

# The Anastasio Law Firm



THE 600 BLOCK OF PINE STREET

# RM-1 Zoning Guide

**The Anastasio Law Firm**  
1221 Locust Street, Suite 201  
Philadelphia, Pa. 19107  
(215) 609-4165  
[info@phillyzoning.com](mailto:info@phillyzoning.com)

## RM-1

RM-1 is a residential multi-family district primarily intended to accommodate moderate- to high-density, multi-unit residential buildings.

### Using this Guide

Single-family dwellings do not require zoning approval. Other uses require either a **Use Registration Permit** from the Department of Licenses and Inspection, or a **Special Exception** or **Variance** from the Zoning Board of Adjustment. Uses not mentioned require a Variance.

Properties must also conform to specific dimensions. Otherwise, a Variance must be obtained.

Information on how to obtain a Zoning/Use Permit, Special Exception, or Variance is also provided. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact The Anastasio Law Firm.

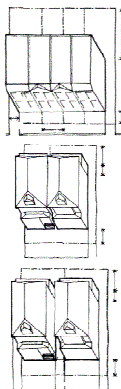
*Please Note: This information is presented using plain language which may differ from the specific Zoning Code provisions and court decisions. Also, this guide offers general principals which may not be applicable to a specific property or use. When going through the zoning and permit process, always contact an attorney.*



## Uses

<b>Residential</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>Parks and Open Spaces</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Public, Civic, Institutional</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Office</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>Retail Sales</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>Commercial Services</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>Urban Agriculture</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>Roof Decks</b> .....	<b>13</b>

## Dimensions



<b>Attached</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>Semi-Detached</b> .....	<b>15</b>
<b>Detached</b> .....	<b>16</b>

## Residential Uses

### Household Living



*Household Living is defined as “Residential occupancy of a building or any portion thereof by one or more families. When a household living use is rented, tenancy is arranged on a month-to-month or longer basis. Uses where tenancy may be arranged for a shorter period are not considered residential; they are considered a form of lodging.”*

**Single Family** does not require zoning approval.

*Single Family is defined as “The use of a lot as a residence for one family.”*

**Two-Family** requires a Use Registration Permit (see page 17)

*If the lot is less than 720 sq. ft., a two-family residence requires a Variance (see page 19). Two Family is defined as “The use of a lot as a residence for two families with each family occupying a single dwelling unit.”*

**Multi-Family** requires a Use Registration Permit (see page 17).

*One dwelling is permitted for every 360 sq. ft. of lot area up to 1,440 sq. ft; then one dwelling for each additional 480 sq. ft. in excess of 1,440 sq. ft. (Whenever the calculation results in a fraction of a unit, the number is rounded down.) Any proposal in excess of this limit requires a Variance (see page 19).*

*Multi-Family is defined as “The use of a lot as a residence for three or more families with each family occupying a single dwelling unit.”*

## Group Living

*Group Living is defined as “Residential occupancy of a building or any portion thereof that is not categorized as a household living use and that typically provides communal kitchen/dining facilities. Examples of group living uses include, but are not limited to, fraternities, sororities, group homes, and temporary overnight shelters.”*

**Personal Care Home** requires a Special Exception (see page 18).

*Personal Care Home is defined as “Any premises in which food, shelter, and personal assistance or supervision are provided for a period exceeding 24 hours for four or more adults who are not relatives of the operator, who do not require the services in or of a licensed long-term care facility, but who do require assistance or supervision in such matters as dressing, bathing, diet, financial management, evacuation from the residence in the event of an emergency, or medication prescribed for self-administration.”* Where the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare requires, personal care homes must comply with 55 Pa. Code Chapter 2600.

**Single-Room Residence** requires a Special Exception (see page 18).

Single-Room Residence is defined as “A building containing rooms rented as living quarters without private bathrooms. Examples include dormitories, rooming houses, and supported independent living.”

