



MEMORANDUM

DATE: June 10, 2021

TO: Mayor Brian Treece
Members of City Council

FROM: Sara Loe, Chairman Planning and Zoning Commission

RE: Unified Development Code Revisions - Request for Authorization

The Commission and staff have been actively working on text changes to the UDC since early-2020. Submitted and upcoming text changes have been prepared to provide added clarity to code sections not performing/producing intended results and to correct technical errors. A first round of code revisions was approved in March and a second round will be presented in July.

The Commission wants to maintain momentum and foresees future amendments providing additional clarity and addressing known or identified public concerns with the Code. These “maintenance” amendments are anticipated to be submitted on a rolling six-month cycle that will allow staff to prepare research, present changes to the Commission, and perform public outreach (as needed) prior to required public hearings.

While desiring to maintain momentum on “maintenance” revisions, the Commission has also identified an emerging issue it believes is timely to address - housing density and lot area coverage. An assessment of the UDC relating to these topics has identified a gap in providing sufficient guidance on these matters. This gap, at times, requires residential development proposals to be submitted utilizing PD zoning when it may be unnecessary and often can inhibit opportunities to offer greater diversity in housing types constructed.

This issue has become more apparent recently as both the Commission and Council have had to evaluate challenging residential development proposals while attempting to balancing the public’s concern regarding their appropriateness. The Commission believes providing clarity and guidance on when and under what circumstances alternative lot sizes and densities could or should be considered may alleviate these current concerns.

Furthermore, guidance and evaluation criteria would permit applicants options to address community-wide housing issues while also acknowledging existing development patterns. Addressing this issue would also potentially decrease the necessity of PD zoning to achieve alternative housing forms. And finally, addressing this issue would more globally fulfill the concept

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 701 E. Broadway, P.O. Box 6015
Columbia, Missouri 65205

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Our vision: Columbia is the best place for everyone to live, work, learn and play.

of creating “livable and sustainable neighborhoods” that allow greater levels of housing diversity as recommended by the City’s comprehensive plan.

Prior to further engaging in research and developing specific regulatory guidance, the Commission desires to receive Council direction that this is a UDC amendment that should be pursued. If direction is received, the Commission anticipates integrating the topic into its amendment rotation and would likely have a working draft of new regulations within the next 6 months, if not, sooner.

For the purposes of context, the Commission and staff will be engaged in the following topics over the next six months:

1. 12-18 routine UDC “maintenance” text changes
2. Comprehensive revision/redevelopment of regulatory standards addressing short-term rentals
3. Preparatory activities associated with the full Comprehensive Plan update to begin in 2022.

The Planning and Zoning Commission will await the Council’s direction prior to pursuing further amendments to the UDC beyond that of routine “maintenance”. Should you have additional needs please do not hesitate to let me know.