

MODULE 2 OUTREACH SUMMARY

BOISE ZONING

R E W R I T E

PROJECT BACKGROUND

Boise's zoning code has shaped Boise as we know it, guiding how the built environment of our city evolves. To support Boise's long-term vision as our community grows and changes, we are rewriting our zoning code in three parts, called modules. The first module of the zoning code outlines what kind of uses are and are not allowed within each zone across the city. The second module outlines development and design standards for redeveloping properties within the city. Community outreach for Module 2 took place January 27th - April 9th of 2022.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Module 2 outlines development and design standards for redeveloping properties within the city. Design standards include dimensional requirements for building height, building setbacks, housing density, parking requirements, building design, and incentives for developments that provide a community benefit. module, the draft document proposes the following updates:

1. Updating dimensional requirements to allow smaller minimum lot sizes and/or lot widths for all residential zones
2. Removing the density calculation requirement of housing units per acre in all zones
3. Adding design requirements to protect the transition between neighborhoods and higher intensity zones (i.e. commercial zones)
4. Creating new zoning incentives in exchange for energy or water saving improvements
5. Reducing off-street parking requirements for single-family, duplex, triplex, and 4-plexes from two parking spaces per home to one parking space per home
6. Broadening the building and site design standards to apply to all new development, rather than just those parcels identified in the Design Review Standards & Guidelines
7. Creating a new section of the code that establishes standards for the safe location of driveways and construction of new streets or pathways that help pedestrians, bicyclists, cars and delivery vehicles move safely and efficiently
8. Creating a new section of the code that requires site improvements for new developments such as landscaping, lighting, signs and other on-site materials to be kept clean and in good condition

To collaborate with and gather feedback from the community, we used a variety of tools to reach our residents. A recap of comments and concerns are included in this report.

Module 2 proposes several changes to the zoning code that would apply to all areas of the city. Residents value unique neighborhood characteristics and would like to be able to predict what growth will look like and provide sufficient housing at various price points for Boiseans. Overall, we heard that residents love our city and revisions to Module 1 and 2 of the draft zoning code should focus on:

- Directing development where there is public investment
- Maintaining a variety of neighborhoods

- Explicitly producing the type of affordable and sustainable development the city needs
- Identifying areas in the city that are purposely managed for conservation

This report outlines the results of the surveys as well as a comprehensive look at the feedback gathered at community outreach events.

SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

Community conversations were structured to present information and facilitate conversations around Module 2’s eight major changes. Each of these events, hosted in person and virtually, were organized to give a background of the zoning code rewrite, incorporate our “why” with several recent policy plans and strategic initiative action plans, and present the eight major changes proposed in the draft.

We partnered with a local consultant and longtime planner from Kushlan & Associates to facilitate the conversations. Attendees were asked the following three prompts:

- What “why” resonates most with you?
- What are your initial reactions to the first four changes?
- What are your initial reactions the last four changes?

Below are the six-policy action plans the city has invested in to support the city’s goals. Attendees were asked to choose which “why” resonated most with them.



Grow in a sustainable & efficient manner that maintains our treasured quality of life. (Blueprint Boise, 2011)



Maximize our constrained land to address increasing housing demand. (Housing Needs Analysis, 2021)



Position the community to be carbon neutral by 2050 while enhancing community resilience to a changing climate. (Climate Action Roadmap, 2021)



Elevate the full experience of a person with a disability living, working, and recreating in Boise. (Cross Disability Task Force Recommendations, 2021)



Build on legacy of the greenbelt to expand safe pathways for walking and biking citywide. (Pathways Master Plan, 2021)



Create a modern, well-balanced transportation system that provides real mobility choice while creating great places. (Transportation Action Plan, 2016)

Understanding which priorities and policies resonate with participants most can help evaluate difficult zoning choices. Through each community conversation we heard every initiative or action plan expressed with a strong desire to prioritize the treasured quality of life outlined in *Blueprint Boise*. However, it was clear the phrase ‘quality of life’ can be interpreted differently to each resident of Boise. When we hosted outreach events with Boise Young Professionals and a Boise State Urban Studies class, the priorities of younger residents shifted toward the city’s climate action goals and the need for more affordable housing.

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS PROPOSED CHANGES TO DRAFT MODULE 2

Many of the residents we heard from expressed concerns that the approach in both Modules 1 and 2 apply to all neighborhoods and seem to direct growth everywhere instead of focusing increased density strategically, where there is sufficient public investment. Furthermore, many made clear that changes to the base zoning would negatively impact existing overlay districts.