## Parks and Open Spaces

*This category includes uses that may occur on land that has been identified for parks and recreation uses open to the public or to be left in a generally natural state.*



**Passive Recreation** requires a Use Registration Permit (see page 17).

*Passive Recreation is defined as “Recreational facilities associated with pastimes that are incidental to natural open space. These facilities require minor land development, require minimal maintenance, and have little impact on natural open space.”*

**Active Recreation** requires a Special Exception (see page 18).

*Active Recreation is defined as “Recreational facilities that require major land development, structure construction, and a moderate- to high-level of maintenance and can accommodate large groups of people.”*

## Public, Civic, and Institutional Uses

*Public, Civic, and Institutional Uses includes public, quasi-public, and private uses that provide unique services that are of benefit to the public as a whole.*

### Day Care

*Day Care is defined as “Uses providing care, protection, and supervision for children or adults for a fee on a regular basis away from their primary residence for less than 24 hours per day. Examples include preschools, nursery schools, Head Start programs, latch key programs, and adult daycare programs.” Care given by guardians or relatives of the children or adults is not regarded as day care, nor is care given away from the primary residence of the children or adults by babysitters or caregivers for fewer than 10 hours per week.*

**Family Day Care** requires a Use Registration Permit (see page 17).

*Family Day Care is defined as “The provision of care within the day care provider’s primary residence for children who are not relatives of the*

*provider.” A Family Day Care is limited to providing care to six or fewer children, except in certain areas where they are limited to providing care to four or fewer children. A Family Day Care must be located in a residential dwelling operated by the resident of the dwelling.*



**Group Day Care** requires a Special Exception (see page 18).

*Group Day Care is defined as “The provision of care in a facility that is not the day care provider’s primary residence for up to 12 children or 12 adults who are not relatives of the provider.”*

**Day Care Center** requires a Variance (see page 19).

*Day Care Center is defined as “The provision of care in a facility that is not the day care provider’s primary residence for 13 or more adults or 13 or more children who are not relatives of the provider.”*

## Educational Facility

**Educational Facility** requires a Special Exception (see page 18).

*Educational Facility is defined as “Public and private schools at the primary, elementary, junior high, or high school level that provide basic education; or Colleges and other institutions of higher learning that offer courses of general or specialized study leading to a degree.”*

## Fraternal Organization

**Fraternal Organization** requires a Special Exception (see page 18).

*Fraternal Organization is defined as “The use of a building or lot by a not-for-profit organization that restricts access to its facility to bona fide, annual dues-paying members and their occasional guests. Banquet rooms and the preparation and serving of food and beverages and occasional live entertainment are uses and activities in association with fraternal organizations.”*

## Hospital

**Hospital** requires a Special Exception (see page 18).

*Hospital is defined as “Uses providing medical or surgical care to patients and offering inpatient (overnight) care.”*

## Library or Cultural Exhibit

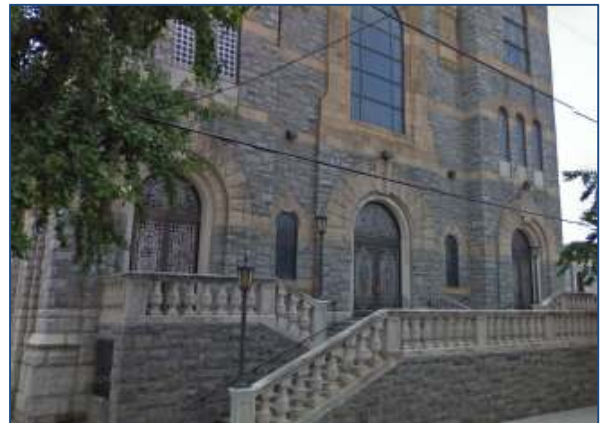
**Library or Cultural Exhibit** requires a Special Exception (see page 18).

*Library or Cultural Exhibit is defined as “Museum-like preservation and exhibition of objects in one or more of the arts and sciences, gallery exhibition of works of art, or library collection of books, manuscripts, and similar materials for study and reading.”*

## Religious Assembly

**Religious Assembly** requires a Use Registration Permit (see page 17).

*Religious Assembly is defined as “Religious services involving public assembly that customarily occur in synagogues, temples, mosques, churches, and other facilities used for religious worship.” Religious Assembly must be in a completely enclosed detached building.*



## Safety Services

**Safety Services** require a Special Exception (see page 18).

*Safety Services is defined as “Establishments that provide fire, police or life protection, together with the incidental storage and maintenance of necessary vehicles.”*

## Transit Station

**Transit Station** requires a Special Exception (see page 18).

*Transit Station is defined as “Stations, off-street passenger waiting areas, and loading/unloading areas for local and regional transit service. Street-side boarding locations, such as bus and trolley stops, are not regulated as transit station uses.”*

## Utilities and Services

**Basic Utilities and Services** require a Special Exception (see page 18).

*Basic Utilities and Services is defined as “Public and quasi-public facilities and services that need to be located in the area where the service is to be provided, such as water and sewer pump stations; electrical transforming substations; wind energy conversion systems; solar collector systems; water conveyance systems; gas regulating stations; stormwater facilities and conveyance systems; telephone switching equipment; emergency communication warning/broadcast facilities; and central heating facilities.”*

