



PLANNING & ZONING REPORT

Zoning Board of Appeals Meeting of July 21, 2026

File # 026-26

APPLICANT: City of Rockford

REQUESTED ACTION: The following text amendments for Articles: Table 20-1 (Residential Use Classification Table), Article 20-005-C (Lot Area per Dwelling Unit), Article 20-005-G (Rear Setbacks), Table 21-1 (Commercial Use Classification Table), Article 30-004 (Mandatory Planned Unit Developments), Article 35 (Infill Overlay District), Article 50-003 (Off-street Parking Ratios), Article 50-016 (Access Locations) and Article 80-003 (Nonconforming Uses and Continuance of Nonconforming Uses)

HISTORY: **File #029-25:** A Text Amendment of the City of Rockford Zoning Ordinance to Table 21-1 Use Classification Table and Table 22-1 Use Classification Table removing the residential storage warehouse as a Special Use Permit in C-3, General Commercial Zoning District and C-4, Mixed-Use Zoning District. This was approved on October 10, 2025.

File #008-25: A Text Amendment for Article 50-003 (Off-Street Parking Ratios) 50-003-G. Electric Vehicle Charging Stations (EVCS) Parking spaces that are specifically designated for EVCS shall be counted towards the minimum number of off-street parking space requirements; and, Article 91-002 (Accessory Use) 91-002-I. Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Stations, (a) Single Family Residential – Electric Vehicle Charging Stations (EVCS) are permitted as an accessory use. EVCS shall be located within a garage or on the interior side of the rear elevation of the structure, (b) Multi-Family Residential – Electric Vehicle Charging Stations (EVCS) are permitted as an accessory use, (c) All other Zoning Districts – Electric Vehicle Charging Stations (EVCS) are permitted as an accessory use within any parking lot or parking structure in all zoning districts. This was approved on May 5, 2025.

File #046-24: A Text Amendment of the City of Rockford Zoning Ordinance to Article 80-009-D Miscellaneous Nonconforming Uses. All properties in R-1, Single Family Districts with gravel driveways and/or gravel parking lots legally established are not required to conform to the regulations contained in Section 50-013-A of this Ordinance. All properties in other Residential Districts (RE, R-1U, R-2, R-3, and R-4) and Commercial Districts with gravel driveways and/or gravel parking lots legally established shall conform to the regulations contained in Section 50-013-A of this Ordinance by November 1, 2023. Nothing in this provision allows illegally established nonconforming parking lots and driveways to remain. This was approved on October 8, 2024.

File #009-24: A Text Amendment of the City of Rockford Zoning Ordinance: Article 20-005-E Front Setbacks, Table 21-1 Uses Classification

Table, Article 20-007 Character Standards, Article 21-004-B C-2 AND C-3 Districts, Table 22-1 Uses Classification Table, Article 30-004 Mandatory Planned Unit Development, Article 33-001 Maximum Wellhead Setback Overlay District, Article 33-002 Minimum Wellhead Setback Overlay District, Article 33-002-E Wellhead Protection Setback District, Article 40-002-F Outside Parking of Vehicles in Residential Districts, Article 40-002-M Solar Collectors, Article 40-002-O Temporary Construction Dumpster/Storage Pods, Article 50-024 Maintenance, Article 51-005 Signs in Residential Districts, Article 52-004-E Maintenance, Article 55-001-B General Fencing Regulations, Article 55-001-C Fence Height in Residential and Commercial Zoning Districts, Article 63-012 Lapse of Special Use Permit and Article 90-003-M Entertainment and Spectator Sports was approved on June 3, 2024; and Article 53-004 Uses Prohibited as Home Businesses was approved on June 17, 2024.

File #067-23: A Text Amendment of the City of Rockford Zoning Ordinance to Article 90-002-A-6., Group Home for Adjustment. A residence for two or more individuals under supervision while on probation, pre-release, parole, mandatory supervised release, or work release, to mainstream residents back into society enabling them to live independently. For purposes of this subsection 6, any property with multi-unit dwellings shall be considered one residence. This was approved on December 6, 2023.

File #032-23: A Text Amendment of the City of Rockford Zoning Ordinance to Article 80-009-D. All properties in R-1, Single Family Residential Districts with gravel driveways and/or gravel parking lots legally established shall conform to the regulations contained in Section 50-013-A of this Ordinance by November 1, 2024. All properties in any other Residential Districts (RE, R-1U, R-2, R-3, and R-4) and Commercial Districts with gravel driveways and/or gravel parking lots legally established shall conform to the regulations contained in Section 50-013-A of this Ordinance by November 1, 2023. Nothing in this provision allows illegally established nonconforming parking lots and driveways to remain. This extended the paving deadline for all non-conforming R-1, Single-family residential gravel driveways and parking lots to November 1, 2024 and was approved on July 12, 2023.

File #026-21: A Text Amendment of the City of Rockford Zoning Ordinance to Article 80-009-D. Miscellaneous Nonconforming Uses was approved on August 3, 2021. This extended the paving deadline for all non-conforming commercial and residential gravel driveways and parking lots to November 1, 2023.

