

Mills Planning & Zoning Board Meeting Minutes

June 5, 2025

Board Members Present: Chairman John Gudger, Vice-Chairman Chris Volzke, Member Robin Baye, and Member Laura Miramontes

City Staff in Attendance: Megan Nelms, City Planner, Kevin O'Hearn, Building Inspector, and Sarah Osborn, City Clerk

Chairman John Gudger called meeting to order at 5:36pm on June 5, 2025, as a quorum was present.

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Minutes

2. Approval of minutes from May 1, 2025

- a. Vice Chairman Chris Volzke made a motion to approve the minutes. Board Member Robin Baye seconded the motion. Chairman Gudger called for a vote to pass the minutes of the May 1, 2025 P&Z meeting. All ayes, motion passed.

3. AGENDA ITEM

4. 25.01 TA – Amendments to Title 17 – City of Mills Land Development Regulations

- a. Chairman Gudger asked Megan Nelms to detail the proposed changes.
- b. Megan provided a detailed overview of the memorandum that was distributed to the board members.
 - i. Staff is presenting the FINAL DRAFT version of proposed amendments to Title 17 – Land Development Regulations (LDRs). A complete revision of the document was adopted in July of 2024. Now a year in use, staff have found minor corrections, modifications and additions needed within the regulations. Staff presented a preliminary version of the amendments at the March Planning & Zoning meeting and requested the Commissioners review and provide any comments on the proposed amendments. I have also consulted with other city staff, external development reviewers and frequent users of the LDRs to solicit comments and feedback about the proposed amendments.
 - ii. Included with the minor changes to the existing regulations is the new Downtown Riverfront Overlay Design District. Covering the riverfront area along both sides of Wyoming Blvd. from approximately Eighth St. to First St., the Downtown Riverfront Design Overlay District is the next step in achieving the goals set forth in the Mills 2017 Comprehensive Plan and the 2016 River Front Concept Design Plan. The zoning overlay is part of the process to implement goals from the Comprehensive Plan, which include:
 - 1. Develop a Downtown Riverfront District with a riverfront park and trails to attract families, the arts and restaurants to create the heart of the community.
 - 2. Create a plaza-like festival space with public spaces that may include, but are not limited to, a band shell, usable greenway, and splash pad, among other amenities.
 - 3. Develop a unique downtown destination for residents and visitors to gather and celebrate the community.

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- iii. The overlay district focuses on establishing a new pattern of land use and utilization of design elements to define the look and feel of the future river front area. Goals from the Comprehensive Plan applicable to the proposed overlay include:
 - 1. Establish an identity for the city through streetscape, community branding, light poles and banners, wayfinding and business improvements in the commercial areas.
 - 2. Encourage the use of the same materials throughout the district and provide incentives to use local products.
 - 3. Clean up the commercial area of lower Mills and work to assist in the quality redevelopment of the identified area.
 - iv. The overlay district standards have been drafted with goals from the Comprehensive Plan in mind. The overlay district regulations put the focus on:
 - 1. Creating a strong sense of place
 - 2. Walkable environments
 - 3. Safe streets and places that are comfortable for people to walk and meet.
 - 4. A mixture of commercial and residential uses
 - 5. Building materials, signage standards and design elements that will look similar across the corridor to establish a cohesive identity for the area.
 - v. A summary of the amendments is provided on the attached spreadsheet. Staff will receive comments, edits, and modifications to the proposed amendments at the meeting and request that the Commission make a recommendation. The amended regulations will then be presented to Council for 1st reading on June 24th. The process to adopt the amendments will take three readings before the Council.
 - vi. **Staff Recommendation:** The Planning Commission provide a “do pass” recommendation to the City Council for the adoption of amendments to Title 17, Mills Land Development Regulations.
- c. Chairman Gudger opened the floor to Vice Chairman Volzke to present his questions regarding the Section 22 Draft
- i. Regarding Section 6 – Building Materials (22.30), since wood is not explicitly listed as either a recommended or avoided material, clarification is needed. While he does not believe wood is intended as a primary material in this area, he questioned whether it could be used as an accent. He also asked whether its omission was intentional and, if wood is to be permitted or prohibited, whether it should be clearly stated in one of the categories.
 - 1. In Chairman Gudger’s opinion—and he welcomed input from Megan and Kevin—there are certain materials, particularly for commercial and civic structures like restrooms or an amphitheater, that should be more clearly addressed. He noted that if timbers are to be used, they should be specifically included in the list of acceptable materials. Although he hadn’t previously marked that, he believes it’s important to do so. He also mentioned newer technologies, such as fiber cement siding (like

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Hardie board), which can achieve the desired look while offering greater durability for commercial applications. Chairman Gudger expressed that natural wood should likely be discouraged, as it's rarely used in its traditional lap siding form for commercial buildings and is generally replaced by more durable, manufactured alternatives.

