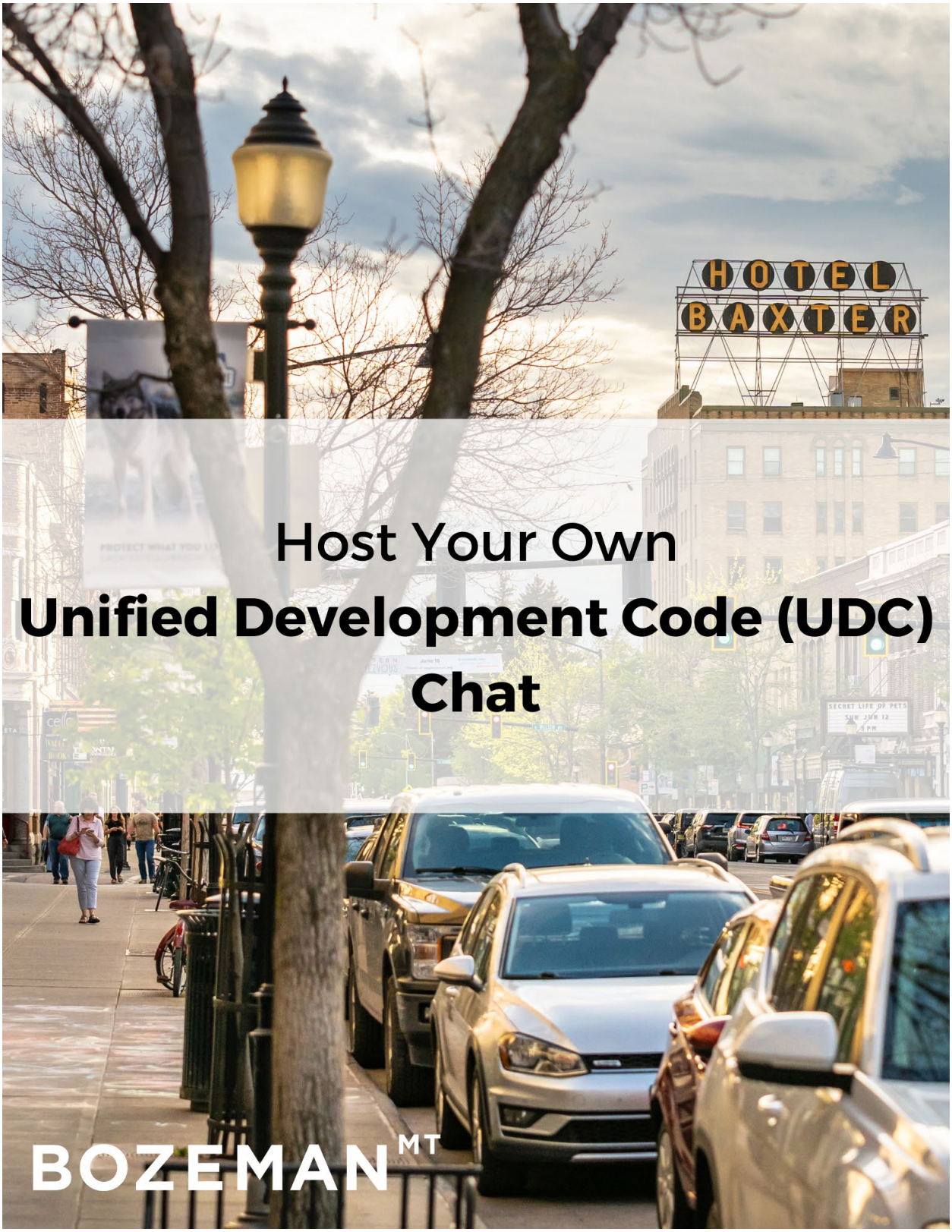

Host Your Own
Unified Development Code (UDC) Chat

BOZEMAN MT

Environment: parks, wetlands, urban forest, water, sustainability

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 focuses on Environment.** 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 how the development you see around town affect our natural resources 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: Please 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.

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Topic: Environment

Each sub-topic listed here includes separate background information and questions below.

- Water
- Sustainability
- Open space, natural areas, parks, urban forest
- Wetlands

Topic: Water

- Primary related sections of existing code and current draft code for reference:

  Existing regulations: 38.410.130 Water adequacy; 38.410.050&060 Utilities and Easements; 38.550 Landscaping; 38.600 Floodplains;

  October 2024 draft text: 38.410.110 Water adequacy; 38.410.050&060 Utilities and Easements; 38.540 Landscaping; 38.600 Floodplains (Degree of modification existing to proposed: small.

- Related facility plans: 2023 Water Conservation and Efficiency Plan, 2013 Integrated Water Resources Plan (IWRP update currently underway), 2025 Stormwater Master Plan; 2017 Water Facility Plan; 2024 Wastewater Collection Facilities Plan.

