

HOUSING ISSUES - COTTAGE HOUSING

HOUSING CHALLENGE:

- Counties and cities planning under the Growth Management Act are required to plan for the availability of affordable housing for all economic segments as part of their planning effort (RCW 36.70A.020, Goal 4).
- In addition, they are to “...promote a variety of residential densities and housing types.”
- Local jurisdictions need to implement a variety of housing types and densities in order to be flexible and responsive to ever-changing local demographics. Cottage housing is a housing alternative that jurisdictions should consider.

PROPOSED SOLUTION:

- Each jurisdiction should adopt policies and regulations that ensure local governments have the capacity to accommodate housing and employment growth as required by the GMA.
- Cottage housing consists of detached units arranged in clusters, with a courtyard or walkway in the middle. They may or may not have storage units. Typically these are smaller units (450 to 1200 sq.ft) that are most often located in single family zones and often have condominium-type land ownership.
- The units tend to sell well. They are primarily targeted for single individuals but others consider these units when looking for an alternative to purchasing a condominium. This alternative offers the advantages of single family houses by offering privacy, a sense of neighborhood, new construction and ownership at an affordable price.
- This housing choice offers an alternative for those seeking a single family neighborhood experience but with a smaller-sized unit than typically offered in single family neighborhoods. Individuals considering these units do not have a need for lots of storage.

Sample Ordinance – Cottage Housing

Policy: Adopt regulations that provide for the creation of cottage housing.

Comment: This document is to be used to enact or amend a local ordinance relating to cottage housing. The form is designed to be a starting place for discussion and negotiation. You may choose to use all or part of the suggested language. You are also encouraged to come up with additional language that fits your local circumstances.

Note: There are a few tables and drawings to illustrate requirements. These are examples which decision makers can determine whether or not to use. The standards specified in the following sample ordinance may need to be modified to reflect the community's requirements for this type of development.

Chapter 00.00 - COTTAGE HOUSING

00.00.010 Purpose and intent - The general purposes of the cottage housing development design standards are as follows:

A. A cottage housing development is an alternative type of detached housing providing small residences for households of typically one to two individuals. Cottage housing is provided as part of the city's overall housing strategy which intends to encourage affordability, innovation and variety in housing design and site development while ensuring compatibility with existing neighborhoods, and to promote a variety of housing choices to meet the needs of a population diverse in age, income, household composition and individual needs.

B. The cottage housing development design standards contained in this section are intended to create a small community of cottages oriented around open space that is pedestrian-oriented and minimizes the visibility of off-street parking. These design standards are intended to ensure that cottage housing developments include pedestrian amenities and take advantage of existing natural features on the site including topography and vegetation. The cottage housing development design standards are intended to maintain traditional cottage amenities and proportions and ensure that cottage housing developments contribute to the overall community character.

C. Cottage housing may allow higher residential density than is normally allowed in the underlying zone district. This increased density is possible through the use of smaller than average home sizes, clustered parking, and site design standards.

D. Cottage housing developments proposed in the R-I zone are subject to special density standards and additional conditional use permit approval criteria. These special standards recognize that land located in the R-I zone is more likely to have stormwater related constraints, contain or be located in close proximity to environmentally sensitive areas, and/or lack full urban infrastructure at the time of development.

E. All cottage housing developments are subject to current city stormwater standards and shall incorporate stormwater low impact development techniques whenever possible.

00.00.020 Applicability, application process, and design review.

Applicability of this section, application procedure and the process for design review is pursuant to Chapter _____.

00.00.030 Density, number of cottage housing units and minimum lot area.

A. In cottage housing developments the permitted densities shall be as follows:

Zoning District	R-I Low Density Residential	R-II Medium Density Single-Family	R-III Medium Density Multifamily
Maximum Cottage Density	1 cottage dwelling unit per 5,000 sf	1 cottage dwelling unit per 3,333 sf	1 cottage dwelling unit per 2,857 sf
Minimum number of cottages per cottage housing development	4	4	4
Maximum number of cottages per cottage housing development	8	12	14
Minimum lot size (accommodates 4 cottages)	20,000 sf	13,332 sf	11,428 sf

B. Projects that exceed the above maximums must be processed as planned unit developments per Chapter _____ (*Note: Decision makers can choose to use or not use a planned unit development process for projects exceeding a certain number of units*).

