



# UDC Workshop: Urban Design Commission Code Update

CHAPTER 33.24, MGO

# Presentation Overview



- ▶ Project Overview Refresher
- ▶ Summary of Public Outreach and Survey Results
  - ▶ Public Outreach - Summary of Workshop Discussions
  - ▶ Public Outreach – Summary of Survey Results and Key Findings
  - ▶ Summary of UDC Survey Results
- ▶ Brainstorm/Visioning Exercise

# Project Background



- ▶ The following goals were identified:
  - ▶ Clean-up outdated language and eliminate redundancies, apply equity lens
  - ▶ Add clarity for procedural and process related items
  - ▶ Review district boundaries for consistency with adopted plans
  - ▶ Revamp design-based elements with the UDDs to better align with modern goals and construction practices, including sustainability
  - ▶ Clean-up sign guidelines and requirements to be consistent with the Sign Code, current legal framework, and best practices
  - ▶ Create a new district for Mifflandia Area based on adopted plan

# Project Overview and Timeline

- ▶ **Phase 1 – Administrative Updates and Simple Clarifications (est. completion Winter 2023)**
- ▶ **Phase 2 – UDC Purpose and Intent (est. completion Winter 2023)**
- ▶ Phase 3 – Creation of new UDD – Mifflandia (est. completion Summer 2023)
- ▶ Phase 4 - Re-evaluation of UDD design guidelines and requirements and current district boundaries (est. completion Summer 2024)
- ▶ Phase 5 – Signage (est. completion 2024)



# Summary of Public Outreach and Survey Results

# Public Outreach - Workshop Discussions

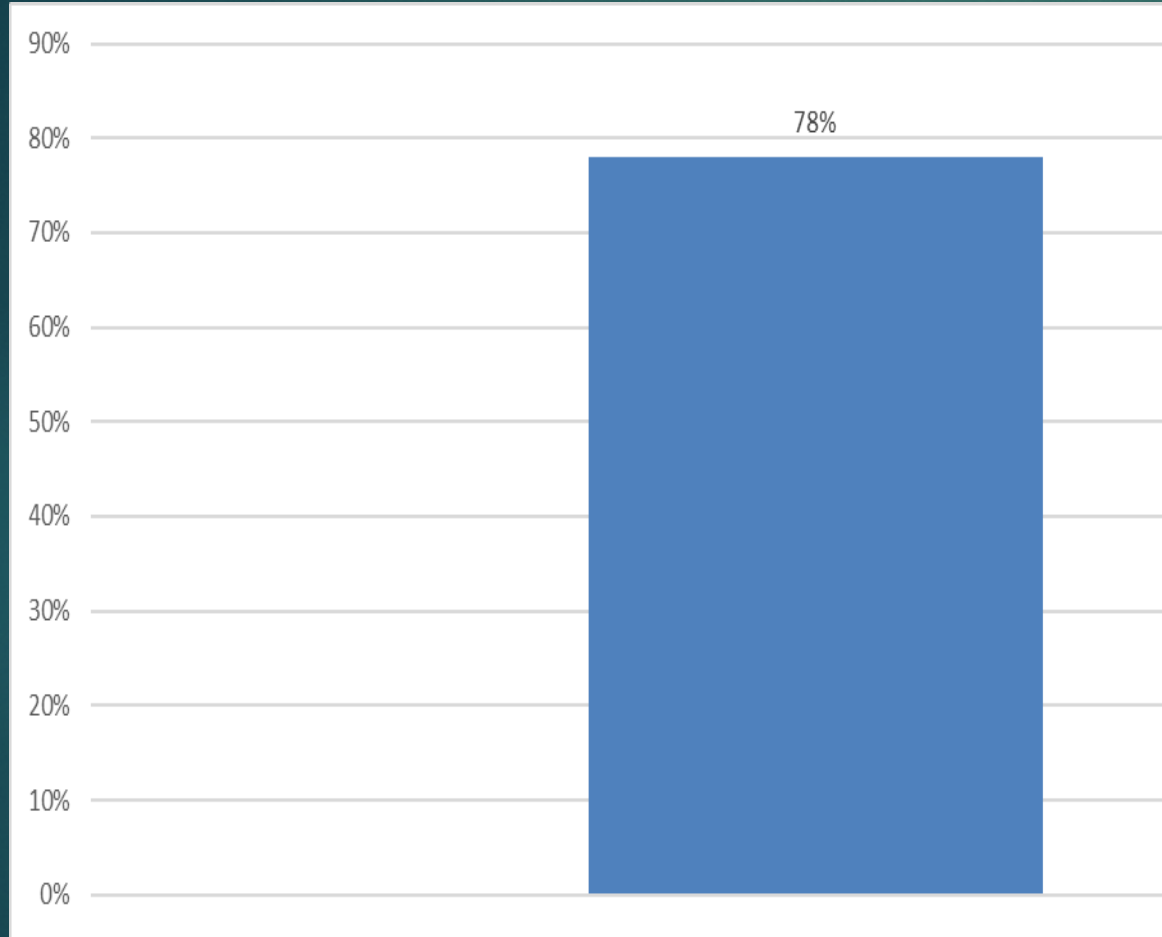
- ▶ What should UDC review?
  - ▶ “Bad” projects
  - ▶ More consideration should be given to context
- ▶ What makes the UDC process difficult?
  - ▶ Lack of predictability/consistency
  - ▶ Too many personal opinions
  - ▶ Code limits creativity
- ▶ What would make the UDC process better?
  - ▶ Review comments and an opportunity to address them prior to the meeting
  - ▶ Develop a framework to set design expectations (i.e. typical standards for certain design elements, points system, etc.)

# Public Outreach - Survey Results and Key Findings

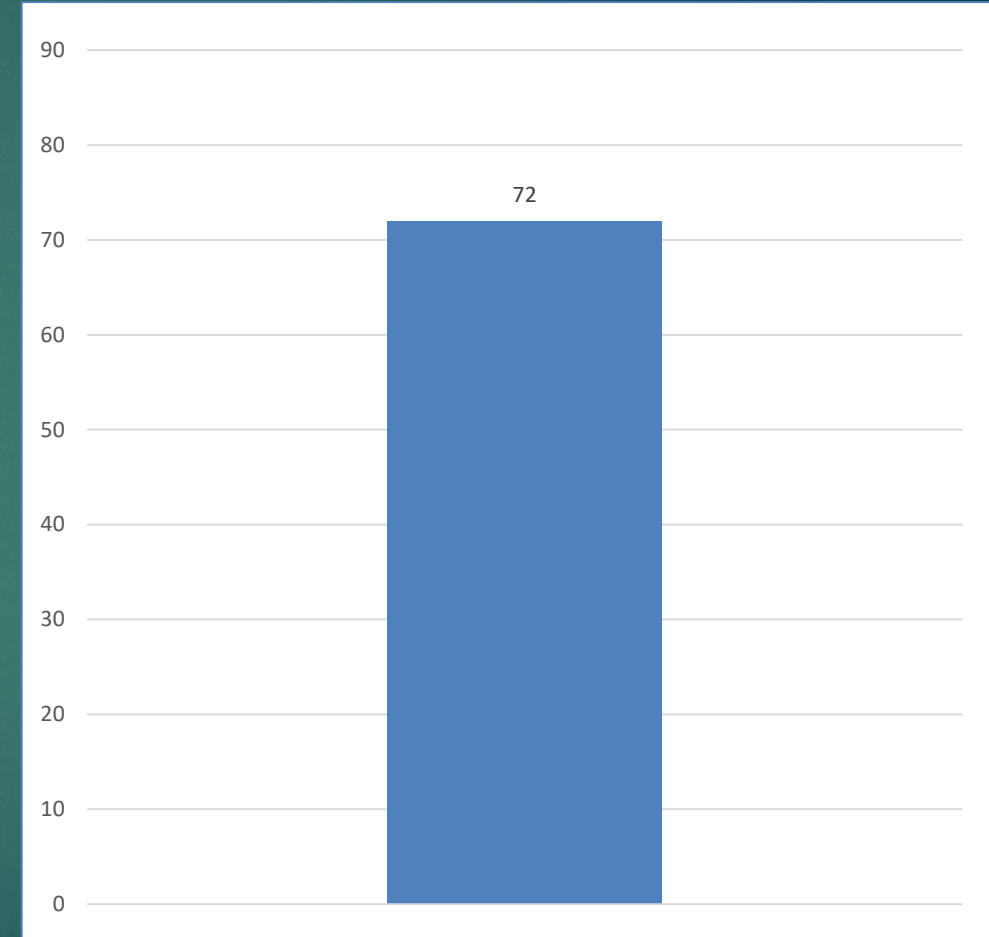
- ▶ Clarity in Process and in Ordinance
- ▶ Benefits and Challenges
- ▶ Structure of the Ordinance - Predictability vs. Flexibility
- ▶ Sustainability Measures
- ▶ General Comments

# Clarity in Process

Q4: On a scale of 1-10 - Would Illustrations be a helpful tool?



