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Background

The 2014 Strategic Assessment

The Objective
In June 2014, the City of Arvada retained Fairfield and Woods, P.C. to provide analysis and recommendations with respect to land development regulation in the City, in anticipation of the adoption of the City’s updated Comprehensive Plan. Fairfield and Woods was tasked with reviewing the City’s Land Development Code (“Code”) from three perspectives:

The “Big Picture.” The first perspective was a comprehensive, “big picture” strategic review of the Code, resulting in recommendations as to: (i) how the Code could be reformed to more effectively implement the City’s adopted land use and transportation plans; (ii) how the procedures in the Code could be made more efficient, while still respecting the values and culture of the community; (iii) how to remove layers of procedure that do not add meaningful value to the resulting development or to the community; (iv) how to add precision to discretionary standards; (v) how to improve the organization and accessibility of the Code; and (vi) how to improve the Code provisions related to signage.

Article 5 and Other Issues. The second perspective was an in-depth review of Article 5 and several issues of pressing concern that were identified by City Staff in early 2014. Article 5 is the article of the Code that addresses the land uses that are allowed, allowed with conditions, or not allowed in each of the City’s zone districts, as well as the standards that are to be applied to certain individual land uses. The issues of immediate concern were the definition of the word “family” in the zoning context, and the City’s standards and procedures for granting “reasonable accommodations” under the Fair Housing Act and Americans with Disabilities Act.

Board of Adjustment. The third perspective was an evaluation and recommendations with respect to the current and future role of the Board of Adjustment in the development review process. The Board of Adjustment is currently tasked with hearing requests for variances (departures from the literal standards of the Code that cannot be accomplished with the City’s administrative minor modifications process). At issue was how the Board should apply the existing variance standards, what factors it may consider, and how those factors should be prioritized and weighted.

The Report
Fairfield and Woods, P.C. delivered a three-volume Strategic Assessment Report in December 2014 that was based on a comprehensive review of the Code and zoning map; summaries of variance decisions; written staff interpretations of various Code provisions; the Comprehensive Plan; the Arvada Transit Station Framework Plan; the Jefferson Center Urban Renewal Plan (as amended); the Northwest Arvada Urban Renewal Plan; the Olde Town Station Urban Renewal Area Urban Renewal Plan (as amended); the Ralston Fields Urban Renewal Plan; the Village Commons Urban Renewal Area Urban Renewal Plan; the Pedestrian and Bicycle Access Plan for the Sheridan Boulevard, Olde Town Arvada, and Arvada Ridge Transit Oriented Development Sites; and Focus Arvada: City Strategic Plan 2014 to 2019. In addition to the document review, Fairfield and Woods
met with residents, business owners, developers, elected and appointed officials, and City Staff to gain strategic insight from a broadly representative cross-section of the community.

As to the “big picture,” the 2014 Strategic Assessment recommended that the City:

Comprehensively re-write the Code to implement the strategic recommendations of this Report (including a comprehensive long-term approach to signs and variances), with the assistance of a broadly representative steering committee to act as a sounding board to ensure that the new Code reflects the community’s shared values and preferences.

The 2014 Strategic Assessment further observed that:

This comprehensive re-write could be expected to take 18 to 30 months, depending upon the level of public outreach and the number and timing of workshops with the Board of Adjustment, Planning Commission, and City Council.

2018 Progress Update

Progress Towards Implementation of the 2014 Strategic Assessment

Since the 2014 Strategic Assessment was delivered, several projects were undertaken to advance its recommendations:

- The recommendations with respect to Article 5 were ultimately implemented through Ordinance 4515, adopted in September 2015. Ordinance 4515 overhauled the land use table in Article 5, replacing outmoded land use classifications with new (and in key instances, more flexible) classifications, harmonizing the use-specific standards in Article 5 with the new classifications, and providing definitions for every land use in the Code.

- In addition to the Article 5 changes, the City Council directed staff to work with Fairfield and Woods to develop a set of design standards for self-storage facilities in the Planned Unit Development-Business/Professional (“PUD-BP”) and Planned Unit Development-Industrial (“PUD-I”) zone districts, so that such facilities could be allowed in those zones in a manner that would be consistent with their desired character. The self-storage standards were adopted as Ordinance 4552 in July 2016.

- The recommendations with respect to sign regulation were implemented through Ordinance 4579, adopted in January 2017. Ordinance 4579 completely restructured and redrafted Section...
6.17 of the Code (pertaining to signs), and updated Section 3.24 (sign permits) and other portions of the Code (including definitions) that related to signage.

Copies of the referenced ordinances, along with the full text of the current Code (which integrates those ordinances), are published on the internet at http://www.municode.com.

**The Code Re-write Project**

In July 2017, the City retained Fairfield and Woods, P.C. and Logan Simpson (which prepared the City’s 2014 Comprehensive Plan) to work with the City to implement the recommendation regarding rewriting the Code. The code re-write project is guided by the following objectives:

- Implement the City’s plans with clear, pragmatic, and responsible regulations;
- Recalibrate, reposition, and reduce the number of zone districts in order to more accurately reflect existing and planned future conditions;
- Encourage a mix of housing types, price points, and lifestyle amenities;
- Protect the City’s diverse community character (by, in part, appropriately balancing building intensity, parking, and landscaping to address community character objectives);
- Promote reinvestment and compatible infill development where appropriate;
- Provide flexibility in developed, developing, and redeveloping areas without imposing unnecessary process; and
- Simplify language, accessibility, and “user-friendliness.”

To verify that the 2014 Strategic Assessment is still pertinent, and to ensure that any changes in direction (or any additional specificity with respect to direction) are identified early in the project, the project team met with a representative Advisory Committee in September and December 2017, held focus group meetings in October and November 2017, and held a joint meeting of the City Council and Planning Commission in October 2017. Input from those meetings is incorporated into this Strategic Assessment Update.

Comments from the focus groups and potential solutions to address the comments are included in Appendix 1.
Findings and Recommendations

Introduction
The 2014 Strategic Assessment noted that Arvada was feeling the type of stress that is expected in communities that are undergoing significant change. If anything, it appears that this condition has intensified over the past three years. On the one hand, there is uneasiness among many residents that the trajectory of change may be to transform Arvada from a place that is familiar, unique, and desirable into a place that is detached from its historical roots and therefore not easily distinguished from any other suburban community. On the other hand, there is also concern that an approach to new development that is too cautious or restrictive will discourage investment and reinvestment, price out current residents or their children, or result in land use patterns that tend to exacerbate fiscal and physical stress by disproportionately burdening City streets, infrastructure, and services. The iterative and interactive process for developing the new Land Development Code will seek to ensure that the new Land Development Code appropriately addresses both of these concerns.

The 2014 Strategic Assessment (Volume I), made a number of recommendations for long-term reforms of the Code. The sections of Volume I that address plan implementation, legal framework, and organization, style, and publication remain equally relevant today. This Strategic Assessment emphasizes and expands upon some of those points, but does not reiterate all of them. Both documents will be used to guide the Code rewrite.

Key Recommendations of this Update

Preserve Existing Neighborhood Character
- Identify “areas of change” and “areas of stability,” and code to incentivize change in the first category, and code to promote stability in the second. Areas of stability may include some areas of limited change and development.
- Protect the character of established, stable neighborhoods by requiring appropriate buffers and transitions at their edges, and by recalibrating the regulations that apply to the neighborhoods to prevent out-of-scale development that encourages land speculation instead of reinvestment in existing buildings.
- For rehabilitation and improvement of existing housing, a good choice for promoting improvements that are consistent with the fabric of the surrounding neighborhood is to create “neighborhood conservation” districts, in which:
  - Bulk and mass are controlled for scrape-off and rebuild projects using building coverage ratios and height constraints, or more sophisticated measures like building height planes or floor area ratios.
  - Setbacks are flexible for reasonable expansions of existing homes. As such, “minor modifications” and variances are not generally needed in order to make improvements to existing buildings.
  - Existing conditions, unless created in violation of the then-existing zoning, are allowed to continue as “conforming.”
The neighborhood conservation strategy utilizes subdistricts based on typical lot sizes and typical development intensities. It is designed so that there is “room to grow” on individual lots, but not to an extent that is obviously out of scale with other homes on the street.

