

STUDY SESSION AGENDA

CITY COUNCIL CITY OF WHEAT RIDGE, COLORADO

7500 W. 29th Ave.
Wheat Ridge CO

October 3, 2016

6:30 p.m.

Individuals with disabilities are encouraged to participate in all public meetings sponsored by the City of Wheat Ridge. Call Carly Lorentz, Assistant to the City Manager at 303-235-2867 at least one week in advance of a meeting if you are interested in participating and need inclusion assistance.

Citizen Comment on Agenda Items

1. Staff Report(s)
 - a) Bike/Pedestrian Master Plan Update
 - b) ADA Transition Plan
2. Residential Development Standards – Bulk Plane
3. Elected Officials' Report(s)

ADJOURNMENT



Memorandum

TO: Mayor and City Council

THROUGH: Patrick Goff, City Manager

FROM: Scott Brink, Public Works Director

DATE: September 23, 2016 (For October 3, 2016 Study Session)

SUBJECT: Bicycle/Pedestrian Master Plan Update

ISSUE:

The City is in the process of updating its Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan, last completed in 2010. The Plan has served as a guide to plan, construct, enhance and improve bicycle and pedestrian mobility throughout the City. Significant corridors were previously addressed, and the plan has also guided Capital Investment Projects (CIP) and developments throughout the City since adoption. Late last year staff, Council and the community agreed the plan needed to be updated as a result of changing travel modes, community needs and priorities, and to incorporate the latest industry practices.

PRIOR ACTION:

After staff completed a standard solicitation and procurement process, the City Council on May 9, 2016, awarded a contract to Toole Design Group to assist the City in updating its Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

On May 9, 2016, the City Council awarded a contract to Toole Design Group in the amount of \$59,788. Funding for this program had been approved in the 2016 CIP budget Bike/Pedestrian Master Plan line item 30-303-800-853 in the amount of \$25,000. As discussed previously with Council, \$35,000 was carried over from the 2015 Bike and Pedestrian Improvement CIP account to cover the total plan costs.

BACKGROUND:

The City's current bicycle and sidewalk network is often described as scattered and inadequate. Sidewalks are absent along a number of collector and arterial streets in the City. The network is neither continuous nor connected to adjacent communities in critical locations. In addition, connectivity to parks, trails, schools, and other destinations is often limited.

In 2010, the City developed and formally adopted a bicycle and pedestrian master plan. The approved plan provided guidance concerning street right-of-way needs and improvements to be implemented as proposed developments were reviewed and as City projects were designed.

Since the adoption of the 2010 plan, the City has implemented bicycle and pedestrian improvements where opportunities have presented themselves and where funding has been available, often in conjunction with other infrastructure improvements or maintenance-related projects. For example, bicycle lanes were recently installed on 32nd Avenue as part of a mill and overlay project. This improvement not only improved bicycle safety and mobility within Wheat Ridge, but also provided improved east-west connectivity with Denver and Jefferson County/Golden. Similarly, in 2014, bicycle facilities were installed on Pierce Street, providing a vital north-south corridor connection across the City between Lakewood and the Clear Creek Regional Trail.

Additionally, construction of the Kipling multi-use trail has improved connectivity and safety for bicyclists and pedestrians needing to reach local destinations such as Crown Hill Park, the Clear Creek Trail, the Wheat Ridge Recreation Center, Discovery Park, Everitt Middle School, local properties and businesses, and other destinations in adjacent communities within the Kipling corridor. Current preliminary design work for Wadsworth Boulevard improvements also includes provisions for future bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Smaller projects to improve safety, such as enhanced crosswalks and flashing beacons (particularly near schools), and small sidewalk projects to fill gaps have also been completed over the past few years. In addition to the City's pavement management program, opportunities to enhance bicycle and pedestrian mobility have occurred through private redevelopment projects such as Kipling Ridge (Sprouts) at the intersection of Kipling Street and 38th Avenue.

The Master Plan update will play a significant role in guiding the City to implement effective policies and practices to improve bicycle and pedestrian modes as a convenient transportation option. In addition, the plan will identify specific mobility needs such as access to transit and safety enhancement opportunities. The updated plan will also assist in identifying long-term capital needs and costs, prioritize needs, and develop a long-term capital plan for constructing improvements.

Recent Activities

Over the past few months, the following key steps and courses of action have been completed:

1. Compilation of all available mapping and data to summarize existing infrastructure assets, identification of existing transportation gaps and safety needs, and base mapping for future improvements.
2. The City and the consultant hosted a "Vision and Goals" workshop on August 22 with various community stakeholders, including representatives of Jefferson County Schools, the Wheat Ridge Active Transportation and Advisory Team (ATAT), Bike JeffCo, RTD, CDOT, and the senior community. In addition to developing a draft vision and goals statement (attached), the group discussed and identified various needs and issues, such as destinations, gaps, barriers, safety needs, ways to prioritize, and suggestions regarding overall process and policy.