Survey Participants

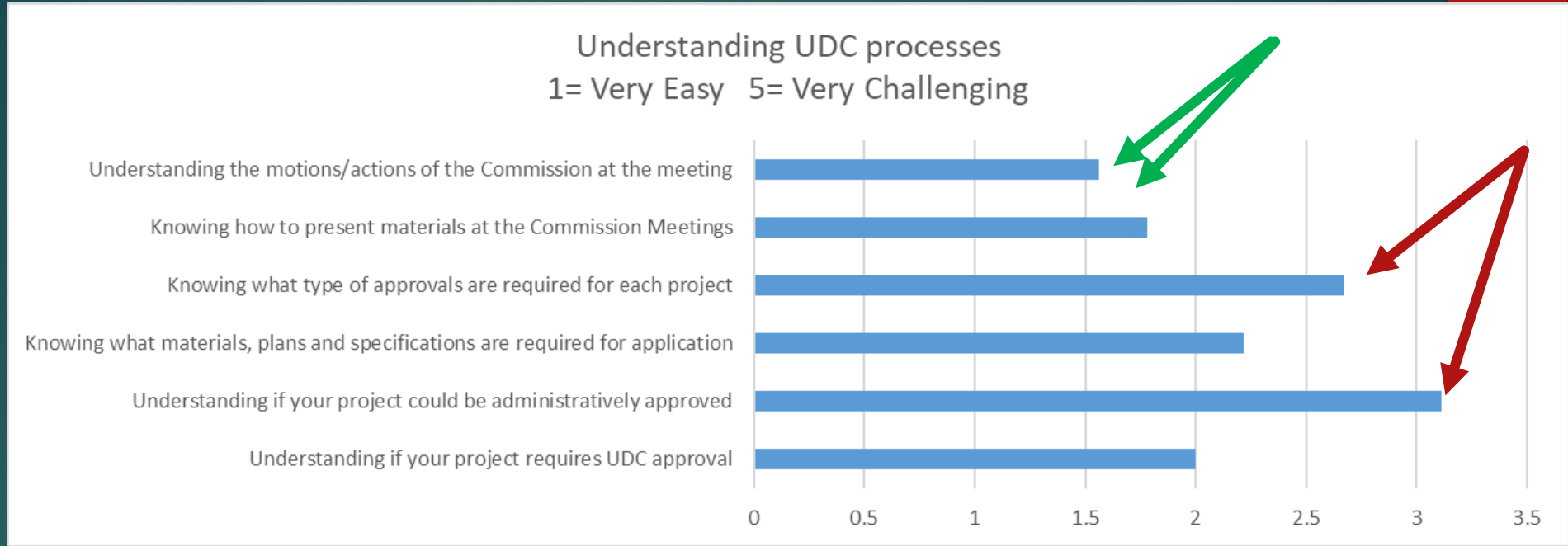


UDC Members

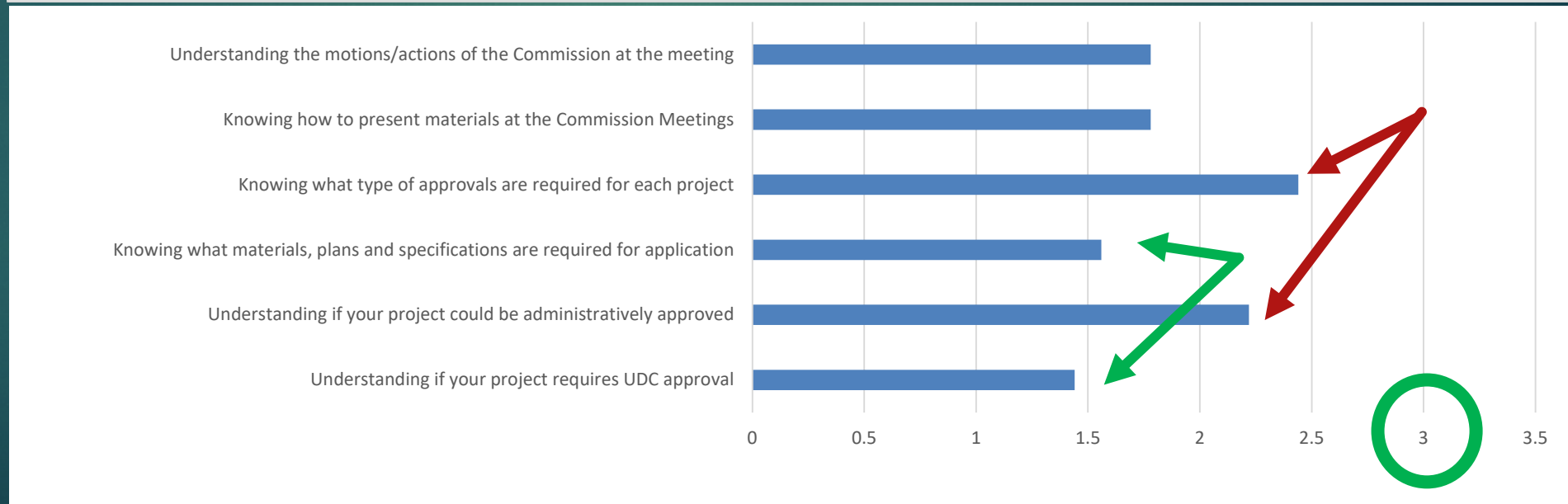


# Clarity in Process

Survey  
Participants

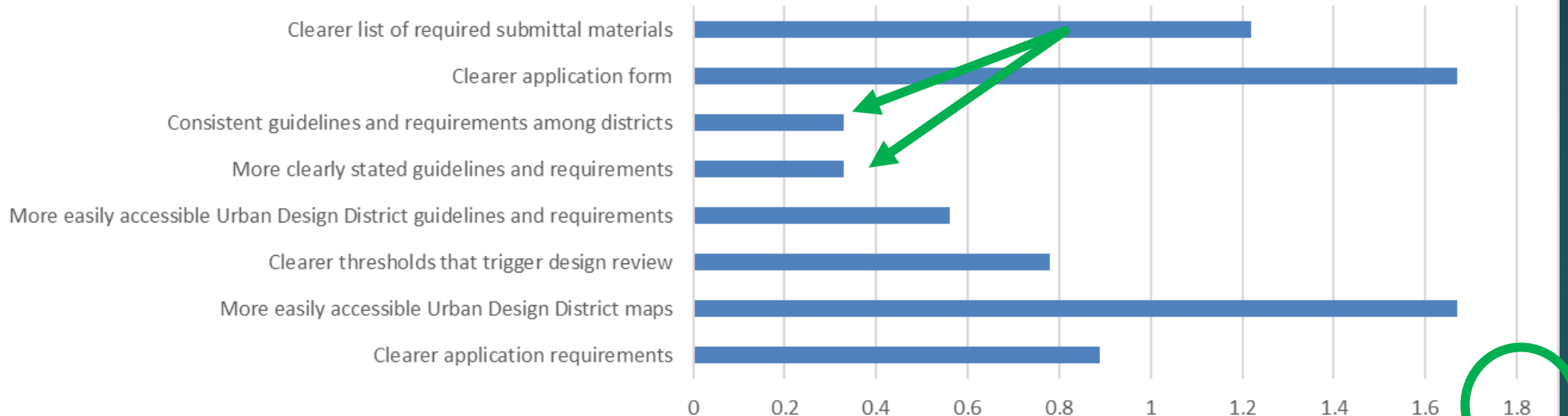


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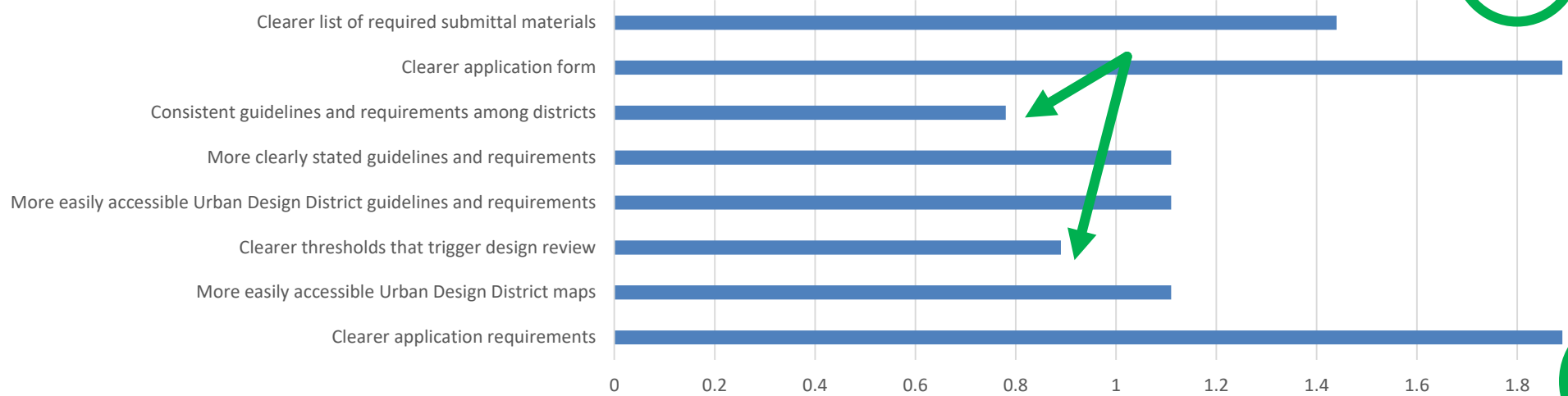


