

CITY OF ROUND ROCK
MEMO

To: Brad Wiseman, AICP, CNU-A
Planning and Development Services Department Director
From: Bradley Dushkin, AICP, Senior Planner
Date: October 10, 2016
Re: Cost changes brought about by the Round Rock Development Code

The Round Rock Development Code marks an important step for the Planning and Development Services Department in continuing the pursuit to fulfill the city's development philosophy of "making it happen." The Code will bring about many changes to development standards and procedures. These changes are intended to enhance quality and durability, keeping with City Council's wishes to create and maintain an economically sustainable built environment over the long-term. Some changes will increase the up-front cost of a project, but staff feels confident the increased up-front cost will decrease the lifetime cost of the project, as discussed at the end of this memo. Other changes have the potential to provide significant relief to the affected development. Additionally, some of the proposed regulations have been implemented by developers on their own accord, so the updated code requirements won't be entirely new to the community. Rather, they will help establish a new normal for development in Round Rock. Below is a non-exclusive list of how certain regulatory changes might alter the cost a given project.

Changes that may increase the up-front cost of a project

- In C-1 and C-1a zoning districts, 75% of a building's exterior shall be stone, simulated stone, brick, split-face or stone-face CMU, or stucco.
- EIFS is prohibited in all zoning districts, requiring stucco or another permitted material to be used.
- Increased soil depth from 3" to 4" in landscaping for multifamily and non-residential uses.
- 4" soil depth in yards for new single-family and two-family homes.
- Large species trees are required in front yard for new single-family and two-family homes: one for lots less than 80' wide, two for wider lots.
- Metal posts are required for new wood fences.
- Where on-site detention is required, it shall accommodate the ultimate 1% annual chance event. Currently only those projects in areas with known flood issues are required to detain to 1% while others may detain to the ultimate 4% annual chance event. This requirement may increase the cost of a detention facility by increasing the height of a cement pond or requiring more land for an earthen berm pond.

Changes that may decrease the total cost of a project

- Elimination of Concept Plan for certain projects: save money on application fees for concept plan and preliminary plat (min. \$625 each) and public hearing fees (\$170 & up)
- Allowing minor plats and amending plats to be administratively approved may save time in obtaining approval and prevents the need to send a project representative to a Planning and Zoning Commission meeting.
- Allowing a minor plat to be used for new subdivisions containing up to four lots (currently only up to two lots) will remove the need for a concept plan and preliminary plat for certain projects, which saves money spent on application fees and public hearing fees plus engineering time and the time required to go to P&Z.
- Creation of new single-family, office, and mixed-use zoning districts which may prevent the need to create a PUD: a rezoning application costs \$750-\$900 while a PUD application costs \$2,000-\$5,000
 - PUD amendments prevented: minor (\$500) and major (\$1,500 + notification fees)

- Example: a 20-acre PUD with 2 major amendments and 1 minor amendment would cost a total of ~\$9,000, which is over \$8,000 greater than a single rezoning for the same 20-acre property
- Compatibility buffer exemption for certain situations: save money on fence (min. \$100 per linear foot installed), landscaping, and associated irrigation.
- Masonry accent columns are no longer required for compatibility fences made of fencecrete and subdivision walls of all materials: savings of ~\$1,600 per column
- Metal is a permitted exterior wall material in the Business Park (BP) and Light Industrial (LI) zoning districts for certain facades, reducing the amount of masonry, stucco, or tilt-wall necessary.
- Interrupting islands no longer required for parking lot landscaping in Light Industrial (LI) district.
- The additional street yard landscaping requirement that applied to developments with large street yards that were absent of parking has been removed.
- Low density multifamily (MF-1) projects may have 12 units per building as opposed to just 8; this will allow a developer to achieve the maximum number of 120 units in only 10 buildings instead of 15.

Some changes in the Code will help save money in less quantifiable ways. Utilizing masonry instead of EIFS or fiber cement siding will last longer, require less maintenance, and earn a lower insurance premium due to the increased fire-rating and overall durability. Other changes will save time and ensure projects can be commenced or completed faster than before. For example, the elimination of a concept plan as mentioned above will save the applicant the engineering time that would be required to create the concept plan plus the time required to get it approved by the Planning and Zoning Commission, which lasts a minimum of 30 days. Additionally, some increased up-front costs can provide greater benefits for the end user. For example, requiring 4" of soil depth under sod allows roots to grow deeper, which permits grass to be healthy and thriving with less water use. This saves the property owner money on their utility bill and conserves water for the city.