3. Created a web-site providing information and ways to encourage citizens to provide input for the plan, including a “Wiki-Map”, which is an interactive map easily accessible on-line where users can click suggestions and input directly on to the map.
4. Promoted the plan update through standard City communication channels, including strong promotion through social media. A flyer/handout (in both English and Spanish) was created for distribution to encourage participation. City representatives and the consultant have promoted the update and encouraged public input through engagement at community events such as the Carnation Festival and Ridgefest. Input received thus far has been positive, extensive, and very useful.
5. The City and the consultant hosted a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting on September 22 that not only included representatives of the groups mentioned above, but also neighboring communities such as Lakewood, Arvada, and Jefferson County. This group’s discussion expanded further on the needs and issues discussed at the previous Vision and Goals Workshop, such as connections to neighboring communities, wayfinding, and how an ADA transition plan (being developed concurrently) parallels and should integrate with this plan.

Next Steps and Actions

1. A Public informational meeting (Open House) will be held at the Wheat Ridge Recreation Center on October 5, 2016 from 5 to 7 p.m.
2. Continue to receive public input until late October.
3. A second Technical Advisory Committee meeting (TAC) will be held in early November.
4. Present a draft plan to the City Council in early December.

Any questions, comments, or suggestions from Council are welcome and appreciated.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Draft Vision and Goals Statement

ATTACHMENT 1

VISION

A vision statement is an inspirational description articulating the future of Wheat Ridge's active transportation system. A vision statement is realistic, yet ambitious and responsive to change by looking to the future and answering the question, "What will success look like?" This vision statement will serve as a preface to all goals and Plan recommendations. The draft vision statement was developed based on input received at the Visioning and Goals Workshop held with City of Wheat Ridge, advocates, and community members:

The Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan envisions Wheat Ridge as a comfortable and safe place to walk and ride a bike for people of all ages and abilities. The network of bicycle and pedestrian facilities is connected, intuitive, and integrated with the local and regional context. The system promotes health, safety, and regional connectivity for all residents.

GOALS

Goals support and promote the vision by providing a framework for the development of the plan's recommendations:

1. Complete a connected network of low-stress bicycle facilities.
2. Create a walkable city that is comfortable and safe for residents of all ages and abilities.
3. Improve intermodal connections, especially access to transit.
4. Increase access to the region's parks and recreational opportunities.
5. Create a plan that is implementable and sensitive to the Wheat Ridge context.



Memorandum

TO: Mayor and City Council

THROUGH: Patrick Goff, City Manager

FROM: Scott Brink, Public Works Director

DATE: September 23, 2016 (For October 3, 2016 Study Session)

SUBJECT: ADA Transition Plan Update

ISSUE:

The City of Wheat Ridge is required, under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and 28CFR35.105, to perform a self-evaluation of its current transportation infrastructure and to develop policies, practices, and programs to address this mandate (development and adoption of an ADA transition plan).

PRIOR ACTION:

After staff completed a standard solicitation and procurement process, the City Council on May 23, 2016, awarded a contract to Alfred Benesch & Company, Denver, CO. to assist the City in developing and adopting an ADA transition plan.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

Funding for this program was approved in the 2016 Capital Investment Program budget ADA Transition Plan line item 30-303-800-861 in the amount of \$50,000.

BACKGROUND:

The City is in the process of addressing the requirements of Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, which applies to the operations of state and local governments specifically related to providing mobility in the public street right-of-ways.

In 2010, the United States Department of Justice (DOJ) issued a final rule in order to adopt enforceable accessibility standards under the ADA. These standards ensure that state and local government services do not discriminate against individuals on the basis of disabilities and require state and local governments to make their programs and services accessible to persons with disabilities. These requirements focus on providing accessibility by addressing and eliminating structural barriers associated with public facilities.

The development of an ADA transition plan will precisely address this mandate. The proposed plan will cover access in public rights-of-way, including sidewalks, intersections, and street crossings. The plan will serve as guidance for public rights-of-way that will address various issues, including access for individuals with disabilities, access to on-street parking, and various

constraints posed by space limitations, including roadway design practices, slope, and terrain. The new guidelines will cover pedestrian access to sidewalks and streets, including crosswalks, curb ramps, street furnishings, pedestrian signals, transit stops, and other components of public rights-of-way. The City's purpose in developing these guidelines is to ensure that access for persons with disabilities is provided wherever a pedestrian way is newly built or altered, and that the same degree of convenience, connection, and safety afforded the public generally is available to pedestrians with disabilities.

The City completed a substantial amount of survey work on curb ramps in the City last year, which is an essential component of the plan. The data and inventory collected is currently being evaluated as part of the ADA plan, which will influence long-term capital planning.