- a. Kevin's viewpoint was that wood should not be entirely prohibited. It was noted that certain types—such as timbers or timber strand—can be appropriate. While OSB is not suitable for exterior use, high-quality options like solid cedar wood siding may be acceptable in the right context.
- b. Vice Chairman Volzke suggested allowing wood as a secondary or accent material, provided it is used in minimal amounts. He emphasized that the intent would not be to exclude features such as timber elements, like exposed beams, which can add architectural value. He referenced the design of David Street Station as an example of how timber can be effectively and appropriately integrated.
 - i. Kevin added to set a limit to 20%.
- c. Megan clarified that Section 22.36(A) states buildings shall be constructed using local or regionally available durable materials such as brick, natural stone, manufactured stone, and other textured finishes. She suggested that wood be included as a secondary material for accents. Additionally, she recommended referencing commercial-grade wood siding alternatives—such as Hardie board or similar products—as acceptable materials.
 - i. Chairman Gudger noted that part of the district's intent is to reflect historic architectural styles, many of which incorporate wood siding. Therefore, imposing a strict percentage limit, such as 20%, may not align with the overall design goals
 - ii. Megan noted that the ordinance language uses the phrase 'materials such as,' which allows for some flexibility. Given that any development within the overlay district is subject to a full development plan review and design review process, there will be multiple opportunities—for staff, the Planning Commission, and City Council—to evaluate whether proposed materials align with the district's design standards and vision. While allowing the use of wood may be appropriate, the review process will ensure that any proposed application of wood fits within the intended character of the area and avoids designs that are inconsistent or out of place.

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- iii. Chairman Gudger expressed concern that developers often prioritize cost over design, especially in Wyoming, which can compromise the city's aesthetic goals for the Town Center. He recommended that the code clearly specify acceptable materials—particularly siding—by allowing commercial-grade wood-type products like Hardie board, rather than setting a strict 20% wood limit. He also noted the need to balance design standards with construction costs, especially for mixed-use buildings. Non-commercial wood trim should be minimized or fire-treated, while durable, commercial-grade options should be listed as acceptable.
- 5. The meeting paused briefly to welcome its newest member, Laura Miramontes.
 - a. Chairman Gudger gave Member Miramontes a brief update on the ongoing discussion and outlined the plans for the Riverfront and the overlay district.
 - b. Chairman Gudger brought the discussion back to Chris's question, asking for input on whether to limit the percentage of siding used on the upper level of a building. He expressed hesitation about enforcing a strict 20% cap and opened the floor for comments and suggestions, specifically inviting feedback from Kevin.
 - i. Kevin suggested leaving the code as is without specifically mentioning wood. He noted that materials like Hardie board offer low-maintenance options, while timbers are less desirable due to upkeep. He proposed that applicants be allowed to present designs that incorporate decorative wood, which could then be evaluated during the design review process. If the wood is used sparingly, functionally, and aligns with the project's budget, it could be approved on a case-by-case basis.
 - ii. Chairman Gudger recommended replacing one of the images on the third page, noting it appeared too modern and did not reflect the city's desired architectural style. He suggested using a grayscale photo from the next page, depicting downtown Cheyenne, as a better example of historic Western architecture. He emphasized maintaining design flexibility while reinforcing the district's aesthetic goals and asked for input from the group.
 - iii. Vice Chairman Volzke suggested wrapping up the wood discussion by agreeing with Kevin's earlier comment—that if the material isn't explicitly included or excluded, leaving the code silent allows flexibility. This approach would let applicants propose uses like timbers or wood accents for consideration during the review process. He felt the group had a thorough discussion of the pros and cons and concluded that leaving it silent is likely the best course of action.
 - 1. All board members agreed and moved forward.
 - iv. Chairman Gudger requested that the image on page 3 be replaced with a more appropriate alternative.
 - 1. Megan agreed and will change out the picture.
- 6. Member Baye initiated discussion by noting that the plans do not mention electric vehicle (EV) charging stations. He asked whether the board wanted to address their placement, especially

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given the inclusion of residential development. He raised concerns about the visual impact of charging stations in front of historic buildings and suggested that if allowed, they should be placed in less prominent locations, such as parking lots.