**Major Utilities and Services** require a Variance (see page 19).

*Major Utilities and Services is defined as “Infrastructure services that have substantial land use impacts on surrounding areas. Typical uses include but are not limited to water and wastewater treatment facilities, major water storage facilities and electric generation plants.”*

## Wireless Service Facility

**Wireless Service Facility** requires a Special Exception (see page 18).

*Wireless Service Facility is defined as “Towers, antennas, equipment, equipment buildings, and other facilities used in the provision of wireless communication services.” Freestanding towers must meet the requirements of §14-603(16) of the new Zoning Code. Building- or tower-mounted antennas must meet the requirements of §14-603(17).*



## Office Uses

*Office Uses includes uses in an enclosed building, customarily performed in an office, that focus on providing executive, management, administrative, government, professional, or medical services.*

## Business and Professional

**Business and Professional** requires a Variance (see page 19).

*Business and Professional is defined as “Office uses for companies and non-governmental organizations. Examples include corporate office, law offices, architectural firms, insurance companies, and other executive, management, or administrative offices for businesses and corporations.”*

## Medical, Dental, Health Practitioner

*Medical, Dental, Health Practitioner is defined as “Office uses related to diagnosis and treatment of human patients’ illnesses, injuries, and physical malfunctions that can be performed in an office setting with no overnight care. Surgical, rehabilitation, and other medical centers that do not involve overnight patient stays are included in this subcategory, as are medical and dental laboratories, unless otherwise indicated.”*

**Sole Practitioner** requires a Variance (see page 19).

*Sole Practitioner is defined as “An office exclusively operated by one medical, dental, or health practitioner and having no more than one assistant regularly-employed there-in.”*

**Group Practitioner** requires a Variance (see page 19).

*Group Practitioner is defined as “A medical, dental, or health practitioner office that does not meet the definition of a sole medical, dental, and health practitioner.”*

## Government

**Government** requires a Variance (see page 19).

*Office uses related to the administration of local, state, or federal government services or functions.*

## Retail Sales Uses

*Retail Sales includes uses involving the sale, lease, or rental of new or used goods to the ultimate consumer. It must be in an enclosed structure unless the code states otherwise.*

### Consumer Goods

**Consumer Goods** requires a Variance (see page 19).

*Consumer Goods is defined as “Uses that sell or otherwise provide furniture, appliances, equipment, and similar consumer goods, large and small, functional and decorative, for use, entertainment, comfort, or aesthetics.”*

### Drug Paraphernalia

**Drug Paraphernalia Store** requires a Variance (see page 19).

*Drug Paraphernalia Store is defined as “Any retail store selling paraphernalia commonly related to the use of any drug or narcotic of which the sale, use or possession is subject to the provisions of “The Controlled Substance, Drug, Device and Cosmetic Act,” 1972, April 14, P.L. 233, No. 64, 51 et seq., 35 P.S. Section 780-101 et seq., including, but not limited to, water pipes, pipe “screens,” hashish pipes, “roach” clips, “coke” spoons, “bongs,” and cigarette rolling paper, except that this term does not include the sale of cigarette rolling paper by a store that also sells loose tobacco or the sale by prescription of implements needed for the use of prescribed drugs or narcotics.”*



### Gun Shop

**Gun Shop** requires a Variance (see page 19).

*Gun Shop is defined as “Any retail sales business engaged in selling, leasing, purchasing, or lending of guns, firearms, or ammunition.”*



## Food, Beverages, and Groceries

**Food, Beverages, and Groceries** requires a Variance (see page 19).

*Food, Beverages, and Groceries is defined as “Uses that sell or otherwise provide food or beverages for off-premise consumption, including grocery stores and similar uses that provide incidental and accessory food and beverage service as part of their primary retail sales business.”*

## Pets and Pet Supplies

**Pets and Pet Supplies** require a Variance (see page 19).

*Pets and Pet Supplies is defined as “Uses that sell or otherwise provide household pets and pet supplies.”*

## Sundries, Pharmaceuticals, and Convenience Sales

**Sundries, Pharmaceuticals, and Convenience Sales** require a Variance (see page 19).

*Sundries, Pharmaceuticals, Convenience Sales is defined as “Uses that sell or otherwise provide goods for personal grooming and for the day-to-day maintenance of personal health and well-being.”*

