

STAFF REPORT

Case Number: 14-ZA-06
Request: Text amendment to Planned Development 79 (PD-79)
Address: City wide
Petitioner: City of Farmers Branch

Summary of Issues:

In response to the City's Neighborhood Revitalization initiative, staff has reviewed the current Planned Development 79 (PD-79) development standards and determined that there are necessary revisions to the text in order to support redevelopment. PD-79 has been successful in carrying out its objective to stabilize the existing neighborhood while promoting the construction of new compatible homes. The provisions of PD-79 ordinance have served the city well in the past.

However, it does not allow the flexibility needed to accommodate the current housing market and trends that are desired by today's homebuyers and builders. Therefore, it is necessary to amend the Planned Development zoning district language to meet the needs of today's development standards.

Branch Crossing:

PD-79 was created in 1998 and was written to establish the "Branch Crossing Special District". The ordinance was prepared with input from builders, realtors, and residents. This area is a true public private partnership between residents and builders.

Now that the ordinance has been tested for sixteen years, few provisions could be clarified, simplified, or reexamined. More importantly, is that these few provisions if left untouched do not impair the continued implementation of the objectives of this ordinance.

The Proposed Amendments to the PD-79 Zoning District:

Front Yard Setback

Currently the minimum required front yard setback is 25 feet from the street right-of-way and the maximum front yard setback is 30 feet. City staff would like to eliminate the maximum requirement of 30 feet. The maximum specification is simply not needed and the 25 foot minimum is more than adequate.

Driveway Coverage

The current ordinance states that no more than 30% of the required front yard may be paved as a front entry driveway or for vehicle parking or maneuvering. Encourages circular drive but due to the size of the lot, the 30% is not enough. This provision prevents the lot from having a circular driveway. City staff is proposing increasing the paved area to 65%.

Fence Height

Currently the allowable maximum fence height is 6 feet. City staff would like to increase the maximum to 8 feet, which is the consistent height throughout the city.

Chimneys

The current ordinance mandated that every home shall include one fireplace and further specified chimney material requirements. City staff is proposing to remove this provision entirely.

Garage Doors

The language currently strictly limits the use of materials for garage doors. Due to increase interest, City staff is recommending that the new requirements allow metal, fiberglass and wood garage doors and that they include either raised panels or architectural pattern.

Solar Panels

Currently the ordinance does not address solar panels. City staff felt that the use of solar panels, when installed correctly, should be allowed, if desired.

By making these minor adjustments to the PD-79 zoning district, today's homebuilders will be able to build more effectively on the in-fill residential lots scattered throughout the City.

Comprehensive Plan:

The 2012 Central Area Plan categorized the City's residential area into three neighborhood revitalization strategies; preservation, conservation and rehabilitation. The Plan also divided the central area into 20 districts in order to allow for more specific neighborhood strategies. The recommendations for the Branch Crossing neighborhood was to support rehabilitation. This text amendment is in line with the goals and recommendations of the Central Area Plan.

Public Responses:

A total of 279 zoning notification letters were mailed to surrounding property owners on August 27, 2014. Several zoning notification signs were placed throughout the neighborhood the same day. As of September 4, one letter of opposition has been received.