- Consider the role of historic and original Arvada neighborhoods and provide for zoning districts that either preserve or allow context-appropriate remolds, additions and new development.

**Allow for Infill and Redevelopment**
- Define “compatibility” in terms of its constituent parts, and then use those parts in development standards, in effect removing the word “compatibility” from the vocabulary of standards-based decision-making without losing its important influence.
- Allow increased building height in appropriate locations, particularly at key nodes and segments of currently underutilized commercial corridors, transit-oriented development (“TOD”) areas (including expanded TODs), and areas zoned for higher densities.
- For infill development, “compatibility” may be enhanced by applying bulk and mass controls that mitigate the impacts of intensification on surrounding properties. Height planes, which restrict the building envelope of the edges of the lot above a certain height, may be a useful tool for reducing the impacts of tall building walls close to property lines. Landscaping, buffering, and architectural design standards may also be useful in areas that are particularly sensitive to intensification (e.g., historic districts and neighborhoods with a mature urban forest).

**Update the Zoning Districts**
- Reduce dependence upon Planned Unit Development. Simplify the Planned Unit Development (“PUD”) districts. Reduce reliance on planned unit development procedures by creating zones that are flexible with respect to site development, but that reinforce desired community character traits by ensuring a contextually appropriate mix of buildings, landscaping, and pavement.
- Streamline the Clear Creek zoning district, if possible.
- Reduce the overall number of zone districts by consolidating similar districts and eliminating obsolete districts.
- Establish new mixed-use zones to allow flexibility for a range of uses, particularly along major transportation corridors, with a range of densities.
- Create standards that are based on mitigating the physical and functional impacts of proposed uses, and allow a broader range of uses in each non-residential or mixed-use zone district.
- All districts should be named to reflect the intent of the district.

**Mapping the New Organization of Zoning Districts**
- The new organization of zones will require an updated zoning map. With the creation of new zones, existing zones may need to be rezoned to the proposed new zones. It is recommended that the legislative rezoning (i.e., rezoning large areas of the City at one time) be undertaken directly after the adoption of the revised Land Development Code.
Revise the Land Use Regulations

- Update the table of allowed and conditional uses by zone, as needed. Modifications will be needed to address any new uses that may be included, as well as update the table with the new zones. Uses to be evaluated include short-term rentals, light-assembly/manufacturing uses for artisan manufacturing, etc.

- Update the sign code to integrate the new zones.

- Update use-specific standards for new and emerging uses (e.g., live work, artists spaces)

- Create more flexibility with respect to business use of the home (including artist and maker spaces), and address the issue of short-term rental housing (e.g., VRBO/Airbnb).

Address Housing Affordability

- Promote housing diversity by making it easy to obtain approvals for a wide variety of housing types in appropriate locations. The Land Development Code should promote a wide variety of housing types and living arrangements at a full range of price points—without the need to use a planned unit development process. Housing types should include, at a minimum: single-family detached, zero lot line, patio homes, cottages (which could include co-housing), duplex, townhomes, multiplex (3 to 5 unit buildings that look like large single-family homes (called “Urban Homes” in the City’s design Standards)), multifamily, manufactured homes, live-work units, and accessory dwelling units.

- For new (“greenfield”) development or large scale redevelopment, a good choice for promoting housing diversity is the use of a “housing palette.” This technique starts with applying density and open space requirements to achieve a specific unit count within a desired community character classification, and then allow the developer to choose from a variety of housing types to achieve the allowable unit count within the area available for development. This technique supplants most planned unit development approvals.

- Investigate methods such as density and height bonuses in tandem with affordable housing requirements.

- Investigate flexibility with development standards such as dimensional standards and materials requirements that impact housing affordability.

Improve Development Standards

- Revise parking standards and parking reduction standards. Allow as many alternatives as are practical to reduce the number of required parking spaces (particularly on “urban” sites), including such strategies as:
  - Parking studies that justify the reduction in the number of off-street parking spaces;
  - Transportation demand management (“TDM”) credits that are applied to reduce the number of off-street parking spaces;
  - Shared parking “as-of-right” (that is, without the requirement of a discretionary approval);
  - Remote parking;
• Credits for on-street parking; and
• Reductions in the required number of off-street parking spaces based on proximity to transit stops.

• Consider creating two “parking zones”—one for general use and one (which would require fewer parking spaces) for “urban” areas.

• The Code should set out all of the details for the fee-in-lieu of parking in Olde Town.

• Review design standards carefully to ensure that they are not standardizing an architecture for the City—or worse, for the region (e.g., by being too similar to other area jurisdictions). Design standards should require creativity, not prescribed architectural styles.

• Remove non-mandatory language from the design standards and insert it into non-binding guideline documents instead.

• Create a more flexible set of landscaping standards that ensures a certain density of planting but does not tend to standardize the planting program.

• Include standards for “priority pedestrian streets” and “secondary pedestrian streets,” which would also include standards for buildings, landscaping, and site access along the streets; and standards for multi-modal street cross-sections generally.

• Evaluate dimensional and lot coverage standards for each zone.

• Evaluating building and landscape design standards to ensure that they reflect and anticipate current and near-term development and design practices.

• Update provisions related to “reasonable accommodations” to address the types of requests that are frequently granted, such as allowing additional residents in a group home.

• Evaluate how public art can be included in development projects through such tools as public art requirements, density bonus, etc.

• Examine standards related to natural hazards to determine whether it would be practical to clarify performance standards with respect to common natural hazards.

• Refine standards relating to resource stewardship and community resilience.

• Encourage the integration of technological innovation in land development.

**Improve the Development Review Process**

• Empower staff to make development review decisions as much as possible, and require neighborhood meetings or public comment where certain thresholds or conditions are met that justify it.

• Simplify procedure and calibrate application requirements to ensure that investments in project design are commensurate with the level of specificity of the application being considered.

• Develop administrative procedures that capture the essential elements of the planned unit development and conditional use procedures, but do not involve the time, expense, and uncertainty of public hearings.
• The existing referral procedures should be continued and enhanced by listing referral agencies in an appendix to the Code. Applicants should be advised that referral agencies may charge fees for application review.

• The public notice provisions provide appropriate time lines for notice (not too long and not too short), and should be continued.

• Neighborhood meetings should not be categorically required for certain application types. They should be required when development at a certain threshold scale occurs in close proximity to residential neighborhoods.

• Appeals should be filed within a short period after a written decision is issued (in the range of seven to 10 days) and should be processed as soon as practicable (ideally less than 60 days after the filing date).

**Streamline and Make the Code More User-Friendly**

• Focus on the costs, benefits, and practicality of regulation and new Code provisions are drafted and existing Code provisions are redrafted, reformed, or removed.

• Reorganize the Code so that it is easier to use by both the casual user and the real estate or design professional by making information easier to find and understand. All related information should be consolidated (e.g., all definitions in one location, all procedures in one location, etc.).

• Utilize an attractive page layout and new numbering system to present a hierarchy of information that modernizes the Code and makes it more user-friendly.

• Include illustrations and other graphics to explain concepts and regulations.

• Utilize a simple, concise vocabulary and short paragraphs, and avoid unnecessary details in the writing style. Improve clarity by removing conflicting, ambiguous or subjective language.

• Use defined terms to avoid the repeated use of long phrases.

