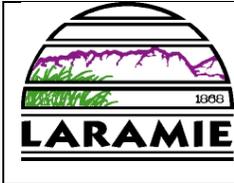


CITY OF LARAMIE COUNCIL WORK SESSION April 19, 2022



Agenda Item: Original Ordinance No. 2044 - 3rd Reading

Title: An ordinance amending various sections of Title 15.10, 15.12 and 15.14 of Laramie Municipal Code regarding R1, LR and RR Zoning district's dimensional standards and accessory dwelling units.

Recommended Council MOTION:

Move to approve Original Ordinance No. 2044, amending sections of Title 15.10, 15.12 and 15.14 of Laramie Municipal Code, as recommended by the Planning Commission, on third and final reading, in accordance with findings of fact and conclusions of law, and authorize the Mayor and Clerk to sign the ordinance.

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 on the dimensional changes within the R1, RR and LR zoning districts, as well as corresponding corrections found during the text amendment process. The City Council had a work session on January 25, 2022 which highlighted these changes and the purpose of them. An overview of the need for these changes was presented to Planning Commission at their February 14, 2022 meeting.

This text amendment is focused on:

- Dimensional changes within the R1, RR and LR zoning districts, as well as corresponding corrections based off the recommended changes in the dimensional table.
- The addition of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs hereafter) into the R1, RR, and LR zoning districts.
- The removal of the garage requirement in R1 and LR zoning districts

PROPOSED CHANGES

As shown in the Attached Ordinance, these changes are focused around the residential dimensional standards within the R1, LR and the RR zoning districts. The proposed changes are to sections 15.10, 15.12 and 15.14 of Laramie Municipal Code.

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, eliminating the garage requirement, and allowing Accessory Dwelling Units to allow for more housing typology, efficient land use and efficient building practices.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION

At the City Council meeting held on March 15, 2022 a specific question regarding what percentage of land in the single family residential zones is still developable. Staff produced the following rough numbers which were estimated based on the city's current GIS data. These are current estimates which is a moving target which could change drastically with a large annexation or rezoning effort.

Zoning District	Total Acreage	Acreage Vacant	% Vacant
LR	600	150	25%
RR	320	30	10%
R1	920	270	30%

Council members also had a question about the separate metering that would be a requirement for accessory dwelling units. This requirement was added due to the Public Works Department's concerns that come along with units sharing utilities. Separate utility metering would also further the self-sufficiency of new Accessory Dwelling Units that come online.

Public Comments Received (Attached):

1. Brett Glass (3/28/22, 3/15/22, 4/5/22)
2. Kristina Hufford (3/20/22)

Planning Commission Recommendation:

Planning Commission recommended approval of TA-22-02 at the February 28, 2022 meeting with a vote of Aye: 5. Nay: 0. Absent: 2.

Responsible Staff:

Derek Teini, AICP, Planning Manager,
721-5245

Philipp Gabathuler, AICP, Principal Planner,
721-5232

Attachments:

- Proposed Ordinance 2044
- Planning Commission Staff Report (February 28, 2022)

Future dates are subject to change

Work Session	January 25, 2022
Advertised	January 9, 2022
Public Hearing Held	
Public Hearing Advertised	
Introduction/1 st Reading	March 15, 2022
2 nd Reading	April 5, 2022
3 rd Reading	April 19, 2022

Public Comment by Brett Glass. Submitted 2/28/22 (Planning Commission) and 3/15/22 (City Council) and commented on at 4/5/22 Council Meeting. Mr. Glass submitted this NY Times Opinion piece for the Planning Commission's and City Council's consideration.

Wonking Out: Are We in Another Housing Bubble?

