



**CODE UPDATE - URBAN MEDIUM NEIGHBORHOOD FOCUS GROUP
MEETING NOTES
WILL ROGERS GARDENS, 8/18/2026**

Where do you live? What do you like about it? What are your concerns?

Attendees shared as follows:

Ken & Stephanie and Jacob, Military Park:

- Value the walkability of our neighborhood
- Need to improve and maintain sidewalks to keep connectivity; some sidewalks need repairs
- Concerns that too many home shares may reduce community cohesion (*Staff note: A new home-sharing ordinance was adopted in 2024 that limits home shares to one per block, but those approved prior to Jan 2025 when the ordinance took effect may remain, with the idea that an overload of homeshares on a block will be controlled from now on.*)
- Concerned that housing products are affordable
- Would like to see diverse types of housing for families
- Affordable housing is needed for families
- Concerns about vacant lots in neighborhood

Summary of Military Park Themes

- Improve sidewalk connectivity and maintenance.
- Fill vacant and underutilized lots.
- Increase housing choice while maintaining neighborhood character.
- Concerns that Airbnb growth may reduce community cohesion.

Matthew, Classen Ten Penn:

- Values diversity of housing, people and cultures in a neighborhood
- Gentrification is creeping in, making it feel more suburban with cookie-cutter housing
- Great proximity to downtown, good for density

Cam, Classen-Ten-Penn

- Greenspace is not used efficiently
- Rainwater is underused
- Supports LID and drought resistant infrastructure

Summary of Classen-Ten-Penn Themes



- Preserve neighborhood diversity and character.
- Encourage a broader range of housing types.
- Allow incremental growth rather than large-scale redevelopment.
- Concerns that short-term rentals reduce opportunities for community building.
- Interest in community gardens, pollinator gardens, and green infrastructure.
- Support for density near downtown when compatible with existing development.

Allen, Central Park:

- Concerned about gentrification pressure, rising housing prices, not enough affordable housing
- Some short-term rentals are creeping in; loss of neighborhood/community
- Supports community food production and urban gardening

Lia, Central Park:

- Values the Central Park strong sense of community
- Wants to protect cultivated green spaces, helps to foster community
- Affordable housing is important; we're losing it
- Neighborhood is rapidly gentrifying

Joel, Central Park:

- Loves the neighborhood's easy access to parks.
- Neighborhoods have not changed in decades due to all R-1 zoning. They cannot grow and change incrementally to help people who live there, this is leading to gentrification.
- Wants diversity of incomes, backgrounds and housing

Summary of Central Park Themes

- Support for affordable housing and housing diversity.
- Interest in balancing density with compatibility.
- Protect green spaces while accommodating growth.
- Concerns about unintended consequences of redevelopment.
- Support for community gardens and urban agriculture.

Carrie, Youngs-Englewood:

- Neighborhood is affordable, maintaining that affordability (the ability to rent or own) is critical, especially so close to downtown



Myles, Helm Farm:

- Affordability has nosedived since Covid; high income housing is being built, leading to higher land prices
- Concerned that developers are incentivized to maximize lot density with increasing land prices
- Neighborhood is a food desert, with limited shopping options

Summary of Helm Farm Themes

- Located between Classen and Western corridors.
- Concerns about higher-income housing replacing more affordable options.
- Desire for a broader mix of neighborhood-serving uses.
- Questions about redevelopment impacts on infrastructure and drainage.

Joseph, Capitol Hill NA/Markland Heights Addition:

- Gentrification has been nice, supporting neighborhood investment and re-investment
- Concerned about quad homes; ok with duplexes
- Would be difficult to do on-street parking, accessible parking on site and sidewalks on our street (*Staff note: their street is only 20 feet of pavement width*)
- Sidewalk maintenance is a burden for homeowners

Theresa, Capitol Hill NA/Markland Heights Addition:

- Housing prices are on a wild upswing right now
- Concerned about affordability
- Streets are safe; can walk to nearby stores.
- Sidewalk requirements conflict with parking
- Not enough street parking for duplexes or quads
- If alleys were improved, drainage would have to be addressed
- Worried about pedestrians using the alley

Lenora, Capitol Hill NA/Markland Heights Addition:

- Too much speeding on SW 35th

Summary of Capitol Hill NA/ Markland Heights area Themes

- Support for safe, walkable streets.
- Need to balance sidewalks and street improvements with parking needs.
- Concerns about drainage and stormwater impacts from redevelopment.
- Questions about alley safety and maintenance responsibilities.
- Concerns about traffic speeds, particularly on routes connecting Shartel and Walker.



Discussion related to quads/two duplexes

Some residents expressed the following questions related to these housing types in their neighborhood and staff answered the following questions:

Q; Will the city acquire property to build duplexes?

A: The code update project is about modernizing the zoning code to better support our growing city. The city will not acquire property or build homes as part of this project – that will be in the responsibility of private development.

Q: Would quads and 2 duplexes only be allowed on corners?

A: the proposed drafts allow these products only on corners or on lots with developed alleys.

Q: Will increased regulations make it difficult to develop a lot as a duplex or quad? Some of the ADU regulations like limited height and privacy windows, increasing prices for those products; and some of the regulations are not context sensitive.

A: Certain requirements were included in the ADU ordinance to address resident privacy concerns. Variances can be sought if regulations create hardship

Q: Larger structures and increased development impacts neighborhood character and may have an impact on existing trees, greenspace and flooding —how will greenspace be protected and flooding be mitigated?

