

Addendum 2 to the Draft ULDR Modifications Plan



Outline of Recommended Changes to the Neighborhood Compatibility Section of the ULDR

Introduction to this Outline

The draft ULDR Modifications Plan recommends that the city's compatibility criteria be refined for use in residential contexts and also extends their application to residential projects, see page 5-36.

This paper proposes an outline for a new section of criteria to be written specifically for residential zone districts; this would become a part of Section 47-25 in the ULDR.

Note that the text here is not the specific language that would be developed for adoption as ordinance, but is provided to give a sense of the intent and direction that this section would take. The actual criteria would include more refined text, as well as illustrations to demonstrate intent of the language and aid in interpretation of the standards. Also note that it uses conventional outline numbering and therefore, it does not at this point follow the numbering system in the code itself.

There also may be situations in which the criteria suggested in this outline will actually be covered in a separate part of the code, as is recommended in the modifications plan. However, the topic is retained here at this stage, to assure that the issue is addressed at least in one place. In some cases, there also will be a cross-reference to another part of the code that also applies.

The objectives for these revised section of compatibility criteria are:

- To provide more guidance for staff when they determine compatibility for development in residential neighborhoods
- To address more qualitative aspects of compatibility that cannot be easily defined in prescriptive standards elsewhere in the code
- To provide an option to property owners for more flexibility in meeting certain standards proposed in the modifications plan

Addendum Authors

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1.0 Applicability:

This would be a new section of the Neighborhood Compatibility section of the development code, which would apply exclusively to the residential zone districts, and suggested in Table 15.5 of the Draft ULDR Modifications Plan (May 20, 2010.). The existing section on neighborhood compatibility would remain unchanged, as it would continue to apply to other situations, including commercial and mixed-use zone districts. These refined residential criteria also would be used in special overlays that could be adopted.

Intent of the Compatibility Criteria:

“Development will be compatible with, and preserve the character and integrity of adjacent neighborhoods, the development shall include improvements or modifications either on-site or within the public rights-of-way to mitigate adverse impacts, such as traffic, noise, odors, shadow, scale, visual nuisances, or other similar adverse effects to adjacent neighborhoods.” (From the current section 47-25 of the ULDR.)

General Requirements:

“In order to ensure that a development will be compatible with, and preserve the character and integrity of adjacent neighborhoods, the development shall include improvements or modifications either on-site or within the public rights-of-way to mitigate adverse impacts, such as traffic, noise, odors, shadow, scale, visual nuisances, or other similar adverse effects to adjacent neighborhoods. These improvements or modifications may include, but shall not be limited to, the placement or orientation of buildings and entryways, parking areas, bufferyards, alteration of building mass, and the addition of landscaping, walls, or both, to ameliorate such impacts. Roadway adjustments, traffic control devices or mechanisms, and access restrictions may be required to control traffic flow or divert traffic as needed to reduce or eliminate development generated traffic on neighborhood streets.” (From the current section 47-25 of the ULDR.)

Steps in Reviewing for Compatibility:

In reviewing a project for compliance with this section, the reviewer and applicant would be required to follow these steps:

Step 1. Determine key features of the context for the project.

(See the section below, describing how to define the context.)

Step 2. Determine goals for the area in which the project is located.

Step 3. Determine which compatibility criteria will apply.

Step 4. Evaluate the proposal, using the selected criteria.

2.0 Determining the goals related to neighborhood compatibility for a project context

Each project shall be consistent with the design goals for the area. The goals shall be determined by referring to the following:

2.1 General Goals for Different Contexts:

For areas where traditional character is to be maintained:

Compatibility shall be determined for these “areas of stability” by fitting with the established context, based on characteristics that already exist and which are valued.

For areas where a transition in character is planned:

Compatibility shall be determined by how a project fits with goals for future character of the area. This applies to “areas in transition,” which are changing to a new, predetermined character (usually with some higher density residential).

In determining which goals shall apply, the City will consider:

- The underlying zoning
- The range of permitted uses and building types. (This signals the anticipated character of an area.)
- The General Goals for different residential contexts in the city

(Note: In order to help define the range of goals that may exist for an area, the description of Goals for Compatibility, which appear in Chapter 3 of the Draft ULDR Modifications Plan, would be used .)

