Host Your Own
Unified Development Code (UDC) Chat

BOZEMANMT

HOUSING: affordability, supply, variety and choice

Introduction

The Unified Development Code (UDC) sets the rules around what kinds of development can occur in which areas of town, and what it all looks like. This includes things like where businesses are located, how tall buildings can be, what types of residences (single-household, apartments, duplexes, townhomes, etc.) can be built in which areas, and so much more.

This toolkit will help guide you and your group through a discussion on this large code document by focusing your conversation on popular topic areas and providing key questions you can all discuss and provide input on. **This toolkit is focused on housing.** That said, feel free to discuss topics that may not be listed here – we'll take all input.

Your input will be used along with everyone else's to help inform us of changes that can be made to the code. If you have participated at all in this project over the past 2 years, you'll have at least some basic background on this project, but don't worry if this is your first time participating. These are informal conversations, and you likely have thoughts on the existing buildings you see around town and what you want to see more or less of. That is the most important part.

Thanks for participating and sharing your thoughts on how Bozeman is developing. We appreciate your voice and look forward to all you have to share!

Planning Your Event

The first step you need to take before hosting a chat involves event logistics. See below for what we recommend.

Save the Date: Choose a date in April to have your chat. We recommend at least a 1- to 2-hour event. You can have it at any location/with any format that you like – maybe it's with your church group, over brunch, in your home, or in a meeting room with roundtables. You can decide what feels most comfortable to you.

Invite Your Guests: This can be anyone you choose – friends, family, coworkers, neighbors, your book club – whoever you think would be interested in the conversation. Consider asking those you invite to bring their spouses, friends, and anyone else to broaden the group even further. Once you've determined the guest list, make sure your invite includes the following:

- **What:** a short description of the UDC and the purpose of the conversation. Example:
    - *I'm hosting a Unified Development Code (UDC) Chat and would love you to join! During this conversation, we'll talk about how Bozeman is developing. We'll have the chance to share these thoughts with the City as they look to update and improve the code, which could change what ends up getting built around us. I think you have an important perspective on this so please join me if you can!*
- **When:** Date and Time
- **Where:** Physical location or link to virtual meeting room
- **Why:** Visit engage.bozeman.net/udc if you want to learn more about this project.

Event Size: A group of 5-10 people is recommended to ensure everyone has a chance to speak and feel heard. If you want to go larger, consider breaking out into smaller groups/roundtables.

Register the Event: This step is critical! Let us know that you're having an event so we can follow up with reminders and make sure we're gathering your input. It's a short form. Visit: https://engage.bozeman.net/udc/surveys/chatregistration.

Setting Up the Chat

1. Welcome and thank everyone for attending.
2. Ask for quick introductions if the group is unfamiliar with each other.
3. Share the ground rules for the conversation, including:
   a. *Allow everyone to finish speaking – don't interrupt.*
   b. *Be respectful of differing opinions – there is no right or wrong way to think about these topics.*
   c. *Share it anyway – you don't have to know how to fix issues you identify. It's enough to identify them.*
4. Ask everyone to agree to the ground rules.
5. Take notes as the host or assign a notetaker. This is a critical step in ensuring feedback gets captured. The notetaker should act as a researcher, accurately capturing what ideas, insights, and reflections get shared.
6. Present the topic areas and guide conversation around them. As a facilitator, your role is important in helping people feel comfortable to share their opinions. Note the following tips for facilitation:
   a. **Address Behavior**: If people aren't being respectful of the ground rules, don't hesitate to remind them.
   b. **Encourage:** You may need to bring out certain voices if they aren't saying a lot. For example, you can say, "Thanks for sharing that perspective. Tom, what do you think about that?"
   c. **Keep Time:** If there seems to be a lull in conversation, feel free to move people on to the next topic as needed. You can also allow silence if people seem to be thinking about a question. Be mindful of when the event needs to wrap up (For example: "We only have 5 more minutes left, so let's hear from two more people.").
   d. **Summarize:** Especially towards the end, be sure to synthesize what you heard into some main points. You can say, "Before we end, I'd like to summarize what I heard in this conversation. A lot of people feel… Does that sound fair?"
   e. **Keep It Open-Ended:** As you facilitate, focus on drawing out information from others. For example, it's better to say, "What thoughts do you all have about tall buildings around town?" rather than "I think the City should avoid building tall buildings. Do you agree?" The first question invites discussion that may lead to multiple nuanced opinions; the second can stifle conversation into a yes or a no. As a facilitator, you can and should share your own thoughts, but avoid doing it as part of a lead-up to discussion.

