

Agenda Item: Orig. Ordinance - 1st Reading

Title: Original Ordinance No. 2036 amending sections 15.10, 15.12 and 15.14 as a best practice approach to updating codes to address housing affordability in the community.

Recommended Council MOTION:

Move to **approve** Original Ordinance No. 2036, amending sections 15.10, 15.12, and 15.14, as recommended by the Planning Commission, on first reading, in accordance with findings of fact and conclusions of law.

Administrative or Policy Goal:

Under Section 15.04.050.A the City Manager's Office shall have the authority to review and make recommendations to the appropriate decision making authority for Text Amendments. Under Section 15.06.060.A states the purpose of a text amendment is for the purpose not to relieve particular hardships nor to confer special privileges or rights on any person, but rather to make adjustments to the text of this code that are necessary in light of changed conditions, changes in the comprehensive plan, public policy, or that are necessary to advance the general welfare of the city. As well, under Section 15.02.050 states that this code should be regularly reviewed, evaluated and amended, if necessary, based on private and city economic conditions, vision for the community, changing planning and zoning principles, frequent difficulty in implementing or enforcing any specific standard(s), or changes in the state, federal or case law.

Background:

The present amendment is initiated by the City of Laramie as part of the continual effort to keep the Unified Development Code (UDC) accurate, correct concerns, and remove potential avenues of confusion. All prior revisions to LMC Chapter 15 (Unified Development Code) can be found online at www.cityoflaramie.org/UDC.

The proposed text updates are part of the City of Laramie's effort in combatting our housing challenges by removing barriers that the Thrive Laramie Housing Study (developed by City hired consultants Community Builders) and Housing Code Audit have shown to prevent flexible development and housing affordability. This text amendment is focused around the dimensional changes within the R2, R2M and R3 zoning districts, as well as corresponding corrections based off the recommended changes in the dimensional table. Planning Commission and Council had a joint work session on August 10th which highlighted these changes and the purpose of them.

Through the process of the Thrive Laramie Economic Development Plan and Housing Study, a survey was conducted in order to gather what housing types are missing from Laramie that people would like to see and need. Through this survey, staff found that the public desires the traditional housing type in single-family housing, but they also wanted to see housing types such as duplexes,

quadplexes, cottage courts, ADUs, townhomes & condos and small apartment buildings (see figure 1 below). These housing types have another name associated with them, which is “Missing Middle.” Currently, the way our dimensional standards (codes) are written, they are restrictive to these “missing middle” housing styles and flexible development options.

Like blueprints for a neighborhood, zoning codes can dictate how a neighborhood is shaped and what type of structures will or can be built. Because zoning codes are written and enforced entirely on the local level, they are expected to change and shift over time as the community’s needs change.

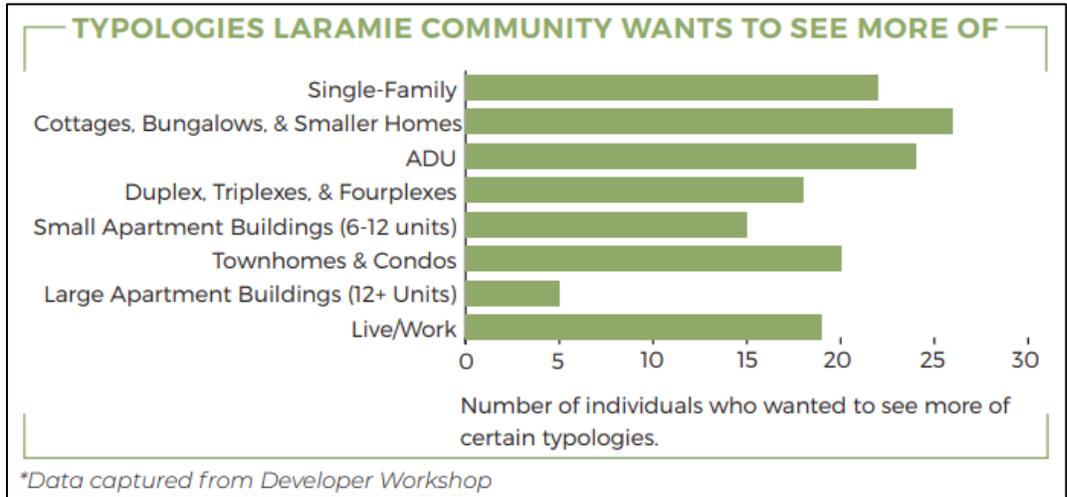


FIGURE 1 DESIRED HOUSING TYPOLOGIES PER THE THRIVE LARAMIE HOUSING SURVEY

The City of Laramie and Community Builders worked to identify what changes our municipal code needed to address housing challenges in our community; these were accumulated into the [Thrive Laramie Code Audit Document](#).

