

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Scott McDonald and Richard Cannone - City of Denton  
**FROM:** Matt Goebel, Jim Spung, and Tareq Wafaie - Clarion Associates  
**DATE:** January 19, 2018  
**RE:** Denton DDC Update – Assessment Memo

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This memo provides a summary of issues to be addressed in the Denton Development (DDC) update project. The memo identifies high-level issues related to the DDC that were not addressed in the original assessment report created in 2013, and summarizes the proposed structure and contents of all major DDC chapters. The purpose of this memo also is to provide staff agencies and the public with an additional opportunity to provide input on the proposed DDC content and structure.

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## PROJECT BACKGROUND

### INITIAL PROJECT (2013)

The City of Denton began working with Clarion Associates in 2013 as part of a series of planning-related activities, including development of the Downtown Implementation Plan (DTIP) and the new *Denton Plan 2030*. While *Denton Plan 2030* was being drafted, the city retained Clarion to assist with targeted updates of the Denton Development Code (DDC) in order to help lay a strong foundation for implementing the new citywide plan. The scoped DDC updates at that time included a comprehensive reorganization and reformatting of the document, as well as targeted substantive updates focused on immediate issues (primarily efficiency of the review process and removing barriers to infill and redevelopment).

### CURRENT SCOPE (2017)

The *Denton Plan 2030* project was (adopted in early 2015) and city leadership recognized the importance of aligning the DDC and other regulatory documents with the goals and objectives identified in the new Denton Plan 2030. The scope of the DDC rewrite project was expanded to look comprehensively at the entire code, rather than only the specific targeted updates identified in the initial scope.

To help inform this new expanded scope, the Clarion team met with city staff and members of the community during a series of meetings and stakeholder interviews. Those interviewed included city staff, members of the City Council and Planning and Zoning Commission, and various stakeholders in the development process (e.g., developers, business owners, neighborhood group representatives, and development professionals such as engineers and planners).



As of December 2017, the revised scope included a four-part drafting process:

1. Districts and Uses (Module 1) – *Public Draft delivered in May 2017*
2. Administration and Procedures (Module 2) – *Staff Draft delivered in September 2017*
3. Development Standards Module (Module 3)
4. Consolidated Draft DDC

Those tasks are underway, with the first module drafted and presented to the public, and portions of the second and third modules underway in the drafting process. A consolidated draft of the entire new draft DDC is scheduled to be ready by late spring 2018.

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## PROJECT THEMES

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These outreach efforts discussed above, which included numerous meetings and interviews with project stakeholders, has helped inform the development of a set of new common themes for the DDC rewrite project:

1. **Focus on the Customer:** Establish development processes and procedures that are predictable, consistent, and efficient. Development Services serves a diverse customer base; it consists of its residents, business owners, contractors, developers and those seeking to locate in Denton.
2. **Build a Strong Foundation:** Simplify the DDC to better align with Texas state statutes, particularly procedures.
3. **Tailor Development Standards to Specific Context and Area:** Move away from a one-size-fits-all approach toward a more tailored code that provides different standards for different character areas. Place focus on a performance-based code rather than a prescriptive code.
4. **Create New Tools to Provide Flexibility:** Build flexibility into all areas of the DDC and empower staff with more decision-making power to apply the code to unique circumstances, subject to more clearly defined standards.
5. **Protect Neighborhoods:** Introduce standards that help protect established and historic neighborhoods, particularly in transition areas near downtown, universities, and other major institutional uses.
6. **Coordinate Efforts:** Coordinate the DDC rewrite project with other related City of Denton efforts, including recent and ongoing updates to criteria manuals and drafting of new ordinances.

## FOCUS ON THE CUSTOMER

Customer service is the heartbeat of successful local governance. With good customer service, local governments build relationships with members of the community and provide businesses and residents with a sense of ownership of the city's plans, policies, and regulations. Without quality customer service, tensions run high and the community begins to mistrust their government. Development Services has made customer service the highest priority.

An ideal development review process is one that is predictable and provides clear expectations to the applicant, which the staff can administer consistently with clear direction, and where approvals of development applications result in the desired built environment consistent with the community's long-range planning policies. In our experience, most developers prefer to build in communities where the

development review process is predictable and consistent, even if the process takes time. The development process should be viewed as a partnership between the city and its residents and business community.