2.2 Goals set forth in Neighborhood Plans:

“Consideration shall be given to the recommendations of the adopted neighborhood master plan in which the proposed development is to be located, or which it abuts, although such neighborhood master plan shall not be considered to have the force and effect of law.” (From the current section 47-25 of the ULDR.)

3.0 Determining the context for the project

3.1 Compatibility with Context

A project shall be compatible with the residential context. In considering compatibility with specific design criteria, these methods shall be used to determine the context:

3.1.1 Context boundaries

The context for a project will be considered at these levels:

a. Immediate Context:

- All properties in the same block face
- All properties in the same block that abut the rear of the property, or that are separated from it by an alley or a water way
- All properties in the same block, on the opposite side the street

b. Properties within the same general development pattern area (See below.)

c. Properties within the immediate boundaries of the same zoning district

d. Properties within the neighborhood, as defined on the city’s map of recognized neighborhood organizations

3.1.2 Development Patterns

For “areas of stability,” the established development patterns shall be considered in determining the key features of the context that are to be respected. For “areas of transition,” the anticipated development patterns, as defined in a Neighborhood Plan, or as determined in other goals statements for the area, would be used. The description of Development Patterns, found in Chapter 3 of the Modifications Plan, would be inserted here and also would apply.

3.2 Defining Key Features of the Context

In determining compatibility, the key features of the context that are valued shall be considered. [Note: A discussion outlining the types of features to consider would be inserted here. These include elements that define the character of the street, the mass and scale of buildings, the setback patterns and quality of open space.]

4.0 The Criteria for Compatibility at a Block Level of Design

This section contains criteria that address the overall character of the street, and the relationship of the project site to collection of properties that face it in the block, in terms of contributing to a sense of neighborhood identity, providing a pedestrian-friendly atmosphere, and establishing a unified streetscape.

4.1 Street trees

- Maintain an established rhythm of spacing of street trees.
- Where no pattern exists, plant new trees to establish a pattern.
- Use trees that will contribute to a street canopy.

“Street trees. In order to provide for adequate landscaping along streets within the city, street trees shall be required along the length of the property abutting a street. A minimum of fifty percent (50%) of the required street trees shall be shade trees, and the remaining street trees may be provided as flowering or palm trees. These percentages may be varied based on existing or proposed physical conditions which may prevent the ability to comply with the street tree requirements of this subsection. The street trees shall be planted at a minimum height and size in accordance with the requirements of Section 47-21, Landscape and Tree Preservation Requirements, except in the downtown RAC districts the requirements of Sec. 47-13.20.H.8 shall apply. The location and number of street trees shall be determined by the department based on the height, bulk, mass and design of the structures on the site and the proposed development’s compatibility to surrounding properties. The requirements for street trees, as provided herein, may be located within the public right-of-way as approved by the entity with jurisdiction over the abutting right-of-way.” (From the current section 47-25 of the ULDR. To be edited for clarity and illustrated.)

4.2 Swales in the public right of way

- Preserve swales as green space.
- Paving should be permitted only for driveways crossing the swale.

4.3 Sidewalks

- Install sidewalks to maintain continuity of pedestrian circulation system along a block.

4.4 Alleys

- Retain alleys for use as public access.

4.5 Streets and Auto Circulation On-site

“Roadway adjustments, traffic control devices or mechanisms, and access restrictions may be required to control traffic flow or divert traffic as needed to reduce or eliminate development generated traffic on neighborhood streets.” (From the current section 47-25 of the ULDR. To be edited for clarity and illustrated.) [Also add guidelines for internal circulation on site for multifamily building types.]

5.0 The Criteria for Site Design

5.1 Landscaping in front yard setback

[Provide guidelines to address the quality of landscaping, to coordinate with the new proposed requirement for minimum percentage of landscaping in the setback.]

5.2 Landscaping in side yard setbacks

[Provide illustrated guidelines.]