The plan must be completed in order for the City to adhere to federal and state compliance requirements of the ADA. The scope of the plan must and will include the following elements:

- A self-evaluation that reviews all services, programs and activities that identifies any architectural barriers, policies, or practices that may limit or exclude participation by people with disabilities. It should be noted that the City has already completed this work for City-owned facilities such as municipal buildings and parks through an earlier process.
- A public notification and information system that is accessible to the public, including people who have disabilities.
- An ADA compliance coordinator needs to be identified and be available to the public. This person is responsible for implementing the transition plan and providing information related to accessibility programs and services.
- A formal grievance procedure is required for filing complaints.
- Developing a recommended multi-year program to correct deficiencies, based in part by priorities and available funding.

Recent Activities

1. Last year City staff initiated an inventory of existing right-of-way conditions, which has been completed.
2. The consultant is completing a review of the City collected survey data (including spot verifications of accuracy), and identifying additional mapping, data, and other information required.
3. The Consultant is working with Public Works and IT staff to complete all mapping needed for the plan.
4. The Consultant has initiated work on the policy and procedure draft in accordance with requirements.

Next Steps and Actions

1. Preparing a web site and flyer for distribution and solicitation of public input, similar to tasks and activities performed for the Bicycle/Pedestrian Master Plan update.

2. Public information meeting (Open House) on October 5 (in conjunction with Bike/Ped Master Plan Update Open House). Continue to identify and reach out to stakeholders and solicit public input through end of October.
3. Finalize transition plan draft (early-mid November, 2016), including policies and procedures. The draft will also identify priorities, provide long-term estimated costs, and prepare a long-term capital improvement plan based on available funding.
4. Complete final plan draft (early December, 2015).

While the ADA transition plan and the Bicycle/Pedestrian Master Plan Update are two separate document developments and processes, the two plans do have some related and overlapping issues, particularly in regard to accessibility. As a result, the public outreach efforts for the ADA transition plan are attempting to take advantage of and “piggy-back” on the Bike/Ped Plan process as opportunities arise, such as having information available at the Bicycle/Pedestrian Master Plan Update Open House on October 5.

Any questions, comments, or suggestions from the Council are welcome and appreciated.

Memorandum

TO: Planning Commission

THROUGH: Patrick Goff, City Manager

FROM: Zack Wallace, Planning Technician

DATE: September 26, 2016 (for October 3 Study Session)

SUBJECT: Residential Development Standards and Bulk Plane

BACKGROUND:

Staff has been researching residential development standards for several months, and presented research findings in July during study sessions with both Planning Commission and City Council. Staff received direction to keep moving forward with research into bulk plane standards.

Subsequent to the July study sessions, City Council considered a moratorium on building permits in the R-1C zone district, and ultimately approved an emergency ordinance implementing a 45° bulk plane requirement measured at 15 feet above the property line in the R-1C zone district effective August 22, 2016. As an emergency ordinance it is effective for 90 days, expiring in mid-November.

In the meantime, staff is continuing forward with research following City Council and Planning Commission direction from July and drafting a bulk plane ordinance for the City's residential zone districts. The ordinance is on track to be presented to City Council prior to the expiration of the emergency ordinance according to the following timeline:

- September 15: Planning Commission Study Session
- October 3: City Council Study Session
- October 20: Ordinance Public Hearing at Planning Commission
- October 24: Ordinance 1st Reading at City Council
- November 14: Ordinance Public Hearing at City Council

Proposed Approach

Based on public comment, Planning Commission and City Council feedback, and review of the City's adopted plans, staff is recommending bulk plane regulations as the most appropriate mechanism to regulate residential construction in all residential zone districts.

The City's 2009 Comprehensive Plan, *Envision Wheat Ridge*, is organized around a series of values and goals. Among the key values is to "promote vibrant neighborhoods and an array of housing options." A stated goal of the Comprehensive Plan is to maintain and enhance the quality and character of existing neighborhoods. The Comprehensive Plan also calls for increased housing options, and encourages investment in existing neighborhoods.

The Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy was adopted in 2005 and also encourages reinvestment in Wheat Ridge neighborhoods recognizing that the City's housing stock tends to be older ranch-style construction that may not adequately meet the demands of the modern homebuyer.

Any proposed regulation will need to provide some balance by creating a reasonable regulatory tool that accommodates new investment but achieves contextually-sensitive designs. This memo outlines bulk plane standards that respect the intent of these guiding documents by maintaining and enhancing the quality and character of the existing neighborhoods while also encouraging investment. The remainder of this memo is structured as follows:

- Bulk plane terminology
- Bulk plane height analysis
- Applicability of bulk plane standards
- Bulk plane vs setbacks
- Exemptions to bulk plane standards
- Discussion

Bulk plane terminology

A bulk plane regulation includes new terminology that has not previously been incorporated in the City's zoning code. These terms are defined below and a prototypical bulk plane graphic is provided.

