



OKC Development Codes Update

NE Coalition Focus Group

Via Zoom from the NE Coalition

February 9, 2023

Staff in attendance: Lisa Chronister, Assistant Planning Director; Marilyn Lamensdorf Allen, Program Planner and staff liaison to the Code Update

Residents in attendance: NE Coalition members on the Zoom call, about 17 members

Staff gave a presentation as invited guests of the NE Coalition. The presentation pointed out the current zoning of the NE Coalition Neighborhoods, which is mainly R-1 and R-2 residential, with a mix of other multi-residential, commercial and offices on the corridors of Lincoln Boulevard, NE 36th street, N MLK Avenue, NE 23rd, N Lottie, and NE 8th and NE 4th streets. Staff also explained that most of the NE Coalition neighborhoods were not platted with 20-foot alleys. A few 20-foot platted alleys exist in the JFK, Culbertsons, and Harrison-Walnut neighborhoods.

Staff then explained why a new zoning code is needed. Plan~~okc~~**okc**, the City's Comprehensive Plan, called for decreasing negative health impacts like obesity and poor air quality which can be worsened by the way neighborhoods are constructed, and by continuing to add new residents further outside the core of the city where driving is necessary to reach everyday needs, instead of walking or using transit. The comprehensive plan called for decreasing these poor outcomes by 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, does not focus on preserving trees and open space (environmental protection); and needs better standards to ensure adjacent commercial development is compatible with residential development.

The presentation explained the concept for one proposed zone 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 specified that Urban Medium areas of the city, where most of the NE Coalition neighborhoods are located, are being prioritized for new zones for at least three reasons. 1) **planokc** laid out a vision for the Urban Medium area of “medium” development intensity; unlike areas outside the core of the City, UM 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. UM areas also 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 zones 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 **planokc**. 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 could not be re-built under the City’s current zones.

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. **Planokc** 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-dwellings 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. It will also have lower height limits and building coverage restrictions so that structures remain "accessory" to the principal dwelling. 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." Again, Heritage Hills has no alleys, deleting the use of this option in the neighborhood.
- 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 it would be rolling out more proposed UM zones for multi-residential and mixed-use zones. These zones would be tailored to be located on larger streets and have buffering and building design that helped them to fit in when they are adjacent to the UM-SD zone. The UM zone in the comprehensive plan prescribed a range of 10 to 40 dwelling units per acre (as compared to Urban High and downtown zones which are up to 100 dwelling units per acre). The idea of the various UM zones is to determine where the "10 du/acre" goes and where the "40 du/acre" goes. That is why the UM-SD zone proposes no more than 4 units on a lot, on the lower end of the range.

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

Comments related to density:

- Do we know whether the sewer infrastructure and streets in these older neighborhoods could handle more density? Staff explained that it is working with

the utilities department on the code update to make sure issues about capacity are addressed.

- Are we looking at better ways to prevent demolition of structures in the non-historic preservation areas? We need to make it more difficult to tear down structures and there needs to be a place to go where people can have a discussion and ask questions.