

Provo City Planning Commission

Report of Action

August 12, 2026

*ITEM 1 Development Services requests an Ordinance Text Amendment to Provo City Code 14.34.290 to add Provo River Design Corridor standards. Citywide Application. Hannah Salzl (801) 852-6423 hsalzl@provo.gov PLOTA20260371

The following action was taken by the Planning Commission on the above-described item at its regular meeting of August 12, 2026:

RECOMMENDED APPROVAL

On a vote of 6:0, the Planning Commission recommended that the Municipal Council approve the above noted application.

Motion By: Joel Temple

Second By: Jonathon Hill

Votes in Favor of Motion: Tosh Metzger, Jonathon Hill, Jon Lyons, Matt Wheelwright, Melissa Kendall, Joel Temple
Matt Wheelwright was present as Chair.

- Includes facts of the case, analysis, conclusions and recommendations outlined in the Staff Report, with any changes noted; Planning Commission determination is generally consistent with the Staff analysis and determination.

TEXT AMENDMENT

The text of the proposed amendment is attached as Exhibit A.

STAFF PRESENTATION

The Staff Report to the Planning Commission provides details of the facts of the case and the Staff's analysis, conclusions, and recommendations.

CITY DEPARTMENTAL ISSUES

- The Coordinator Review Committee (CRC) has reviewed the application and given their approval.

NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING DATE

- Citywide application; all Neighborhood District Chairs received notification.

NEIGHBORHOOD AND PUBLIC COMMENT

- Neighbors or other interested parties were present or addressed the Planning Commission.

CONCERNS RAISED BY PUBLIC

Any comments received prior to completion of the Staff Report are addressed in the Staff Report to the Planning Commission. Key issues raised in written comments received subsequent to the Staff Report or public comment during the public hearing included the following:

- One resident supported trail preservation and careful development that prevented large warehouses from being built by the river.

PLANNING COMMISSION DISCUSSION

Key points discussed by the Planning Commission included the following:

- Commissioner Lyons asked how the city would determine what ecological improvements were necessary for developers. That determination would be made primarily by staff from Public Works and Parks with Development Services supporting as needed.
- Commissioner Wheelwright asked when the proposed standards would take effect. They would be required for all

- developments submitting applications after the date of adoption, should the Council adopt the design corridor.
- Commissioner Temple asked how the standards would apply to renovations and additions to existing homes. The standards would not apply retroactively to existing structures, but additions, new structures, and rebuilds would have to comply with the design corridor standards.
- Commissioners Wheelwright, Temple, and Lyons expressed their support for the proposed design corridor.



Planning Commission Chair



Director of Development Services

See Key Land Use Policies of the Provo City General Plan, applicable Titles of the Provo City Code, and the Staff Report to the Planning Commission for further detailed information. The Staff Report is a part of the record of the decision of this item. Where findings of the Planning Commission differ from findings of Staff, those will be noted in this Report of Action.

Legislative items are noted with an asterisk (*) and require legislative action by the Municipal Council following a public hearing; the Planning Commission provides an advisory recommendation to the Municipal Council following a public hearing.

Administrative decisions of the Planning Commission (items not marked with an asterisk) **may be appealed** by submitting an application/notice of appeal, with the required application and noticing fees to the Development Services Department, 445 W Center Street, Provo, Utah, **within fourteen (14) calendar days of the Planning Commission's decision** (Provo City office hours are Monday through Thursday, 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.).

BUILDING PERMITS MUST BE OBTAINED BEFORE CONSTRUCTION BEGINS

EXHIBIT A

Chapter 14.34.290(6)

PRDC – Provo River Design Corridor

(6) Provo River Design Corridor

(a) *Creation.*

- (i) The Provo River Design Corridor (PRDC) is established to encompass all properties within two hundred (200) feet of the ordinary high water mark (OHWM) of the Provo River on both sides of the river, unless otherwise specified in the language of individual sections of this Section.
- (ii) The development standards of this Section do not apply to the Provo River Trail or other City-owned properties, which are governed by their own standards for public accessibility.

(b) *Purpose and Objectives.* The purpose of the PRDC is to further the goals of the Provo River and Lakeshore Plan by balancing preservation of the river's natural beauty with support for public access and development that enhances the public's ability to access and engage with the river. Strategic developments that advance this purpose include gear shops, equipment rentals, outdoor clothing and supply stores, restaurants, hotels, cultural venues, and public gathering spaces.

