CITY OF JOPLIN
COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM

ITEM:
2026-261 – Text Amendment

MEETING DATE:
April 6, 2026

ORIGINATING DEPARTMENT:
Planning, Development and Neighborhood Services

REVIEWED BY:
Director of Planning, Development & Neighborhood Services – Troy Bolander
Director of Finance – Leslie Haase
City Attorney – Peter Edwards
Assistant City Manager – Tony Robyn
City Manager – Nicholas Edwards

FUNDING SOURCE:

Not applicable for this item.

SUMMARY REQUEST:

Case 010-26: Text Amendment – A request to amend the Joplin Development Code, Table 5-02, to permit Duplex - Multi-Unit Home under R-2 (Two-Family Residential), through limited applicability – Tyler Casey/Pro X, Inc.

BACKGROUND:

The current zoning code is a form-based code, that takes into consideration the type of structure being built, and the context of the neighborhood in which it is constructed. The code currently defines two types of duplex developments. Duplex, Suburban vs Duplex, Multi-Unit house, and differentiate the building types based on the existing contexts of the neighborhood.

Duplex, Multi-Unit House, falls within the context of an urban neighborhood. This type of structure has the scale and massing of a detached house that happens to be divided into multiple units. These types of structures are typically within the older, walkable neighborhoods, or neighborhoods within the original street grid, where the design is compatible with the existing pattern of development, typically at a higher density (3,000 square feet per unit, or 6,000 for a duplex). This housing type is currently permitted through limited applicability (allowed as infill based on surrounding context) in an R-3 District, and within the R-4 District. Currently, this is not permitted on a 6,000 square foot lot within the R-2 District.

Duplex, Suburban, is permitted in R-2 and R-3 by right, provided the lot is at least 7,800 square feet. This is at a lower density than Duplex, Multi-Unit House. Suburban Duplexes are duplexes that have the scale and massing of two attached houses.

The proposed change will be to allow Duplex, Multi-Unit house, through limited applicability through infill, or through a Planned Development application if not infill development, within the R-2 District. The request will be for limited applicability, in contexts where varieties of housing types exist, and the structure proposed is compatible with the buildings in the neighborhood. The limited applicability will protect single-family residential neighborhoods, while still allowing higher density housing in R-2 Districts in appropriate contexts.

The intent of the R-2 District states "The R-2 district provides residential living that mixes multi-unit building formats into low- or moderate-density suburban neighborhood settings, allowing a mix of housing options at strategic locations in which transition to complimentary and supporting uses."

PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION TESTIMONY:

The applicant presented the case. Mr. Bellairs elaborated that the request adjusts the density standard to 6,000 square feet for a specific type of construction (multi-unit home) in infill situations where it is consistent with the existing neighborhood.

The Commission asked if this could be accomplished through a variance. Mr. Bellairs responded that the Board of Adjustments does not have authority over zoning standards, only on development standards. The Commission asked if this could be accomplished through a PD. Mr. Bellairs responded that a PD is meant to benefit the area as a whole and has a minimum size requirement. They cannot be used to make adjustments for a single infill lot.

Ms. Klue-Michael asked if there were any cons. Mr. Bellairs said that this will be context based, because the way it was written it is limited applicability only in infill situations. We reduced the lot size for single-family homes to 6,000 in an R-2. So in neighborhood like the Schuber Mitchell subdivisions that were just done were at 6,000 square foot lots, that would be a suburban context that would not be infill. Think more like the walkable neighborhoods, the original street grids that are much more urban style of development where a variety of housing types already exist, that would be an ideal location where this would be permitted only through infill. More suburban neighborhoods, the way it is written it still protects those developments from being changed to two-family or multi-family. So it does have protections in there based off the way it was written and anything that is outside infill they have to go to the commission and council through a planned development review, we can't approve that administratively it is only in the defined very narrow context that this is allowed. It still has those protections that would ideally prevent any negative outcomes from lowering that density.

Ms. Phillips stated that just because something is zoned R-2, does not mean that we should put a duplex on the lot. Infill houses that she is seeing are not sympathetic to the neighborhoods.

PUBLIC COMMENT;

There was none.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Staff recommends approving Council Bill 2026-261

Planning & Zoning Commission recommends denying Case 010-26 (Motion to pass failed - 3 in Favor, 4 Opposed, 0 Absent)

ATTACHMENTS

Staff Planning Report
P&Z Commission Minutes
Applicant Materials

CASE 010-26 TEXT AMENDMENT

Dustin Ellias of ProX, 809 Catherine Ave, explain that that the R-2 zoning currently requires at 7,800 square foot lot but many of the R-2 zoned lots are only 50 feet wide and 120 feet long so even though they are R-2 their square footage requirement isn't met. We are asking that that minimal lot size be 6,000 square feet rather than 7,800. This is meant to increase the number of affordable housing.