R2 (Limited Multi-Family) District Current and Recommended Dimensional Standards Comparison		
Zone Districts	Current	Recommended
Min. Lot Area per principal Building	6,000 sqft	N/A
Min. Lot Area per Unit	3,500 sqft	1,250 sqft
Min. Lot Size	N/A	2,500 sqft

Table 1 Recommended dimensional amendments for the R2 (Limited Multi-Family) District

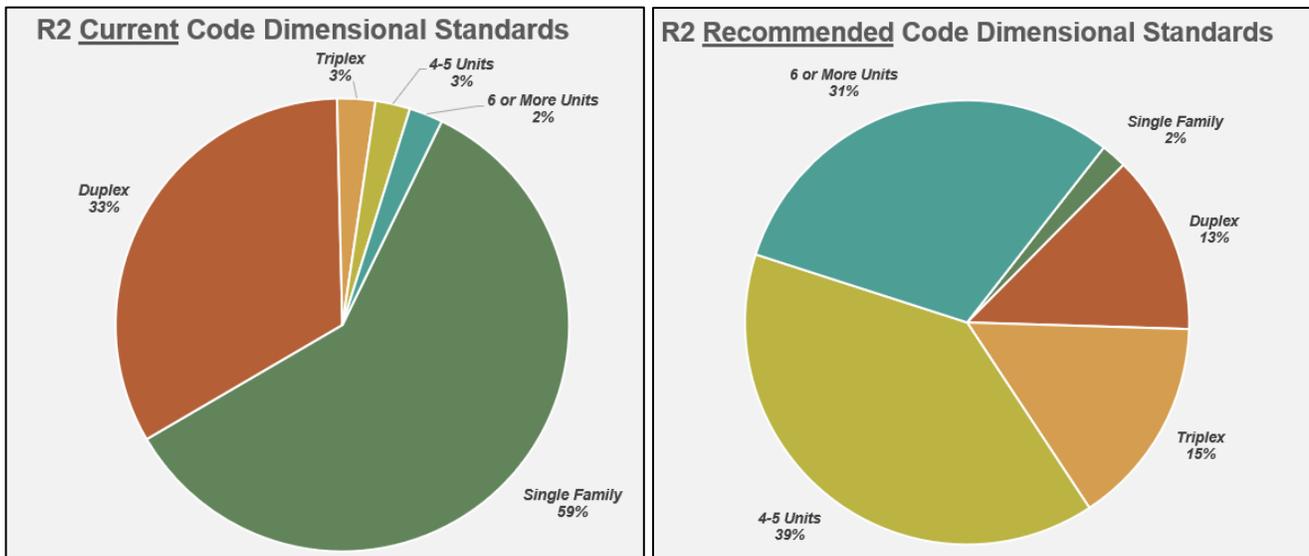


FIGURE 2 PERCENTAGE OF LOTS IN THE R2 DISTRICT AND HOW MANY UNITS COULD FIT ON THEM FOR CURRENT AND RECOMMENDED CODE CHANGES.

In the Thrive Laramie Code Audit, a general overview of how codes can dictate housing types and affordability was detailed. Additionally, general code recommendations were provided that culminated in more detailed analysis of key zoning districts. Community Builders and their partners used infill lots to show what currently could go on the lot and what could be constructed after these code amendments.

In the pie charts above and shown table, it shows how the dimensional changes shown below in Table 15.12-2 under proposed changes, allow for the R2 zone district to develop in the way it was intended to develop. As can be seen in the pie charts, a majority of R2 District lots have only been able to be developed with single-family housing units. With the recommended changes, the amount of units allowed to be developed on a lot are spread out more evenly. Taking into account that a maximum of 4 units are allowed on a R2 District Lot. For the R3 and R2M changes, please Table 15.12-2 below under proposed changes.

With the allowance of more densely developed lots if these code recommendations are adopted, members of the public and council should be aware that a multi-family development consists of any property with three (3) or more units on the property. Once a property contains more than two (2) units, it must come into full compliance with all multi-family standards including parking, landscaping, access, building layout, etc. Staff believes this will persuade existing home owners to construct another unit on their property, while ensuring that more than 2-units on a property remain well designed and of a high quality.

PROPOSED CHANGES

As shown in the Attached Ordinance, these changes are focused around the residential dimensional standards within the R2, R2M and the R3 zoning districts. The proposed changes outside of Table 15.12-2 are being amended in order to correct language in sections 15.10, 15.12 & 15.14, so as to be in line with the amendments within the table and to ensure that they are not contradicting, repetitious or unnecessary.

The overall purpose of these changes is to combat our housing challenges by offering more choices to achieve housing affordability. Staff believes these changes will achieve this through relaxing dimensional standards to allow for more housing typology, efficient land use and efficient building practices.

Planning Commission Recommendation:

Planning Commission recommended approval of TA-21-02 at the October 25, 2021 meeting with a vote of Aye: 6. Nay: 0. Absent: 1.

Legal/Statutory Authority:

- Laramie Municipal Code: Title 15 (Unified Development Code)
 - Wyoming State Statutes Title 15 Cities and Towns, Article 5 Planning
 - Wyoming State Statutes Title 15 Cities and Towns, Article 6 Zoning
 - Laramie Comprehensive Plan
 - Thrive Laramie Economic Development Plan
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Responsible Staff:

Todd Feezer, Assistant City Manager,
721-5304
Derek Teini, Planning Manager,
721-5245

Future dates are subject to change

Advertised	
Public Hearing (PH) Held	December 7, 2021
PH Advertised	November 20, 2021
Introduction/1 st Reading	November 16, 2021
2 nd Reading	December 7, 2021
3 rd Reading	December 21, 2021

Attachments:

- Proposed Ordinance No. 2036
- Attachment A
- Planning Commission Staff Report (October 25, 2021)
 - Support Letters (7 pages)