The topic of highest interest from the community was the proposal to reduce parking minimums for all single family, duplex, tri-plex and 4-plexes. This concern was mainly rooted in the perception that Boise residents would “never give up their cars” due to a variety of factors including weather, lack of transit, and lifestyle. However, at several events there was a change in prioritization for younger Boiseans who felt the reduction in the parking minimums would offer them more choice in deciding what worked best from them in terms of housing, parking, and transportation. The community understands that growth is happening and there needs to be a nuanced approach to help develop where infrastructure already exists in our city.

Additional comments and themes that emerged are grouped categorically below:

TOPIC	COMMENTS
AGENCY COORDINATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration is needed between zoning and public transportation • Infrastructure concerns: density, water, sewer, roadways, emergency services, schools
NATURAL RESOURCES & CONSERVATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request to keep, and where possible, strengthen, the WUI/Firewise standards – including the ability to monitor and enforce these standards • We need to consider our city’s water resources, specifically ensuring our aquifer is protected and replenished • How are we balancing preserving the foothills with the need for density and affordability
UNIQUE NEIGHBORHOOD NEEDS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Southwest values green space, pathways, and access to the outdoors. They need better public transportation and access to amenities/services • West Bench has little public transportation, relies heavily on cars • Southeast needs adequate parking, especially near the Boise State campus • Northwest values large lot sizes and small agriculture/livestock farms • Foothills would like to keep large lots and access to nature and looks to protect the foothills • Central Bench encourages suburban style neighborhoods with adequate parking for recreations vehicles (boats, RVs) • North/East End enjoys the historic preservation of the neighborhood and walkability • Desire for neighborhoods with amenities like grocery stores, parks, shops, and services
DESIGN MATTERS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appreciation for considering quality access & connectivity in neighborhoods • Appreciation for design standards in zoning code • Detached sidewalks are good, helpful for safety on high-speed roads
GOOD GOVERNANCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will design maintenance be monitored and enforced? • Being able to predict how a property will be developed would be helpful • Density will help with transportation, access, open space, and increasing quality of life • We need to limit sprawl but does a blanket zoning code across the entire city mean we risk losing Boise’s uniqueness and the diversity between different neighborhoods
AFFORDABILITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concern about housing prices that are unattainable, and the lack of supply

Participants provided a wide range of comments both via the online survey, as well as the community and neighborhood conversations. Results from both surveys and community conversations are attached as an addendum to this report.

OUTREACH METHODS

On January 27, 2022, Planning and Development Services (PDS) released the draft Module 2 and began community outreach. In-person events were held at a variety of times and locations throughout the City of Boise to provide convenient engagement opportunities for residents. In addition to seven neighborhood planning area meetings, we also hosted virtual events and several community conversations to present the housing needs analysis from Housing and Community Development. Presenting the housing needs analysis set the stage for how the zoning code rewrite can help create solutions to address our current housing crisis.

The city offered an online survey for the wider community and a more technical survey for individuals that are quite familiar with the existing zoning code. To encourage broad survey participation, we used a combination of social media posts, email marketing using the city's external *In The Know* newsletter, targeted post card mailings, poster routes, press releases, Next Door, and printed business cards that were distributed at each community event. Partner agencies and Neighborhood Associations were also informed of engagement opportunities. Local media advertised the outreach events on BoiseDev.com, KTVB Channel 7, KIVI Channel 6, Fox News Channel 9 as well as KIDO 580 Radio. In total, roughly 3,800 people participated in Module 2 outreach.

Outlined below is the list of events that city staff presented to the community.

MODULE 2

DATE	EVENT	PARTICIPANTS	TYPE
January 13, 2022	Urban Land Institute - NEXT Cohort (35-45 years old)	16	In Person
February 8, 2022	Central Bench	27 / 10	In Person / Virtual
February 9, 2022	Urban Land Institute – Idaho Developer Product Council	20	Virtual
February 12, 2022	Housing + ZCR Conversation	49	In Person
February 16, 2022	West Bench	29	In Person
February 22, 2022	Accessibility Taskforce Committee Presentation	6	Virtual
February 23, 2022	Housing + ZCR Conversation	39	Virtual
March 1, 2022	Southwest	40	In Person
March 2, 2022	Housing + ZCR: Housing Groups	35	Virtual
March 4, 2022	Idaho Walk Bike Alliance	17	Virtual
March 8, 2022	Climate Groups	25	Virtual
March 9, 2022	Foothills	35	In Person
March 9, 2022	COMPASS	15	Virtual
March 12, 2022	Community	14	Virtual
March 16, 2022	Northwest	45	In Person
March 22, 2022	Boise Young Professionals	14	In Person
March 29, 2022	Community	20	Virtual
March 30, 2022	BSU – Urban Studies	22	In Person
March 30, 2022	Neighborhood Leadership	48	In Person
March 31, 2022	Southeast / Airport	15	In Person
April 6, 2022	North End / East Ends	52	In Person
April 7, 2022	Urban Land Institute	21 / 15	In Person / Virtual