Mr. Kimble asked if there were any questions from the Commission.

Ms. Phillips asked if ProX wrote the text amendment or if the city was involved as well.

Mr. Bellairs explained that the staff report was provided by the city while the application was done by ProX. He went on to say that the way the amendment was written it does more than what was just explained. That there are two types of duplexes. One being the outward appearance of two home put together with a common wall. What ProX is typically building is what's called a multi-unit home, which has the forming, massing, and modulation of the outward appearance of one home that's just been divided into two units. This will not be the kind of suburban style that is spread out. This style of development is meant for in-fill in certain context in neighborhoods that match what they're trying to do. In a lot of our more urban neighborhoods there are several homes that you would not know that are divided into multiple units because they are in R-3 districts. Currently the zoning code allows for that type of duplex in an R-3 district at 3,000 square foot per unit. But the suburban style is still at 7,800 square feet. You will not be able to build the suburban style at 6,000 square feet. But in those neighborhoods where it is truly in-fill and the surrounding context where there is similar housing types they can do that housing style where it still looks like a single-family house from the outside, but it has two units. This is not a broad approval of duplexes within 6,000 square feet, it is very much context based depending on the housing types there and it is very much subject to the review of the type of structure they're building.

Ms. Klue-Michael asked Mr. Bellairs if we were to approve this type of build on these smaller lots are we going to be facing any cons for the city or for other people who are looking to build this type of structure? Is there going to be any negative impact?

Mr. Bellairs said that this will be context based, because the way it was written it is limited applicability only in infill situations. We reduced the lot size for single-family homes to 6,000 in an R-2. So in neighborhood like the Schuber Mitchell subdivisions that were just done were at 6,000 square foot lots, that would be a suburban context that would not be infill. Think more like the walkable neighborhoods, the original street grids that are much more urban style of development where a variety of housing types already exist, that would be an ideal location where this would be permitted only through infill. More suburban neighborhoods, the way it is written it still protects those developments from being changed to two-family or multi-family. So it does have protections in there

based off the way it was written and anything that is outside infill they have to go to the commission and council through a planned development review, we can't approve that administratively it is only in the defined very narrow context that this is allowed. It still has those protections that would ideally prevent any negative outcomes from lowering that density.

Ms. Phillips asked if this could be handled on a case-by-case basis also by the Board of Adjustment?

Mr. Bellairs indicated that this would be a code change to allow it to be infill, so no, this would not go to the Board of Adjustment. The Board of Adjustment does not have the authority under the interpretation article of the zoning code. They don't have the authority to grant any amendments to zoning or district standards like density or lot size, zoning or what uses are allowed, that is outside their review. They can grant variances to the development standard but they cannot grant variances to matters of zoning or district standards.

Mr. Kimble asked Mr. Ellias what his team is hoping to gain by going to try to change or have this amendment for R-2 rather than going with an R-3 that would fit what the current building is right now.

Mr. Ellias stated that we just want to make R-2 lots that are available where there are infill lots, we just want to make those to where they can accommodate a duplex. We're not into building multi-family homes outside of bigger than a duplex. There is plenty of inventory in lots out there that are 6,000 square feet that have been sitting there with nothing built on there for quite a while. Doing this would allow duplexes to be built on them.

Mr. Kimble said that when you say duplex are you talking about just a two-family unit or a multi-family unit that looks like a regular house?

Mr. Ellias stated that it would be just a two-family unit.

Mr. Kimble stated that everything Tyler (Mr. Bellairs) has talked about and my understanding was that this was a multi-family unit not just a two-family unit.

Mr. Bellairs indicated that the definition is multi-unit home that can be hypothetically if you have the square footage you can do a three or four unit home but in an R-2 it is still limited to two family.

Dr. Rosenburg asked, you're not asking for a change to the width of the lot, you would like to change the depth of the lot?

Mr. Ellias responded that was correct.

Dr. Rosenburg said that most of the time you come anyway and you ask for a 50-foot lot and you're going to put a single family dwelling on it. That seems to be the trend that I'm seeing. That would reduce the depth of a lot to 100 feet?

Mr. Ellias stated that it would be 120 feet. There are plenty lots along Byers.

Dr. Rosenberg asked if those lots are just unbuildable.

Mr. Ellias responded that they are not buildable for a duplex even though they are zoned for a duplex. But based on the square foot requirement we can't build duplexes.

Dr. Rosenberg asked if the lots are not necessarily as narrow as 50 feet that they might be 65 feet or 60 feet.

