

## *Staff Opening Remarks to Land Use and Planning Committee, 12-11-24*

Staff heard several key themes through the public comment and questions from council at the Public Hearing on Monday that we would like to elevate initially and offer some additional perspective.

The themes center around the following things:

- Questioning that the varied degrees of place types are needed and where they are located. This includes uncertainty about the degree of aspiration and prescriptiveness in the Plan.
- Weighing the merits of considering compatibility when planning for new residential development. and
- Addressing the approach to parking that is described in the Plan.

To start with - **the value of having a variety of place types and the consideration of their general locations:**

The place type map is intended to be the set up for zone mapping and regulation amendments. The potential new capacity for development from the place type analysis and subsequent zoning map changes need to be grounded in the assurance that new potential development can be served by the infrastructure and has minimal constraints to achieving that development. This is actually an expectation of the state law, and a mitigating factor in the level of aspiration that the Plan can include.

Aspirational (go bold) aspects of place type potential needs to be tempered with a well-grounded understanding of the readiness for the area to absorb the growth, making the capacity analysis achievable.

This is also why the place types relate to the existing block patterns, working with concepts like whether the area has a set pattern of compact grid which is easier to connect to, walk within, and disperse or more fragmented block patterns.

The Place Type designation for each neighborhood accounts for barriers or constraints. These factored into the degree of change that a specific neighborhood can support. Constraints include environmental factors such as placement in a Floodplain, infrastructure that was built in more suburban or rural patterns, lacking alleyways, adjacency to sensitive lands, wildlife corridors, or areas prone to wildfire. When these constraints or barriers are present, the degree of change is impacted.

To Recap: place types describe geographic areas with unique combinations of land uses, built form, mobility, intensity, and constraints. So unique combinations yield distinctions in place types. Then we factored in guidance from the equity report and tested out the distinctions through the engagement process.

However, it should be noted that every neighborhood in the Plan area is experiencing a meaningful degree of change. Even in our most constrained areas, we are still seeing significant increases in allowable homes that will help us achieve our housing goals.

In summary, we want to make the point that just taking the step of incorporating this place type approach into this Land Use Plan is a big one and sets us up for future conversations on growth and development based on evaluating for aspirational degrees of change related to future land use, form and mobility options, and informed by environmental and infrastructure constraints. Beyond just establishing this new framework, we also see the City's acknowledgement of the distinctions in what development patterns currently exist throughout the City, and the recognition that those create different contexts for what levels and types of growth we should realistically aspire to. In essence, the Place Type approach looks to analyze the past, in order to understand the present, so that we can plan for the future. The differences between where today has developed in an urban or more limited urban pattern is a significant basis of consideration that we have identified and that should inform the future code update.

**To address the comments related to compatibility:**

The plan describes Compatible Development as buildings that are added to an existing neighborhood that fit within the established context in terms of building size, shape, and location, the relationship between the building and the street, and how people and cars access the property.

The benefits of this approach include:

- Supports missing-middle housing (duplexes, triplexes, etc.) scaled to match single-family homes.
- Speaks to what is there today and what we envision in the future
- Focuses on strategic, compact growth near services and multimodal transportation options.
- Uses form-based regulations for predictable and cohesive outcomes.
- Balances development intensity with neighborhood stability.
- Preserves neighborhood identity while expanding housing and mixed-use opportunities.

A central component of the Plan is to pair raising allowable development densities with compatibility related to community and built form within each relative Place Type.

For the past 1 ½ years, through interaction with the community, the audit of our code, realization through the equity in land use report, and relating to our values around housing, equity, climate, and connectivity, we have been shaping the foundational elements that help to inform the plan and plan actions. A key way to address the needs and the values is through compatibility and the connection to form.

The concept of compatibility is especially directed towards our residential places, our neighborhoods, and where we have identified that there are significant barriers to seeing new infill residential development, which negatively affects the City's overall housing capacity.

Compatibility also ties back to our equity and land use report. Acknowledges that our current code includes rules that inadvertently support larger homes on larger lots, whereas we would like to

support smaller and more affordable. A key route to address this is to bring the missing middle concept back into our codes with the goal of providing more housing that is at a neighborhood scale. This Report developed 6 key principles, one of which is to Focus regulations more on the form of buildings, less on density.