# Clarity in Process

Potential Improvements to UDC process  
1 = Very Helpful 5 = Not Helpful at All



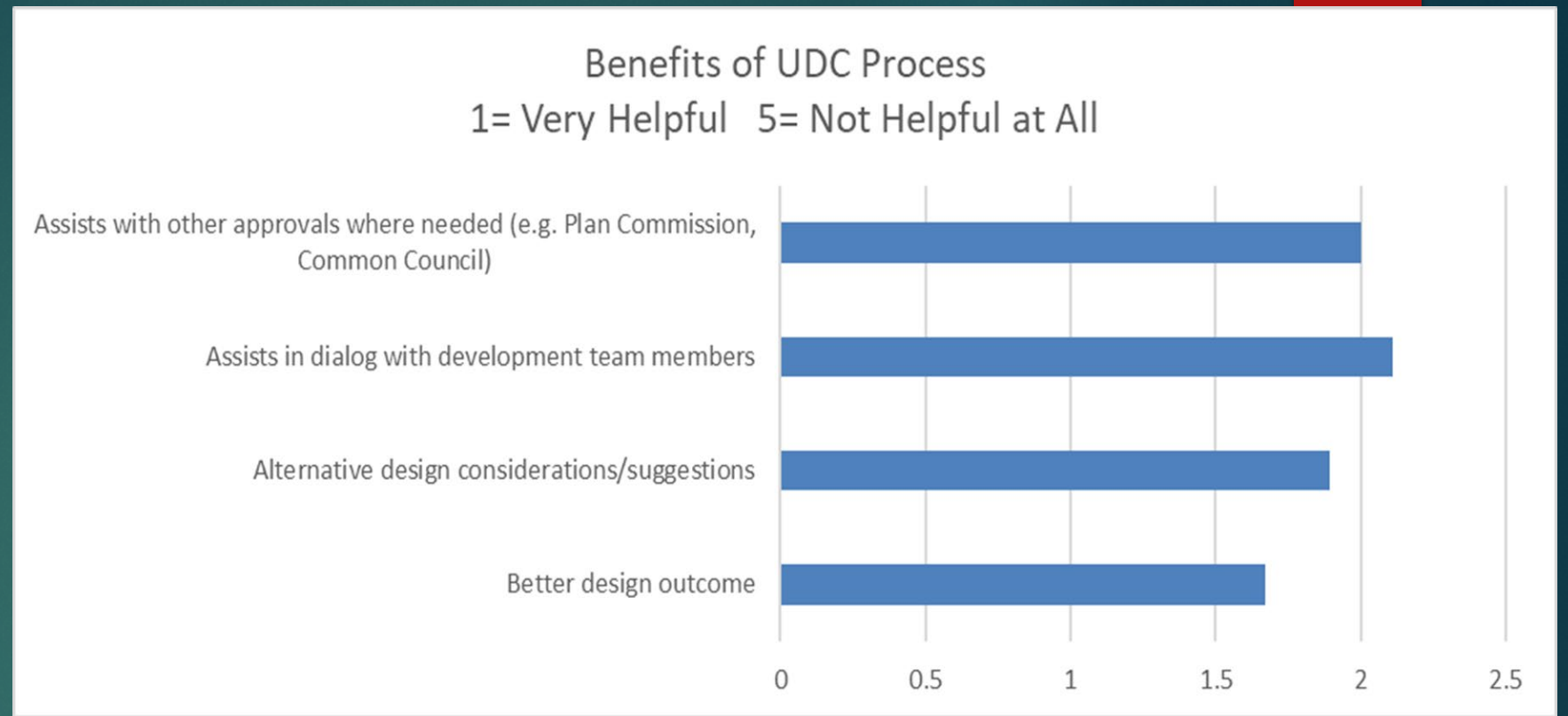
Survey  
Participants



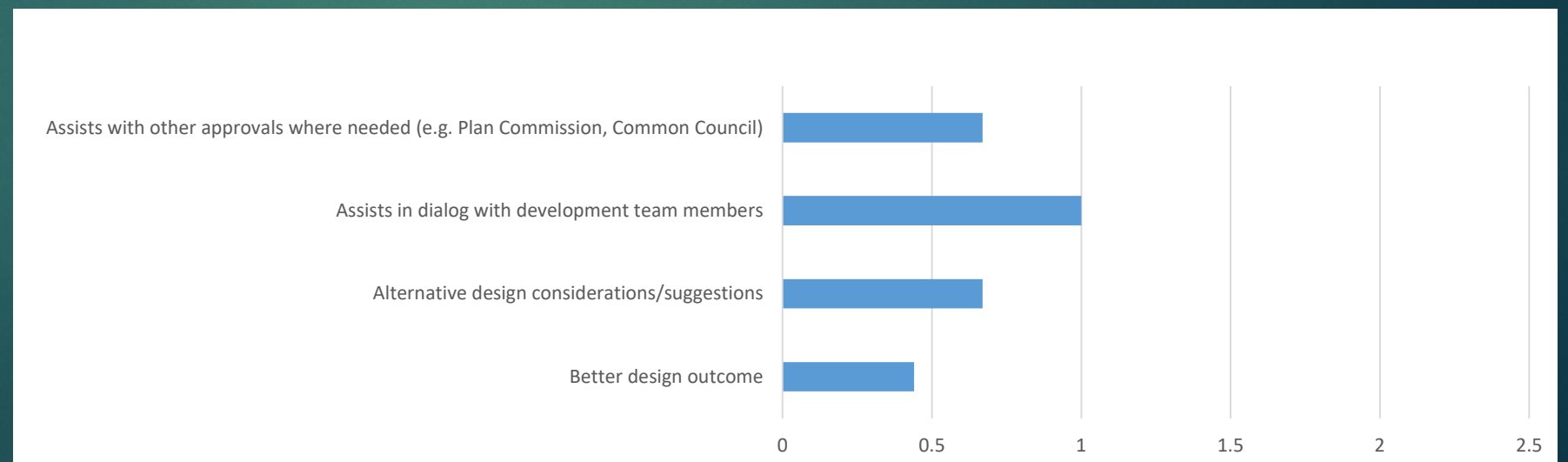
UDC  
Members

# Benefits & Challenges

Survey Participants

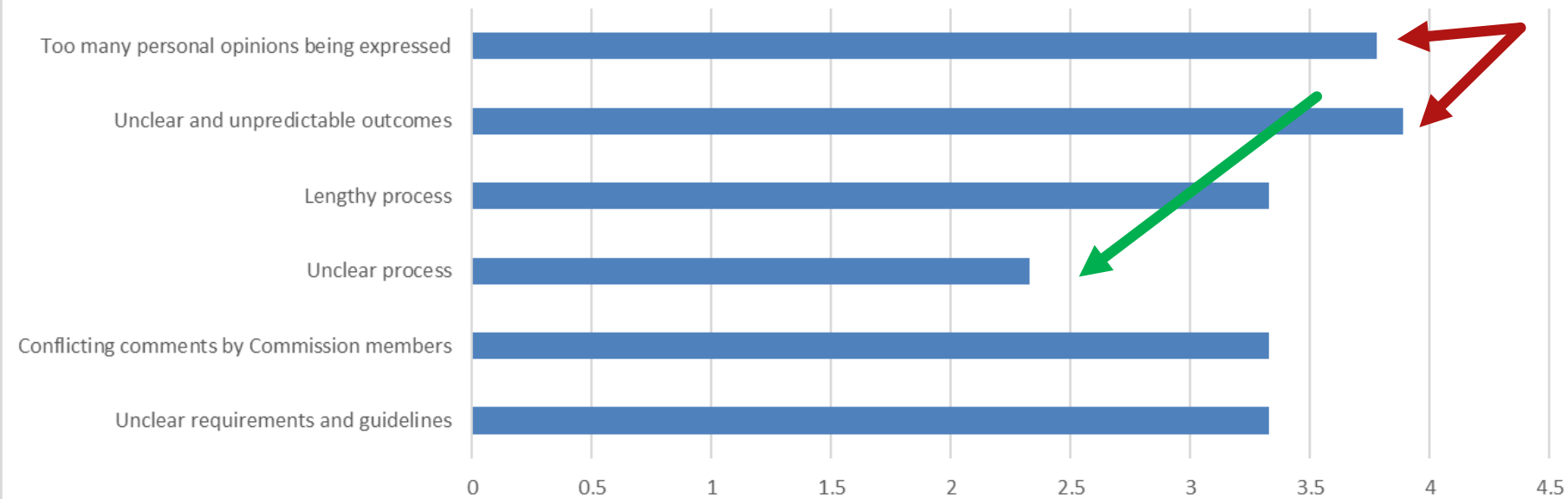


UDC Members



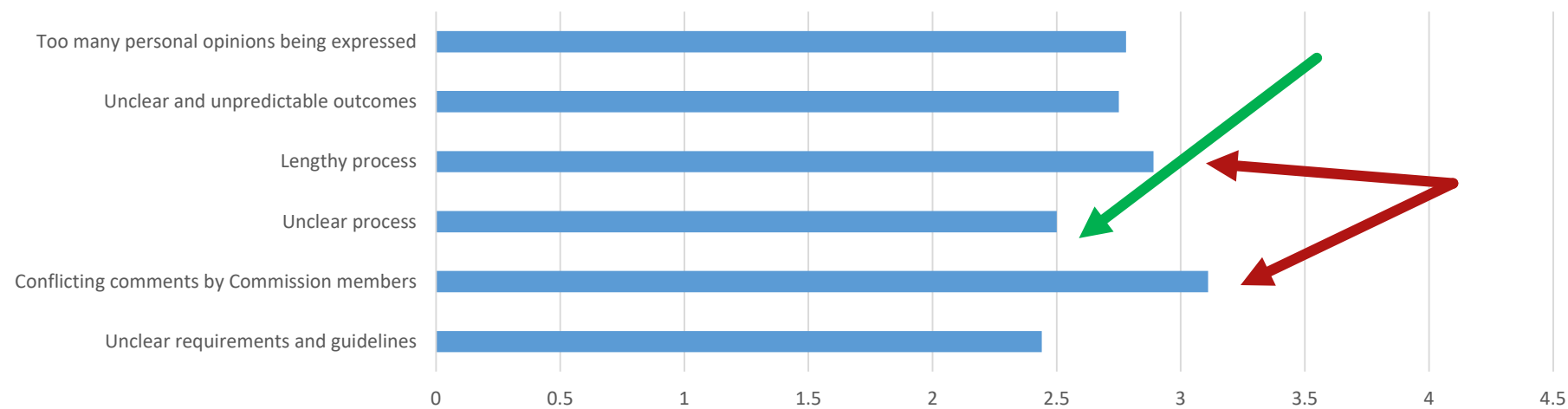
# Benefits & Challenges

Challenges of UDC  
1= Least Challenging 5= Most Challenging



Survey Participants

**Potential Discussion: Ideas for creating clear direction/guidance from the Commission – limit conflicting comments?**



UDC Members

