



Agenda Report to Mayor and Council

Agenda item title: FIRST READING DC 25-01 - An ordinance of the City of Phoenix repealing and replacing Chapters 1.3 - Definitions, 2.2 – Residential Districts, 2.3 – City Center District, 2.4 – Commercial Highway Zone, 3.2 – Access and Circulation, 3.3 - Landscaping, 3.4 – Vehicle and Bicycle Parking and 4.2 – Site Plan Review in the Phoenix Land Development Code as part of the Highway 99 Bear Creek Greenway Corridor Re-Visioning Project.

Meeting Date: May 19, 2025

From: Zac Moody, Community Development Director

Action: ___ Motion, **X** Ordinance, ___ Resolution, ___ Information only, ___ Other

SUMMARY

This ordinance will amend the Land Development Code to establish development standards and procedures that encourage development in the corridor with pedestrian-friendly design, involving establishing coordinated design standards for the City Center and Highway 99 and focusing on consistent setbacks, street trees, active ground floors, and pedestrian amenities.

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION

The Highway 99/Bear Creek Greenway Corridor Re-Visioning Project has established a clear, community-driven vision for the future redevelopment of Phoenix, Oregon, following the devastation of the 2020 Almeda Fire. Phoenix was significantly impacted by the fire, losing a substantial number of homes and commercial properties, which has intensified challenges related to housing affordability, infrastructure, and fragmented land ownership. However, these challenges also present opportunities for Phoenix to become a more vibrant, walkable, and resilient community along the Highway 99 and Bear Creek Greenway corridor.

Phoenix's re-visioning process builds on the city's comprehensive plan and an ongoing Land Development Code (LDC) audit and update, which are designed to address redevelopment barriers, streamline approvals, and encourage mixed-use and commercial redevelopment. In addition to code changes considered as part of the Highway 99 Bear Creek Greenway Corridor Revisioning, the City of Phoenix recently conducted a comprehensive zoning code audit and amendment process to address redevelopment barriers post-Almeda Fire. Outdated review procedures and zoning constraints have slowed redevelopment, particularly for commercial properties. The goal of the previous evaluations of the land development code was to streamline approvals, align local policies with state regulations, and encourage mixed-use and commercial redevelopment. Many of the proposed amendments recommended through the city's previous land development code audit directly relate to the recommendations from the work completed by the TGM grant, code audits, and suggestions from comments received through the public outreach portion of this project.

Through this review, it was determined that many of the recommendations from the city's independent code audit were in line with the recommendations of the work done through the TGM project. As such, the recommendations from the city's code audit that are relevant to the recommendations made by TGM have been incorporated into the amendments that have been recommended for approval by the Planning Commission. A signed Final Order of the Planning Commission (**Exhibit A**) summarizes

how the proposed amendments meet the requirements of the Land Development Code and the Comprehensive Plan.

During a Planning Commission Study Session in April, staff and TGM presented two documents for the Planning Commission to review. The first document was a matrix of proposed amendments developed through the TGM review process. The second document was a package of code amendments extracted from the code audit by the city. These were presented separately to allow the Commission to see the recommendations from TGM to meet the goals of the grant and to identify what policies were being recommended that were a result of the city's independent audit.

The proposed zoning code amendments were driven by five overarching strategies to guide Phoenix's policy and code updates. First, encouraging active uses in the corridor involves updating the land uses in commercial zones to prioritize mixed-use and residential opportunities, while discouraging auto-oriented or less active uses such as drive-throughs and self-storage. This also includes supporting public-serving uses, artisan manufacturing, and live-work spaces, especially near the City Center, and streamlining review processes for residential and mixed-use developments to provide clear, objective, and predictable approvals.

Second, bringing the community and development to key hubs focuses on recognizing Highway 99 segments adjacent to the downtown couplet as extensions of the City Center, emphasizing mixed-use and pedestrian-friendly design. This strategy supports the creation of gateway features, new public and civic spaces, and a "park once" approach to encourage walking between downtown and the corridor, as well as promoting lodging options and visitor amenities near the Greenway and City Center.

Third, expanding housing variety within walking distance aims to increase housing options—including duplexes, townhomes, apartments, and live-work units—close to shops, transit, and the Greenway. Updates to the Housing Element encourage flexible open space requirements based on district context and proximity to parks or trails, while amendments to the LDC allow a wider range of housing types in the R-1 zone and streamline architectural standards across residential districts.

Fourth, meeting the corridor with pedestrian-friendly design involves establishing coordinated design standards for the City Center and Highway 99, focusing on consistent setbacks, street trees, active ground floors, and pedestrian amenities. Parking along Highway 99 will be limited and required to be located behind or beside buildings, with enhanced landscaping for shade and visual appeal. The strategy also includes reducing maximum residential block lengths, requiring midblock pathways to improve neighborhood connectivity, and strengthening standards for pedestrian circulation through parking areas and landscaping requirements for large parking lots.