00.00.040 Existing nonconforming structures and accessory dwelling units.

A. On a lot to be used for a cottage housing development, an existing detached single-family residential structure, which may be nonconforming with respect to the standards of this chapter, shall be permitted to remain, but the extent of the nonconformity may not be increased. Such nonconforming dwelling units shall be included in the maximum permitted cottage density.

1. Nonconforming dwelling units may be modified to be more consistent with this chapter.

B. New accessory dwelling units (ADUs) are not permitted in cottage housing developments. All residential units in a cottage housing development count towards the maximum permitted density. An existing attached or detached ADU that is accessory to an existing nonconforming single-family structure may be counted as a cottage unit if the property is developed subject to the provisions of this chapter.

00.00.050 Building height.

A. Objective. Structures in cottage housing developments shall be designed to be single story or single story plus a loft. Because the base density is higher and building separation less than on typical residential lots, it is important to maintain a feeling of adequate light and open space by providing more restrictive maximum roof heights and roof proportion standards.

1. The maximum building height permitted for structures in cottage housing developments shall be 18 feet.
2. The highest point of a pitched roof may extend up to 23 feet.

00.00.060 Exterior trim and roof eaves.

A. Objective. Cottage housing development structures shall be provided with substantial exterior trim elements consistent with traditional northwest cottage design and small home craftsmanship. Roofs in cottage housing developments shall have eaves to recognize traditional northwest cottage design traits to efficiently shed rain, and provide rain protection for exterior walls. Departures from these standards (exterior trim and eave requirements) shall be reviewed through the alternative design review process.

Alternative exterior trim and eave designs shall demonstrate a coherent cottage housing design based upon traditional design principles including weather protection.

1. Window and door trim with a minimum width of three and one-half inches shall be provided on all cottage housing developments structures.
2. Eaves of at least 12 inches shall be provided on all cottage structures on at least two sides of each building. Where buildings are not square (one set of exterior parallel walls are longer than the other), the eaves shall be provided on the parallel walls that are the longest.

00.00.070 Covered main entry porches.

A. Objective. All residences in cottage housing developments shall be provided with a covered main entry porch to create a private outdoor space protected from the weather and provide a transition from the interior private residential space to the semi-private outdoor space. Covered porches shall be usable both in design and dimension.

1. Cottage homes shall have a covered main entry porch with a floor area measuring at least 60 square feet in size.
2. The floor of the covered main entry porch shall have minimum dimensions of not less than five feet in any direction (length or width).

00.00.080 Street facing facades.

A. Objective. The street facing facades of cottages in a cottage housing development will contribute to the neighborhood by including attractive design details such as windows, changes in materials, and views of front doors or porches. The main entries of some cottages will be visible from the adjacent streets to provide a visual pedestrian connection with the surrounding neighborhood.

1. All cottages shall have street facing facades that avoid blank walls or appear to “turn their backs” to the street. All cottages shall include one or more of the following on-street facing facades:

- a. Changes in exterior siding material and paint color;
 - b. Windows which may include bay windows; and/or
 - c. Building modulation with a depth measuring at least one foot.
2. At least one cottage shall have its front main entry door and/or front porches visible from each street frontage.

00.00.090 Lot coverage area.

A. Objective. Cottage housing developments shall not exceed underlying lot coverage standards for the respective zoning district to maintain residential neighborhood character and the balance of built structures to open spaces.

- 1. The maximum lot coverage permitted for all structures in cottage housing developments shall not exceed the requirements for the underlying zoning district.