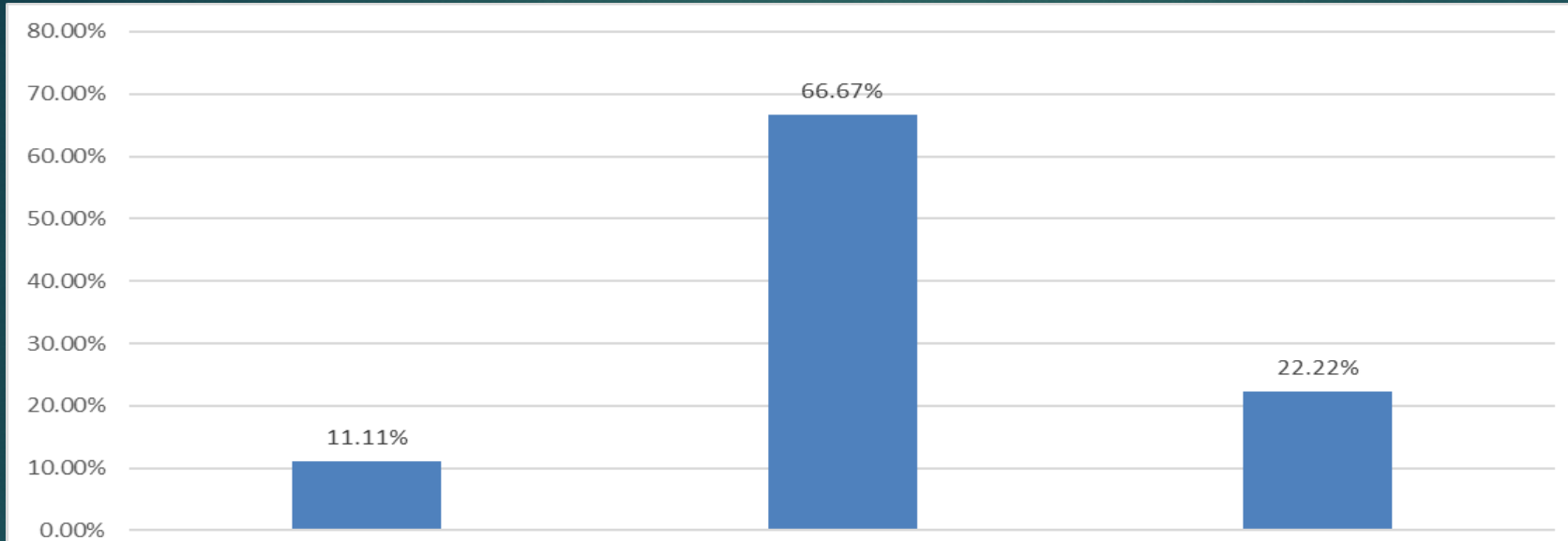
# Structure of the Ordinance

## Predictability vs. Flexibility

- ▶ Guidelines – general, broad, flexible, “shall” be met
- ▶ Requirements – standards that must be met, prescriptive
  - ▶ Are there areas of design that should have more prescriptive requirements or guidelines?
  - ▶ Are there areas of design that should have more flexible guidelines or requirements?
  - ▶ Should requirements and/or guidelines be supplemented with graphics?