- a. A broader conversation followed comparing EV stations to traditional gas stations, with several members expressing that neither are appropriate in the historic district—particularly the Public Land/Institutional (PLI) overlay area, which includes the park, amphitheater, and valuable riverfront property. The consensus was that charging stations and fueling stations should be restricted in the PLI zone but could be allowed in the C-1 General Commercial zone.
 - b. Staff clarified that EV charging stations are not currently listed as a permitted use in the Land Development Regulations (LDRs), and therefore are not allowed unless explicitly added. The board discussed potential updates to the LDRs to address this.
 - c. The Chair suggested an exception be considered for private-use charging stations located within enclosed garages tied to residential or mixed-use developments, noting this would balance preservation goals with future flexibility. Staff and board members agreed this was a reasonable compromise, allowing private residents with EVs to charge vehicles out of public view, while restricting public or commercial EV stations from visually sensitive areas.
 - d. The board agreed to move forward with recommendations that:
 - i. Prohibit EV and fuel stations in the PLI overlay.
 - ii. Permit EV charging stations in the C-1 zone.
 - iii. Allow private EV charging in enclosed garages associated with residential or mixed-use buildings.
7. Vice Chairman Volzke raised a question regarding the lack of specified parking requirements in the current overlay plan, noting that while the design shows overall parking, it does not define the number of required spaces. He assumed the default would revert to commercial code standards and asked whether the board was comfortable with that, or if a reduced requirement might be more appropriate given limited space and the desire to maximize development.
 - a. Board members discussed the benefit of shared parking, especially between residential, retail, and amphitheater uses, given their differing peak hours. Several members agreed that dedicated residential parking should be required (e.g., 24/7 access), while commercial and public uses could share available lots due to opposite usage patterns. It was noted that the current Land Development Regulations (LDRs) require 1.5 spaces per dwelling unit for multifamily housing but also allow City Council discretion to adjust parking standards on a case-by-case basis.
 - b. Examples were shared of recent developments that utilize underground parking or offer purchase options for additional spaces. Board members also noted the evolving transportation landscape, including increased walkability, remote work, and reduced car dependency in urban-style environments.
 - c. The group expressed consensus that the overlay should allow flexibility, promote shared use, and avoid excessive parking that could reduce the area's development potential or disrupt its urban character.
8. There was also brief discussion on the possibility of incorporating thematic or historic-style lighting throughout the district to maintain a cohesive visual identity. Board members supported

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this idea and noted that the city would likely control lighting within public rights-of-way. Some members suggested that a consistent lighting theme would enhance the overall design and appeal of the area.

9. Vice Chairman Volzke raised a concern regarding the language in Section 22.35.9(A)(2) on sign compatibility, stating it appeared overly broad and open to interpretation. He noted that terms like “relative scale,” “overall size,” and “compatibility with building design” could be interpreted differently by staff, the board, and developers. However, he acknowledged that flexibility may be appropriate given the design goals of the overlay district.
 - a. Board members agreed that while the language leaves room for interpretation, this could allow for more case-by-case review and refinement during the development approval process. The flexibility was viewed as beneficial, so long as it supports overall design consistency and the district’s intended character.
10. There was detailed discussion about the use of freestanding signs, particularly monument-style signs, within the overlay district. Key points included:
 - a. Consensus emerged to prohibit pole and pylon signs, favoring low-profile monument signs with solid bases.
 - b. Some members expressed a desire to restrict signage in the PLI (Public Land/Institutional) zone—especially riverfront property—to building-mounted signs only, to maintain a cohesive and pedestrian-scale town center aesthetic.
 - c. Others pointed out the need for some flexibility to support commercial investment (e.g., restaurants or retail) that may require modest monument signage for visibility and branding.
 - d. Concerns were raised about creating inconsistent signage standards across Wyoming Boulevard, where one side (PLI) would be more restricted than the other (C-1 General Commercial). Several members recommended maintaining a unified signage standard for the entire district to preserve a cohesive visual identity.
11. Planning staff referenced Section 22.35.10(D) and DI.2, which already restrict freestanding signs to monument type, require solid bases, limit height to 8 feet, prohibit pylon signs, and require landscape integration and appropriate sightlines.
 - a. These existing standards were found to sufficiently address most of the board’s concerns, providing structure while still allowing thoughtful design flexibility.
 - b. The board agreed that signage regulations should apply uniformly across the overlay district, with the understanding that contextual interpretation will occur during planning review.
12. Member Bryson raised a question about applicable setbacks for development along Wyoming Boulevard, specifically within the overlay district. Staff clarified that setback requirements would defer to the base zoning unless otherwise modified.
 - a. For C-1 (General Commercial) zoning, the standard front setback is 5 feet.
 - b. For PLI (Public Land/Institutional) zoning, the front setback is 25 feet, similar to residential zoning standards.
13. Bryson and other members noted that a 25-foot setback could significantly constrain development along the riverfront, where lot depths are often shallow. The group acknowledged