00.00.100 Cottage floor area.

A. Objective. Structures in cottage housing developments shall be designed to be single story or single story plus a loft. Residences in cottage housing developments are primarily intended for one- and two-person households and their occasional guests. Maintaining the maximum square footage of residences in cottage housing developments is necessary to prevent overbuilding of the site and to not exceed available off-street parking.

- 1. The maximum ground floor area for an individual principal structure in a cottage housing development shall be as follows:
 - a. For at least 50 percent of the units, the ground floor area may not exceed 650 square feet.
 - b. For no more than 50 percent of the units, the ground floor area may be up to 800 square feet.
 - c. The net total floor area of each cottage shall not exceed one and one-half times the area of the main level.

00.00.110 Yards – Building setbacks from exterior lot lines.

A. Objective. Exterior lot line building setbacks in cottage housing developments are based upon setbacks in the _____ zoning district. These yard setbacks are appropriate based upon the allowed density of cottage housing as well as the small size of the structures. Flexible setbacks are allowed per the discretion of the _____ (*Note: This needs to reference the Community Development Director, Planning Director or other administrator*) to obtain improved site design and to avoid impacting existing physical features on the site such as trees.

- 1. Front yard and street side yard on corner lots shall be 10 feet:
 - a. Exception: The _____ director in consultation with the public works director may authorize the setback averaging from the public right-of-way. In such cases the setback average shall be 10 feet and at no point less than five feet where the location of all structures, landscaping and other improvements will not conflict with future improvements in the right-of-way. Fences may not be placed in the right-of-way and are subject to Chapter _____.

2. Rear Yard Building Setback. The minimum rear yard shall be 10 feet, unless abutting an alley, then the minimum setback shall be five feet.
3. Side Yard Building Setback – Interior Lot Lines. The minimum side yard setback shall be five feet for interior lot lines.

00.00.120 Cottage housing development building separation.

A. Objective. Structures within cottage housing developments shall observe minimum setbacks from other cottage housing development structures to avoid overcrowding the site and to maintain a sense of privacy within the cottages themselves.

1. All buildings within a cottage housing development shall maintain a minimum separation of 10 feet from cottages within a cottage housing development measured from the nearest point of the exterior walls. Accessory buildings shall comply with building code requirements for separation from noncottage structures.

00.00.130 Common open space.

A. Objective. Open space that is commonly owned by all members of a cottage housing development is an important feature of any site design. It is intended that the open space be adequately sized and centrally located with individual cottage entrances oriented towards the open space.

1. Common Open Space. A minimum of 400 square feet per cottage unit of common open space is required. Parking areas, yard setbacks, spaces between buildings of 10 feet or less in width, private open space, and driveways do not qualify as common open space.
2. Proximity to Common Open Space.
 - a. At least 50 percent of the cottage units shall abut a common open space, all of the cottage units shall be within 60 feet walking distance measured from the nearest entrance of the cottage along the shortest safe walking route to the nearest point of the common open space. The common open space shall have cottages abutting at least two sides.
 - b. For the purposes of cottage housing, “common open space” shall be the central space that may be used by all occupants of the cottage complex.

00.00.140 Private open space.

A. Objective. Each residential unit in a cottage housing development shall be provided an area of private open space. The private open space shall separate the main entrance to the cottage from the common open space to create a sense of privacy and shall be oriented to take advantage of solar orientation and other natural features to create a small but pleasant private yard area. The private open space may be separated from the common open space with a small hedge, picket fence, or other similar visual separation to create a sense of separate ownership.

1. Each cottage unit shall be provided with a minimum of 200 square feet of usable private open space separated from the common open space by a hedge or fence not to exceed 36 inches in height.
2. No dimension of the private open space shall be less than eight feet.

00.00.150 Tree conservation.

Cottage housing developments shall be designed to incorporate existing trees to the extent possible. New trees shall be located to create amenities in the common open space, private open space, provide shade where appropriate, to create separation between buildings when desired, and to screen and soften the perimeter of parking areas and street facing sides of cottage housing developments.

