

# One-Family Residential Development Options

Over the past 40 years, the residents and the leadership of the Village and later the City of Novi, have expressed an interest in protecting natural features and providing open space as land is developed in Novi. Since 1966, Novi's Zoning Ordinance has included one-family residential development options to help protect natural features and to provide open space. In addition, the City has adopted a [Wetland and Watercourse Protection Ordinance](#) and a [Woodland Protection Ordinance](#) to help protect these natural features in the City.

Today, the City of Novi [Zoning Ordinance](#) includes three one-family residential development options:

- the [One-Family Cluster Option](#);
- the [Residential Unit Development \(RUD\) Option](#); and
- the [Open Space Preservation Option](#).

These options provide flexible development standards when open space and/or preservation areas are provided (see the [City of Novi One-Family Residential Development Options Chart](#)). The options are primarily for one-family detached dwellings but the One-Family Cluster Option and the RUD Option also permit attached one-family dwellings.

The one-family residential development options encourage the clustering of dwellings by permitting the reduction of the minimum lot area, the minimum lot width and the required yards (setbacks) when natural features and/or open space are preserved. Clustered dwelling units typically have shorter roads and utility lines which reduce the cost to development the project when compared to traditional subdivision designs. Often the use of these one-family residential development options will reduce woodland and wetland mitigation costs. As an added benefit, the preserved natural features and open space become neighborhood amenities desired by future home buyers.

In addition to the three one-family residential development options listed above, the City of Novi Zoning Ordinance permits deviations from the Ordinance when those deviations are part of an approved Planned Rezoning Overlay rezoning petition.

The use of any of the options is voluntary. A brief discussion of the above three one-family residential development options and the PRO rezoning option follow. Please see the [City of Novi Zoning Ordinance](#) and other ordinances for more details.

## [One-Family Cluster Option \(Section 2401\)](#)

The intent of the One Family Cluster Option is to permit, through design innovation, flexibility in the development of one-family residential housing patterns on sites where the conventional subdivision approach to residential development would either destroy

the unique environmental significance of the site, or where a transitional type of residential development is desirable.

This option can be used in the R-1, R-2, R-3 and R-4 zoning districts. The overall site density remains the same as specified in the zoning district. The total number of dwelling units permitted is calculated by multiplying the maximum density permitted in the district by the net site area. Detached and attached one-family cluster dwellings are permitted when the following conditions are met:

- The site is less than 600 ft. deep and it fronts on a major arterial road or freeway; or
- The development of the site using standard Ordinance requirements would destroy natural features and one of the following apply:
  - The site has an unusual shape;
  - The site is generally of unbuildable soils;
  - Severe topography limits road construction unless the site is mass graded; or
  - 50% of site is regulated woodlands or wetlands and the qualifying preservation or open space areas must be equal to at least 50% of the net site area.

Clusters must meet special setback requirements and are limited to clusters of 2 to 4 dwelling units. Some setback reductions are permitted. Standard site plan requirements apply with the Planning Commission being the approving body.

#### [RUD Residential Unit Development Option \(Section 2402\)](#)

The intent of the Residential Unit Development Option is to provide development flexibility which allows a mixture of various types of residential dwelling units and permit permanent preservation of valuable open land, fragile natural resources, and rural community character that would be lost under conventional development.

This option can be used in the RA, R-1, R-2, R-3, and R-4 zoning districts and provides the most flexibility and the most incentives to help preserve natural resources. It can be used with the development of sites 20 acres and larger. The number of dwelling units permitted is calculated by multiplying the maximum density permitted in the district by the gross site area (including existing rights-of-way) minus regulated wetlands over 2 acres in area. An additional 0.8 dwelling units is permitted per acre of open space provided up to the maximum permitted density in the district based on the gross site area including all wetlands. The minimum lot area may be reduced to 12,000 square feet (up to a 72% reduction in the RA district) and the minimum lot width may be reduced to 90 feet (up to a 40% reduction in the RA district). Yard requirements must meet the setbacks required for lots of the same minimum size in other one-family residential districts.

The City Council is the approving body for this option. Greater density, smaller lots and smaller setbacks may be permitted if there is a finding that the proposed deviation(s), meet the following requirements:

- If the deviation is not granted it would prohibit an enhancement that would be in the greater public interest;
- The deviation is compatible with existing and planned uses in the surrounding area;
- The deviation would not be detrimental and/or it would enhance the natural features and resources on the site;
- The deviation would not cause unsafe traffic conditions; and
- The deviation would not create any adverse fiscal or financial impact on the City.

