



PLANNING COMMISSION SYNOPSIS

Thursday, August 28, 2025

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Phil Koktan called the Planning Commission meeting to order in the City Council Chambers at 6:02 PM.

PLANNING COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Phil Koktan, Kevin Cunningham, Abdi Isse, Deanna White, Anne Linnee, Jared Munster, and Madeline Summers (in person).

STAFF PRESENT: Nick Johnson, Dakota Kastenday, Emily Hestbech, and Derly Navarro (in person), Julie Long and Kevin Toskey (attending remotely).

Chair Koktan led the attendees in the reciting of *The Pledge of Allegiance*.

**ITEM 1
6:02 p.m.**

CASE: #PL2025-102
APPLICANT: City of Bloomington
REQUEST: Public Arts Incentives Ordinance

STAFF REPORT:

Hestbech presented the staff report, outlining five proposed zoning code changes:

Code Change 1 introduces a definition for “art structure” as a non-commercial, original freestanding structure intended for artistic or cultural expression, such as sculptures. This creates a foundation for incentives supporting private property art.

Code Change 2 would allow art structures to encroach into required setbacks. Staff proposes uniform setbacks, 10 feet front and rear, 5 feet side, and a 10-foot height maximum for those within setbacks, ensuring visibility from streets and sidewalks. Structures over 7 feet would still require a building permit.

Code Change 3 would permit murals to substitute for ground-level window requirements in Mixed Use Districts, subject to review for size and scale. This expands existing façade exceptions and recognizes murals as eligible permanent art.

Code Change 4 would allow art structures to substitute for up to 25% of required landscaping, reducing tree and shrub counts with approval from the issuing authority. This would join existing exceptions such as fee-in-lieu payments or reductions for mixed-use districts.

Code Change 5 proposes allowing art structures under 10 feet in required landscaping yards (20 feet along streets, 5 feet otherwise). This would clarify that art structures, like rain gardens and bus shelters, can be part of required landscaped areas.

Johnson responded that most citations are tied clearly to the vehicle owner, and Environmental Health staff usually issue warnings first to gain compliance rather than fines. He added that in most cases, the vehicles in question are parked on private property rather than on the street.

Toskey said enforcement usually happens after staff observe the same vehicles for 40–60 days. Violations often occur when driveways lack space, leading to street parking. Staff confirm ownership through the Department of Public Safety and issue 3–4 notices before fines. Most vehicles remain consistently in front of the home or driveway, making violations clear.

Commissioner Isse asked staff to inquire about other cities’ requirements.

Chair Koktan reiterated Isse’s question to Navarro.

Navarro noted that she will have the data should there be a public hearing.

Commissioner Summers expressed her favor for the more restrictive option.

Navarro presented the fourth question.

Johnson provided context on Navarro’s question, specifically on screening during different seasons.

Commissioner Munster suggested exploring whether screening or placement requirements could vary by vehicle size.

Chair Koktan asked Navarro to explain the context of the slide for screening and setback requirements.

Navarro presented an example for RV setbacks. She explained that the moderate option is the current code requirement.

Johnson noted that screening tall recreational vehicles is difficult and costly, which is why current RV standards only require screening 50% of the visible mass.

Commissioner Isse expressed favor for the less restrictive option.

Commissioner White explained that it is subjective and expressed favor for the more moderate option.

A study session will tentatively be held on September 15, 2025, at the City Council, and the item may return to the Planning Commission and will hold a public hearing on October 9, 2025.

ITEM 3	CASE:	#PL2025-88
7:40 p.m.	APPLICANT:	City of Bloomington
	REQUEST:	Missing Middle Housing Phase II

STAFF REPORT:

Kastenday presented the staff report on Missing Middle Housing Phase II, which builds on work that began in late 2023 and paused during staff transitions and the 2024–2025 legislative sessions. Phase I was adopted in May 2025, and Phase II now focuses on establishing standards to allow new housing types in Bloomington. The goal is to encourage a broader mix of housing that fits well within low density neighborhoods, expands housing availability and affordability, provides flexibility and choice, supports infill development, increases homeownership opportunities, and enables residents to age in place. The effort aims to create a variety of housing types suitable for people at different stages of life.

He then shared an overview of recently proposed state legislation, which has not passed.

He explained the zoning considerations which consisted of setbacks, density threshold (units per acre), floor area, site area, building height, parking, open space/landscaping/impervious surface.

Kastenday presented guided questions for the Commission’s feedback on Missing Middle Housing Phase II:

First, he asked what an appropriate parking standard should be for these housing types, offering several options (A–E) for consideration.

Second, he asked which zoning districts should allow Missing Middle Housing, including whether certain types should be permitted in R-1, offering several options (A–E) for consideration.