SUMMARY OF DRAFT MODULE 2 SURVEYS – COMMUNITY & TECHNICAL

Over 3,114 people responded to the community survey and 47 responded to the technical survey. Results from the community survey are outlined below. Comments and technical survey results are attached as an addendum.

WHO DID WE HEAR FROM?

The survey responses covered a wide range of Boise neighborhoods, from every planning area in the City of Boise and represented renters, homeowners in a variety of housing types.

PLANNING AREA	PERCENT OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS	*PERCENT OF CITY POPULATION
Airport	1.6%	1%
Barber Valley	1.8%	3%
Central Bench	16%	15%
Downtown	3%	3%
Foothills	3%	4%
North/East End	19%	10%
Northwest	14%	6%
Southwest	15%	13%
Southeast	14%	17%
West Bench	18%	28%

*Data Source: ESRI Population Estimates

HOME OCCUPANCY	SURVEY RESPONDENTS	*CITY POPULATION
Rent	16.5%	35%
Own	82.3%	65%
Other	1.2%	n/a

*Data Source: 2021 ESRI Population Estimates

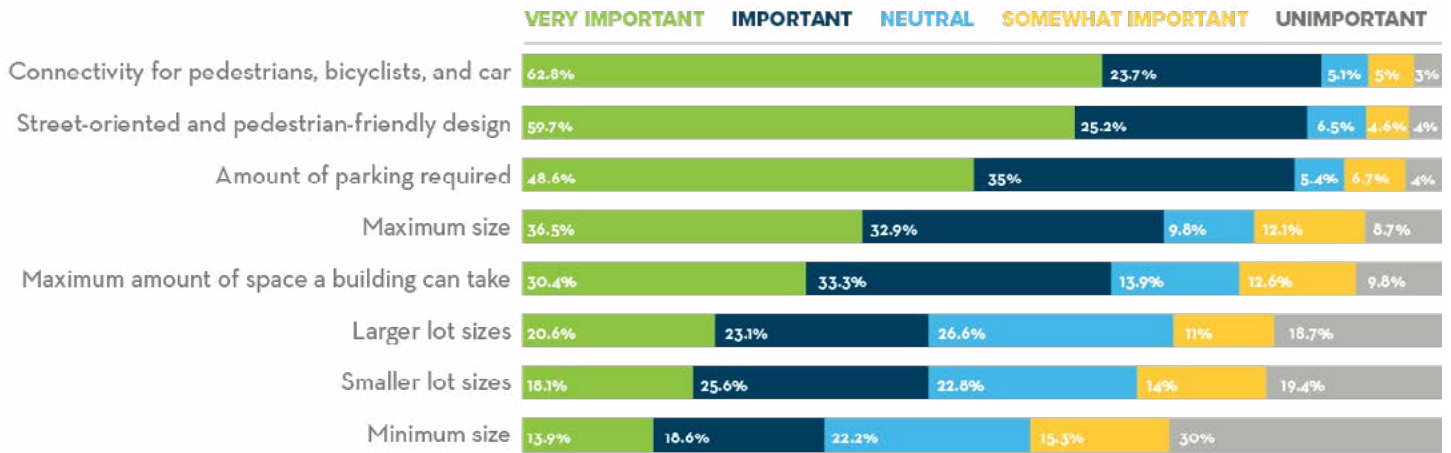


DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

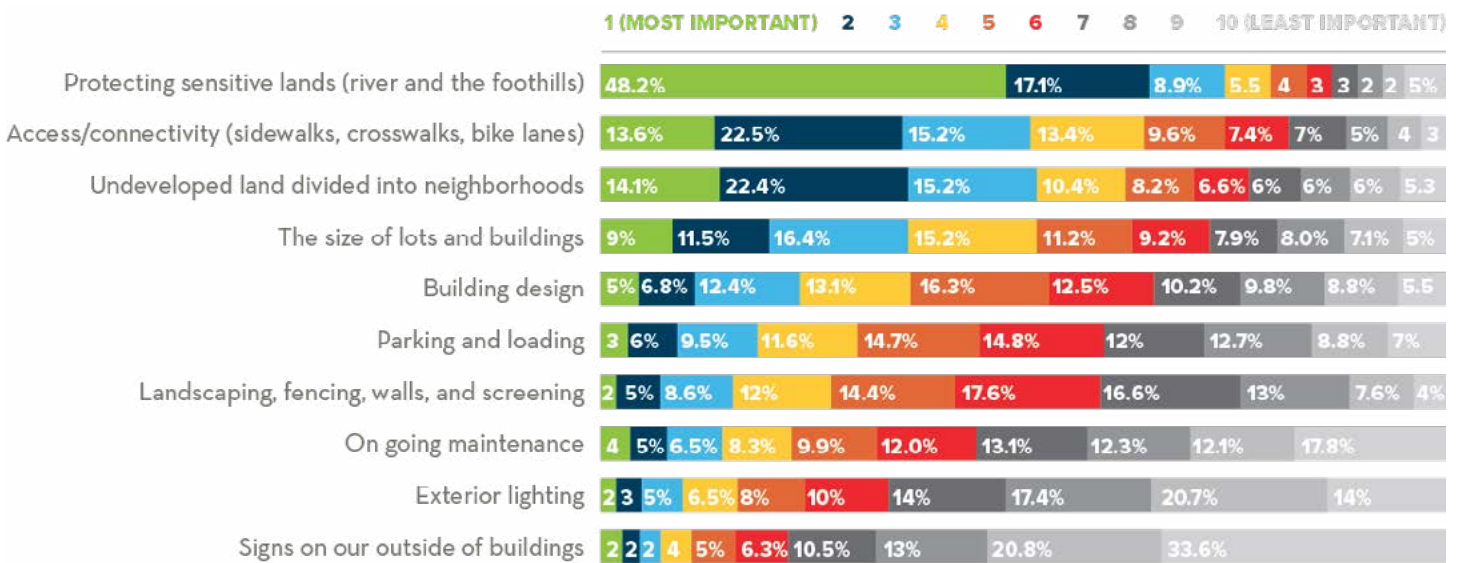
Module 2 includes the standards for how development look and feel. Each element of Module 2, whether sidewalk requirements or limits on how tall a building can be, seeks to use design to create new development that contributes to the vibrancy of the city.

The first question of the survey asked respondents to think broadly about what elements of design they perceive to have the greatest effect on creating exceptional places.

Overall, residents prioritized connectivity for pedestrians and bicyclists and not with street-oriented and friendly design with almost 60% of residents citing those standards as ‘very important’.



We then asked residents to rank development and design standards and their level of importance. Almost half of respondents want to prioritize protecting sensitive lands, such as the foothills and river, as well as indicating concern about how large areas of unprotected land will be divided into neighborhoods (14.1%).



