

Butte-Silver Bow--

Thomas & MLCT members,

Butte Silver Bow is doing several things to address the issue of affordable housing in Butte and around Silver Bow County.

- 1) Contracted engineering consultant to create a plan for water/sewer infrastructure expansion
- 2) Developing a local affordable housing advisory committee
- 3) Hired consultant to rewrite city/county zoning last revised in 1978 when the city & county consolidated
- 4) Developing an RFP to rewrite housing plan – ARPA dollars used
- 5) Increasing Planning Department Staff to address increased demand in department

We have other things we are focusing on such as impact fees.

Respectfully,
J.P.

City of Billings—**New Zoning Code Adopted in February 2021 by City of Billings:**

- Does not have minimum lot size requirements
- Allows ADUs in all residential districts except they are allowed by Special Review (CUP) in our only existing Single Family Detached Home Zoning of N3.
- Has one remaining Single Family Detached Home Zoning (N3). All other residential districts allow 2 or more units depending on the district.
- Increased the lot coverage percentages in most residential districts to allow more building footprint area per lot.
- Reduced the parking requirements for multi-family development and includes transit off-sets.
- Utilizes “Proportionate Compliance” to enable existing property that is being redeveloped to meet new standards at a certain level based on the redevelopment occurring – Not starting from scratch with all site development requirements.

City Policy and Stakeholder Efforts:

- City Council passed a Housing Strategy Initiative in January 2022 with initial goals of:
 - Undertaking a housing needs assessment for The City of Billings
 - Developing a strategic plan to address the situation uncovered by the needs assessment(This effort is currently underway)

- City Council also made Housing a priority in its 2022-2023 Priorities and Goals for Billings, including setting a goal of 1,000 new housing units added by 2024
- City Council approved additional funds for low-income housing projects - Financing is available for the development of rental or single-family units through the Affordable Housing Development program. Applications are accepted anytime. Guidebook and application forms online at www.BillingsMT.gov/chdo (federal requirements apply).
- An Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice is completed every five years by the City of Billings and the last report was [published in 2020](#). Impediments and strategies can be found on page 9.
- Billings manages a First Time Home Buyer loan program for down payment and closing cost assistance is available to low-income households. Information is online at www.BillingsMT.gov/homebuyer. The Billings Community Development Division also purchases HUD foreclosed homes to renovate and sell to low-income households through the City's First Time Home Buyer program.
- Downtown Housing Working Group - A stakeholder group spearheaded by Big Sky Economic Development (our local economic development agency) that includes hospitals (Billings Clinic and St. Vincent Healthcare) ; City Council and City staff; Realtors; private developers; Urban Renewal District staff; and others formed to focus efforts on development of housing in the Billings City Core. This involves meeting with partners, employers and developers now for 7 months to identify gaps in the market/development opportunities related to downtown housing development (critically important is \$1.0 billion in new healthcare infrastructure planned for the medical corridor in Billings);
- City, Downtown Billings Partnership, and Big Sky Economic Development (BSED) have all identified downtown housing/redevelopment as a top priority, and the City, BSED, DBP are conducting direct outreach to developers to foster interest—biggest need is land assemblage and infrastructure investment
- A Downtown Housing Needs Assessment first completed in 2017 is being updated and is near completion with current housing and market data
- Billings is regularly noted by local and statewide developers for its subdivision and land use entitlement review process schedules and timeliness.
 - Major Preliminary Subdivision Plats are processed in 60 working days or less.

- Zoning applications are completed in approximately two months from application submittal to City Council action
- Applications are run concurrently –Annexation, Zoning and Subdivision to achieve as efficient a time frame as possible for developers and land owners working on projects
- The City of Billings Building Division review timelines have remained steady and timely. New 1 and 2 family dwellings are reviewed in 5 business days. Commercial and multi-family project are reviewed in 4 weeks. We have added staff in both Plan Review and Inspections to meet the current high demand and future workloads that are associated with the increased housing demands. We will also be adopting the most current 2021 International Building Codes on September 1st to stay up-to-date with new construction technologies and requirements for safe housing.

Examples of Housing Projects recently entitled/approved in Billings that will add units to the inventory:

- Downtown
 - Old Town Flats – 36-unit apartment project
 - Downtown North Townhomes – 26 townhomes (2 unit structures)
 - Lincoln Apartments – 28-units (converted from women’s shelter after shelter relocation)
 - Montana Rescue Mission – Initial development stages for 29 Low Income Housing Tax Credit Units
 - Minnesota Ave/Burger Dive - Initial development stages for 8 energy efficiency units
 - Formerly known as the Streeter Brothers building (though not in the TIF District) - added 7 units at the ground level
- City-Wide
 - Jackson Court – 38 units of low-income housing utilizing the Low Income Housing Tax Credit program (State)
 - InterUrban Project – 216 units
 - Interpointe Apartments – 144 units
 - Zimmerman Home Place Multi-Family – 300 apartment units and 60 townhomes
 - Elks’s Lodge Property Residential Redevelopment – 216 units
 - Barrett Road (4-unit bldgs.) – 95 units
 - Homerun Townhomes (2 and 4 units bldgs.) – 153 units
 - Icon Apartments at Cardwell (24+ unit bldgs.) – 324 units

- Farmstead at Lenhardt – 313 units
- Reda Lane Apts – 8 units
- Mt Sapphire Townhomes – 70 units (4 to 8 unit buildings)
- Cardwell Ranch Apts (no name yet) – 249 units (2 buildings)

Impediments to affordable housing development experienced by local government

- The State Urban Renewal Laws and the Tax Increment Financing mechanism that goes with Urban Renewal is a critical tool for local government to help encourage redevelopment and incentivize housing projects in areas of the City experiencing blight or underutilized property. Constant State Legislative efforts to undermine this tool create uncertainty and a dis-incentive to the private sector and local government to use the TIF tool and add housing units to the community.
- Lack of ability to propose optional sales tax tool to help support local services (Building, Planning, Police, Fire, Streets, Parks, etc.) and absorb impacts of community growth to accommodate new residents
- State subsidies for expansion of water and sewer for low-density development and no \$\$ for maintenance of existing water/sewer infrastructure
- State Legislative Actions that interfere and take away from the development toolbox of local communities, ie. Inclusionary zoning removed in 2019
- Would like to see tax abatement program modified to allow for partnership with housing development (not just limited to primary sector job creation)