

The Greater Bloomington Chamber of Commerce has been tracking the drafts of this UDO update and providing input for over a year. We'd like to thank the consultants and planning staff for their hard and thorough work on the draft, and for incorporating changes submitted by the Chamber.

In particular, we'd like to highlight our support for changes that encourage building more housing in the city and for incentives related to affordable housing. As local businesses attempt to recruit and retain staff, one common challenge is a lack of housing that's affordable for their workforce.

We also need to provide more housing options for the younger generation, people in their 20s and 30s who are starting to put down roots here. This UDO helps advance that goal.

Adding to the housing stock at all price points is crucial for the economic resilience of our community. The UDO draft takes important steps toward achieving this goal.

On a personal note, I recently moved to Bloomington and am currently renting an apartment downtown. The lack of affordable options makes it unclear whether I'll be able to stay within the city. As someone who strongly believes in living in the community where I work, I see this as a challenge that affects people of all but the highest income levels.

While pleased with many of the changes incorporated into the new draft, we are concerned with the section that provides for a payment-in-lieu process related to affordable housing. The draft currently states:

“The provisions of this Section 20.04.0110(c)(7) shall not become effective until the City adopts administrative procedures for calculating, collecting, accounting for, and spending payments-in-lieu in compliance with all applicable law.”

A previous version indicated that the City Council – not just “the City” – would be charged with adopting these administrative procedures. We support the Council's role in this process.

Further, the section does not specify that the procedures be included in the final UDO. The Chamber therefore recommends amending this section to:

“The provisions of this Section 20.04.0110(c)(7) shall not become effective until such time as **the City Council** approves administrative procedures, **which procedures are adopted as a part of this ordinance and specifically set forth the methodology** for calculating, collecting, accounting for, and spending payments-in-lieu in compliance with all applicable law.”

The Chamber wants to ensure that the procedures are included in the UDO update so that the process as outlined in this section will be consistent and standardized.

We are especially concerned that the administrative procedures are not yet available to the public. That means the public is not able to provide feedback before the payment-in-lieu process is codified in the UDO. At the least, that information should be released before the Plan Commission and Council vote to adopt the UDO.

Finally, we'd like to stress that this UDO isn't proposing radical changes. It's not allowing for a liquor store in the middle of a residential neighborhood or next to a playground. Rather, it makes sensible changes to help increase our city's housing stock, a widely recognized need.

Again, we would like to thank the consultants, the City Administration, and the Planning Department for their excellent work on this updated UDO. We look forward to these new rules being incorporated and stress the importance of the City to abide by this document as it allows for predictability in the development process.