Mr. Ellias indicated that most of the lots are 50-foot wide.

Mr. Bellairs clarified that the density standards for the district give you a certain square footage for each type of development that you have to have. In this instance what they are referring to is that there are lots in the City of Joplin that are zoned R-2 they just aren't 7,800 square feet. In an R-2 district where the infill context is appropriate they could build a two-unit home in a 6,000 square foot lot with this change. Specifically what he is referring to is existing lots that are already zoned R-2 that just aren't at that 7,800 square foot size.

Mr. Kimble asked Mr. Bellairs could this just be a case-by-case basis rather than making an amendment to what's already there where someone is wanting to put a duplex on a lot this size because they come up and ask for the change rather than making an across-the-board change. Why not just have that happen every time rather than the overall change or amendment to the text.

Mr. Bellairs said that in our procedures we do have codes to address the fluctuation of density requirements but that is what is called a planned development or in some areas a planned unit development. There is usually a specific size where it is going to benefit more than the individual property. It is going to be more of a neighborhood style development where there is typically a size requirement for that in a PD. That would be a case-by-case basis. Because we're talking about individual lots that's the goal behind this change because you are going into an individual lot that typically is not going to qualify or meet the size requirements to do a PD on a case by case basis which is why they are requesting to amend the code to allow it by right.

Dr. Rosenberg said that it seems to me that if I remember right the housing development on North St. Louis has a whole bunch of 5,000 square foot lots for a single family dwelling.

Mr. Bellairs responded that was done through a PD and then amended the code to 6,000 square feet for single-family. That was the Schuber development.

Dr. Rosenberg stated that the whole trend is to get a smaller lot.

Ms. Phillips said that just because something is zoned R-2 is probably historically because they changed a single-family dwelling to a duplex. Just because something is R-2 we are force a duplex onto a lot that was something before we even had zoning. If there is an empty lot that's not being developed as R-2, I say put a single-family lot there. Because the infill houses that I'm seeing aren't sympathetic to the neighborhoods. Not all of them, some are not sympathetic to the single-family dwelling in the neighborhood. Though I say single-family they may be technically zoned R-2 because of historic reasons. If we did a case-by-case and the neighbors within 185 feet said "No" that's not going to look good for the neighborhood, density in this neighborhood is not a good thing or we don't want it at this time.

Mr. Ellias said that one of our big things is to reduce housing costs and to be able to provide affordable housing. As a builder I can tell you there's a duplex you get to build off of one electrical drop, one roof. There are costs that are shared between the two units. My square footage cost between building a duplex and building a single home is almost one and a half times. It's 40% higher to build a single-family home. If I'm renting the same I got to charge more for a single-family. We are trying to make it so that everybody, not just us, can build these more affordable housing in areas that are already zoned R-2. They're zoned for a duplex the code but by putting 7,800 square feet means that they're not really zoned for a duplex.

Ms. Klue-Michael asked what the rent rate would be for affordable housing.

Mr. Ellias responded that for these being brand-new homes with three bedroom and two bath, we are renting them at $1,200 - $1,250 range.

Mr. Kimble asked Mr. Bellairs to clarify why it wouldn't be better to go case-by-case rather than making a sweeping amendment on this right now.

Mr. Bellairs stated that with the issues of zoning beside the PD is that you can't do it on a case-by-case basis. The Board of Adjustment does not have that authority to grant a case-by-case exception. The only way to do that would be a PD and a lot-by-lot basis wouldn't work. You need to look at the zoning districts across the board. We can't pick it out on a case-by-case district.

Mr. Kimble asked what happens if we pass the text amendment and this gentleman wants to come and build a house on a lot where the zoning is not aligning, the text amendment is saying that we can have this conversation.

Mr. Bellairs indicated that the text amendment is to reduce the size for that kind of development. If it were an R-1 then it would need to be rezoned. But if the property is 6,000 square feet in a neighborhood where there are already a mix of housing types and it is already zoned R-2, they wouldn't have to come back.

Mr. Kimble asked if there were any other questions from the commission.

Mr. Kimble asked if there was anyone in attendance who would like to speak in favor.

Mr. Kimble asked if there was anyone in attendance who would like to speak in opposition.

Mr. Kimble asked the commission for a motion.

DR. ROSENBERG MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE CASE 010-26. THIS MOTION WAS SECONDED BY MS. KLUE-MICHAEL, MOTION DID NOT PASS. (3 IN FAVOR, 4 IN OPPOSITION, 0 ABSENT).

JOPLIN
PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT, & NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES

STAFF PLANNING REPORT
Text Amendment

CASE 010-26 Text Amendment

APPLICANT Tyler Casey/Pro X, Inc.

