

Frequently Asked Questions About Neighborhoods and Student Housing

For more information, please contact:
Planning & Community Development at (989) 779-5347 or planning@mt-pleasant.org
Neighborhood Resource Unit at (989) 779-5123 or neighborhoods@mt-pleasant.org

1. What uses are allowed in the R-3 district?

The R-3 district is one of 4 residential districts in the Mt. Pleasant zoning ordinance. The districts differ primarily in the minimum lot areas and dimensions required in each zone. The permitted uses in each zone are the same.

Within the R districts, the following are principal uses permitted:

One-family dwellings

Public, parochial and private schools offering courses limited to K-12 education.

Publicly-owned libraries, parks, parkways and recreational facilities.

Home occupations where the occupants are the sole employees

Swimming pools as an accessory use to a principal building

In addition, the following principal uses are permitted subject to special use permits:

Convalescent homes

Hospitals

Churches

Group day care homes

Child care centers

Foster family group homes

Home occupations where employment by persons other than the dwelling occupants occurs

Bed and breakfast dwellings

Two-family dwellings (duplexes)

2. What uses are allowed in the M-2 district?

The M-2 district is one of 2 multiple family districts in the Mt. Pleasant zoning ordinance. The districts differ in both minimum lot areas and dimensions required in each zone as well as the permitted uses.

Within the M-2 district, the following are principal uses permitted:

All uses permitted and as regulated in the R Residential Districts (see above)

All uses permitted and as regulated in the M-1 Multiple-Family Residential District (multiple-family dwellings, housing for the elderly, convalescent homes, churches, and mobile home parks)

In addition, the following principal uses are permitted subject to special use permits:

Registered student organization dwellings (i.e. Sororities and Fraternities)

Rooming and boarding house / tourist house

3. Why are there uses in my neighborhood that are not allowed by the zoning ordinance?

Uses that existed prior to the adoption of the current zoning ordinance that do not conform with the allowed uses are considered non-conforming uses. These uses may continue, but not expand, so long as they do not lapse for more than a 12 month period.

Occasionally, there are uses that are not allowed by the zoning ordinance that do not meet the standard of being an existing non-conforming use. If you believe such a situation exists at a particular property, please report it to the Neighborhood Resource Unit.

4. What is the M-2 Redevelopment Procedure?

The M-2 Redevelopment Procedure is a set of procedural guidelines adopted by the Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) in 2012 to address the redevelopment of non-conforming properties in the M-2 District as provided for by the zoning ordinance. The procedures were a way of memorializing the limited opportunity the ordinance gives to the ZBA to approve new, non-conforming uses provided the new use *markedly*

decreases the degree of nonconformance and would enhance the desirability of adjacent conforming uses.

Review criteria include:

- Decrease in Nonconforming conditions
- Improved Building Appearance
- Improved Site Design
- More Restrictive Lease Agreements

For “distinctive” projects meeting additional site and building design standards, modest increases in occupancy have been permitted in order to incent a final product that exceeds the minimum requirements provided by the zoning ordinance itself.

5. Is the City going to rezone properties in the R-3 district to M-2 to allow for more student housing?

In the area south of High Street and north of Bellows Street, between Mission Street and the railroad, no expansion of the M-2 zoning district has occurred since the 1984 zoning ordinance was adopted. The City’s Future Land Use map, while not regulatory, provides guidance to City staff, appointed and elected officials on rezoning decisions in the future. The most recent map, adopted in November 2014, shows the R-3 neighborhood with a future land use of “Urban Residential” and the M-2 area with a future land use of “Multiple Residential – Medium,” both of which are consistent with the existing zoning districts.

Individual property owners may file an application at any time to request a rezoning of their property to another zoning district. Approval of such a change requires public hearings before both the Planning Commission and City Commission and an affirmative vote by a majority of the City Commission in order to take effect. There are currently no plans to rezone any properties from R-3 to M-2 in this area.

6. If the zoning map has not changed since 1984, why are there more students and/or rentals in my R-3 neighborhood?

Property owners may apply for a rental license for any residential property in the city. Within the R-3 district, new rental licenses can only be issued for single family or two-family occupancy depending upon the building type. The zoning ordinance does not regulate whether or not a rental license may be issued, only the type of license that is allowed.

7. What steps can I take to resolve issues related to over-occupancy, solid waste, noise, or other nuisances?

For all emergencies you should dial 911 immediately.

For nuisances such as noise, please call Public Safety’s non-emergency line at (989) 773-1000.

For potential code violations (including trash, over occupancy, parking, etc.), please call the Neighborhood Resource Unit at 779-5123.