Preservation of existing trees, and/or new trees, shall be provided consistent with Chapter _____, *(Note: Reference to adopted Tree Preservation code section if there one is adopted)*. Native trees and other vegetation shall be preserved to the extent possible and the overall site design shall take advantage of the location of existing trees as well as natural openings or clearings on forested sites.

00.00.160 Stormwater low impact development techniques.

A. Objective. Cottage housing developments shall be designed to take advantage of open space and landscaped features to utilize stormwater low impact development techniques including natural filtration and on-site infiltration of stormwater.

1. Low impact development techniques for stormwater management shall be used wherever possible. Such techniques may include the use of pervious pavers in parking areas and for walkways, directing roof drains and parking lot runoff to landscape beds, green or living roofs, and the use of rain barrels.
2. In the R-I zone, cottages shall be located so as to maximize natural stormwater functions. In this zone, cottages shall be clustered and parking areas shall be located to preserve as much contiguous, permanently undeveloped open space and native vegetation as possible.).

00.00.170 Off-street parking.

A. Objective. Off-street parking space requirements for cottage housing developments shall be less than normally required for detached single-family residences. These reduced standards are based upon the cottages being smaller than average detached single-family homes and on average containing fewer occupants. Off-street parking shall be located and designed to be less visible from frontage streets than the cottages themselves. Off-street parking shall be designed to maintain a pedestrian character for the overall cottage housing development. Clustering parking to the side or rear of a cottage project will most often best accomplish these goals. However, on a site-specific basis, design solutions other than clustering may be found to meet this objective through the alternative design process. Parking areas shall be attractively landscaped to screen parking from adjacent properties and street rights-of-way and shall meet applicable parking lot landscape standards.

1. Parking Ratios.

Total Net Floor Area of Cottage or Nonconforming Dwelling Unit	Ratio of Off-Street Parking Spaces Required per Cottage or Nonconforming Dwelling Unit
Up to 1,000 square feet	1.25 parking spaces
1,001 to 1,200 square feet	1.5 parking spaces

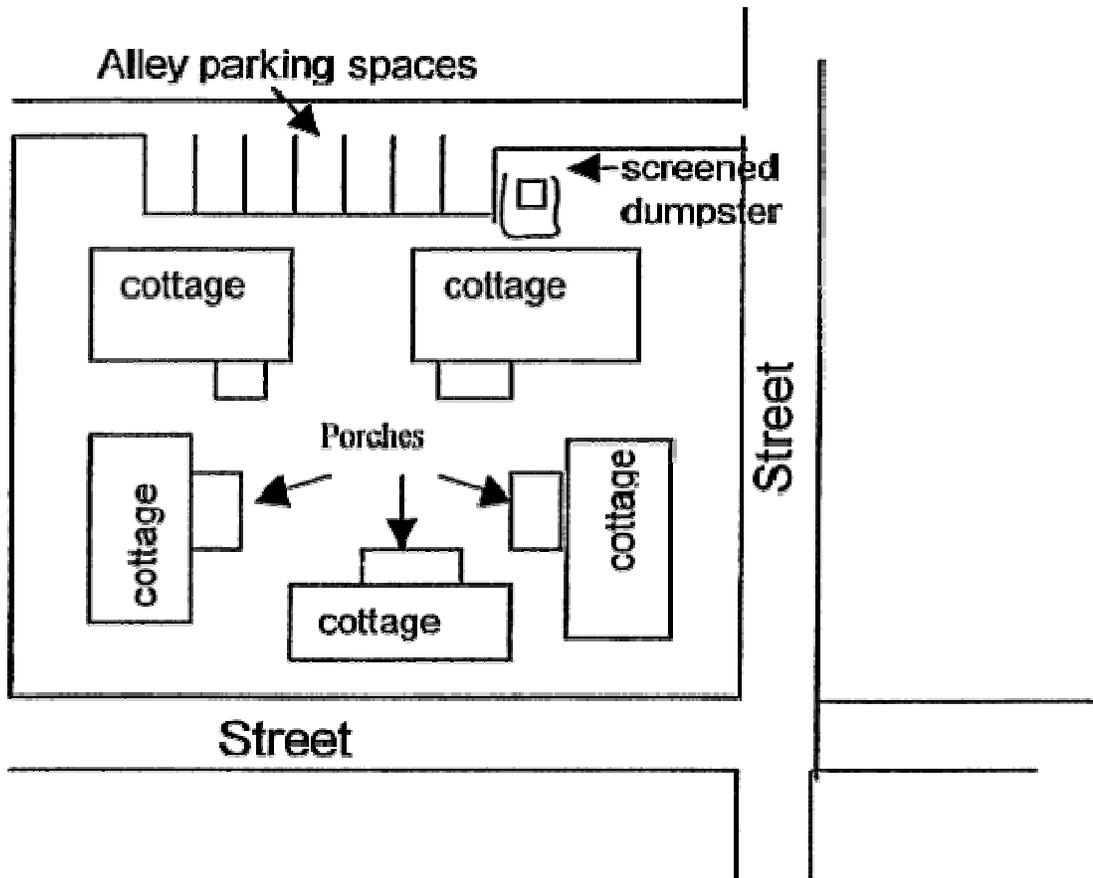
Existing nonconforming single-family residence	2 parking spaces
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2. Off-Street Parking Location. Parking shall be located on the cottage housing development property. Off-street parking lots shall be located to the side or rear of the cottage housing development (see illustrations below). Parking lots shall not be located between the cottage housing development and the primary street frontage.