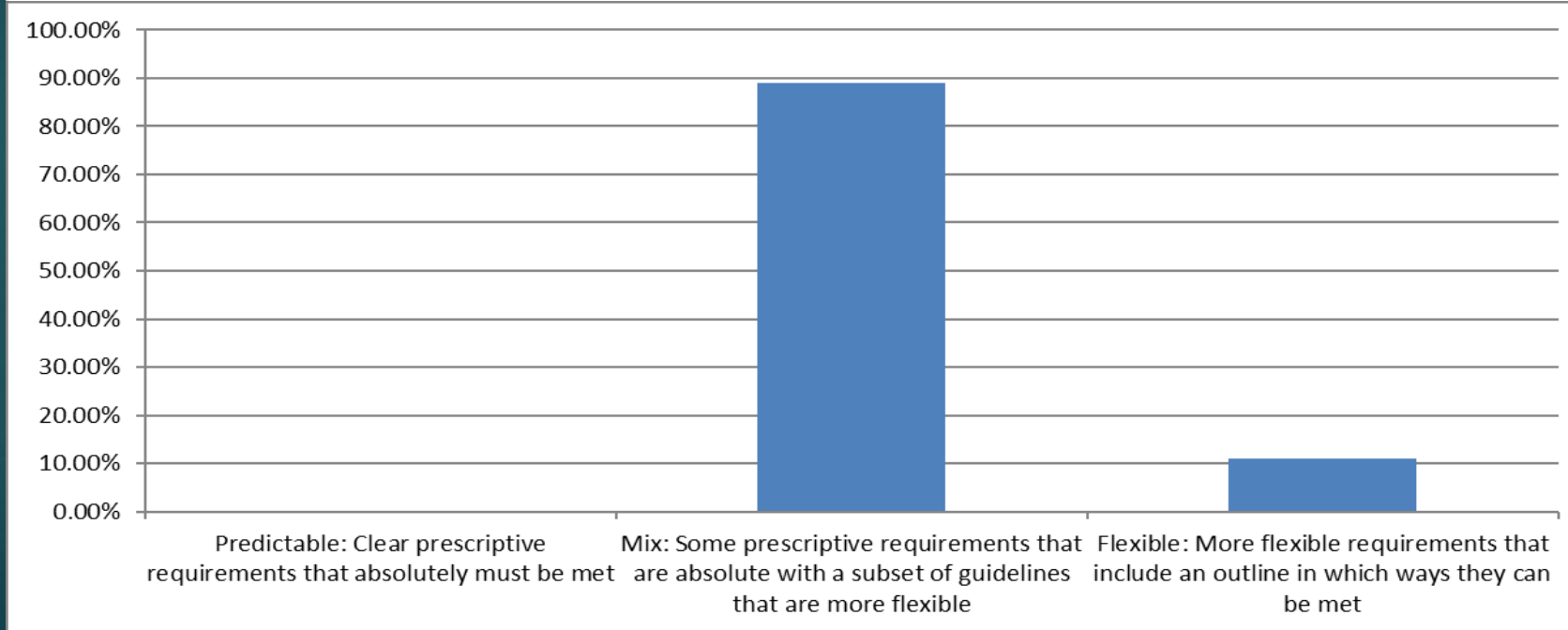
# Structure of the Ordinance

Q1: Predictability vs. Flexibility



Survey Participants

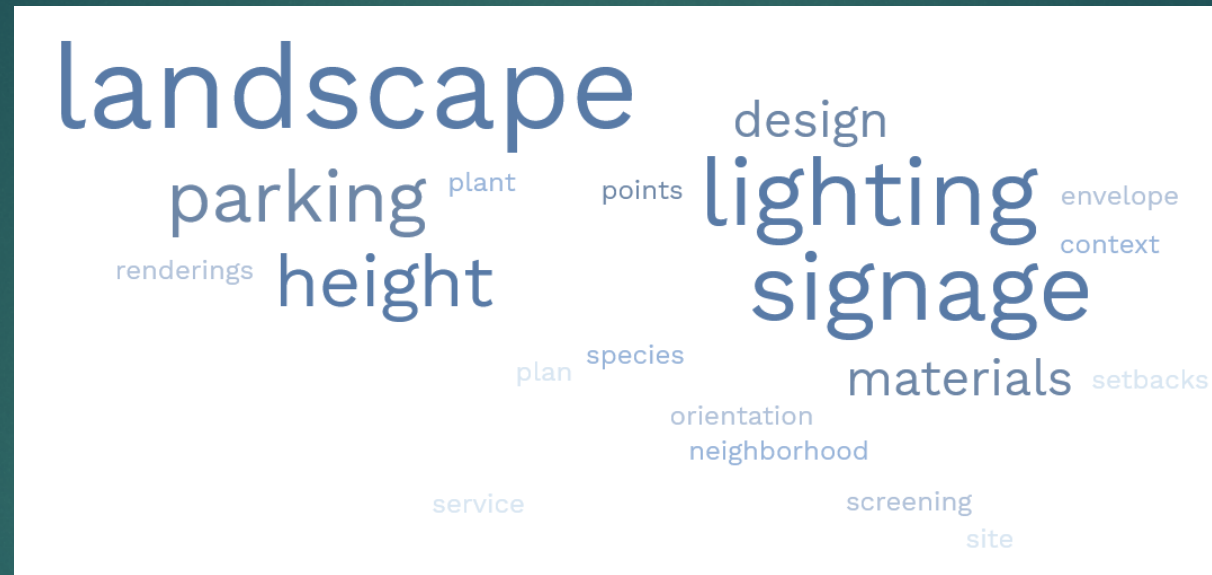
**Mix: Some prescriptive requirements that are absolute with a subset of guidelines that are more flexible**



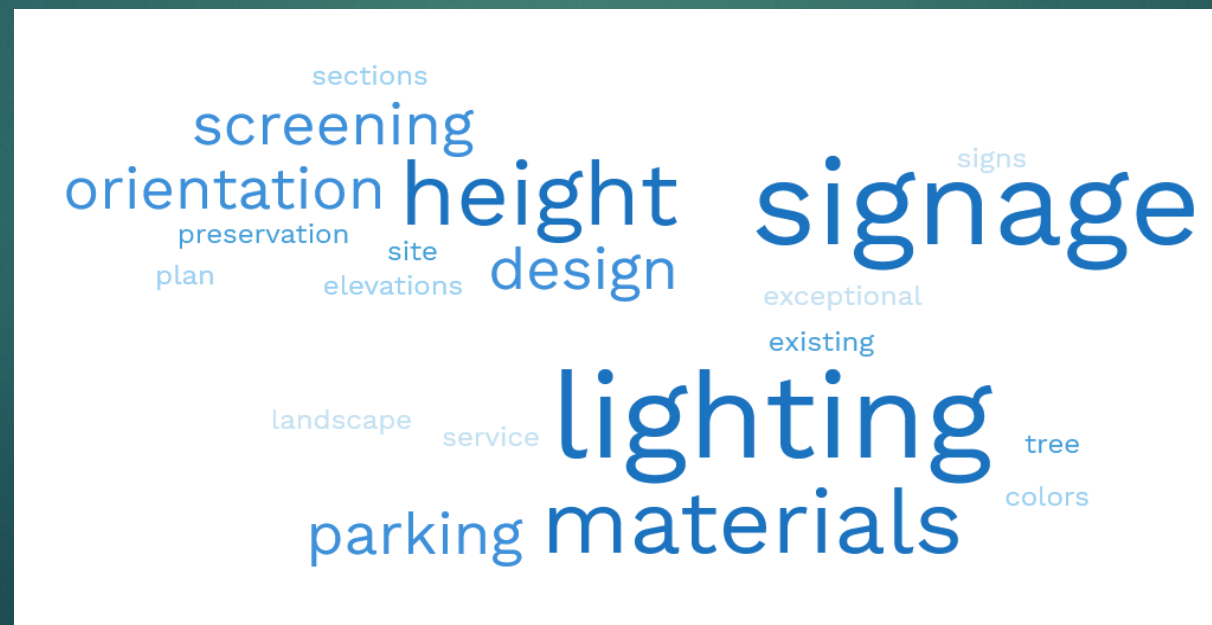
UDC Members

# Structure of the Ordinance

Q2: What elements should be more prescriptive?