Several in the development community believe the City of Denton has earned a poor reputation due to a broken development review process and general lack of customer service. Staff should partner with applicants to lead them through the development review process, rather than simply advising applicants to follow the provisions of the DDC. The shared sentiment among several stakeholders is that the code inspectors are inconsistent with their comments. In some cases, different inspectors are making different comments on the same development projects. Stakeholders also noted that the DDC lacks the clarity needed to avoid constant interpretation and negotiation.

Frustrations with the development review process may be generally categorized as follows:

- Conflicting and outdated information in the DDC and criterial manuals;
- Concerns with the development review process itself;
- Lack of customer service; and
- Inadequate interdepartmental coordination.

Development Services leadership is currently analyzing and implementing improvements to the permit shop in Denton, a one-stop shop where applicants can gather information, submit applications, and receive over-the-counter approvals. These efforts will help to alleviate some of the immediate concerns raised by the development community related to the broken development review process.

### **BUILD A STRONG FOUNDATION**

Texas state statutes establish the minimum procedural processes by which local governments can approve certain land development projects. Over the years, Denton has adopted local standards that in some cases are more stringent than what the minimum state law requires. For example, Denton currently requires all development projects that involve public infrastructure improvements to have a three-party agreement in place prior to issuing project permits. Establishing such an agreement can introduce unnecessary project delays and consume staff time and resources. This requirement is not mandated by Texas law and could be changed to a surety bond system, which is more common for local governments. Generally, City leadership has suggested that any unnecessary procedural requirements be identified and removed from the DDC to allow a more, predicable, streamlined, and efficient process. In cases where the state grants municipalities the authority to impose additional standards (or to provide flexibility) beyond the minimums prescribed, Clarion will recommend standards based on our national experience and our work with Texas communities.

### **TAILOR DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS TO SPECIFIC CONTEXT AND AREA**

Like much of the Dallas Metroplex, Denton has experienced rapid growth in the past 20 years. This growth has diversified the built form and context of development in Denton. The city includes areas of widely varying physical character, including the historic downtown core, established historic neighborhoods, newer suburban-style subdivisions, auto-oriented commercial centers, large-scale industrial projects, and agricultural land uses. However, the existing DDC generally has a uniform set of standards that apply to these different types of places in the same manner.

A one-size-fits-all approach to development standards is particularly challenging because of the broad range of land use patterns established in Denton. For example, minimum parking requirements may be

lower in a pedestrian-oriented environment like downtown, but auto-oriented environments like Rayzor Ranch or the Golden Triangle may see more land dedicated to parking. Also, there is only one set of landscaping standards, for instance – yet landscaping tools that are appropriate in the downtown may be quite different than those suited to a suburban commercial center. Generally, infill and redevelopment projects present different and unique challenges that may not be common with greenfield development.

While it is important to establish baseline standards for the entire city, it is also important to recognize different character areas and to allow a degree of flexibility in the DDC to allow city staff and the development community to find reasonable solutions to unique challenges.

### **CREATE NEW TOOLS TO PROVIDE FLEXIBILITY**

Effective codes set baseline minimum standards, but they must not be so strict that they inhibit creativity by the private sector and stifle growth. Tools are needed to give planners and city officials flexibility in how they apply the code and adapt it to each unique set of circumstances.

The current DDC has a tool in place intended to provide flexibility, but has not been effective in achieving the desired outcome. The Alternative Development Plan (ADP) provides the option to deviate from design criteria through a discretionary Planning and Zoning Commission procedure. It was established as a means to provide greater flexibility to developers when the DDC was adopted in 2002, and is used in a significant number of projects today. However, a significant number of stakeholders expressed concerns with the ADP process, stating that it has turned into simply a mechanism to waive the code and that ADPs are typically approved. Developers also argue that it is unpredictable. Planning staff and the Planning and Zoning Commission observe that it more closely represents a variance process. Others note that the trade-offs negotiated through this process rarely mitigate the issues raised, and that they are often arbitrary. While it is important to ensure that a formal procedure for administrative waivers is in place, it is equally important to have built-in mechanisms throughout the DDC that provide developers with options and flexibility by-right.

