



MEMORANDUM

Seminole County – LDC Updates 2025

To: Jose Gomez, Joy Giles, Maya Athanas

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Date: April 11, 2025

Subject: Recommendations to zoning districts permitted within LDR

The maximum allowable density of 4 dwelling units per acre in the Low Density Residential (LDR) Future Land Use District is not achievable within the constraints of the permitted zoning districts. While existing regulations are suitable for individual lots, they present challenges for larger developments, limiting flexibility, quality, and efficiency in site planning. This memorandum outlines the need for changes to LDR implementation within the Land Development Code and provides recommendations to address these issues.

Analysis of Existing Regulations within LDR

1. Density Limitations & PD Rezoning:

- While LDR allows 4 dwelling units per acre, the current zoning districts do not support this density under their existing development standards in new subdivisions.
 - Other than very small development projects on existing platted lots or served only by existing roadways, most new single-family development requires the construction of surface stormwater retention and new internal roadways to provide lot access. This infrastructure reduces the achievable density in new subdivisions when minimum lot size is a limiting factor.
- The table below outlines the standards for existing zoning districts currently allowed in LDR, as well as two additional zoning districts allowed in MDR and how many dwelling units they might produce.
 - The purpose of the table is to test the development standards, assuming a 20-acre parcel to see if the allowed maximum density of LDR (4 du/ac) could be achieved.

- For a 20-acre site, the maximum number of units that can be allowed under LDR FLU inside the Urban Core is 80, and outside the Urban Core is 64 (as shown in Columns 7 and 8).
 - In Seminole County, the calculation of net buildable acres for determining development density varies based on the location of the property:
 - Urban Core: The Urban Core is defined as the area bounded by Interstate 4 (I-4) on the west, extending ¼ mile east of U.S. Highway 17/92, and includes all land within ¼ mile of State Road 436 (SR 436). For parcels intersected by this boundary, the entire parcel is considered within the Urban Core. Within this area, net buildable acres are calculated by excluding only natural lakes and wetlands or flood-prone areas from the total acreage of the development site.
 - Outside the Urban Core: In all other areas of Seminole County, the calculation of net buildable acres involves excluding the following from the total acreage of the development site: Road rights-of-way, transmission power line easements, natural lakes, wetlands, or flood-prone areas.
- In order to estimate the impacts of supporting infrastructure on density and lot yield, the table assumes a percentage allocation for major infrastructure elements. When allocating 20% of the developable land for stormwater and 20% for roads, none of the zoning districts permitted under the LDR can achieve a density of 4 dwelling units per acre—even when no common areas or open space is provided (as shown in Columns 9 and 10).

Assume 20 Acre Parcel									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
		Min. Lot Size (sq. ft.)	Min. Lot width	Depth	Units by Zoning (w/o infrastructure)	# Max. Units Allowed per LDR FLU		Units Feasible (assuming 20% stormwater, 20% roads)	Sufficient to reach max. density?
						Inside Urban Core	Outside Urban Core		
LDR	R-1	8,400	70	120	104	80	64	62	No
	R-1A	9000	75	120	97			58	No
	R-1AA	11,100	90	123	78			47	No
	R-1AAA	13,500	100	135	65			39	No
	R-1AAAA	21,180	100	212	41			25	No
	A-1	43560	150	290.4	20			12	No
	RC-1	43560	120	363	20			12	No

Notes:

- a) Column 6 shows "Units by Zoning," which is the number of units achievable on a 20-acre parcel based solely on the minimum lot size—without factoring in land needs for required infrastructure.

- b) Column 9 includes infrastructure assumptions for stormwater and roads. Typical ranges for stormwater are 15% - 20%, and for roads are 20% - 25%. Column 9 assumes 20% for each stormwater and roads.

2. The Current Regulatory Structure penalizes developments for providing Open Space.

- Because lot sizes are the limiting factor in new conventional developments, the current regulations strongly disincentivize the provision of open or common spaces. Any open space provided directly results in a loss of units, as shown in lines 11 and 12 of the table below.
- This structure may also disincentivize other potentially desirable design features in new developments such as roadway connectivity, wider rights of way, or more create stormwater designs.

