



Residential Low Zone (R-L)

PH-02

Community Development Department

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ECC 15.300.040 (B) Residential Low Density Zone (R-L)

Residential Low Density Zone (R-L). The R-L zone is intended to protect and enhance the character of existing low density residential neighborhoods while allowing for compatible infill development. These purposes are accomplished by:

1. Allowing detached single-family dwellings as the predominant use, with options to integrate accessory dwelling units, townhomes, duplexes and cottage housing;
2. Providing standards and guidelines that reinforce Ellensburg's established pattern of attractive and walkable residential neighborhoods;
3. Providing standards and guidelines that promote the integration of usable open space for residential uses;
4. Providing standards and guidelines that encourage parks, trails, open spaces, and natural features to be integrated with the design of new development;
5. Providing a minimum density standard to avoid large scale low density sprawl;
6. Providing a flexible system of bonus incentives (see ECC 15.330.020) that allows for an increase in density in exchange for:
 - a. Energy efficient building and site design;
 - b. Mix of housing types;
 - c. Off-street trails;
 - d. Preservation of historic buildings; and/or
 - e. Affordable housing; and
7. Use of this zone is appropriate for any of the following, or combinations thereof:
 - a. Areas designated residential in the comprehensive plan;
 - b. Areas characterized by, or immediately adjacent to, areas which are predominantly single-family in character.

Table 15.320.030. Building setback and intensity standards table – Residential zones.

Topic	R-S	R-L	R-M	R-H
DEVELOPMENT INTENSITY AND CONFIGURATION				
Minimum lot area	None ¹	None ¹	None ¹	None ¹
Minimum frontage	None ^{1,2}	None ^{1,2}	None ^{1,2}	None ^{1,2}
Density, minimum (ECC 15.320.050)		6 du/acre ³	8 du/acre ³	15 du/acre
Density, maximum (base) ⁸ (ECC 15.320.050)	6 du/acre	8 du/acre	No limit	No limit
Density, maximum with bonus (see Chapter 15.330 ECC)	12 du/acre ⁴	16 du/acre ⁴	No limit	No limit
Maximum building height	35 ft	35 ft	35 ft ⁵	45 ft ⁵
BUILDING PLACEMENT (see ECC 15.320.070 through 15.320.120)				
Minimum front yard setback ^{6,7}	15 ft	15 ft	15 ft	15 ft
Garage front yard setback	22 ft	22 ft	22 ft	22 ft
Minimum rear yard setback	20 ft	20 ft	20 ft	20 ft
Minimum rear yard setback, accessory buildings (including garages)	5 ft ¹⁰	5 ft ¹⁰	5 ft ¹⁰	5 ft ¹⁰
Minimum rear yard setback, detached accessory dwelling unit (see ECC 15.540.040)	5 ft ¹⁰	5 ft ¹⁰	5 ft ¹⁰	5 ft ¹⁰
Minimum side yard setback (includes corner lot interior lot line) ⁹	5 ft/10 ft ¹¹	5 ft/10 ft ¹¹	5 ft/10 ft ¹¹	5 ft/10 ft ¹¹
Minimum side yard setback (corner lot exterior lot line)	10 ft	10 ft	10 ft	10 ft
Minimum garage side yard setback (corner lot exterior lot line)	22 ft	22 ft	22 ft	22 ft

Development conditions:

1. Lot sizes may be variable provided they are sized and shaped sufficient to accommodate permitted uses and conform to applicable design and density standards.
2. New lots shall have access directly to a public right-of-way or may obtain access from a courtyard access (ECC 15.420.050(C)) or shared driveway (ECC 15.420.060(A)(2)).
3. The density minimum shall apply only to new subdivisions greater than one acre in size.
4. Exception: Projects complying with Net Zero Energy provisions may exceed the maximum density limits as set forth in ECC 15.330.020(A).
5. For buildings, or portions thereof, with pitched roofs, the maximum height may be increased by five feet. Applicable roof slopes must be at least 4:12 to qualify for this additional height.
6. Porches and covered entries may project up to six feet into the front yard.
7. No front yard is required for buildings adjacent to designated “storefront streets.”
8. Base maximum density refers to the maximum density allowed without utilizing density bonuses. Per ECC 15.310.040, duplexes and townhomes are permitted in R-S and R-L zones

on preexisting legal lots of record as of December 31, 2021, notwithstanding the maximum density requirements of this chapter. For lots recorded after this date, duplexes and townhomes must meet the density standards of this chapter.

9. Townhouses and zero lot line homes are exempt from side yard standards internal to a development. However, such uses shall meet applicable side yard standards for adjacent lots outside of the development.
10. Accessory buildings and accessory dwelling units may be built to a property line abutting an alley, provided sufficient turning movement and emergency vehicle access is provided within the alley. Minimum side yard setbacks as required by Table 15.320.030 would still apply.
11. For lots 6,000 square feet or less, the minimum side yard shall be five feet on each side. [Ord 4953 § 9-10, 2025; Ord. 4887 § 24, 2022; Ord. 4807 § 46, 2018; Ord. 4656 § 1 (Exh. O2), 2013.]

15.320.050 Density calculations.

A. Calculations for Determining Minimum Density – Net Area. All site areas shall be used in the calculation of minimum allowed residential density or project floor area except:

1. Street rights-of-way, easements, or other areas reserved or dedicated for public use (such as parks, open space, and stormwater retention facilities) except private easements that serve as primary access to no more than five lots; and
2. Submerged lands, landslide hazard areas and buffers, Category I-IV wetlands and buffers, and Type 1, 2, 3 and 4 streams and buffers.

B. Calculations for Determining Maximum Density – Gross Developable Acreage.

1. All site areas may be used in the calculation of the maximum allowed residential density or project floor area except as outlined under the provisions of subsection (B)(2) of this section.
2. Submerged lands, landslide hazard areas and buffers, Category I-IV wetlands and buffers, and Type 1, 2, 3 and 4 streams and buffers shall not be credited toward the maximum density or floor area calculations. Property used for new roadways, trails, stormwater facilities, or other features used by residents may be counted as part of the site area for density calculations. Property transferred to the city for the construction of public roadways or other public feature shall be counted as part of the site area if the city and property owner reach such an agreement as part of the transfer.

C. Density Calculations. Minimum and maximum density for an individual site shall be calculated by multiplying the gross developable acreage by the applicable number of dwelling units. When calculation results in a fraction, the fraction shall be rounded to the nearest whole number as follows:

1. Fractions of 0.50 and above shall be rounded up.
2. Fractions below 0.50 shall be rounded down.

D. Prohibited Reduction. Any portion of a lot that was used to calculate compliance with the standards and regulations of this title shall not be subsequently subdivided or segregated from such lot.