5.3 Landscaping in rear yard setbacks

[Provide illustrated guidelines]

5.4 Bufferyard requirements.

“When a use which is subject to the requirements of this Sec. 47-25.3 is contiguous to any residential property, the property where the use is located shall be required to have a landscaped strip area and a physical barrier between it and the residential property. Such landscape strip shall meet the following requirements:

Landscape strip requirements. A ten (10) foot landscape strip shall be required to be located along all property lines which are adjacent to residential property. Such landscape strip shall include trees, shrubs and ground cover as provided in the landscape provisions of Section 47-21, Landscape and Tree Preservation Requirements. The width of the landscape area shall extend to the property line. All required landscaping shall be protected from vehicular encroachment. When walls are required on nonresidential property abutting an alley, required shrubbery shall be installed and located within the landscape area on the exterior of the wall.” [From the current section 47-25 of the ULDR. To be edited for clarity and illustrated.]

5.5 Surface parking areas

Intent: to minimize visual impacts of surface parking areas, as perceived from neighboring properties and from the public street.

“Parking should be provided consistent with the proposed use, adjacent development and as required under Section 47-20. Access drives to parking should be limited to those necessary for the function of the facility and comply with vehicular ingress/egress guidelines outlined herein. Direct backout or “head-in” parking should be expressly prohibited.” [From the current section 47-25 of the ULDR. To be edited for clarity and illustrated.]

“Grade level parking must be adequately screened so parked cars are not visible from adjoining public corridors, and landscaped to moderate views from surrounding buildings.” [From the current section 47-25 of the ULDR. To be edited for clarity and illustrated.]

“Parking perimeters may incorporate walls, fencing, mounds and/or landscape treatments to meet the screening requirement providing these elements are compatible with adjoining public sector site elements and allow safe and secure use of parking facilities. Trash, storage and mechanical equipment located within parking facilities should also comply with the screening requirements outlined herein.” [From the current section 47-25 of the ULDR. To be edited for clarity and illustrated.]

“Grade level parking lots should be appropriately screened from adjacent pedestrian areas with walls, fencing and/or planting. Shrubs surrounding ground level parking lots should be of sufficient height to hide automobile grill work. Landscape material used to meet the above requirements should provide 100% screening within one growing season, and must be provided with an automatic irrigation system.” [From the current section 47-25 of the ULDR. To be edited for clarity and illustrated.]

5.6 Urban Open Spaces

“The following amenities should be encouraged within urban open spaces: ornamental fountains, waterfalls, sculpture, trellises, arbors, seating facilities, landscape features, etc. Design features of these open spaces should serve to enhance the visual and functional quality of the adjoining corridor and be compatible with public sector site elements.” [From the current section 47-25 of the ULDR. To be edited for clarity and illustrated.]

5.7 Detached parking garages

Intent: To encourage use of detached parking garages as a means of reducing overall perceived mass and scale on a site, while maintaining compatibility with context.

A detached garage which is permitted to encroach into the rear setback shall meet these requirements:

- One story only
- No use above
- Subdued building forms and details

“Covered parking should also be encouraged providing the overhead structures are compatible with adjoining architecture/ site elements and comply with the building rooftop design guidelines outlined herein.” [From the current section 47-25 of the ULDR. To be edited for clarity and illustrated.]

5.8 Fences and Screen Walls

[Provide illustrated guidelines.]

5.9 Building Orientation, Views, Light and Air

“Buildings should be oriented to take advantage of southeasterly breezes for summer cooling and interrupt occasionally strong northeasterly winds.

Buildings should allow adequate space between structural masses for the passage of natural breezes. New building masses should be sited to the extent feasible so they maintain reasonable views to the ocean and Intracoastal Waterway from existing structures.” [From the current section 47-25 of the ULDR. To be edited for clarity and illustrated.]

5.10 Landscaping

“Private sector landscape planting should be consistent with the proposed use, adjacent development, and as required under Section 47-12 of the ULDR. Existing trees should be preserved or otherwise mitigated as outlined in the ordinance. Plant material should be used in a contemporary urban context, acknowledging the limitations of the beach environment, and creating a lush tropical environment in keeping with the visual quality of the beach and adjoining public corridors.

Plant massings should be rich in material, with special attention given to the ground plane treatment. Color should be used in bold, massive statements where appropriate.

