

Memorandum

REPORT TO: Inter-Neighborhood Council

FROM: Jim Webster, INC secretary and SCAN chair and INC rep

SUBJECT: The Case for Interim Zoning (35 minutes)

MEETING DATE: March 12, 2026

AGENDA ITEM TYPE: Citizen Advisory Board/Commission

RECOMMENDATION: INC is invited to weigh in on this discussion and HPAB probably will too. We then can decide or not to write a letter of support to HPAB to join INC in writing a Letter of Support to the City Commission to ask them to hold a public hearing and consider adopting this temporary measure.

STRATEGIC PLAN: 1.2 Community Engagement: Broaden and deepen engagement of the community in city government, innovating methods for inviting input from the community and stakeholders.

BACKGROUND: Many citizens have been asking that the height allowed in the B-3 zoning district downtown be reverted to 70 feet from the 90 feet granted in the Unified Development Code (UDC) update that went into effect February 1. Several public comments have been submitted, along with a petition that contains over 300 signatures in support of the return to 70 feet. Some argue the return to 70 feet is to protect the viewshed of our several surrounding mountain ranges for the enjoyment of all downtown. Others argue for the preservation of the character of our historic downtown, which itself will be harmed by taller buildings built in a halo around it. While still others beg us not to give away the extra development potential without extracting some public good, like cash-in-lieu of affordable housing. Pressure on parking needs and traffic concerns further add fuel to the debate. All of these are valid arguments.

The City is about to engage with consultants to update the NCOD Guidelines and the Lakota Group from Chicago has been hired to help with this process. They will be in Bozeman next month to do their work. There is also an initiative to create a Local Landmark Program and rework Historic Preservation standards generally. This covers all of Bozeman and not just the NCOD, thus more comprehensive and has to cover neighborhoods with great variety. These initiatives are due in large part to public participation asking for the Neighborhood Conservation Overlay District (NCOD) Design Guidelines to be enforced to a greater degree.

Because the work for these Preservation Policies work is ongoing, there is belief it is prudent to enact an interim zoning ordinance to prevent “uses that may conflict with a zoning proposal that the governing body is considering or studying”. This action is allowed to us by the most recent edition of Montana Code Annotated title 76, chapter 25, item 307. It makes sense to consider pausing large developments until the work for these two important policies is completed by the city.

A recent development: Bozeman's Historic Preservation (HPO) officer, Sarah Rosenberg, resigned earlier this week. As of one day after our INC meeting, March 13th, there will be no HPO to determine if developments meet our existing historic preservation standards and guidelines. We on the Historic Preservation Advisory Board (HPAB) will continue to work as diligently as we can, to ensure the NCOD guidelines are upheld, but our board lacks the "teeth" it needs, as we have no decision making authority. The Consultants from the Lakota Group are arriving in April to begin work on Bozeman's NCOD Guidelines with City Staff. Without an HPO, there will be new challenges to take on. Please know that our HPAB Vice Chair, Mike Wiseman and I (Jim Webster) are hard at work to keep strategy alive!

UNRESOLVED ISSUES: None

ALTERNATIVES: None

FISCAL EFFECTS: None

Attachments:

[Interim Zoning_Data_All_260306.pdf](#)
[Bogert_Data_All_260306.pdf](#)
[Bozeman Creek_Data_All_260306.pdf](#)
[BridgerCreeklands_Data_All_260306.pdf](#)
[Figgins_Data_All_260306 \(1\).pdf](#)
[Cooper Park_Data_All_260306 \(1\).pdf](#)
[Jandt_Data_All_260306.pdf](#)
[Kirk_Data_All_260306.pdf](#)
[Mar-Lin_Data_All_260306 \(1\).pdf](#)
[Midtown_Data_All_260306.pdf](#)
[NHV_Data_All_260306.pdf](#)
[NENA_Data_All_260306.pdf](#)
[SCAN_Data_All_260306.pdf](#)
[University_Data_All_260306.pdf](#)
[Valley Unit_Data_All_260306.pdf](#)

Report compiled on: March 6, 2026