**Issues**

**Coding for All Types of Development**

Arvada is a place where infill development, redevelopment, expansion and improvement of existing buildings, and new development are equally important. As such, the new Code should include tools to ensure that the impacts of each of these types of development are appropriately addressed in a timely, efficient, and fair manner—ensuring that landowners are empowered to creatively meet market demands, solve problems, and make efficient and productive use of their land. The Code should be restructured to provide more focused standards to ensure that infill development, redevelopment, and expansions of existing buildings are both (i) economically realistic and (ii) physically and functionally integrated into their surroundings.

The 2014 Strategic Assessment focused on the “compatibility” of infill development and redevelopment. This Assessment recognizes that there are many areas of the community in which “compatible” infill development or redevelopment means development that, if different from its neighbors in terms of use, bulk, or form, is only incrementally different. That is, “compatible” means “much like what is already there.” However, there are other areas of the community where
what is already there is not the desired future condition. In these areas, infill development and redevelopment will establish a new context, and “compatibility” with the existing context is not a desired outcome. Discussions with the community suggest that “physical and functional integration” of new development into its surroundings is perhaps a better phrase to capture both ideas.

**Emphasizing Community Character**

The restructuring of the Code should focus on “community character,” that is, the relationship among buildings, landscaping, and pavement in a given area in terms of their respective visual dominance. For example, to achieve “urban character,” buildings must be the predominant visual element, and to achieve “rural character,” landscaping and natural open space must be the predominant visual element. The community character focus provides a flexible framework and appropriate regulatory “tools” for new development, infill development, redevelopment, and building expansions.

In the current Code, one set of open space requirements applies to the Clear Creek zoning district, and another set of open space requirements applies to all other zoning districts except Olde Town. Within that framework, different open space requirements apply to different types of uses. For example, a multifamily development that is outside of Olde Town or Clear Creek must include 25 percent open space, regardless of the desired character of its context. This assessment recommends that the City consider the desired character of the context first, and then establish open space requirements to implement that desired character.

**Further Strengthening the Heart of the Code**

*Rethinking the Zoning Districts.* Article 5 is the “heart” of the Code. It sets out which land uses are allowed in which zoning districts. As is typical of zoning codes as they age, the Article grew increasingly complex over the years. The 2015 revision went a long way towards simplification, but in its present condition the Article still “micro-manages” land use. That is because even though the use list is simplified in the left-hand column of the Table of Allowed and Conditional Principal Uses by Zoning District, there are 43 zoning districts (including sub-districts) across the top row.

After the 2015 revision, there are 86 land uses in the land use table. These listed uses, many of which encompassed a number of formerly enumerated items, translate to additional opportunity and less unnecessary micro-management within each zone. However, the micro-management problem still exists City-wide, because the 86 land uses and allocated among 43 distinct zoning districts (resulting in 3,698 individual cells in the land use table!).

The 2014 Strategic Assessment recommendation that “The number of zone districts and subdistricts should be reduced, and the opportunities to use property within each district should, in general, be increased,” holds equally true today. Yet it is important to reiterate that the reduction in the number of zoning districts must be purposeful.

That is, while many zoning districts should be eliminated or consolidated, new zoning districts should also be created. Districts should be created (or consolidated) to recognize that the City has areas of stability and areas of change, which require different regulatory approaches. Areas of stability are more sensitive to changes in physical form or land use, while areas of change often need a disruptive, catalytic conversion of form or land use in order to establish a new and desired development trajectory. This Strategic Assessment anticipates the creation of one or more zones to
promote transit-oriented development (as “mixed-use” centers or primary employment centers); a
zone, with sub-zones, to address existing, stable neighborhoods; and several mixed-use or flexible
residential zones to address areas of change (including, for example, certain nodes on Wadsworth
and certain segments of Ralston Road).

With the conceptual framework for creating and consolidating zones in mind, the work of rethinking
the zoning districts should be focused by the need to simplify—in part, to end up with the smallest
number of zoning districts that will appropriately implement the City’s plans and objectives.

Streamline Zoning in Clear Creek. The Clear Creek zoning district is part of an Intergovernmental
Agreement ("IGA") between the City of Arvada and Jefferson County. The district includes five
subdistricts, but there does not appear to be a continuing rationale for the nuanced distinctions
among them. The City and the project team should work with Jefferson County to amend or
terminate the IGA, in order to allow for streamlining of zoning within the area currently zoned
Clear Creek.

Reallocating Land Uses. With a new set of zoning districts, the project team will have to reallocate
land uses among the zoning districts. That is, decisions about what will be allowed where will
have to be made. Of course, a key objective will be ensuring that the existing condition is not
interrupted. Another key objective will be to increase the economic opportunities within business
and industrial zones to the extent that such an increase is consistent with the community’s shared
values. Increasing the range of opportunities (e.g., allowing low-impact light manufacturing in
highway commercial areas) is a strategy for dealing with the uncertain future of bricks-and-mortar
retail and centralized office uses. Finally, land use table revisions may be used to allow for small-
scale neighborhood retail, service, and restaurant nodes within or on the edges of neighborhoods
should the market (and the neighborhood) support their establishment.

Reducing Dependence upon Planned Unit Development Zones by Creating Mixed-Use and Flexible
Residential Zones. Approximately 39 percent of the land area in Arvada is zoned PUD. In addition,
too much new development in the City is being processed as PUD. Although Arvada has a tradition
of “standards-based” PUD approvals, the Code allows modifications to Code standards within
a PUD. That means that each new PUD is, in effect, a new zoning district, creating long-term
management problems.

Moreover, even with codified PUD development standards, the PUD process is lengthy and
uncertain compared to other standards-based “straight-zoning” procedures. PUD approvals and
modifications may be risky to the developer (due to uncertainty about how standards will be
applied at the public hearing). There is also structural uncertainty about how to apply use-specific
standards within a PUD (in which broad qualitative development standards also apply).

To address these issues this Strategic Assessment recommends: (i) a sharp reduction in the use of
PUD process for development approvals in Arvada; and (ii) simplification of the PUD approval
procedure for those PUDs that remain.

Creating Efficiency and Certainty by Empowering the City’s Professional Staff. In addition to the
recommendation about reducing the number of zoning districts, the 2014 Strategic Assessment
noted that “[t]oo many uses are subject to the conditional use approval procedure, which adds
time, expense, and uncertainty to the development review process.” During the update process,
The proliferation of PUDs has created a circumstance in which unnecessary and redundant procedures are required for many applications that would otherwise be routine; and the preliminary plat procedure is lengthy and includes poorly defined discretionary standards (e.g., “consistency with the Comprehensive Plan” and “implements the intent” of the zoning district).

These existing development approval procedures highlight the need for alternative procedures that create more opportunities for administrative development approval.

**Ensuring Public Participation in Critical Decisions.** A call for more administrative development approvals should not be taken as an end-run around public process. Indeed, this Assessment recognizes that certain land uses, contexts, or intensity changes should trigger early public involvement, with the objective of optimizing how the new development, infill development, redevelopment, or building expansion will physically and functionally integrate into its surroundings and the overall fabric of the community. These details will be worked out during the...
Code development process, and will likely involve the creation of one or two sets of new procedures that, in terms of rigor and public input, fall in between the current “allowed by right” (completely administrative) and “conditional use” (neighborhood meeting, referral agency review, Planning Commission hearing and recommendation, and City Council hearing and decision) processes. These new procedures will help reduce dependence upon PUD process to work out “compatibility” issues.

*Implementing Lessons Learned.* Finally, the work already done on Article 5 should be further refined to address any issues that have arisen with respect to land use definition since 2015, and to reallocate land uses among a new set of zoning districts. The revision of Article 5 should be guided by the original intent of the 2015 revision—to calibrate the Code to current markets and to clarify how use-specific standards are to be applied. The key is still to help open opportunities to reposition properties in appropriate areas of change, and to promote economic development and reinvestment over the long-term.