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that this may warrant a re-evaluation of zoning for the riverfront parcels currently designated PLI.

14. Planning staff confirmed that:
 - a. The overlay district sets design guidelines, but use and dimensional standards (like setbacks) still default to the base zoning.
 - b. If the city-owned riverfront parcels are eventually developed for commercial purposes (e.g., restaurants or retail), it may be appropriate to rezone them to C-1 or Office Business, which would reduce the front setback and better align with intended uses.
 - c. Rezoning requests would be reviewed case-by-case, but the overlay design standards would still apply.
15. Members also discussed the importance of integrating parking and trail access into the site design and emphasized the need for creative architectural solutions, such as covered parking or rear access, especially along the riverfront.
16. Member Bryson raised the need to introduce landscaping breaks within large parking lots, noting that some cities require no more than 20 consecutive parking stalls without a landscape island or break. The board agreed that continuous rows of 50 or more parking spaces are excessive and visually unappealing.
 - a. After discussion, the board reached general consensus on the following standard:
 - i. "Any row of parking containing more than 20 consecutive spaces shall include a landscaped island or break after every 20 spaces."
 - b. The intent is to prevent long, uninterrupted rows of vehicles, enhance the visual quality of parking areas, and support stormwater management and pedestrian safety.
 - c. Planning staff agreed to draft revised language based on this guidance and to review comparable standards (e.g., City of Casper) for reference and best practices.
17. Member Bryson emphasized the importance of visual appeal and functional separation in parking lot design. He proposed incorporating buffering requirements for all parking lots, not just those over one acre in size, to improve aesthetics and prevent large expanses of uninterrupted pavement.
 - a. Key points of agreement and revisions included:
 - i. Landscaped islands: The board reaffirmed its support for requiring landscape breaks after every 20 consecutive parking spaces to avoid excessive pavement and promote visual relief.
 - ii. Buffer strips: All parking lots, regardless of size, should be buffered from adjacent properties and roadways by a landscaped strip.
 - b. The group recommended the following updated standard:
 - i. "All parking lots shall be buffered by a landscaped strip at least 5 feet in width, located between the parking area and any abutting property."
 - c. The board agreed to remove any allowance for landscaping within the public right-of-way to meet minimum buffer requirements. Developers may supplement with additional landscaping in the right-of-way, but they must meet the minimum buffer width entirely within their own property.

