Memorandum

Date: October 21, 2010

To: Plan Commission

From: Planning Division Staff and Zoning Administrator

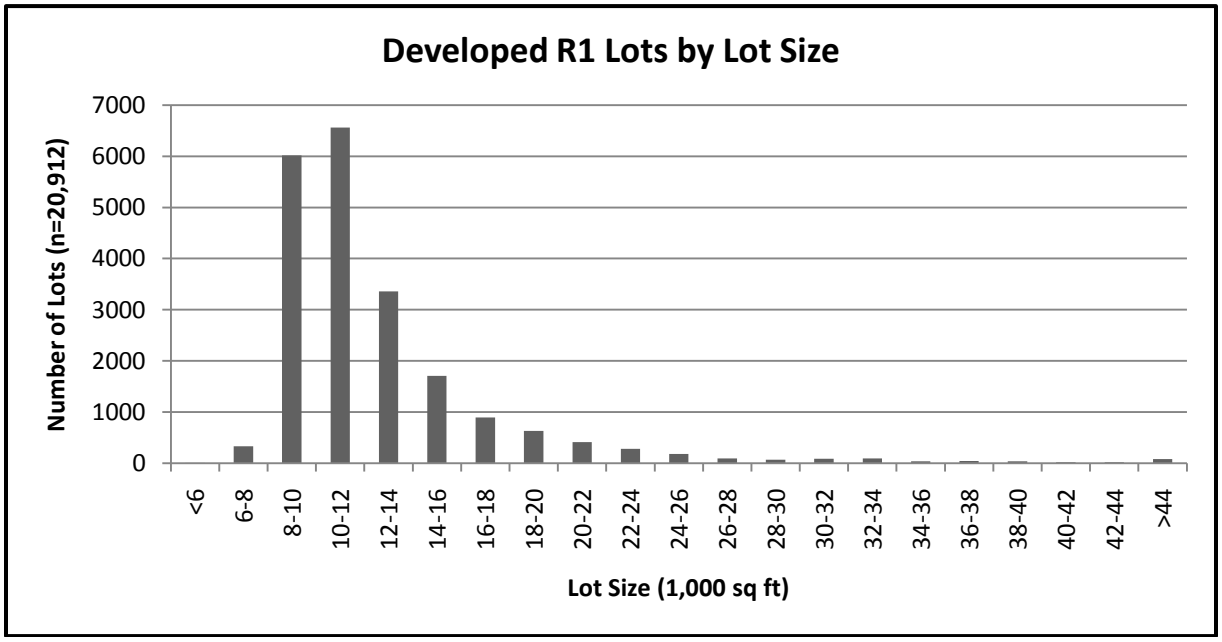
Re: Analysis of R1 Districts – Information Only

At the October 6, 2010 meeting, Plan Commissioners discussed the possibility of reducing the minimum lot size from 8,000 sq ft to 6,000 sq ft in the SR-C1 District, with the interest in exploring a hypothetical long term increase in density through lot divisions in the areas this district is applied.

Existing R1 Lots

There are 20,912 developed, residential R1 lots in the City of Madison comprising 6,118 acres of land at a net density of 3.4 units/acre. While the minimum lot size in the R1 District as established in the 1966 Zoning Code is 8,000 square feet, the mean and median lot size are much greater (Mean = 12,700, Median = 11,100). Figure 1 below shows the distribution of developed residential R1 lots by lot size.

Figure 1



Potential Additional Lots

Using a GIS analysis of the existing platted and developed R1 lots in the city (lots likely to be zoned SR-C1), staff compared the number of potential additional lots under the existing lot size and width minimums (8,000 sq ft, 60 ft) vs. reduced minimums (6,000 sq ft, 50 ft).

Importantly, lot divisions can only be reviewed for properties of sufficient size and width to divide into two or more lots. Private neighborhood covenants, utility easements, and other limitations further complicate lot divisions on platted and developed property, and were not taken into account for this analysis. Thus, the hypothetical numbers resulting from this analysis are likely very high, compared to the number of additional lots that could actually be created over time, regardless of which set of lot dimensions is used.

