

Fact Sheet 6: Housing in Medium Density and High Density Residential Zones

Noosa Plan 2020 – As amended 26 September 2025

Housing in the Medium Density and High Density Residential zones

The Medium Density and High Density Residential zones are intended to support a diverse range of permanent housing options that meet the needs of both current and future residents, including small households, older residents, people on low incomes and people with special mobility needs.

Given the limited availability of land zoned for medium and high density development in Noosa Shire, it is essential these zones are developed efficiently and sustainably accommodating higher density housing forms, not single *dwelling houses*.

The construction of a single dwelling house in these zones is considered an underutilisation of valuable higher-density land.

To encourage a more diverse and affordable housing supply, Noosa Plan 2020 also includes incentives for the development of *small dwellings* in these zones, particularly one and two-bedroom units.

Table 1 provides a summary of the dwelling types and consistency in the Medium Density and High Density Residential zones by lot size.

What is a Dual Occupancy?

A **dual occupancy**, often called a duplex, involves the residential use of two dwellings for two separate households. These dwellings may be:

- Attached (e.g. side-by-side or one above the other), or
- Detached (e.g. freestanding homes on the same lot).

Dual occupancies can be subdivided and separately owned and may share common property, such as a driveway.

A dual occupancy is a **consistent use** in the Medium Density Residential zone only on lots less than 600m².

Dual occupancies are an **inconsistent use** in the High Density Residential zone and on lots 600m² or greater in the Medium Density Residential zone.

What is a Multiple Dwelling?

A **multiple dwelling** is the residential use of three or more dwellings for separate households. These dwellings may be:

- Attached (e.g. apartments, townhouses), or
- Detached (e.g. separate dwellings on a parent lot).

Like *dual occupancies*, *multiple dwellings* can be subdivided and individually owned and may share common property, such as a driveway.

Multiple dwellings are a **consistent use** in the Medium Density and High Density Residential zones.

What are Small Dwellings?

To encourage greater housing diversity and choice, Noosa Plan 2020 includes bonus incentive provisions (i.e. additional allowable developable GFA and site cover) to develop *small dwellings* within *multiple dwelling* developments.

Small dwellings are dwellings with a maximum 100m² of gross floor area (GFA)¹. There is no limit on the number of bedrooms in a small dwelling.

¹ Garages, unenclosed balconies and stairwells do not contribute to GFA.

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Dwelling Houses in the Medium or High Density Residential zones

The Medium Density and High Density Residential zones are intended to accommodate higher density housing forms. The construction of single *dwelling houses* in these zones is considered inefficient and unsustainable.

To support this planning intent, Noosa Plan 2020 limits development for new *dwelling houses* in the Medium and High Density Residential zones to lots less than 500m², which is accepted development subject to requirements.

Dwelling houses on lots 500m² or greater within these zones are an ***inconsistent use*** and not supported.

Is Council planning approval required?

Existing dwelling houses can continue to enjoy existing use rights in the Medium and High Density Residential zones, however, any significant increase in the scale or intensity of an existing house, such as through major renovations or a knock-down and rebuild, may constitute a Material Change of Use. The same applies for adding a secondary dwelling. In such cases, Council approval is required.

Most other dwelling types in the Medium Density and High Density Residential zones require planning approval from Council. This approval takes the form of a Development Permit for a Material Change of Use. Refer to Tables of Assessment 5.5.2 and 5.5.3 of Noosa Plan 2020 to determine the level of assessment required for each dwelling type.

How is development capacity calculated?

Under Noosa Plan 2020, residential density is regulated through a combination of built form provisions. Each site's development capacity is determined based on these provisions in conjunction with the lot size.

Table 2 provides guidance for calculating a site's development capacity. **This is not an exhaustive list of requirements.** Applicants must consult the full Noosa Plan 2020 to identify all relevant site constraints to

accurately determine the allowable development capacity.

Affordable Rental Premises

Noosa Plan 2020 includes an administrative definition of *affordable rental premises*, being one or more dwellings which are:

- Affordable housing*²;
- Entirely *small dwellings*³;
- Owned or leased by a registered provider as defined in the *Housing Act 2003*; and
- Managed by a registered community housing provider, as long-term rental housing (for a minimum of 20 years).

There are "opt-in" built form incentives for delivery of 20% *affordable rental premises* on the following High-Density Residential sites:

- Lot 3 RP884396 (former Noosa Heads Bowls Club, Noosa Drive, Noosa Heads)
- Lot 7 SP322201 (at the Noosa Business Centre, Walter Hay Drive, Noosaville)

Refer to *Fact Sheet 22: Affordable Rental Premises* for more information.

This Fact Sheet is intended to assist with interpreting Noosa Plan 2020 and **should not be solely relied on to inform decisions.**

Prior to making decisions or undertaking any development, it is strongly recommended that applicants:

- Review all the requirements of Noosa Plan 2020, and/or
- Seek advice from a qualified planning professional.

Noosa Plan 2020 is available online at:

<https://noosaplan.noosa.qld.gov.au/eplan>

For further information or assistance, contact Council's Development Assessment team:

☎ (07) 5329 6500

✉ planning@noosa.qld.gov.au

² affordable housing means housing that is appropriate to the needs of households with low to moderate incomes, if the members of the households will spend no more than 30% of gross income on housing costs.

³ small dwellings means a dwelling that has no more than 100m² of gross floor area.