Fifth, connecting the corridor and Bear Creek Greenway seeks to improve multimodal connectivity along the corridor by filling gaps in the sidewalk and bike lane network and adding new connections between Highway 99 and the Greenway, such as pedestrian bridges or public pathways, especially south of the couplet. New development will be required to provide pathway connections to the Greenway at intervals of 600 feet or less, and special standards for fencing, landscaping, and site design will be established for properties adjacent to the Greenway to enhance visibility, safety, and access.

As Phoenix moves forward with the Highway 99/Bear Creek Greenway Corridor Re-Visioning Project, the city stands at a pivotal moment to transform its recovery into long-term resilience and vibrancy. The comprehensive vision and coordinated code amendments now under consideration reflect extensive community engagement, technical analysis, and a commitment to removing redevelopment barriers that have slowed progress since the Alameda Fire. By integrating recommendations from both the TGM project and the city's independent code audit, Phoenix is ensuring that future growth along the corridor will support a diverse mix of housing, thriving local businesses, and safe, accessible connections for people walking, biking, and using transit. With continued collaboration among city leaders, stakeholders, and residents, these efforts will lay the groundwork for a more adaptable and connected Phoenix—one that honors its past while embracing new development opportunities.

PUBLIC NOTICE

A Notice of the Proposed Amendment (PAPA) form was submitted to DLCD on April 4, 2025. Public notices were published on the City of Phoenix website, at City Hall, and the Phoenix Post Office on April 8, 2025, over one month prior to this City Council public hearing. Notice of the meeting was also displayed on the Phoenix City Hall lobby monitors and a webpage dedicated solely to the proposed amendments.

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED AMENDMENTS

Chapter 1.3 (Definitions)

- Adopt recommendations from the 2023 code audit (definitions consistent with state statute)

Chapter 2.2 (Residential Districts)

- Use table updated in tabular format, similar to other zones
- Changes in definitions to be consistent with the Oregon Revised Statutes
- ORS references removed
- Building Form – Changed to 150 feet, rather than 80 feet, to be consistent with other code sections

Chapter 2.3 (City Center District)

- Use table updated in tabular format, similar to other zones
- Removed Section 2.3.5 – Open Space (moved to Section 2.3.8(B))
- Removed Section 2.3.8 (B)(1), replaced with Streetscape standards
- Removed Section 2.3.9 – Pedestrian and Transit Amenities (moved to Section 2.3.8(B))

Chapter 2.4 (Commercial Highway)

- Use table updated in tabular format, similar to other zones
- Section 2.4.2 rewritten to clarify permitted versus conditional use
- Section 2.4.3(B) removed (moved to Section 2.2.4)
- Section 2.4.4 (A)-(H) removed, replaced with updated streetscape requirements
- Section 2.4.5 (G) amended to require additional setbacks for self-storage

Chapter 3.3 (Landscaping, Street Trees, Fences, and Walls)

- Section 3.3.3(C) amended to eliminate the minimum percentage of required landscaping for City Center zoned properties
- Section 3.3.3(E) amended to add special landscaping standards along Highway 99. Details requirements for landscaping, pedestrian pathways and plaza features, visibility of storefronts, trees and shrubs/groundcover
- Section 3.3.3 (E)(3) amended to add standards for parking lots over ¼ acre (Oregon Administrative Rule 660-012-0330, which requires updates of land use regulations to improve urban design – CFEC Compliant)

Chapter 3.4 (Vehicle and Bicycle Parking)

- Table 7 (3.4.3A) amended to be in compliance with state-mandated parking standards (OAR 660-012-0405)
- Section 3.4.3 amended to add subsections (F) and (G) for commercial developments over 20,000 square feet and to improve pedestrian circulation within parking lots (OAR 660-012-0405)

Chapter 4.2 (Site Plan Review)

- Recommended changes to applicability (Section 4.2.2) to provide clarity for when a Type I versus a Type II Site Plan Review is required
- Recommended options for submission requirements
- Recommended changes to modifications of existing site plans
- Recommended changes to the text of the Expiration and Extension sections

COUNCIL GOALS SUPPORTED

Goal 1: Concise, transparent, and frequent communication to build a culture of respect, accountability, and excellence. Leadership that is accessible, responsive, and proactive.

Goal 8: Promote and encourage developers. Maintain responsive and efficient planning and building services.

FISCAL IMPACT

There will be no direct financial impact on the City resulting from the adoption of the ordinance. The resulting changes to the Land Development Code will provide the necessary next steps for development in the Highway 99 corridor, with opportunities to grow the existing property tax and water customer base.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the council conduct a public hearing for consideration and approval of ordinance No. 1045 (**Exhibit B**) as recommended by the Planning Commission.

PROPOSED MOTION

"I move to approve, for first reading by title only, ordinance No. 1045 an ordinance of the City of Phoenix repealing and replacing Chapters 1.3 - Definitions, 2.2 – Residential Districts, 2.3 – City Center District, 2.4 – Commercial Highway Zone, 3.2 – Access and Circulation, 3.3 - Landscaping, 3.4 – Vehicle and Bicycle Parking and 4.2 – Site Plan Review in the Phoenix Land Development Code as part of the Highway 99 Bear Creek Greenway Corridor Re-Visioning Project."

ATTACHMENTS

Exhibit A – Planning Commission Signed Final Order

Exhibit B - Draft Ordinance No. 1045