The compatibility concept, which was further described in the Our Missoula Code Diagnostic and pointed to specifically as one of the 4 Key Findings in that material, recognizes that compatible infill can take many forms and provides us a way to understand how we can find opportunities and create space for allowing missing middle housing into our existing neighborhoods. It also recognizes that we already have many examples of the diverse housing types that this Plan supports already in existence in many of the neighborhoods that currently prohibit that type of development. In other words, compatibility provides a basis for allowing for a higher diversity of housing types, especially in what are currently predominantly single-family neighborhoods, that is within a palatable degree of change for us as a community.

Compatibility does not equate to developing the same thing as what is exactly next door. Rather it applies across an entire neighborhood, or place type or district. The range of possibilities when you look more broadly across a neighborhood is eye opening and takes into consideration, how development has occurred over time and includes recognizing the much loved but previously non-conforming mix of building types in the neighborhood. Now, did we get the range of the potential to help represent the compatibility right? We think so, but that is also up to you to decide.

Ultimately the menu of items and scale bar range of possibilities is illustrative. When we move into the next phase - code reform work we will develop the specific rules that will be responsive to the particular neighborhood's context.

As it is used, compatibility represents a range of possibilities that is shown through the use of scale bars for each place type. The range is suggested and will be finetuned while working on the zoning code. By the time we have an updated zoning code, we should have clear and distinct requirements for the various zoning districts, and very little should be left to guidance, ambiguity and the need for various iterations of a project that is guessing at the intent. We also intend to develop streamlined processes, so experiences that people have had in the past related to complying with design guidelines shouldn't carry over into the outcome of review for new projects using clear and straight forward form-based regulations.

When we talk about an emphasis on form, we do not equate that to developing a form-based code. Form based codes are a type of zoning regulation that focuses on the physical design and appearance of buildings and public spaces, through reliance on a lot of graphics and prioritizing the overall "form" and considering design features that elevate the form of a development rather than strictly separating land uses like residential, commercial, and industrial zones. There may be more variation in describing the uses, which is how the Sx<sup>w</sup>tpqyen Form Based Code is developed. Our intent is to develop a highly graphic code that is matched with text to describe the intent and zoning rules.

It's helpful to also differentiate between architectural design and community form. Design refers to the practice of designing individual structures, with a focus on creating interior and exterior spaces

that meet a specific person/family/business's needs, while community form is a broader concept that considers a building's relationship to the environment around it. It involves a more comprehensive approach aimed at creating cohesive cities, towns, and neighborhoods. Design also speaks to style and articulation which is different than a focus on form elements.

**Finally, to address our approach to parking concepts in the plan:**

There were several key policy issues that were the focus of the "Future Growth Scenarios" open houses earlier this year. The scenarios were used to 'test' tradeoffs related to some of our more controversial aspects of development, including minimum parking requirements.

Based on the community input that was received and related to the other policy issues that were explored, there was less consensus on minimum parking requirements than on the housing-related questions. and neighborhood commercial uses. The next two most popular options were middle ground choices between complete elimination of parking requirements and the most reductions. In total, there was clear support, with over 80% of respondents indicating support for some degree of lowering existing minimum parking requirements.

This input was brought into the land use plan's preferred scenario and based on both the technical analysis conducted for this project and the public sentiment expressed in the open house events, it was determined that elimination of parking requirements citywide should not be recommended at this time and a more nuanced approach was needed.

Some additional reasons why a more nuanced approach to parking regulation is recommended include the following:

- Many areas of Missoula lack access to transit or levels of service that would make it practical or feasible for many households to own no or fewer vehicles.
- As noted by some public comment, eliminating minimums detracts from the City's capacity to offering incentives for encouraging developments to meet certain city goals.
- The City has already developed a transportation options action plan, which is incorporated into policy language in the Plan. The approach to parking that is described in the Land Use Strategy of the Plan is meant to work in combination with consideration of potential implementation aspects of the transportation options plan.

In summary, the Land Use Plan takes the step of indicating and acknowledging that decisions made about parking have impacts on other city goals and policies and directs the City to consider and manage for those, as new parking requirements are developed and calibrated with the new UDC.