

# **Increased Residential Density Bonus Points**

Manual

City of Gainesville, Florida  
Adopted by Resolution 040757  
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## Increased Residential Density Bonus Points Manual

### (1) Purpose.

The Increased Residential Density Points Manual is established to encourage new development and redevelopment that is designed to exceed minimum standards for quality. Within RMF-6, 7, 8, RMU, RH-1 & 2 districts, increases in development density above the minimum allowed by right in the zoning district, may be allowed should an applicant achieve City objectives as described in this manual, and if the applicant can demonstrate that the increased density will be compatible with neighboring properties and the health, safety and welfare of the general public. For each objective achieved by the applicant, certain points shall be credited to the project. Those points, calculated in accordance with this manual and the applicable zoning district regulations, shall determine the maximum allowable density.

### (2) Objectives and Available Points.

Increased development density points are awarded for objectives listed in Table 1:

**Table 1. Residential Development Density Points**

Objective	Points
Cross-Ventilation	6
Solar Hot Water, Electric, or Air	8
Structure Shading	6
Separate Pedestrian/Bicycle Access	14
Parking Structure	20
Bus Shelter	4
Additional Street Trees	5
Retention of Existing Building/Design	13
Off-Street Parking	17
Front Porch	9
Traffic Calming	12
Compact Development	18
Affordable Housing	10
Greenway Corridor Dedication	13
Build-To Lines	20
Building Height	10
Block Length and Cross-Access	12
Residential Building Orientation	10
Mixed Use Development	25
Construction Materials & Building Color	10
Total Points Available	242

**(3) Qualifying for Increased Residential Density.**

All proposed development requesting an increase in residential density above the minimum allowed by right in the zoning district shall provide a development application indicating that development approval is requested through compliance with the Increased Residential Density Points Manual. The applicant shall be responsible for the information necessary to show how the proposed development complies with objectives for which the applicant wishes to be awarded density points. All devices, structures, facilities, trees, landscape areas, features, or design criteria for which increased residential density points may be awarded for any development must be clearly shown on an approved site plan. The development review board, on examining this information and determining which objectives have been achieved, shall then allow the applicant to begin using the density outlined in the specific zoning district. The development review board shall be the sole deciding authority on whether or not any objective is met and increased residential density points are awarded. No certificate of occupancy shall be issued until a development is completed in accordance with the approved site plan.

Objectives used to obtain density bonus points cannot be used to meet required standards established in the Transportation Concurrency Exception Area (TCEA) for mitigation of the development's transportation impacts.

**(b) Objectives: Minimum Requirements for Scoring Points.**

**1. Cross-ventilation.**

**Intent:** To moderate hot, humid climates by cooling and drying dwelling units, thereby conserving energy.

**Criteria to Achieve:** Each dwelling unit must be cross-ventilated by the use of either mechanical means designed to bring in fresh air from outdoors at a minimum air exchange rate of 20 cubic feet per minute for each 300 square feet of floor area or by natural cross-ventilation. A dwelling unit will be considered naturally cross-ventilated if there is a screened window or windows with at least 5 square feet of opening to the outdoors, located on each of 2 walls in the same room, or in separate rooms, with opposite or nearly opposite exposures, on each floor of the unit.

**2. Solar Hot Water, Electric, or Air.**

**Intent:** To reduce residential consumption of non-renewable fossil fuel energy.

**Criteria to Achieve:** Installation of solar water heaters, photovoltaic panels, and/or solar space heating (either active or passive) systems. Solar facility shall be installed for each individual dwelling unit, or through a common system supplying each dwelling unit. The unit shall be designed to be the primary heat or electrical source for the dwelling units being served.

### 3. Structure Shading.

**Intent:** To use existing and proposed trees to shade the east and west exposures of a building, which reduces significantly the amount of solar radiation of a building's exterior surfaces. Large trees that are deciduous or semi-deciduous provide shade in hot seasons and allow solar radiation in cold weather. High-branching trees also allow good circulation.