Base plane: The horizontal plane which is generally parallel to a property's original grade from which building height and bulk plane are measured.

Bulk plane: the angled plane which extends from a set height above each property line and constrains the permitted building envelope.

Building envelope: the three-dimensional space within which a structure is permitted to be built on a lot and which is defined by regulations governing building setbacks, maximum height, and bulk plane; by other regulations; or any combination thereof.

Figure 1: Visual representation of bulk plane definitions

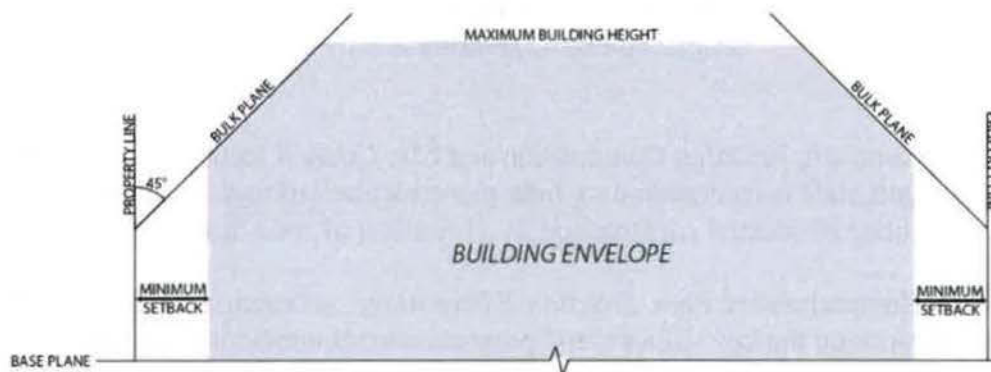


Figure 1: Visual representation of bulk plane definitions

By creating a diagonal limit on vertical construction, a bulk plane regulation requires a building or upper story to increase its distance from the property line as it gets taller in height. Typically, this can still allow multi-story construction, but it increases the separation between taller homes and generally results in a more context-sensitive development.

Bulk plane height analysis

Based on research of neighboring jurisdictions, bulk plane heights are most commonly established between 10 and 17 feet above the property line depending on the context in which development is occurring. Staff is recommending that the City's bulk plane begin at a height of 15 feet above the property line.

The images below show a variety of bulk plane heights, with a structure located at a 5-foot setback, as this would be the instance of largest impact of bulk plane regulations on property development, and this minimum setback applies in several residential zone districts. The images include a two-story home, as staff has determined that this is a reasonable minimum development pattern to accommodate, and investment in existing housing stock often includes a "pop-top" or second story addition to expand the size of the City's relatively small single-story homes. Staff's assumptions include a 5-foot setback and approximately 11 feet per story, allowing for a 10-foot ceiling and 1-foot spacing between floors for mechanics and utilities.

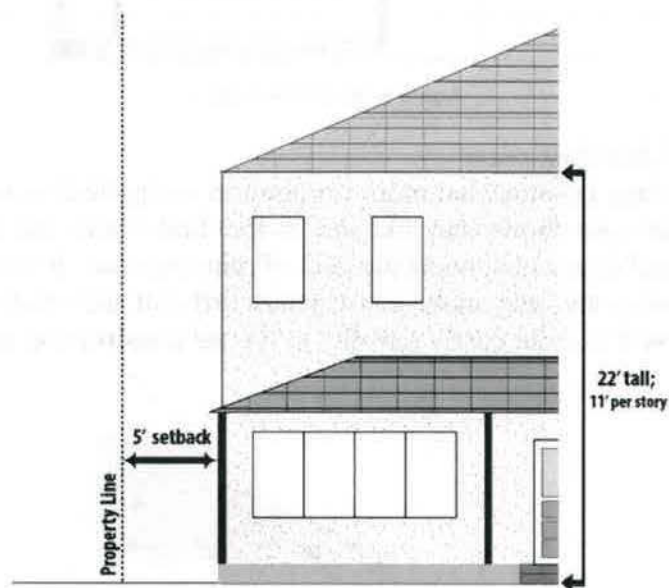


Figure 2: Analysis assumptions

Not recommended: 10-foot bulk plane –

The 10-foot bulk plane is the least common. It may be too restrictive and does not support the goal of reinvestment. It severely cuts into the buildable area for a second story and may make construction difficult and costly as ceiling heights are unable to be achieved without costly retrofits to typical construction techniques.

It has the potential to negatively impact properties through an overly restrictive buildable area, especially on the City's smaller lots. On the City's narrowest lot (50-foot wide), it would be nearly impossible to construct even a two-story home because it far exceeds the building envelope created by the 10-foot bulk plane.

