



OKC Development Codes Update

Urban Medium LUTA Focus Groups

November 3, 2022 Belle Isle Library

(Speakers at this presentation included consultants hired by the City to write the code)

December 12, 2022 Virtual Zoom Meeting

Meeting Notes combined

In attendance: Nov. 3: Geoff Butler, Planning Director; Lisa Chronister, Assistant Planning Director; Marilyn Lamensdorf Allen, Program Planner and staff liaison to the Code Update; Katie Friddle, Principal Planner over Current Planning, 6 residents representing Wilde Oaks UCD; Las Vegas Neighborhood Association; JFK Neighborhood Association, and Montague-Sonador HOA (An Urban Low neighborhood).

In attendance: Dec. 12: Lisa Chronister, Assistant Planning Director; Marilyn Lamensdorf Allen, Program Planner and staff liaison to the Code Update; Katie Friddle, Principal Planner over Current Planning, 7 residents representing Helm Farm Neighborhood Association; Linwood Place UCD, Crestwood Neighborhood Association; a realtor and housing advocate.

Staff gave a presentation explaining the proposal for new residential zones in the area known as the “Urban Medium LUTA” (Land Use Typology Area) as assigned in the City’s Comprehensive Plan, plan**okc**. The presentation explained the concept for one new zone proposed to be called Urban Medium-Single Dwelling (UM-SD). The one zone would have three development choices, depending on the property’s location. The intention of the zone is “One Zone, Many Options.”

Staff explained that Urban Medium areas of the city are being prioritized for three reasons. 1) plan**okc** laid out a vision for the Urban Medium area of “medium” development intensity because it already has city services; new services don’t have to be added as they do when new neighborhoods are built at the edges of the city. However, the City’s current zoning districts do not allow the type of intensity envisioned

for the UM area. 2) The City has seen a proliferation of special zoning requests called Simplified Planned Unit Development (SPUD) to build the more-dense housing types envisioned in plan**okc**. The problem with SPUDs, however, is that each one is individually negotiated, and the outcome is unpredictable to adjoining residents and to the zoning applicants.

3) Development types of smaller lot single family, duplexes, quadplexes and garage apartments were built in the Urban Medium areas of the city during the 1920s to the 1940s. These dwellings still exist in the Urban Medium areas but many of the forms on the ground are not legal under the City's current zones. For those structures to be maintained, zones that allow their form are needed.

Staff and consultants have spent the past year listening to residents and builder/developers to determine what is needed to both increase housing in the core area of the City and to respect existing neighborhood character. Staff also has analyzed current conditions and examined SPUD zones that requested more density to determine what is needed to both build more units in the core and keep neighborhood character. The input process led the staff to some guiding principles for the new zone rules.

- Provide flexibility without negotiation
- Accommodate different housing types and promote housing affordability
- Protect neighborhood character and ensure compatibility with current neighborhood character form having distinct height, setbacks, lot coverage, street frontage and regular spacing of driveways.
- Support infill development
- Guide density to appropriate locations. Plan**okc** envisions a level of density for the UM LUTA that ranges from 10 to 40 dwelling units per acre. The zones should guide the range (ie. Where do single dwellings fit and where do multi-dwelling types fit?)
- Protect stormwater quality and reduce quantity
- Ensure predictability

Staff and consultants explained the concept for the new Urban Medium single-dwelling (UM-SD) zone which is based on the above principles. It is proposed to replace R-1 and R-2 current zones. The proposed UM-SD zone allows three patterns. The three types depend on whether the site is in the middle of a block, on a corner, or whether the lot could have access to an alley so that vehicles can park behind the buildings and not disrupt the sidewalks and walkability along the street. The three building types are allowed on streets identified in plan**okc** as "Neighborhood" Streets. The three forms are:

- 1) Standard Options (Pattern 1): Anywhere in an area that would be zoned "UM-SD" an owner may build two dwellings on a lot with either a primary home and a smaller "accessory" dwelling in the rear on a minimum lot size of 6,000 square feet and a

minimum lot width of 50 feet. The owner may also build an attached duplex and may split the duplex into two ownerships of 25 feet lot width or more. The “accessory” dwelling may not be split into a second separate lot. A single home is also allowed. This is proposed to be called “Pattern 1.”