File #012-20: A Text Amendment of the City of Rockford Zoning Ordinance: Articles: 22-003 Floor Area Ratio, 22-004 Density, 40-002-F Outside Parking of Vehicles in Residential Districts, 40-002-M Solar Collectors, 51-010 Murals, 71-003 Violation Penalties and Appendix A: Recommended Plant Species List was approved on July 8, 2020.

File #033-19: A Text Amendment of the City of Rockford Zoning Ordinance to Article 80-009-D. Miscellaneous Nonconforming Uses was approved on July 3, 2019. This extended the paving deadline for all non-

conforming commercial and residential gravel driveways and parking lots to November 1, 2021.

File #035 (a)-16: Text Amendments of the City Rockford Zoning Ordinance: Table 20-1 Use Classification Table, Table 21-1 Use Classification Table, Table 22-1 Use Classification Table, Table 23-1 Use Classification Table, 30-005 Elective Planned Unit Developments, 50-013-A. Surfacing, 51-002 Signs Not Permitted, 51-004-D. Height (Commercial and Industrial Zoning Districts-C-2, C-3, C-4, I-1, I-2 and I-3 Districts Only), 51-005 Signs in Residential Districts, 51-007-A-8. Sandwich Signs, 52-002-C Schedule of Landscape Units, 55-001-B General Fencing Regulations, 80-009 Miscellaneous Nonconforming Uses, 91-175 Concrete Batch Plant was approved on February 8, 2017

File #035 (b)-16: Text Amendments of the City of Rockford Zoning Ordinance: Table 20-1 Use Classification Table, 30-004-L. Mandatory Planned Unit Developments, 65-003-L. Community Gardens, 65-003-M. Urban Farming, 91-002 Accessory Use, 53-003.L. Home Business, 40-002-N. Beekeeping, 91-176 Community Garden, 91-177 Urban Farm, 91-178 Beekeeping was approved on February 8, 2017.

File #005-16: A Text Amendment to the City of Rockford Zoning Ordinance to Driveway Widths Exhibit Article 20-007-C., Setback Standards for Corner Lots Article 21-005-G., Mandatory Planned Unit Development Article 30-004, Parking lots and Parking Ratios Article 50-001-A and 50-003-F, Signs Article 51-002 and 51-004, Fences Articles 55-001-A, C, and D, Administration and Enforcement Article 71 and Terminology and Measurements Article 91 was approved on March 7, 2016.

File #050-16: A Text Amendment to the City of Rockford Zoning Ordinance to Definitions 91-004: Article 55, Section 55-001-B (6); and the addition of New Section 51-001-E was approved on February 1, 2016. This gave clarification for procedures to obtain an electric fence via a Special Use Permit.

REVIEW COMMENTS: The proposed text amendments to the Zoning Ordinance are shown as redline as follows:

Table 20-1 Use Classification Table

USE GROUP	Zoning District						Use Standard	Parking Standard
Use Category ^L specific use type	RE	R-1	R-1U	R-2	R-3	R-4		
P=Permitted Use; S= Special Use; PR=Performance Review; PUD= Planned Unit Development; - = Prohibited Use								
RESIDENTIAL								
^L Detached house	P	P	P	P	P	P		Group A
^L Townhouse	-	-	-	P	P	P		Group A
^L Two-unit house	-	-	-	P	P	P		Group A
^L Three-unit house	-	-	-	P	P	P		Group A
^L Four-unit house	-	-	-	P	P	P		Group A
^L Multifamily	-	-	-	-	P	P		Group A

20-005-C. LOT AREA PER DWELLING UNIT (DENSITY)

3. MINIMUM LOT AREA EXCEPTION FOR THREE AND FOUR UNIT HOUSES IN R-2

Three-unit and four-unit houses permitted as new construction in the R-2 district and must meet the minimum lot area per unit standards of the R-3 district and does not include conversion of existing structures.

Review Comments: This would allow the construction of new three and four unit houses on vacant lots in the R-2 district providing that the lot size meets the minimum lot area standard for the R-3 district. This would be an incentive to provide new housing construction in many older areas where it would make more financial sense to establish more units and provide market rate housing. Many of these areas already have a mix of housing types with a scattering of 4-unit houses as well as other multifamily houses. This would only be permitted for new construction and would not allow for the conversion of existing structures.

20-005-G. REAR SETBACKS

1. In all RE districts, the minimum rear setback for principal buildings is 75 feet.
2. In all other R districts, the required rear setback for principal buildings other than detached accessory structures is ~~2030~~ feet.

Review Comments: This would change the rear setback from 30 feet to 20 feet in all residential districts with the exception of the RE, Rural Estate Zoning District. This would allow for some flexibility on creating additions to homes, especially on existing smaller lots, as well as finding ways to encourage new infill development on those smaller vacant lots.