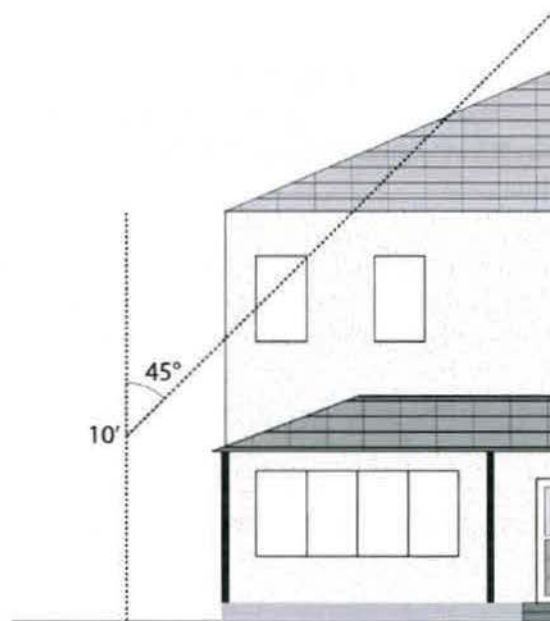


Figure 3: 10-foot bulk plane

Not recommended: 12-foot bulk plane –

The 12-foot bulk plane is somewhat more common in its application on a metro wide level. However, staff's analysis shows that, like the 10-foot bulk plane, the 12-foot bulk plane may be too restrictive and does not support the goal of reinvestment. It cuts into the buildable area for a second story and may make construction difficult and costly as ceiling heights are unable to be achieved without costly retrofits to typical construction techniques.

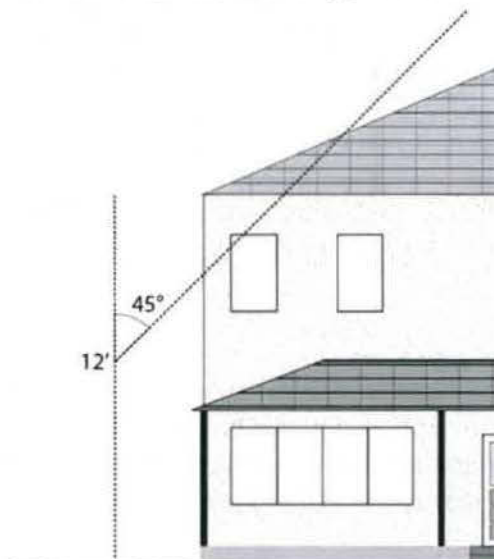


Figure 4: 12-foot bulk plane

Not recommended: 17-foot bulk plane –

Staff feels the 17-foot bulk plane height may be too permissive and allows development at a mass and scale inconsistent with existing neighborhoods. It would allow a full two-stories at a 5-foot setback and could still allow a substantially sized third story.

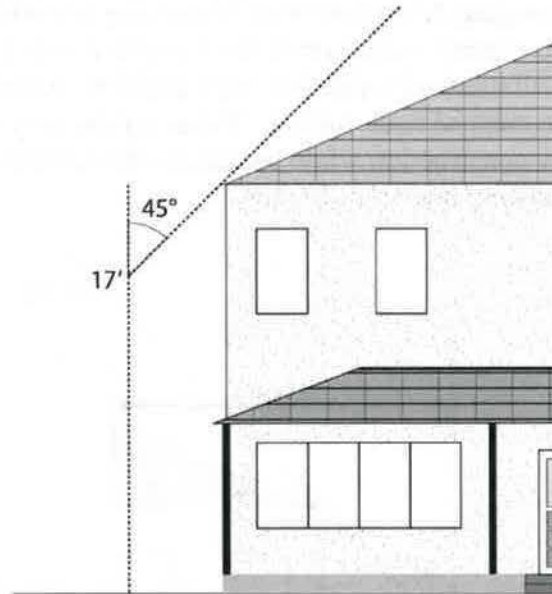


Figure 5: 17-foot bulk plane

Recommended: 15-foot bulk plane –

Ultimately staff is recommending a bulk plane beginning at 15 feet above each property line. This height provides a reasonable building envelope in which property owners may reinvest in their property, while also reducing the likelihood of the three-story construction on small or narrow lots that has caused recent concern for some members of the community.