*Defining “Compatibility”—and Applying It*

The existing Code uses the term “compatible” or “compatibility” in 31 sections. The Code defines the word as:

The characteristics of different uses or activities or design which allow them to be located near or adjacent to each other in harmony. Some elements affecting compatibility include height, scale, mass, and bulk of structures. Other characteristics include pedestrian or

“Compatibility” may encompass a wide range of physical and functional factors that are not currently within the City’s definition of the term.
vehicular traffic, circulation, access and parking impacts. Other important characteristics that affect compatibility are landscaping, lighting, noise, odor, building materials, and building architecture. Compatibility does not mean “the same as.” Rather, compatibility refers to the sensitivity of development proposals in maintaining the character of existing development.

In practice, the application of the word “compatibility” leaves a lot to be desired. The determination of whether two projects are in “harmony” with each other is highly subjective. Consider the analogy of music. One person may enjoy Beethoven while another may enjoy Aretha Franklin, or the Grateful Dead, or the Ramones, or the atonal compositions of Alban Berg, or . . . . In short, what one person considers harmony may be cacophony to someone else.

The Denver block pictured above includes single-family bungalows, townhomes, multifamily, and commercial uses with different forms and architectural styles. Consider how one’s perspective on “compatibility” within this block may be different if the principal planning objective is: (1) preserving the character of an historic, single-family neighborhood; or (2) providing for intensification to accommodate more households; or (3) providing for a variety of housing types in close proximity to services and gathering places.
Compatibility is also problematic when the existing condition is different from the planned condition. The City should consider compatibility standards that advance the City's planning objectives by addressing the context of the proposed development.

This Strategic Assessment recommends that, using the current definition of “compatible” as a starting point (and potentially building upon it), the elements of compatibility should be individually applied as standards, as appropriate to the context of any individual development application. In other words, instead of evaluating whether a new home is “compatible” with an existing home, the decision-maker might evaluate the new home in terms of specific standards for building coverage, height, building articulation, roof pitch, and setbacks.

Finally, this Strategic Assessment recommends that the City consider the use of height planes and other bulk controls to protect the integrity of stable neighborhoods at their edges.

**Encouraging Diversity in Housing Types and Protecting the Character of Established, Stable Neighborhoods**

With respect to housing, the existing Code does not necessarily stand in the way of housing diversity, but it does relatively little to encourage it. A new, four-pronged approach to housing should be considered:

- First, the number of housing types addressed by the Code should be increased (to allow for a variety of formats, including very small homes and micro-apartments), and the procedure for approval of a development with mixed housing types should be simplified. Put simply, planned unit development should not be the principal mechanism for approval of residential developments with mixed housing types. The 2014 Strategic Assessment provides details about regulatory framework that addresses density, open space, and a palette of housing options. This Strategic Assessment encourages the use of those approaches.

- Second, lots that are proposed for redevelopment in existing, stable neighborhoods should be subject to standards that ensure that the new home is either consistent with (that is, not a jarring departure from) the existing character of the neighborhood, or is consistent with the anticipated (and planned) future character of the neighborhood. Holiday in Boulder is an example of a neighborhood with a highly diverse collection of housing types, including single-family detached, accessory dwelling units, co-housing, multifamily, and townhomes. A key recommendation of this Strategic Assessment is to allow for this type of neighborhood to be approved without a PUD process.
neighborhood. This means that the standards that apply in residential zones with established, stable neighborhoods should be calibrated more closely to the existing condition (with room for reasonable expansion of existing homes). Diversification of the housing stock in established stable neighborhoods is not an objective of the Code rewrite.

- Third, lots in existing neighborhoods that have buildings that are proposed for expansion or modification should be subject to flexible standards that encourage the improvement, provided that it does not create a safety problem, overwhelm the street, or result in development that is otherwise a jarring departure from the character of the surrounding neighborhood.

- Fourth, existing stable neighborhoods should be “protected zones” with respect to adjacent development. That is, development that borders on existing neighborhoods should provide effective transitions to reduce impacts on the existing neighborhood. Bulk planes, buffer yard requirements, and setbacks are illustrative “tools” that can be used for this purpose.

**Improving Housing Affordability**

*Costs and Benefits of Regulation.* Housing affordability is a more complicated problem than housing diversity. Affordability is affected by many macro-level trends that the City does not control. However, zoning regulations and subdivision requirements may increase the marginal cost of providing housing, and the potential cost impacts of regulations should be taken into account as they are developed. Several focus group participants echoed the sentiments of national industrial site selectors—telling the project team that employers are seeking locations where their employees can afford to live.

To illustrate the cost-benefit problem, take the City’s current single-family and duplex design standards. These standards require rear facades that face public streets (e.g., on double-frontage lots) to have:

- brick, stone, or stucco cladding in a minimum amount equivalent to 50% of the façade, (excluding windows, doors, trim and vents) from the average grade to the highest eave or all brick up to 9'-6” above the average grade, whichever is lowest.

In terms of materials alone, brick tends to retail for more than six times the cost of high quality cement fiber siding on a per square foot basis. Installation of brick, stone, and stucco also require more time, preparation, additional materials (e.g., mortar), and more expensive labor than siding. As a result of this standard, the cost of constructing the home on the double-frontage lot increases by several thousand dollars.

This required investment in aesthetic treatments could be justified if it significantly improves the character of the adjacent arterial or collector street, catalyzing a “virtuous cycle” of reinvestment. But that is unlikely because under the current Code, the builder is also required to screen that rear-facing elevation from view from arterial and collector streets using a combination of landscaping and a fence or wall. Not only does the screen markedly reduce the visibility of the bricks, stone, or stucco, but it also costs a few thousand more dollars to install.

This example is not to say that aesthetic regulations should not have a place in the Code. It is to say, instead, that aesthetic regulations should be well thought-out, and should not require investments that are either not worth it, or cancel out the benefits of other required investments.
Practicality of Regulation. In addition to the cost of regulation, the practicality of regulation should also be taken into account during the drafting process. Again by way of example and not limitation, the Code currently contains provisions related to affordable housing. The stated purpose of these provisions is “to provide a greater supply of new single-family housing on Small Lots for individuals and families seeking relatively affordable housing in the City of Arvada.” Yet the Code provisions that follow actually limit the supply of small lots.

Specifically, the provisions require subdivisions with at least 10 single-family or duplex lots to include 10 to 20 percent “small lots,” depending upon the context. In no event are more than 20 percent of the lots allowed to be “small lots.” The Code defines a “small lot” as:

- A lot that is less than 6,000 square feet in size and is equal to or larger than: (A) 4,000 square feet, or (B) the average size of all platted single family lots located within a ¼ mile radius of the subject property, whichever is less.

Of the allowed “small lots,” the maximum number that may be less than 5,000 square feet is 50 percent. To illustrate, in an effort to promote affordable housing in a 100 lot greenfield subdivision, the Code requires at least 15 (minimum number of “small lots” in a greenfield development is 15 percent) but not more than 20, “small lots.” Since not more than half of the small lots are allowed to be less than 5,000 square feet, the breakdown of lots in the subdivision will be:

- 80 lots that are at least 6,000 square feet in area;
- 10 lots that are more than 5,000 square feet, up to 6,000 square feet in area; and
- 10 lots that are between 4,000 square feet and 5,000 square feet.

With today’s land costs in Arvada, those 10 lots that are between 4,000 and 5,000 square feet, developed with a single-family home, will likely sell for more than $260,000. Lots that could provide for “affordable” single-family development would have to be smaller than the Code allows. This is not to say that the Code should not include provisions to encourage small lot development. Instead it is to say that if the Code states a purpose to increase the supply of affordable small lots, then it should include regulations that also actually promote that objective.

