

# BOISE ZONING

## REWRITE

### PROJECT BACKGROUND

Boise’s zoning code has shaped Boise as we know it, outlining how property can be used in our city. To support our city’s long-term vision as our community grows and changes, we have started the process to rewrite our zoning code in three modules.

This first module of the zoning code outlines what is and is not allowed within certain zones across the city. This module proposed the following changes to help better align our zoning code with the city’s long-term vision:

- Condense and rename zoning districts
- Allow new housing types within all residential zones
- Allow small-scale commercial in some residential zones
- Create new zones that allow mixed-use development

The City of Boise sought feedback on this draft document from May 10 to June 15. The Boise community had the opportunity to take part in an online public survey, attend in person and/or virtual meetings, or meet with a planner through scheduled “office hours.” Community input will help refine the first module to ensure the City grows in a sustainable, efficient, and responsible manner that allows us to support and enhance our quality of life.

### HOW DID WE REACH OUT?

From May 10 to June 15, the Zoning Code Rewrite team began to advertise and perform the engagement tactics noted below to gather public input on Module 1. In-person events were held at a variety of times and locations throughout the City of Boise to accommodate various schedules and provide convenient engagement opportunities near where residents live.

Notice for each engagement opportunity was shared through the project’s email list, the city’s “In the Know” newsletter and on social media throughout May and June. Partner agencies and Neighborhood Associations were also informed of engagement opportunities.

Local media advertised the outreach events including two articles on BoiseDev.com, an interview on Radio Boise (KRBX) Vital Idaho, and several repeating segments on KTVB.

ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITY	DATE /TIME	LOCATION	PARTICIPANTS
Community Wide Survey	May 10 - June 15	Online	1,054
Office Hours with a Planner	Every Monday and Wednesday from May 19 to June 14; 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM	Virtual and at City Hall	7
City Council Work Session	Tuesday, May 18 4:00 PM	City Hall	N/A
Community Conversation	Friday, May 21 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM	Virtual	32
Community Conversation	Monday, May 24 5:30 PM - 6:30 PM	Cassia Park	4
Community Conversation	Wednesday, May 26 4:00 PM - 5:00 PM	Baggley Park	1
Community Conversation	Wednesday, June 2 11:30 AM - 12:30 PM	Winstead Park	8
Community Conversation	Monday, June 7 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM	Virtual	22
Community Conversation	Thursday, June 10 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM	Magnolia Park	+/-60

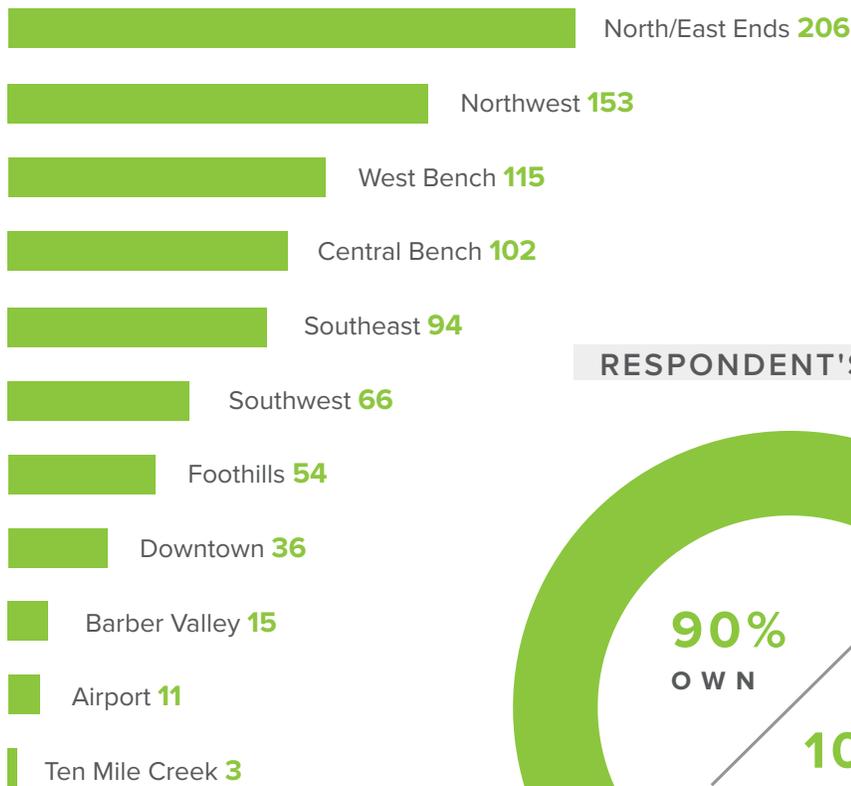
## SUMMARY OF DRAFT MODULE 1 SURVEY

The Draft Module 1 survey had three questions about the respondent and eight questions addressing each of the four proposed changes.