Table 21-1 Use Classification Table

USE GROUP	Zoning District			Use Standard	Parking Standard
Use Category	C-1	C-2	C-3		
↳specific use type					
P=Permitted Use, S=Special Use, PR=Performance Review, PUD= Planned Unit Development, - = Prohibited Use					
RESIDENTIAL					
Household Living					
↳Artist Live/Work Space located on the ground floor	S	S	S		Group B
↳Artist Live/Work Space located above the ground floor	P	P	P		Group B
↳Dwelling Units located above the ground floor	P	P	P		Group B
↳Dwelling Units located on the ground floor (as follows)					

USE GROUP	Zoning District			Use Standard	Parking Standard
LDetached house	S	S	S		Group A
LAttached house	S	S	S		Group A
LTwo-unit house	S	S	S		Group A
LApartment/condo (3+ units)	PS	S	S		Group B

Review Comments: This proposed change would allow residential uses by right in the C-1, Limited Office Zoning District. They were previously allowed by right under the 1993 Zoning Ordinance. This change is being proposed as we have a fairly significant amount of vacant C-1 zoned land. New office construction is rare these days and, with the changes in technology, we have seen numerous companies now having employees work from their homes as it is more economically efficient. Allowing R-3 uses within the C-1 District could encourage more multifamily developments and allow these vacant sites to become tax generating properties.

30-004 MANDATORY PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENTS

Planned unit development review and approval, in accordance with the requirements of this section, is required for the following:

30-004-I. Residential developments with multiple *buildings* on a single lot excluding town home developments with less than ~~50~~60 units that conform with Section 40-002-H; and

Zoning District	Thresholds		
	Single-Family Detached	Single-Family Attached (Townhomes)	Multifamily
Residential or Commercial Districts	150 100 units	60 50 units	80 60 units

Where a project includes a mix of single-family, townhouses, and multifamily housing the most restrictive threshold will apply.

Review Comments: This proposed amendment would change the mandatory planned unit development for certain types of development. Currently, any proposed development over 50 townhome units (attached single-family), over 60 multifamily units and over 100 single family (detached) homes would trigger a mandatory planned unit development. Also, where a project includes a mix of single-family, townhouses, and multifamily housing, the most restrictive threshold will apply. In order to continue to encourage the development of more housing for our city, this change in the ordinance would allow for an increase in the number of units in all three housing categories. These changes would be business friendly and help encourage more development, not stifle it. This would encourage good infill residential development as well by eliminating the Special Use Permit requirement and allowing certain uses by right.

Article 35 | INFILL OVERLAY DISTRICT

35-001 PURPOSE

The purpose of the Infill Overlay District is to facilitate new construction and residential development within the district and to allow new construction of two-family residences. This district overlays properties in areas already classified in other zoning districts. The overlay is designed to achieve the following objectives;

- 35-001-A. To promote new residential development and interest in the district.
- 35-001-B. To allow two-family residences within a single-family only district.
- 35-001-C. To allow flexibility of uses and development standards.
- 35-001-D. To boost the housing stock and encourage reinvestment in the neighborhood.

35-002 DISTRICT DESCRIPTION

The Infill Overlay District shall apply to all properties located within the District as designated on the City of Rockford Zoning Map as "Infill Overlay District".

35-003 PERMITTED USES

Permitted uses, special uses, bulk regulations and parking regulations shall be those applicable for the underlying zoning district, except as specifically stated, permitted and/or prohibited within Sections 35-001 to 35-006. Where the use or provision is in conflict with another Overlay District i.e. the Historic Preservation Overlay District, the most restrictive regulation shall apply.

35-004 LOT SIZES

A detached single-family house or two-family house may be established on any lot of record regardless of its lot width, lot length or lot size, provided that all other requirements of this overlay district are met for new construction. This exemption also applies if a lot of record is increased in area and still does not comply with applicable minimum lot frontage standards.

35-005 SETBACK REQUIREMENT

- 35-005-A. Front yard setbacks are 25 feet or must be set back a distance equal to the average front yard depth that exists on the block of the subject lot but never greater than 25 feet.
- 35-005-B. Side yard setbacks are 4.5 feet.
- 35-005-C. Rear yard setbacks are 20 feet.

35-006 PARKING

2 spaces for new construction detached houses. 1.5 spaces per unit for new construction two-flats.

Review Comments: This is a new Article that is being proposed by creating an Infill Overlay District. This would allow for the construction of new two-family residences within an R-1, Single-family Residential Zoning District. This has the potential to promote new residential development and interest in the district, allow flexibility of uses and development standards, and boost

the housing stock by encouraging reinvestment in the neighborhood. The areas in which this could be established are having trouble in obtaining financing for new single-family homes and allowing them to construct two-family homes would provide additional revenue for the builder/owner and help close any financing gaps that may exist.

This proposed Infill Overlay District would also allow construction of a detached single-family house or a two-family house on any established lot of record regardless of its lot width, lot length or lot size, provided that all other requirements of this overlay district are met for new construction. Some of these lots have been vacant for numerous years due to their substandard size or perhaps not being able to meet required setbacks. This will memorialize certain exceptions on setbacks to permanently apply to the Infill Overlay District.

