

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: Notable changes to regulations in the Round Rock Development Code

In keeping with the city's development philosophy of "making it happen," the Round Rock Development Code marks a major change to the organization of land development regulations in the city. With it came the opportunity to evaluate how Round Rock stacks up to its peer cities with regards to design and development standards, and subsequent research showed that Round Rock's base standards had fallen behind. The new Code contains regulations that ensure Round Rock will maintain its prominent reputation among developers both locally and nationally and will provide a durable, high-quality built environment for years to come.

Many of the proposed changes serve to provide clarity to existing requirements or address areas where the Code was previously silent. Those are minor in nature. A summary of the more notable changes to development regulations contained within the new Code are as follows:

- Upgrades the exterior wall treatment of most non-single family zoning districts, with an emphasis on true masonry such as stone, simulated stone, brick, and architecturally finished concrete masonry units, as well as stucco. Fiber cement siding and architecturally finished steel/metal are permitted as well, as is concrete tilt wall in some zoning districts.
- Allows greater flexibility for alternate, recognized architectural styles not explicitly accommodated by the Code.
- Creates new single-family, office, and mixed-use zoning districts which may alleviate the need to create a PUD for certain types of developments.
- Increases the height limit in the MU-2 zoning district for properties west of Mays St; the closer to IH-35 a property is, the taller it can be, to a maximum of 8 stories.
- Creates a cap on the number of bars in the MU-1 zoning district to encourage a variety of uses and more daytime activity in the downtown core.
- Creates landscaping requirements for new single-family and two-family homes which generally mirror those in recently-adopted PUDs.
- Permits accessory dwelling units in the Local Commercial (C-2) and General Office (OF-1) zoning districts to accommodate small business owners.
- Permits multi-story, climate controlled self-storage facilities in the Light Industrial (LI) zoning district.
- Clarifies that compatibility buffers are not required when the adjacent single-family zoned property is occupied by a civic use or place of worship; also creates the ability to apply for an exemption to the compatibility buffer requirement where existing site features already serve to provide a buffer.
- The 150-foot setback that serves to buffer drive through facilities and restaurant patios from residential property lines may be waived where existing site features serve as a buffer already.
- Changes the requirements for a concept plan such that it will apply to fewer developments, and changes the requirements for a minor plat such that it will apply to more developments, streamlining the platting process for many projects.
- Allows for administrative approval rather than Planning and Zoning Commission approval of some plat applications, as permitted by Texas Local Government Code.
- Requires a property owner of an historic structure to pay back to the city the previous 5 years of historic tax exemption monies should the owner choose to demolish the structure. This will help the city recoup some of the cost of subsidizing the preservation and maintenance of the city's historic building stock.

It is also important to note what the Code will not change:

- The process by which Planning and Development Services staff interact with the development community, review applications, and issue comments and permits.
- No properties are proposed to be rezoned.
- Nearly all uses will continue to be permitted as under the current Code, with a few exceptions:
 - Outdoor dog kennels will be prohibited within city limits (currently permitted in LI district)
 - Gas Stations in the C-2 district that share a common lot line with a single-family or two-family home will be limited to a maximum of 4 pump islands, although more may be permitted with ZBA approval of a special exception (currently no limit)
 - Amenity centers will not be permitted in the C-2 district
 - Event centers in the Mixed-Use Downtown Medium Density (MU-2) zoning district will require special exception approval from the ZBA (currently permitted by right)