

Department of Community and Economic Development  
Planning Division  
**ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY/CODE INTERPRETATION**

**ADMINISTRATIVE  
POLICY/CODE**

**INTERPRETATION #:** CI-99

**MUNICIPAL**

**CODE SECTIONS:** RMC 4-2-115

**REFERENCE:**

N/A

**SUBJECT:**

Common Open Space Requirements in the R-10 and R-14 zones

**BACKGROUND:**

The Residential Design and Open Space Standards (RMC 4-2-115) require that developments of four (4) or more dwelling units within the R-10 and R-14 zones provide common open space areas. These areas are intended to provide passive and active recreational opportunities to residents of the development. In some instances, unfortunately, these areas have become unusable due to: site grading, the installation of retaining walls, and the installation of storm drainage facilities within these areas, which consequently does not meet the intent of providing passive and active recreation areas.

**JUSTIFICATION:**

Usable common open space areas are an important amenity within higher density residential developments. The intent of the common open space requirements in the R-10 and R-14 zones is to provide a usable common open space area for residents of the development. The placement of retaining walls, above ground storm drainage facilities, and finished grade within common open space areas adversely impacts the residents' ability to utilize these areas for passive or active recreational activities.

**DECISION:**

Amend RMC 4-2-115 as specified below.

**ADMINISTRATOR  
APPROVAL:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
C. E. "Chip" Vincent

**EFFECTIVE DATE:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**APPEAL  
PROCESS:**

To appeal this determination, a written appeal--accompanied by the required filing fee--must be filed with the City's Hearing Examiner (1055 South Grady Way, Renton, WA 98057, 425-430-6515) no more than 14 days from the date of this decision. Your submittal should explain the basis for the appeal. Section 4-8-110 of the Renton Municipal Code provides further information on the appeal process.

**CODE  
AMENDMENTS  
NEEDED TO  
IMPLEMENT  
DETERMINATIONS:**

**4-2-115 RESIDENTIAL DESIGN AND OPEN SPACE STANDARDS**

**E. REQUIREMENTS:**

**2. Open Space**

Standards for Common Open Space:	
R-10 and R-14	<p><b>Developments of three (3) or fewer dwelling units:</b> No requirement to provide common open space.</p> <p><b>Developments of four (4) or more units:</b> Required to provide common open space as follows: <u>outlined below. Above ground drainage facilities (i.e. ponds, swales, ditches, rain gardens, etc.) shall not be counted towards the common open space requirement.</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. For each unit in the development, three hundred fifty (350) square feet of common open space shall be provided.</li><li>2. Open space shall be designed as a park, common green, pea-patch, pocket park, or pedestrian entry easement in the development and shall include picnic areas, space for <del>small</del> recreational activities, and other activities as appropriate.</li><li>3. Open space shall be located in a highly visible area and be easily accessible to the neighborhood.</li><li>4. Open space(s) shall be contiguous to the majority of the dwellings in the development and accessible to all dwellings, and shall be at least twenty feet (20') wide.</li><li>5. A pedestrian entry easement can be used to meet the access requirements if it has a minimum width of twenty feet (20') with a minimum five feet (5') of sidewalk.</li><li>6. Pea-patches shall be at least one thousand (1,000) square feet in size with individual plots that measure at least ten feet by ten feet (10' x 10'). Additionally, the pea-patch shall include a tool shed and a common area with space for compost bins. Water</li></ol>

shall be provided to the pea-patch. Fencing that meets the standards for front yard fencing shall surround the pea-patch with a one foot (1') landscape area on the outside of the fence. This area is to be landscaped with flowers, plants, and/or shrubs.

7. Grass-crete or other pervious surfaces may be used in the common open space for the purpose of meeting the one hundred fifty feet (150') distance requirement for emergency vehicle access but shall not be used for personal vehicle access or to meet off-street parking requirements.
8. ~~Storm ponds may be used to meet the common open space requirement if designed to accommodate a fifty (50)-year storm and to be dry ninety percent (90%) of the year.~~ Common open space areas shall have a maximum slope of five percent (5%).
9. Obstructions shall not be placed in common open spaces, such as retaining walls and fences.

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