Building Height. Building on the previous example, if land costs can be reduced on a per unit basis by allowing increased height for affordable multifamily development in appropriate locations, the opportunity to build products that are affordable to lower income people begins to take shape. This Strategic Assessment recommends allowing increased building height for multifamily development at strategic nodes on major corridors (on the order of five stories, and in some cases, potentially more), and in particular, those corridors that may be better served by transit in the future.

Parking. The current parking requirements for multifamily residential uses are 2.2 spaces per dwelling unit if centralized parking is used, and 2.5 spaces per dwelling unit if centralized parking is not used. There are some variations—efficiency units require only one parking space per unit, and housing for the elderly requires one space per two dwelling units.

Parking is expensive to build and maintain, and parking regulations that are not well calibrated can not only add thousands (or tens of thousands) of dollars of additional cost on a per-unit basis, but they can also reduce the opportunity to build density because they occupy land that could be used
for buildings. Currently, the Code does not provide for reductions in parking requirements based on context (e.g., access to services and transit) or housing affordability (e.g., housing that is restricted to low income families) unless the project is approved using the Planned Unit Development process. This Strategic Assessment recommends that the City re-evaluate its parking standards and specifically allow for reduced parking requirements for low-income housing.

**Accessory Dwelling Units.** The Code currently allows accessory dwelling units (“ADUs”) in all zones where single-family dwelling units are allowed. Generally, the standards are reasonable and promote the development of ADUs. The only provision of some concern to this Strategic Assessment is the owner-occupancy requirement (either the principal building or the ADU must be owner-occupied). The owner-occupancy requirement is difficult to enforce and does not take into account unexpected changes in residents’ lives that may require them to move, potentially resulting in a code violation if they do not choose to sell their property.

**Group Homes.** The state of Colorado allows local governments to require 750 feet of spacing between certain types of group homes, presumably in order to ensure that they do not form “critical masses” that affect neighborhood function. This Strategic Assessment points out that a circle with a radius of 750 feet occupies a land area of slightly more than 40 acres. Moreover, 750 feet may be a noticeable distance along a block face, but in many cases in Arvada, a 750 foot distance from a rear lot line restricts development of other group homes up to three parallel streets away. It is highly unlikely that residents of the next block over that do not share a rear lot line or corner with the group home will ever know that the group home exists. Consequently, this Strategic Assessment recommends reevaluating the spacing requirements for group homes in order to increase options for special needs populations.

**Recalibrating and Adding Flexibility to Parking Standards**

**Revise and Recalibrate the Parking Standards.** It is fundamental that parking “drives” development. The City’s parking regulations (outside of Olde Town) are relatively rigid and do little to encourage alternative modes of transportation. Moreover, the land uses in the parking table do not correspond to the land uses in the land use tables. That is, the 49 land uses for which parking standards are specified in Article 6 of the Code do not line up with the 86 land uses that are set out in the land use table in Article 5.

This Strategic Assessment recommends creating a parking standard for every land use that is listed in the land use table, so that there is no confusion as to what parking standards apply to any particular use. All parking standards should be evaluated to ensure that the minimum standards do
not require significantly more parking than is typically needed to serve the use. Minimum landscape standards are a more direct way of achieving environmental and aesthetic objectives—leaving the balance of building and parking up to the landowner.

*Provide Additional Opportunities for Parking Reductions.* A revised code should include opportunities to reduce the number of required off-street parking spaces in all areas of the City based on: (i) a parking study; (ii) participation in transportation demand management (“TDM”) programs; (iii) as-of-right, easily calculated reductions in overall parking requirements for mixed-use development based on standardized shared parking tables; (iv) remote parking; or (v) credits for on-street parking.

**Promoting Resilience and Resource Stewardship**
The Code includes many provisions that address natural resources and environmental quality, including:

- Environmental performance standards for vibration, air pollution, odors, electromagnetic radiation, re and explosion, and materials and waste handling;
- Strong standards for tree protection and mitigation of the impacts of tree removal;
- High standards for the size and quality of new trees and shrubs;
- Standards for species diversity (which provide visual interest and mitigate impacts when a particular species of trees is affected by insects or disease);
- Recognition that significant landscape features should be preserved during site planning;
- Strong standards for water-wise landscaping;
- Required standards for floodplains and flood damage prevention;
- Typical standards for drainage and erosion control; and
- A mixed set of standards (some strong, some poorly defined) for addressing development in areas with natural hazards.

The Code does not include:

- Incentives or material flexibility with respect to solar energy systems (photovoltaics) or other on-site renewal energy generation (e.g., small wind, geothermal). The City should consider the question of whether installation of photovoltaic panels justifies tree removal or reduced tree planting, setback adjustments, height adjustments, etc.
- Provisions to address and facilitate the establishment of temporary uses after disasters, for example, temporary housing or debris storage and processing.

In terms of Code improvements:

- Comprehensive Plan policy R-5.1 (Water-Wise Landscaping) suggests that the City “Examine changes to the Land Development Code to further increase the use of water-wise landscaping and to ensure that plans were built and are operating per specifications.” This means that,
potentially, refinement of the water-wise standard and refinement of the enforcement procedure should be considered.

- The standards related to natural hazards should be examined in detail to determine whether it would be practical to clarify performance standards with respect to common natural hazards.

**Addressing Business Use of the Home**

The is a growing demand for flexibility in terms of the use of residential property for business purposes, including such uses as home offices, artist studios, home-based day care, home-based businesses, vacation or short-term rental housing, and live-work units.

- Ordinance 4515 established “live-work unit” as a conditional use in nine zoning districts. The conditional use process and associated standards may be a disincentive for the development of this product. The allocation of where live-work units should be allowed, and the standards that should be applied to them, will be revisited to encourage their development.

- Home offices and home-based businesses are subject to the standards of Section 5.3.4, which are probably more restrictive than necessary to protect the character and function of residential neighborhoods. These standards should be revisited with the objective of providing additional opportunity for the business use of the home.

- There are no current provisions for short-term rentals. This is an emerging topic in land use, and should be considered during the code rewrite process.

**Reasonable Accommodations**

Federal law requires the City to provide “reasonable accommodations in rules, policies, practices, or services, when such accommodations may be necessary to afford such [disabled] person [or person associated with a disabled person] equal opportunity to use and enjoy a dwelling.” Currently, the City offers reasonable accommodations in two ways: through the administrative “minor modifications” procedures, and through the application of standards related to group homes. This Strategic Assessment echoes the 2014 Strategic Assessment, and recommends increasing the level of flexibility of City Staff to provide “reasonable accommodations,” provided that the applicant submits acceptable documentation of the need for those accommodations.

A query on VRBO.COM for vacation rentals available during the second week of January, 2018 shows that there are a number of short-term / vacation rentals operating in Arvada. These short-term rentals are not necessarily a problem, but their impacts should be evaluated during the Code re-write.
Sign Code
The Sign Code will require a minor update to address changes in the zoning districts.

Restructuring—and Simplifying—Procedure
Procedures should be simplified, articulated, and streamlined so that they are well understood by all who would participate, and further, so that value is added at each step in each process. The corollary is that the development review process should not include steps that do not materially enhance the quality of the result. As to procedures:

• Application requirements should be keyed to the level of detail that is necessary to process the particular application. That is, preliminary plans should not have to include large amounts of detail.

• The existing referral procedures should be continued and enhanced by listing referral agencies in an appendix to the Code. To the extent practicable, applicants should be notified that referral agencies may have their own requirements (e.g., review fees, administrative fees, application requirements, engineering standards, and application procedures).

• To the extent possible, review cycles should be managed to shorten the review process.

• The public notice provisions provide appropriate time lines for notice (not too long and not too short), and should be continued.

• Neighborhood meetings should be required when development at a certain threshold scale occurs in close proximity to residential neighborhoods, as opposed to being required categorically for certain types of development review.

• The minor subdivision process should be expanded to include larger subdivisions.