REQUEST:

The applicant is requesting to amend Table-5-02, of the Joplin Municipal Code, Appendix 29-A (Joplin Development Code), Article 5: Building and Development Standards, Section 1, Residential Development Standards, to allow for Duplex/Multi-Unit House in an R-2 District.

DISCUSSION:

The current zoning code is a form-based code, that takes into consideration the type of structure being built, and the context of the neighborhood in which it is constructed. The code currently defines two types of duplex developments. Duplex, Suburban vs Duplex, Multi-Unit house, and differentiate the building types based on the existing contexts of the neighborhood.

Duplex, Multi-Unit House, falls within the context of an urban neighborhood. This type of structure has the scale and massing of a detached house that happens to be divided into multiple units. These types of structures are typically within the older, walkable neighborhoods, or neighborhoods within the original street grid, where the design is compatible with the existing pattern of development, typically at a higher density (3,000 square feet per unit, or 6,000 for a duplex). This housing type is currently permitted through limited applicability (allowed as infill based on surrounding context) in an R-3 District, and within the R-4 District. Currently, this is not permitted on a 6,000 square foot lot within the R-2 District.

Duplex, Suburban, is permitted in R-2 and R-3 by right, provided the lot is at least 7,800 square feet. This is at a lower density than Duplex, Multi-Unit House. Suburban Duplexes are duplexes that have the scale and massing of two attached houses.

The proposed change will be to allow Duplex, Multi-Unit house, through limited applicability through infill, or through a Planned Development application if not infill development, within the R-2 District. The request will be for limited applicability, in contexts where varieties of housing types exist, and the structure proposed is compatible with the buildings in the neighborhood.

The limited applicability will protect single-family residential neighborhoods, while still allowing higher density housing in R-2 Districts in appropriate contexts.

The intent of the R-2 District states "The R-2 district provides residential living that mixes multi-unit building formats into low- or moderate-density suburban neighborhood settings, allowing a mix of housing options at strategic locations in which transition to complimentary and supporting uses."

Staff finds the requested density allowance compatible with the intent of the R-2 District.

Staff recommends to approve Case 010-26

ENCLOSURES:

- Application

Text Amendment Procedures

Applicability. Amendments to these regulations that are generally applicable throughout the city or in specific districts, or are uniformly applied to certain situations, may be initiated by the property owner, the City Council or the Planning Commission, or by Staff on behalf of these entities.

Review Criteria. A text amendment shall be reviewed according to the following criteria:

1. The amendment furthers the purposes of these regulations in Section 1.01.B.
2. The amendment is consistent with the comprehensive plan and has been considered for both its long-range affects as well as immediate impacts.
3. The amendment promotes the public health, safety, quality of life and general welfare of the community in the City of Joplin.

Review Procedures. In addition to the general requirements in Table 2-1 and Section 2.01, the following requirements are specific to text amendment applications.

1. Applications may be accompanied by a related comprehensive plan amendment, or more specific plan, provided that amendment or plan has meet all of the legal and policy requirements for plan approvals independent of the proposed text amendment.
2. The City Council may recommend the application be returned to Planning Commission for further study or additional information at its next regular meeting. Failure by the Planning Commission to consider or revise its recommendation shall be considered a resubmission of its original recommendation.
3. The Planning Commission may recommend or City Council may approve a lessor change than was proposed in the notice, when considering the proposed change relative to the currently applicable standards.

Effect of Decision. Amendments to the text of these regulations shall be approved by the City Council in the form of an ordinance, and be effective after the date specified in the ordinance. The Director shall incorporate approved amendments into this code by reference to the specific amending ordinance, and indicate the newly applicable provisions and the replaced provisions, or by recodification of the official code that incorporates the approved amendment.

Text Amendment Application

Return Form to:
Planner
Joplin City Hall
602 S. Main Street
Joplin, Missouri 64801
417-624-0820 Ext. 1511
Zoning-Planning@JoplinMO.org

Office Use Only
Case No.: 010-26
Filing Fee: $550.00
Received: 2/3/26
Date Advertised: _____
Proj. No.: 26-013
Public Hearing Date: 3/9/26-PNZ
4/6/26
-CC

Applicant: Tyler Casey / Pro X Inc. Phone No.: 620-687-0425

Address: 809 Katherine Avenue, Joplin, MO Email: tyler@proxproperty.com

Owner: Tyler Casey Phone No.: 620-687-0425

Address: 809 Katherine Avenue, Joplin, MO Email: tyler@proxproperty.com

Section to be Amended: Joplin Municipal Code, Appendix 29 A (Joplin Development Code), Article 5. Building and Development Standards, Section 1. Residential Development ~~Standards, Table 5-02.~~

Present Text: ☐ ☐ Duplex / Multi-unit House
~~6K - 12K s.f.~~
3K s.f. per unit
2 - 4 units

Reason for Amendment:
To allow Duplex/Multi-Unit House in the R-2 District, under limited applicability. Substantial data and justification is attached to ~~this application, this type of land use restriction negatively~~ impacts housing affordability, private investment and job creation.

