



Community Development Department
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DEVELOPMENT CODE AMENDMENT – DC25-01 STAFF REPORT

File: DC25-01 Land Development Code Amendment – Amending Chapters 1.3, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, and 4.2 to emphasize a cohesive vision for a vibrant, walkable corridor linking Oregon Hwy 99 to the Bear Creek Greenway.

Location: N/A

Land Use District: N/A

Date Notice of Application Published: April 1, 2025

Date of Hearing: April 28, 2025 (1st evidentiary hearing)

I. OWNER INFORMATION

N/A

II. APPLICANT

City of Phoenix
Zac Moody, Community Development Director
PO Box 330
Phoenix, OR 97535

III. SUMMARY

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 Outdated review procedures and zoning constraints have slowed redevelopment, particularly for commercial properties.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 before the Planning Commission at this time. A proposed 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 the Study Session on April 21, 2025, 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 (**Exhibit B**) were driven by five overarching strategies to guide Phoenix's policy and code updates. Please note that even though there are Comprehensive Plan amendments recommended in the matrix, no Comprehensive Plan amendments are proposed as part of this review. First, encouraging active uses on 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 Almeda 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.

IV. APPLICABLE CRITERIA

- Phoenix Land Development Code (PLDC) Section 4.1.2 D. and Section 4.1.6 - Type IV Procedure, and PLDC Chapter 4.7 - Land Use District Map and Text Amendments.
- Phoenix Comprehensive Plan – Land Use Element

V. AGENCY COMMENTS

N/A

VI. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

VII. RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission adopt the findings of fact and conclusions of law presented in the proposed final order and, based on those findings and conclusions, recommend that the City Council **APPROVE** the amendments outlined in the proposed final order.

VIII. PROPOSED MOTION

"I move to adopt the findings of fact and conclusions of law presented in the proposed final order, and, based on those findings and conclusions, recommend City Council approve the amendments outlined in the proposed final order."

IX. EXHIBITS

- A. PC Proposed Final Order
- B. Draft Amendments & Matrix

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Zac Moody', is written over a light blue rectangular background.

Zac Moody
Community Development Director