## Wearing Apparel and Accessories

**Wearing Apparel and Accessories** requires a Variance (see page 19).

*Wearing Apparel and Accessories is defined as “Uses that sell or otherwise provide goods to cover, protect, or visually enhance the human form.”*

## Commercial Services

*Commercial Services includes uses that provide for consumer or business services, for the repair and maintenance of a wide variety of products, and for entertainment.*

### Business Support

**Business Support** requires a Variance (see page 19).

*Business Support is defined as “Uses that provide personnel services, printing, copying, photographic services, or communication services to businesses or consumers. Typical uses include employment agencies, copy and print shops, telephone answering services, and photo developing labs.”*

### Eating and Drinking Establishment

**Eating and Drinking Establishment** requires a Variance (see page 19).

*Eating and Drinking Establishment is defined as “Uses that prepare or serve food or beverages for on- or off-premise consumption. Establishments that meet the definition of a use classified in the eating and drinking establishments use subcategory and that also include occasional live entertainment may be classified as eating and drinking establishment uses.”*



### Personal Services

**Personal Services** requires a Variance (see page 19).

*Personal Services is defined as “Uses that provide a variety of services associated with personal grooming, personal instruction, and the maintenance of fitness, health, and well-being.”*

### Visitor Accommodations

**Visitor Accommodations** requires a Variance (see page 19).

*Visitor Accommodations is defined as “Uses that provide temporary lodging for less than 30 days where rents are charged by the day or by the week or portion thereof and may also provide food or entertainment primarily to visitors and tourists.”*

## Urban Agriculture

*Urban Agriculture includes uses such as gardens, farms, and orchards that involve the raising and harvesting of food and non-food crops and the raising of farm animals.*

### Animal Husbandry

Animal Husbandry requires a Variance (see page 19).

*Animal Husbandry is defined as “Uses that involve the feeding, housing, and care of farm animals for private or commercial purposes.” Animal Husbandry is subject to §10-101(8) and §10-112 of the Philadelphia Code regarding farm animals.*

### Community Garden

**Community Garden** requires a Use Registration Permit (see page 17).

*Community Garden is defined as “An area managed and maintained by a group of individuals to grow and harvest food crops or non-food crops (e.g., flowers) for personal or group consumption, for donation, or for sale that is incidental in nature.” A community garden area may be divided into separate garden plots or orchard areas for cultivation by one or more individuals or may be farmed collectively by members of the group. A community garden may include common areas (e.g., hand tool storage sheds) maintained and used by the group. Community gardens may be principal or accessory uses and may be located on a roof or within a building.*

### Market or Community-Supported Farm

**Market or Community-Supported Farm** requires a Use Registration Permit (see page 17).

*Market or Community-Supported Farm is defined as “An area managed and maintained by an individual or group of individuals to grow and harvest food crops or non-food crops (e.g., flowers) for sale or distribution that is not incidental in nature.” Market farms may be principal or accessory uses and may be located on a roof or within a building.*

### Horticulture Nurseries and Greenhouses

**Horticulture Nurseries and Greenhouses** requires a Variance (see page 19).

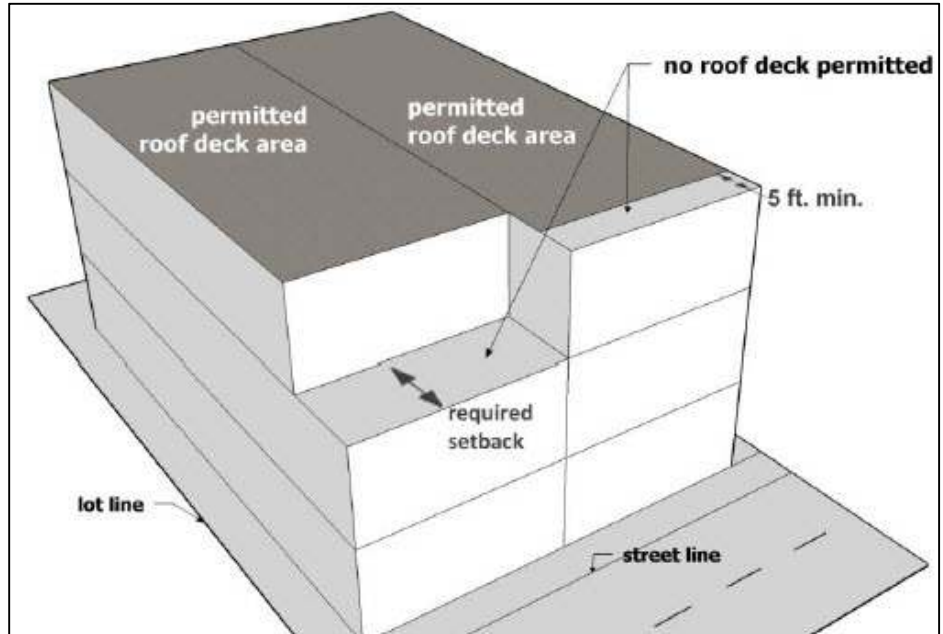
*Horticulture Nurseries and Greenhouses is defined as “A principal use involving propagation and growth of plants in containers or in the ground for wholesale or retail sales and distribution.”*

