Open Space Regulations

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City of Redmond
WASHINGTON

What do I need to know about open space regulations?

The City of Redmond requires the provision of open space as part of developments containing residential uses. Open space is a broad term that encompasses patios, landscaped plaza space, community gardens, rooftop gardens, and more. Open space can include both active and passive spaces that are either accessible to all or reserved for private use.

Each zone type that accommodates residential uses has different standards on the amount of required open space, the accessibility of open space, what constitutes open space, and where it may be provided.

General Requirements

Open space within a development shall be available for common use by the residents, tenants, and/or the general public depending upon the type of project. The open space may be used for recreation, waterfront access, landscaping, visual/noise/land use buffer, drainage control, or other purposes consistent with the definition of open space and approved by the City.

Open space should be designed to enhance and preserve natural site features, link adjacent open spaces, appear natural rather than rigidly engineered, and provide variety in use and character.

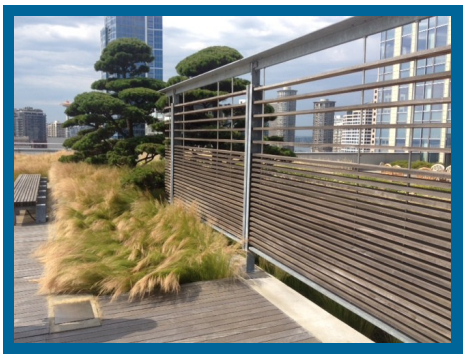
Open space maintenance and ownership may come in a variety of forms, including but not limited to: City ownership of land and assumption of liability and maintenance, property owner holding the open space land in common and maintaining (either directly or through contracting), fee-in-lieu paid to the City for open space elsewhere, ownership and maintenance by a homeowners' association, or other alternative schemes for ownership and maintenance.

The City recognizes three primary types of open space:

- **Conservation Open Space**, which provides areas where plants, animals, water, air, and soil have been left in an undisturbed state or areas of historical value.
- **Amenity Open Space**, which are undeveloped lands or natural features worthy of preservation primarily for their scenic or aesthetic value and landscape areas.
- **Recreation Open Space**, which are recreation areas and facilities that meet recreation needs of City residents. Such open space may provide for active or passive open space uses.

Standards for Downtown Zones

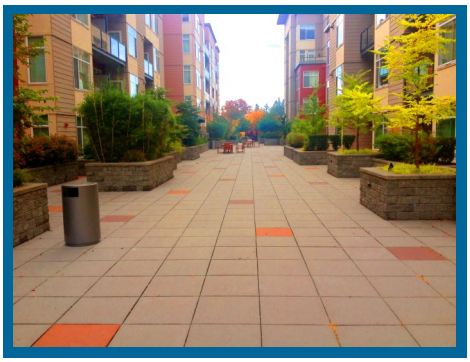
Downtown zones require two types of useable open space for each residential dwelling unit in a development. Both common open space (e.g. plazas, rooftop gardens, and recreation rooms) and private open space (e.g. balconies



and patios) must be provided.

At least 100 square feet of common open space must be provided for each residential unit. Total common open space is capped at 20% of the site area. Private open space must be provided in the form of an attached patio (80 square feet minimum) or balcony (50 square feet minimum) for each unit.

Under reasonable circumstances, the City may allow a development to seek relief from the above-mentioned requirements by allowing fee in-lieu as an option. The number of balconies in a development may be reduced so as to prevent clutter and monotony in design by contributing a fee for absent on-site private open space to the City for parkland purchase in the Downtown neighborhood. The developer may also seek to pay a fee for off-site open space as well. Under both circumstances, a minimum presence of both private and common open space is still required on-site as prescribed by RZC 21.10.130.E, Residential Useable Open Space.



Standards for Overlake Zones

The **Overlake Village** zones require useable open space for all developments with residential components. The usable open space must be provided in an amount equal to or greater than 6.25% of the gross residential floor area. The open space may be provided in a number of ways as public or private space:

- **Common Open Space** may, in part or in full, satisfy the useable open space requirement. Landscaped courtyards or decks, gardens with pathways, children's play areas, multi-use areas, or green spaces qualify as common open space.
- **Rooftop Open Space** for residents and tenants only may meet up to 50% of the useable open space requirement. However, if the rooftop provides access to the public as well, it may meet up to 100% of the useable open space requirement.
- **Private Open Space** may meet up to 50% of the useable open space requirement. Balconies, patios, multi-use areas, and green spaces qualify as private open space.

Open space shall be landscaped to create visual interest by providing a variety of colors, heights, and forms of foliage; soften building edges; and reduce the impacts of elements such as noise and wind.

Please note that any features provided in developments under the Overlake Village Incentive Program may not also count as useable open space even if provided as open space. Such open space features only qualify for incentive bonuses and thus developments must still provide the additionally required open space.

The **Overlake Business and Advanced Technology** (OBAT) zone contains all of the same requirements as the Overlake Village zones on open space, except one: the usable open space must be provided in an amount equal to or greater than 6.15% of the gross residential floor area.

Standards for Single-Family and Multi-Family Residential Zones

Open space standards are the same for both single-family and multi-family development. Any development within R-3 to R-30 zones is required to provide at least 20% of the total square footage as on-site open space. This may come in the form of open space on a lot-by-lot basis or in combination lot-by-lot and development-wide.

Environmentally critical areas, buffers, swimming pools, recreational buildings, sports courts, golf courses, outdoor patios, and front and rear setbacks may satisfy as open space. At least 25% of the total open space must be in areas that are not in wetlands, streams, lakes, and sensitive areas. In other words, there is a 25% minimum for active recreation space.

Lot-By-Lot means that the open space requirement can be met partially or in full by providing private open space on each lot within a residential development. Open space under the lot-by-lot option can come in a number of forms as defined in the RZC and may be located in any portion of the property to satisfy the requirement.

Development-Wide means that the minimum open space requirement may be partially met on a development-wide basis by providing common open space. Lots within the development must still provide at least 10% of the total square footage on each lot with open space, but the remainder the open space requirement may be supplemented on the development-wide basis.

The common open space must provide active open space areas designed for recreation (e.g. picnic areas, children's play areas, and sports courts), but may additionally include passive open spaces.

Applicable Code Sections

RZC 21.08.170: *Site Requirements for Residential Zones*

RZC 21.10.130: *Downtown Site Development Requirements*

RZC 21.12: *Overlake Regulations*

RZC 21.36: *Open Space*

Questions: 425-556-2494 or planneroncall@redmond.gov.
You can also visit us in person at the Development Services Center located on the 2nd floor of City Hall. Open Monday through Friday from 8 am to 5 pm.

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