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18. Members noted that excessive pavement without greenery creates an unwelcoming environment and detracts from the community's identity. Improving parking lot design with landscape buffers helps signal a vibrant, safe, and inviting area for residents and businesses.
19. Chairman Gudger raised a concern about the inclusion of stucco as an acceptable exterior building material within the design standards. He emphasized that stucco does not reflect the historic or regional architectural character the overlay district is intended to promote. Instead, the area's traditional materials include stone, wood siding, and industrial elements like concrete—materials that are more authentic to the local historical context.
 - a. Gudger recommended removing stucco from the list of allowed materials, citing its incompatibility with the district's desired aesthetic. Several board members voiced agreement.
 - b. The discussion also touched on the use of wood, which had previously been excluded due to maintenance concerns. Members noted that modern alternatives such as engineered wood and fiber cement board (e.g., Hardie board) offer improved durability and weather resistance while still providing the desired appearance.
20. Board Consensus:
 - a. Stucco should be removed from the list of permitted exterior building materials.
 - b. Modern wood alternatives such as engineered wood or fiber cement siding may be acceptable due to their improved durability and lower maintenance needs.
 - c. The design standards should emphasize materials that are historically appropriate, durable, and contextually compatible with the region's architectural character.
21. Action: Planning staff will revise the materials section to remove stucco and clarify acceptable wood alternatives.
22. Chairman Gudger's Concerns and Proposed Edits – Overlay District
 - a. *The board agreed with each of the following recommendations.*
23. Color Standards
 - a. Remove reference to specific colors such as "muted green."
 - b. Use general language referring to "natural, warm base colors."
 - c. Allow accent colors to be reviewed and approved during the Planning & Zoning site development process.
 - d. *Rationale:* Prevent limiting acceptable color choices and preserve flexibility.
24. Brick Consistency
 - a. If brick is used, require its color to be similar to that of City Hall or other established buildings in the district.
 - b. Add clarification in the Building Materials section.
 - c. *Rationale:* Maintain architectural cohesion throughout the overlay area.
25. Lighting Standards
 - a. Encourage Use of LED
 - i. Add language that encourages the use of LED lighting throughout the overlay district.
 - ii. *Rationale:* LEDs are energy-efficient and support modern lighting controls.
26. Light Containment
 - a. Require all lighting to be contained within property boundaries, both:
 - i. Vertically

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- ii. Horizontally
 - b. Ensure consistency with existing zoning code standards.
 - c. *Rationale:* Prevent light pollution and protect neighboring properties.
- 27. Site Lighting Clarifications (Section 5D & E)
 - a. Make verbiage more specific regarding:
 - i. Illumination control
 - ii. Containment of lighting spillover
 - b. *Rationale:* Strengthen the enforceability of lighting design standards.
- 28. Color Temperature (Warm Lighting Definition)
 - a. Define warm lighting as 2700 to 3000 Kelvin.
 - b. Apply standard to all lighting types, where applicable.
 - c. *Rationale:* Maintain a historic and inviting atmosphere appropriate for the district.
- 29. Outdated/Inappropriate Lighting Technologies
 - a. Remove the following from acceptable lighting sources:
 - i. Cool-season fluorescent
 - ii. Mercury vapor
 - b. Conditionally allow, only if within the 2700–3000K range:
 - i. Halogen
 - ii. High pressure sodium
 - iii. Low pressure sodium
 - c. *Rationale:* These are outdated or inconsistent with historic district aesthetics.
- 30. Parking Lot Lighting
 - a. Ensure parking lot lighting complies with:
 - i. Containment standards
 - ii. Warm lighting (2700–3000K)
 - b. *Rationale:* Consistency with other lighting provisions and district character.
- 31. Title 17 LDRs Amendments
 - a. Vice Chairman Volzke initiated a review of Title 17 updates, beginning with a discrepancy in the public hearing notice distance listed in Section 16.
 - i. Issue Identified:
 - 1. The summary matrix incorrectly states the notice distance as 140 feet.
 - 2. The actual ordinance text (located on page 61 of the PDF) correctly states the notice distance as 300 feet.
 - b. Clarification:
 - i. The board confirmed that the correct and intended distance is 300 feet.
 - ii. The summary document will be updated to reflect the correct figure.
 - c. Board Action:
 - i. Confirmed that 300 feet is the accurate and approved standard for public hearing notice distance.
 - d. Vice Chairman Volzke sought clarification on whether the front setback is officially being increased back to 25 feet, noting previous adjustments and varying practices.
 - i. Staff confirmed that the setback had been reduced to 20 feet when the new Land Development Regulations (LDRs) were adopted, but based on feedback and longstanding familiarity, it is now being returned to 25 feet.