For reviews on already-developed lots, property owners would need to submit an application for a Certified Survey Map (CSM) at a minimum, and in many cases, an application for demolition of the existing home. Each case would be reviewed by applicable agency staff and the Plan Commission at a public hearing, based on relevant standards. As has been mentioned, these cases have been rare in the past, and some have been highly controversial.

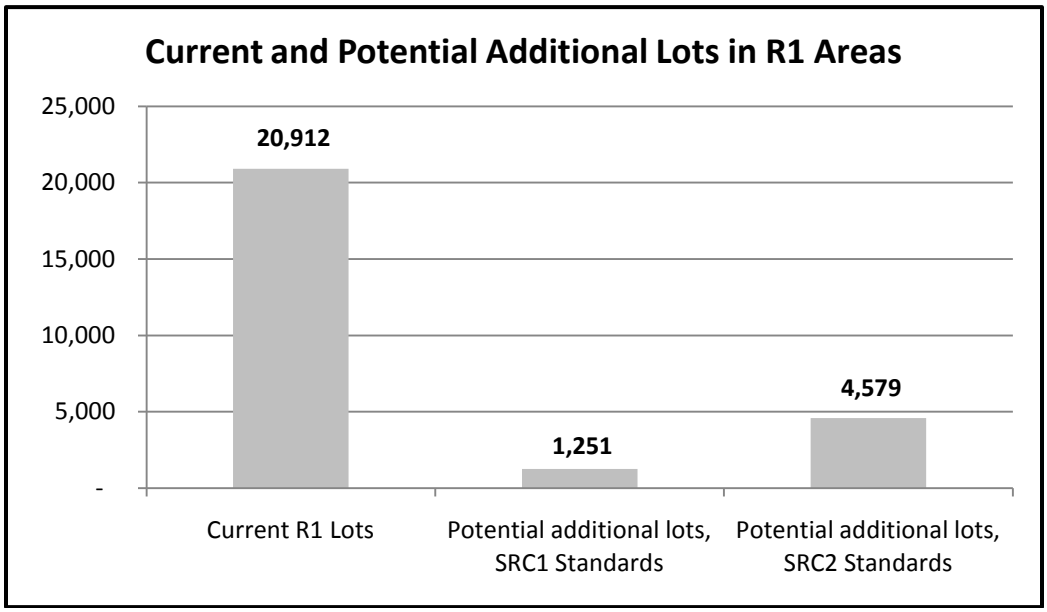
Of the existing R1 properties, 981 (5%) have the necessary lot size and width so as to be divided into two or more R1-sized parcels. If the minimum lot size and width were reduced to 6,000 square feet and 50 feet respectively, the number of lots that could be divided would increase from 981 (5%) to 3,891 (19%) The potential number of resulting additional lots in existing R1 areas would increase from about 1,250 to about 4,500 new lots, or a difference of about 3,300 additional lots[1] (see table and figure below).

While it is very unlikely that a large percentage of property owners would seek to demolish their homes and divide their lots for resale, a reduction in minimum lot size and width would increase the number of lots that could hypothetically be divided.

Table 1: Potential to absorb new residential lots within existing R1 areas

New District Applied	SRC1 (R1 Standards)	SRC2	Difference
Minimum lot size (sq ft)	8,000	6,000	2,000
Minimum lot width (ft)	60	50	10
Parcels that could be divided	981	3,891	2,910
Resulting new parcels	1,251	4,579	3,328
Resulting Total	22,163	25,491	3,328
% Increase in # parcels	6%	22%	16%
Resulting potential density (du/ac)	3.6	4.2	0.6

Figure 2



[1] For the sake of comparison, approximately 5,700 single-family homes have been built citywide between 2000 and 2010 at a density of 4.4 du/ac.