Does the Amendment...:

Yes No

(X) ( ) Add language to the Development Code?

○	⊗	Supplement an existing section?
⊗	○	Modify an existing section?
○	⊗	Repeal an existing section?

Submission of Documents: The following documents are **required** at time of submission.

Yes	No	
⊗	○	Completed and signed application.
⊗	○	One thumb drive of a .docx copy of the proposed amendment.

Applications that are incomplete or missing required documents will **not** be processed or scheduled on an agenda to the Planning & Zoning Commission until corrected and resubmitted.

Signature: Tyler Casey **Date:** 2/2/2026

docusign

Certificate Of Completion

Envelope Id: FFEB2AD3-BE54-4124-8D70-5951AF03F44B
Status: Completed
Subject: Complete with Docusign: Blank TextAmendmentApplication2022Fillable.pdf
Source Envelope:
Document Pages: 3
Signatures: 1
Certificate Pages: 1
Initials: 0
AutoNav: Enabled
EnvelopeId Stamping: Disabled
Time Zone: (UTC-08:00) Pacific Time (US & Canada)

Envelope Originator:
Tyler Casey
101 S Broadway
Pittsburg, KS 66762
tyler@proxproperty.com
IP Address: 67.235.135.49

Record Tracking

Status: Original
2/2/2026 2:25:53 PM
Holder: Tyler Casey
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Signer Events	Signature	Timestamp
Tyler Casey tyler@proxproperty.com CEO Pro X Franchising LLC Security Level: Email, Account Authentication (None)	Tyler Casey Signature Adoption: Pre-selected Style Using IP Address: 67.235.135.49	Sent: 2/2/2026 2:36:47 PM Viewed: 2/2/2026 2:36:55 PM Signed: 2/2/2026 2:36:59 PM

Electronic Record and Signature Disclosure:
Not Offered via Docusign

In Person Signer Events	Signature	Timestamp

Editor Delivery Events	Status	Timestamp

Agent Delivery Events	Status	Timestamp

Intermediary Delivery Events	Status	Timestamp

Certified Delivery Events	Status	Timestamp

Carbon Copy Events	Status	Timestamp

Witness Events	Signature	Timestamp

Notary Events	Signature	Timestamp

Envelope Summary Events	Status	Timestamps
Envelope Sent	Hashed/Encrypted	2/2/2026 2:36:47 PM
Certified Delivered	Security Checked	2/2/2026 2:36:55 PM
Signing Complete	Security Checked	2/2/2026 2:36:59 PM
Completed	Security Checked	2/2/2026 2:36:59 PM

Payment Events	Status	Timestamps

Proposed Zoning Text Amendment

City of Joplin Zoning Code
Section 5.01 – Table 5-02 (Dimensional Standards)

Current Standard (R-2 District):
Minimum Lot Area: **7,800 square feet**

Proposed Amendment:
Minimum Lot Area: **6,000 square feet**

All other dimensional standards remain unchanged.

Applicant's Rationale & Findings

1. Excessive and Unworkable Land Use Restriction

A review of existing platted lots within the City of Joplin reveals that **there are effectively no R-2 zoned lots that meet the current 7,800 square-foot minimum lot size requirement**. As a result, the standard functions as a **de facto prohibition** on new development within the R-2 zoning district rather than a reasonable regulation.

This condition exceeds what is necessary to accomplish legitimate land-use objectives and represents an **excessive restriction on property rights**.

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2. Conflict With the Intent of the R-2 Zoning District

The R-2 zoning district is intended to accommodate **duplexes and low-density multifamily housing** as a transitional housing type between single-family neighborhoods and higher-density residential areas.

In practice, the current minimum lot size:

- Prevents duplex and small multifamily development
- Forces R-2 zoned land to function **no differently than single-family zoning**
- Undermines the original policy intent of the zoning classification

Reducing the minimum lot size to 6,000 square feet restores the district's intended function without increasing allowed density beyond what the district already permits.

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3. Negative Impact on Housing Supply and Affordability

The current standard directly:

- Reduces housing supply
- Limits housing type diversity
- Decreases consumer choice
- Contributes to upward pressure on housing costs

By preventing otherwise lawful development, the regulation **artificially constrains housing production**, which is contrary to widely accepted housing affordability principles and local economic development goals.