Third, he asked if minimum lot sizes in the R-3 and R-4 zoning districts should be reduced.

Finally, he asked whether setbacks should be reduced for these housing types: R-3, R-4, RM-12.

QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION:

Commissioner Munster asked if triplexes, fourplexes, and multi-plexes could all be treated the same under the 12-units-per-acre standard.

Kastenday explained the triplex was used as the base example but noted it would be possible to treat all these types the same, with density limits determining outcomes.

Johnson said prior direction supported two units in R-1, while three or more require rezoning to R-3 or greater. He noted staff openness to broader allowances if consistent with the Comp Plan.

Commissioner Munster asked why an R-3 lot limited to three units could not allow six if the 12-units-per-acre standard permits it, and questioned differences between R-3, R-4, and RM-12 allowances.

Johnson said establishing specific use types helps support different standards for each if desired, as small multi-plexes are similar to triplexes, but larger ones (ten units or more) have greater impacts.

Commissioner Isse asked about the People over Parking Act and its effects on front-loaded versus alley-loaded parking.

Kastenday noted that People over Parking would prohibit cities from setting minimum parking requirements, leaving parking decisions to a market-based decision.

Kastenday presented the first question.

Vice Chair Cunningham expressed his favor for a less restrictive option – Option B.

Commissioner Linnee expressed her favor for a less restrictive option – Option B, with the requirement of one spot.

Chair Koktan expressed his favor for a less restrictive option – Option B.

Vice Chair Cunningham suggested that larger projects may benefit from requiring guest or additional parking beyond one space per unit.

Commissioner Isse expressed favor for the least restrictive option – Option A.

Kastenday presented the second question.

Vice Chair Cunningham asked if any feedback tonight would apply to the RS-1 zoning district.

Kastenday explained they are only focusing on R-1.

Commissioner Isse asked for clarification on what was meant by standards that match, referencing Option B as an example.

Kastenday said Option A allows reduced setbacks and taller buildings, while Option B applies R-1 single-family standards to a missing middle type.

Commissioner Isse asked if requiring triplexes or cottage courts to follow R-1 setbacks undermines the purpose of missing middle housing.

Kastenday said views differ on triplexes and asked whether they should match single-family standards or allow more flexibility.

Commissioner Linnee asked if plex units would be individually owned or rentals, supporting both options if owned but recognizing some differences.

Kastenday said plexes and cottage courts could be either owner-occupied or rentals, noting examples of both models and that regulation of ownership type is limited.

Chair Koktan sought verification that attached townhomes are not allowed in R-1.

Kastenday affirmed Koktan.

Johnson said triplexes resemble townhomes, but attached townhouses were not included as a missing middle type, noting more interest in detached townhomes or villas.

Kastenday noted that is not in this proposal – he stated they were open to adding it as a part of the project.

Chair Koktan expressed his favor for Option A. He expressed he was not in favor of Cottage Courts.

Commissioner Isse expressed his favor for Option A. He expressed he is in favor of Cottage Courts.

Vice Chair Cunningham expressed his favor for Option B.

Commissioner Summers generally concurred with Cunningham and questioned whether contractors would frequently push toward Option A if single-family standards under Option B created mismatches, potentially adding extra work.

Kastenday said staff would encourage applicants to meet standards but noted flexibility could be sought through a PUD or rezoning if needed.

Vice Chair Cunningham shared his experience working for a developer and in the industry and explained his caution towards Option A.

Commissioner White expressed her favor for Option B. She expressed her apprehension about Cottage Courts.

Vice Chair Cunningham asked White if she supported allowing all proposed uses in R-1.

Commissioner White was generally supportive of the uses in R-1 but noted concerns about large detached townhomes and redevelopment pressures, while acknowledging the need for more housing and density.

Vice Chair Cunningham shared his concern about Cottage Courts.

Chair Koktan said cottage courts are a good concept but cautioned that placing them in R-1 next to single-family homes could draw strong public opposition. He preferred considering them in R-3 or R-4.

Commissioner Munster expressed his favor for Option C. He explained his apprehension about Cottage Courts.

Commissioner Isse asked his fellow Commissioners what issues Cottage Courts present?

Chair Koktan noted upkeep and safety concerns and expressed support for multi-family housing for density purposes instead.

Commissioner Munster concurred with Koktan.

Commissioner Summers questioned if single R-1 parcels could be converted to multi-plexes, noting potential neighborhood impacts.

Kastenday stated he can research and bring it back to the next Study Session.

Commissioner Isse asked if Cottage Courts would have to follow the zoning code pertaining to neighborhood characteristics and aesthetics.