Moving forward, we recommend replacing the ADP process with new tools that provide flexibility but also help address some of the concerns noted above. Specifically, we recommend introducing an administrative adjustment tool to allow staff the ability to approve minor deviations from certain numeric standards where additional flexibility is needed but the overall intent of the code is still met. The new DDC will include such a tool for discussion purposes. Other tools for flexibility may include more menu-based standards, such as a potential landscaping point system, enhancing the intent of the code through performance options rather than prescriptive means.

### **PROTECT NEIGHBORHOODS**

Allowing and promoting infill and redevelopment requires a delicate balance between encouraging economic development within the city while maintaining the fabric of existing and surrounding neighborhoods. Typical concerns from neighborhoods in or near commercial districts include parking and loading; pedestrian safety and overall walkability; traffic generation; aesthetic value of new development; scale of new development; and nuisance pollutants from light, air, and noise.

A key goal in the DDC update will be developing tools where possible to help protect established neighborhoods and historic districts from the impacts of infill projects while not stifling new growth altogether, including increased notification requirements and required pre-application neighborhood compatibility meetings for major application types or improvements. Many concerns from the neighborhoods revolve around traffic and parking. Neighborhood groups in Denton expressed interest in

enhancing partnerships with local developers and the universities to approach infill and redevelopment from common ground. They want to see investment, redevelopment, and mixed-use transition gradually and positively into residential districts. However, protecting the long-standing neighborhoods from the adverse impacts of new development is paramount.

## **SYNCRONIZE REGULATORY TOOLS AND IMPROVE INTERNAL PROCESSES**

Managing ongoing updates and changes to local government regulations can be challenging, especially when those changes are happening simultaneously across several departments. It is critical that regulatory standards and information provided to the public by all city departments be consistent and that communication and coordination among departments effective. The following paragraphs describe how coordinating efforts among departments will improve the efficient administration of the new DDC.

### **Criteria Manual Updates**

Denton has adopted several criteria manuals that contain technical design and engineering standards, much of which is too detailed to include in the DDC. There are multiple references to these design criteria manuals in the current DDC. For example, Section 35.21.6 refers users to the Water and Wastewater Design Criteria Manual for details related to sanitary sewer system design. Often, the regulations stated in the design criteria manuals are identical to or overlap with the regulations within the DDC, which can lead to inconsistencies when one ordinance or manual is amended without amending the other. These provisions will be removed from the DDC and included in the appropriate criteria manuals. Additionally, the criteria manuals will have an annual date for effective updates. This process will create a means for community input, adoption, and an effective date, thus more predictable. City departments are currently in the process of, or have recently completed, updates to their respective criteria manual. To ensure consistency among city departments, it is important that ongoing efforts to update existing ordinances, criteria manuals, and other documents are coordinated.

### **Ordinance Updates**

Denton staff is currently drafting several ordinance updates that impact development in Denton, including a tree ordinance, an environmentally sensitive areas ordinance, and the historic preservation ordinance. City staff and the Clarion team will need to coordinate the integration of these updates into the larger DDC document. For example, the historic preservation ordinance could be incorporated as its own subchapter, or its content could be weaved into existing sections of the DDC. Having a subchapter dedicated to historic preservation would allow users to gather information from one place, while integrating the standards throughout the DDC would allow users to see how historic preservation ties into several elements of development. This should be discussed in greater detail as these updates near adoption. Additionally, the ordinances should be reviewed alongside the new DDC to ensure there are no inconsistent practices, policies, or standards that would cause conflicts or confusion.

### **Interdepartmental Coordination**

Several stakeholders have expressed concern regarding a general lack of interdepartmental coordination and communication in Denton. Each department tends to work independently from each other when reviewing submitted applications and requests. This break-down in interdepartmental communication coupled with vague and sometimes contradictory DDC requirements and overlapping standards in department criteria manuals, has created a recipe for a frustrating development review process for both staff and the applicant. Establishing clear and objective standards in the DDC that minimize the need for interpretation by staff will help minimize inconsistent and contradictory plan review comments among plans examiners; however, current internal procedures and processes are under review to ensure interdepartmental coordination with projects.

