Zoning Ordinance Amendment

Listening Session Notes

**March 17, 2021**

Attendees: Jenah Thornborrow (Garden City), Scott Koberg (Ada County Parks & Waterways), Lanette Daw (Boise School District), Alissa Taysom (Valley Regional Transit)

**General Comments**

Alissa wanted the code to prioritize future transit service in the County by better accommodating planned transit routes and stops.

Jenah noted that many unincorporated properties become non-conforming uses once they are annexed into Garden City due to the County having more lenient use and design standards. She felt the Rural Urban Transition Zone, in particular, did not align well with Garden City’s future land use plans and thought it would be nice if the County would require design standards similar to Garden City’s.

Lanette Daw said it was important for her to be able to track upcoming developments in order to anticipate the future transportation needs of the Boise School District. Providing safe walking and biking routes to school and safe bus stops were high priorities for the District.

Scott Koberg noted that Ada County Parks & Waterways sometimes submits development applications to Ada County for parks facilities, and that he felt the communication process between Development Services and Parks & Waterways could be improved.

**What is working well with the existing zoning ordinance?**

Jenah felt the County was doing a good job of noticing other agencies of upcoming developments and events and liked the web map included with the notices showing where the subject property is located. She also appreciates the address lists provided by the Ada County Assessor and how accurate they are.

**What is not working well with the existing zoning ordinance?**

Jenah felt that the existing ordinance was allowing uses in Areas of Impact that are not compatible with the future land use goals of cities. She said the Rural Urban Transition zone, which is used in a lot of the Areas of Impact, allows industrial uses which are not compatible with city properties. In particular she mentioned gravel pits and billboards which had been allowed on unincorporated areas within Garden City’s Area of Impact.

**Are there any specific design standards that the County needs to tune up?**

Jenah thought it would be a good idea for the County to require new development within the Garden City Area of Impact to meet Garden City’s design standards. In particular, she mentioned things like requiring buildings to front streets and requiring more detached sidewalk and street trees.

Lanette thought it would be a good idea to add a provision to the zoning ordinance requiring large-scale developments to dedicate land for school buildings, and noted that this had been done for some large developments recently in the City of Boise.

Scott noted that trail and pathway connectivity was very important to Ada County Parks & Waterways. He would like the ordinance to require large developments, such as planned communities, to work with Parks & Waterways to determine where future trails and paths should be located on a property. He noted that many of the trails and trailheads in the area are becoming very crowded and that it is important to find opportunities for new trails and trailheads where possible.

Alissa noted that Valley Regional Transit’s (VRT’s) Valley Connect 2.0 Plan includes future transit service to portions of unincorporated Ada County, and that it is important for the County to plan for future transit facilities, such as bus stops, in these locations.

**Are there any uses that are a concern, or that the zoning ordinance should do a better job of accommodating?**

Jenah felt that in general, zoning ordinances should accommodate denser housing in areas in which urban facilities already exist. She said she agreed with the message of Ada County’s Community Growth Conversations, which sought to reduce the costs of new development by locating housing closer to existing public services and facilities.

**Are zoning application processes meeting the needs of staff and the development community?**

Jenah said she liked that the County was beginning to invite city staff to its pre-application meetings for proposed developments within the Areas of Impact.