Survey Participants



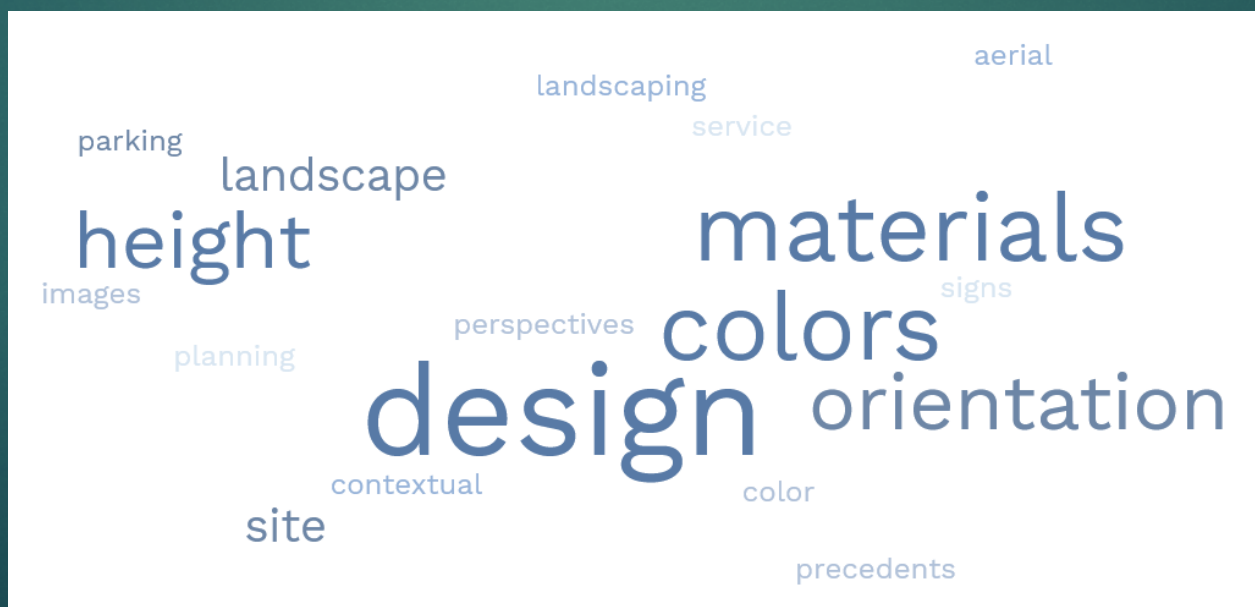
UDC Members

# Structure of the Ordinance

Q3: What elements should be more flexible?



Survey Participants



UDC Members



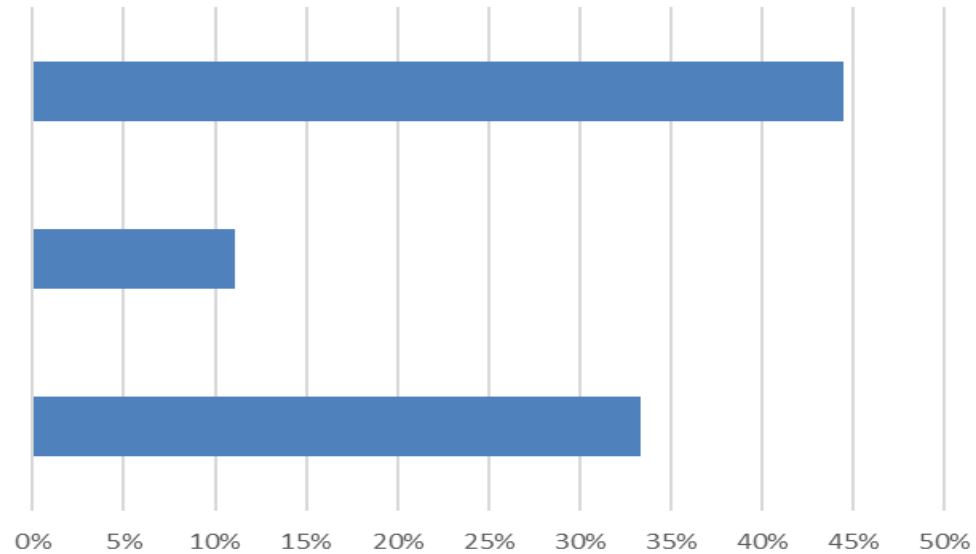
# Structure of the Ordinance

Potential Structure of UDC Ordinance

Have requirements and guidelines the same for every district, except for a small number of select district specific standards

Have requirements and guidelines the same for every district

Keep separate requirements and guidelines for each Urban Design District (current status)

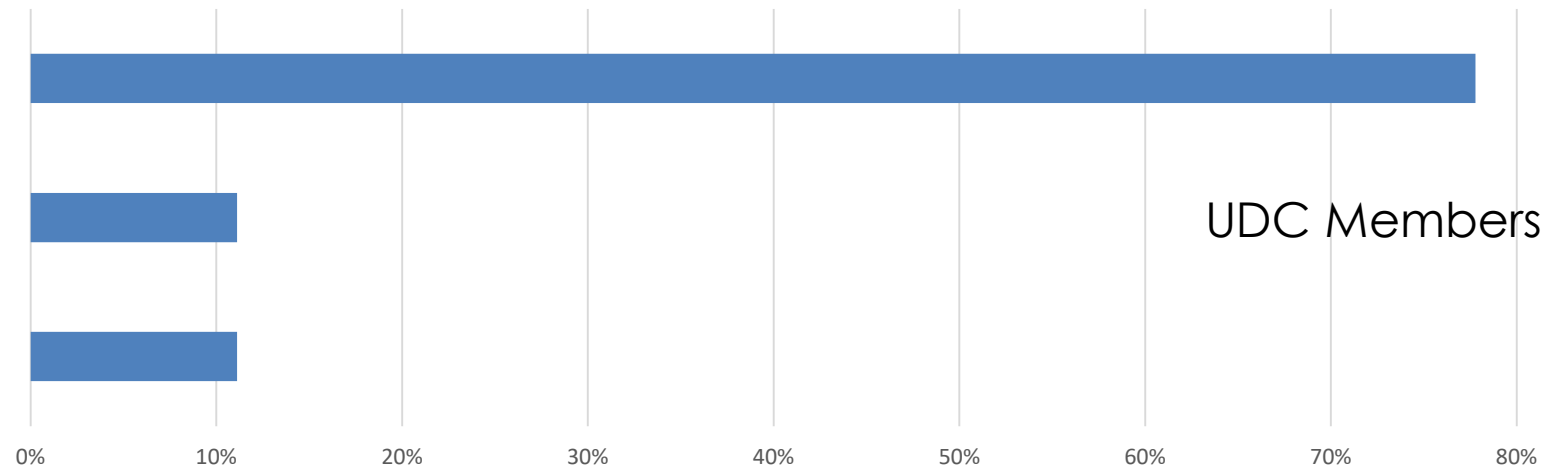


Survey Participants

Have requirements and guidelines the same for every district, except for a small number of select district specific standards