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Table 1: Dwelling types and consistency in the Medium and High Density Residential

Dwelling type	Medium Density Residential zone	High Density Residential zone
Dwelling house	Consistent on lots less than 500m ²	Consistent on lots less than 500m ²
Dual Occupancy	Consistent on lots less than 600m ² *	Inconsistent
Multiple dwellings	Consistent on any lot size	Consistent on any lot size**

*Excluding lots 102-110 Pacific Avenue Sunshine Beach where dual occupancies are inconsistent.

**247-257 Gympie Terrace Noosaville where multiple dwellings must be in a mixed use format and 46 Walter Hay Drive, Noosaville or 99 Noosa Drive, Noosa Heads and consisting entirely of small dwellings.

Table 2: Built form provisions

MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL	HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
BUILDING HEIGHT	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maximum of 8 metres and 2 storeys 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maximum of 12 metres and 3 storeys* <p>* refer to the High Density Residential Zone Code for site specific exceptions</p>
SITE COVER	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where <i>small dwellings</i> (or a ratio of at least 3 <i>small dwellings</i> to one other dwelling) – 45% Where not <i>small dwellings</i> – 40% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where <i>small dwellings</i> (or a ratio of at least 3 <i>small dwellings</i> to one other dwelling) – 45% Where not <i>small dwellings</i> – 40% <p>* refer to the High Density Residential Zone Code for site specific exceptions</p>
PLOT RATIO	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where <i>small dwellings</i> (or a ratio of at least 3 <i>small dwellings</i> to one other dwelling) - 0.5:1. Where not <i>small dwellings</i> - 0.4:1. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where <i>small dwellings</i> (or a ratio of at least 3 <i>small dwellings</i> to one other dwelling) - 0.75:1. Where not <i>small dwellings</i> - 0.65:1. <p>* refer to the High Density Residential Zone Code for site specific exceptions</p>
SETBACKS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frontages - 6m, the first 2m of which must be soft landscaping Rear boundary - 6m Side boundaries: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.5m setback up to 4.5m height; 2m setback for between 4.5m and 7.5m height; and 2.5m setback where above 7.5m height 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frontage - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1st and 2nd storeys - 6m 3rd storey and thereafter -10m. Rear boundary: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1st and 2nd storeys - 6m 3rd storey and thereafter - 8m. Side boundaries: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.5m setback up to 4.5m height; 2m setback between 4.5m and 7.5m height; and 2m, plus 500mm for every 3m above 7.5m height or part thereof.

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MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL	HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ For premises adjoining a watercourse within the Noosa Waters estate no building work, filling or excavation works occurs within 4.5m of the centre line of the top of the concrete revetment wall. ▪ Buildings and structures on premises fronting the Noosa River system are set back at least 10m from mean high water spring. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Where a boundary adjoins land in the Environmental Management and Conservation zone the minimum setback is 5m. ▪ Buildings and structures on premises fronting the Noosa River system are set back at least 10m from mean high water spring.
GARAGES AND CARPORTS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Garage doors that face the street are no more than 6m in width or 50% of the frontage, whichever is the lesser ▪ Where multiple garages face the street, they are separated by a minimum of 2m or are staggered in setback by a minimum of 1m. ▪ Garages that are visible from the street (but do not face the street) include a landscaped setback to the street and provide articulation, windows or a mix of materials to provide interest to the garage façade. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Garages and covered car parking are integrated with the line and plain of the building. ▪ Covered car parking spaces are not located between the building and the road frontage. ▪ Where multiple garages face the street, they are separated by a minimum of 2m or are staggered in setback by a minimum of 1m. ▪ Garages that are visible from the street (but do not face the street) include a landscaped setback to the street and provide articulation, windows or a mix of materials to provide interest to the garage façade.
CAR PARKING	
<p>Carparking spaces are to be provided at the following rates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A <i>dual occupancy</i> - a minimum of 3 carparking spaces, which may be covered or uncovered ▪ For multiple dwellings, which may be covered or uncovered: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Where <i>small dwellings</i> – one space per dwelling and one visitor space per four dwellings ○ Where not <i>small dwellings</i> – two spaces per dwelling (which may be provided in tandem) and one visitor space per four dwellings. 	
LANDSCAPED OPEN SPACE	
<p>Landscaping is provided at the following rates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Where all <i>small dwellings</i> - a minimum of 35% of the site area is landscaped, and 60% of this is <i>soft landscaping</i>; or ▪ Where not <i>small dwellings</i> - a minimum of 40% of the site area is landscaped, and 60% of this is <i>soft landscaping</i>. <p>The front 6m of the property is landscaped open space, the first 2m of which must be <i>soft landscaping</i>.</p>	
PRIVATE OPEN SPACE	
<p>Private open space is provided at the following rates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Where <i>small dwellings</i>: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ at ground level – a minimum of 20m², accessed directly from living spaces, and exclusive of clothes drying areas; or ○ above ground level – 9m² with a minimum width of 2.5m, accessed directly from living spaces ▪ Where not <i>small dwellings</i>: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ at ground level – a minimum of 25m², accessed directly from living spaces; or ○ above ground level – 12m² with a minimum width of 2.5m, accessed directly from living spaces. <p>Private open space (contributing to the above requirements) is to have a maximum gradient/slope of 10% and is to be clear of any utilities, such as gas, water tanks and air conditioning units.</p>	

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MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL	HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
ACCESSIBILITY	
<p>Multiple dwellings provide a minimum of 1 in 5 dwellings as <i>accessible housing</i>. <i>Accessible housing</i> means dwellings designed to Liveable Housing Australia – Liveable Housing Design Guidelines Platinum Level or National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Specialist Disability Accommodation Design Standard of fully accessible or high physical support.</p>	