## Roof Decks

**Roof Decks** require a Zoning Permit (see page 17) and must comply with the following rules unless a Variance is obtained (see page 19).

### Setback

Roof decks must be set back at least five ft. from the front building line. In cases where the top story is already set back at least five feet, the roof deck does not require an additional setback. Some properties in RM-1 districts require that the third floor must be set back from the first two floors (see “front setback” on pages 14-16). In that case, a roof deck may not be constructed on the second floor roof.

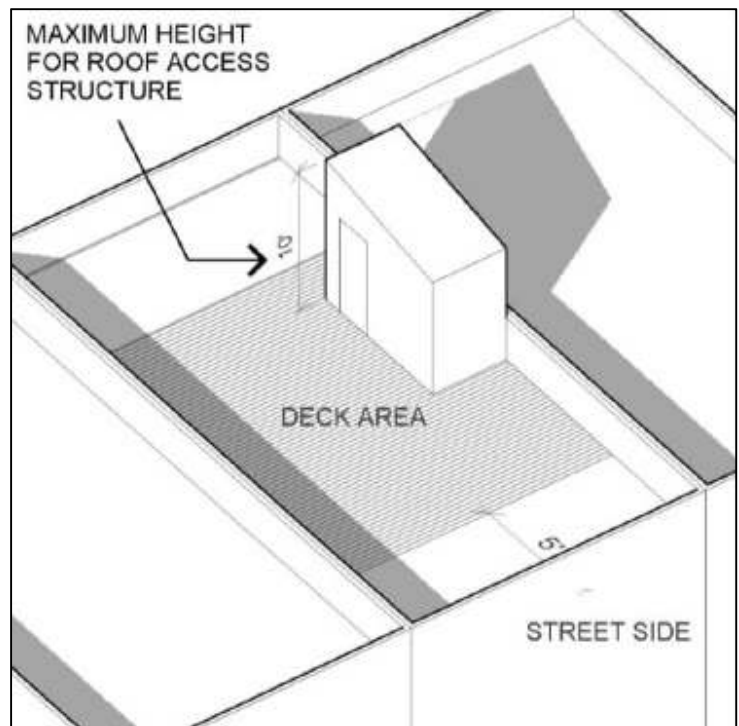


### Access Structures (“Pilot Houses”)

Roof deck access structures (known as “pilot houses”) may extend above the maximum height allowed for the building (see pages 14-16) if they only serve to enclose the access stairs and do not exceed 10 feet in height.

### Railings

Railings are permitted up to 48 inches above the midway point between the highest and lowest points of the roof. Railings can extend above the maximum height allowed for the building (see pages 14-16).



## Dimensions

Buildings which do not comply with these dimensions require a Variance (see page 19).

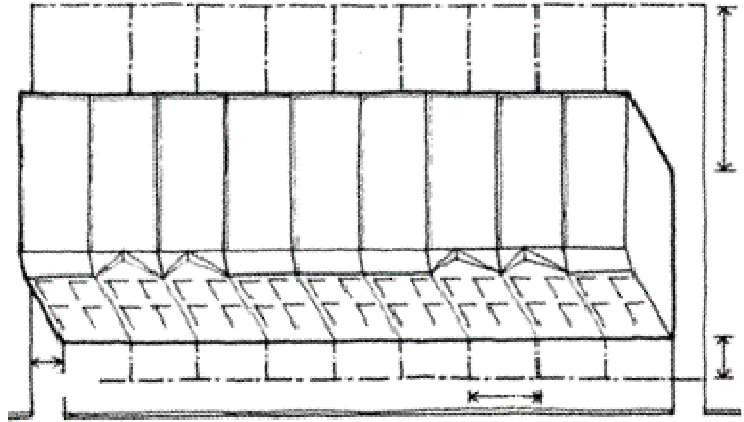
### Attached Properties

**Lot Width (Minimum):** 16 ft.

**Lot Area (Minimum):** 1,440 sq. ft.

*A lot containing at least 1,600 sq. ft. of land may be divided into lots with a minimum lot size of 800 sq. ft., provided that:*