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- e. Vice Chairman Volzke's Position:
 - i. While acknowledging he may be in the minority, he expressed a preference for retaining the 20-foot setback, especially in light of:
 - 1. Reduced minimum lot sizes (down to 5,000 sq. ft.).
 - 2. The need to allow flexibility in structure placement to ensure usable rear yards.
 - ii. However, he indicated he would not oppose the majority's preference for 25 feet if that is the prevailing decision.
 - f. Additional Notes:
 - i. Casper's current model includes 20 feet for the primary structure and 25 feet for garages, which was noted as a helpful compromise to prevent parking over sidewalks.
 - g. Board Direction:
 - i. Tentative consensus to revert to 25-foot front setbacks, consistent with historical expectations and community preferences.
32. Legacy Incompatible Uses (Page 136)
- a. Vice Chairman Volzke commended the added language addressing legacy incompatible uses, noting it was a thoughtful and well-crafted section.
 - b. He expressed appreciation for the clarity and usefulness of this addition to the code.
 - c. Board Response: General agreement and thanks to staff for the improvement.
33. Manufactured Housing Setbacks (Page 150)
- a. A. Concern About Reduced Setbacks
 - i. Vice Chairman Volzke questioned the reduced front setback for manufactured housing, particularly in manufactured home parks.
 - ii. He noted that while standard front yard setbacks had been increased back to 25 feet elsewhere in the code, manufactured housing was being allowed a 10-foot front setback.
 - iii. He expressed concern about inconsistency and the visual impact on neighboring properties.
 - b. Staff Clarification
 - i. The reduced setback applies only to manufactured home parks, not individual manufactured homes on single-family lots.
 - ii. This adjustment was informed by recent rezoning and development in areas such as Lafayette, where tighter site constraints made the previous 20-foot park boundary setback difficult to meet.
 - iii. Staff emphasized that the 20-foot buffer from the park boundary remains in place, while the 10-foot setback applies to interior streets within the park.
 - c. Additional Discussion and Concerns
 - i. Volzke and other members questioned whether a 10-foot setback from a public street was appropriate, especially when adjacent to standard single-family homes that must follow a 25-foot setback.
 - ii. The board generally agreed that:
 - 1. Setbacks facing a public street (even within a park) should be consistent with R-1 residential standards.

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2. 10-foot setbacks may be acceptable only when facing interior/private roads within the manufactured home park.
 - d. The group emphasized the need to avoid allowing visual or spatial inconsistencies between manufactured parks and adjacent residential areas.
34. Proposed Clarification
 - a. Revise the language to distinguish clearly between:
 - i. Public streets – maintain 25-foot front setbacks.
 - ii. Interior/private streets – allow reduced setbacks (e.g., 10 feet).
 - b. *Rationale*: Ensure equity between neighboring properties and preserve consistent frontage and visual character in mixed residential zones.
35. Vice Chairman Volzke introduced a suggestion to allow duplexes by right within R1 zoning districts. Drawing from his background in affordable housing, he emphasized that integrating the occasional duplex into a single-family neighborhood could increase affordability and housing diversity without significantly altering neighborhood character. He clarified that this would not permit fourplexes or multifamily units—only one- and two-family dwellings.
 - a. Volzke acknowledged this is a personal preference and welcomed differing opinions. He noted that landscaping standards and setbacks should remain consistent with existing R1 requirements to maintain aesthetic integrity. He referenced recent developments on Badger Lane as examples of what should be avoided—townhomes with expansive concrete and no front landscaping, which were viewed as aesthetic and planning failures. These developments were clarified as fourplexes, and such structures would not be permitted under his proposal.
 - b. A discussion followed regarding lot sizes and zoning designations:
 - i. R1 zoning currently allows only single-family dwellings with a 5,000 sq. ft. minimum lot size.
 - ii. R2 zoning allows one- and two-family dwellings and manufactured homes, with 7,000 sq. ft. minimums for duplexes.
 - iii. Concern was expressed about maintaining the character and property values of existing R1 neighborhoods, especially where homes were built under the assumption that only single-family development would occur.
 - c. Member Baye voiced that neighbors should have input if duplexes were to be introduced into an R1 area.
 - d. Planning staff clarified that Urban Ag Residential zones, such as Plat View, are not part of this conversation, as duplexes are not permitted there regardless.
 - e. Some members were open to the idea of adding duplexes in R1 with clear design and landscaping standards, while others were firmly opposed, citing potential property value impacts, aesthetics, and a desire to keep R1 as a low-density, single-family zone.
 - f. The discussion also touched on whether lot sizes in R1 should be increased, but there was no consensus. While some saw smaller lots as a tool for affordable housing, others felt that preserving larger lot sizes protected homeowner investment and neighborhood quality.
36. Member Bryson raised a question regarding the potential for allowing shipping containers ("C-cans") to be used as permanent structures, either for dwellings or accessory buildings, within city limits. He noted that with the high cost of traditional building materials, shipping containers

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offer a much more affordable, secure, and resilient alternative for small structures—particularly if they are properly clad, roofed, and installed on a foundation.

