

# Multi-Family Site Plan Review Information Guide

Section 42-230 to 236 of Chapter 42 of the Code of Ordinances



PLANNING &  
DEVELOPMENT  
DEPARTMENT

All multi-family residential developments in the city limits are required to have a site plan review by City of Houston Planning Department and the Fire Marshal per Chapter 42 – Sec 42-233 (c).

All multi-family site plan review materials shall be submitted for formal review through Projectdox. This submission will now be included in the building permit application. Multiple submissions may be required to address staff comments.

## YOUR MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL SITE PLAN SHALL INCLUDE:

1. A detailed site plan. This plan must correlate with the building permit scope of work site plan. See checklist below for specific item to be illustrated.
2. Recorded plat and survey (property must be an unrestricted reserve or a lot that allows for multi-family use); and
3. Supporting documents to illustrate compliance of any the items listed below.

## VARIANCES:

- If a variance(s) has already been approved for this project, please attach a copy of the full, approved application and supporting documents received from the Planning Commission.
- If you are anticipating a possible need for a variance(s), please attach a summary with your submittal and discuss with staff.

## WALKABLE PLACES & TOD:

- If multi-family development is located on a Walkable Places or Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) street, provide site plan notes, building elevations, and floor plans to show compliance with relevant requirements.

## PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

- If opting into a performance standard, include the applicable notes on the multi-family site plan.
- Provide building elevation sheets to clarify heights and front façade of the building.

## RESIDENTIAL BUFFERING

- If the multi-family development proposes a high-rise or mid-rise structure abutting residential, the site plan must show compliance with the residential buffering rules. Refer to Chapter 42 Division 8, Residential Buffering Standards for more information.

## FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

- The Planning Department homepage ([www.houstonplanning.com](http://www.houstonplanning.com)) includes processes, templates, and standard multi-family notes.  
Planner of the Day (832) 394-8849 (Ask to speak with a member of the multi-family team.)
- If the project is located outside of the city limits, contact the respective County engineering office for multi-family permitting process and requirements.
- **Please Note:** Your multi-family project is still subject to reviews outside of fire protection based on Chapter 42 Division VI & Appendix D Fire Apparatus Access, such as interior fire considerations and local building codes.

## MULTI-FAMILY SITE PLAN - CHECKLIST

Site plan shall illustrate the following on one (1) sheet.

- **Project Information** (Sec 42-230, template available on-line)
  - Number of separate buildings
  - Number of stories and height of building (elevation details may be requested)
  - Total number of dwelling units
  - Total acreage of development
  - Density of the project (density = dwelling units/acres)
  
- **Drawing Basics**
  - Drawing to engineering or architectural scale (show legible graphic and numerical scale i.e., 1"=60")
  - North arrow (up)
  - Notes and legends (pertinent to this site plan)
  - Title block with project name, address, developer, applicant/consultants, and other details
  - Clearly identify, dimension, and label all adjacent Right of ways (ROW)
  - Dimension all property lines (proposed site must match the plat or survey provided)
  - Identify and label all building lines and easements (provide record information)
  - Identify proposed and existing building outline(solid) with overhangs/canopies/balconies (dashed)
  - Identify the location of principal entrances for each multi-family building.
  - Identify and label the water meter easement (15 x 25' standard)
  - Private water line note (if applicable; template available) or show water line in 10' easement within private street).
  - Dimension surface parking (8.5' x 19' min. standard stall)
    - Compact parking not allowed for multi-family.
    - Tandem parking allowed when assigned to a unit.
  
- **Multi-Family Development Types**
  - Garden Style - Multi-family developments with a density less than 30 units per acre
    - Highlights for GARDEN STYLE:
      - Two points of access if over 1 acre; loop street per 42-232
      - Hose lay dimensioned at 300' from hydrant, then 200' from truck per 42-233
      - Project must meet ALL other requirements for review per **Sec. 42-231 through 234**
  - Performance Standard – Multi-family developments with a density with more than 30 units per acre
    - Highlights for PERFORMANCE STANDARD:
      - No development plat variances permitted to the performance standards.
      - Must comply with all five of the criteria in 42-235
      - Hose lay dimensioned at 200' maximum from hydrant, then 300' from truck per 42-235
      - Loading berth (10 x 55' standard; may be 10 x 40') per Sec. 26-523
  
- **Garden Style Streets, Points of Access, Termination** (Refer to Sec 42-231 and 42-232)
  - Each multi-family development must provide access from a public right of way.
  - Refer to Chapter 42 Sec 231 for information on Private streets – General standards.
  - Types of Streets and Drives allowed inside a multi-family development:
    - Private Streets (28') required for tenants and fire apparatus access.