The parking requirements would be changed for the overlay district as well. New single-family detached homes would be required to have two spaces and new construction two-flats would be required to have 1.5 space per unit. The requirement for a minimum one-car fully enclosed garage would no longer apply for new construction within the Infill Overlay District.

50-003 OFF-STREET PARKING RATIOS

District	Minimum Automobile Parking Ratio (per unit or gross floor area)	Minimum Bike Parking
Parking Group A (Detached House, Townhouse, Two Flat)		
R-1 and R-1U	2 spaces per unit; At least one of the required parking spaces must be located in a fully enclosed garage.	None
R-2	2 spaces per unit for detached houses, 2 spaces per unit for two-flats, and 2 spaces per townhouse. At least one of the required parking spaces must be located in a fully enclosed garage.	None
All other R districts	2 spaces per unit for detached houses 1.5 spaces per unit for two-flats and 1 space per townhouse	
C-1, C-2, C-3 districts	2 spaces per unit for detached houses, 1.5 spaces per unit for two-flats, and <u>2</u> space per townhouse	
Parking Group B (Multi-unit)		
All R districts	<u>2</u> <u>1.5</u> spaces per unit;	1 per 4 auto spaces in buildings with more than 2 units.
C-1, C-2, C-3 districts	<u>2</u> <u>1.5</u> spaces per unit;	1 per 4 auto spaces in buildings with more than 2 units.

Review Comments: This proposed change would reduce the amount of parking spaces required for multifamily developments. This would also decrease the amount of pavement for these types of projects and allow developers to reduce expenses. As a result, this would reduce storm water runoff as well. The 1993 Zoning Ordinance only required 1.5 spaces per unit. We experienced a lot of growth and development back in the 1990's and parking was not an issue. This change would be based on what has

worked well in the past, require less pavement and allow for more pervious surface areas within the multifamily development.

50-003 OFF-STREET PARKING RATIOS

District	Minimum Automobile Parking Ratio (per unit or gross floor area)	Minimum Bike Parking
Parking Group M (Eating and Drinking Establishments and Food and Beverage Sales)		
C-1, C-2, C-3 and all I Districts	Restaurants and take-out food stores: 13.3 spaces per 1000 square feet; fast food restaurants: 13.3 10 spaces per 1000 square feet plus 8 stacking spaces per drive-up window. <i>The Zoning Officer may make further reductions on the required number of parking spaces, based on competent evidence provided by the applicant, that the proposed number of parking spaces is adequate to support the use based on the established evidence.</i>	1 per 10 auto spaces

Review Comments: This proposed change would reduce the required parking for fast food restaurants with drive-through facilities. Most fast food restaurants with a drive-through no longer need the amount of parking that we currently require as 75-80% of their business uses the drive-through and, therefore, never use the parking lot. Many of these restaurants have recognized the need for less pavement and have been inquiring about parking variations on their projects. This would eliminate the need for the variation. The only exception to the parking issue would be Culver's or a fast food restaurant next to an interstate highway who experience more sit down business due to travelers looking to take a break. Those businesses have maximized parking in the past because they know they need it. This proposed change would be provide flexibility depending on the situation, location and be more environmentally friendly as well.

50-016 ACCESS LOCATIONS

- A. All access points should be located to provide the maximum separation distance between the *driveway* and the intersections of public *streets*. Where it is not possible to maximize the separation distance, then other traffic management methods (e.g. raised medians, controls for right-in and right-out, or shared *driveways*) should be used as recommended by the City Traffic Engineer.
- B. *Only one (1) driveway shall be permitted for each residential property and two (2) driveways for a commercial or industrial property. Additional driveways may be considered and approved by the City Engineer based upon parcel size and development type. Circular driveways are permitted on residential properties for an interior lot with street frontage of at least one hundred and twenty five feet (125') and for a corner lot with street frontage of at least two hundred feet (200').*

Review Comments: Staff has been asked by a significant amount of residents regarding driveway issues why they cannot have two access points. If we add the language from the Engineering Design Criteria and place it under 50-016-B, this would solidify our position and make it a zoning

regulation as well. Article 50-016-A is actually from the Engineering Design Criteria as well so this would be the perfect spot to make this part of the ordinance.

80-003 NONCONFORMING USES AND CONTINUANCE OF NONCONFORMING USES

80-003-B. CHANGE OF USE

3. A single-family home within the C-1 District that was lawfully converted to an office use may be re-established as a single-family home via a change of use permit.

Review Comments: A couple of older corridors, such as portions of North Main Street and North Church Street received a lot of pressure in the past to change the zoning from residential to commercial since they were on heavily traveled roads. As a way to handle the demand, the zoning map changed in these areas to C-1, Limited Office Zoning District to allow the conversion of the large, older single-family homes into offices. At that time, this was a way to help commercial office growth, but preserve and maintain the architectural heritage of these corridors. Now, many of these businesses have left and the new property owners are desirous of restoring these back to single-family homes. This change would provide a path to legally allow the conversion of the structure back to a single-family home but still leave on option for it to be office space in the future as well.

