

Multnomah County **Zoning Code Improvement Project**

Board of County Commissioners Briefing
October 28, 2025



Presentation Agenda

- Introductions
- Project Update
- Community Engagement Findings
- Code Amendments Approach
- Next Steps
- Questions & Discussion

Project Background

Project Goals

- Update and modernize the Zoning Code
- Make the code easier to use and navigate
- Make the code consistent with County policy priorities
 - Promote affordable housing, social equity, climate resiliency, and customer service
- Ensure housing related provisions are Clear & Objective (C&O) and comply with State legal requirements

Funded with County and State Grant Funding

Overall Process

Code Audit

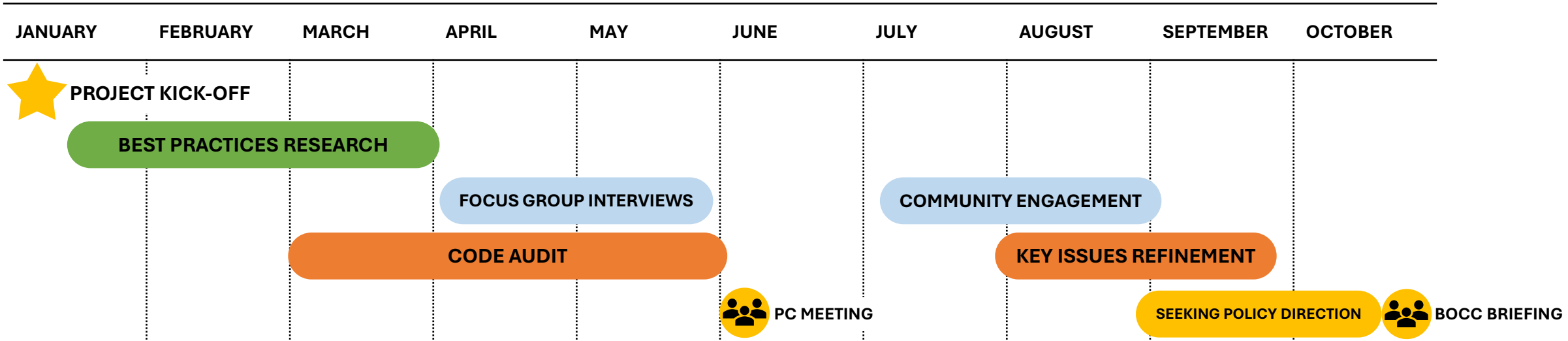
**Policy Options
& Direction**

Code Rewrite

Adoption

Current Project Schedule – Phases 1-2

2025



Tasks Completed to Date

- ✓ Project Kickoff and Goal-Setting
- ✓ Meeting with Current Planning Staff
- ✓ Best Practices Research
- ✓ Focus Group Meetings
- ✓ Code Audit Report
- ✓ Summary of Key Findings
- ✓ Planning Commission Briefing
- ✓ Community Meetings
- ✓ Refined Recommendations

Code Issues

**CODE
ORGANIZATION**

**APPLICATION
PROCEDURES**

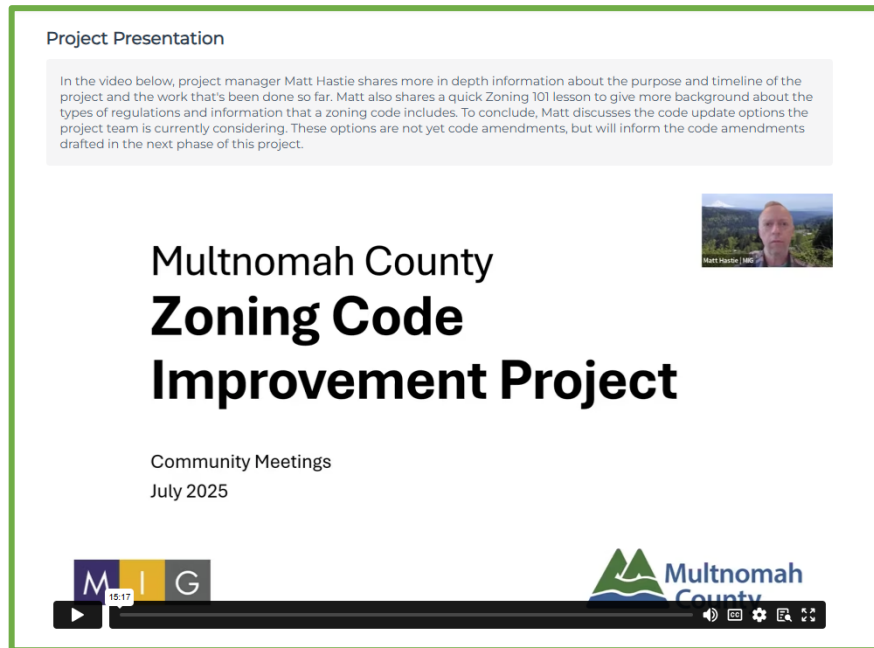
**COMMON
DEVELOPMENT
STANDARDS**

**CONDITIONAL
USES**

**SPECIFIC USE
STANDARDS**

Community Engagement Process

Online presentation and survey, available for 5 weeks, allowed community members to learn about the project and share feedback virtually.



online participants

Engagement opportunities were publicized via:

- County website
- interested parties email list
- neighborhood associations
- County social media channels

Community Engagement Process

120 meeting attendees

Sauvie Island Community Association
August 5, 2025

Forest Park Neighborhood Association
July 24, 2025

Agriculture Community Focus
August 22, 2025 | Hybrid Meeting

NEMCCA
August 21, 2025

The Sauvie Island
Community Association
meeting on August 5th
had over 45 attendees!



Community Feedback

Improve County coordination with City of Portland and NSA in permitting process.

Lot of record and full compliance standards are significant issues and cause major delays.

Code language is too complex. It's hard to understand and interpret.

Large need for customer service improvements. Re-open the planning counter and make it easier to talk to planners.

Need more clear and objective standards to help ensure consistent interpretation of the code by applicants and County staff.

Professional assistance is needed for even minor applications which increases the cost and length of the permitting process.



Refined Recommendations

- Make the code easier to read; use plain language wherever possible.
- Simplify application review processes and clarify which process applies to each use type/zone.
- Make discretionary language clear and objective (C&O), particularly for housing.
- Ensure standards are up-to-date and consistent with state rules.
- Right size development standards, conditional uses, accessory uses, and agricultural use standards for rural County context.
- Simplify lot of record verification process.
- Refine full compliance and non-conforming situations processes.
- Remove non-land use requirements from land use code.

Next Steps: Code Amendments

Near Term

Update minor accessory structures review process

Refine processes for:

- Minor modifications to approved plans
- Agricultural Fill Permit
- Marijuana Business Permit

Minor amendments to Administrative Procedures

6 Months

Update lot of record verification process

Refine nonconforming situations procedures

Update full compliance requirements

Long Term

Right-size development standards

Address state administrative rules and statutes

Ensure requirements related to development of housing are C&O

Add graphics and use tables

Re-format text to 1-column



Questions and Discussion

- Are we headed in the right direction?
- Have we missed anything that is important to the Board?