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4. Economic Development and Employment Impacts

The restriction has broader economic consequences, including:

- Fewer construction projects
- Reduced demand for local construction trades
- Decreased private investment
- Lower property tax base growth

Lots that are zoned and intended for multifamily development remain **vacant or underutilized**, resulting in lost economic activity and foregone municipal revenue that could otherwise support essential city services.

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5. Consistency With Existing Development Patterns

A 6,000 square-foot minimum lot size:

- Aligns with existing platted lot sizes throughout Joplin
- Is consistent with historic development patterns
- Allows modest infill development without altering neighborhood character
- Does not increase height, bulk, or use intensity beyond what R-2 already permits

This amendment corrects a dimensional mismatch rather than introducing new development pressure.

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6. Public Benefit

The proposed amendment will:

- Increase feasible housing production
- Support workforce housing needs
- Encourage reinvestment in underutilized areas
- Expand the local tax base
- Create construction and related jobs
- Better align zoning regulations with adopted land-use goals

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Conclusion

The current 7,800 square-foot minimum lot size in the R-2 zoning district is not supported by existing conditions, zoning intent, or public benefit outcomes. Reducing the minimum to 6,000 square feet is a **measured, data-driven correction** that restores functionality to the zoning district while advancing housing availability, affordability, and economic vitality in the City of Joplin.

The Impact of Minimum Lot Size Regulations on Housing Supply, Affordability, and Economic Development

A Justification for Amending the R-2 Minimum Lot Size Requirement in Joplin, Missouri

Abstract

Minimum lot size regulations are a common zoning tool intended to manage density and neighborhood character. However, when set above prevailing development patterns, these standards can operate as exclusionary constraints that limit housing supply, reduce affordability, and suppress economic activity. This paper examines empirical research on land-use regulation and housing markets and applies those findings to the City of Joplin's R-2 zoning district. Evidence indicates that the existing 7,800 square-foot minimum lot size functions as an excessive restriction that prevents development consistent with the district's intent. Reducing the requirement to 6,000 square feet is supported by planning theory, housing economics, and public interest outcomes.

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1. Introduction

Local zoning ordinances play a central role in shaping housing supply and urban form. Among these regulations, minimum lot size requirements directly influence development feasibility by determining whether parcels can be used at all. When such standards are misaligned with existing lot patterns or zoning intent, they can unintentionally eliminate permitted housing types, reduce housing supply, and increase costs.

In the City of Joplin, the R-2 zoning district is intended to accommodate duplexes and low-density multifamily housing. However, the current minimum lot size of 7,800 square feet has resulted in a condition where virtually no existing R-2 lots are developable under the ordinance, effectively nullifying the district's purpose.

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2. Minimum Lot Size Regulations and Housing Supply

A substantial body of economic research finds that restrictive land-use regulations, including minimum lot sizes, reduce housing supply by limiting the number of units that can be built on available land.

Glaeser and Gyourko (2003) demonstrate that artificial regulatory constraints, rather than construction costs, are a primary driver of housing scarcity in regulated markets. Similarly, Glaeser, Gyourko, and Saks (2005) find that zoning constraints significantly reduce housing elasticity, meaning markets are unable to respond to increased demand with new supply.

Minimum lot size requirements are particularly impactful because they can render otherwise viable parcels undevelopable, leading to underutilized land and suppressed housing production (Pendall, 2000).

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3. Effects on Housing Affordability

The relationship between land-use restrictions and housing affordability is well documented. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the Federal Reserve have both concluded that restrictive zoning increases housing prices by limiting supply.

A national study by the National Bureau of Economic Research found that metropolitan areas with stricter land-use regulations experience significantly higher housing prices and rents, even after controlling for income and demand factors (Gyourko, Saiz, & Summers, 2008).

HUD (2021) specifically identifies minimum lot size requirements as a regulatory barrier that disproportionately increases housing costs by mandating higher land consumption per unit, thereby increasing per-unit land costs and excluding more affordable housing types.

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4. Misalignment With Zoning Intent

Planning best practices emphasize that zoning regulations should implement, not undermine, stated land-use objectives. When dimensional standards prevent the development of permitted uses, the regulation functions as a de facto prohibition rather than a reasonable control.

In the case of Joplin's R-2 district, the minimum lot size effectively restricts development to single-family homes, despite duplexes and multifamily uses being permitted. This phenomenon is consistent with findings by Pendall (2000), who notes that large-lot zoning often serves to exclude multifamily and moderate-density housing, even where nominally allowed.

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5. Economic and Fiscal Impacts

Restrictive zoning not only affects housing markets but also has broader economic consequences. Research by the Brookings Institution finds that land-use constraints reduce construction activity, limit job creation in the building trades, and suppress local economic growth (Molloy, 2016).