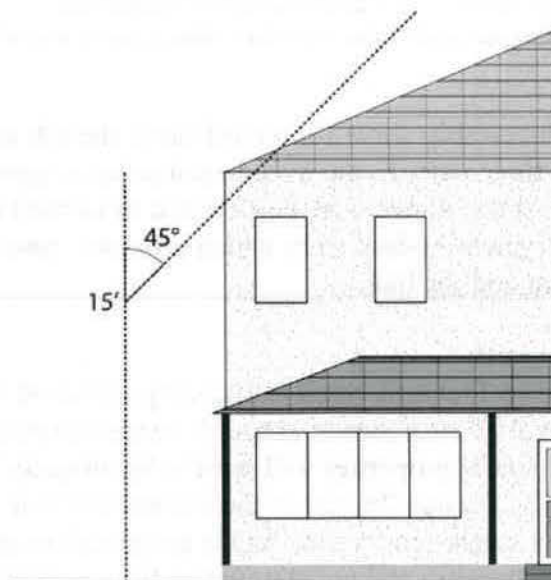


Figure 6: 15-foot bulk plane

Staff's analysis shows that a new two-story home with typical ceiling heights would fit within a 15-foot bulk plane with an approximate 7-foot setback. Most side setbacks are only 5 feet, as shown in the image above, but an increased setback for a taller structure within the bulk plane may be appropriate. Most two-story homes are constructed with the stories stacked and not offset to control construction costs and to create a less complicated load bearing wall situation. Alternatively, the first story could be at a minimum 5-foot setback and a second story would be stepped back further. Either option provides a reasonable accommodation for new construction while increasing the separation between two-story homes and the City's existing one-story homes.

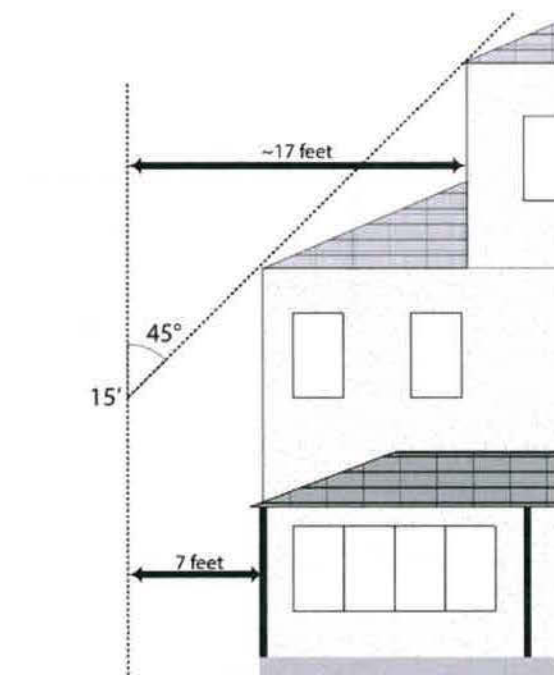


Figure 7: Two-story structure built in-line at a 7-foot setback, with a potential 3rd story.

A 15-foot bulk plane would conceivably allow for a third story, though in limited circumstances, and generally on larger lots. A three-story home would need to have approximately 17-foot setbacks from the property line if the stories were constructed in vertical alignment with each other. This setback assumes a typical 11-foot story which provides space between floors for mechanical/electrical equipment and the like.

Applicability of bulk plane standards

Staff recommends applying the 15-foot bulk plane universally across all residential zone districts. This will provide a level of assurance to property owners citywide that potential redevelopment of adjacent residential properties will need to be properly scaled back to comply with the bulk plane. Additionally, Section 26-120 of the Municipal Code (Nonconforming lots, uses and structures) states that a single-family dwelling is permitted on any single lot of record, provided the lot is in separate ownership and not continuous frontage with other lots under the same ownership. This means that single-family homes must comply with the development

standards established for the zone district (height and setback), but may be developed regardless of lot area and/or width. Applying the bulk-plane standards universally ensures that substandard lots across the City, on which single-family homes are a use by right, will be scaled back to ensure they are respectful of surrounding properties.

Due to the nature of the bulk plane, it will be less impactful on larger, wider properties as they allow for greater setbacks to accommodate the bulk plane regulations. Narrower lots with will have building envelopes that interfere with the bulk plane, and thus be required to scale back, at a lower height than homes on larger lots that require and allow for larger setbacks. For example, a bulk plane beginning at 15 feet above a property line will intersect an R-1 structure (15-foot minimum setback) at 30 feet in height; whereas it would intersect an R-1C structure (5-foot minimum setback) at 20 feet in height.

Staff is recommending that the bulk plane standards apply to all structures—primary and accessory. Given existing height limitations and typical rooflines, it is unlikely that a 15-foot bulk plane would impact the construction of accessory structures. It may require increased setbacks for a gambrel-style (barn like) garage roofs which tend to be taller than a garage with a standard hip or gable roof.

