

Memorandum

REPORT TO: City Commission

FROM: Tom Rogers, Senior Planner
Chris Saunders, Community Development Manager
Erin George, Community Development Director

SUBJECT: Discussion of Unified Development Code Update Focusing on Natural Resources and Direction to Staff, Application 21381

MEETING DATE: August 19, 2025

AGENDA ITEM TYPE: Community Development - Legislative

RECOMMENDATION: Discuss and determine direction on issues relating to natural resources.

STRATEGIC PLAN: 4.2 High Quality Urban Approach: Continue to support high-quality planning, ranging from building design to neighborhood layouts, while pursuing urban approaches to issues such as multimodal transportation, infill, density, connected trails and parks, and walkable neighborhoods.

BACKGROUND: The City Commission is reviewing the outcomes of the supplemental engagement public input on the UDC update and providing direction on the next iteration of the draft to replace Chapter 38 of the municipal code and the associated zoning map. Previous work sessions were held on June 3rd (phase 2 engagement summary)[[External Link](#)], June 24th (tools for managing bulk, mass and scale of buildings)[[External Link](#)], and July 14th (zoning districts and uses)[[External Link](#)]. A follow-up work session relating to the previously discussed issues follows on this agenda.

The Community Development Board discussed these issues in work sessions at a public meeting on [August 11th](#) [external link]. Staff provided the memo that is attached to this agenda item and presented an overview of how development review works in the City of Bozeman considering the general context of our community.

The Board was asked to opine on the questions detailed at the end of the attached memo. Key points in the discussion are listed below.

Agenda item begins at 1:03:35
Board discussion starts at 1:55:20
Public comment began at time stamp 2:42:33
Concluding remarks at 3:21:10
[Link to the meeting video](#)

The City Commission will receive a presentation from Community

Development Staff on specific issues relating to natural resources related issues, ask questions, receive public comment, and give direction on possible revisions to the text to be incorporated in an upcoming revised draft for public review.

A staff memo providing background information on natural resource related code subjects and processes is attached to this cover memo.

The state has replaced the review criteria applicable to Bozeman for the approval of zoning, as part of the 2023 Montana Land Use Planning Act. Criteria are established in [76-25-304\(2\) MCA](#) [external link]:

(2) Prior to making a recommendation to the governing body to adopt or amend a zoning regulation or map, the planning commission [Community Development Board] shall:

(c) make a preliminary determination as to whether the zoning regulation and map as proposed or as amended would be in substantial compliance with the land use plan, including whether the zoning regulation or map:

(i) accommodates the projected needed housing types identified in 76-25-206;

(ii) contains five or more specific strategies from 76-25-302 to encourage the development of housing within the jurisdiction;

(iii) reflects allowable uses and densities in areas that may be adequately served by public safety, emergency, utility, transportation, education, and any other local facilities or services identified by the local government in 76-25-207;

(iv) allows sufficient area for existing, new, or expanding commercial, industrial, and institutional enterprises the local government has identified in 76-25-208 for targeted economic growth in the jurisdiction;

(v) protects and maximizes the potential use of natural resources within the area, as identified in 76-25-209;

(vi) minimizes or avoids impacts to the natural environment within the area, as identified in 76-25-209; and

(vii) avoids or minimizes dangers associated with natural hazards in the jurisdiction, as identified in 76-25-209; and

(d) preliminarily determine whether the proposed zoning regulation, map, or amendment results in new or increased impacts to or from local facilities, services, natural resources, natural environment, or natural hazards from those previously described and analyzed in the assessment conducted for the land use plan.

These new criteria will need to be considered when the Community Development Board eventually makes a recommendation and the City Commission votes on the final UDC text and zoning map later this year. The attached staff memo and related materials provide some background information to support the in-depth discussion at the August 19th work session.

UNRESOLVED ISSUES: Direction chosen by the City Commission.

ALTERNATIVES: As determined by the City Commission.

FISCAL EFFECTS: No budgeted funds are expended with this discussion.

Attachments:

[CC August 19 2025 Natural Environment Memo.pdf](#)

Report compiled on: August 12, 2025