To summarize, these proposed text amendments should help change the Zoning Ordinance to compliment the needs of the community in a consistent manner. The purpose of these text amendments is to assist with the development and re-development of land within the City of Rockford, especially helping with infill development. The proposed Infill Overlay District would provide a spark for an area of the city that has seen little to no investment or construction of new residences. The proposed change will also ease the parking requirements for new construction within the overlay district. It will also increase the threshold for certain types of development so they are permitted by right and not by Special Use Permit. It will also ease some parking regulations thereby reducing impervious surface and storm water runoff. Additionally, it will codify the issues with driveway access which is currently contained within the Engineering Design Criteria Standards. Finally, it provides a legal way to allow the re-use of single-family homes that were once office space to be converted back to single-family homes. As we believe this would be a positive step forward with the Zoning Ordinance, Staff supports these proposed amendments.

RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends **APPROVAL** of the following Text Amendments of the City of Rockford Zoning Ordinance to Table 20-1, Article 20-005-C (Lot Area per Dwelling Unit), Article 20-005-G (Rear Setbacks), Table 21-1, Article 30-004 (Mandatory Planned Unit Developments), Article 35 (Infill Overlay District), Article 50-003 (Off-street Parking Ratios), Article 50-016 (Access Locations) and Article 80-003 (Nonconforming Uses and Continuance of Nonconforming Uses).

June 24, 2026

Rockford City Council
425 East State Street
Rockford, Illinois 61104



PlatFORM
Group

Please note 3 letters

RE: Support for Proposed Zoning Text Amendments to Advance Infill Development, Missing Middle Housing, and Neighborhood Revitalization

Dear Mayor McNamara and Members of the City Council:

On behalf of The PlatFORM Group, we write in strong support of the proposed zoning text amendments currently under consideration by the City of Rockford. As an organization dedicated to advancing housing opportunity, neighborhood revitalization, economic development, and equitable growth throughout Rockford, we believe these amendments represent a thoughtful and important step toward addressing the city's housing needs while strengthening existing neighborhoods through strategic infill development.

Rockford's future growth depends not only on attracting new investment, but also on maximizing the potential of the land, infrastructure, and neighborhoods that already exist. The proposed amendments recognize that one of the most effective ways to increase housing production is to remove barriers that prevent vacant lots, underutilized parcels, and aging commercial properties from being redeveloped into housing. By creating greater flexibility for residential development, reducing unnecessary regulatory constraints, and modernizing development standards, these amendments will help transform vacant and underperforming properties into productive community assets.

The PlatFORM Group is particularly supportive of the proposed enhancements to the Infill Overlay District, which we view as one of the most significant housing production tools available to the city. The overlay district acknowledges the reality that many of Rockford's neighborhoods were developed long before current zoning regulations were adopted. As a result, thousands of parcels throughout the city—including many in Midtown, the Northwest Side, and older established neighborhoods—do not conform to modern lot width, lot area, frontage, or setback requirements. The proposed changes create a practical pathway for these lots to once again contribute to the city's housing inventory rather than remaining vacant indefinitely.

The ability to build homes on lots of record, combined with reasonable setback standards and parking requirements, will substantially improve the feasibility of neighborhood-scale housing development. These are precisely the kinds of reforms needed to encourage small developers, nonprofit organizations, neighborhood builders, and local property owners to

participate in housing production. Infill development does not require the extension of new roads, utilities, or public infrastructure; instead, it leverages investments that taxpayers have already made while strengthening neighborhood stability and expanding the local tax base.

We are also encouraged by the amendments that expand opportunities for missing middle housing, including duplexes, triplexes, four-unit homes, townhouses, and small multifamily developments. Missing middle housing represents a critical component of a healthy housing market because it provides housing options between single-family homes and large apartment complexes. These housing types historically existed throughout Rockford and helped create diverse, walkable neighborhoods that accommodated households of varying incomes, ages, and family sizes. Unfortunately, many current zoning regulations make these housing types difficult to build despite strong market demand. The proposed amendments begin to address this challenge by creating additional opportunities for incremental density and housing choice in a manner that remains compatible with existing neighborhood character.

The proposed parking reforms are similarly important. Excessive parking requirements increase housing costs, reduce the amount of land available for housing, and often make small infill projects financially infeasible. By right-sizing parking requirements and allowing greater flexibility, the City is helping reduce development costs, lower impervious surface coverage, improve stormwater outcomes, and create more opportunities for attainable housing production.

These amendments are also highly consistent with the housing priorities identified through local and regional planning efforts. Increasing housing supply, supporting neighborhood reinvestment, revitalizing commercial corridors, creating housing choice, and encouraging development within existing neighborhoods have all emerged as recurring themes in Rockford's housing and economic development strategies. The proposed amendments advance each of these goals while positioning the city to better compete for residents, workforce talent, and private investment.