- 2) Alley Options: (Pattern 2) On a lot that can be accessed via a constructed alley, the owner may build up to two buildings and four dwellings. Lots that have constructed alley access may be split for smaller single dwellings to 25-foot lot widths. Parking would be accessed from the alley and/or from one single drive allowed for every 50 feet of lot frontage (which means small lot homes would need to share a drive from the front). About one-third of existing residences in the Urban Medium LUTA are located on a platted alley, although most are not built. This is proposed to be termed “Pattern 2.”
- 3) Corner Options: (Pattern 3) On a corner lot, an owner may build up to two buildings and four dwellings. More intensity is proposed at corners due to their ability to provide a driveway on each street front and essentially split up the parking areas. This may have the form of one quadplex with parking in the rear, two duplexes, a single dwelling and accessory dwellings or small-lot single dwellings split into lots with 25-feet of frontage. This is proposed to be called “Pattern 3” and allows the most density in the UM-SD zone.

Consultants explained that the exact dimensional standards for the development types are still being explored and that specific measurement ideas are needed with more input and more focus groups. Dimensional standards, like percentage caps on building and lot coverage, may prevent increased density on some lots if they can’t meet the dimensional standards.

Staff explained that residential development intensity and “density” are expressed in terms of dwelling units per acre (du/acre). Currently, in the Urban Medium areas most lots only have one dwelling on them, although there are duplexes, triplexes, quadplexes and apartments. Staff explained that currently the Urban Medium zone has an overall density of 6 dwelling units per acre (6 du/acre), even including existing apartments. The concepts above would bring the Urban Medium density to about 13 dwelling units per acre (13 du/acre), within the Urban Medium plan **okc** vision but on the low end of that vision.

Staff and consultants also explained that higher density UM zones are being drafted that would increase housing in certain areas to up to the 40 dwelling units per acre envisioned in plan **okc**. These are being discussed for higher capacity streets and where regular transit (bus) and the new bus rapid transit will be available. These zones are proposed to be named UM-Multi-Dwelling (UM-MD) and UM-Mixed Use (UM-MX) and will be explained at future focus groups.

After the presentation and some questions and answers, the following points were made as feedback and discussion.

Comments related to rental products vs home ownership:

- Neighbors said they are in favor of density along the corridors, like N Classen Blvd. and where there are businesses to walk to
- For those who have invested in homes, they wouldn't want to see rental products like quadplexes right next door (Patterns 2 and 3); why bring duplexes, triplexes and quadplexes into single-family neighborhoods; people need ways to build wealth in ownership configurations, perhaps the patterns encourage too much rental and not enough opportunity for home ownership
- Staff explained that home ownership is allowed in all three patterns, and that Patterns 2 and 3 accomplish home ownership with the ability to split duplexes into smaller lots, and build detached small lot single family homes for more affordable products within a neighborhood. Multi-dwelling zones, which will be ready for presentation in the spring, will contain more small-lot single family in the form of cottage courts, single homes or duplexes that can be owned individually around shared drives and courtyards.
- Where there are large areas of empty home sites, we don't want to see that infill to all rental properties because it will bring down the value and stability of existing neighborhoods
- Accessory dwellings are fine because they can go in the back, they promote multi-generational living, and it's already being done
- Need to have housing types that encourage home ownership in UM-SD.
- Need to have at least fair distribution of rental products across the City of Oklahoma City
- In many neighborhoods in UM, a diversity of housing types exist because that was what was built prior to 1950s; and they are still there, that is the pattern of many UM neighborhoods, Study the patterns that are on the ground and determine rules, ie. If 50% of the block are duplexes, then more duplexes could be built; if 100% single-family, then should stay that way
- Perhaps if we had more density, the schools in the core would re-open
- This relegates all that development to the center around the communities that affect people of color the most. I just see our communities that have lots of vacancy and this drawing rental development to our district.
- Staff pointed out that the intent is to protect traditional core neighborhoods and to guide dense development to specific locations. Proposals are intended to incentivize redevelopment but not at the expense of existing character and incentivize keeping existing housing stock.
- Discussion about how HOA rules and Neighborhood Association rules would affect the standards being suggested. It was suggested that HOA rules can be litigated and maintained; Neighborhood Association rules are not as enforceable.
- Discussion about how new zones would affect PUD and SPUDs, previously negotiated zones? Staff explained that the new code will not override PUDs and SPUDs. They would remain, but a property owner could apply to re-zone the property to a new zone, just as they can apply to re-zone today. All re-zones are approved by the City Council.

