June 12th, 2023

Boise City Council
150 N Capitol Blvd,
Boise, ID 83702
Re: Modern Zoning Code

Dear Council Members,

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, we encourage the Boise City Council to approve the affordability, sustainability, and open space provisions included in the City of Boise's Modern Zoning Code.

Boise is facing rapid and inevitable growth, and a modern zoning code is necessary to meet the needs of our community both today and into the future. This code meets those requirements and will help preserve the city we cherish while making it more livable for everyone. In addition to the critical updates to our zoning policies and procedures, this code includes the sustainability and affordability provisions that will continue to make our city a safe and welcoming city for all residents.

The inextricable link between sustainability and affordability is clear within the detail of the proposed code. For example, by gently increasing density and creating more mixed-use zones, we will create less-expensive options for first-time buyers, renters, and young families while also decreasing car trips and increasing walkability. By implementing water and energy efficiency incentives, we can decrease the ownership costs over the lifetime of a home while protecting our critical infrastructure and resources.

Additionally, we find fears that this will destroy homes or the character of our community to be completely unfounded. We strongly feel this code will instead preserve the look and feel of the neighborhoods that are cherished by residents of the City of Trees. This code protects the aspects we love while making this community safe, welcoming, affordable, sustainable, and livable for everyone.

For detail on the specific sustainability, affordability, and open space provisions that we support, please refer to the following categories on pages 3-4: natural environment, consumption and waste, cars and electric vehicles, walkable communities, water, food systems, buildings, and energy and housing affordability.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Ryan McGoldrick
Senior Program Manager
Conservation Voters for Idaho

Stephanie Day
Executive Director
CATCH

Brad Heusinkveld
Energy Associate
Idaho Conservation League

Housing Advocates
Neighbors for Boise

Lisa Young
Director
Idaho Chapter Sierra Club

Board of Directors
Boise Bicycle Project

Patrick Riceci
President, Board of Directors
Idaho Walk Bike Alliance

Lisa Reed
President
Golden Eagle Audubon Society

Canals Connect Community Coalition

Natural environment: We support…

- The mapping overlay of the Wildland Urban Interface to guide decisions around areas where our built environment meets the natural environment.
- Improved mapping overlays of the Boise River and the Foothills to protect the sensitive areas we all treasure.
- The new requirement for Class III trees in many locations (for example, parking lots) to increase our community's tree canopy, which will lower energy costs during the summer and combat the urban heat island effect.
- The new requirement to increase the diversity of tree species for newly-developing sites to create a healthier and more diverse canopy.
- New tree mitigation policies to protect the existing tree canopy, as well as enhanced and clarified requirements for the protection of trees during construction.

Consumption and Waste: We support…

- New incentives to encourage the adaptive reuse of buildings and avoid materials going to the landfill.
- New requirements for multifamily developments to accommodate recycling and compost from homeowners by dedicating equal area to landfill diversion (recycling and compost) as trash.

Cars and EVs: We support…

- Reduced parking requirements for single-family, duplex, triplex, and fourplex homes to align with improved public transit and bike/ped infrastructure and reduced need for independent vehicles (owners can still choose to have more spaces available).
- The increase in both electric vehicle charging stations and EV-ready infrastructure within new developments to significantly reduce future costs.

Walkable Communities: We support…

- New connectivity standards to provide clear and efficient walkability for people to access places of interest such as public transit, open space, and goods and services.
- Improved pathway designs to safely and comfortably accommodate all modes of active transportation.
- New standards to allow for wider and detached sidewalks in mixed-use areas and along main arterial roadways to increase pedestrian safety and comfort, allow for more shade from trees along sidewalks, and encourage more active modes of transportation to cut down on traffic congestion.
- Improved bicycle parking standards based on expected use rather than on the number of required parking spaces.
- New standards for limited, small-scale retail and cafes in residential neighborhoods for walkability and convenience.

Water: We support…

- The requirement for new developments to have a certificate of assured water supply.
- Limits on the amount of grass that can be provided on developments.

- Encouragement for the use of non-potable water for landscape irrigation whenever possible.
- Allowed use for xeriscape landscape designs, as well as other plantings that consume less water.
- Policies to encourage new developments to be focused in areas where there is existing public investment in water supply to ensure we are using our water efficiently.

Food Systems: We support…

- Requirements for pollinators and other native species in green and open spaces.
- Revised guidelines for the annexation and rezones of land to protect the continued operation of farmlands and rangelands.

Buildings and Energy: We support…

- Allowances for more density when developments meet affordable and sustainable requirements. The sustainability provisions include clean energy sources, energy efficiency, and water efficiency.
- Requirements on building designs and lighting to prevent bird fatalities.
- Incentives for density, height, and parking in the zones where it makes sense for our community.
- Requirements for buildings in the Mixed-Use areas to be a minimum of two stories and not exceed parking requirements to ensure density is focused in the locations with the infrastructure to support density.
- Requirements for certain buildings to be placed adjacent to the street to create pedestrian friendly environments where residents can easily walk between businesses.
- Expanded availability of attached housing styles, which increase the energy efficiency of buildings through shared walls, heat capture by upper floors in cold months, etc.

Affordability: We support…

- Policies that allow for more infill, covering critical housing gaps, such as the need for small starter homes for first time home buyers.
- Incentives that allow for multi-family homes (including duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes) that gently increase density and increase affordability without altering the look and feel of neighborhoods.
- Policies that target density in mixed-use neighborhoods that are close to services and transit.