Additionally, undeveloped or underdeveloped land generates fewer property tax revenues than improved parcels, reducing fiscal capacity for local governments (Been, Ellen, & O'Regan, 2019). By preventing feasible development, excessive lot size requirements contribute to lost investment and foregone municipal revenue.

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6. Policy Implications for Joplin

Reducing the minimum lot size in the R-2 zoning district from 7,800 to 6,000 square feet aligns with empirical research and planning best practices by:

- Restoring the functional intent of the zoning district
- Enabling modest infill and low-density multifamily development
- Increasing housing supply without increasing allowed use intensity
- Supporting affordability through reduced per-unit land costs
- Encouraging private investment and construction employment

Importantly, the proposed standard remains consistent with existing neighborhood patterns and does not introduce new uses, heights, or densities beyond those already permitted.

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7. Conclusion

Academic research consistently demonstrates that excessive land-use restrictions, including minimum lot size requirements, reduce housing supply, increase housing costs, and constrain economic development. In Joplin, the current R-2 minimum lot size functions as an effective prohibition on intended development, contrary to sound planning principles and public interest outcomes.

Reducing the minimum lot size to 6,000 square feet represents a targeted, evidence-based amendment that corrects a regulatory misalignment while advancing housing affordability, economic vitality, and zoning consistency.

References

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Data-Backed Comparison: A High-Restriction City vs. a Low-Restriction City (San Francisco vs. Houston)

To illustrate how land-use restrictiveness can correlate with housing affordability outcomes, consider **San Francisco, California** (a high-regulation environment with complex and discretionary approvals) compared to **Houston, Texas** (the largest major U.S. city widely described as operating **without conventional zoning**).

1) Land-use regulatory posture (qualitative comparison)

- **Houston:** Scholarly literature frequently identifies Houston as the only major North American city without formal zoning, relying instead on a mix of subdivision rules, deed restrictions, and targeted regulations rather than comprehensive use-based zoning. ScienceDirect
- **San Francisco:** California's Housing and Community Development department has described San Francisco as an outlier in approvals, citing the city's use of broadly discretionary review and a complex approvals environment that increases uncertainty and delay for housing development. California Housing Department

2) Housing affordability outcomes (quantitative comparison)

Home prices (median):

- **San Francisco:** median home sale price ~**$1.5 million** (Nov 2025). Redfin
- **Houston:** median home sale price ~**$350,000** (Nov 2025). Redfin

Median household income (Census QuickFacts):

- **San Francisco: $141,446** (2019–2023, in 2023 dollars). Census.gov
- **Houston: $62,894** (2019–2023, in 2023 dollars). Census.gov

Price-to-income (simple affordability indicator):
Using the above figures, the **median home price is ~10.6× median household income in San Francisco**, compared to **~5.6× in Houston** (computed from cited Redfin price and Census income figures). Census.gov+3Redfin+3Redfin+3

Rents (median advertised rent):

- **San Francisco:** median rent **$3,595** (Dec 2025). Zumper - Apartments for Rent & Houses
- **Houston:** median rent **$1,523** (Dec 2025). Zumper - Apartments for Rent & Houses

Rent-to-income (rough burden proxy):
Using median advertised rent (annualized) divided by Census median household income, rent equals **~30.5% of median household income in San Francisco** and **~29.1% in Houston** (computed from cited Zumper rent and Census income figures). While this is not a perfect measure of renter burden (because "median household income" includes owner households and "median advertised rent" reflects current listings), the comparison still shows that **Houston achieves far lower nominal rents and prices** and a substantially lower price-to-income ratio. Census.gov+3Zumper - Apartments for Rent & Houses+3Zumper - Apartments for Rent & Houses+3

