



CITY OF HOUSTON - CITY COUNCIL

Meeting Date: 9/19/2023

ALL

Item Creation Date: 6/16/2023

PLN - Chapter 42 Livable Places Housing Amendments

Agenda Item#: 10.

Summary:

ORDINANCE amending the Code of Ordinances of the City of Houston, Texas, by amending several sections of Chapter 42 of the Code of Ordinances, and adding several new sections, all amendments relating to multi-unit residential performance standards, courtyard style development performance standards, and entry feature performance standards; containing findings and other provisions relating to the foregoing subject; declaring certain conduct to be unlawful and providing a penalty therefor; providing for severability; and establishing an effective date

Background:

For three years, the Planning and Development Department has been working with the Livable Places Action Committee (LPAC) to update portions of the City's development codes to provide a wider variety of homes at a wider variety of price-points. They focus on affordability, equity, and walkability. These changes will have a positive and long-lasting effect on how our city grows and develops for years to come.

The proposed updates to Chapter 42 (Subdivisions, Developments and Platting) and Chapter 26 Article VIII (Off-Street Parking and Loading) of the City's Code of Ordinances scale back some of the rules that increase development costs and encourage more neighborhood-focused homes. These changes will not override active deed restrictions.

Planning Commission held a public hearing for the proposed amendments on March 16, 2023, and forwarded them to City Council for consideration with two changes on June 8, 2023. City Council held a public hearing for these amendments on June 21, 2023.

The proposed changes address four main areas:

Second Dwelling Unit: Increases maximum size of the second dwelling unit from 900 to 1,500 square feet and requires parking based on the unit size.

Multi-Unit Residential: Brings back this affordable housing type that is small-scale, 3–8-unit apartments with a height restriction and parking based on the unit size to fit better within neighborhoods.

Courtyard Style Development: Promotes this housing type where lots are located around a common courtyard space and do not require street frontage. The proposal includes courtyard space requirement per lot, parking could be separate from the units and have a height restriction so that homes are at neighborhood scale.

Narrow-Lot Development: Encourages lots to be built with garages and driveways in the rear of the home and incentivizes access from a publicly maintained alley, or a narrow-shared driveway to reduce the number of times pedestrians come in potential conflict with automobiles. It also incentivizes smaller homes by requiring parking based on unit size when the pedestrian realm is preserved. This proposal restricts front-access driveway widths to improve pedestrian safety, reduces impervious surfaces in the right-of-way and improves public access to the street. Narrow-lot development requires front doors and windows along the street to fit in with the neighborhood character and provide better visibility on the street.

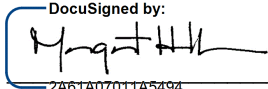
Housing Recommendations Ordinance Amendments Timeline:

- LPAC established consensus (May 11 and June 7, 2022)
- Greater Houston Builders Association Developers Council (November 2, 2022)
- LPAC Reviewed ordinance draft (February 21 and March 14, 2023)
- Meeting with Neighborhood Leaders (February – March, 2023)
- Planning Commission presentation and public hearing (March 16, 2023)
- Survey and public comment period (March 16 – April 27, 2023)
- Held multiple citywide public meetings (April 2023)
- Presented at multiple social events (April 2023)
- Presented at several Super Neighborhood and civic association meetings (July 2022 – June 2023)
- Super Neighborhood Alliance (Quarterly meetings since May 2022)
- Bicycle Advisory Committee (April 26, 2023)
- Greater Houston Builder's Association (Quarterly meetings since May 2022)

- Houston Real Estate Council (Quarterly meetings since May 2022)
- Planning Commission action (June 8, 2023)
- Quality of Life Council Committee presentation (June 13, 2023)
- City Council public hearing (June 21, 2023)
- Presented at multiple Super Neighborhood board and community meetings (July 2023 - present)

The Planning and Development Department recommends that City Council approve the housing amendments to Chapters 42 and 26.

Note that the proposed changes to Chapter 26 will be considered in a separate agenda item.

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ATTACHMENTS:

Description	Type
Livable Places FAQ	Backup Material
Streetscape Drawing for Narrow Lots	Backup Material
Letters of Support	Backup Material
Planning Commission Chair Letter	Backup Material
Planning Commission Action Amendment Language - June 8 mtg.	Backup Material
RCA	Signed Cover sheet