- Discussion about LUTA boundaries, that the Urban Medium extends from NW 63rd to SW 51st and from I-44 to I-35, and whether UM goes too far or not far enough.
- The So8th report has not been released yet but throughout the study process participants recommended creating a process for neighborhood input as properties are developed. Neighbors don't want to lose the right to provide input. Want to have a say about what goes on in our neighborhood.
- Concerns that NE side has so many more vacant lots that it will get more of the infill/density.

Comments related to house form:

- Small-lot single family, duplexes and accessory dwelling units could work, depending on what they look like and if they are ownership and not rental. Design matters, including having a minimum pitch for roof forms and building materials that fit in.
- Homes need to be limited in square footage and height to stay affordable and to fit in with what is there
- Duplexes could only intermix if their form were similar to houses. Staff explained that currently you need 60-feet of lot frontage to split a duplex for ownership. Changing the code to allow for splits into 25-foot lots may allow for more homeownership of the duplex form. This ownership splitting is only for attached units in Pattern 1 so that it looks like a house.
- For good design of neighborhoods where house forms are mixed, near N May and Hefner Parkway (Quail Creek)
- The proposed patterns seem more pro-development than pro-neighborhood; if you can develop in multiple forms, taking away neighborhood input at Planning Commission and City Council. Right now we have the opportunity to object to development and now we don't, they have so many options. Where is the voice of the neighborhood? Staff pointed out that focus groups were being held now on these concepts and we wouldn't adopt concepts that people oppose.
- Better practices need to be observed during construction to prevent sedimentation from running down the street and into neighboring yards
- If there are HOA and plat rules like building lines, those should supersede zoning regulations. Neighborhood Association rules aren't enforceable, except where there is a zoning overlay like the UCDs.
- Are demolition requirements addressed in the plan, thinking of redoing neighborhoods. Is there a chance that you would see a vintage home on a large lot to increase the density? Discussion about demolition, review, incentives.

Comments related to alleys:

- Will the City have funds to help people move non-complying fences and sheds out of alleys if the ones that are platted are developed?

- Alleys cause people to park on the street
- Staff said that the concept of alleys is to have parking and access in the back and not interrupt the sidewalks and pedestrian experience along streets.

After the discussion, staff provided information about the code update timeline. Certain areas around the UM formed Urban Conservation Districts in the 1990s and early 2000s. Staff will be meeting with all the UCDs to determine how new zones would be incorporated into UCD overlays. The UCDs can remain, be collapsed into a neighborhood conservation overlay, or dissolved if the new code addresses UCD concerns.

Future neighborhood meetings will include more discussion about higher intensity mixed use and multi-dwelling UM zones (UM-MD) for the more major streets. A written draft of the proposed new zones will be released so that residents can comment on the zones and more focus groups will be held. Ultimately, the zones would have to be adopted by the Planning Commission and City Council which would probably not be before 2024. Once the regulations are adopted in word form by the City Council, another process would include mapping the zones, assigning new zones to every parcel. If Council adopts some zones before the entire new code is adopted, owners could file an application to re-zone to one of the new zones in the interim. Decisions to re-zone include public notice, and must be approved by City Council with recommendation from the Planning Commission