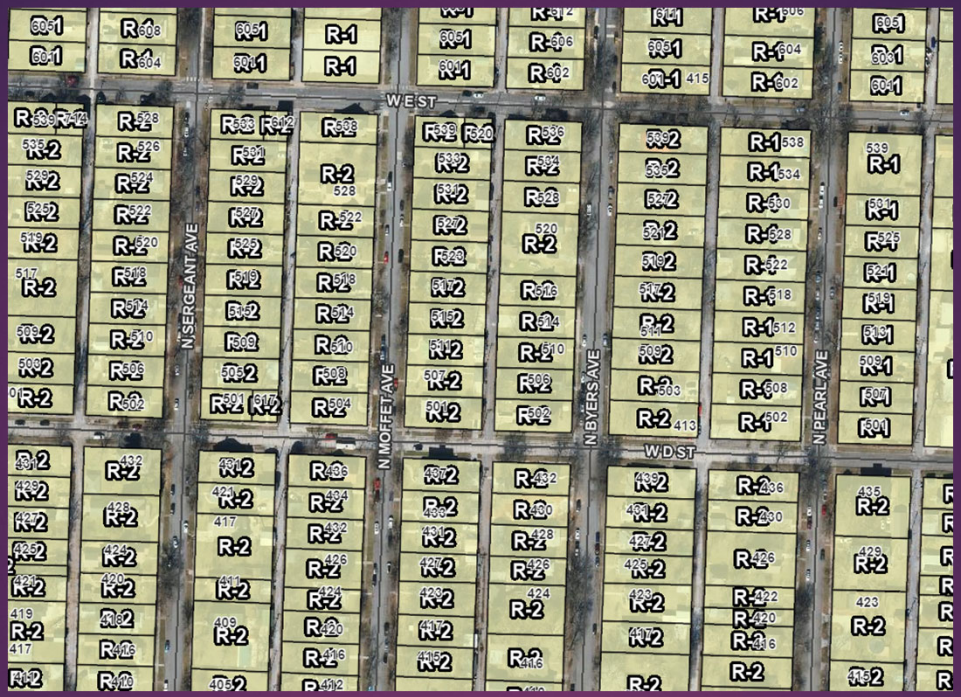
3) Interpretation for the Joplin minimum lot size amendment

The San Francisco–Houston contrast is not proof of single-cause explanation (many factors also matter: regional demand, geography, job growth, and building costs). However, it is consistent

with the broader literature: **when regulatory structures add discretionary friction or reduce feasible housing capacity, supply responsiveness tends to fall and affordability pressures rise**. In that context, a minimum lot size that renders an intended residential district effectively unbuildable operates as a capacity constraint similar in kind (if not scale) to other exclusionary rules documented in the housing economics and planning literature

Request to Allow Two-Unit Home in R-2

- Currently, the standard size requirement for any two-family dwelling in an R-2 District is 7,800 square feet.
- The City has several 50'x120' lots in our traditional neighborhoods, that are zoned R-2, but do not have 7,800 square feet. In order to build a duplex, a developer would have to acquire two 50'x120' lots, even though the property is zoned R-2.
- This request will allow for two-unit homes (designs that are compatible with the surrounding neighborhood) in infill contexts on 50'x120' lots (6,000 square feet).



This map displays a neighborhood Southeast of Eagle Picher. As you can see, this neighborhood is primarily zoned R-2, and the typical lot size is 50'x120.' This is an example of a walkable neighborhood (narrow lots, sidewalks, and alleys). Under the current code provisions, a duplex would not be permitted, unless the developer had two lots.

Duplex vs. Two-Unit Home

Two-Unit Home



Duplex



Two-Unit Home

- Complies with the Walkable Design Guidelines
- Gives the outward appearance of one home that happens to house two units
- Single Frontage Features (Porches, Stoops, Railings, and Ornamentation)
- Permitted in higher density neighborhoods (6,000 square feet minimum)
- Currently not permitted in an R-2 District with a lot that is 6,000 square feet.









Duplex

- Suburban, less walkable design
- Two single-family homes connected by a common wall
- Permitted in lower density neighborhoods (7,800 square feet minimum)
- Permitted in an R-2 and R-3 District





P & Z Case 010-26
Tyler Casey/Pro X, Inc.
(P & Z Recommended to Deny)

COUNCIL BILL NO. 2026-261 ORDINANCE NO.

AN ORDINANCE amending the Joplin Development Code, Ordinance No. 2022-119, passed by the Council of the City of Joplin, Missouri, August 1, 2022, being Appendix 29-A of the Joplin Municipal Code.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF JOPLIN, MISSOURI, as follows:

Section 1. Having referred to the subject matter of this ordinance to the City Planning and Zoning Commission and having given at least fifteen (15) days' notice of time and place of hearing on same by publication in the Joplin Globe, Ordinance No. 2022-119 is hereby amended to reflect the following:

Section 2. That Article 5. Building & Development Standards, Section 1. Residential Development Standards, Table 5-02: Residential District Building Type & Development Standards, of Chapter 29-A (Zoning Code) of the Joplin Municipal Code, be amended to allow Duplex/Multi-unit House in the R-2 District through limited applicability.

Section 3. That any other ordinance, or part of such ordinance, or chapter of the Joplin Municipal Code in conflict with said provisions shall and the same is hereby repealed.

Section 4. That this ordinance shall become effective beginning _____, 2026.

PASSED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF JOPLIN, MISSOURI, this the _____ day of_____, 2026, by a vote of _____.

_____
Keenan T. Cortez, Mayor

ATTEST:

_____
Holly Nagy, City Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

_____

Peter C. Edwards, City Attorney