**Criteria to Achieve:** The eastern exposures (facing between 45 degrees and 135 degrees from True North) of all principal structures will be at least 40 percent shaded by trees when measured at 9:00 a.m. on August 21, within a period of 10 years, based on the required minimum planting size and expected canopy. All southern exposures (facing between 135 degrees and 225 degrees from True North) of all principal structures will be so shaded when measured at 1:00 p.m. on August 21. All western exposures (facing between 22 degrees and 315 degrees from True North) of all principal structures will be so shaded when measured at 5:00 p.m. on August 21. Shading may be through use of either existing trees, or planted deciduous or semi-deciduous street trees or buffer trees from the Gainesville Tree List.

### 4. Separate Pedestrian/Bicycle Access.

**Intent:** To promote non-auto transportation modes in order to increase transportation choices available to citizens.

**Criteria to Achieve:** A majority of the project dwelling units shall be directly linked to a pedestrian/bicycle path which provides non-vehicular access from the dwelling units to off-site land uses including schools, parks, other residential developments, commercial/shopping developments, employment centers, or social service centers. The path shall be dedicated for perpetual use as a non-motorized transportation corridor.

### 5. Parking Structure.

**Intent:** To promote compact, walkable design by use of parking structures, which consume substantially less land area, per parking space, than a surface parking lot. To the extent that such structures reduce or eliminate the need for surface parking, they promote compatibility with nearby residential neighborhoods and improve the character of streets.

**Criteria to Achieve:** At least 50 percent of the total provided parking spaces are located within a parking structure (defined as layers of parking stacked vertically, or as a parking layer over another use, under another use, or both). The structure must be set back at least 30 feet from the property lines of all adjacent streets in

order to allow space for “liner” buildings that are required by Policy 1.2.10 of the Urban Design Element.

#### **6. Bus Shelter.**

**Intent:** To encourage the use of buses as a transportation mode.

**Criteria to Achieve:** The applicant shall construct a bus shelter, as approved by the city manager, within 1320 feet of at least half of the dwelling units of the project.

#### **7. Additional Street Trees.**

**Intent:** To provide shade, enclosure, visual scale, and aesthetic appeal along community transportation routes.

**Criteria to Achieve:** One tree shall be provided for every 25 feet of street frontage. Trees shall be within 5 feet of the right-of-way of street frontage (or if a public utility easement exists outside of the right-of-way, placed where feasible to best shade the sidewalk, street, or both). Trees must be street trees from the Gainesville Tree List, and must be either preserved, existing, mature trees, or installed trees. Each installed tree shall be at least 25 gallons, as shown in the Gainesville Landscape and Tree Management Ordinance. Installed trees shall have a minimum planting bed of 25 square feet. If at least 50 percent of the required street trees are preserved, existing, mature trees, 4 points shall be awarded under this objective; otherwise, 2 points shall be awarded.

#### **8. Retention of Existing Building/Design.**

**Intent:** To preserve historically, culturally, or architecturally significant buildings, and improve the compatibility of new developments with the surrounding neighborhood.

**Criteria to Achieve:** At least 70 percent of the new residential dwelling units of a project are established within an existing building recognized (or eligible) by local, state, or national registries for historic, cultural, and/or architectural significance. Alternatively, if all primary structures of significance are retained in their entirety as part of the project, regardless of the number of dwelling units incorporated. Any expansion of the existing building must be historically and architecturally consistent with the existing building and the surrounding neighborhood.

### 9. Off-street Parking.

**Intent:** In general, off-street parking should be on the side or rear of the building to promote quality of life and high quality urban design, not dominate the front yard, and not dominate the streetscape. A good pedestrian environment is important competitive leverage for walkable areas over other commercial areas. Parking areas located in front of buildings are inconvenient and unpleasant for pedestrians.

