

Multnomah County Code Update Project

Planning Commission Meeting
April 6, 2026



Presentation Agenda

- Introductions
- Project Update
- Code Amendment Presentation & Discussion
- Next Steps
- Questions & Discussion

Introductions



County Staff Team

- Megan Gibb, Land Use Planning Director
- Kevin Cook, Principal Planner



Consulting Team (MIG)

- Matt Hastie
- Emma-Quin Smith
- Carrie Brennecke
- Cathy Corliss

Project Background

Project Goals

- Update and modernize the Zoning Code
- 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

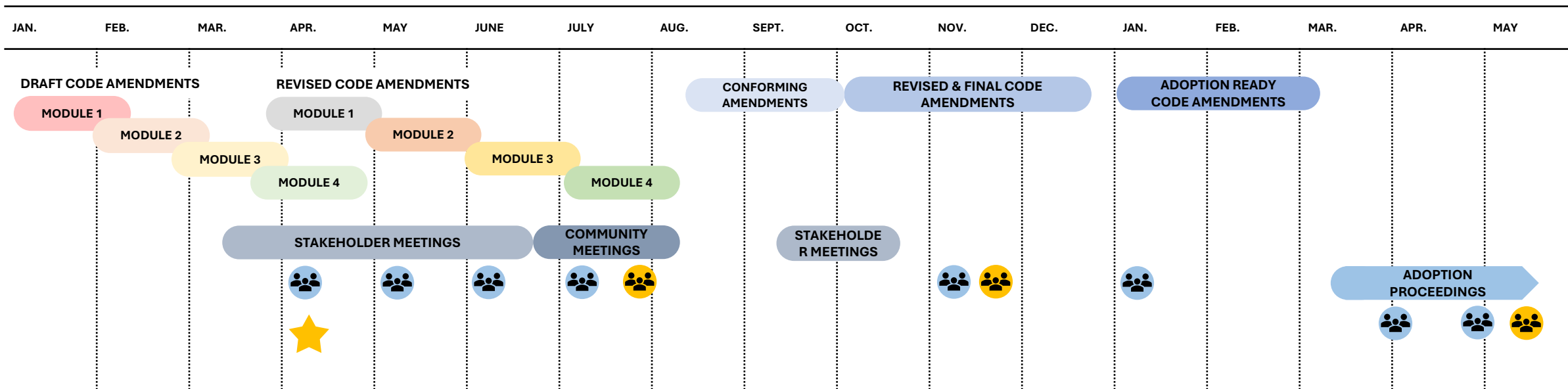
Code Rewrite

Adoption

Current Project Schedule – Phases 3-4

2026

2027



PC MEETING



BOCC MEETING

Note: Updates to the Zoning Code are being prepared in four different parts, or "Modules." The first three modules will address specific topics or chapters in the Code. The fourth module will include additional needed changes to ensure consistency and clarity throughout the Code.

Tasks Completed to Date

- ✓ All Phase 1 and 2 Activities
- ✓ Phase 3 Scoping & Initiation
- ✓ Project Webpage Updates
- ✓ Module 1 Code Amendments
- Module 2 Code Amendments (in progress)

Discussion Topics – Part 1

- Issue: Appeal of Planning Commission decision by Planning Director – highly unusual, rarely used and adds complexity to appeals process
- Recommendation: Eliminate provision

Discussion Topics – Part 7

- Issue: Current Conditional Use approval criteria are highly subjective, creating barriers & uncertainty for applicants and others, and leaving the County open to appeals.
- Recommendation: Replace these criteria with more typical approval criteria used by other jurisdictions, using the TGM Model Code as a starting point.

Discussion Topics – Part 7

- Issue: Currently all conditional use reviews must also undergo Site Design Review. Similarly, the code requires a Site Design Review process to reestablish a discontinued CU and re-open as the same use. This presents barriers to efforts to develop, expand, or reinstate commercial uses.
- Recommendation: Decouple the site design review process from the conditional use process and add additional exemptions for site design review.

Discussion Topics – Part 7

- Issue: The code defines the storage of one or more ‘Vehicles of Special Interest’ as a conditional use. This appears to be an excessive requirement.
- Recommendation: Eliminate these provisions or significantly increase the threshold for them.

Discussion Topics – Part 7

- Issue: Code provisions related to Type C Home Occupations which are conditional uses appear to be outdated and potentially act as unnecessary barriers to certain types of relatively low impact home occupations.
- Recommendation: Revisit and update these requirements.

Discussion Topics – Part 7

- Issue: The County's Community Service Uses framework is very atypical and adds unnecessary complexity and confusion to the code.
- Recommendation: Eliminate the Community Services approval process and procedures and treat those uses either as Conditional Uses or as allowed or review uses where that appears to be more appropriate. Incorporate use-specific requirements as needed in the base zones.

Discussion Topics – Part 7

- Issue: The code includes prescriptive siting standards for the Community Services Uses in some zones which differ from base zone requirements. This adds unnecessary complexity to the code and the rationale for these differences is unclear.
- Recommendation: Eliminate these standards and apply the base zone standards, with the exception of Conditional Uses which will be subject to discretionary review based on impacts.

Discussion Topics – Part 7

- Issue: Uses listed under “surplus public school space” do not seem to have greater impacts than similar school space uses and do not rise to a Type III review process; they likely would be permitted outright in other zones and locations.
- Recommendation: Eliminate this section, recognizing that schools are centers of community and may use spaces in evenings and at other times in response to community needs.
- Question: Does PC support this recommendation?

Discussion Topics – PC Feedback

- Does PC support these recommendations?
- Do any of them require further discussion or refinement?

Next Steps: Code Amendments

Module 2

- Base Zones
- Overlay Zones
- Common Development Standards

Module 3

- Specific Use Standards
- Parcels, Lots, Property Lines and Land Divisions
- Definitions

Module 4

- Conforming Amendments
- Cleanup and Reformatting

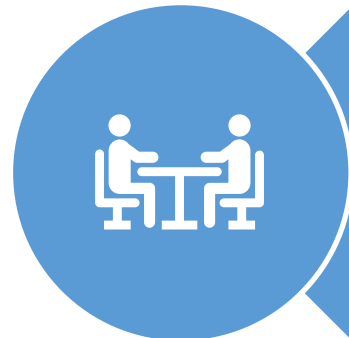
Next Steps




**PREPARE CODE UPDATE
MODULES 2 – 4 & REVIEW WITH
STAFF**



**CONDUCT PC WORK SESSIONS
FOR MODULES 2 AND 3**



**PLAN FOR AND CONDUCT
STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS**



Additional Questions and Discussion

Project Contact Info

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