Jan. 28, 2022



Credit...Monty Rakusen/Getty Images



By Paul Krugman

Opinion Columnist

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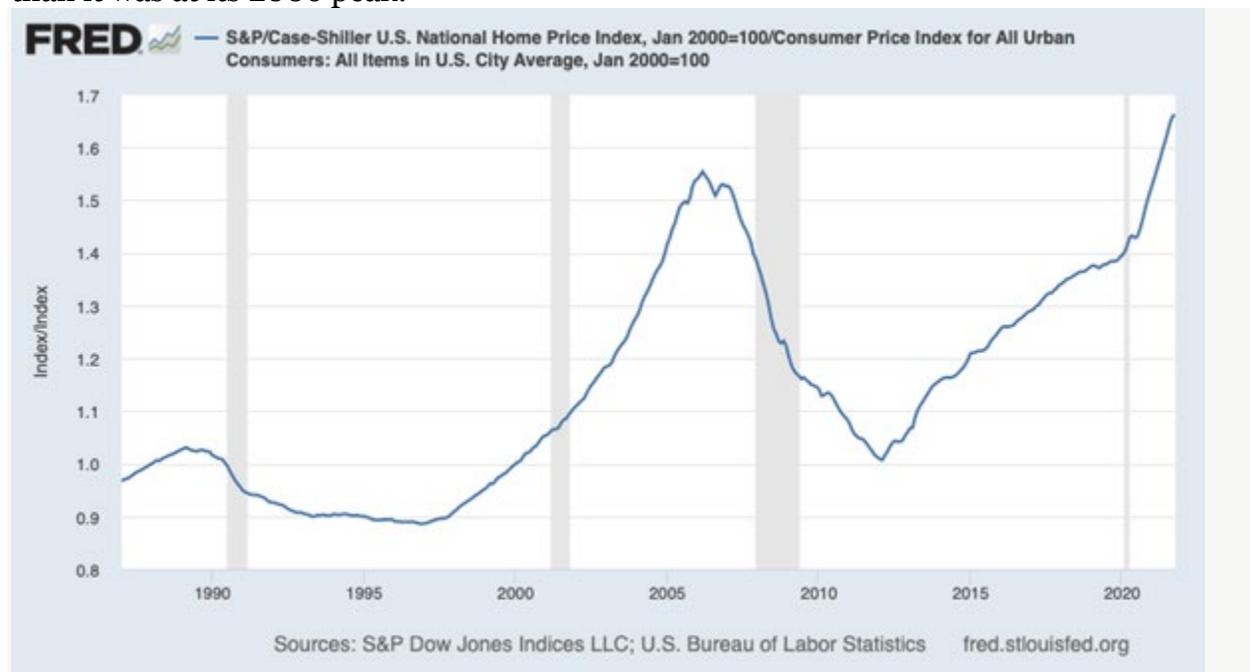
Do you remember the housing bubble? OK, if you're 35 or younger, probably not — you were a teenager at the most when the bubble burst. But it was a huge deal at the time, and a very strange one.

When the bubble was inflating in the early 2000s, it seemed to me and others — [Dean Baker](#) may have been the first prominent economist to sound the alarm — to be the most obvious case of mispricing we'd ever seen. At least the dot-com bubble of the late 1990s

had the excuse that businesses were developing exciting new technology, so at least some of the new companies might end up becoming extremely valuable. But people have been building houses for thousands of years; what could justify those extraordinary prices?

At the time, however, anyone raising questions about housing was treated like ... people who now raise questions about cryptocurrencies. (After [yesterday's column](#) went online, a Wall Streeter friend texted “God help your inbox.”) I got a lot of “You only say there’s a bubble because you hate President Bush” emails.

Anyway, the bubble eventually burst, taking a large part of the financial system down with it. That is a worrying precedent, because housing prices have once again been rising rapidly. In fact, the average real price of housing in major markets is now higher than it was at its 2006 peak:



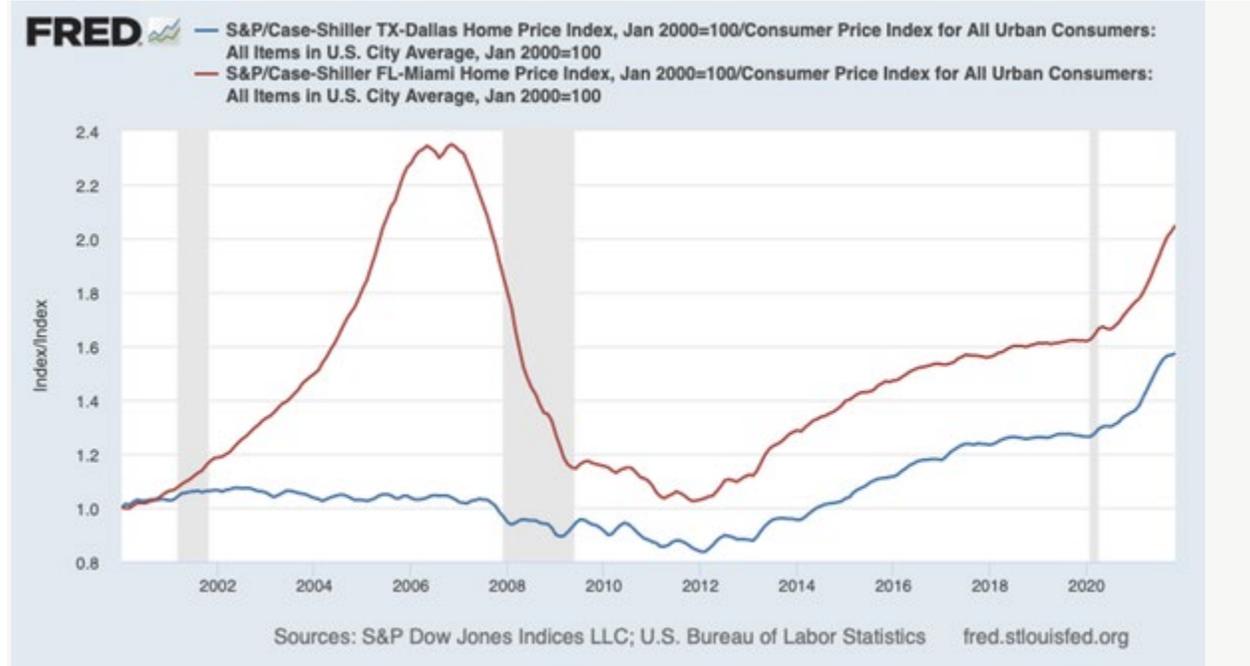
Image

Here we go again?Credit...FRED

So is history about to repeat itself? Well, there are important differences between this house-price surge and the previous one, differences that arguably make this one less worrying.

One important feature of the 2000s spike in housing prices was that it affected only some metropolitan areas. When I [wrote about the bubble](#) in 2005, I argued that America was effectively divided between Flatland — places where it was easy to increase the housing supply — and the Zoned Zone, where “a combination of high population density and land-use restrictions” made it hard to build new houses. And the big price increases

took place only in the latter. For example, here's a comparison over time between Miami and Dallas:



Image

But this time it's more evenly spread. Credit...FRED

That distinction was key to my conclusion that we were in the midst of a bubble. By the mid-2000s, real home prices at a national level were up by “only” about 50 percent, a number you could, with painful intellectual contortions, try to justify on the basis of low interest rates. But there was no way to justify the 100 percent or more increases we were seeing in places like Miami and San Diego.

This time, however, is different. Look again at the Miami-Dallas comparison. As you can see, the new surge in home prices is much more of a national phenomenon, with prices rising as much or more in Flatland than in the Zoned Zones along the coasts. Adjusted for inflation, prices in places that were the epicenter of the 2000s bubble are still below their previous peak (and their price rise is easier to justify, because interest rates are even lower now); the reason the national average is so high is that prices are surging everywhere — even in [small towns](#) that used to be bargains.

How is this possible? In the 2000s home prices stayed low in many places, despite surging demand, because there was plenty of supply: Buildable land was abundant both in small cities and in cities that, like [Houston](#), don't have much in the way of zoning.

This time, however, record home prices haven't led to a boom in housing construction:



Image

Build we won't. Credit...FRED

But why? With houses selling for so much, you'd think there would be a big incentive for developers to throw up new units, which they can do quite quickly. I still remember driving around New Jersey during the [McMansion boom](#) and being amazed at how quickly houses went up. Why aren't the developers rushing in now?

In correspondence, my old M.I.T. classmate and economist Charles Steindel pointed me to the likely answer: It's the supply chain, stupid. Look at what is happening to the price of building materials:



Image

The supply chain strikes again. Credit...FRED

So prices are shooting up, even in places with plenty of buildable land, because supply can't rise to meet the demand.

Put all this together, and the case for a bubble isn't nearly as compelling as it was in 2005 or 2006. That doesn't mean that all is well. Real estate people I know tell me that there's still a feeling of unhealthy frenzy, and people who paid high prices for small-town houses may regret it once supply chains get unsnarled and more houses get built.

But this time is different, even if some house prices are starting to look like the 2000s bubble. I wouldn't say that everything is fine, but a housing bubble probably isn't in my top 10 list of things to worry about.

Public Comment Receive 3/20/22

Hello Derek,

The proposed changes to R1 LR and RR zoning bely the non-compliance that already exists in these neighborhoods. I've found out after the fact that there is a commercial property in the R1 zone I moved to despite the restrictions on commercial properties in this zone. The property in question is 2213 SPRING CREEK DR LARAMIE and is a disruptive, for-profit commercial housing complex. I moved to an R1 zone in order to find single family housing, not commercial units.

I object to this commercial property in R1 zoning and I want to know why the city does not honor its zoning requirements. I also want to learn how to investigate this property and determine my course of action. Given this example alone, I don't have faith in any current proposed changes to the zoning code.

Kristina Hufford
2305 Spring Creek