Private sector plant material which immediately abuts and is readily visible from adjoining public corridors should reflect the species, size, and spacing of the public sector landscape and provide a cohesive visual and functional transition without interruption.

Landscape design and maintenance should be compatible with public sector site elements. Private sector landscape planting should be consistent with the proposed use, adjacent development, and as required under Section 47-12.

Property abutting the Intracoastal Waterway should have trees and palms planted along this water frontage. Landscape design and maintenance should be compatible with public sector site elements.” [From the current section 47-25 of the ULDR. To be edited for clarity and illustrated.]

6.0 The Criteria for Building Design

6.1 Building Massing & height

Intent: To reduce the perceived scale of building as experienced from neighboring properties, where traditional scale is a defined feature of the context. Also, to promote a sense of pedestrian-friendly scale in all areas, especially as seen from the street and along transition areas.

6.1.1 Overall Height:

“Buildings should be encouraged to vary in overall height and not be contained in a single volume of continuous height. “

- Divide larger building masses into “modules” to reduce perceived scale.
- Step down building height nearer property edges.

6.1.2 Vertical Plane Modulation:

“Buildings exceeding thirty-five (35) feet in height should be encouraged to maintain no more than three (3) stories without horizontal modulation in vertical surface plane. This modulation should consist of a minimum four feet horizontal variation in surface plane such as brise soleil, balconies, building projections, etc.” [to be edited to relate more to residential building types]

6.1.3 Height along transitional zoning district boundaries:

- Step down building height nearer property edges.
- Provide landscape buffer
- Articulate walls to provide interest and sense of human scale. A menu of options would be provided (see example below - 6.2.1.)

6.2 Building Articulation

Intent: To reduce the perceived scale of building mass

6.2.1 Variation in wall planes

Provide articulation to reduce perceived scale and provide visual interest. Articulation must be expressed in ways that are substantial, and are consistent throughout the building form. (i.e. a wall offset must be of an effective depth, and should not appear as a thin veneer. To be explained in the criteria.)

A menu of options for building articulation would be provided, with guidance about determining the adequacy of each:

- Wall off-sets
- Changes in materials in color, texture and finish (inherent to the building materials), to express horizontal lines, or to express building modules
- Reveals and moldings that substantially break up the surface area and provide distinctive shadow patterns.
- Variation of cornice and eave lines
- Varied roof forms

6.2.2 Variation in Cornice Height:

“All buildings should be encouraged to display a uniform cornice height of a maximum of thirty-five (35) feet in height. This cornice height should consist of a uniform alteration to the building massing for a minimum of twenty (20) feet perpendicular to the vertical surface. “[From the current section 47-25 of the ULDR. To be edited for clarity and illustrated.]

6.2.3 Articulation of Facade Treatment:

“The first thirty-five (35) feet of exterior facade vertical plane should be encouraged to enhance the pedestrian environment by incorporating appropriate architectural features. Such features include cornice detailing, belt courses, corbelling, molding, stringcourses, ornamentation, changes in material or color, and other sculpting of the architectural surface which add special interest and are compatible with public sector site elements.” [From the current section 47-25 of the ULDR. To be edited for clarity and illustrated.]

6.3 Building Materials

Intent: To promote the use of materials that build a sense of visual continuity with the context, while providing for individuality and accent in the streetscape; and to minimize potential negative environmental impacts, in terms of glare and heat gain on adjacent properties.

6.3.1 Primary Materials

- Materials are to be Consistent with those in the context
- Avoid glare onto adjacent properties

6.3.2 Finishes

Roof and exterior wall finishes should be light in color to encourage maximum reflection/minimum transmission of heat loadings.

6.4 Fenestration

Intent: To maintain traditional window patterns along the street, where these are defined characteristics; to minimize negative environmental impacts from glare; and to minimize impacts on privacy. Factors to address:

- Percentage of solid to void
- Reflectivity
- Location
- Grills

“A majority of the first floor facade on these frontages should be windows, doors or other transparent architectural features. Expanses of solid wall should be minimized. Reflective surfaces on windows or doors should be discouraged. Exterior glass surfaces should be shaded to improve energy efficiently.” [From the current section 47-25 of the ULDR. To be edited for clarity and illustrated.]