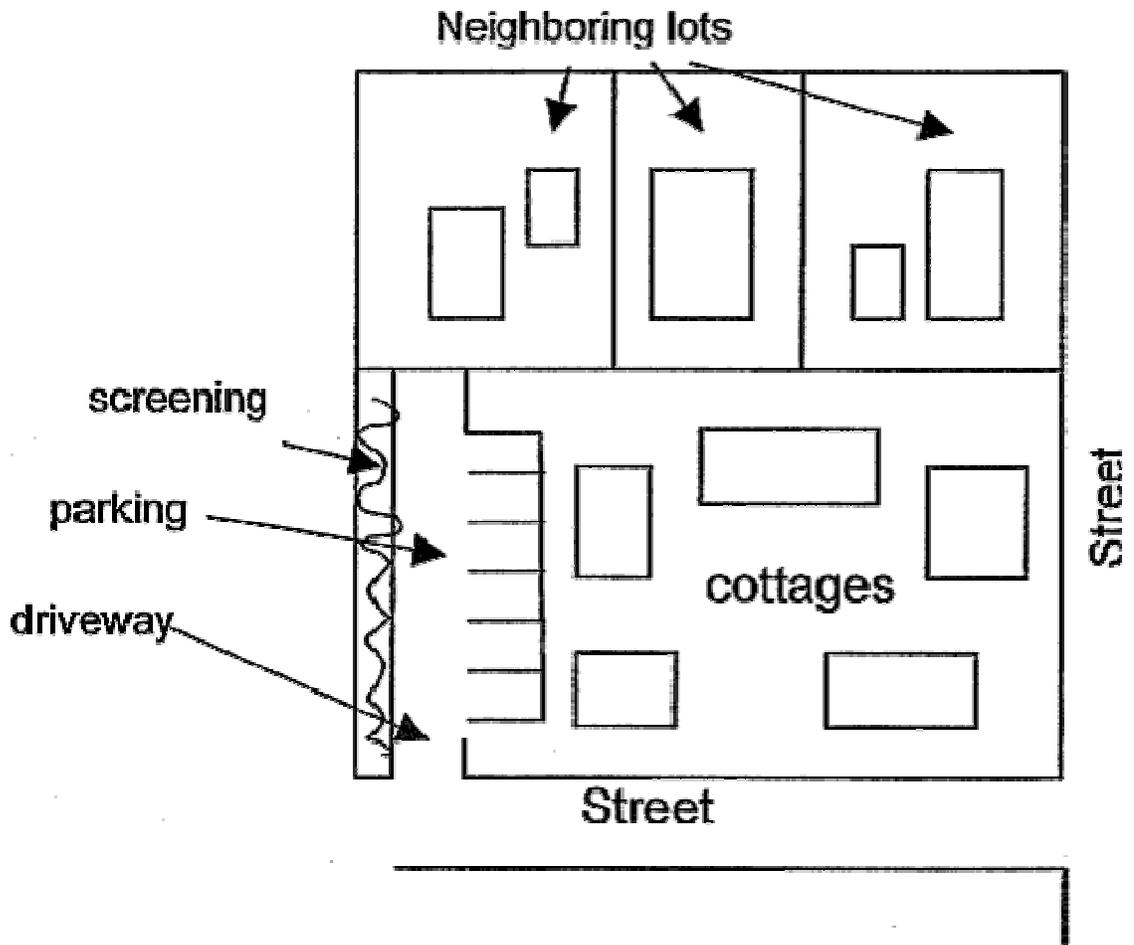
a. Off-Street Parking Screening. Off-street parking may be located in or under a non-cottage parking structure (such as a single or multi-auto carport or garage), but such structures shall not be attached to individual cottages. Uncovered parking is also permitted; provided, that off-street parking shall be screened from direct street view from one or more street facades by garage doors, or by a fence and landscaping.