• One or two new categories of administrative decision-making should be developed, which would apply locational, design, or operational standards to applications, and which would potentially include a public notice and comment period or neighborhood meeting. Many current conditional uses would then be reclassified to these new administrative review categories.

• Appeals should be filed within a short period after a decision is issued (in the range of seven to 14 days) and should processed as soon as practicable. Ideally, an appellant should have “one bite” at an administrative appeal (i.e., if the first appeal is to the Planning Commission, there should not be a second appeal to City Council).

Reorganizing and Refining the Code
Organizationally, the Code should be structured to ensure that access and navigation are intuitive. Substance, procedure, definitions, and enforcement provisions should be separated and well-organized under headings and subheadings. Illustrations and tables should be used to present complex ideas.
Conclusion

Codes have a relatively predictable “shelf-life.” Over time, they tend to become increasingly complex as amendments that respond to the immediate issues of the day bring different vocabularies, approaches, procedures, and perspectives into the mix. There is a point at which all codes should be re-examined and comprehensively re-written. The 2014 Strategic Assessment concluded that the Arvada Code has reached that point, and this Strategic Assessment echoes that conclusion.

This Strategic Assessment document should be used to frame the further discussions that will take place during the development of a proposed new Land Development Code for the City. During the Code development process, a series of issue outlines will be created to provide additional details about the recommendations of this Assessment, in order to focus the discussions of the project participants.
## Appendix 1: Summary of Focus Groups Issues and Identification of Potential Strategies for the LDC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issues Raised in Focus Groups</th>
<th>Potential Land Development Code Solutions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1-1</strong> Boards and Commissions Focus Group</td>
<td>- Revise the zoning districts, uses and development standards to promote a variety of housing types.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Issues Raised in Focus Groups</td>
<td>Potential Land Development Code Solutions</td>
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<tr>
<td>disillusioned.</td>
<td>development approval.</td>
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| 1-9 Consider the environment and sustainability, such as increased impervious areas with new development. | - Address environmental considerations and resiliency and review floodplain requirements.  
- Review landscape standards to ensure that water conservation is addressed. |
| 1-10 Align the LDC update with the policies in the Comprehensive Plan and the other approved City Plans. | - Evaluate policies in the Comprehensive Plan and other City approved plans, and translate the relevant policies into development standards, changes in zoning, and other actions in the updated code.  
- If necessary, amend the Comprehensive Plan to reflect the LDC update.  
- Remap zoning districts to they reflect the future land uses in the Comprehensive Plan. |
| 1-11 Ensure there are street connections and reduced barriers for biking. | - Include street typologies, where appropriate, emphasize complete streets, pedestrian connections, and include bicycle parking requirements in new developments. |
| 1-12 Current code is difficult to understand. | - Rewrite and reorganize the code so that is logically organized, simple to understand, and well-illustrated with graphics that present important information. |
| **2 Development Process Focus Group** | |
| 2-1 The approval process is too long for certain projects and doesn’t allow for submittals within the four-week block. These timelines extend the length and cost of a project. | - The review process introduced in the spring of 2016 will be reviewed on its one-year anniversary. The LDC update process will consider revisions to the development review process. The LDC update will also evaluate and consolidate the zoning districts and determine the applicable approval process requirements. |
| 2-2 Requirements for the Preliminary Development Plan (PDP) are too detailed. | - The requirements for the PDP will be reviewed. |
| 2-3 City Council is making decisions on projects from the dais on the PDP, in particular. This creates unpredictability and questionable compliance with the code and Comprehensive Plan policies. | - Review the approval process options for site plans, plats, preliminary and final development plans, rezoning, annexations, and other approvals and identify the preferred options.  
- Strengthen the code to provide predictability and continuity. |
| 2-4 PDPs should be conceptual in nature. Currently, too much detail is required, the costs to prepare are high, and there is uncertainty at City Council. | - Evaluate the requirements for PDPs and Final Development Plans (FDPs). |
| 2-5 The process of preliminary plats is too long as well, and they are required to be too detailed. | - Evaluate the requirements for preliminary and final plats. |
| 2-6 Straight zones are much better than Planned Unit Developments (PUDs). PUDs should be used for the unique projects that don’t fit within a standard zone. There are issues with build-out of long term PUDs. | - Evaluate and consolidate the zoning districts.  
- Evaluate the options for converting PUDs to straight zones.  
- Evaluate types of projects to be considered for PUD zoning. |
| 2-7 The process should allow comments from Arvada residents. The public process should conclude at Planning Commission. However, it was also noted that referral groups have too much clout. | - Evaluate and provide methods for public input according to the various types of plans and approval processes. |
| 2-8 There is a need to coordinate better with the Arvada Fire Protection District (AFPD) and ditch companies. | - Review and evaluate coordination and referral processes.  
- Consider treating input from referrals as comments. |
### Issues Raised in Focus Groups

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<tr>
<td>2-9</td>
<td>Staff should administer the code through administrative review. If a project meets the code and the Comprehensive Plan, Council should not be able to deny or make design conditions.</td>
<td>Allow for administrative review and approval on a range of plans and plats.&lt;br&gt;Consider increased use of master (or sketch) plans that are reviewed by Planning Commission and Council, with individual site plans approved administratively.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2-10</td>
<td>Need an avenue if the developer disagrees with staff or Planning Commission.</td>
<td>Evaluate appeal and call-up procedures to Council.</td>
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<td>2-11</td>
<td>The existing code leaves too many things open for interpretation. The better the code is written, the easier it is to get through the process.</td>
<td>Strengthen the requirements and standards, and remove inconsistencies in language and intent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-12</td>
<td>Major issue is the edge treatment, particularly for infill development. Current infill standards may not reflect community views, leading to backlash in public meetings.</td>
<td>Strengthen the design standards for edge and transition areas, for both new development and infill.</td>
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### Potential Land Development Code Solutions

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<td>3-1</td>
<td>Need more diverse housing that is affordable in Arvada. Increase the type and density of housing allowed.</td>
<td>Provide for a wide range of housing types, including cottage cluster, micro units, co-housing, tiny homes, etc. with appropriate parking ratios.</td>
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<td>3-2</td>
<td>Encourage incentives into the code to help reduce the cost and risk to developers (e.g., by reducing fees, etc.). Include an affordable housing component in all residential developments.</td>
<td>Evaluate density bonuses and other methods to encourage density and affordability.&lt;br&gt;Evaluate development fees (e.g., require a fee per square foot of new residential development).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-3</td>
<td>Height restrictions in Arvada hinder the ability to construct most multifamily housing products that would be more affordable. Incentivize building affordable housing by offering height exceptions</td>
<td>Identify locations where height can be increased to allow taller, higher density housing.&lt;br&gt;Consider incentives that support the development of affordable housing.</td>
</tr>
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<td>3-4</td>
<td>Standards such as lot coverage and setbacks, open space and landscaping requirements, limit the number of units that can be built.</td>
<td>Revise required setbacks and other dimensional standards to make small sites buildable and allow higher densities.&lt;br&gt;Review and revise the open space requirements for multifamily.&lt;br&gt;Provide for options in building materials and landscaping requirements that can impact costs and affect housing affordability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-5</td>
<td>The city should map out priority areas/parcels that are available within the city to build affordable housing on.</td>
<td>Review the maps that have already been compiled by the Community Development Department and assess whether or how this could be reflected in the zoning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-6</td>
<td>Rezone big box commercial areas to mixed-use zone district. Mixed-used offers opportunities to increase the density near services.</td>
<td>Create a new mixed-use district for infill and redevelopment.&lt;br&gt;Determine appropriate design standards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-7</td>
<td>Treat the edges and encourage transitions between different building types and scales.</td>
<td>Evaluate and revise setbacks, heights, landscaping and uses in buffer and setback areas.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3-8</td>
<td>Prioritize TOD/transit areas for affordable housing as well as locations with bus routes.</td>
<td>Consider height and diversity of housing types within transit and transportation corridors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-9</td>
<td>Zoning should try to protect established neighborhoods from experiencing infill, redevelopment, or gentrification.</td>
<td>Designate stable neighborhoods with a limited range of redevelopment and infill opportunities.&lt;br&gt;Evaluate options for “urban” and “suburban” residential zoning districts.&lt;br&gt;Evaluate options for a neighborhood conservation zoning district.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-10</td>
<td>Continue to encourage ADUs.</td>
<td>Review option to increase size of ADUs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-11</td>
<td>Reduce the 750 ft. spacing between group homes.</td>
<td>This will be evaluated.</td>
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### New Neighborhoods Focus Group