The use of the option requires an applicant to obtain RUD plan and RUD agreement approval. The public process begins with the Planning Commission holding a public hearing on the application, reviewing the plan and making a recommendation to City Council. Next, the RUD plan must receive preliminary approval from City Council. Final approval of the RUD plan is effective with the recording of an RUD agreement between the developer and the City. The agreement will include the RUD plan and all approved deviations to the Zoning Ordinance. After the plan and agreement are approved, standard site plan or platting requirements must be followed.

#### Open Space Preservation Option (Section 2403)

The intent of the Open Space Preservation Option is to encourage the long-term preservation of open space and natural features and the provision of recreation and open space areas.

This option can be used in the RA, R-1, R-2, R-3, R-4 zoning districts. The maximum number of dwelling units permitted cannot exceed the number permitted by multiplying the maximum dwelling units per acre permitted by the net site area. The overall density cannot exceed the number of dwelling units that could be built using standard Zoning Ordinance requirements. The use of this option requires the submittal of a bona fide (parallel) plan that uses conventional zoning requirements and clearly identifies unbuildable areas to determine the maximum number of dwelling units permitted. The use of this option requires at least 10% of the gross site area, excluding existing and statutory road rights-of-way, to be preserved as permanent open space or recreation areas (excluding golf courses). The minimum lot area and lot width may be reduced (up to 44.9% and 25.0% respectively) with the use of the option. Open space must be permanently protected and be accessible from all lots. Land donations and agreements naming the City must be approved by City Council prior to final site plan or final plat approval. Standard site plan or platting approval procedures are followed (Planning Commission approval of site condominiums and City Council approval of subdivisions).

#### Planned Rezoning Overlay (PRO) Option (Section 3402)

The intent of the PRO Option is to provide a land and development project review process based upon the application of site planning criteria to achieve the integration

of the proposed land and development project with the characteristics of the project area.

In addition to the above three one-family residential development options, the PRO Option can be used in conjunction with a rezoning to help facilitate the clustering of dwelling units and the preservation of natural features and open space by allowing the reduction of lot area, lot width and setbacks. The Zoning Ordinance permits deviations from the Ordinance when those deviations are part of an approved PRO rezoning petition. A PRO plan and PRO agreement may be approved by the City Council after it receives a recommendation on the PRO plan from the Planning Commission. Deviations from the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance may be approved if the Council finds the following:

- An enhancement to the project area compared to the existing zoning;
- The enhancement would unlikely be achieved or would not be assured without the use of the Overlay; and
- Sufficient conditions and/or amenities would be proposed by the petitioner for the City Council to conclude that the public benefits outweigh any detriments.

**[Contact the Planning Division for more information](#)**

Developers and property owners who are interested in building a detached or attached one-family residential development in the City of Novi are encouraged to contact the Planning Division of the Community Development Department to set up a concept meeting to discuss the options available. Detail submittal and design requirements can be found in various [City ordinances](#) and in the [Site Plan Development Manual](#) on the City's web page at [cityofnovi.org](http://cityofnovi.org). Please feel free to contact the Planning Division at 248-347-0475 with any questions regarding these options or any of the other City's development requirements.



Option Type, Intent & Permitted Uses	Districts Permitted	Density Permitted (DU/acre)	Std. Lot Area (sq. ft.)	Max. Reduced Lot Area (sq. ft.)	% Reduction	Std. Lot Width (feet)	Max. Reduced Lot Width (feet)	% Reduction	Other Provisions <sup>5</sup>	Qualifying Criteria <sup>5</sup>	Approving Body
<p><b>One-Family Cluster Option</b> (Section 2401) Permit flexibility where transitional development is desirable of where conventional development would destroy the site's unique environmental features. One family detached and attached cluster residential.</p>	R-1	1.65	<p>Not applicable – no restriction on lot area and width - must meet all cluster and building spacing requirements. 75 ft. setback all property lines 30 ft. from internal ROW and private streets – Clusters cannot face major roads, non-residential uses or non-residential zoning district.</p>						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimum 2 unit and maximum 4 unit clusters.</li> <li>• Cannot exceed normal density based on "net site area" for each district.</li> <li>• Parcels less than 10 acres or unusual shape or in the interest of saving natural features, the Planning commission may reduce setbacks.</li> <li>• Allow "T" turn-arounds or units facing arterial streets.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parcel adjacent to 120 foot or larger ROW and less than 600 feet deep providing a transition between road and conventional one family detached housing.</li> <li><b>or</b></li> <li>• Use of conventional development would destroy unique environmental significance of the site and one of the following must exist:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Site unusual shape.</li> <li>○ Site is generally of unbuildable soils over majority of site.</li> <li>○ Severe topography, slopes in excess of 15% or achieving road grades of 6% or less impossible unless site mass graded.</li> <li>○ 50% of site regulated woodlands or wetlands and the qualifying areas must be preserved and be 50% or more of the net site area.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Planning Commission (site plan process)</p>
	R-2	2.0									
	R-3	2.7									
	R-4	3.3									