Simply put, Rockford cannot solve its housing shortage without building more housing, and it cannot build more housing without modernizing the regulations that govern development. The proposed Infill Overlay District enhancements and missing middle housing reforms represent practical, balanced, and forward-looking policies that will help create the conditions necessary for meaningful housing production over the coming decade.

For these reasons, The PlatFORM Group respectfully urges the City Council to approve the proposed zoning text amendments. We commend City staff, the Planning and Zoning Division, the Code and Regulation Committee, and community stakeholders for advancing

reforms that will strengthen neighborhoods, support housing production, and further the City's long-term vision for growth and revitalization.

Thank you for your consideration and your continued commitment to building a stronger and more prosperous Rockford.

Sincerely,

Ron Clewer
CEO
The PlatFORM Group
631 North Longwood Street, Suite 101
Rockford, Illinois 61107

CC: Todd Cagnoni, City Administrator
Sarah Leys, Community and Economic Development Department

Zion Development Corp.

910 Fifth Avenue
Rockford, IL 61104
Ron Clewer,
CEO and Executive Director

Phone: 815.964.8280
www.ziondevelopment.com
executivedirector@ziondevelopment.org



June 23, , 2026

Mayor Tom McNamara and Members of the Rockford City Council
City of Rockford
425 East State Street
Rockford, Illinois 61104

RE: Support for Proposed 2026 Zoning Text Amendments

Dear Mayor McNamara and Members of the City Council:

On behalf of ZION Development Corporation, we are pleased to express our strong support for the proposed zoning text amendments currently under consideration by the City of Rockford. As an organization focused on neighborhood revitalization, housing development, and equitable community investment, we believe these amendments represent important and practical steps toward increasing housing opportunities, encouraging redevelopment of underutilized properties, and advancing the housing goals established by the City of Rockford.

ZION Development Corporation has a particular interest in the success of infill development throughout Rockford, especially within Midtown and surrounding neighborhoods where decades of disinvestment, population loss, demolition, and vacant land have created both challenges and opportunities. The proposed amendments recognize that many of the barriers preventing new housing construction today are regulatory rather than physical. By expanding opportunities for three- and four-unit homes, increasing flexibility within the Infill Overlay District, reducing excessive setback requirements, allowing housing on lots of record, and modernizing parking standards, the city is creating a framework that better aligns with the historic development pattern of Midtown and many of Rockford's older neighborhoods.

These reforms are particularly important because infill development is one of the most cost-effective and sustainable ways to increase housing supply. Midtown already benefits from existing streets, utilities, schools, parks, public services, and commercial corridors. Encouraging residential investment in these areas strengthens neighborhoods, supports local businesses, increases property values, and makes more efficient use of public infrastructure while reducing pressure for outward expansion. The proposed amendments provide the flexibility necessary to return vacant lots and underutilized properties to productive use and help restore neighborhood density levels that historically support thriving commercial districts and walkable communities.

We are especially supportive of the enhancements to the Infill Overlay District, which acknowledges the realities of historic urban neighborhoods where lot dimensions often do not conform to modern zoning standards. Allowing housing development on existing lots of record and providing reasonable flexibility for setbacks and parking requirements can unlock numerous

Zion Development Corp.

910 Fifth Avenue
Rockford, IL 61104
Ron Clewer,
CEO and Executive Director

Phone: 815.964.8280
www.ziondevelopment.com
executivedirector@ziondevelopment.org



development opportunities that would otherwise remain infeasible. These are exactly the types of incremental changes that can catalyze private investment and expand housing choices without altering the fundamental character of established neighborhoods.

Rockford's adopted housing strategies and regional planning efforts have consistently identified the need to increase housing production, diversify housing types, promote neighborhood reinvestment, and encourage redevelopment within existing urban areas. These amendments directly support those objectives. While no single zoning change will solve the housing shortage, these reforms collectively represent meaningful progress toward creating a more housing-friendly environment and a stronger pipeline of infill development opportunities.

For these reasons, ZION Development Corporation supports the City Council in approving the proposed zoning text amendments. We commend City staff, the Planning and Zoning Division, and the Code and Regulation Committee for advancing thoughtful reforms that balance neighborhood character with the urgent need for additional housing and reinvestment. Thank you for your leadership and commitment to strengthening Rockford's neighborhoods and expanding housing opportunities for current and future residents.

Sincerely,

Ron Clewer
CEO
ZION Development Corporation

cc: Code & Regulation Committee
Planning & Zoning Division
Zoning Board of Appeals
Todd Cagnoni, City Administrator
Sarah Leys, Community and Economic Development Department

Rockford Area YIMBY
312 Harper Avenue
Rockford, Illinois 61103



June 24, 2026

Mayor Tom McNamara and Members of the Rockford City Council
City of Rockford
425 East State Street
Rockford, Illinois 61104

RE: Support for Proposed 2026 Zoning Text Amendments

Dear Mayor McNamara and Members of the City Council:

On behalf of Rockford Area YIMBY (Yes In My Back Yard), we write in strong support of the proposed zoning text amendments currently under consideration by the City of Rockford. These amendments represent meaningful, practical, and locally tailored reforms that will help increase housing production, encourage infill development, reduce unnecessary regulatory barriers, and advance the housing goals identified in the City's housing strategy.