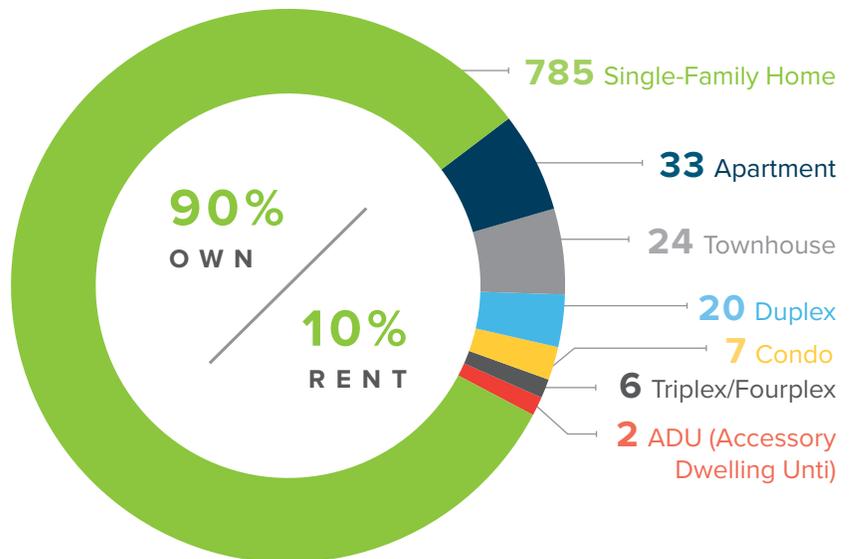
### Who did we hear from?

While we did hear from people living in every area of the city as shown below, we received the most responses from those who live in the North/East Ends and Northwest. We also heard from a majority of people who live in single-family homes (90% of respondents), hearing from just 33 people who live in an apartment, 24 people who live a townhome, and 6 people who live in a triplex or fourplex. Similarly, the responses were from majority homeowners (90% of respondents).

### NEIGHBORHOOD RESPONSES: WHAT NEIGHBORHOOD DO YOU LIVE IN?



### RESPONDENT'S CURRENT TYPE OF HOME



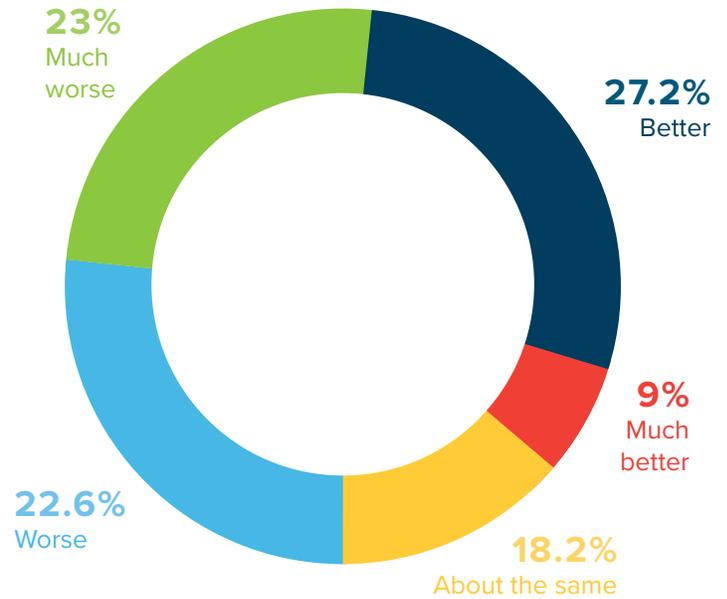
## CONDENSED AND RENAMED ZONE DISTRICTS

The City's Comprehensive Plan, Blueprint Boise, identifies where people and services should be located to accommodate long-term growth in Boise. To align our zoning code to our City's comprehensive plan, Module 1 proposes condensing and renaming several existing zoning districts.

We asked residents how well they believed the proposed condensed and renamed zones address the City's long-term needs.

## HOW WELL DOES THE PROPOSED CHANGES MEET THE FUTURE NEEDS OF OUR CITY?

Overall, 45.6% of respondents believe the proposed zone district changes would position the city “worse” or “much worse” than our current zoning code while 36.2% believe the changes would be “better” or “much better” than the current zoning code. A portion of respondents believe the changes would neither benefit nor detract from the City’s ability to meet future needs.