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<tr>
<td>Issues Raised in Focus Groups</td>
<td>Potential Land Development Code Solutions</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-1 Factors that increase costs include high land costs (allowing smaller lots helps), irrigation and fees.</td>
<td>• Review fees for housing types such as cottage housing and pocket neighborhoods.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Evaluate the preferred minimum size for lots, given different housing types.</td>
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<td>• Promote xeric landscaping approaches for both residential and commercial uses.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4-2 More flexibility is needed with zone districts to allow a variety of housing types. Need to be able to adjust density and add product such as townhomes, which increases affordability. There is a demand for condos and smaller lots. Also, opportunity for tiny home villages and senior housing.</td>
<td>• Evaluate expanding the range of uses within the zoning districts, and whether form-based is appropriate.</td>
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<td>• Assess the zoning districts and housing types such as cottage housing, tiny homes, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4-3 Walk-out design standards for units within public view are onerous and silly. The number of units allowed in a row.</td>
<td>• This will be reviewed. Determine other options and design standards that are appropriate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-4 The parks and open space requirements should maintain native species and allow for drop systems.</td>
<td>• This will be considered.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-5 Fees are a major reason why we can’t build attainable housing.</td>
<td>• Fees are one factor. Through the update, other factors such as parking requirements, requirements for façade materials, and other factors that may increase the cost of a project, will be reviewed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-6 Arvada offers no incentive to build affordable housing.</td>
<td>• Evaluate the possibility of incentives such as density bonuses, and other incentive types.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-7 Engagement and education to the public is a major piece to gain approval.</td>
<td>• Identify points in the review process where public input can be obtained. Identify how the new and evolving registered neighborhood process can be included as referrals for new projects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-8 Public hearings allow for politics to come into play on details that should be addressed with the code. Public hearings in Arvada make it hard to develop here.</td>
<td>• Develop regulations that are clear, concise and easy to interpret that reflect the Comprehensive Plan and other approved plans.</td>
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<td>• Draft a Code that provides regulations and standards that are predictable for staff to administer.</td>
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<td>4-9 A clear and understandable code should make the community comfortable with staff approvals.</td>
<td>• See 4-8.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4-10 Increase the number of lots allowed for a minor subdivision and don’t include tracts.</td>
<td>• Assess increasing the maximum number of lots for a minor subdivision.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-11 Planning Commission should have more power over land use approvals. Planning Commission and City Council hearings are redundant</td>
<td>• Evaluate situations where Planning Commission provides the final approval for a project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-12 Neighborhood meetings help engage the neighbors and build trust and allow developers to know what is popular and unpopular with a project.</td>
<td>• See 4-7.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>• Evaluate when neighborhood meetings are held for administrative approvals.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4-13 The Outline Development Plan (ODP) process should be flexible to adapt to a changing market over the years.</td>
<td>• Consider revisions to the requirements for an ODP, recognizing that it is a master plan for an area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-14 Greenfield development problems include traffic congestion, limited connections between neighborhoods, and too much separation between residential and commercial (e.g., restaurants) areas.</td>
<td>• Ensure all districts allow appropriate land uses.</td>
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<td>• Encourage mixed-use developments and town centers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-15 Building commercial at the same time as residential is costly without having people living there yet.</td>
<td>• Recognize the impact of market demand on development. Provide for flexibility in ODPs to reflect...</td>
</tr>
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</table>
### Issues Raised in Focus Groups

| 4-16 | **Help decrease driving by creating more neighborhood centers and locating services closer to higher density neighborhoods. Village of Five Parks is an example.** |

### Potential Land Development Code Solutions

- **Ensure all districts allow appropriate land uses. Encourage mixed-use developments and town centers in suburban areas as well as in the original Arvada neighborhoods.**

### Non-residential Focus Group

| 5-1 | Why do projects need to go to Council if the use is allowed or the project meets code requirements? This puts developers at a competitive disadvantage, delays opening of businesses, is expensive, and creates uncertainty. This also limits opportunities for small companies and developers since the process is very expensive. This can limit opportunities for small, innovative projects. |
| 5-2 | PUDs need to be geared towards unique projects, not the typical commercial development. It takes over a year for the approval process, which is too long. |
| 5-3 | For the subdivision process the current Minor Subdivision limits are too small. Changes to subdivisions should be handled by staff. Public improvements should be separated from subdivision. |
| 5-4 | Too much detail is required at the PDP stage. This requires amendments through public hearings for minor changes. The PDP looks like the Final Development Plan, and it really should be more conceptual. Need to find a balance of regulations, generalize the PDP process, and allow staff level amendments. |
| 5-5 | Projects could have been reviewed and approved administratively under standard zoning rather than PUD. Need to have flexibility to respond to the market, through change of use, density, etc. Need opportunities of mix of uses or change of uses. |
| 5-6 | Mixed-use zoning is the direction to go. Retail is changing, so flexibility to address aging centers is necessary. Look at allowing light industrial in commercial districts. The market is going to continue to change so flexibility in uses is needed. |
| 5-7 | City Council should focus on policy and larger issues, such as rezoning. Council should not focus on design or small details and should relinquish control on site plans. |
| 5-8 | There is a role for the public to comment. Recognize that better projects are the result when the public is included. Need to have a balance between public input and administrative review. Need to have standards that work and protect neighborhoods. Consider that the Planning Commission is the approval body, and with required neighborhood meetings for project. There has been a problem with a few vocal neighbors that don’t represent the vast majority of the public. |

### See 2-4, 4-7 and 5-1.
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>5-9 An increase to the 35 ft. height limit would be appropriate, however the context is important.</td>
<td>• Identify and evaluate locations for redevelopment that can be higher density, and with buildings taller than 35 ft. Consider the implications of density at these locations on traffic, adjacent neighborhoods, and the overall benefit to the city.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-10 Would like to see commercial uses in neighborhoods to create more walkable areas.</td>
<td>• Identify neighborhoods which could have local commercial uses, and assess whether this would be economically viable, an enhancement to the neighborhood, and locally supported. • Build on the idea of neighborhood centers that may be adjacent to established neighborhoods, and which are connected to the neighborhoods with sidewalks and trails.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-11 Mixed-use or more intense development may be an issue in existing neighborhoods. Need to address food deserts.</td>
<td>• Ensure commercial and mixed-use zoning provides for grocery retail. Investigate ways to reduce any barriers that small retail and convenience stores may face to carry food goods and produce. Evaluate parking requirements for such businesses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-12 View corridors should be considered by protecting significant public views, but not private views.</td>
<td>• Consider establishing specific view corridors from important public spaces.</td>
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<td>5-13 The code needs to be understandable to the general public – keep the code simple.</td>
<td>• A goal of the LDC update is to rewrite the code in clear and understandable language. • Introduce graphics and visual aids (e.g., summary tables, illustrations, flowcharts, etc.) to explain the regulations. • Implement a new page layout and clear numbering system for the LDC that lays out a clear hierarchy of information.</td>
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<td>5-14 Transportation corridors could have more intense development, such as mixed-use, commercial, light industrial. Need to ensure there are proper transitions into adjacent residential areas.</td>
<td>• Include mixed-use zoning in high traffic volume corridors. Evaluate including a range of commercial and light industrial uses in these areas. Develop standards to address transition zones for density and height between high intensity uses and adjacent residential neighborhoods.</td>
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### 6 Olde Town/New Town/Historic Neighborhoods/Ralston Road Focus Group