*(a) At least 75% of lots adjacent to the lot to be divided is 1,000 sq. ft. or less; (b) Each of the lots created is used for one single-family attached home; and (c) Each of the lots created meets the minimum lot width requirement of the zoning district.*



**Open Area (Minimum):** 30 percent for mid-block properties; 20 percent for corner lots

*On lots less than 45 ft. in depth, the open area requirement does not apply to the first 12 ft. of building height. Portions of the buildings above 12 ft. must comply with the requirement.*

### Front Setback:

*In the case of a mid-block property where both neighbors on either side have only two stories of habitable space, any story above the second story must be set back 8 ft.*

*The front setback shall be no further from the street than the furthest front façade of the principal building on either of the two immediately abutting lots, and shall be located no closer to the primary street than the closest front façade of the principal building on either of the two abutting lots. If both abutting lots are vacant, setback is based on the closest building. Front setback must be 8 ft. if there are no sufficient lots to establish a front setback.*

**Rear Yard Depth (Minimum):** The greater of 9 ft. or 20 percent of the lot depth

*On lots less than 45 ft. in depth, the minimum rear yard depth is 5 ft. for the first 12 ft. of building height. Portions of the buildings above 12 ft. must comply with the rear yard depth minimum.*

**Rear Yard Area (Minimum):** 144 sq. ft.

**Height (Maximum):** 38 ft.

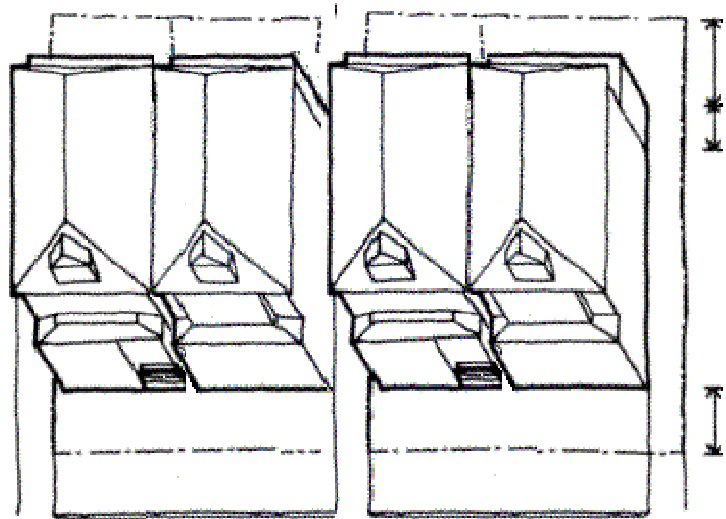
Buildings which do not comply with these dimensions require a Variance (see page 19).

## Semi-Detached Properties

**Lot Width (Minimum):** 16 ft.

**Lot Area (Minimum):** 1,440 sq. ft.

*A lot containing at least 1,600 sq. ft. of land may be divided into lots with a minimum lot size of 800 sq. ft., provided that: (a) At least 75% of lots adjacent to the lot to be divided is 1,000 sq. ft. or less; (b) Each of the lots created is used for one single-family attached home; and (c)*



*Each of the lots created meets the minimum lot width requirement of the zoning district.*

**Open Area (Minimum):** 30 percent for mid-block properties; 20 percent for corner lots

*On lots less than 45 ft. in depth, the open area requirement does not apply to the first 12 ft. of building height. Portions of the buildings above 12 ft. must comply with the requirement.*

### Front Setback:

*In the case of a mid-block property where both neighbors on either side have only two stories of habitable space, any story above the second story must be set back 8 ft.*

*The front setback shall be no further from the street than the furthest front façade of the principal building on either of the two immediately abutting lots, and shall be located no closer to the primary street than the closest front façade of the principal building on either of the two abutting lots. If both abutting lots are vacant, setback is based on the closest building. Front setback must be 8 ft. if there are no sufficient lots to establish a front setback.*

**Rear Yard Depth (Minimum):** The greater of 9 ft. or 20 percent of the lot depth

*On lots less than 45 ft. in depth, the minimum rear yard depth is 5 ft. for the first 12 ft. of building height. Portions of the buildings above 12 ft. must comply with the rear yard depth minimum.*