- (i) Developments within the PRDC will be low impact, to preserve natural ecosystems to the greatest extent possible, support healthy watersheds and groundwater permeability, and be designed to embrace the river and allow visitors to more fully experience this unique natural asset.
- (ii) Preserving and enhancing public access to the river and the Provo River Trail is the primary objective of these standards.

(c) *Levels of Development.*

- (i) The PRDC creates two categories of land uses along the river: light-use stretches and high-use nodes. Light-use stretches constitute the majority of the river corridor, with high-use nodes distributed along its length based on the underlying zones.
- (ii) *Light-Use Stretches.* Light-use stretches consist of low- to medium-density residential areas with minimal additional design standards beyond those of the underlying zone.
 - (A) Light-use standards apply where the underlying zone is R1, RA, A1, VLDR, LDR, MDR, RM, PF, or OSPR.
 - (B) Properties in light-use stretches must comply with the standard river setback set forth in PCC 15.05.180, which requires a setback of 100 feet.
- (iii) *High-Use Nodes.* High-use nodes consist of clusters of businesses and high-density residential uses with aesthetic standards and medium-scale buildings.
 - (A) High-use standards apply to all properties with underlying zones not enumerated in the light-use list of zones in this Section.
 - (B) Properties in high-use nodes may be located closer to the river than the standard river setback set forth in PCC 15.05.180, subject to the provisions of this Section.

(d) *Prohibited Uses.*

- (i) Uses will be permitted by the underlying zone except that the following uses are prohibited:
 - (A) Industrial and manufacturing uses;
 - (B) Storage businesses;
 - (C) Warehouses;
 - (D) Auto-centric businesses, including but not limited to auto storage, auto repair, gas stations, car washes, and similar uses;
 - (E) Dry cleaners;
 - (F) Drive-through businesses; and
 - (G) Data centers.

(e) *Nonconforming Structures.*

- (i) Structures that were lawfully built prior to the adoption of this Section are considered nonconforming structures. If exterior alterations or expansions are made to such structures, they must comply with the development standards set forth in this Section.

(f) *Setbacks and Building Height.*

- (i) The following setbacks from the ordinary high water mark (OHWM) of the Provo River apply within the PRDC in high-use nodes. Where these conflict with setback requirements of the underlying zone, the requirements of this Section prevail.
 - (A) 0-25 feet from the OHWM: No structures, furniture, or walking paths are permitted. This area is reserved for riparian vegetation and trails only.
 - (B) 26-40 feet from the OHWM: No permanent structures are permitted, but temporary, movable furniture (e.g., dining tables and chairs) may be placed.
 - (C) 41-70 feet from the OHWM: Structures may not exceed 30 feet in height, or the maximum height permitted by the underlying zone, whichever is lesser.
 - (D) 71-100 feet from the OHWM: Structures may not exceed 40 feet in height, or the maximum height permitted by the underlying zone, whichever is lesser.
 - (E) 101-200 feet from the OHWM: The development standards of the underlying zone apply.
- (ii) Notwithstanding the distances established in Subsection (f) of this Section, no structure or amenity may be located closer than five feet to the Provo River Trail. The area between any structure and the Provo River Trail must be landscaped in accordance with the requirements of PCC Title 15.
- (iii) The Development Services director or designee may permit adjustments of up to 20% of the height limits if the project reduces lot coverage and uses green landscaping infrastructure (permeable surfaces for parking, bioswales, rain gardens, etc.).

(g) *Lot Coverage.*

- (i) A non-single-family-residential lot within the PRDC in a high-use node may not have more than 60% combined lot coverage of buildings, parking areas, and hardscape, unless the underlying zone requires a lower maximum lot coverage.
- (ii) Permeable surface materials do not count toward hardscape coverage limits, except in parking areas and vehicle access areas.

(h) *Landscaping.*

- (i) Rock groundcover in landscaping is prohibited throughout the PRDC.
 - (A) Riprap is permitted along the riverbank as needed for bank stability.
- (ii) All plants used in landscaping within the PRDC must be native or native-compatible species. Refer to the Provo River and Lakeshore Plan for an approved plant list.
- (iii) Natural or existing topographic patterns that contribute to the beauty or utility of a development should be preserved. Modifications to topography may be permitted where such modifications contribute to good appearance or restore appropriate riparian topography, as determined by the Public Works Department.
- (iv) In high-use nodes adjacent to the Provo River Trail, the buffer yard between the trail and any structures on the property must be landscaped (see PCC 14.34.290(6)(f)).
- (v) On the side of any development adjacent to the river and on the two perpendicular sides—that is, on all sides except the building face farthest from the river—landscaping must include at least one canopy tree, one understory tree, and five shrubs or large ornamental grasses for every 30 linear feet. Landscaping must be proportional to the scale of the buildings. All required trees and plants must be maintained and replaced as needed.
- (vi) Developments are encouraged to consider viewsheds from their property in order to maximize visitors' ability to appreciate the river.