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<b>RUD Residential Unit Development Option (Section 2402)</b> Permit various dwelling types to preserve open land, natural resources and rural community character. Permits reduced lot size and a relaxation of bulk and dimensional standards to reduce the visual intensity, and to protect privacy and natural resources. One family detached and attached cluster residential, churches, schools, non-commercial golf courses, rental offices and clubhouses.	RA	0.8	43,560	12,000 <sup>1</sup>	72.4%	150	90 <sup>3</sup>	40.0%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Density based on gross site area minus regulated wetlands over 2 acres plus an additional 0.8 dwelling units per acre for each acre of RUD open space if meets criteria not to exceed district density for gross area.</li> <li>Detached one-family use setbacks that correspond to minimum lot area used.</li> <li>Attached one-family use setbacks in Sec. 2403.</li> <li>330 ft. adjacent to detached residential must be detached residential with reduction down to 75 ft. due to topography, screening, or narrow lot dimension.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>20acre minimum which may be separated by a road right-of-way, 360 ft. strip of detached single family when adjacent to residential.</li> <li>Requires RUD plan.</li> <li>Must enter into RUD agreement.</li> </ul> City Council can waive lot area, lot width, density, & setback requirements if it finds the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The deviation if not granted would prohibit an enhancement that would be in the greater public interest.</li> <li>The deviation is compatible with existing and planned uses in the surrounding area.</li> <li>The deviation would not be detrimental or would enhance the natural features and resources.</li> <li>The deviation would not cause unsafe traffic conditions, and have no adverse fiscal or financial impact on City.</li> </ul>	Planning Commission recommendation & City Council approval RUD Plan – City Council approval RUD agreement – Site Plan or Plat normal approval process
	R-1	1.65	21,780	12,000 <sup>1</sup>	44.9%	120	90 <sup>3</sup>	25.0%			
	R-2	2.0	18,000	12,000 <sup>1</sup>	33.3%	110	90 <sup>3</sup>	18.1%			
	R-3	2.7	12,000	12,000 <sup>1</sup>	0%	90	90 <sup>3</sup>	0.0%			
	R-4	3.3	10,000	10,000 <sup>2</sup>	0%	80	80 <sup>4</sup>	0.0%			

Notes:  
<sup>1</sup> min. lot area 12,000 sq. ft. may vary to preserve natural features.

<sup>2</sup> min. lot area may vary to preserve natural features

Notes:  
<sup>3</sup> min. lot width 90 ft. may vary to preserve natural features

<sup>4</sup> min. lot width may vary to preserve natural features



Option Type, Intent & Permitted Uses	Districts Permitted	Density Permitted (DU/acre)	Std. Lot Area (sq. ft.)	Max. Reduced Lot Area (sq. ft.)	% Reduction	Std. Lot Width (feet)	Max. Reduced Lot Width (feet)	% Reduction	Other Provisions <sup>5</sup>	Qualifying Criteria <sup>5</sup>	Approving Body
<b>Open Space Preservation Option (Section 2403)</b> Encourage the long term preservation of open space and natural features and the provision of recreation and open space areas. One-family detached residential.	RA	0.8	43,560	24,000	44.9%	150	120	20%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cannot exceed normal density based on "net site area" for each district and based on a bona fide parallel plan using normal code requirements .</li> <li>Side yard setback reductions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minimum 10% of natural features or permanent open space areas that could be developed with normal requirements must be preserved.</li> <li>If development proposed on more than 80% of the site as could be developed using standard development techniques, then application subject to Special Land Use Permit approval.</li> <li>Land donations and agreements that name the City such as conservation easements must be approved by Council before Final Site plan approval.</li> <li>Must submit bona fide (parallel) plan.</li> </ul>	Site plan or plat use normal approval process
	R-1	1.65	21,780	12,000	44.9%	120	90	25%			
	R-2	2.0	18,000	10,000	44.4%	110	85	22.7%			
	R-3	2.7	12,000	9,000	25%	90	75	16.7%			
	R-4	3.3	10,000	8,000	20%	80	70	12.5%			

Note <sup>5</sup> The list of Other Provisions and Qualifying Criteria do not include all minor provisions and criteria. Please consult the City of Novi Zoning Ordinance for details.