Topic Area

Through our outreach to the public, we have found that some topics are consistently identified as important as people think about the code and development in Bozeman. We have created a conversation starter kit for each of these topics. You are welcome to host a conversation on more than one topic. There may be multiple – you can focus on one, a few, or all, depending on how much time you have and how robust the discussion is.

Housing – affordability, supply, variety, and choice

Primary related sections for reference:

- *Existing regulations* 38.310 Permitted Uses, 38.320 Form and Intensity standards; 38.360 Supplemental Use [Accessory dwellings, group living, apartment limited]; 38.380 Affordable Housing; 38.430 Planned Development Zone; 38.700 Definitions

  October 2024 draft text: 38.210 Residential Districts; 38.300 Allowed Uses; 38.340 Affordable Housing (outdated); 38.250.010 Planned Development Zone; 38.800 Definitions (Degree of modification existing to proposed: Districts substantial, Uses moderate but subject to further change, Affordable Housing use newly adopted February 2025 text, PDZ no change, Definitions small)

- Related facility plans: 2020 Community Housing Action Plan, Bozeman Community Plan 2020, 2019 Housing Needs Assessment, 2024-2029 Consolidated Housing Plan
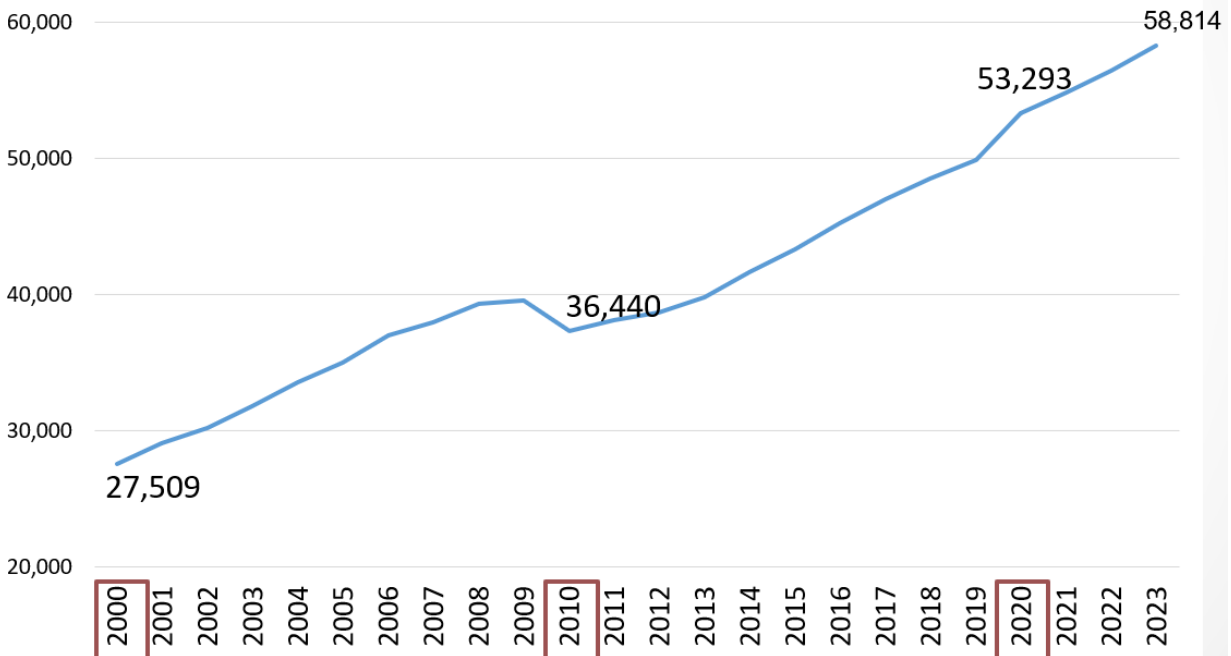
Graphics in this conversation kit are from workshops held in March on this same topic.