Bulk plane vs setbacks

Currently the zoning code calls for additional setbacks, or “stepbacks,” for duplexes and multi-family structures. An additional 5-foot setback per upper story is enforced for all duplexes (in R-2, R-2A, R-3, and R-3A) and for multifamily structures in the R-2A zone district. In the R-3 and R-3A zone districts multifamily structures must have a setback of 15-feet for the first 2 stories and an additional 5 feet for each additional story. Figure 26-123.1 is provided in the Code for clarification on how to enforce the setbacks.

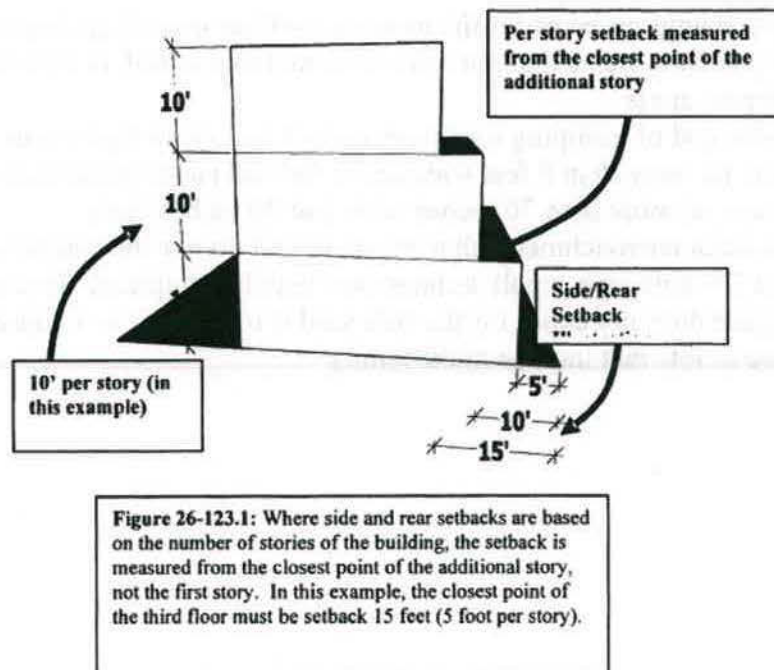


Figure 8: Stepback diagram from the Wheat Ridge Municipal Code

It is staff's opinion that the bulk plane ordinance, in effect, creates the same regulatory framework by requiring additional setbacks or stepbacks as structure increases in height. For clarity and consistency, staff recommends removing the stepback provisions described above to avoid confusion and redundancy with the proposed bulk plane regulations.

Exemptions to bulk plane standards

Currently Section 26-611.A of the Code allows setback encroachments for the following:

- Porches, patios, decks and balconies open on at least 2 sides may encroach in a setback up to 8 feet into a front setback or 1/3 distance to property line for side and rear yard
- Architectural features including cornices, eaves, sills, canopies, etc. may encroach no more than 30 inches
- Chimneys may encroach into front, side, or rear yards no more than 2 feet, so long as a yard is not reduced to less than 3 feet
- Fire escapes, open stairways may encroach any distance, so long as a yard is not reduced to less than 3 feet

The City of Wheat Ridge exemptions are limited to horizontal encroachments, as the City has not had any form of vertical restrictions other than the 35-foot height maximum for residential buildings. If a bulk plane standard is adopted, it may be appropriate to consider possible allowances for encroachments into and above the 45-degree bulk plane.

The following cities have bulk plane standards and have adopted exemptions for the following building elements:

- *Boulder*
 - Roof overhangs or eaves for the primary roof (no more than 30 inches)
 - Rooftop solar systems that are flush-mounted to the roof, or mounted at no more than a 15-degree angle
 - The gable end of a sloping roof form up to 8 feet (with limitations on width)
 - Dormers no more than 8 feet wide and 6 feet tall (with limitations on size)
 - Chimneys no more than 70 inches wide and 30 inches deep
 - Insubstantial encroachments that are small and do not substantially increase the bulk (e.g. radio or TV antennae, small architectural details, sculptural elements, weather vanes)
 - Bulk plane does not apply for the side yard if it adjacent to a nonresidential principal land use or lots that include multi-family