Kastenday affirmed Isse, stating they'd have to follow current standards and additional standards like landscaping and lighting requirements.

Commissioner Isse said cottage courts would increase housing and density, and while enforcement issues are possible, he felt the benefit of added housing outweighs the risks.

Chair Koktan explained his interest in detached townhomes as they faced the street.

Vice Chair Cunningham concurred with Koktan. He then explained the difficulty of Cottage Court developments.

Chair Koktan noted Cunninghams points.

Kastenday presented the third and fourth question.

Chair Koktan asked if they have reduced minimum lot requirements in R-3 and R-4, or just R-1.

Kastenday stated they have only reduced R-1.

Johnson affirmed Kastenday.

Chair Koktan expressed his support for the proposed reduction.

Vice Chair Cunningham concurred with Koktan.

Commissioner White concurred with Cunningham and Koktan.

Johnson said the goal is to create more candidates, noting this was a theme of the 2022 zoning reform.

Commissioner Munster asked a question about the proposed standard for R-4.

Kastenday confirmed that a four-plex on a 33,000-square-foot lot meets the 12-units-per-acre threshold in the comp plan or the underlying density cap of the district.

Commissioner Munster asked if they could make it less.

Kastenday said his calculations showed 12 units per acre as the maximum density threshold.

Kastenday asked about proposed setbacks.

Johnson noted the 40-foot multifamily setback pushes buildings toward neighbors, suggesting a future review of setback standards, and added fire prevention prefers buildings closer to the street when a fire lane is not provided in front of the building.

Commissioner Isse expressed support for the setback proposal.

Commissioner White shared that she trusts staff but expressed concerns for impervious surface.

Vice Chair Cunningham added to White's comments, and asked Kastenday about setbacks and impervious surface calculations.

Kastenday said projects must still meet impervious surface limits, 70% in R-3 and 80% in R-4 and RM-12.

Vice Chair Cunningham stated is general favor for the proposed standard.

Chair Koktan expressed support for the setback proposal.

Commissioner Munster was okay with the proposal and asked if setbacks apply only to plexes, not the whole district.

Kastenday clarified that setbacks apply to the entire zoning district, not just specific housing types.

Chair Koktan asked if R-3 was the most recently added district.

Johnson affirmed Koktan.

Chair Koktan noted that R-3 was applied to only one site, and has not yet been developed. Johnson stated R-3 was created in 2015.

Chair Koktan shared he could be in support of the proposal.

Commissioner Isse asked a clarifying question about R-3.

Chair Koktan affirmed Isse.

A study session will be held on September 29, 2025, at the City Council.

ITEM 4 8:45 p.m.	APPLICANT: City of Bloomington
	REQUEST: Annual Review of Rules of Procedure

STAFF REPORT:

Johnson presented the revised Rules of Procedure.

QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION:

This item will be considered as Consent Business on September 8, 2025, at the City Council.

ACTIONS OF THE COMMISSION:

M/ Cunningham, S/ Summers: Motion to adopt the Planning Commission rules of Procedure as presented at the August 28, regular meeting, motion carried: 7-0.

ITEM 5 8:50 p.m.	APPLICANT: City of Bloomington
	REQUEST: Consider approval of draft July 24, 2025 Planning Commission meeting synopsis

Chair Koktan requested a motion to approve the 08/07/25 and 08/14/25 Planning Commission meeting synopses.

ACTIONS OF THE COMMISSION:

M/ White, S/ Linnee: Motion to approve the 08/07/25 Planning Commission meeting synopsis, motion carried: 7-0.

M/ White, S/ Linnee: Motion to approve the 08/14/25 Planning Commission meeting synopsis, motion carried: 6-0, with Munster abstaining.

ITEM 6 8:54 p.m.	APPLICANT: City of Bloomington
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REQUEST: Planning Commission Policy and Issues Update

Johnson gave an overview of upcoming meetings and updates. September 4, 2025, Planning Commission meeting is cancelled due to no scheduled items. On September 18, the Commission will hold public hearings on final site and building plans for the City fleet maintenance facility at 1800 West 96th Street and an amendment to the Normandale Lake District Plan, along with a study item on the 2025 Miscellaneous Issues Ordinance. The October 9 meeting will include study items on the Official Height Limits Map and the Annual PMP/CIP Update.

Chair Koktan asked when the Normandale Lakes District was last updated.

Johnson noted the Normandale Lake District Plan was last updated in 2017 in response to the new westbound I-494 access at East Bush Lake Rd and resulting traffic and park impacts.

Meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Prepared	Shonte	Reviewed	Nick Johnson
By:	Brown	By:	Dakota Kastenday
			Emily Hestbech
			Derly Navarro

Approved By Planning	
Commission:	09/18/25