Water and water related infrastructure are essential elements of Bozeman's long-standing land development regulations. The City has adopted several long-range plans to evaluate needs and identify necessary improvements to keep the systems working well.

Capital construction for the City is primarily managed through the City's capital improvement program which is updated every year. Most infrastructure to service new development is funded by that new development and installed before building permits are approved. Development applications must show that they can meet established standards and be functional before being approved. The City's team of professional engineers carefully review all proposals and monitor their completion.

City plans, processes, and standards require mitigation of the impacts of new development on the water and wastewater systems.

Questions for discussion:

1) What is your greatest concern regarding water as it applies to the UDC?
2) How do you think this concern could best be addressed in the UDC?
3) How do you see any financial costs related to this implementation as being met?

(see below for additional background information)

Proactive Growth Planning: Water Adequacy Policy

- Policy went into effect in 1980's.
- Require that projected water demand of new development be offset.
- Water Supply & Optimization Tool allows the City to proactively manage its water supplies. The tool tracks:
    - Current demands
    - Projected demands associated with new and future development projects
    - Water supply

Water Conservation Policies

- Water conservation-based rate structure
- Permanent mandatory outdoor watering restrictions
- Drought Management Plan
- Water efficient landscape ordinance
- Water Conservation and Efficiency Plan

Topic: Open space, natural areas, parks, urban forest

- Primary related sections of existing code and current draft code for reference:

  Existing regulations: 38.420 Park and Recreation Requirements, 38.550 Landscaping; 38.410.100 Watercourse setbacks

  October 2024 draft text: 38.420 Park and Recreation Requirements, 38.540 Landscaping; 38.620 Watercourse setbacks (Degree of modification existing to proposed: small, watercourse is relocated to Article 6)

- Related facility plans: 2024 Parks, Recreation, and Active Transportation Plan, 2016 Urban Forest Management Plan.

The Department of Parks, Recreation, Forestry & Cemetery is responsible for the management of Bozeman's parks and public urban forest. The Forestry division implements the 2016 Urban Forestry Master Plan which is expected to begin an update next fiscal year. The Parks and Recreation functions are supported and given policy guidance by the 2024 Parks, Recreation, and Active Transportation Plan.

Montana law requires new development to mitigate impacts on park resources. The Parks and Forestry divisions participate in review of new development to ensure that proposed dedication of new parks or other mitigation proposals meet adopted standards, are consistent with adopted plans, and will be a solid community asset for many decades to come.

Both divisions have their own operational standards outside of the UDC that go into the fine details. The UDC does not set processes or standards for reservations, maintenance, or other operations matters.

Private open spaces on a particular site, private commonly owned areas such as landscaped areas in a condominium development, or open space owned by a property owners association are not regulated or managed by the City's Park or Forestry divisions.

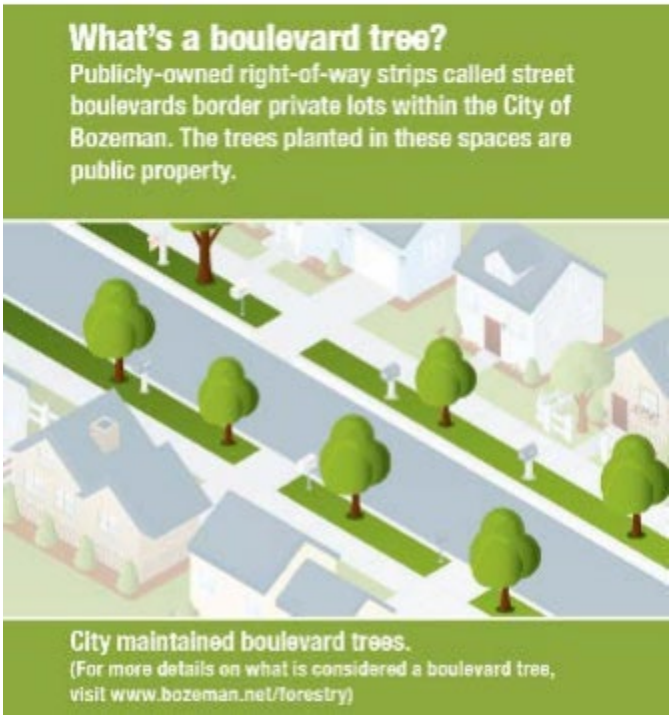
Questions for discussion:

1) What is your greatest concern regarding open space, natural areas, parks, urban forest as it applies to the UDC?
2) How do you think this concern could best be addressed in the UDC?