(i) *River Improvements.*

- (i) All developments in high-use nodes must make any necessary and feasible improvements to the river corridor for ecological benefit, including but not limited to general cleanup, removal of concrete from

riverbanks, and improvements to flood control. Required improvements will be determined by the Parks, Public Works, and Development Services Departments.

- (ii) The developer is responsible for the cost and completion of required river improvements.

(j) *Building Appearance.*

- (i) The architectural design standards of this Section apply to all developments within the PRDC except single-family housing and duplexes.
- (ii) Architectural Style.
 - (A) Buildings in high-use nodes must be harmonious with the natural setting and reflect a light, open, and historically compatible aesthetic. Buildings must emphasize an overall horizontal design, and the primary building mass must be oriented along and parallel to the river.
 - (B) Prohibited Exterior Materials. The following exterior materials are prohibited:
 - a) Vinyl siding;
 - b) Stucco, except as specifically permitted in this Section;
 - c) Terracotta or brightly colored brick;
 - d) Plain concrete block; and
 - e) Foam architectural elements.
- (iii) Building Massing.
 - (A) Buildings must be composed of multiple, differentiated volumes rather than single large boxes. Varied horizontal wall planes are required at intervals of no more than 30 feet along any single building face in order to maintain visual variety. Acceptable techniques include balconies, terraces, projections, and recesses.
- (iv) Roofs.
 - (A) Black shingles are prohibited as a roofing material.
- (v) Timber Elements.
 - (A) Exposed functional or decorative timber beams are encouraged, especially for porch and deck structures.
- (vi) Transparency and Accent Materials.
 - (A) The ground floor facade facing the river must have a minimum of 60% transparency.
- (vii) Porches, Decks, and Balconies.
 - (A) Porches and decks along the river frontage are encouraged. All porches, decks, and balconies must be functional and must have a minimum depth of five feet. Balconies may be recessed into the building or positioned above a ground-level deck. Balconies may not protrude from the building face without an overhanging roof.
- (viii) Screening of Service and Parking Areas.
 - (A) All service and parking areas must be screened from the view of the river with landscaping. Natural or natural-looking fencing is permitted to supplement landscaping coverage gaps; however, views from the river and trail should be primarily of landscaping rather than fencing.
- (ix) Walkways.
 - (A) Pedestrian walkways must be constructed of natural stone, stamped or textured concrete, unit pavers in natural colors, or compacted aggregate. Flat poured concrete paths are not permitted.
- (x) Fencing.
 - (A) Fencing must be at least 50% permeable to allow small wildlife to traverse the riparian corridor, and it must be constructed of natural or natural-looking materials.
- (xi) Decorative Lighting.
 - (A) Color-changing lights and small string lights may not be installed as permanent decorative fixtures but are permitted as seasonal decorations. Bistro lights (i.e., durable, weatherproof outdoor string lights featuring evenly spaced, larger bulbs; also known as café lights or Edison string lights) in outdoor gathering areas are permitted as permanent fixtures but must be shut off between the hours of 10:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m.
- (xii) Mechanical Equipment.