Rockford, like communities across Illinois and the nation, faces a significant housing shortage across multiple price points. Meeting the needs of current residents, attracting new workers and families, supporting economic development, and stabilizing neighborhoods all require a greater supply and diversity of housing options. The proposed amendments take important steps toward achieving these outcomes by allowing three- and four-unit homes in additional residential districts, reducing excessive lot area and setback requirements, expanding opportunities within commercial districts for residential uses, reducing barriers to infill development, and modernizing parking regulations. Collectively, these changes create more opportunities for "missing middle" housing, adaptive reuse, neighborhood reinvestment, and incremental growth that can be accommodated within existing infrastructure.

We are particularly encouraged by the amendments that support the Infill Overlay District and allow development on existing lots of record, regardless of current lot dimensions, while maintaining reasonable development standards. These changes recognize the realities of Rockford's historic neighborhood pattern and remove barriers that have prevented vacant and underutilized parcels from contributing to the city's housing inventory. Likewise, the proposed reductions in minimum parking requirements acknowledge changing market conditions and help reduce unnecessary development costs, impervious surface coverage, and stormwater impacts while making smaller-scale housing projects more financially feasible.

The proposed amendments also align with best practices being implemented by communities nationwide that are seeking to address housing shortages through zoning modernization. Research consistently demonstrates that allowing a broader range of housing types, streamlining approvals, reducing excessive parking mandates, and encouraging infill development are among the most

Rockford Area YIMBY
312 Harper Avenue
Rockford, Illinois 61103



effective local tools available to increase housing production and improve affordability over time. These amendments do not eliminate local review or neighborhood protections; rather, they appropriately balance community character with the need to create additional housing opportunities.

Importantly, these changes directly support the City of Rockford's housing strategy goals by encouraging redevelopment of underutilized land, expanding housing choice, supporting neighborhood revitalization, and creating conditions for additional housing investment. Housing affordability cannot be achieved without increasing housing supply, and increasing housing supply requires removing unnecessary regulatory barriers. These amendments represent a thoughtful and measured approach to accomplishing both objectives.

For these reasons, Rockford Area YIMBY respectfully urges the City Council to advance and approve the proposed zoning text amendments. We appreciate the efforts of City staff, the Planning and Zoning Division, and the Zoning Board of Appeals in developing these recommendations and taking meaningful steps toward a more housing-friendly Rockford.

Thank you for your consideration and your continued commitment to addressing the community's housing needs.

Sincerely,

Ron Clewer, Co-Lead
Rockford Area YIMBY

cc: Code & Regulation Committee
Planning & Zoning Division
Zoning Board of Appeals
Todd Cagnoni, City Administrator
Sarah Leys, Community and Economic Development Department



**NORTHWEST
NEIGHBORS**

Main Office Northwest Neighbors Inc
3106b N Rockton Ave
Rockford, IL 61103

June 24, 2026

Mayor Tom McNamara and Members of the Rockford City Council

City of Rockford
425 East State Street
Rockford, Illinois 61104

RE: Support for Proposed 2026 Zoning Text Amendments

Dear Mayor McNamara and Members of the City Council:

On behalf of Northwest Christian Community Development Corporation, also known as **Northwest Neighbors**, we write in strong support of the proposed zoning text amendments currently under consideration by the City of Rockford. As an organization dedicated to neighborhood revitalization, housing opportunity, and community development on Rockford's northwest side, we believe these amendments represent an important step toward addressing the city's housing shortage, encouraging reinvestment in existing neighborhoods, and expanding opportunities for infill and missing middle housing development.

Northwest Neighbors works daily in neighborhoods that have experienced decades of population decline, disinvestment, housing loss, and increasing vacancy. While these challenges are significant, they also present one of Rockford's greatest opportunities: the ability to add new housing within existing neighborhoods that already have streets, utilities, schools, parks, churches, transit access, and commercial corridors. The proposed amendments recognize that many of the barriers to housing production today stem not from a lack of land, but from outdated regulations that make infill housing difficult or financially infeasible to build. By modernizing these regulations, Rockford can unlock hundreds of opportunities for incremental neighborhood reinvestment.

We are particularly supportive of the amendments that expand opportunities for **missing middle housing**, including two-unit, three-unit, four-unit, townhouse, and small multifamily developments. These housing types historically existed throughout Rockford and provided attainable housing options for working families, seniors, young professionals, and first-time homebuyers. Missing middle housing offers a practical way to increase housing supply while maintaining neighborhood scale and character. Allowing more of these housing types in appropriate locations will create housing choices that are currently lacking in the marketplace and help meet the needs of a growing and changing population.

