



G R E A T E R S A L T L A K E
**Municipal Services
District**

To: Magna Township Planning Commission
From: Brian Tucker, MSD Planner
Date: March 10, 2022
Re: Planned Community (P-C) Zone Residential Densities

At their February 8, 2022, meeting, the Magna Township Council adopted a motion to have the Magna Township Planning Commission “examine and amend the zone density and parking issues”. This motion was made in response to concerns raised by Councilman Barney about the lack of larger residential lots in Magna generally and in the new master planned projects specifically. Councilman Barney also expressed concerns about vehicles parking in a manner that block sidewalks in those new master planned projects, thereby reducing walkability. In order to facilitate the Planning Commission in “examining and amending”, the MSD staff have scheduled discussion items on the commission’s agenda.

The Planned Community Zone makes use of land use districts or combinations of land use districts in determining what uses will be allowed in a master planned community. The districts include those for: open space; business, research or educational campuses; town centers; villages; and neighborhoods. The neighborhood land use district is designed for “*comparatively low-density mixed-use development that emphasizes residential (single and multi-family) use, but also includes office, commercial, public/semi-public, and recreation/open space uses. **Neighborhood residential densities are anticipated to range between 4 and 8 units per gross acre.***” It is this district that is of interest for discussing the Council’s adopted motion.

Councilman Barney believes that there are not enough larger residential lots being created where a family can live for decades in the same home. Based on conversations between the MSD and the Councilman, it seems that his desire is for lots in the 1/3-to-1/4-acre range to be more common in Planned Communities and that a tiered system should be created within the “Neighborhood” land use category. This tiered system would include some number of lots in the 3-4 units per acre density range with others in the 5-7 unit per acre range.

When considering this issue, MSD staff notes that it is important to have a good mix of housing types and sizes in a planned community but 1/3-to-1/4-acre lots are more typical of the traditional zoning of the post war era than modern planned communities. The typical home in Magna is located on a lot between 6,000 and 10,000 square feet, densities of 4.3 to 7.2 units per acre. It is estimated that less than 10% of the homes in Magna are on a ¼ acre (10,890 square feet) or larger lot and yet many families have been started and raised in this community and many of these residents are aging in place in the same home where they raised their families. Others have raised their families and then downsized, not wanting to continue to maintain relatively larger yards. There are those in the Magna community, as well as the large Wasatch Front area, who would like to purchase a home to raise their family in but are priced out of the market. Land acquisition costs are a significant component of house prices. These costs are passed on to buyers, with larger lots being more expensive. These and other considerations are worthy of lively discussion.