A: The proposed UM-SD zone regulates driveway width/spacing and limits lot coverage to 50 percent of the lot. While R-1 lot coverage is limited to 50 percent now, the way lot coverage is currently defined makes it possible to build to 75% coverage. The new code will fix this definition to ensure 50% lot coverage. Regulating driveway width will allow for more trees to be preserved or re-planted. Building coverage will also be a new measure that is not regulated now, except for accessory buildings (like sheds) that are limited in coverage.

Q: Is the goal of the code update to allow infill housing “by right”?

A: The code update has many goals and infill development by right is one of them because currently R-1 zoning in the core is too limiting for infill. Re-zoning to a SPUD is one of the only tools available to achieve diverse types of infill housing.



Building and Site Design in the proposed code for quads and two duplexes on a lot

Staff explained that draft single-dwelling zoning would require extra building and site design regulations for triplexes, quadplexes, and two duplexes on a lot. These include requiring front entrances to address the street front with porches or stoops and limiting driveway spacing and widths to better blend in with existing housing and driveway spacing.

Residents asked and staff answered the following questions:

Q: Who is responsible for alleys? How would I look up if my alley is open or closed?

A: The developer/property owner is responsible for improving the alley. Adjacent property owners must maintain it. The County assessor has maps that show whether property lines adjoin at the rear (no alley) or whether there is a gap (platted alley that may not be developed). The Planning Department will look into clearer tools to help property owners determine if there is an alley.

Q: Are code updates going to address mixed-use developments?

A: Yes. There will be other zones that address Multi-Dwelling and Mixed Commercial products. This meeting only focused on UM-SD (single-dwelling)

Q: How is density spread out rather than centralized? Too much density can overload a neighborhood.

A: The new code allows more density only in appropriate areas such as near busier streets.

Q: Is there infrastructure to accommodate more density? Should we be looking at micro-grids to handle increased electricity loads?

A: Yes, we are coordinating with the Utilities Department, and they have assured us that there is enough water and sewer capacity. We can discuss micro-grids with OGE.

Q: Does the new code address permeability of paving? Are there any incentives to use it? And what about too much paving of yards.

A: Yes, the draft proposes clearer standards for permeable paving in residential areas, including pervious ribbons to reduce lot coverage. The lot coverage of 50% will include paving in front, side and rear yards.



Design Review for quads and two duplexes on a lot

Staff presented the concept of expanding design review processes prior to construction of dwellings on smaller lots, duplexes, triplexes, quadplexes and two duplexes on a lot. Staff explained that design review would trigger a notice to nearby neighbors who could look at the proposed project online and see staff's approval of the project. This design review would be primarily administered by staff. Focus group participants provided the following feedback:

Q: Who pays for mailed notices? Won't that be a big cost? Don't charge too much.

A: Application fees cover notices. Usually about \$250. This is much cheaper than the cost of rezoning.

Q: Will you post the new rules for the code update?

A: Yes, drafts and the new code will be available online in more user friendly formats than the current code.

Q: Infill development is often done by small developers. Make new rules clear so they don't add too much time and cost to the process. Don't limit architecture too much, for example it may be ok to require porches, but not dictate roof types to allow for creativity and innovation.

A: The draft provides choices for meeting standards for flexibility; however, we will need further input into what would be considered in Design Review.

Q: Would design review also apply to renovations?

A: Yes, if they were renovating an existing building into a quadplex; we will continue to discuss when design review would be applicable.

Q: Staff review is a good alternative to design review board.

A: Yes, most design review applications can be approved administratively, quickly.



Summary of Design Review proposal

- Desire to make redevelopment of vacant lots easier and more understandable for small-scale property owners and residents.
- Concern that increased review processes could become too restrictive.
- Renovations converting structures into duplexes or quadplexes would trigger review requirements.
- General support for staff-level design review.

Demolition Notice proposal

Staff also described a process whereby a demolition permit would trigger a notice within 300 feet of neighbors. The neighbors would have a specified number of days (maybe 30 days) to contact the owner and discuss the proposal. After the delay period, the city could issue the demolition permit. This would be a way to pause demolitions so that neighbors could be notified. After some discussion, focus group participants were in favor of this tool.

Adaptive Re-use

Staff also said that new rules would be put in place so that old buildings could be adaptively re-used, without having to meet all new zoning code requirements such as parking, landscaping, setbacks, etc. as an incentive to keep an old building and re-use it for something different.

Final Meeting Poll

Does the new code address your concerns about quads and two duplexes on a lot?

A majority of the participants said the rules described allow them to feel comfortable with adding those housing types on corners or where there are alleys.

Does design review address your concerns about quads?

More than half of the focus group participants agreed that design review by staff would help with neighborhood compatibility.



Would demolition notices be helpful?

A majority of the focus group participants agreed that demolition notice would be helpful in preserving housing stock.

Is adaptive reuse helpful?

A majority of the focus group participants agreed that adaptive re-use incentives would be helpful in preserving housing stock and older buildings in their neighborhoods.

Other comments:

Code readability: Councilman Cooper noted that Boise, Idaho had a comic book version of their code to make it more understandable to residents. Staff will look into this but notes that the new code is already designed to be more user-friendly than this existing code, with interactive links and graphics.

New code adoption timeline: The city hopes to release some code drafts in the fall, with adoption continuing through 2027.