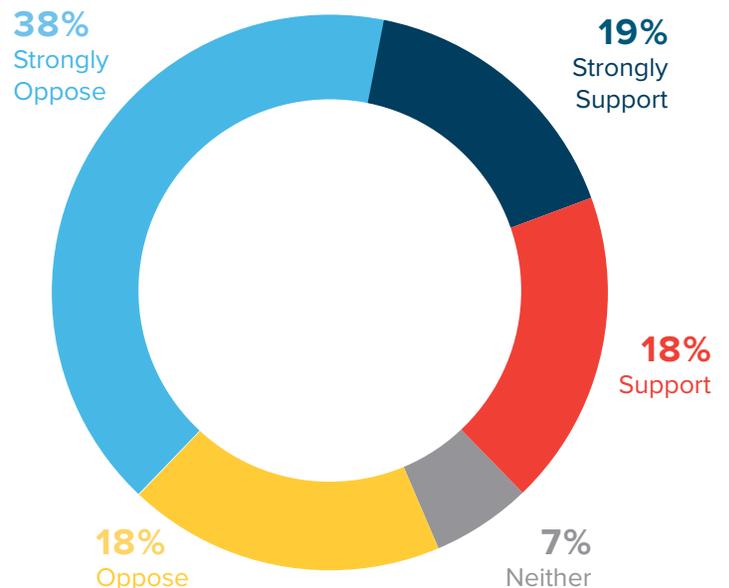
## NEW HOUSING TYPES WITHIN ALL RESIDENTIAL ZONES

Module 1 proposes expanding housing choice by including triplexes, fourplexes, and townhomes as allowed housing types in all residential zones (subject to design and development standards).

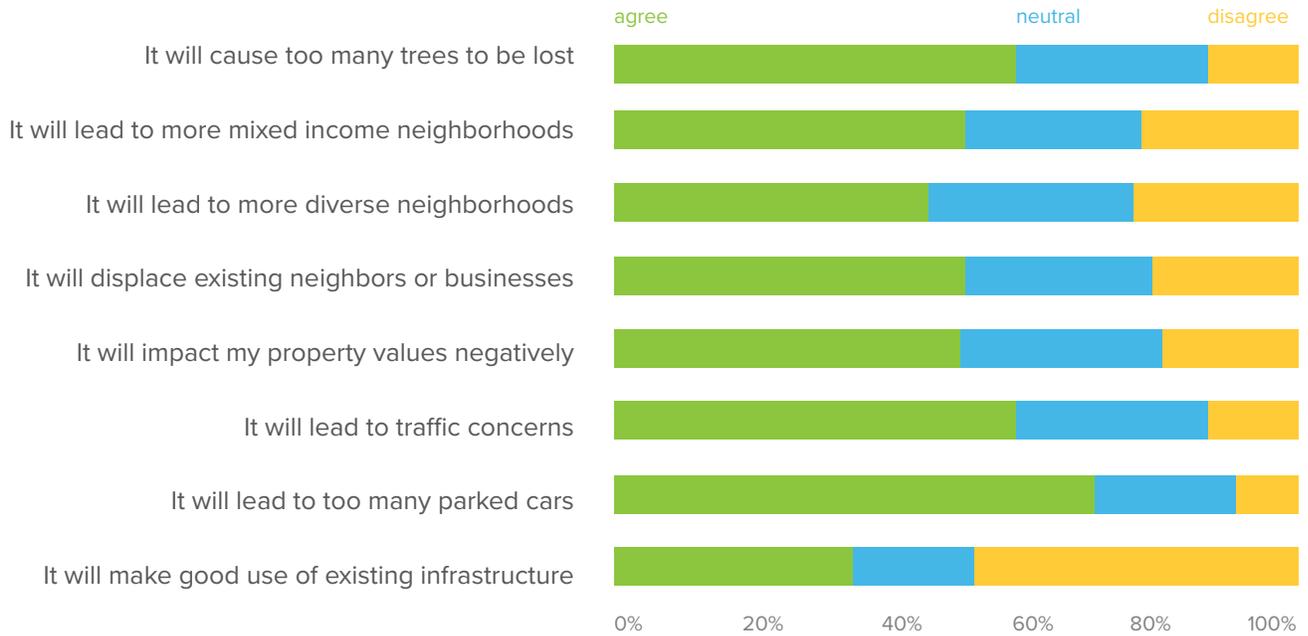
We asked our residents several questions to understand their comfort with allowing these types of housing types, what they perceived the impact of expanded housing choice will be, and what they felt should be prioritized for development and design standards.