Assume 20 Acre Parcel											
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
		Min. Lot Size (sq. ft.)	Min. Lot width	Depth	Units by Zoning (w/o infrastructure)	# Max. Units Allowed per LDR FLU		Units Feasible (assuming 20% stormwater, 20% roads)	Sufficient to reach max. density?	Units Feasible (assuming +8% Open Space)	Sufficient to reach max. density?
						Inside Urban Core	Outside Urban Core				
LDR	R-1	8,400	70	120	104	80	64	62	No	54	No
	R-1A	9000	75	120	97			58	No	50	No
	R-1AA	11,100	90	123	78			47	No	41	No
	R-1AAA	13,500	100	135	65			39	No	34	No
	R-1AAAA	21,180	100	212	41			25	No	21	No
	A-1	43560	150	290.4	20			12	No	10	No
	RC-1	43560	120	363	20			12	No	10	No

Notes:

- a) Column 11 calculates density, assuming 8% for open space in addition to the 40% for infrastructure

Use of Planned Developments within LDR

Developers and property owners are not guaranteed the right to maximize the allowable FLU density, however, the significant difference between achievable densities in the applicable conventional zoning districts and the maximum permitted FLU density creates a strong incentive to use the PD process.

Are PDs the best tool to address this issue? The following advantages and challenges should be considered when relying on PDs to address this density gap:

- Advantages of PDs:
 - 25% open space requirement ensures green space.
 - Increased flexibility on lot sizes.
 - Opportunities to negotiate for connectivity, access, and other site planning features.

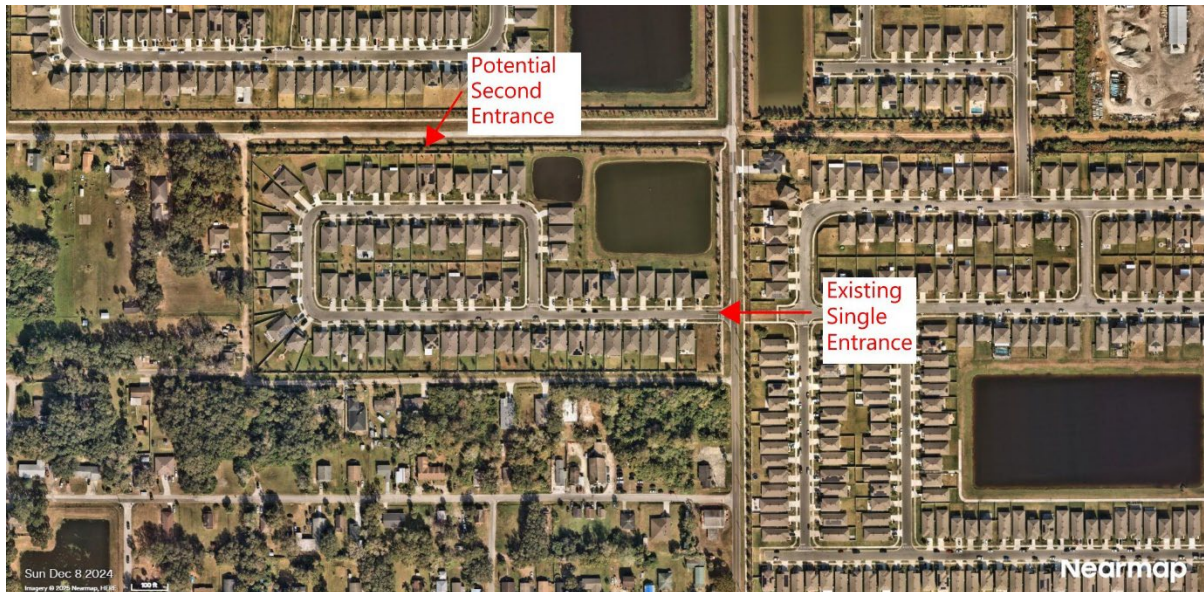
- Challenges of PDs:
 - Lack of predictability for applicants and the public.
 - Extended review and approval timeline.
 - Added administrative time/effort for county staff.
 - Increased complexity for applicants and county staff.
 - Risk of inconsistent regulation and outcomes.