Bozeman has a wide diversity of housing types. These help to meet the ever-changing needs and preferences of our residents. Development trends and personal preferences over time have influenced where different types of homes and architectural styles are found. Many areas have mixes of housing types and styles, as shown in these Bozeman examples:

Existing Bozeman HOUSING
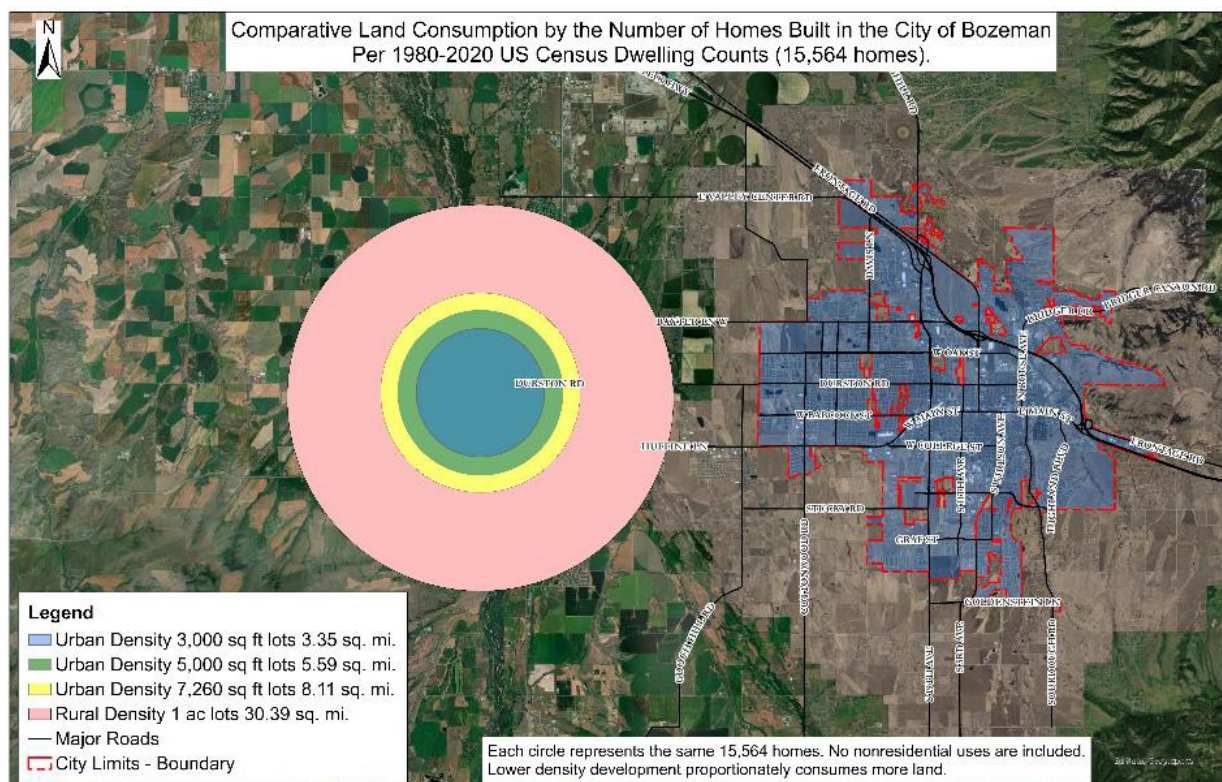

Bozeman Population Growth 2000-2023

Bozeman has grown in both people and area for a long time. On average, 2,500-2,700 new people move to Bozeman per year. This represents approximately 1,000 new homes needed per year to accommodate the growth. The choices of development standards affect how much land is used, how the community is experienced, and housing and job availability for existing and future community members.

The UDC does not set standards or processes for annexing new land. It does set standards for constructing new homes and businesses. All city regulations must be developed and implemented within the legal structure set by state law. State laws for land development regulations were substantially changed in the last few years.

On average, a home in Bozeman has 2.2 residents (per US Census). A mix of housing types and sizes are needed in the community to meet different needs. The state, in 2023, modified the City's zoning authority to require a broader range of housing in all residential districts and modified other standards to encourage construction of more housing. Updated authorized uses, including housing, are available in the Oct 2024 code draft in Section 38.310; available through engage.bozeman.net\udc.

Bozeman has long encouraged a variety of home types to meet the various needs of our community members. Additional data on housing needs, the City's Housing Action Plan, and ongoing affordable housing projects is available through the Community Housing webpage.

