

COUNCIL INITIATIVE PROPOSAL FORM

City Code Sec. 2-214(14). *Council Initiatives.* This section of the agenda is reserved for individual councilmember requests for future legislative or staff action. These shall be limited to giving direction to staff to assist in formulating policies, work plans, etc. for future consideration of the city council. An initiative moves forward by majority vote of the city council.

City Charter Sec. 3.08. *Interference with Administration.* Except for the purposes of inquiries and investigations, the Council, its members and the Mayor shall deal with the City officers and employees who are subject to the direction and supervision of the City Administrator solely through the City Administrator.

COUNCIL MEMBER PROPOSING INITIATIVE: TOM RUP SIS

SHORT NAME OF INITIATIVE: ZONING AND OTHER CHANGES INTENDING TO IMPROVE THE SAFETY AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT IN BILLINGS

TERMS OF MOTION PROPOSING LEGISLATIVE OR STAFF ACTION: (Please be as specific as possible. Indicate if action is to be divided into steps or phases. Use separate sheet if needed.)

I would like Council to discuss a set of changes to zoning, subdivision, and other codes that aim to (1) improve safety, (2) reduce costs of development, and/or (3) encourage more community-focused development. I propose that Council give staff direction on whether or not to schedule a series of work session discussions starting in the first quarter of 2024 focusing on the following topic areas. The specific policy ideas are examples of proposals that may be made during discussion, and other council members may certainly add to this list.

Parking

Policy Questions:

- 1) What should the role of government be in deciding how much land should be dedicated to parking?
- 2) What are the impacts of over-supply and under-supply of parking?
- 3) How is parking downtown different from parking in the rest of the city?
- 4) What is the current state of parking downtown and how is downtown parking priced?

Example Policy Ideas:

- 1) Eliminate regulations establishing minimum parking requirements
- 2) Establish a moratorium on new surface parking lots downtown

Housing

Discussion Questions:

- 1) What are the core differences between our 3 lower density residential zones and why are they necessary?
- 2) In what ways do government zoning and subdivision regulations add cost and complexity to residential development?
- 3) Does the government have an interest in the housing market? Should government policies generally support housing appreciation or housing affordability? Is there a neutral position?

Example Policy Ideas:

- 1) Consolidate the N1, N2, and N3 zones and allow ADUs and at least duplexes in the consolidated residential zoning district(s)
- 2) Establish a narrower standard street profile for neighborhood residential streets
- 3) Allow for subdivision designs that incorporate alternative pedestrian transportation networks
- 4) Incentivize residential development that includes a mix of market rate and permanently affordable housing options

Business/Residential Integration

Discussion Questions:

- 1) What are the implications of separating business and residential areas?
- 2) What kinds of businesses do we want in the immediate vicinity of our homes and what are the barriers to those developing?

Example Policy Ideas:

- 1) Allow for streamlined zoning change to NMU/NO for any residential zoned property on an arterial or collector street
- 2) Allow neighborhood pubs
- 3) Encourage more mixed-use zones in Planned Neighborhood Developments
- 4) Evaluate the impacts of permanent strip lighting and other commercial lighting on surrounding areas

A brief explanation of each of the above points is provided at the end of this document.

CITY STAFF OR DEPARTMENT POTENTIALLY IMPACTED BY INITIATIVE: Planning, Public Works

HAS COUNCIL MEMBER COMMUNICATED WITH CITY ADMINISTRATOR ABOUT THE INITIATIVE?
YES

ESTIMATE OF APPROXIMATE STAFF AND COUNCIL TIME REQUIRED: Will be dependent on the number of items that Council chooses to support.

APPROXIMATE TIMELINE FOR STAFF/DEPARTMENT ACTION: WORK SESSION DURING 1ST QUARTER OF CALENDAR YEAR 2024

COSTS OTHER THAN STAFF TIME, IF ANY: None

PRIORITY RELATIVE TO EXISTING INITIATIVES (SEE LIST AVAILABLE FROM CITY ADMINISTRATOR): Ties to adopted strategies to improve public safety and our built environment

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION OR COMMENTS:

MOST, IF NOT ALL OF THE ITEMS LISTED WILL REQUIRE FURTHER DEFINITION. I DON'T THINK COUNCIL SHOULD GET INTO ALL THE DETAILS RIGHT NOW. RATHER, WE ARE GIVING STAFF DIRECTION THAT WE WOULD LIKE TO DISCUSS ALL OR SOME OF THESE ITEMS FURTHER. SOME ITEMS MAY BE NON-STARTERS WITH A MAJORITY OF COUNCIL. A QUICK HAND COUNT OF EACH SHOULD LET US KNOW WHICH WE CAN AVOID SPENDING TIME ON DURING THE WORK SESSION.

BRIEF EXPLANATION OF EXAMPLE POLICY IDEAS:

PARKING

1. Regulations on parking minimums are an excess cost on both residential and commercial development. We already have no minimum parking regulations downtown, and expanding this policy throughout the city will encourage more efficient use of our most valuable resource, land.
2. Parking studies downtown routinely show that we have a glut of available parking. Surface parking lots downtown are an inefficient use of land, raising the tax burden on developed properties throughout the city by eliminating development of our most valuable spaces.

Housing

1. Consolidating to a single residential zoning district will simplify the development process and provide additional flexibility to developers, allowing more opportunities to develop the “missing middle” housing that our community needs.
2. In residential neighborhoods where houses have both garages and driveways, the 34’ standard street profile (2 lanes of traffic with dedicated parking on both sides) can be reduced by about 25% to both reduce the cost of development and increase safety.
3. Well-planned alternative transportation networks such as trails that connect every home to the broader community outside the neighborhood should be allowed. We know much about CPTED now that can improve on previous attempts at this type of development.
4. There is an economic mismatch between the types of housing development that the market supports (either large multi-family or high-priced single-family) and the diverse options that our community needs. We should explore ways to incentivize a broader mix of housing.

Business/Residential Integration

1. Our community needs to encourage more businesses like the Poly Food Basket and Black Dog Coffee House (formerly Harper Madison) in places closer to where we live, providing more opportunities for neighbors to gather locally and reduce traffic trips.
2. The desire to separate large, potentially noisy, bars from residential areas is understandable. But making people drive to drink is not a great plan. Around the world, the neighborhood pub serves a smaller population within walking distance. We should explore how to allow such community gathering spots here in Billings.
3. The PNDs that have been introduced since ReCode was passed have not generally included a good mix of uses as was anticipated. We should start looking at why this is and what can be done to encourage more mixed-use developments throughout the city.
4. Commercial enterprises are rapidly becoming much more aggressive with their outdoor lighting designs, pushing the envelope of our city code and impacting surrounding areas with excess lighting. We should explore the need for and potential types of regulation in this area.