- Private Drives (24') required width for two-way tenant access (no fire apparatus)
    - Fire lanes (20') exclusive to emergency vehicles, must be gated with 911 Knox box.
    - Turnarounds (per required dimensions)
  - When a development provides access through an adjacent site a recorded access easements is to be provided. The document shall state that the easement is perpetual and non-exclusive.
- **Garden Style Fire Protection and Fire Marshal Requirements** (Refer to Sec 42-233)
  - Identify and label proposed and existing fire hydrant locations that will serve the site.
  - Fire hydrant within 100' of entry, and no more than 20' from edge of street or fire lane
  - Label and dimension the fire hose lay from the fire hydrant to the truck then from the truck around the building.
  - Label and identify the 5' unobstructed clear zone between buildings and when adjacent to the property lines.
  - Label the Fire Department Connections (FDC), facing the public or private street (path unobstructed)
  - Label standpipe locations in the stairwell and provide hose-lay measurement around the courtyard (as applicable)
  - When providing a vehicle gate, setback 30' from back of curb, measured from the public street.
  - Provide and label a 911 box at each pedestrian access gates.
  - 14' unobstructed height clearance for fire truck access
- **Performance Standards Requirements** (Sec 42-235, template available online)
  - A multi-family residential development with a density of 30 dwelling units or more per acre that meets each of the performance standards of this section shall be exempt from the requirements of section 42-231, 42-232 (a), 42-232 (b), 42-233 (a) and 42-233 (b) of this Code if they comply with the following five criteria.
    - (1) The development provides fire truck access to all fire hydrants by either a 20-foot-wide fire lane along which no parking is allowed, a 28-foot private street or a public street. The fire lane or private street may loop through the development or may terminate at a dead end if the dead end is less than 500 feet. A dead end longer than 150 feet but less than 500 feet must have an "L", "T" or 90-foot diameter circular turnaround, as depicted in figures 1, 2 and 3. No dead end may be greater than 500 feet;
    - (2) Fire hydrants are located no further than 20 feet, measured perpendicularly, from the edge of the pavement of the fire lane, private street, or public street. Access to the fire hydrants through any fences is provided by 911 access gate;
    - (3) One fire hydrant is located within 100 feet of the property line on any fire lane or private street, as shown in figure 4;
    - (4) Fire hydrants are located so that a fire truck can drive a maximum of 200 feet from a fire hydrant and then use a maximum 300-foot hose length from the edge of pavement at the fire truck around all buildings as the hose lays on the ground around all obstacles, including but not limited to fences, walls, buildings, structures and trees, as shown in figure 5;
    - (5) The maximum distance between fire hydrants is 600 feet, as shown in figure 6.
- **Dwelling Units & Parking Analysis** (Sec. 42-234, template available on-line)
  - Provide a parking analysis on the site plan.
    - Itemized list of dwelling units by the number of bedrooms
    - Total # of each size of apartment
    - Parking required for each size (refer to Sec. 42-234, Sec. 26-492)
  - Include the parking requirement for any other proposed uses on the site (i.e. mixed use developments)

- Indicate the total number of loading berths (refer to Sec. 26-522 for the requirements for certain loading facilities categories)
  - Loading berth size for multi-family may be 40' x 10'
  - Loading berth shall not be in the right of way.
  - Loading berth shall not be in the drive aisle.
  - Clearance height shall be 12' min.
- Third party proof of any special residential uses
- **Parks Requirements** (Sec. 42-251 to Sec. 42-259, template available online)
  - This requirement is for projects within the city limits and does not apply to those developments in the extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ) or in limited purpose areas.
  - Include the five parks notes and table per Chapter 42-253 Fee in Lieu.
  - Include the park sector on the table (refer to an interactive map of park sectors available at <https://mycity.maps.arcgis.com/home/index.html>)
  - Complete the worksheet portion of the table (template available online)
  - If the project proposes to claim existing dwelling units, provide the following to receive credit:
    - A signed and sealed survey;
    - Documentation from [www.hcad.org](http://www.hcad.org);
    - A demolition permit from within the last year
  - For projects proposing park land dedication, applicants shall coordinate with the Parks and Recreation Department and refer to Sec. 42-252. A subdivision plat or replat is required when proposing park land dedication.
- **Appendix D – Section D – 105 Aerial Fire Apparatus Access Roads**
  - When the highest point of the roof on the proposed multi-family building exceeds 30 feet, compliance with Appendix D shall be illustrated on the site plan. The Fire Marshal's office will review for compliance during this review.
    - Provide the width of the roadway or drive.
      - 28' private street when occupied by both residents and the fire apparatus.
      - 26' private drive for fire apparatus only.
    - The distance of the offset between the truck and the building must be 15-30'
    - There shall be no obstructions on the side of the building where compliance with Appendix D is being illustrated.
      - No overhead powerlines.
      - Landscaping shall be spaced out 30' to allow clearance.