



## OKC Development Codes Update

### **Urban Conservation District Focus Group**

### **Linwood UCD and Mayfair Heights UCD**

**January 9, 2023 via Zoom**

Staff in attendance: Lisa Chronister, Assistant Planning Director; Marilyn Lamensdorf Allen, Program Planner and staff liaison to the Code Update; Katie Friddle, Principal Planner over Current Planning and Urban Design

Residents in attendance: Mark Beck; Travis and Anna Roach; Scott and Karen Dedmon; Bogie Ramirez, Micki Glover, Tony and Michelle Meazell

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 comprehensive plan called for integrating residential unit types and sizes; increasing walkability while ensuring that adjacent construction was compatible to mitigate any negative impacts of more compact development. The existing zoning code (Chapter 59 of the City’s Ordinances) does not allow easy integration of different housing types and 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 new zones for at least 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 and UM areas have access to modes of transportation other than vehicles. The existing UM walkable patterns can improve health outcomes for the City and provide various housing types for different stages of people’s lives. The City’s current zoning districts do not allow the type of intensity envisioned for the UM area in walkable formats. 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 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.

Staff explained that existing plat restrictions in Linwood Place and Mayfair Heights seem to allow only Pattern 1 (single dwellings, duplexes and accessory dwellings) and Pattern 3 (corners). However, staff added that they are working with the City's Legal Department to confirm enforcement of plat notes and zoning regulations.

The second part of the presentation centered around going over the Linwood and Mayfair Heights Urban Conservation District (UCD) overlay regulations. Staff and consultants are gathering information from all the UCDs about how to transfer the overlay regulations into the new code and update them if needed. Linwood regulations were adopted in 1981 and Mayfair Heights regulations in 2003. Since that time, some of the regulations were added in other parts of the code, making some of the regulations duplicative. Staff showed a table explaining the regulations, which ones are duplicated in other parts of the existing code, and which ones may carry over into the new code.

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

### **Comments related to current UCD regulations:**

- Neighbors are concerned that UCD regulations don't have enough teeth or need stronger language to be enforced, as evidenced by applications for Simplified Planned Unit Developments (SPUDs) that have overridden UCD regulations; omissions of the regulations when building permits are approved by the City, and lack of code enforcement of the regulations. "We don't want to have to fight to keep our neighborhood like it is."
- Neighbors are concerned that renovation in their UCD neighborhoods are not always compatible in terms of building materials, painting masonry, the style and number of stories matching the neighborhood. As homes continue to age in these neighborhoods, they feel they may not have sufficient protections to ensure neighborhood quality as homes are renovated or re-built.
- Neighbors are concerned that new construction is not required to save existing large trees. Tree preservation and/or tree for tree replacement is needed as

homes redevelop. Also, need more rules on types of trees to re-plant or not to plant (ie. Bradford Pears). Additionally, neighbors were concerned about the preservation of trees in general.

- Neighbors are concerned that more regulations are needed to prevent demolitions. (ie. “knock-down rules”)
- Neighbors agreed that enforcing the platted building line is one of the most important aspects of the UCD regulations. They did not object to the allowance of accessory dwellings as long as there are parking requirements for them.
- Neighbors agreed that they would not object to exploring a simplified overarching UCD for all traditional neighborhoods to make enforcement less complicated and more effective.