## DO YOU SUPPORT ALLOWING OTHER HOUSING TYPES IN ALL BOISE NEIGHBORHOODS?

Overall, 56% of respondents “oppose” or “strongly oppose” expanding housing choice in all Boise neighborhoods while 37% “support” or “strongly support” the expansion of housing choice.



## WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE THE IMPACTS OF EXPANDING HOUSING CHOICE WILL BE?

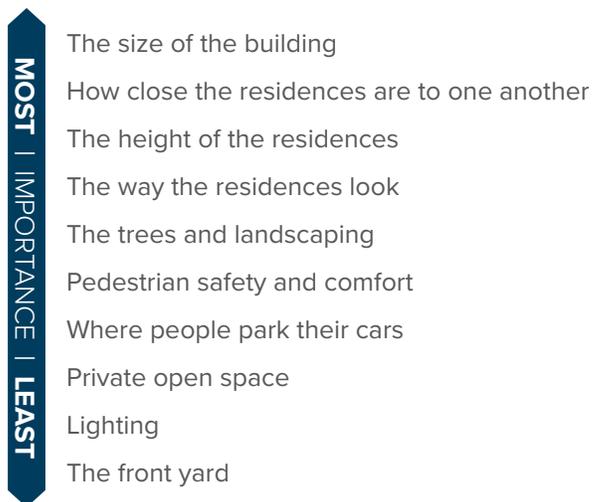


Overall, respondents appeared to hold a wide variety of opinions about the impact of expanding housing choices; however, there are areas of commonality (50% or above):



## WHAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING TO CONSIDER AS WE ALLOW NEW TYPES OF HOUSING?

When asked what elements of design and development were most important when expanding housing choice, the following design criteria received the highest weighted scores.



## IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE WE SHOULD KNOW?

We gave respondents the opportunity to share general thoughts about the expansion of housing choice in all residential areas. About half of the respondents skipped this question (495 skipped out of 1,051).

Our community expressed a wide range of views some related to the proposed draft Module 1 changes and some outside the scope of the project. **Below is a summary of some of the ideas/concerns that were shared:**

- Opposition to the removal of R1-A
- Opposition to expanding housing choice
- Opposition to any changes in zoning
- Support for increased residential density
- Support for expanding housing choice
- Support for mixed-use development
- Concerns about parking
- Concerns about how increasing development will impact infrastructure capacity (roads, utilities, emergency services)
- Concerns about transient neighbors/bad behavior
- Concerns about overcrowding and overbuilding
- Concerns about short term rentals
- Concerns about resident safety, noise, shading, traffic, speeding etc.
- Concerns over “Not in My Backyard” sentiment preventing the building of housing
- Concerns about a shelter for those experiencing homelessness
- Desire to stop building in the foothills
- Desire for cottage courts to be an allowed use
- Desire to maintain open space
- Desire to use environmentally sensitive building practices (water conservation, fire protection)
- Desire to identify solutions/programs to expand/incent affordable housing development
- Desire for new growth/development to pay more than existing residents
- Desire for more adaptive reuse/building conversion rather than new construction
- Desire to make zoning changes across the board, not exempt certain neighborhoods
- Desire for more experienced Planning and Zoning Commissioners
- Desire to expand the tree canopy
- Belief that proposed changes only benefit developers, that ideas are being pushed through by developers
- Belief that people do not want to live in apartments
- Questions about how Design Review fits into these proposed changes
- Questions about dimensional standards
- Questions about what is the logic behind these proposals

## SMALL SCALE COMMERCIAL IN SOME RESIDENTIAL ZONES

**Module 1 proposes allowing small-scale commercial and retail in some residential zones.** We asked what the most important design and development standards are to ensure that small-scale commercial uses fit within residential zones. The following design and performance criteria received the highest weighted scores.

**MOST | IMPORTANCE | LEAST**

- Noise levels
- How close the building is to residences
- Where people park their cars
- Size of the building
- Height of the building
- Way the building looks
- Pedestrian safety and comfort
- Hours/days of operation
- Trees and landscaping
- Exterior lighting

## NEW MIXED-USE ZONES

As part of the condensing of commercial and office zones, Module 1 created new mixed-use zones that could allow residential, office, and commercial development on the same site.