**Side Yard Width (Minimum):** 5 ft. for single- and two-family dwelling; 12 ft. for multi-family dwelling; 12 ft. for nonresidential

**Height (Maximum):** 38 ft.



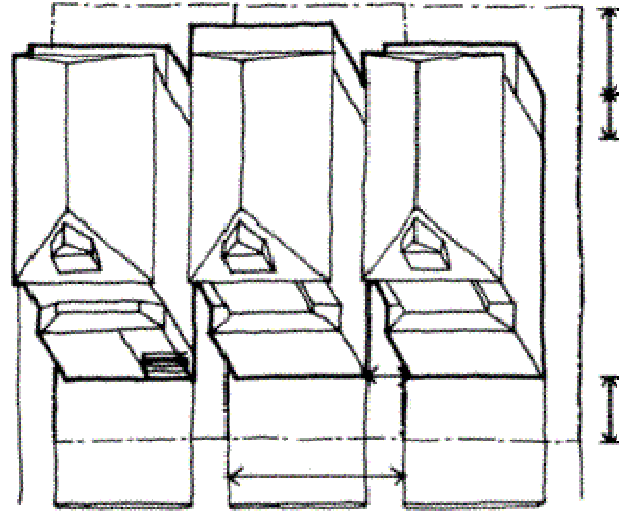
Buildings which do not comply with these dimensions require a Variance (see page 19).

## Detached Properties

**Lot Width (Minimum):** 16 ft.

**Lot Area (Minimum):** 1,440 sq. ft.

*A lot containing at least 1,600 sq. ft. of land may be divided into lots with a minimum lot size of 800 sq. ft., provided that: (a) At least 75% of lots adjacent to the lot to be divided is 1,000 sq. ft. or less; (b) Each of the lots created is used for one single-family attached home; and (c) Each of the lots created meets the minimum lot width requirement of the zoning district.*



**Open Area (Minimum):** 30 percent for mid-block properties; 20 percent for corner lots

*On lots less than 45 ft. in depth, the open area requirement does not apply to the first 12 ft. of building height. Portions of the buildings above 12 ft. must comply with the requirement.*

### Front Setback:

*In the case of a mid-block property where both neighbors on either side have only two stories of habitable space, any story above the second story must be set back 8 ft.*

*The front setback shall be no further from the street than the furthest front façade of the principal building on either of the two immediately abutting lots, and shall be located no closer to the primary street than the closest front façade of the principal building on either of the two abutting lots. If both abutting lots are vacant, setback is based on the closest building. Front setback must be 8 ft. if there are no sufficient lots to establish a front setback.*

**Rear Yard Depth (Minimum):** The greater of 9 ft. or 20 percent of the lot depth

*On lots less than 45 ft. in depth, the minimum rear yard depth is 5 ft. for the first 12 ft. of building height. Portions of the buildings above 12 ft. must comply with the rear yard minimum.*

### Side Yard Width (Minimum):

*Single- or Two-Family:* Two 5 ft. side yards for mid-block properties; One 5 ft. yard for corner  
*Multi-Family Residential:* Two 5 ft. side yards for mid-block properties; One 8 ft. yard for corner  
*Nonresidential:* Two 12 ft. side yards for mid-block properties; One 12 ft. yard for corner lots

**Height (Maximum):** 38 ft.

## Obtaining a Zoning / Use Registration Permit


*Zoning permits permit the proposed structure, site improvement, construction, or sign.  
Use registration permits permit the proposed land use.*



Zoning permits and Use Registration Permits can be obtained from the Department of Licenses and Inspection, located on the ground floor of the Municipal Services Building.

Filling out an application for a Permit requires knowledge and experience regarding Philadelphia Zoning law so as to ensure that the property is approved for a broad range of uses without the application getting rejected.

To speak to an attorney, call The Anastasio Law Firm at (215) 609-4165, e-mail [info@phillyzoning.com](mailto:info@phillyzoning.com) or visit us at 1221 Locust Street, Suite 201.