**Criteria to Achieve:** No off-street parking is located between the front façade and the street. Parking lots shall not abut street intersections, be adjacent to squares or parks, or occupy lots which terminate a street vista.

### 10. Front Porch.

**Intent:** To encourage neighborliness and street activity by children and pedestrians.

**Criteria to Achieve:** A front porch is an un-airconditioned, roofed structure attached to the front (and along a sidewalked street side) of the dwelling unit. The porch shall be attached to at least 25 percent of the dwelling units. Each porch shall have a minimum depth of 8 feet and a minimum width of 12 feet. Except for supporting columns, front porches shall not be enclosed above 3 feet, as measured from the finished floor of the porch. All or a part of the porch may encompass a ramp providing handicap access, and may encroach up to 10 feet into the front setback.

### 11. Traffic Calming

**Intent:** To reduce vehicle speed to improve traffic safety, reduce noise, and enhance the comfort level of pedestrians and bicyclists.

**Criteria to Achieve:** Traffic circles, roundabouts, speed humps, speed tables, chicanes, design vehicle speed for internal streets not exceeding 20 mph, curb radius at intersections no more than 15 feet, or streets no wider than 24 feet, as approved by the city manager or designee, shall be installed.

### 12. Compact Development.

**Intent:** To reduce the number and length of vehicle trips to discourage auto use, energy consumption, pollution, and urban sprawl, increase urban vibrancy, increase travel independence and choice, and increase quality of life.

**Criteria to Achieve:** The project shall be within, or adjacent to, the boundaries of the Traditional City, University Heights, College Park, and the Community

Redevelopment Agency areas or other designated mixed-use neighborhood or activity center. Or at least half of the dwelling units of the project shall be within:

1320 feet of the Traditional City or the East Side Redevelopment District.

1320 feet of a neighborhood shopping center, 2500 feet of a community shopping center, or 4000 feet of a regional shopping center.

10,000 feet of a Park-n-Ride Lot.

5000 feet of the University of Florida or Santa Fe Community College Downtown Center.

2500 feet of a neighborhood park (excluding schools) or 5000 feet of a community park.

### **13. Affordable Housing.**

**Intent:** To increase the availability of affordable housing to lower income citizens who are otherwise renting a home due to inability to afford home ownership. In addition, to achieve the benefits associated with the neighborhood integration of varying incomes.

**Criteria to Achieve:** Affordable housing is defined as housing which has monthly rent or monthly mortgage payments including taxes and insurance not exceeding 30 percent of the median annual gross income for households in Florida. However, it is not the intent to limit an individual household's ability to devote more than 30 percent of its income for housing, and housing for which a household devotes more than 30 percent of its income shall be deemed affordable if the first institutional mortgage lender is satisfied that the household can afford mortgage payments in excess of the 30 percent benchmark.

### **14. Greenway Corridor Dedication.**

**Intent:** To enhance non-motorized and transportationally-disabled travel access between land uses, increase property values, promote neighborliness, provide for recreation and exercise, increase tourism and recruitment of new businesses, encourage local acquisition of federal/state/private grants, provide wildlife corridors, and conserve environmentally significant features.

**Criteria to Achieve:** For developments which contain a portion of a designated greenway, a right-of-way or trail easement of at least 25 linear feet shall be dedicated to the city under Sec. 30-308, Greenway District.



## 15. Setbacks and Build-To Lines.

**Intent:** The intent of a build-to line is to pull the building facade close to the street and streetside sidewalk. By doing so, building facades along a block face will be aligned to form a street edge that frames the public realm, while retaining sufficient width for people to walk, and sufficient space to provide a formal landscape created by street trees. The street edge shapes the public realm to provide a sense of comfort and security for the public space. Buildings closer to the street sidewalk have more of a human scale, and allow for the construction of canopies which create shade and shield the pedestrian from wet weather. Shops and offices are usually closest, multi-family is intermediate, and single-family is furthest. The distance is such that a front porch or outdoor area, if located with the building, is a conversational distance from the sidewalk, and enough room is retained for ample sidewalk width and street trees.