To understand our community's opinions about mixed-use development, we asked what excited or concerned them about mixed-use developments. Below are some of the major themes we heard:

### Excitement about Mixed-Use Development

- **Business:** Economic development / opportunity, support variety of local businesses
- **Housing:** Increase housing and potentially more affordable housing options
- **Inclusion:** Promote equity, reduce segregation, support diversity
- **Good Governance:** making good use of infrastructure, being responsive to change/growth
- **Multi-Modal Transportation:** Reduce congestion, shorten or reduce car trips, improve air quality, create better places for biking and walking, support a viable transit system
- **No excitement**

### Concerns about Mixed-Use Development

- **Vehicle Impacts:** Not enough parking, increased congestion, bringing traffic and parked cars into residential neighborhoods, people will still drive, our transit is not good enough
- **Design:** Too much parking, strip mall design with large parking lots in front of buildings, general bad design/aesthetics, loss of tree coverage, sterile, cold, massive buildings
- **Behavior:** Crime, noise, less family-oriented businesses, light pollution, decrease in property values, smell
- **Change:** Change in neighborhood character, adding higher densities in areas not currently dense, adding new residents at the expense of existing residents, loss of history
- **Overbuilding:** Too much commercial development, will not create special/unique places, loss of open space, wildlife impacts, mega-blocks
- **Infrastructure:** missing sidewalks, poor quality transit, incompatible roadway design
- **Distrust/Lack of Faith in Government:** giving special privileges to developers, poor regulation and enforcement, poor interagency partnership
- **Gentrification:** loss of affordable housing, replacement with luxury housing/condos, increase in property values pushing people out
- **It Won't Work:** We won't build dense enough, we won't attract authentic local businesses, existing residents will stall development, businesses won't be successful
- **No concerns**

## SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

As part of the public engagement for draft Module 1, staff hosted facilitated conversations with the community, both, in-person at local parks and virtually via Zoom. The conversations started with an introductory presentation covering background information in regard to Blueprint Boise and zoning as well as the key proposed draft Module 1 changes.

We then facilitated a conversation with two questions:

- What principles of *Blueprint Boise* resonate with you?
- Will these changes meet the needs of Boise into the future?

## BLUEPRINT BOISE PRINCIPLES

Participants were shown a list of Blueprint Boise principles and asked what values resonated with them. Understanding which values of Blueprint Boise resonate with participants will help evaluate tradeoffs associated with difficult zoning choices.

Through each community conversation we heard every principle expressed with a strong desire to prioritize quality of life and advancement of environmental stewardship.

Most participants supported the vision of Blueprint Boise and recognized the importance of balancing competing needs. However, at 1 of the 6 community conversations, some residents felt Blueprint Boise did not represent their interests.

## MEETING BOISE'S NEEDS INTO THE FUTURE

We asked participants a broad question to spark thought and conversation about the impact of the proposed changes.

Below represent summaries of the feedback related to the four proposed changes:

### Condense and rename zoning districts

- Some frustration about the removal of R1-A
- Some belief that the removal of R1-A will decrease housing diversity and neighborhood diversity within the city
- Stated conflict between removing/condensing some zones and its impact on environmental stewardship
- Some desire for an agricultural zone
- Some belief that R1-B should also be removed
- General support for mixed-use zones

### Allow new housing types within all residential zones

- Some believed the City could go further and allow even more housing types in all residential zones
- Some believed this change could have unintended consequences removing public participation or incenting teardowns, redevelopment, and displacement
- Some were less concerned about the number of units and more concerned about the form/design of the building
- Some believed that single-family neighborhoods should stay single-family
- Desire for diversity of housing types in large new developments (not just single-family homes or large apartment complex)
- Important design considerations noted: height, parking, usable open space

### Allow small-scale commercial in some residential zones

- General support for small-scale commercial uses in residential zones
- Recognition that context matters to ensure that these fit within existing residential areas
- Attention to parking, noise, and “family-friendly” uses

### Create new zones that allow mixed-use development

- Preference for local businesses
- Recognition that providing parking is important but do not want to see parking as part of the design
- Belief that adequate infrastructure (sidewalks, pathways, transit) is needed for mixed-use areas to be successful

Other topics that emerged from general comments included:

#### **Public engagement**

- Need to find a way to get people to show up and participate. Zoning seems boring but this impacts everyone and we need to try and reach people
- Find new ways to reach residents – TV, postcards, utility bill inserts, etc.

#### **City leadership concerns**

- Feeling that Blueprint Boise does not represent all residents
- Feeling that some areas of the city are often ignored
- Feeling that developers get whatever they want

## **ADDENDUM**

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Participants provided a wide range of comments both via the online survey, as well as the live community conversations. Comments are available as an Addendum document posted on the project's website; [Zoning Code Rewrite | City of Boise](#)