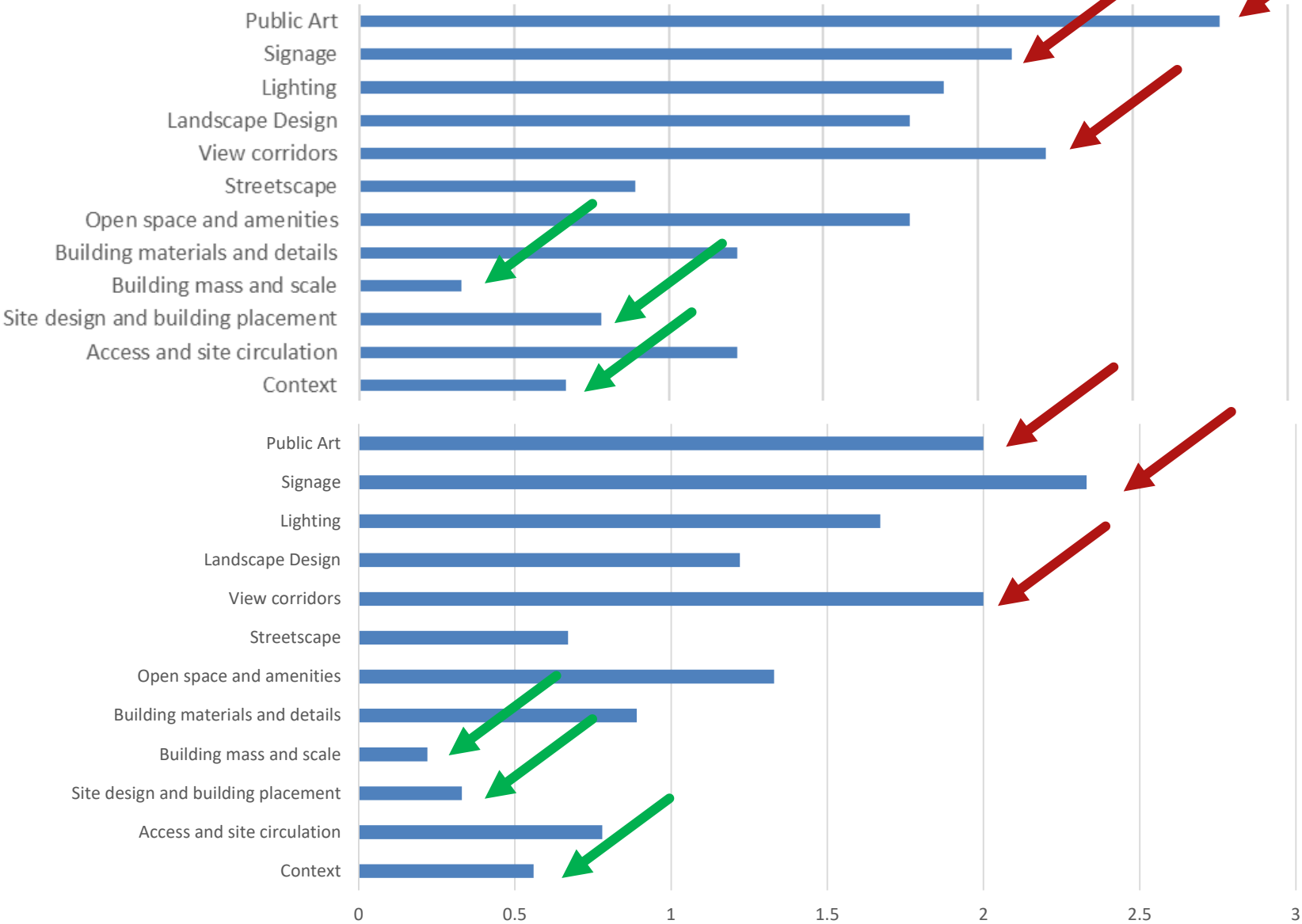
Have requirements and guidelines the same for every district

Keep separate requirements and guidelines for each Urban Design District (current status)



UDC Members

Design Elements for UDC review  
1= Most Important 5= Least Important



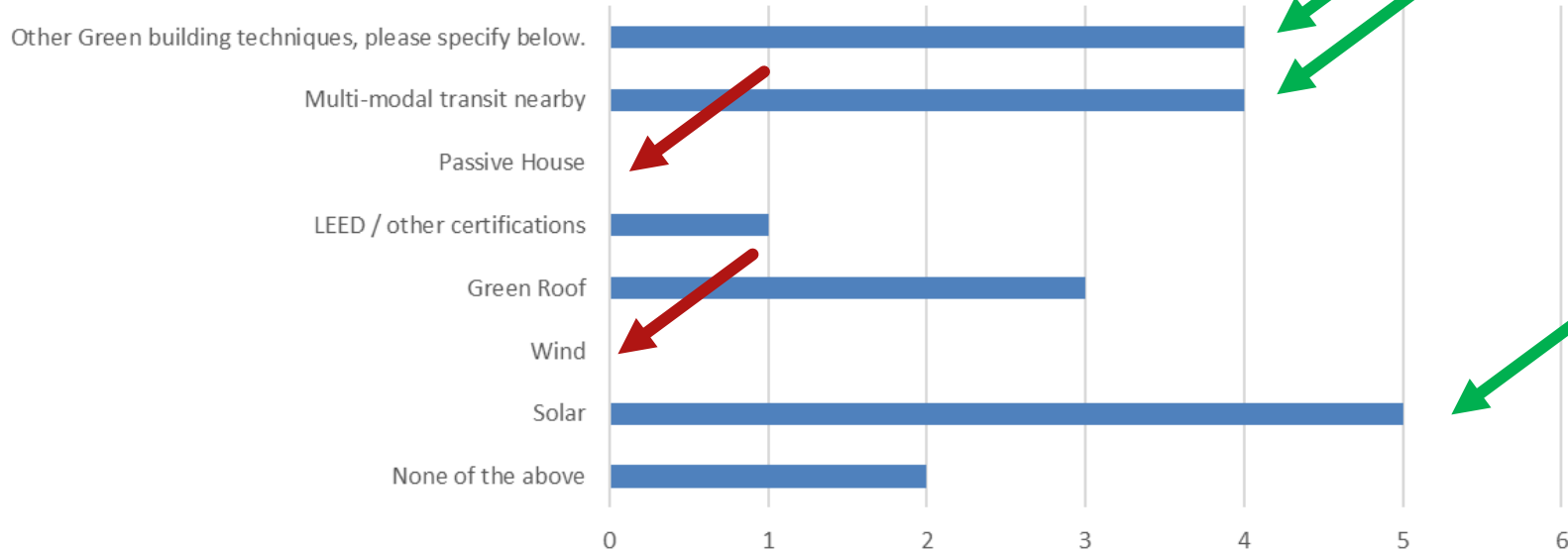
Survey Participants

**Potential Discussion: Looking at the “least important” design elements, should UDC practice/review change related to these items? If so, how?**

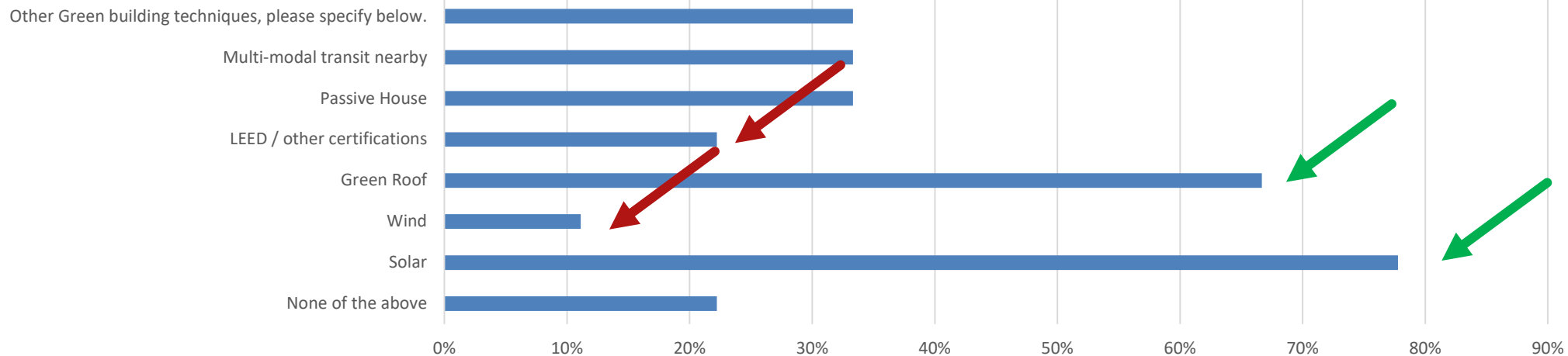
UDC Members

# Sustainability Measures

What sustainability measures would be most beneficial to incorporate into UDC Ordinance?



Survey Participants



UDC Members

# Public Outreach - General Comments

Q12 - As we consider updating the ordinance, what do you think should be the role (purpose and intent) of the UDC/ordinance?

- ▶ Design should be focused on “smart growth” principles
- ▶ Limit discussions about details
- ▶ Focus should be on improving the worst projects
- ▶ Advocate for creative design solutions
- ▶ **Provide clear direction**
- ▶ **Clearly define review purview**
- ▶ More focus on the whole, not the parts
- ▶ Higher level of involvement in larger-scale city projects
- ▶ Create high quality spaces for people in rapidly urbanizing Madison
- ▶ Hold suburban residential developments to the same aesthetic, design, materials, and quality standards as downtown developments
- ▶ More opportunity for approval of projects in a quicker period of time

# Public Outreach – UDC Comments

Q12 - As we consider updating the ordinance, what do you think should be the role (purpose and intent) of the UDC/ordinance?

