

Small Lot Ordinance (SLO) FAQs

What is the SLO?

The Small Lot Ordinance (Ord. No. 15-03) is a Zoning Code Ordinance that was adopted by the City Council in April of 2014. The ordinance allows for the development of 15 or less detached residential ownership units on individual parcels as an alternative to residential common interest units. SLOs are allowed in the R2-MD, R2-HD, and R3 zones as well as in the City's Urban Plan Overlay Districts (mixed use, live/work). SLO's are not permitted in R1 zones.

What was allowed prior to the SLO?

Common Interest Development (CID), or condominium subdivisions which places streets and landscaping in common areas, were allowed prior to the SLOs and continue to be permitted in the Zoning Districts noted above.

Is the SLO allowed everywhere in the City?

No. SLO's are allowed in the R2-MD, R2-HD, and R3 zones as well as in the City's Urban Plan Overlay Districts (mixed use, live/work). SLOs are not permitted in R1 zones.

How many SLO projects have been approved since its adoption in 2014?

As of this date, 43 SLO projects have been approved. These projects include a total of 153 dwelling units representing the addition of 51 new homes in the City.

Does the SLO allow for increased density in areas where it is allowed?

No. Density is the number of permitted dwelling units per acre of a development. The SLO did not change the maximum number of dwelling units permitted per acre in the affected areas of the City.

In contrast to density, bulk constitutes the actual size of development on a property. New development on a property may maximize the development per City standards. Therefore, a new development, SLO or otherwise, may result in significantly larger development than previously existed (e.g. a new two-story home replacing smaller one-story home). SLO development is required to maintain 30-percent open space versus 40-percent for a non-SLO development. As such, an SLO development could be somewhat larger than a comparable non-SLO development.

What is the difference between the SLO and previous City standards?

The majority of the development standards are the same as the development standards for CIDs in R2 and R3 zones. There are different SLO standards for:

- Required open space (30-percent for SLOs; 40-percent for CIDs)
- Rear setback for two-story units, not abutting a public street (10 feet for SLOs; 20 feet for CIDs)
- Distance between main buildings (no requirement for SLOs; 10 feet for CIDs)
- Private open space (200 square feet for SLOs; 400 square feet for CIDs)

What are the average lot sizes for SLO lots?

4,128 square feet in the R2-MD zone and 3,146 square feet in the R2-HD zone.

Do other cities in Orange County allow small lot subdivisions?

Yes. Anaheim, Garden Grove, Huntington beach, and Westminster allow small lot subdivisions. In all, 13 cities in Orange County allow residential lots of 3,500 square feet or less.