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## ANNOTATED OUTLINE OF NEW DDC

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This section provides an overview of our recommendations for the proposed structure and general content of the new DDC and is intended to provide a roadmap for organizing and drafting updates to the DDC. It also serves as a framework for further discussions with the city about key development regulation issues. In several places, we have noted “further discussion” to flag specific topics.

### SUBCHAPTER 1: GENERAL STANDARDS

This subchapter includes the provisions that apply to the entire Code. Major elements include:

- Overall DDC purpose and intent.
- Applicability and jurisdiction of the DDC.
- Nonconformities (including nonconforming lots, uses, and structures).
  - *Further discussion:* To what extent should nonconformity provisions be amended, expanded, or relocated?
  - *Further discussion:* Discuss whether or not nonconforming signs should be addressed in the DDC or remain in the Code of Ordinances, Section 33.10.
- Enforcement procedures and penalties.
- Standards addressing issues related to the transition from the current DDC to the new DDC.

### Major Proposed Changes

- Consider updates to thresholds for when certain development standards apply to redevelopment of nonconforming properties.
- Eliminate the special exceptions procedure and any other procedure not supported by an authorizing ordinance or state statute.

### SUBCHAPTER 2: ADMINISTRATION & PROCEDURES

This subchapter describes the process for reviewing and approving development applications in Denton. Content will draw in part from the existing Subchapter 3, Procedures, and Subchapter 4, Boards, Commissions, and Committees. Major elements include:

- Descriptions of review and decision-making bodies – including their composition and procedural operations.
- Descriptions of application types – including review procedures required, public notice requirements, and the review and decision-making authorities associated with each.
- Common review procedures that apply to most development application types.
- Application-specific procedures.
- Increased notification requirements and neighborhood compatibility meetings for specific application types or improvements.
- To replace the current Alternative Development Plan process, introduce a new procedure to authorize decision-makers to make specific minor adjustments to numeric code standards when certain criteria are satisfied.

- Relocate historic preservation-related procedures to Subchapter 4, *Overlay and Historic Districts*, which will carry forward the updated preservation ordinance (currently in review).
- *Further discussion:*
  - Discuss with City Attorney’s Office whether or not the special exception procedure should be carried forward and the applicability and/or the necessity of that tool.

### Major Proposed Changes

- Generally, revise procedural standards to align with the requirements in the Texas Local Government Code. Remove unnecessary procedural steps not required by TLGC.
- Avoid repetition and eliminate conflicting information among different development application types.
- Introduce common review procedures to establish a consistent and predictable review process for common applications.
- Designate the “Director” as the authority of administrative decisions for the DDC.
- Increase flexibility by providing staff with more administrative decision-making authority, within defined parameters, and under the direction of the Director.
- Relocate site plan review procedures from Subchapters 13 and establish new thresholds for when a site plan review is required and the elements to be included.
- Reconcile inconsistencies with design manuals, administrative manuals, and ongoing ordinance amendments being drafted by staff.
- Convert the role of the DRC to that of a Development Advisory Committee (DAC).

The following table summarizes the current draft of the proposed review procedures and approval bodies for application types in Denton. As the drafting continues, comments are welcome and encouraged on this proposed overall structure.

<b>Summary Table of Procedures</b>												
R = Review/recommendation   D = Decision   A = Appeal   [R/D/A] = Public hearing required   <R/D/A> = Public meeting required √ = Neighborhood meeting recommended   X = Required												
Application Review Procedure (Each procedure is subject to the common review procedures and also the specific requirements and criteria in the referenced section).	Code Section	Public Notice Required					Applies within the ETJ? (Y or N)	City Staff	Planning & Zoning Commission	City Council	Board of Adjustment	Historic Landmark Commission
		Neigh. Meeting	Online posting	Mailed Notice	Published Notice	Posted Notice						
<b>DEVELOPMENT PERMITS AND PROCEDURES</b>												
Specific Use Permit		√	X	X	X	X		R	[R]	[D]		
Site Plan Review			X					D	A			
Vested Rights			X				Y	D			A	
Watershed Protection Permit			X					D	A			
Gas Well Development Site Plan		See Subchapter 22 (35.5.10.4) (Administrative Approval by the Gas Well Administrator)										