b. Preferred locations for parking, in descending order of preference, are as follows:

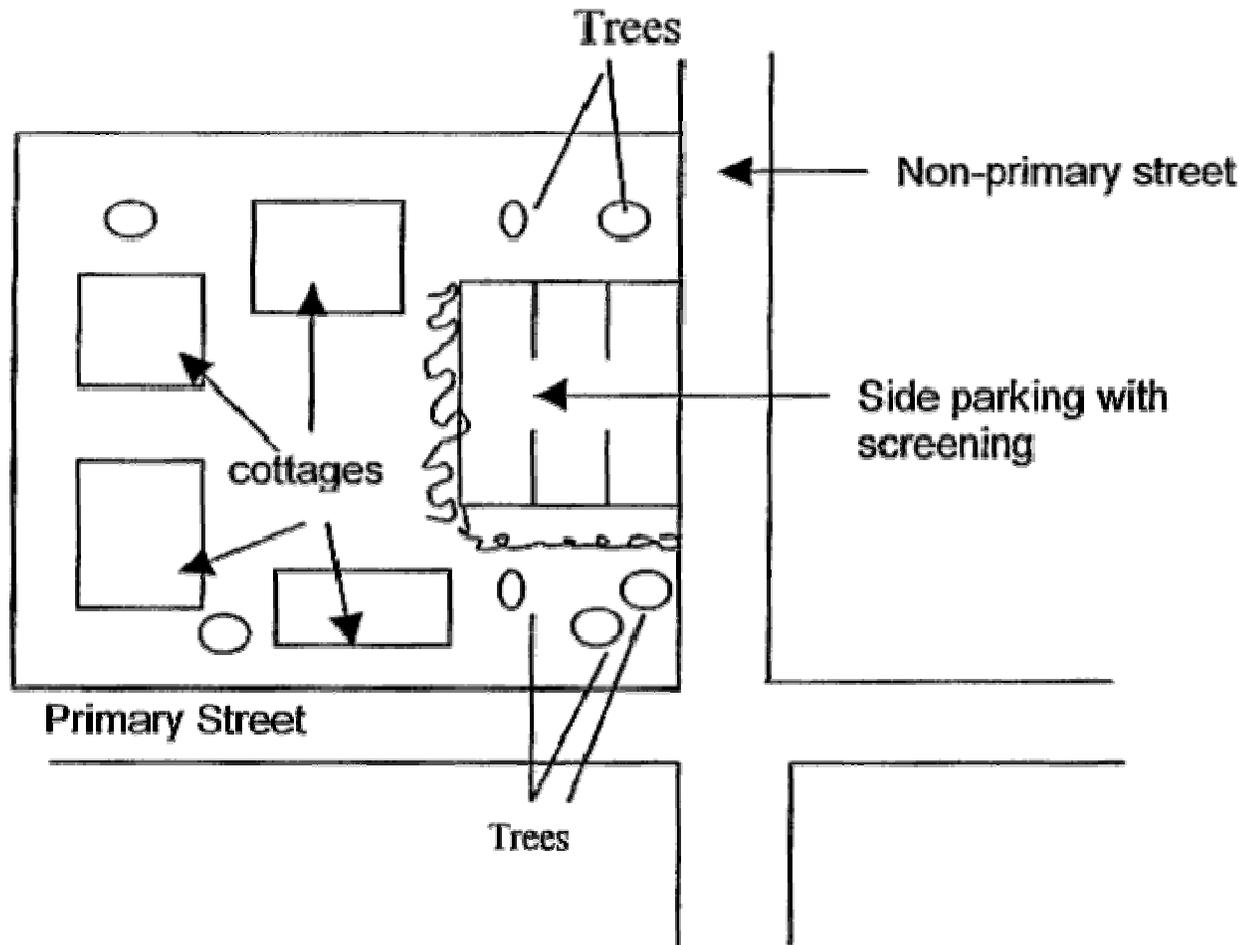
i. To the rear of cottage housing units accessed by an alley.



