



MEMO

To: Mayor and City Council

CC: Lacey Smieja, City Administrator/Clerk
Amanda Johnson, City Attorney

From: Jennifer Haskamp, AICP, City Planner

RE: Consideration of proposed ordinance changes to Chapter 30 and Chapter 32

Date: August 26, 2026

Background

Over the past several months the City Council has met in work session to discuss changes to the Zoning Ordinance to address undersized lots, and their status as potentially transferrable and buildable, in the City. Through this analysis, the Council determined that it was prudent to clean up the ordinance to add clarity for property owners, community members, staff and the Council, and directed staff to prepare a draft with proposed changes. Concurrently to this discussion, Staff and Council identified other sections of the zoning ordinance for potential revisions including: 1) Variances, to bring current language into compliance with State Statutes; and 2) Data Centers.

Summary of Proposed Ordinance Changes (Attached)

The attached ordinance is provided for consideration, discussion and public hearing. Two Chapters of the City Code are proposed for revisions based on the previous work session discussions. Chapter 30 Subdivisions and Chapter 32 Zoning are interrelated chapters that often cross-reference each other due to the nature of the regulations. For purposes of the undersized lot evaluation, both Chapters address this issue. Chapter 30 describes and/or regulates them in terms of conveyance, while Chapter 32 establishes the dimensional standards to determine buildability. The proposed changes reduce the current conflict between the sections and add clarification between platted and unplatted lots, when and how such lots are deemed buildable, and establishes new regulations as well as existing regulations that are applicable to the determination. With respect to dates of creation, the adopted subdivision ordinance identifies July 1, 1980 and the date when minimum lot sizes were established as they exist today (minimum of 5.0 acres). Because the adopted and codified ordinance establishes this as the date, this is carried forward in the proposed draft.

The other significant change proposed is to modify section 32-59 and to add section 32-61 to address variance process and criteria in the City. The purpose of the revised section is to bring our current language up to date to be consistent with Minnesota State Statutes. State Statutes replaced “hardship” with “Practical Difficulties” and established criteria by which cities must process variances in order to be valid. The draft ordinance incorporates this language and establishes that it is the Applicant’s responsibility to demonstrate that they meet the associated criteria (often referred to as the 3-prong test).



Lastly, per the direction of the City Council, Data Centers have been added to the Table of Uses and has been defined within section 32-1 Definitions. The Data Center use has been categorized as ‘not permitted’ in all zoning districts. The Council discussed that data center uses tend to be high volume water and utility users, and the City does not, nor plan, to have infrastructure of a scale and capacity to support this type of use.