



## OKC Development Codes Update

### **Miller/Crestwood Focus Group**

### **Miller HOA February Board meeting**

**February 23, 2023**

Staff in attendance: Kathryn Friddle, Principal Planner, Current Planning division manager and Oklahoma City Historic Preservation Officer and Marilyn Lamensdorf Allen, Program Planner and staff liaison to the Code Update

Residents in attendance: Miller HOA Board of Directors (5 members); Crestwood NA representative (1 member)

Staff gave a presentation related to the Code Update and specifically how the Urban Medium proposed new zones would affect the Miller and Crestwood Neighborhood Association areas. The presentation pointed out the current zoning of Crestwood and Miller, which is all R-2 residential, with a mix of commercial and office zoning on the corridors of N May Avenue and NW 23<sup>rd</sup> Street and Industrial zoning along NW 10<sup>th</sup> Street. Staff also explained that few alleys were platted in the original Miller and Crestwood plats. The few alleys that were platted along N Villa and N May Avenue, were closed by City Council many decades ago, but never vacated at District Court. The alleys could only be re-instated with at least 50 percent of the owners' permission and a vote by City Council.

The presentation explained why a new zoning code is needed. Plan**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 also called for infill development to decrease costs to the city for additional roads, utilities and other services created when growth extends to its edges. 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 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.

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 standard lot, on the lower end of the range.

Staff explained that it would be rolling out more proposed UM zones for multi-residential and mixed-use zones this spring. These zones would be tailored to be located on larger streets like N May Avenue, NW 23<sup>rd</sup> and NW 16<sup>th</sup> and have buffering and building design that helped them to fit in when they are adjacent to the UM-SD zone. The more intense

zones are intended to be placed on the larger streets where there are bus stops, traffic signals and wider right of ways that can accommodate more development.

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

### **Comments related to UM Zones:**

- It is difficult to understand how increased density fits into an established neighborhood. We don't want an unintended consequence of investors buying up everything at the cost of everything else. There needs to be a way to balance the amount of owners and renters. If there are clear guidelines about what can be built, lot coverage, about parking, about trash (dumpsters), then increasing density some makes sense. The development needs to fit with the neighborhood.
- Garage apartments, duplexes, triplexes, quadplexes, apartments and some homesharing permits are already located in the Miller area.
- The anchors of a community are sidewalks, biking, and safe open spaces, and those anchors needs to be considered. Sidewalks on Villa need to come to down to NW 10<sup>th</sup>, not stop at NW 16<sup>th</sup> like the current plan, especially if density is increased. Also, lighting is needed.
- NW 16<sup>th</sup> is fairly narrow and there may not be a lot of room for a lot more density there.
- Residents have discussed a Save May program, that would help revitalize the businesses on N May Avenue, including NW 10<sup>th</sup> and May which is a gateway to downtown from the airport and the Fairgrounds, which bring a lot of visitors to this area of Oklahoma City.
- Several years ago, there was a group called the Trolley Track Coalition that was made up of representatives from several of the surrounding neighborhoods and they assisted with vocalizing desires of the surrounding neighborhoods and learned from each other. For example, the post office wanted to put on-street mailboxes around the area and the Trolley Track Coalition prevented the expansion of that idea. We need a similar Coalition who can get together to discuss zoning and development cases to preserve continuity of the neighborhoods. A second layer of design review makes sense when the development would increase intensity; ie. meeting with the neighborhoods when you are going to a more intense development type.
- In Crestwood, there is a corner property owner that has a garage apartment that fits in nicely with the neighborhood, with drives on the side and materials that match the main house.
- Residents mentioned other properties that have "overbuilt" – too many structures in backyards, nowhere for the cars, etc., and issues with front yards being paved. Residents mentioned several recently constructed properties that either "got it right" or that they felt were not consistent with the neighborhood.