**Criteria to Achieve:** In most instances, the build-to line shall be 20 feet from the curb or edge of pavement for at least 70 percent of the building façade, or any building wall that faces a street. At the build-to distance, the front façade or other building wall of the primary building shall be parallel to the street it faces. The build-to line shall apply to the building façade or other building wall even along street sides (except rear) not facing the more primary street. Factors to be considered for variations to this build-to line shall be as follows:

- \* When considering a closer build-to line, the building facade or other building wall shall, in most instances, be no closer than 14 feet from the curb or edge of pavement along an arterial, 12 feet along a collector, and 11 feet along a local street, to leave space for adequate sidewalks and tree strips.
- \* When the proposed building is adjacent to existing buildings on an abutting property the facade or other building wall shall, in most instances, be built at the facade of the adjacent building closest to the street, or at the 20-foot build-to line, whichever is closer to the street.
- \* The appropriate reviewing board, city manager or designee can approve a facade or other building wall closer to or further from the curb or edge of pavement than the previously listed distances so that a consistent street edge of adjacent buildings can be maintained.
- \* Buildings on corner lots or buildings on more than one street frontage shall, in most instances, have the 20-foot build-to line requirement on the more primary street frontage area.
- \* The standards described in this subsection shall supersede any landscape buffer width requirements found in Article VIII of the Land Development Code for frontage areas, except in front of surface parking lots. Stoops, stairs, chimneys, and bay windows are allowed to extend beyond the build-to line as long as they do not exceed more than 25 percent of the front façade or other building wall.

Open porches, projecting signs, balconies, arcades, awnings and outdoor cafes may also extend beyond the build-to line. However, at least 5 feet of unobstructed sidewalk width and room for any required tree strip must be retained.

#### **16. Building height.**

**Intent:** Multi-story buildings create the “verticality” necessary to form a pleasant sense of enclosed space or an “outdoor room.” They tend to be of an intensity that supports viable transit service.

**Criteria to Achieve:** In non-single-family residential areas, buildings shall be at least 2 stories in height.

#### **17. Block length and cross-access.**

**Intent:** Block faces that are modest in length promote travel convenience for pedestrians and bicyclists.

**Criteria to Achieve:** The maximum length of a block face is 480 feet, unless shortened with cross-access sidewalks, arcades or alleys, so that the face is no more than 480 feet. When possible, access routes between adjacent parcels—particularly residential and non-residential—shall be created, so that travel can occur along routes other than the more primary streets serving the parcels. When walls, fences or berms surround a property that accommodates public access, breaks or openings in these features shall be incorporated to avoid excessive block lengths.

Off-street parking lots shall be linked with off-street vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian connections.

#### **18. Residential Building Orientation.**

**Intent:** Provide more vibrant energy and walkability to activate a streetside sidewalk when individual units have an entrance facing the street.

**Criteria to Achieve:** All residential units fronting a street shall have its main entrance facing the streetside sidewalk from the outside at ground level. At least 5 units must front the street and be provided such an entrance to qualify for points.

### **19. Mixed Use.**

**Intent:** Create walkable, compact, vibrant, safe neighborhoods through mixed-use buildings.

**Criteria to Achieve:** When allowed by the zoning district, residential units are found within the same building as non-residential uses such as office or retail. The non-residential portion of the building is at least 500 square feet in floor area.

### **20. Construction Materials and Building Color.**

**Intent:** Create building compatibility.

**Criteria to Achieve:** Building construction materials and building colors shall be compatible with other buildings in the vicinity. The use of black, high-reflectance or fluorescent (e.g., purple, orange, pink, lime, yellow) colors and materials are not used as the predominant exterior building color or material, or for major trim features on a building and major sign elements. Light-reflective value does not exceed 50 percent. Building colors other than minor trim do not exceed 6 in chroma and 6 in value on the Munsell Color Scale.