- (A) All HVAC units, vents, and satellite dishes larger than 18 inches in diameter must be screened from view from the river, the Provo River Trail, and any access paths. Roof-mounted equipment must be set back a minimum of 10 feet from the roof edge where possible.
- (xiii) *Signage.*
 - (A) Backlit signs are prohibited. Only hooded spotlights may be used to illuminate sign faces.
 - (B) Sign colors must complement the colors of the principal structure.
 - (C) On the portion of a structure facing the river, each building may have no more than one sign. The sign may not exceed 12 square feet.
 - (D) Signs may be flush with the building face or perpendicular (blade) to the building only if they are framed in a historic or vintage style.
 - (E) Wall-mounted dimensional letters are permitted but will be counted as part of the 12 square foot signage allowance.
 - (F) Vinyl banners are not permitted as permanent signs.
- (xiv) *River-Facing Building Use.*
 - (A) High-use node developments must make productive use of the building side adjacent to the river by either siting the primary building entrance on that side or by providing customer-oriented space that allows customers to better access or appreciate the river.
- (k) *Lighting.*
 - (i) All outdoor lighting within the PRDC, including lighting for residential developments, must comply with dark-sky standards as follows:
 - (A) Full-cutoff fixtures are required.
 - (B) All fixtures must be directed downward.
 - (C) All fixtures must be shielded or hooded. Exposed bulbs are not permitted, except bistro lights as specified in this Section.
 - (D) Fixtures must have a warm color temperature of between 2,700 and 3,000 Kelvin (amber/warm white).
 - (E) Fixtures must be mounted below the eave line where possible.
 - (F) Uplighting is prohibited.
- (l) *Adaptive Reuse of Historic Buildings.*
 - (i) An applicant proposing the adaptive reuse of a building that qualifies for listing on the historic register may request alternative compliance with the development standards of this Section if strict compliance would compromise the building's historic character. The applicant must demonstrate that the proposed alternative design achieves equivalent or superior design quality.
- (m) *Dumpsters.*
 - (i) Dumpsters may not be located along the river frontage of any property within the PRDC. All dumpsters must be located within a fully screened enclosure designed in an architectural style compatible with the principal structure.
- (n) *Parking.*
 - (i) Parking areas may not be located adjacent to the river. Parking may wrap around the side of the building only if the majority of the parking area remains on the side of the development farthest from the river. The parking area must be screened so that no vehicles are visible from the river. The screening must be aesthetically compatible with the main building.
 - (ii) All parking lots within the PRDC must comply with PCC 15.20.090.
 - (iii) A pedestrian walkway must be provided for every three rows of parked vehicles, counting tandem parking as one row. Such walkways must be protected from vehicle traffic and must provide overhead shading. Where shade trees are used to provide overhead shading, the trees and adjacent landscaping may count toward minimum landscaping requirements; however, the square footage of hardscaped walking path areas may not be counted toward minimum landscaping calculations.

- (iv) Structured parking garages are not permitted within 200 feet of the river.
- (o) *Delivery and Loading Areas.*
 - (i) Loading and delivery areas must be located on the side or rear (relative to the river) of buildings and must be screened from the view of the river and the Provo River Trail.
 - (ii) Delivery operations are restricted to the hours of 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.
- (p) *River and Trail Access.*
 - (i) Development within the PRDC may not block public access to the river, the Provo River Trail, or any established access points.
 - (ii) Access from the public road at the front of a property to the river at the rear must be provided at the following minimum intervals, based on the applicable land use category:
 - (A) Light-use: at least once every 1,320 feet (one-quarter mile).
 - (B) High-use: at least once every 500 feet.
 - (iii) Existing single-family dwellings and duplexes in light-use areas that are rebuilt or remodeled are not required to provide trail access. Single-family or duplex developments that are redeveloped as part of a larger subdivision must provide trail access.
 - (iv) Access trails required by this Subsection must comply with ADA standards. Permitted trail surface materials include cement, pavers, permeable pavers, bricks, compacted aggregate, and other ADA-compliant materials.
 - (v) All required river improvements and trail easements must be completed prior to the issuance of a certificate of occupancy (CO) for the first building phase. Required trail connections must be open to the public within 90 days of CO.
 - (vi) All river and trail access paths within the PRDC are subject to a public access easement for the City's maintenance of the river and adjoining landscapes.
- (q) *Access Trail Maintenance.*
 - (i) The property owner, or a homeowners' association if applicable, must maintain all required access trails and associated signage on their property.
 - (ii) Snow removal and ice management on access trails must use non-chloride alternatives, including calcium magnesium acetate, potassium acetate, and sand.
- (r) *Trail Signage.*
 - (i) All access trails leading to the river and the Provo River Trail must be posted with signage that readily identifies them as public access points to the Provo River and the Provo River Trail.
 - (ii) Sign design and dimensions must conform to the standard Provo City signage template for public access points, per the Parks and Recreation Department.
- (s) *Trail Amenities.*
 - (i) Every development within the PRDC must install at least one bench at the point where the required access path meets the river.
 - (ii) In high-use nodes, if a development fronts more than 500 feet of riverfront, additional benches are required at intervals of approximately 500 feet along the full extent of the development's river frontage.
 - (iii) The installation, maintenance, and replacement of required benches are the responsibility of the adjacent property owner or homeowners' association.
- (t) *Erosion Control Plan.*
 - (i) All construction activity within the Provo River Design Corridor must have an Erosion Control Plan approved by the City Engineer prior to the issuance of a grading permit pursuant to PCC 15.05.050.