

Legislation Text

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Agenda Date: 01/13/2020

Subject:
Downtown Development Precursor Changes

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PURPOSE:

Staff is introducing proposed changes to the City Code and Downtown Littleton Design Standards as a precursor to the larger Unified Land Use Code project. Staff is seeking input on the proposed changes and an implementation strategy.

PRESENTATIONS:

Staff Presenters: Jennifer Henninger, Community Development Director;
Mike Sutherland, Deputy Director

Additional Presenters: N/A

SUMMARY:

Since the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan in October of 2019, staff has identified the policies and goals that specifically apply to downtown development. Currently there are inconsistencies between the Comprehensive Plan and the City's code which will lead to conflicts and interpretation challenges when it comes to downtown development.

These types of conflicts can start to be addressed with modifications to

- public engagement requirements
- inconsistent allowed uses
- lot-development regulations
- height
- parking regulations

These conflicts should be addressed as a precursor approach prior to the formal adoption of a new Unified Land Use Code, which is not anticipated to occur until mid-2021.

In Council study sessions held on December 10, 2019 and January 7, 2020, staff introduced several proposed interim changes to address the conflicts as set forth above that include changes to the Littleton City Code, the Downtown Littleton Design Standards, as well as administrative operating standards. Summaries of the proposed changes are attached.

PRIOR ACTIONS OR DISCUSSIONS:

- During the Comprehensive Plan outreach process, staff received questions and concerns regarding how

development would be reviewed between the adoption of the Plan and the adoption of a new Unified Land Use Code

- Kendig Keast Collaborative (KKC) put together a post-adoption memo that outlines high-priority areas for the City and identified the need to address downtown immediately
- The draft scope of work for Unified Land Use Code starts with downtown
- At the December 10, 2019 Study Session - Council confirmed key areas of conflict and directed staff to return with additional detail on phased regulations to mitigate conflicts
- At the January 7, 2020, Council directed staff to proceed with the discussion and evaluation of the proposed changes and to create two 90-day moratoriums, one pertaining to development with more than one residential unit and the other pertaining to auto-oriented uses

ANALYSIS:

Staff Analysis

Over the past several years, 22 of the 23 development applications received for the downtown area have involved multi-family development. Additionally, when analyzing the types of uses that are currently allowed in downtown, there are a number of auto-oriented commercial uses allowed by current code which may not be consistent or compatible with many of the goals and policies set forth in the Comprehensive Plan such as pedestrian active uses, making the city more walkable, and encouraging mixed use.

When analyzing the conflicts between the Comprehensive Plan and the City's zoning codes, staff identified 10 proposed changes to the city code, 10 proposed changes to the design standards, and eight proposed changes to the administrative operating standards. Each of the proposed changes has varying scope and impact. Staff is recommending separate study sessions to discuss the proposed changes, scope, and impact in greater detail. Following the Council study sessions, Council members asked for additional consideration of short-term rental regulations and changes to the Preliminary Project Plan process.

Staff is moving forward with two separate 90-day moratoriums:

- The first would address development which includes more than one residential unit
- The second would include development that is considered auto-oriented.

The moratoriums will allow the public, Council, and Planning Commission more time to review and understand recommended interim changes before implementation. The moratoriums will also allow staff to focus on future changes to the City's zoning regulations rather than the review of downtown development applications which may be inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

- Schedule:
 - Moratorium First and Second Readings - 1/21 & 2/4
 - Planning Commission Study Sessions (5)
 - 1/13 introduction
 - 1/27 codes
 - 2/10 design standards
 - 2/24 operating standards
 - 3/8 optional
 - Council Study Sessions (3)
 - 1/14 codes

- 2/11 design standards (KKC present to kickoff the larger code process)
- 3/10 finalize phase 1 changes
- Planning Commission Public Hearings - 4/13
- First and Second Readings + resolution for design standards - 5/5 and 5/19

Council Goal, Objective, and/or Guiding Principle

One of Council's 2019 goals was to update the code extending into 2020. This discussion item is directly related to the code update goal and relates to the Envision Littleton objective.

Fiscal Impacts

None. Discussion item only. Depending on outcomes, staff will prepare a fiscal impact analysis for alternatives as necessary.

Alternatives

1) Do not adopt interim codes:

- Risk: potential downtown development applications being submitted between now and adoption of the Unified Land Use Code may be more likely to be inconsistent with the City's Comprehensive Plan. This alternative has the greatest potential of allowing development to occur that is in conflict with the Comp Plan and the expectations of our community.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Proceed with schedule for interim changes as directed by Council.