



INFORMATION MEMORANDUM

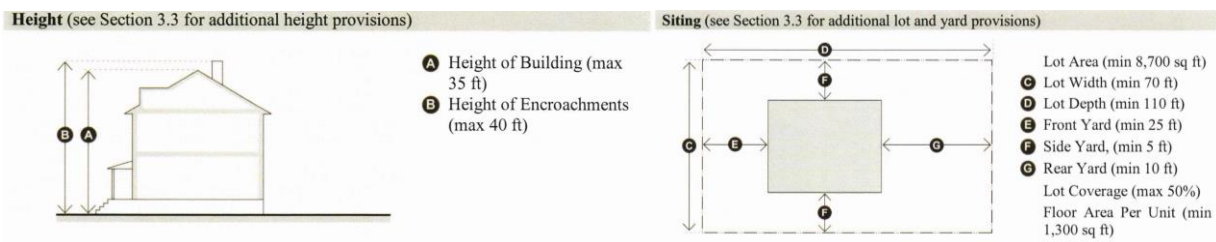
TO: Mayor and City Council
THROUGH: Ben Williamson, City Manager
FROM: Sam Chavez, Interim Director of Community Services
CC: Jawaria Tareen, Deputy City Manager
DATE: July 31, 2025
SUBJECT: Zoning Overlay Options for Valwood Park

Background:

At the February 4, 2025, City Council meeting, Councilman Omar Roman requested information on a potential zoning overlay for the eastern portion of District 1. This area includes the Valwood Park residential neighborhood, which was developed in multiple phases beginning in the 1950s. A memorandum outlining existing zoning regulations and potential overlay options was provided to the City Council for review in May 2025. This agenda item provides an opportunity for continued discussion on strategies to preserve neighborhood character and prevent resident displacement.

Existing Zoning:

The majority of the Valwood Park neighborhood is zoned “R-6” One-Family Residence District, which is designed to accommodate detached homes on small individual lots. The Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance (CZO) outlines the following standards for new development in the R-6 district:



All new homes must be constructed with a minimum floor area of 1,300 square feet and an enclosed two-car garage. There is no maximum square footage as long as the building setback and lot coverage requirements are met. Homes can be built up to two stories tall (maximum of 35 feet).

Currently, the CZO does not regulate architectural design for new single-family construction, allowing flexibility for a variety of design styles. Some planned development (PD) districts within the city do include design standards, such as PD-99 and PD-100 for the Mercer Crossing area, or PD-79 for the Branch Crossing neighborhood. While Texas state law now prohibits cities from regulating building materials or colors, zoning can dictate other design elements, including but not limited to roof pitch, window design, patios, and garage placement.

Zoning Overlay Options:

An overlay district is a zoning tool used to apply additional standards or regulations to a specific geographic area while maintaining the underlying base zoning. Overlay districts can be crafted to address neighborhood-specific concerns, such as architectural compatibility, height, or square footage, without necessitating a complete rezoning.

The Builders of Hope organization has recently published a guideline document entitled “A Right to Stay: Dallas Neighborhood Anti-Displacement Toolkit.” The strategies outlined in this document were shaped by engagement and advocacy efforts aimed at preventing gentrification in established residential neighborhoods and protecting residents from displacement.

Specifically, the toolkit references the existing Neighborhood Stabilization Overlay (NSO) program within the City of Dallas. The program was adopted in 2005 and is designed to preserve single-family neighborhoods through certain design criteria without the burden of establishing a conservation or historic district. The criteria regulated by an NSO are limited to front yard setbacks, side yard setbacks, garage location, and building height.

An NSO must be comprised of at least 50 single-family properties in a compact, contiguous area and include full neighborhood blocks. At least 10 owners within the proposed area must form a neighborhood committee and petition the City to create the NSO. After the petition is reviewed by staff, the neighborhood committee is responsible for gathering data regarding existing neighborhood conditions, taking inventory of each lot within the proposed NSO, and gathering support signatures. Staff facilitates a neighborhood meeting, and if enough support signatures are gathered from the affected property owners (at least 50% support), the zoning proposal is forwarded to P&Z and City Council for consideration.

The NSO program is an example of a community-driven overlay program that can be used to ensure new development aligns with the scale and character of existing homes. However, in the Anti-Displacement Toolkit, Builders of Hope notes that the NSO program can be too limited and difficult to apply effectively. Instead, they recommend that Dallas create a Displacement Mitigation Zoning Overlay for West Dallas that includes stronger design standards, restrictions on height, square footage, roof type, porch requirements, garage placement, etc., for new residential development. To date, the City of Dallas has not adopted this overlay.

Next Steps:

If the City Council is interested in pursuing a zoning overlay option for the Valwood Park neighborhood, the following steps should be considered:

- Project Scope: Specific direction on the intention for an overlay district, geographic area to be included, and development conditions to be addressed.
- Assessment of Existing Conditions: Evaluation of existing parcels, including lot size, building size, zoning, and ownership, to assess the potential impact of an overlay district.
- Neighborhood Engagement: A robust outreach and input process should be considered to ensure neighborhood stakeholders are involved in shaping overlay standards.
- Draft Ordinance: Collaboration between City Council, the Planning & Zoning Commission (P&Z), staff, and neighborhood stakeholders to draft appropriate overlay standards, including review by the City Attorney.
- Approval Process: A zoning map amendment will be required, including notification to all property owners within the overlay and a surrounding buffer area. A public hearing and recommendation from P&Z and final approval from the City Council are required.