

Proposed Zoning Code Updates – Summary

April 8, 2024

The City Council directed staff and the Planning Commission to consider updates to the non-single-family zoning districts as part of the housing policy discussions, following adoption of the Comprehensive Plan in 2021 (districts *except* R-1A and R-1B). From August 2023 to March 2024 the Planning Commission held a series of work sessions that identified five key strategies for the overall changes. These strategies and specific changes associated with each strategy are listed below.

1. ***Hold the status quo in R-2, R-3, and R-4 Districts.*** *This strategy is based on the fact that some of the current multi-family properties may not meet the existing R-3 and R-4 standards, and the fact that the Planning Commission feels the scale and format of development in these districts is appropriate. These changes would allow existing projects to be built back “as is” or allow new projects of a similar scale and format to be built in these areas. The R-2 district was included to establish a consistent approach to standards in all districts that allow multi-unit buildings.*

The specific changes are:

- a. *Changing the R-3 minimum lot area standards from 2,500 square feet per unit to 1,750 square feet per unit.*
 - b. *Reconcile a current conflict for lot coverage standards in R-3 (20% vs. 30%; reconciled in favor of 30%). [19.12.015, Table 19.12.A]*
 - c. *Adding impervious surface limits to be consistent with R-1A and R-1B districts:*
 - *R-2 (40%) – same as R-1A and R-1B. [19.10.015, Table 19.10.A.]*
 - *R-3 (50%). [19.12.015, Table 19.12.A.]*
 - *R-4 (50%). [19.14.015, Table 19.14.A.]*
 - d. *Add a section to identify planning and development parameters for planned rezoning (“-P”) in the R-2, R-3 and R-4 district. [19.10.30, 19.12.30, and 19.14.30]. Currently, planned zoning applications in these districts have no specific parameters. (See Strategy 5, below)*
 - e. *Non-substantive and formatting changes, which include:*
 - *Adding intent statements to be consistent with other zone districts and allow better consideration for the context of each district in relation to the comprehensive plan.*
 - *Converting sections of text on dimensional standards to a single table (also consistent with previous formatting updates in other districts).*
2. ***Allow residential uses in the C-districts.*** *This strategy promotes housing and mixed-use development by allowing residential uses in all commercial zoning districts. Currently, residential uses are only allowed in the C-O district, and then they are subject to the R-1, R-2, or R-3 development standards. The Planning Commission direction was to promote residential uses in mixed-use or*

commercial settings. This allows residential uses, but with no changes to the physical form and development standards that would otherwise apply to non-residential projects.

The specific changes are:

- a. Add a new use to the use table “residential – mixed use” (residential uses on the upper floor of commercial buildings or behind ground-level commercial uses), and enable it in C-O, C-1, and C-2 zoning districts. [19.27.005, Table 19.27]
 - b. Non-substantive and formatting changes, which include:
 - Adding intent statements to be consistent with other zone districts and allow better consideration for the context of each district in relation to the comprehensive plan.
 - Converting sections of text on dimensional standards to a single table (also consistent with previous formatting updates in other districts).
3. **Improve the MXD – Mixed Use District.** This MXD district is a planned zoning district that promotes mixed use development, but it currently relies on very large-scale master plans and complex procedures. This scenario is not very applicable to future development in Prairie Village. Similarly, the district has very few standards or guiding development principles, so is open to interpretation under any specific plan that may be proposed. The Planning Commission direction was to make the district more applicable to smaller scale development plans, and to establish planning and development parameters for a basis of any proposed plan and rezoning to the MXD district. While the process still affords flexibility from these standards through the Planning Commission and City Council review, the base development standards establish a starting point and expectations for proposed development plans.

Specific changes include:

- a. Replace the large-scale master planning process with two specific and smaller scales of development plans – a community plan, including project surroundings, and a project plan for specific sites and buildings. Note: this approach applies to all application for “planned” zoning districts – i.e. R-3P, C-2P, or MXD. [19.24.020] (See Strategy 4, below)
- b. Establish base standards for a range of building types that may be appropriate for various mixed-use projects or contexts. [19.23.015, Table 19.23.A]
- c. Establish design guidelines that address integrating projects into surrounding contexts, and which promote more walkable, and human-scale design features as a pre-requisite to supporting the plan and proposed mixed use development projects. [19.23.020]

- d. *Create better intent and approval criteria for the MXD district, and for all planned zoning applications. [19.24.010 and 19.24.025]. (See Strategy 4, below)*

- 4. **Revise the current planned rezoning and development standards and process.** *The overall approach directs most future changes development through the current “planned zoning” process, which is a rezoning application that requires a Planning Commission Recommendation and City Council decisions. The concept of “planned zoning” is to allow flexibility from current standards to promote better, innovative, or more appropriate development, but the current planned zoning process is complex and has few criteria or planning or development parameters. The Planning Commission’s specific strategy is to establish better planning parameters, review criteria, and expectations in the planned zoning process.*

Specific changes include:

- a. *Establish that all plans shall be based on a proposed base zoning district and district standards, and deviations from those standards should be based on specific planning, design, or community benefits. [19.24.015]*
- b. *Improve the planning parameters necessary to justify flexibility in the standards with two specific and smaller scales of development plans – a community plan, including project surroundings, and a project plan for specific sites and buildings. [19.24.020]*
- c. *Improve the criteria for approval of planned zoning applications [19.24.025]*

- 5. **Consider MXD Development in specific scenarios.** *This strategy combines elements of all of the above changes – (1) it capitalizes on the improved planned zoning criteria, and anticipates how that may be used in any of the current zoning districts; (2) it assigns some of the more specific MXD district building types to districts that are most appropriate for that scale of building or project; and (3) it utilizes the planned zoning process as a basis for integrating smaller scale or infill projects into specific situations in these districts.*

Specific changes include:

- a. *Adding parameters for planned zoning applications in all zoning districts and requiring the updated process and criteria in item 4 be used. [19.10.030, 19.12.030, 19.14.030, and 19.16.030]*