- ▶ Design that promotes the general welfare of the community through architecture that is rooted in the spirit and history of Madison, establishes timeless places that are designed for the long-term, and aspires to resolve the challenges of our time including diversity, equity, and environment.
- ▶ To encourage well-thought out approaches to the design of new buildings and the spaces around them, but not to rigidly enforce/mandate personal aesthetic choices on developers/architects.
- ▶ Guidance and oversight.
- ▶ Design critique of the project's contribution to the public realm. Accountability for projects being public-serving rather than merely self-serving.
- ▶ I think that UDC should be a body that ensures new developments fit within the current and future plans of neighborhood design. UDC should be able to push forward designs that are sustainable, affordable, unique, creative, etc. I don't think that our current process supports this.
- ▶ UDC guidelines should be adaptable - Step backs are old and make no logical sense design wise.
- ▶ Expectation of the best, most forward-thinking design solutions in clearly defined district boundaries. The purpose of urban design districts and projects requiring UDC review should be given careful consideration.

# Public Outreach - General Comments

Q 13 -Tell us anything else that you want to share about your experiences with the Urban Design Ordinance or the Urban Design Commission.

- ▶ Limit personal opinions
- ▶ **Provide clear design direction**
- ▶ **Maintain/outline clear review parameters**
- ▶ **Encourage pre-application meetings with staff**
- ▶ Cost toward the developer needs to be more top of mind for the Urban Design Commission
- ▶ Consider designing a streetscape module for districts, neighborhoods, and priority streets
- ▶ Current city ROW standards challenge projects that are willing and able to take on ROW enhancements because of the restrictive nature of the real estate and maintenance agreements

# Public Outreach - UDC Comments

Q 13 -Tell us anything else that you want to share about your experiences with the Urban Design Ordinance or the Urban Design Commission.

- ▶ I strongly believe we are part of a process that results in a more attractive Madison, but I'm not sure the general public believes (or understands) that and I think many (not all) of the developers find us as bureaucratic speed bumps.
- ▶ Personal opinions are too prevalent.
- ▶ More focus needed on bigger picture design issues and less emphasis needed on smaller design details.
- ▶ UDC has become as such where developers put forward the same cookie-cutter design instead of more creative design, because they know what will pass UDC.
- ▶ UDC could do a better job at keeping equity, accessibility, and sustainability front and center.
- ▶ BIRD GLASS KILLS PROJECTS! It's costly and prohibitive.

# Brainstorming/Visioning Exercise



# UDC Purpose and Intent Statement

MGO 33.24, UDC Purpose and Intent:

- ▶ To assure the ***highest quality of design for all public and private projects*** in the City.
- ▶ To ***protect and to improve the general appearance of all buildings, structures, landscaping and open areas in the City***; to encourage the protection of economic values and proper use of properties.

# UDC Purpose and Intent Statement

- ▶ To **encourage and promote a high quality in the design of new buildings, developments, remodeling and additions** so as to maintain and improve the established standards of property values within the City.
- ▶ To **foster civic pride in the beauty and nobler assets of the City**, and in all other ways possible assure a functionally efficient and visually attractive City in the future.

# UDC Purpose and Intent Statement - Discussion

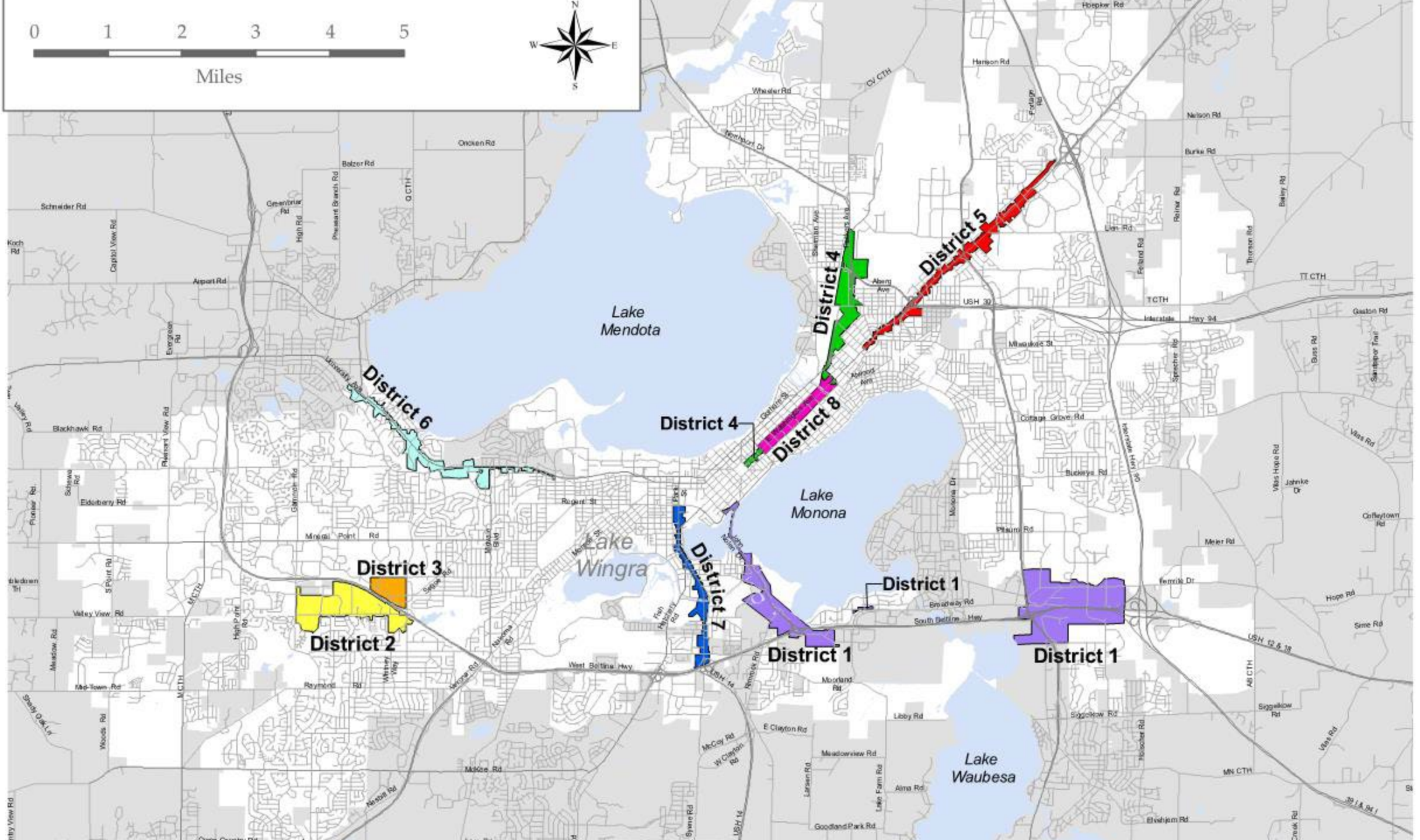
- ▶ What is urban design?
  - ▶ What are “good” design principles?
  - ▶ Is there such a thing as “bad” design?
- ▶ **Review the Purpose and Intent Statement - What works, what does not work, what is missing?**

# Benefits & Challenges – Discussion

- ▶ **What would make the UDC process more beneficial to projects, and why?**
- ▶ As a Commissioner, what is most difficult about the UDC process and how would you change it?
- ▶ Where does the commission add value? Are there project types here you believe the Commission does not provide as much value?

# Structure of the Ordinance - Discussion

- ▶ UDD's were originally created to promote design quality along the City's primary gateways.
  - ▶ **Considering this geography, are there changes to the districts that you would suggest?**
  - ▶ Could the design guidelines and requirements be modified to better align with the UDC purpose and intent?
- ▶ **Are there key areas of design for which guidelines and requirements should provided?**
  - ▶ What areas of design should be predictable?
  - ▶ What areas of design should be flexible?
  - ▶ Do you feel district's should have more similar, broad standards or more site-specific prescriptive standards that reflect particular geometry?





Any last thoughts or questions?

Thank you!