<p>| 6-1 Stocke-Walter and Columbine neighborhoods should have a historic designation and be included within the design guidelines. If this cannot happen, then maybe specific zoning for these areas can help maintain some of the historic qualities. | • Evaluate whether historic designation and/or design guidelines are appropriate. • Consider a conservation-type residential zoning. |
| 6-2 Consider the use of Historic districts and Conservation areas to preserve the character of neighborhoods. | • Consider various types of residential zoning that include conservation elements to protect the character of existing neighborhoods. These districts may allow residential in-filling and expansion of existing homes. |
| 6-3 Would it be possible to rezone properties along Ralston Road to commercial or mixed-use? Ralston Road needs more attention to its design and character. Should the height limits along Ralston Road be adjusted? Need to be sensitive to the adjacent neighborhoods. There is the opportunity for redevelopment at the intersection of Ralston and Wadsworth. | • Reconsider the role of Ralston Road as a connection between Olde Town and Ralston Creek North. Evaluate the redevelopment potential including increasing the height, including a mix of uses, and expanding zoning district to allow redevelopment. |
| 6-4 Balance mobility and parking with the historic | • Evaluate parking requirements, in-lieu fees, etc. for |</p>
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<td>structures in the Olde Town zoning district.</td>
<td>Olde Town. Also consider bike parking and connections to bike routes. Allow for alternative parking types (i.e., bike and car share to count towards or reduction towards parking requirements).</td>
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<tr>
<td>6-5 Views are important from Grandview Avenue.</td>
<td>• Consider formalizing viewpoints and view corridors from important public places, specifically the transit plaza adjacent to the Olde Town Station.</td>
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| 6-6 Olde Wadsworth Blvd. could serve as a major pedestrian and bike connection between Olde Town and Memorial Park. | • Evaluate the treatment of the sidewalks and setbacks in these areas.  
  • Incorporate the Bicycle Master Plan route recommendations for pedestrian and bike connections. |
| 6-7 Wayfinding systems should be incorporated into the design of a site in order to make the parking work. | • Evaluate how to include wayfinding systems in the LDC. |
| 6-8 Parking needs to be addressed for redevelopment, with ideas such as shared parking. Overflow parking into the adjacent neighborhoods is becoming an issue. Bikes and pedestrians should also be incorporated into the site planning for new developments. | • Evaluate minimum parking requirements for land uses, adjust existing parking requirements for shared parking, valet parking, etc. where appropriate.  
  • Evaluate bicycle parking (both inside and outside of buildings) and electrical vehicle charging station requirements. |
| 6-9 Provide options for live/work units, offices, and townhomes in these areas.                | • The LDC allows live-work in “commercial” districts such as most PUD districts and all Olde Town districts. It is a conditional use in several of the straight zone districts. This can be reviewed to determine whether existing regulations should be improved.  
  • Townhomes are currently allowed in a limited number of straight zones. This can be reviewed.  
  • Consider home occupations utilizing accessory structures and garages (including artist and maker spaces). |
| 6-10 Review the maximum lot coverage for single-family homes.                                  | • Review lot coverage requirements for all the zoning districts. |
| 6-11 The bulk, scale and overall design of large buildings should be regulated.                 | • Review the bulk plane requirements and determine where applicable. |
| 6-12 Require bike parking and spaces, as well as bike-oriented public improvements.            | • Evaluate bicycle parking requirements accompanying bike-oriented public improvements. |
| 6-13 Consider specific regulations for home additions that address bulk and scale.            | • Evaluate the existing development standards for residential additions and amend, as needed. This may be very important if there are conservation-designated neighborhoods and zoning districts. |

### 7 Infill, Corridors, Allison Street & Established Neighborhoods Focus Group

| 7-1 Not all neighborhoods want diverse housing or diversity in character. | • Identify neighborhoods for conservation-type zoning and consider revisions to height and development standards to preserve the existing character. Determine if form-based is appropriate |
| 7-2 In some places, the 35 ft. height limit is too tall. In other places, it is restrictive. | • Review the 35 ft. height limit and its benefits and restrictions in all the zoning districts. |
| 7-3 Improve the bulk plane requirements                                                  | • See 6-11. |
| 7-4 The scale, housing style, roof pitch, etc. should match the existing character of the neighborhood. Need to balance diversity with existing character. | • Review development standards in the residential zoning districts.  
  • Consider a conservation-oriented residential zoning district for certain neighborhoods. |
<p>| 7-5 Additions and expansions to existing homes should                                         | • See 6-13. |</p>
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<td>be allowed, but be contextually sensitive.</td>
<td>• Analyze the existing character of neighborhoods and consider a conservation-oriented zoning district and development standards.</td>
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<td>7-6 Include “Neighborhood Conservation” as a goal. Consider the difference between “stable” and “in-flux” neighborhoods.</td>
<td>• Review height and zoning in New Town.</td>
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<td>7-7 Consider redevelopment opportunities in New Town on big box sites.</td>
<td>• See 6-9.</td>
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<td>7-8 Live/work should be allowed.</td>
<td>• See 6-8.</td>
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<td>7-9 Increase the loading/unloading area standards for higher density areas. Evaluate parking requirements, shared parking and incentives.</td>
<td>• Evaluate incentives and requirements to increase opportunities for housing attainability. • Include a range of housing types (e.g., cottage housing, townhomes, small lot housing, etc.) where appropriate to expand housing diversity.</td>
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<td>7-10 Include affordable housing incentives.</td>
<td>• Consider including low impact stormwater and drainage standards.</td>
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<td>7-11 Consider water resources as well as stormwater and drainage issues.</td>
<td>• Evaluate developing new mixed-use zoning districts for large infill and greenfield sites. • For New Town, see 7-7.</td>
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<td>7-12 Larger sites should offer both residential and commercial uses at a neighborhood scale. Encourage different/diverse development south of “the hill” from Olde Town</td>
<td>• Review standards for the A-1 district. • Evaluate provisions for community gardens and related uses, such as small scale retail, sales stands, etc.</td>
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<td>8 Planning Staff</td>
<td>• Assess expanding range of uses in infill and redevelopment sites, within a new mixed-use zoning district.</td>
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<td>8-1 A-1 district needs to be reviewed (no need for 5 ac. lots), and consider community gardens.</td>
<td>• Assess compatibility within neighborhoods as well as the transition between stable neighborhoods and higher-density infill redevelopment.</td>
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<td>8-2 Could be possible to include light manufacturing into commercial centers with redevelopment. This would address flexibility and long-term needs. Need to define the types of industrial.</td>
<td>• Evaluate buffers, particularly if uses within or adjacent to residential neighborhoods have minimal impacts from their activities and determine appropriate standards.</td>
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<td>8-3 Compatibility would include mass, scale, placement of some characteristics (e.g., porches), roof pitch.</td>
<td>• Review the bulk plane requirements. • See 6-11.</td>
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<td>8-4 Define buffers for offensive noise and odors. Elements such as hours of operations, outdoor storage, drainage, landscaping, etc. are all important. Some industrial uses are unobtrusive, and can be included in or near residential areas.</td>
<td>• Identify neighborhoods where a conservation residential district may be appropriate. Create appropriate development standards.</td>
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<td>8-5 Review parking requirements, and consider the context. Consider the flexibility to consider future innovations, such as driverless cars.</td>
<td>• Evaluate near- and medium-term technology changes for transportation and incorporate these technologies in parking areas or in public rights-of-way adjacent to the sites.</td>
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