



Objective: compare voices heard in PhotoVoicesNE with the City of Bozeman's plans and ordinances

In August 2019 the Northeast Neighborhood facilitated the PhotoVoicesNE project to convey their visions for preserving neighborhood character. These voices were compared with the Community Plan, Strategic Plan, and Unified Development Code in order to understand where these voices agreed with the City, where they disagreed, what was missing, and how the City can preserve this neighborhood's character.

Agreement

- **Mixed Uses:** Participants in PhotoVoicesNE felt that the mix of uses, including industrial uses, seen in the Northeast Neighborhood contribute to the unique character and feel of the neighborhood. The Community Plan and Development Code confirms that the City also encourages mixed-use neighborhoods and developments.
- **Historic Preservation:** Many in PhotoVoicesNE mentioned the value of historic homes and commercial buildings in the neighborhood, and support for the goals and requirements of the NCOD.
- **Infill and Housing Diversity:** Many voices expressed positivity towards gentle infill in the neighborhood, provided it fits with the aesthetics and scale of existing homes, and diversity of housing stock in the neighborhood, much as is encouraged in the Community Plan.

"Let's keep a tolerant attitude toward non-residential uses in our neighborhoods."

"It would be a shame for the NE neighborhood to lose all of its historical charm."

"These photos depict what I think are NENA values of creativity, variety, infill, and non-conformity."

"...more people leads to unlikeable living conditions for everybody!"

"Keep the view across the meadow. Don't lose our mountains to walls."

"Our treasured northeast neighborhood alleys provide safe travel and places for kids to play year round."

"Because it fits the code does not make it fit the hood."

Disagreement & Missing

- **Rapid Growth, Development, & Density:** Many participants in PhotoVoicesNE expressed concern that the rapid growth in their neighborhood would lead to large-scale, high-density projects which would not fit the context of the neighborhood's character, scale, and community.
- **Viewshed Preservation:** Participants in PhotoVoicesNE treasured the mountain views from their neighborhood, and were concerned that density and development would block those views. The Community Plan asserts a desire to preserve viewsheds, but no specific plans about how this will be achieved.
- **Alleys as a Public Asset:** The Northeast Neighborhood's ubiquitous dirt alleys are a great source of community pride for the neighborhood, and while the City Code gives design requirements for alleys it does not explicitly encourage alleys as a means of building community or improving character.
- **Nonconformity:** Many viewed the City Code as a whole in a negative light, and believed its project requirements do not do enough to keep the neighborhood unique, encourage diversity, maintain scale, or preserve historical character.

Recommendations

- **Require Developers to Match Neighborhood Context :** Because scale, aesthetics, and setbacks are all critical to new development which PhotoVoicesNE accepted as fitting with the context of the neighborhood, a NENA-specific zone with specific design and scale requirements would help preserve the neighborhood's character as it continues to grow and develop.
- **Consider Incentives for Historic Preservation:** Historic homes and buildings are deeply important to the Northeast Neighborhood, and some of the new money coming in to the neighborhood from new development, via impact fees and cash-in-lieu payments, can be harnessed for grants for preservation and improvement projects.
- **Create a Concrete Plan for Viewshed Preservation :** Other cities with excellent views have utilized the power of GIS to understand the areas most susceptible to viewshed loss, and Bozeman can undergo a similar process to identify and implement a viewshed protection overlay or district.
- **Continue to Encourage Participatory Planning Throughout the Planning Process:** There was a tendency throughout PhotoVoicesNE to blame the code for any loss of identity or character in the neighborhood, despite a general alignment of goals and values. Increased transparency, engagement, and cooperation through all stages of the project approval process could help reduce this disconnect.