<b>APPLICATION FOR ZONING / USE REGISTRATION PERMIT</b>		 <p><b>CITY OF PHILADELPHIA</b> DEPARTMENT OF LICENSES AND INSPECTIONS MUNICIPAL SERVICES BUILDING – CONCOURSE 1401 JOHN F. KENNEDY BOULEVARD PHILADELPHIA, PA 19102 <i>For more information visit us at <a href="http://www.phila.gov">www.phila.gov</a></i></p>	
<small>(For office use only)</small> APPLICATION # _____			
ZONING CLASSIFICATION _____			
PREVIOUS APPLICATION NO. _____			
<small>(Applicant completes all information below. Print clearly and provide full details)</small>			
LOCATION OF PROPERTY (LEGAL ADDRESS) _____			
PROPERTY OWNER'S NAME _____		PROPERTY OWNER'S ADDRESS: _____	
PHONE # _____	FAX # _____	LICENSE # _____	E-MAIL: _____
APPLICANT: _____		ADDRESS: _____	
FIRM/COMPANY: _____		_____	
PHONE # _____	FAX # _____	LICENSE # _____	E-MAIL: _____
RELATIONSHIP TO OWNER: <input type="checkbox"/> TENANT/LESSEE <input type="checkbox"/> ATTORNEY <input type="checkbox"/> DESIGN PROFESSIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> CONTRACTOR <input type="checkbox"/> EXPEDITOR			
<b>TABULATION OF USES</b>			
FLOORSPACE # _____	CURRENT USE OF BUILDINGSPACE _____	Last Previous Use _____	Date Last Used _____

## Obtaining a Special Exception

*The Zoning Board of Adjustment may grant a Special Exception if the Applicant shows the proposed use will not cause: (a) congestion in streets/transit systems; (b) Overcrowding the land; (c) Impairing light/air to adjacent property; (d) Burdening public facilities; (e) Impairing or permanently injuring the use of adjacent properties; (f) Endangering the public health or safety; or (g) Inconsistency with the Comprehensive Plan of the City.*

If a Special Exception is required, the first step is to apply for a Use Registration Permit from the Department of Licenses and Inspection (see page 17). The application will be “referred” to the Zoning Board of Adjustment (ZBA). The applicant has 30 days to appeal to the ZBA, which will schedule a hearing to decide whether to grant the Special Exception.

Before going before the ZBA, the applicant must line up support from the neighborhood. In addition to circulating a petition to neighbors on surrounding blocks, the applicant must notify and meet with the Registered Community Organization for the neighborhood where the property is located.



Each community group has their own requirements for applicants. Most require architectural drawings depending on the proposal.

The Applicant must work to gain the support of the community before the hearing before the ZBA in order to maximize the chance of being granted a Special Exception. Even with support of the Registered Community Organization, one or more neighbors may present evidence that the proposed use is likely to cause a detrimental impact on the health, safety, and welfare of the neighborhood.

Gaining the support of both the neighborhood group and the Zoning Board is a unique and difficult process that requires an experienced professional. Before beginning the process, a potential applicant should **seriously consider hiring an experienced zoning attorney**. To speak to an attorney, call The Anastasio Law Firm at (215) 609-4165, e-mail us at [info@phillyzoning.com](mailto:info@phillyzoning.com) or visit us at 1221 Locust Street, Suite 201.

## Obtaining a Variance

*A Variance may be issued if an applicant proves that the denial of the variance would result in an unnecessary hardship, and that the unnecessary hardship was not created by the applicant.*

*The Variance must be the minimum variance (the least modification possible) that will afford relief and must be in harmony with the purpose and spirit of the Zoning Code. The Variance cannot substantially increase congestion in the streets/transit, burden public facilities, endanger the public welfare, affect implementation of a neighborhood plan, injure the adjacent properties (including supply of light and air), or create significant environmental damage.*

If a Variance is required, the first step is to apply for a Use Registration Permit from the Department of Licenses and Inspection (see page 17). The application will be “rejected.” The applicant has 30 days to appeal to the Zoning Board of Adjustment (ZBA), which will schedule a hearing to decide whether to grant a Variance.

Before going before the ZBA, the applicant must line up support from the neighborhood. In addition to circulating a petition to neighbors on surrounding blocks, the applicant must notify and meet with the Registered Community Organization for the neighborhood where the property is located.

Each community group has their own requirements for applicants. Most require architectural drawings depending on the proposal.

The Applicant must work to gain the support of the community before the hearing before the ZBA in order to maximize the chance of being granted a Variance. Even with support of the Registered Community Organization, one or more neighbors may present evidence that the proposed use is likely to cause a detrimental impact on the health, safety, and welfare of the neighborhood.

Gaining the support of both the neighborhood group and the Zoning Board is a unique and difficult process that requires an experienced professional. Before beginning the process, a potential applicant should **seriously consider hiring an experienced zoning attorney**. To speak to an attorney, call The Anastasio Law Firm at (215) 609-4165, e-mail us at [info@phillyzoning.com](mailto:info@phillyzoning.com) or visit us at 1221 Locust Street, Suite 201.

