

# Subdivision Code



## Amendments

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*Revisions:*

- Dated 06/27/11 As adopted by City Council under Ordinance 2011-06.
- Dated 03/17/11 Updated per PC comments from work session on 03/02/11.
- Dated 02/15/11 Original version by staff.

## **ARTICLE 200 Definitions**

*Insert the following language, as appropriate, alphabetically in Section 200.01:*

*“Retaining wall”*: A structure erected between lands or land and water of different elevations that resist the lateral displacement of soil or other materials resulting from a separation in grade. Typically constructed to protect structures or prevent erosion from the upper slope.

## ARTICLE 1300 Retaining Wall Standards

### **Section 1300.01. Applicability**

- (A) The requirements of this article shall apply to the construction, installation, extension, or replacement of all retaining walls two and one-half (2.5) feet or more in height, as measured from the final grade at the lower side of wall to the top of the wall, unless specifically exempted below.
- (B) *Exemptions.* Retaining walls that meet the following requirements shall be exempt from the requirements of this section:
  - (1) Retaining walls less than two and one-half (2.5) feet in height.
  - (2) Retaining walls designed as part of a primary structure authorized by a valid building permit.
  - (3) Retaining walls designed as part of a public capital improvement project.

### **Section 1300.02. Design and Inspection**

- (A) *Slopes.* Slopes of 1:1 or steeper shall be treated as a retaining wall and shall comply with the regulations of this section.
- (B) *Safety Railings.* Safety railings may be required for any retaining wall two and one-half (2.5) feet or higher. The decision to require safety railing shall be based on specific site conditions, potential pedestrian and public access to the retaining wall, and applicable building codes.
- (C) *Drainage.* All walls, regardless of height, must provide some means of alleviating hydrostatic pressure behind the wall and conveyance of water.
- (D) *Prohibited Materials.* Walls coming into contact with a lake, stream, or other body of water may not be constructed of treated wood or railroad ties that could leach chemicals into the water body.
- (E) *For Retaining Walls Two and One-half (2.5) to Four (4) Feet in Height.*
  - (1) The Planning and Code Enforcement Department may require retaining walls less than four feet in height to be designed by an Architect, licensed Landscape Architect, or Professional Engineer registered in the State of Arkansas, depending on specific site conditions. Determination will be made at time of application.
  - (2) The applicant shall contact the Planning and Code Enforcement Department to request a footing inspection prior to construction and final inspection upon completion of construction. If the Department Official determines that the wall is constructed in accordance with these regulations and approved retaining wall permit, a Certificate of Completion will be issued. If the retaining wall does not pass the inspection, the Department Official shall prepare an inspection report detailing the deficiencies.

**Section 1300.03.**

*(F) For Retaining Walls in Excess of Four (4) Feet in Height.*

- (1) Any retaining wall more than four (4) feet in height shall be designed by a registered Professional Engineer and shall be field inspected by the design engineer.
- (2) Upon completion of construction, the engineer shall provide the Planning and Code Enforcement Department with a certification letter stating that all code and plan requirements have been fulfilled.
- (3) *Investigation Report.* All proposed retaining walls ten (10) feet or greater in height will require a geotechnical investigation and a formal report submitted by a registered Professional Engineer qualified to make such investigations.

**Section 1300.03. Retaining Wall Submittal Specifications**

- (A) All site plans submitted for a retaining wall permit shall be drawn to a typical engineering scale and include the following:
  - (1) Location of all property lines;
  - (2) Location of all existing and proposed structures;
  - (3) Locations of existing retaining walls on or adjacent to the property that are to remain in place, if applicable;
  - (4) Portions of existing retaining walls that will be replaced, if applicable;
  - (5) Location of any septic drainage fields, if applicable;
  - (6) Locations of new retaining walls; and
  - (7) Location of all utilities, utility easements, drainage easements, and drainage ways.
- (B) All applications for a retaining wall permit shall contain construction details that include the following:
  - (1) Dimensions and height of the wall;
  - (2) Cross section(s) of the wall including footing design;
  - (3) Elevations above and below the wall; and
  - (4) Proposed wall material.
- (C) For walls in excess of four (4) feet in height, all plans submitted for a retaining wall permit shall be stamped and signed by a Professional Engineer registered in the State of Arkansas.
- (D) The Planning and Code Enforcement Department may require additional information to process a permit application.

**Section 1300.04. Retaining Wall Placement**

- (A) *Rights-of-way*. Retaining walls shall not be located in a public right-of-way.
- (B) *Private Property*. All retaining walls shall be located on private property and shall be built with the consent of the property owner. The retaining wall contractor and / or property owner shall be responsible for correctly locating property boundaries. Retaining walls shall not encroach on neighboring properties.
- (C) *Sight Triangle*. All retaining walls, constructed near street intersections, shall not be located in the sight distance triangle, as described in §1200.04(E), in order to provide a reasonable degree of traffic visibility.
- (D) *Easements*.
- (1) *Utility Easements*. Retaining walls shall not restrict access to utilities. Where no utilities are present in an easement, or where utilities are planned to be relocated, and where such action is approved by all utility agencies, then retaining walls may be placed within the easement.
  - (2) *Drainage Easements*. Retaining walls shall not impede the normal flow of storm water and shall not cross open drainage channels. Retaining walls proposed in drainage easements shall be approved on a case by case basis.
  - (3) *Access Easements*. Retaining walls shall not be constructed over a public or private access easement.
- (E) *Setbacks*.
- (1) *From Structures*. Retaining walls shall be placed a minimum of ten (10) feet or one and one-half times the height of the wall, whichever is greater, away from existing or proposed structures, unless such wall is exempted under 1200.01(B)(2).
  - (2) *From Property Lines*. Retaining walls shall be placed a minimum of seven and one-half (7.5) feet or one and one-half times the height of the wall, whichever is greater, away from property lines.
- (F) *Septic Systems*. Retaining walls shall not be placed over any existing or proposed septic drain fields. Retaining walls shall not be placed any closer than ten (10) feet in any direction to a septic leach field.
- (G) *Terraced Retaining Walls*. If retaining walls are terraced, the upper wall shall be located no closer to the lower wall than one (1) times the height of the tallest wall.