## Summary Table of Procedures

**R** = Review/recommendation   **D** = Decision   **A** = Appeal   **[R/D/A]** = Public hearing required   **<R/D/A>** = Public meeting required  
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		Neigh. Meeting	Online posting	Mailed Notice	Published Notice	Posted Notice						
<b>SUBDIVISION PROCEDURES</b>												
General Development Plan			X				Y	R	<D>			
Preliminary Plat			X				Y	R	<D>			
Final Plat			X				Y	R	<D>			
Minor Plat – Minor Replat			X				Y	D	At Director discretion			
Replat			X	X	X	X	Y	R	[D]			
Amending Plat			X				Y	D	At Director discretion			
Vacating Plat			X				Y	R	<D>			
Development Plat			X				Y	D				
Conveyance Plat			X				Y	R	<D>			
<b>FLEXIBILITY AND RELIEF PROCEDURES</b>												
Variance – Zoning or Sign		√	X	X	X	X		R			[D]	
Variance – Subdivision		√	X	X	X	X		R	[D]	[A]		
Administrative Adjustment			X					D	At Director discretion		A	
Alternative ESA Plan		√	X	X	X	X			[R]	[D]		
Religious Freedom		√	X	X	X	X	Y			[D]		
<b>HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROCEDURES</b>												
Certificate of Appropriateness, Administrative	<i>See Subchapter 4, Overlay and Historic Districts</i>											
Certificate of Appropriateness, Standard												
Certificate of Demolition												
Certificate of Designation												
Historic Conservation District Designation												
Historic Landmark Designation												
<b>PLAN AND ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS</b>												
Annexation		Pursuant to TLGC					Y	R		[D]		
Comprehensive Plan Amendment		√	X	X	X	X	Y	R	[R]	[D]		
Zoning Amendment		√	X	X	X	X		R	[R]	[D]		
Special Sign District		√	X	X	X	X		R	[R]	[D]		

### SUBCHAPTER 3: ZONING DISTRICTS

This subchapter describes the base zoning districts, special purpose districts, and planned development district in Denton. Major elements include:

- Purpose statements for each zoning district.
- Graphics that illustrate the general character of the district and demonstrate the basic dimensional standards.
- Consider carrying forward the contents from Subchapter 5, *Zoning Districts and Limitations*, and portions of Subchapter 7, *Special Purpose and Overlay Districts*.

### Major Proposed Changes

The Public Draft of Module 1 delivered to the City in May 2017 contains detailed footnotes identifying changes to the current Subchapter 3. The following summarizes key changes presented in Module 1 and additional changes that may be considered prior to adoption of the new DDC.

- Consolidate zoning districts with similar standards and/or similar purpose and intent statements.
- Eliminate zoning districts that are rarely applied, or in some cases have never been applied.
- Establish new zoning districts that help Denton carry out the Denton Plan 2030.
- Rename zoning districts for consistency and to more intuitively reflect the intent of the district.
- Create a new residential zoning district (R4) that caters to established historic neighborhoods with small lots (50 ft x 100 ft) that do not meet current zoning district dimensional requirements. This district would allow increase lot coverage and a variety of residential housing types (single family, duplex, triplex, four-plex, and accessory dwelling units).
- Introduce distinct and elevated location-specific standards for developments along corridors within the proposed MN and MD zoning districts.
- Replace density metrics with dimensional requirements that achieve the same intent (building height, setbacks, lot coverage, etc.).

The following table summarizes the proposed changes to the current zoning district lineup including consolidations, eliminations, and additions:

Current vs. Proposed Denton Zoning Districts	
Current District	Proposed District
<b>RESIDENTIAL DISTRICTS</b>	
RD-5 Rural Residential	RR – Residential Rural
A Agriculture	
RD-5X Rural Residential	
RC Rural Commercial	---
NR-1 Neighborhood Residential 1	R1 – Residential Large Lot
NR-2 Neighborhood Residential 2	R2 – Residential Medium Lot
NR-3 Neighborhood Residential 3	
NR-4 Neighborhood Residential 4	R3 – Residential Small Lot