6.5 Balconies & Roof Terraces

Intent: To promote the use of balconies and roof terraces as a means of providing visual interest and reducing building mass, while providing a reasonable sense of privacy for adjoining properties.

Topics to address:

- Balcony location & orientation
- Limit the length of a single balcony when placed within 10 feet of a side yard setback.
- Require a minimum spacing distance between such balconies.

6.6 Architectural Details

[The intent is not to dictate architectural styles, but to provide elements that will help provide a sense of human scale that is compatible with the neighborhood]

Topics to address:

- Ornamental details
- Awnings & Canopies
- Depth of framing, trim elements

6.7 Garage doors integrated into a primary structure

Intent: To minimize the visual impacts of garage doors and related driveways as viewed from the street, in order to promote a pedestrian-friendly public sidewalk realm. (Note that a limit on the percentage of overall front wall length that can be garage doors is proposed in Chapter 5 of the Modifications Plan.)

6.7.1 Placement

Define a menu of options for garage placement and orientation:

6.7.2 Other methods of minimizing garage door impact on the street:

- Blend garage door with wall material
- Divide into single car garage doors

6.8 Building entry definition

Intent: To establish a clear connection between individual residential units and the street.

Require that, for all residential units at the street facing edge of the property, the primary entrance must be clearly defined.

Menu of options for defining primary entrance:

Directly facing the street:

- Porch, projecting forward or inset
- Recessed entry, with distinct material framing it
- Gate in front fence or hedge, with gate posts

If not facing the street:

- Located within 10 feet of front façade
- Defined with a porch, portico or canopy
- Walkway clearly defined and separate from any driveway

6.9 Primary building façade

Design the primary façade to convey human scale

- Have active residential use
- Minimize cars
- Orient to street; provide sense of connection to neighborhood

6.10 Structured Parking

The first floor of all structured parking should be designed to encourage pedestrian activity.

“Structured parking facilities should be designed with street level frontages consisting of occupied space or an architecturally articulated facade which screens the parking area of the structure. Street level openings to parking structures should occur only on side streets and be minimized to accommodate necessary vehicle entrances and pedestrian access only.” [From the current section 47-25 of the ULDR. To be edited for clarity and illustrated.]

7.0 The Criteria for Other General Considerations of Compatibility

This section includes design criteria for elements that may occur in site designs and on buildings.

7.1 Lighting

[The existing lighting standards, which seek to minimize glare and light spill onto adjacent properties, would be edited for clarity, illustrated, and inserted here.]

7.2 Loading facilities.

Loading and service facilities shall be screened so as not to be visible from abutting residential uses or vacant residential zoned property. [From the current section 47-25 of the ULDR. To be edited for clarity and illustrated.]

7.3 Rooftop mechanical equipment

All rooftop mechanical equipment, stair and elevator towers shall be designed as an integral part of the building volume and shall be required to be screened with material that matches the material used for the principal structure and shall be at least as high as six (6) inches above the top most surface of the roof mounted structure.

“All rooftop mechanical equipment, stair and elevator towers should be designed as an integral part of the building volume and/or adequately screened.” [From the current section 47-25 of the ULDR. To be edited for clarity and illustrated.]

7.4 Dumpster regulations.

“All solid waste refuse containers (dumpsters) shall be set back a minimum of twelve (12) feet from any property line which is contiguous to residential property, and shall be screened in accordance with the Dumpster requirements, as provided in Section 47-19, Accessory Uses, Buildings and Structures.” [From the current section 47-25 of the ULDR. To be edited for clarity and illustrated.]

7.5 Trash/Loading Facilities/Service Areas:

“All building facilities for loading, trash and service should be incorporated within building volume and screened so as not to be visible from the street and pedestrian circulation areas. Where buildings are of inadequate volume to accommodate these facilities, trash/loading facilities should be architecturally treated as part of the building mass and screened by solid walls, fences, planting or architectural devices.” [From the current section 47-25 of the ULDR. To be edited for clarity and illustrated.]