- a. He questioned why shipping containers are entirely excluded under current guidelines, despite increasing interest and no formal code provisions for evaluating them. He acknowledged the aesthetic concerns from residents and enforcement challenges the city has faced in the past, particularly when containers are placed without finishing, left in yards, or become long-term storage eyesores.
 - b. Bryson proposed that if containers are to be used as permanent structures:
 - c. They must be clad or painted to match the primary structure.
 - d. A pitched roof must be added for proper drainage and aesthetic alignment.
 - e. The structure must meet existing setbacks and permitting requirements.
 - f. It should go through the same inspection process as any accessory building or shed.
37. Other members acknowledged that when enforced correctly, this approach could be viable. However, concerns were raised about enforcement capacity, past abuse, and whether residents would follow through with the necessary upgrades once the container is in place. There was discussion of compliance tools, such as fines and permitting inspections, but also concerns about staff workload and resource limitations.
38. It was noted that:
 - a. Any structure over 200 sq. ft. already requires full permitting.
 - b. Proper code compliance would require site plans, inspections, and certificate of occupancy (if for habitable use).
39. Ultimately, while some support was expressed for exploring this as a future option—especially for non-residential accessory use—there was no formal recommendation to change policy at this time. Members agreed the concept had merit, particularly for affordable storage or utility buildings, but emphasized the need for clear standards and strong enforcement mechanisms to prevent misuse.
40. In conclusion, there was general agreement that fourplexes and multifamily units are not appropriate for R1 zones, but the proposal to allow duplexes by right drew mixed reactions, with some openness to further study and others preferring to retain the current zoning structure.
41. Chairman Gudger asked for a motion to make amendments to Title 17
 - a. Member Bryson made a motion, Member Baye seconded the motion, Chairman Gudger called for a vote to pass the amendments. All ayes, motion passed.
- 42. 25.01 COZ – Zone Map Amendment – Downtown Riverfront District Overlay**
 - a. Megan presented the case for an amendment to the official City of Mills zoning map, proposing to apply the Downtown Riverfront Overlay District to specific lots and blocks within the original Mills townsite. She referenced the staff report, which includes the legal descriptions and a map highlighting the affected area in yellow.
 - i. Key points from Megan’s presentation:
 1. The overlay aims to guide future redevelopment in the downtown area in alignment with established district goals.
 2. Existing uses and structures will be grandfathered in. Current property owners are not required to conform to overlay standards unless there is:
 - a. A redevelopment, or

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- b. A change in use of the property.
 - 3. This approach ensures that the overlay only applies moving forward, without disrupting existing residential or mobile home uses.
 - 4. A commissioner asked for clarification on whether overlay regulations would apply if:
 - a. A property with an existing residence or mobile home is sold and continues to be used as such.
 - b. A property owner seeks a permit for an accessory structure like a shed.
 - ii. Megan confirmed:
 - 1. In both scenarios, the property would remain subject to the current zoning regulations, not the overlay.
 - 2. The overlay only applies upon redevelopment or a formal use change—not simply upon transfer of ownership.
 - iii. She reiterated that this point was a major concern during previous public meetings, and staff has continued to reassure residents that no retroactive compliance is required. Properties can continue as-is indefinitely unless their use changes.
 - iv. Staff recommended that the Planning Commission approve the zoning map amendment to apply the Riverfront Overlay District.
- 43. Vice Chairman Volzke made a motion to approve the proposed zoning map, Member Baye seconded the motion, Chairman Gudger called for a vote to pass the amendments. All ayes, motion passed.
- 44. Megan informed the board that the meeting for July has been moved to July 10th, 2025.
- 45. Chairman Gudger adjourned the meeting at 7:44pm

Chairman, John Gudger

Date

City Clerk, Sarah Osborn

Date