



2016 PRIORITIES FOR POLICIES AFFECTING NEIGHBORHOOD LIVABILITY

About the Neighborhood Coalition

BNC was organized as a citywide effort to influence policies that affect the quality of life in Bend's residential neighborhoods. This is not anti-growth, anti-business, anti-university, or anti-fun. It's about striking a balance in policies, so residents who invest their lives in our community are able to enjoy peace and quiet at home, safe streets, and the residential character of their neighborhoods.

We want to change the dialogue on livability from complaining to a focus on constructive solutions. To do this, we are conducting research on best practices in other cities and making recommendations. We believe that Bend needs a policy infrastructure that allows for growth and livability.

Noise

BNC has published a white paper on Bend's noise ordinance and met with senior staff to review suggested changes to the code and its enforcement. (See: <https://bendneighborhoodcoalition.org/document-archive/>) In our research, we have discovered that some problems with noise are related to the development code — e.g., there is no definition of “outdoor entertainment” as a permitted use, leading to the informal adoption of “incidental uses” (which is not in the code) to allow outdoor music venues, even if they impact issues like parking required by the original land use permitting process.

Transitional Zoning

Transitional zones (with step-downs in permitted uses) are common in other cities as a means of buffering residential areas from commercial and mixed use activities); however the concept is missing in Bend's code. Policy language is needed in the comprehensive plan that acknowledges “offsite impacts and nuisances” as a threat to livability and allows for code provisions, such as Neighborhood Compatibility Zones, which were proposed as part of the Central Westside Plan.

Short Term Rentals

BNC believes the City needs to re-visit the short term rental code adopted in 2015 to phase out non-conforming permits using approaches adopted in other cities, including terminating non-conforming permits within a designated time frame or upon sale of the property. Current policies are not decreasing density and have turned residential zones into mixed-use zones. They have also created two classes of properties with values that have diverged as much as 20% within the first year alone.

University District

University district overlay zones have become a common planning device in town/gown communities. Bend needs to concentrate university-related development (student housing, business incubators, administrative offices, etc.) to the east and south and protect residential areas to the north and west. The City also needs policies on high occupancy living arrangements found in other cities to avoid turning single family homes into rooming houses, undercutting multi-family regulations.