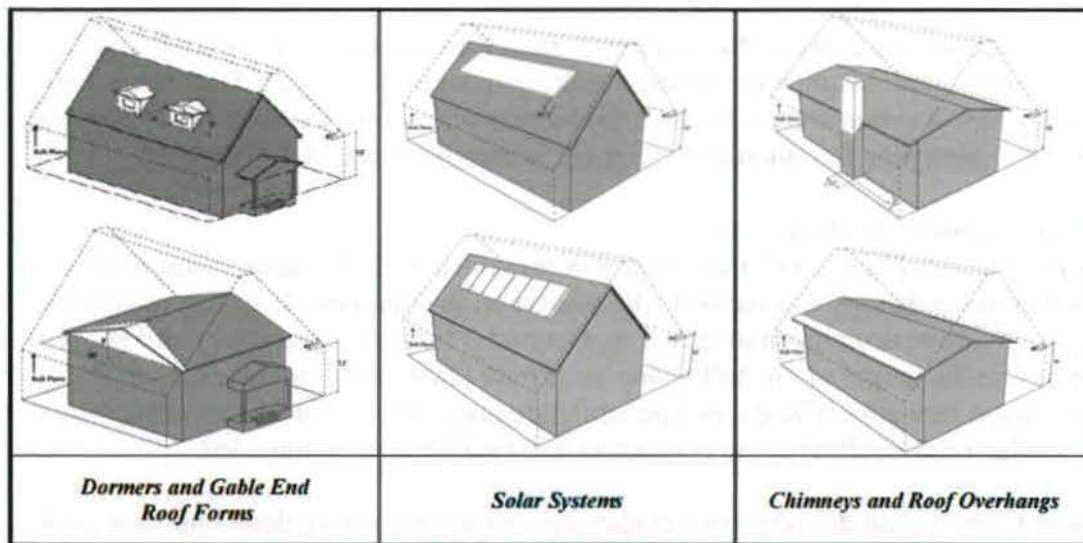


Figure 9: Boulder bulk plane exemptions (Source: Side Yard Bulk Plane Handout, City of Boulder)

- *Englewood*
 - Dormers with windows may exceed the bulk plane but not the height of the ridgeline of the roof surface (with limitations on size)
 - Eaves (no more than 24 inches)
 - Gutters
 - Chimneys (no more than 10 feet)
 - Patio or deck railings that are at least 75% open or transparent (maximum of 42 inches)
 - Multi-family buildings consisting of 5 or more units, non-residential development, and accessory structures in residential zone districts and 2 mixed use districts
- *Denver*
 - Eaves
 - Unoccupied spires, towers, flagpoles, antennas, chimneys, flues and vents (maximum of 28 feet)
 - Flush-mounted solar panels
 - Evaporative coolers

As evidenced by the exceptions in other communities, it may be appropriate to exempt certain architectural features. Such exemptions are in the spirit of the City's current regulations which already acknowledge reasonable types of encroachments. The exemption of a deck railing (Englewood) would allow open rooftop decks where the building envelope prohibits an upper story but the building code requires adequate enclosure.

Variance

In certain situations, it may be possible to seek relief from the bulk plane standards through the City's variance process. This process is outlined in Section 26-115 of the zoning code. A variance can be appropriate when strict application of a development standard creates a hardship. All variance requests are evaluated against a set of nine criteria. Depending on the extent of the request and neighborhood input, a variance is typically either reviewed administratively or by the Board of Adjustment.

Variance requests are expressed in numeric terms; for example, “a 2-foot (33%) variance from the 6-foot maximum height requirement resulting in an 8-foot fence.” Staff is currently evaluating how a variance from the bulk plane standards would be quantified. No code amendment pertaining to bulk plane variances is recommended at this time.

Planning Commission Discussion

On September 15, Planning Commission was presented with this same memorandum to discuss staff’s recommendations and facilitate discussion on the main points of this memorandum in order to provide a recommendation to City Council. Planning Commission did not reach consensus on the height of the bulk plane, or if bulk plane is the right tool to address neighborhood concerns. There was a general agreement on not applying a bulk plane universally in all residential zone districts, in contrast to what staff has recommended.

Planning Commission did come to a consensus on recommending that height and architectural design regulations may be better utilized to preserve neighborhood character and address 3-story height concerns. They also recommend that geographic overlays be considered since many areas of the City are unique and may warrant their own unique regulations.

Planning Commission understands the emergency ordinance is only valid until mid-November. They suggest adopting the language of the emergency ordinance for a permanent bulk plane ordinance moving forward in R-1C and as a possible short term solution. They recommend a more resource-intensive process as a second phase to address residential height and architecture through geographic overlays.

The formal Planning Commission recommendation will be forwarded once an ordinance is drafted and they hold a public hearing, which is scheduled for October 20.

Public Forum

Three citizens spoke during the Planning Commission public forum regarding bulk plane standards and new development in East Wheat Ridge. One member of the public presented a petition with 33 signatures of neighbors in support of a 12.5-foot bulk plane and maximum building height of 25 feet in the R-1C zone district.

Discussion

Staff is seeking feedback on the recommendations and discussion items outlined in this memo, specifically:

- Is there support for a bulk plane regulation that begins at 15 feet above all property lines?
- Is there support for applying the bulk plane regulations in all residential zone districts?
- Is there support for removing the current “stepback” standards that duplicate the regulatory framework created by the bulk plane?
- Is there support for identifying limited acceptable encroachments into the bulk plane or other exceptions?
- Is there support for Planning Commission’s discussion of an in-depth, long-term analysis of residential height standards and architectural design standards?