(see below for additional background information)

Forestry Div. Overview

TREE CITY USA®
Arbor Day Foundation



- Responsible for all Park & Blvd Trees
  - Over 27,000 Trees
  - Interactive Tree Inventory Map
- 5 Arborists on staff
  - Planting, Pruning, Removals, Stump Grinding, Emergency Storm Response
- Urban Forest Management Plan
  - Comprehensive view, city-wide
  - Due for an update in 2026
- Branch Out Bozeman
  - Volunteer initiative with Gallatin Watershed Council
  - Develop Tree Canopy Mapping & Analysis

Parks & Trails Division Overview

- Responsible for all Public Parks, Trails, and associated Planning and Development
    - 900 Acres of Parkland = 81 Parks
        - 17.8 / 1000 residents
        - 10.6 / 1000 ntnl. avg.
        - 118 Miles of Trail / Pathway
            - Ntnl. Avg. = 16
- 29 Park Workers on staff
    - 20 STW
    - 5 Seasonal
- 2023 PRAT Plan
    - Comprehensive view, city-wide
    - Goals
        - Welcoming, Equitable Access
        - Programs, Places and Partnerships
        - Active Transportation
        - Natural Resources
    - Implementation
        - Cattail Creek Corridor Park Master Plan w/ 3.5-mile Anchor Route
        - Capital Improvements Plan
        - UDC Code Update

Topic: Sustainability

- Primary related sections of existing code and current draft code for reference:

  Existing regulations: 38.300 Permitted Uses; 38.320 Form and Intensity standards; 38.430 Planned Development Zone; 38.540 Parking; 38.550 Landscaping; 38.700 Definitions

  October 2024 draft text: 38.210 Residential zoning districts; 38.250 Planned Development; 38.300 Uses; 38.320.110 Urban Agriculture [new]; 38.530 Parking; 38.540 Landscaping; 38.800 Definitions; (Degree of modification existing to proposed: moderate for most things, urban ag standards are new)

- Related facility plans: Bozeman Climate Plan 2020, Bozeman Community Plan 2020.

Sustainability runs through many aspects of the UDC. Compact development, support for multi-modal transportation, urban agriculture, and many other elements all interact with the theme of sustainability. Many sustainability implementation actions are non-regulatory and the City advances them through methods other than the UDC. See https://www.bozeman.net/departments/strategic-services/sustainability for the division website that explains some of these approaches and tools.

More than half of Bozeman's greenhouse gas emissions come from energy use in buildings. Advancing efficiency of the residential and commercial building sectors is prioritized by advocating for more stringent state-wide building code standards, supporting professional development in the building trades, consumer outreach, and promotion of utility and government incentives. While the City of Bozeman cannot require building codes that exceed the state-adopted codes (MCA 50-60-302), the City can incentivize energy efficiency and renewable energy through the sustainability public benefits in Planned Development Zones.

(see below for additional background information)

Sustainability in the UDC Update

- Facilitation of electric vehicle charging
- Specifies shared solar, energy storage, and district energy as essential services
- Enhances compact development and walkability
- Reduced parking requirements in commercial, expanded bike parking to include both short and long-term uses
- Adds recycling and composting facility to site plan
- Adds urban agriculture allowances

Questions for discussion:

1) What is your greatest concern regarding sustainability as it applies to the UDC?
2) How do you think this concern could best be addressed in the UDC?
3) Sustainability is inherently an exercise of balancing competing priorities. From your perspective, should the City consider rebalancing priorities through the UDC or other policy documents?
4) How do you see any financial costs related to this implementation as being met?

Topic: Wetlands

- Primary related Sections of existing code and current draft code for reference:

  Existing regulations: 38.410.100 Watercourse Setbacks, 38.600 Floodplain, 38.610 Wetland Regulations,

  October 2024 draft text: 38.600 Floodplain, 38.610 Wetland Regulations, 38.620 Watercourse Setbacks. (Degree of modification existing to proposed: mostly editorial. Wetland update has its own ongoing project separate from the overall UDC update)

- Related facility plans: Bozeman Community Plan 2020, 2023 Sensitive Lands Protection Plan.

Bozeman formally adopted wetland protection requirements in 2002. The City's regulations work concurrently with federal wetland requirements administered by the US Army Corps of Engineers. It is estimated that 75-85% of all wetlands in the Bozeman planning area are subject to federal jurisdiction and compensatory mitigation requirements.

The City's standards focus first on avoidance and minimization of wetland impacts and mitigation of impacts second. Compensatory mitigation may be pursued for unavoidable impacts subject to federal wetland mitigation rules. The wetland standards also integrate with the City's standards for protection of watercourses and floodplains.

The City has a separate ongoing project to update its wetland regulations. A webpage for that project is available on the Engage Bozeman website at https://engage.bozeman.net/wetlands. That project is anticipated to be completed prior to the overall UDC update. Any adopted revised standards will be carried forward into the final UDC draft.

Questions for discussion:

1) What is your greatest concern regarding impacts to wetlands as it applies to the UDC?
2) How do you think this concern could best be mitigated in the UDC?

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.