Gaps in Conventional Single-Family Development Regulations

- Single-family subdivisions developed under conventional zoning regulations do not require designated open spaces, though recent updates mandate keeping 25% of existing protected trees.
- Many new subdivisions lack proper connectivity that would facilitate better traffic flow and emergency response.

The example below illustrates the lack of connectivity and open space in an existing residential development.

Existing Seminole County Neighborhood **Example**



Recommended Changes

Regulations that work for individual lots are impractical for new subdivisions. New subdivisions would benefit from more flexible standards to optimize land use while improving development quality. More flexible standards would also help the County to address housing supply, especially given the limited amount of developable land remaining in preferred development areas (areas excluding the WRPA and the Rural Boundary Area)

1. Allow R-1B and R-1BB Zoning Under LDR

Assume 20 Acre Parcel											
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
		Min. Lot Size (sq. ft.)	Min. Lot width	Depth	Units by Zoning (w/o infrastructure)	# Max. Units Allowed per LDR FLU		Units Feasible (assuming 20% stormwater, 20% roads)	Sufficient to reach max. density?	Units Feasible (assuming +8% Open Space)	Sufficient to reach max. density?
						Inside Urban Core	Outside Urban Core				
LDR	R-1	8,400	70	120	104	80	64	62	No	54	No
	R-1A	9000	75	120	97			58	No	50	No
	R-1AA	11,100	90	123	78			47	No	41	No
	R-1AAA	13,500	100	135	65			39	No	34	No
	R-1AAAA	21,180	100	212	41			25	No	21	No
	A-1	43560	150	290.4	20			12	No	10	No
	RC-1	43560	120	363	20			12	No	10	No
MDR	R-1B	6,700	60	112	130			78	No*	68	No*
	R-1BB	5,000	50	100	174			105	Yes	91	Yes

* Yes Outside Urban Core

- As demonstrated in the table above, permitting the two additional zones (R1B and R1BB) under LDR will allow design flexibility, including the provision of open space while being able to reach or come closer to reaching the Future Land Use density.

2. Establish additional development standards for conventional subdivisions that mimic some common benefits of Planned Developments while providing a more predictable framework for applicants and the public.

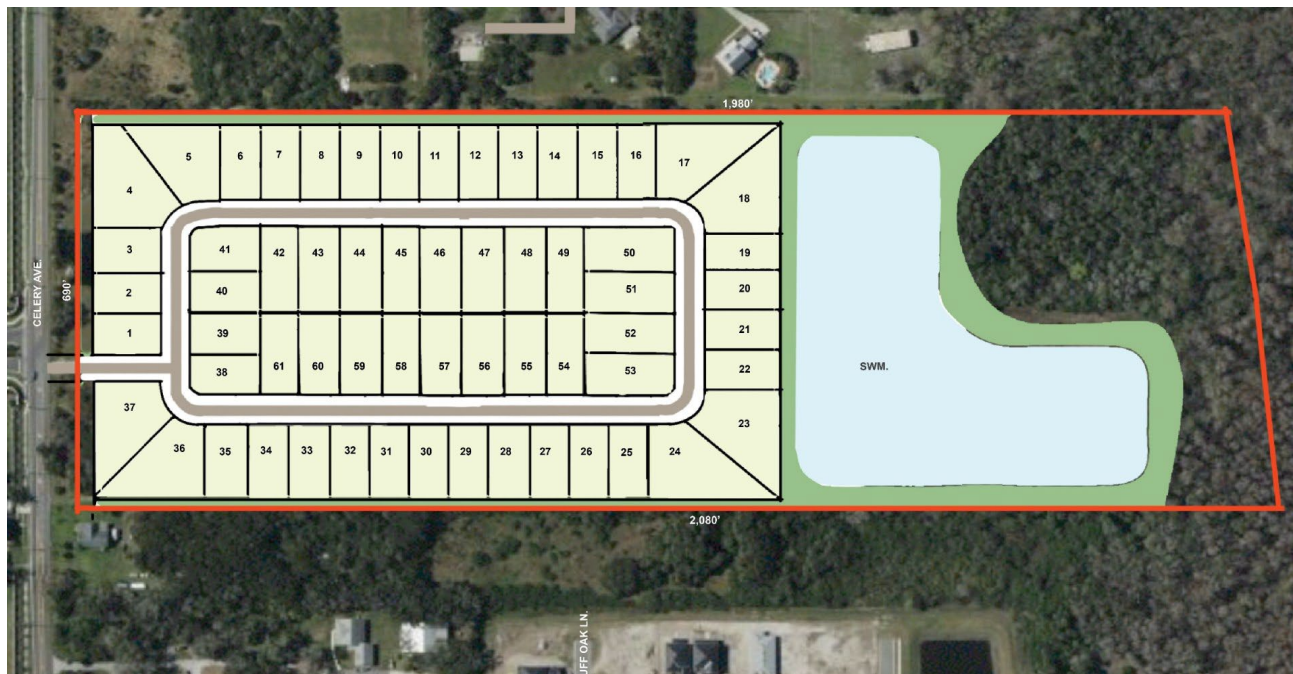
- Establish minimum open space requirements.
 - Recommend a common usable open space requirement for new subdivisions with lots 1 acre or less of between 8 and 15 percent.
 - Example from MM standards: Commonly accessible open space is required subject to the following standards:
 - Minimum 8% of developable land
 - Open Space may be provided in multiple locations however, each location must be:

- Bordered by streets, stormwater ponds, natural lakes, or commonly accessible pedestrian pathways.
 - Not less than 0.25 contiguous acres.
 - A minimum of 40 feet in width.
 - Except that open space areas adjacent to a stormwater pond or natural lake may be a minimum of 20 feet in width from the top of the berm to the public right of way or lot line.
- Apply additional development standards to ensure quality design, including:
 - Connectivity requirements to improve access and emergency response.
 - Establish a minimum of two access points for developments with more than 400 feet of single-road frontage.
 - When a property has access to more than one street – Establish at least one access point on every street frontage.
 - Consider discouraging gated communities except where natural barriers to connectivity exist.
 - Provide stub-outs for future connections to neighboring properties.
 - Require connectivity to existing roadway/trail easements or streets stubs on adjacent properties.
 - Where a roadway connection is not possible or required, consider requiring a bicycle/pedestrian connection.
 - Consider limiting cul-de-sacs and dead-end streets except:
 - Where an easement for future street connectivity to adjacent undeveloped property is provided. Where road stubs exceed 250 feet in length, a temporary cul-de-sac turnaround must be provided.
 - To provide a connection to an existing or planned public recreation trail.
 - In limited circumstances where wetlands, existing water bodies, or infrastructure corridors prevent connections.
 - Consider design requirement for a “close” in lieu of a cul-de-sac:
 - The close must be rectangular or square and include a central landscaped open space.
 - The minimum right-of-way width for a close is 80 feet in any direction.
 - A paved way, 20 to 30 feet in width, must surround the landscaped open space.
 - The central open space must be a minimum of 40 feet in any direction; and

Site Plan Analysis: Existing Conditions vs. Proposed Changes

- The following site concepts were developed to illustrate potential differences between existing development standards for a conventionally zoned subdivision in LDR (Exhibit 1) and the recommended standards for new subdivisions (Exhibit 2). Net Density represents the Core Area standard. Net/Net Density represents the non-Core Area standard.
 - Exhibit 1 uses the R-1 zoning with 70' wide lots and no requirements for open space.

Exhibit 1: Existing Conditions



Upland	27.6 ac.	
Roads	2.88 ac.	10%
SW Ponds	5.50 ac.	20%
Parks	Not required	
Lots	61 (70'x120')	
Net Density	2.21 DU/Ac	
Net/Net Density	2.46 DU/Ac	

- Exhibit 2 shows the same lot subdivided with R-1BB standard of 50' wide lots, with 8% park space and multiple entries/future road connections. The resulting density is closer to the LDR maximum, and the subdivision receives better open space and connectivity. Street tree plantings are not shown but could also be required.

Exhibit 2: Proposed Changes



Upland	27.6 ac.	
Roads	3.87 ac.	14%
SW Ponds	5.50 ac.	20%
Parks	2.34 ac.	8%
Lots	74 (50' x 120')	
Net Density	2.68 DU/Ac	
Net/Net Density	3.12 DU/Ac	