<b>Current vs. Proposed Denton Zoning Districts</b>	
<b>Current District</b>	<b>Proposed District</b>
<b>NR-6</b> Neighborhood Residential 6	<b>R4</b> – Residential Urban
<b>MIXED-USE DISTRICTS</b>	
<b>NRMU-12</b> Neighborhood Residential Mixed Use 12	<b>MN</b> – Mixed-Use Neighborhood
<b>NRMU</b> Neighborhood Residential Mixed Use	
<b>DR-1</b> Downtown Residential 1	---
<b>DR-2</b> Downtown Residential 2	---
<b>DC-N</b> Downtown Commercial Neighborhood	<b>MD</b> – Mixed-Use Downtown Core
<b>DC-G</b> Downtown Commercial General	
<b>CM-G</b> Community Mixed Use General	---
<b>CM-E</b> Community Mixed-Use Employment	---
<b>RCR-1</b> Regional Center Residential 1	<b>MR</b> – Mixed-Use Regional
<b>RCC-N</b> Regional Center Commercial Neighborhood	
<b>RCR-2</b> Regional Center Residential 2	
<b>RCC-D</b> Regional Center Commercial Downtown	
<b>COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR DISTRICTS</b>	
---	<b>HC</b> – Highway Commercial
---	<b>SC</b> – Suburban Corridor
<b>EC-C</b> Employment Center Commercial	<b>GO</b> – General Office
<b>EC-I</b> Employment Center Industrial	<b>LI</b> – Light Industrial
<b>IC-E</b> Industrial Center Employment	
<b>IC-G</b> Industrial Center General	<b>HI</b> – Heavy Industrial
---	<b>PF</b> – Public Facilities
<b>MPC</b> Master Planned Community	<b>PD</b> – Planned Development
<b>OVERLAY DISTRICTS</b>	
Denton Municipal Airport Overlay District	<b>MAO</b> – Municipal Airport Overlay
Fry Street Overlay District	Replaced by small area plan – currently underway
Rayzor Ranch Overlay District	<b>RRO</b> – Rayzor Ranch Overlay
Infill Special Purpose District	
Unicorn Lake Overlay District	<b>ULO</b> – Unicorn Lake Overlay
Oak-Hickory Historic District	<b>OHH</b> – Oak-Hickory Historic District
Bell Avenue Historic Conservation District	<b>BHC</b> – Bell Avenue Historic Conservation District
West Oak Area Historic District	<b>WOH</b> – West Oak Area Historic District

#### **SUBCHAPTER 4: OVERLAY AND HISTORIC DISTRICTS**

This subchapter describes the overlay districts in Denton, each of which is listed in the table above. For those districts being carried forward, the subchapter will be based on the current Subchapter 7, *Special Purpose and Overlay Districts*.

## Major Proposed Changes

- Carry forward and re-organize the content in the current overlay districts to match the structure and format of the new DDC as provided in the table above.
- Fold in the historic district ordinance amendments currently underway by staff.

## SUBCHAPTER 5: USE REGULATIONS

This subchapter includes standards regulating the use of land in Denton. Major elements include:

- A consolidated table of permitted uses with levels of permission for each land use type in each base zoning district.
- Use-specific standards for land use types that require special standards (called limitations in the current DDC).
- Standards for accessory and temporary uses and structures, wireless telecommunication facilities, and gas well drilling and production.
- Consider carrying forward the contents from Subchapter 6, *Specific Uses*; Subchapter 8, *Group Homes*; Subchapter 9, *Manufactured Homes*; Subchapter 10, *Sexually-Oriented Businesses*; and Subchapter 22, *Gas Well Drilling and Production*.

## Major Proposed Changes

The Public Draft of Module 1 delivered to the City in May 2017 includes proposed changes to the DDC. The following is a summary of the key changes proposed in Module 1:

- Create use categories and subcategories to organize specific use types in a logical way, making future land use determinations more streamlined.
- Consolidate like land use types, eliminate archaic use types, and introduce new use types that will help implement the Denton Plan 2030.
- Replace the current “limitation” system with cross-references to use-specific standards.
- Update use-specific standards for existing and new use types to address potential land use impacts.
- Define new multi-family dwelling types (triplex, fourplex, etc.) to encourage “missing middle” products and neighborhood compatibility.
- Respect built conditions by ensuring the levels of permission in the table of permitted uses are appropriate for each zoning district and the built context.