ii. To the side of the cottage housing units access by a private driveway.



iii. Parking on the side (nonprimary street) screened from the side street by either garage doors, landscaping, and/or fencing.



c. Parking Lot Landscaping. Parking lot landscaping shall comply with the requirements of (code section).

0.00.180 Exterior lighting and heating/cooling equipment noise.

A. Objective. Cottage housing developments should be designed to minimize light and noise impacts both within the development and to adjacent properties.

1. Where provided, exterior lighting shall be mounted as low as possible, pointed downward, and the light source shall be shielded from direct observation from above, adjacent properties, and public rights-of-way. Lighting “spillover” to adjacent properties shall be avoided.

2. Heating (and cooling, if applicable) equipment for cottage housing developments shall be designed to cause little or no noise impacts within the development and to adjacent

properties. To help prevent noise problems, heat pumps shall not be used for cottage housing developments.

00.00.190 Required separation of cottage housing developments in the R-I and R-II zoning districts.

A. Objective. Cottage housing developments in single-family zoning districts shall be separated from each other by a minimum distance to promote housing-type diversity, to reduce potential cumulative impacts of cottage housing development, and to help protect neighborhood character.

1. Each cottage housing development in the R-I or R-II zoning districts shall be separated from any other cottage housing development in the R-I or R-II zoning district by a distance of at least 1,000 feet or one block, whichever is greater.

00.00.200 Ownership and residential use of cottages.

A. All cottage housing developments shall be developed utilizing the procedures of Chapter _____, Binding Site Plans, except that an association, cooperative or other similar ownership technique may be substituted for the requirement of residential condominiums. Appropriate documentation of formal legal ownership of the development shall be recorded with the _____ County auditor's office.

B. Cottages are for residential use only and may not be operated as transient accommodations.

00.00.210 Alternative site design.

It is possible that an alternative design may fulfill the intent of this chapter while not complying with the provisions herein. Requests for alternative designs shall be processed pursuant to Chapter _____ (*Note: Reference to existing process to allow alternative design. If there is not such a process elsewhere in the code, or if there is a desire to have a specific process for cottage housing, then this section could reflect the chosen process for an alternative site design*).