. To vary the lot area or lot width requirements up to fifty (50) percent for schools, grades K-12, located in the OR2, OR3 and commercial districts.
 - b. ~~To vary the lot area or lot width requirements up to fifty-five (55) percent for newly constructed two-family dwellings located in the R2B District, provided the surrounding properties are primarily two-family dwellings developed on lots similar in size to the proposed development.~~

**AN ORDINANCE
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MINNEAPOLIS**

By Bender and Reich

Amending Title 20, Chapter 546 of the Minneapolis Code of Ordinances relating to Zoning Code: Residence Districts.

The City Council of the City of Minneapolis do ordain as follows:

Section 1. That the following portion of Table 546-7 R2 Lot Dimension and Building Bulk Requirements be amended to read as follows:

Table 546-7 R2 Lot Dimension and Building Bulk Requirements

Uses	Minimum Lot Area (Square Feet)	Minimum Lot Width (Feet)	Maximum Floor Area Ratio (Multiplier)
RESIDENTIAL USES			
Dwellings			
Single-family dwelling	6,000	40	0.5 or 2,500 sq. ft. of GFA, whichever is greater
Two-family dwelling	12,000 6,000	40	0.5 or 2,500 sq. ft. of GFA per unit, whichever is greater

Section 2. That the following portion of Table 546-9 R2B Lot Dimensions and Building Bulk Requirements be amended to read as follows:

Table 546-9 R2B Lot Dimensions and Building Bulk Requirements

Uses	Minimum Lot Area (Square Feet)	Minimum Lot Width (Feet)	Maximum Floor Area Ratio (Multiplier)
RESIDENTIAL USES			
Dwellings			
Single-family dwelling	5,000	40	0.5 or 2,500 sq. ft. of GFA, whichever is greater
Two-family dwelling, existing on January 1, 1995	5,000	40	0.5 or 2,500 sq. ft. of GFA, whichever is greater
Two-family dwelling, established after January 1, 1995	10,000	40	0.5 or 2,500 sq. ft. of GFA, whichever is greater