In the existing zoning code, there is a residential density calculation that sets a maximum of units per acre for a single piece of property. In the survey, residents were asked if removing the density calculation to focus more on the design criteria, such as maximum height, parking, and setbacks, would help encourage creative housing design and various housing types. Over 62% of respondents thought that removing the density calculation would create more housing types.



As a follow up question, we then asked if this proposed changes would help encourage more affordable housing types and 43% said yes and 37% said no.



The Module 2 draft includes new ways to provide more predictability regarding compatibility between homes and more intense uses (like schools, hotels or other businesses) next to them. **55% of respondents indicated the the suggested changes will help protect existing neighborhoods and reduce potential conflicts between residential and non-residential land uses.**



Throughout outreach, parking was a topic of high interest. The draft proposes updating parking requirements to generally reduce the minimum number of *required* parking spaces. **Among survey respondents, 58% didn't think the proposed changes make sense for Boise.**



The draft also includes new standards to encourage smaller blocks and more frequent street and sidewalk connection points to encourage walking and bicycling as an alternative to automobile trips. **54% of respondents felt the proposed changes would encourage more walking and bicycling and reduce the number and length of automobile trips.**



The draft Module 2 proposes changing standards for landscaping with new requirements to: encourage xeriscaping (using organic mulches to reduce evaporation, discourage weed growth, and keep the soil cool); install drought-tolerant or adaptive sod/seed mix. Limit grass to 33% of the landscaped area; prohibit invasive plants; and limit the use of water features (fountains, waterfalls, and ponds). **Three-quarters of survey respondents reacted favorably to these proposed changes, indicating strong support for promoting environmental stewardship through environmentally friendly development practices.**



The draft zoning ordinance proposes some relatively simple standards to enhance the city's regulation of exterior lighting to incentivize energy efficiency and protect nighttime environments. **A solid majority of respondents agreed with the proposed changes.**