Comparative Land Consumption by the Number of Homes Built in the City of Bozeman Per 1980-2020 US Census Dwelling Counts (15,564 homes).

Legend
- Urban Density 3,000 sq ft lots 3.35 sq. mi.
- Urban Density 5,000 sq ft lots 5.59 sq. mi.
- Urban Density 7,260 sq ft lots 8.11 sq. mi.
- Rural Density 1 ac lots 30.39 sq. mi.
- Major Roads
- City Limits - Boundary

Each circle represents the same 15,564 homes. No nonresidential uses are included. Lower density development proportionately consumes more land.

Primary drivers of housing costs are labor, lending, lumber (materials), and land. The City completed an update to affordable housing incentives in February 2025, as a separate code update project in February as Ordinance 2025-001. Those amendments are in effect now and will be merged into a future version of the overall UDC text but are not currently shown in the October 2024 version of the UDC that is available on Engage Bozeman. The City must use *incentives* to support fixed cost housing as the state prohibits the City from requiring fixed cost housing with development.

Part of recent changes in state law is to require the City to show that its land use regulations are taking certain actions in support of creating more housing. In the December open houses, people had an opportunity to choose which alternatives they

preferred. A total of 314 responses were provided. The list of preferred options ranked most preferred at the top to least preferred at the bottom follows.

Dec 2024 Open House Housing Alternatives Responses

(m) allow multi-unit dwellings or mixed-use development as a permitted use on all lots where office, retail, or commercial are primary permitted uses; or

(b) zone for higher density housing near transit stations, places of employment, higher education facilities, and other appropriate population centers, as determined by the local government;

(e) allow, as a permitted use, for at least one internal or detached accessory dwelling unit on a lot with a single-unit dwelling occupied as a primary residence;

(j) provide for zoning that specifically allows or encourages the development of tiny houses, as defined in Appendix Q of the International Residential Code as it was printed on January 1, 2023;

(a) allow, as a permitted use, for at least a duplex where a single-unit dwelling is permitted;

(h) eliminate minimum lot sizes or reduce the existing minimum lot size required by at least 25%;

(g) allow, as a permitted use, a triplex or fourplex where a single-unit dwelling is permitted;

(k) eliminate setback requirements or reduce existing setback requirements by at least 25%;

(n) allow multi-unit dwellings as a permitted use on all lots where triplexes or fourplexes are permitted uses.

(d) eliminate impact fees for accessory dwelling units or developments that include multi-unit dwellings or reduce the fees by at least 25%;

(f) allow for single-room occupancy developments;

(l) increase building height limits for dwelling units by at least 25%;

(c) eliminate or reduce off-street parking requirements to require no more than one parking space per dwelling unit;

(i) eliminate aesthetic, material, shape, bulk, size, floor area, and other massing requirements for multi-unit dwellings (5+ homes in one building) or mixed-use developments or remove at least half of those requirements;

Questions for discussion:

1) What is your greatest concern regarding housing in Bozeman?

2) How do you think this concern could best be addressed in the UDC?

3) In Phase 1 outreach, we heard that higher density was preferred near places of employment, schools, transit, and main roads. What does this mean to you? (i.e. types of uses, heights, how close is 'near', etc.)

4) If the number of homes on your block were to increase, would you rather see that happen as taller, narrow buildings or shorter, larger footprint buildings?

5) Are you more concerned about the number of dwellings in a building, or how it looks?

6) If you said "how it looks," are you more concerned about height, bulk, or design and why?

7) What characteristics of housing make it likely for different types of housing to fit well together in your view?

8) What characteristics of a building make it feel "too tall" versus acceptable?

Wrapping Up

When your chat is over, be sure as the host or notetaker to [complete our Post-Chat Survey](#) so we can learn more about what was discussed during your event. This is where you will directly upload your notes. You must submit this survey by **April 30, 2025**, so we may include your feedback in our analysis of code changes.

Questions?

If you have any questions about this toolkit, the post-event survey, or how to run an event like this, don't hesitate to reach out to Emily Kiely below.

Emily Kiely, Community Engagement Coordinator

Office: 406-582-2274 | Cell: 406-595-6585

ekiely@Bozeman.net.

For more information on the UDC project and to keep up to date on how this project moves forward, please visit engage.bozeman.net/udc.