The proposed enhancements to the **Infill Overlay District** are especially important. Allowing residential construction on lots of record, providing flexibility for lot dimensions and setbacks, and reducing barriers to redevelopment acknowledge the realities of Rockford's historic neighborhood pattern. Many vacant lots throughout the northwest side and Midtown were created long before current zoning standards existed. These amendments will make it possible



NORTHWEST NEIGHBORS

to return many of those properties to productive use, transforming vacant land into homes, strengthening blocks, and increasing the tax base without requiring costly infrastructure expansion.

From a community development perspective, infill housing is about more than simply producing additional units. New housing helps stabilize neighborhoods, supports local businesses, increases property values, attracts new residents, and strengthens the long-term viability of schools, parks, and community institutions. Every vacant lot returned to productive use represents an investment in neighborhood confidence and community health. These amendments create the conditions necessary for that investment to occur at a scale meaningful enough to support Rockford's housing and economic development goals.

Northwest Neighbors believes that addressing housing affordability requires increasing housing supply across a variety of housing types and price points. Communities throughout the country are embracing zoning reforms that support infill development and missing middle housing because they recognize that sustainable growth must occur within existing neighborhoods as well as through larger development projects. The proposed amendments position Rockford to become a regional leader in this effort while remaining consistent with the character and history of its neighborhoods.

For these reasons, Northwest Christian Community Development Corporation respectfully urges the City Council to approve the proposed zoning text amendments. We commend City staff, the Planning and Zoning Division, the Code and Regulation Committee, and community stakeholders for advancing practical reforms that will help create more housing, strengthen neighborhoods, and support long-term community revitalization.

Thank you for your leadership and your commitment to expanding housing opportunities for Rockford residents.

Sincerely,

Ron Clewer

Chief Executive Officer

Northwest Christian Community Development Corporation

cc: Code and Regulation Committee

Planning and Zoning Division

Zoning Board of Appeals



**NORTHWEST
NEIGHBORS**

Northwest Neighbors Inc
3106b N Rockton Ave
Rockford, IL 61103

June 26, 2026

RE: Support for Proposed Zoning Text Amendments to Advance Neighborhood Revitalization, Housing Restoration, and Infill Development

Dear Mayor McNamara and Members of the City Council:

On behalf of Northwest Christian Community Development Corporation (NWCCDC), doing business as Northwest Neighbors, I am pleased to express our organization's support for the proposed zoning text amendments currently under consideration by the City of Rockford. As a nonprofit community development corporation focused on neighborhood revitalization, housing restoration, community engagement, and economic development, we view these amendments as important tools that can help remove barriers to reinvestment and support the continued revitalization of Rockford's established neighborhoods.

NWCCDC's mission includes preserving existing housing, restoring vacant and deteriorated properties, supporting neighborhood stability, and encouraging reinvestment in communities that have experienced decades of disinvestment and population loss. Throughout the neighborhoods we serve, we encounter vacant lots, underutilized parcels, and aging properties that have the potential to become productive housing opportunities but are often constrained by regulatory standards that do not reflect the realities of historic neighborhood development patterns.

We are especially encouraged by the proposed enhancements to the **Infill Overlay District**, which creates greater flexibility for residential construction on existing lots of record and establishes development standards better aligned with Rockford's traditional neighborhood fabric. Many neighborhoods on the northwest side and other mature areas of the city contain vacant parcels that were created decades ago and no longer conform to current dimensional standards. By allowing appropriately scaled housing development on these lots, the city can support reinvestment without requiring the extension of new infrastructure or expansion into undeveloped areas. These changes help make infill development a more practical and attainable tool for neighborhood revitalization.

The proposed amendments also create opportunities for additional **missing middle housing**, including duplexes, triplexes, four-unit homes, townhouses, and small multifamily developments. These housing types have historically been part of Rockford's residential landscape and continue to provide an important housing option for working families, seniors, young adults, and individuals seeking attainable housing choices. From a community development perspective, missing middle housing offers an opportunity to add residents, strengthen neighborhood vitality, and support local businesses while maintaining a scale and character consistent with existing neighborhoods.

As a nonprofit engaging in housing restoration and neighborhood development, NWCCDC recognizes that successful revitalization requires both preservation of existing housing and



NORTHWEST NEIGHBORS

creation of new housing opportunities. The proposed zoning amendments help support both objectives. Increased flexibility in setbacks, lot standards, residential uses, and parking requirements can improve the feasibility of redevelopment projects and make it easier for nonprofit organizations and community-based developers to undertake projects that otherwise may not be financially viable.

These amendments are consistent with our goals related to neighborhood stabilization, housing choice, reinvestment, and economic vitality. They represent a balanced approach to encouraging housing development within existing neighborhoods while respecting the character of the communities in which that development occurs. For organizations like NWCCDC, the proposed changes provide additional tools to advance our mission of restoring neighborhoods, strengthening housing opportunities, and improving quality of life for residents.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Eric Lemonholm".

**Eric Lemonholm, President
Northwest Neighbors**

cc: Code and Regulation Committee
Planning and Zoning Division
Zoning Board of Appeals