## SUBCHAPTER 6: DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

This subchapter consolidates several current DDC subchapters that contain standards and regulations associated with physical layout and design of development. Major elements include standards for: site preparation and land-disturbance, environmentally sensitive areas, site drainage, access and circulation, off-street parking and loading, landscaping, tree preservation, buffering, fencing, site design, building design, exterior lighting, electric standards, water and wastewater, and any operational and maintenance standards as outlined in criteria manuals.

## Major Proposed Changes

### Generally

- Tailor development standards for specific contexts and areas in Denton.
- Review and update thresholds for redevelopment and what activities trigger compliance with specific sections of the DDC.
- Relocate more technical material to an administrative manual or another criteria manual.
- Reorganize the development standards subchapter, moving from broad standards related to site preparation and ending with more specific standards such as lighting and landscape design.
- Consider elevated compatibility standards for neighborhood interface areas (historic and university areas).
- Include more graphics and tables where possible to improve user-friendliness.
- Integrate neighborhood protection standards throughout the DDC to prevent negative impacts of harmful influences such as abrupt contrasts of scale and intensity and incompatible land uses.
- Relocate signage standards outside of the DDC to the Code of Ordinances.
- Discuss whether there is existing capacity to administer and enforce new standards
- Discuss whether standards should apply citywide, or only to certain types of developments or zoning districts.
- Discuss if there are scenarios where these standards would not apply – e.g., infill and redevelopment sites.

### Land-Disturbing Activities

- Overhaul the current Subchapter 18, *Land Disturbing Activities*, by relocating content related to procedures to Subchapter 2 and removing requirements from the DDC that are administered through a building permit or other criteria manual.

### Environmentally Sensitive Areas

- Currently being drafted by staff; the adopted ordinance will be folded into the new DDC and replace current Subchapter 17, *Environmentally Sensitive Area*.

### Drainage Standards

- Carry forward most of the standards from current Subchapter 19, *Drainage Standards* with no major substantive revisions.
- Relocate content specific to subdivisions, procedures, or other topics to their corresponding section of the DDC.

### Landscaping, Screening, Buffering, and Fences

- Introduce simple buffering standards to minimize impacts of incompatible land uses.
- Introduce standards and/or incentives focused on water conservation and improving stormwater quality through low-impact landscape design and xeriscaping.
- Develop landscaping standard options by which the Director is given authority to evaluate landscaping plans with more flexible standards.

- Create standards addressing fencing materials and quality, fence height, and perimeter fencing associated with new development and redevelopment.
- Fold new tree ordinance into the DDC that is currently being drafted by city staff.
- Discuss if parking lot landscaping standards should be located in the parking section or with the landscaping standards.

### Access and Circulation

- Update standards related to internal circulation, connections between developments, and multi-modal considerations on a site.
- Relocate street design and vehicular circulation standards to the subdivision standards with a cross-reference as appropriate.
- Consider carrying forward the contents from current Subchapter 20, *Transportation*.

### Parking and Loading

- Review and update current parking minimums and maximums (or eliminate maximums for some uses) and establish a table of required parking ratios consistent with the new use table.
- Introduce alternative parking standards for flexibility (credits for shared parking, off-site parking, parking proximate to transit, structured parking, carpool/vanpool parking, etc.).
- Enhance parking lot location and design standards to emphasize walkability and multi-modal circulation in and around parking areas
- Refine location of parking areas by zoning district, with stricter requirements in pedestrian-oriented mixed-use districts.
- Update parking lot landscaping and screening standards to reflect best practices and low-impact development and stormwater management.
- Consider carrying forward the contents from current Subchapter 14, *Parking Standards*.
- Consider requirements for bicycle parking areas.

### Building and Site Design

- Establish a distinct section within the DDC addressing site and building design.
- Develop additional standards related to how buildings are situated on corners, and how large developments with three or more buildings shall organize units around a central courtyard, plaza, or other type of common open space.
- Consider standards addressing the location and design of garages and carports to avoid the prominence of garages where appropriate (i.e., rear entry where alleys exist, front-loaded garage width maximums and setbacks, garage placement to maximize walkability, aesthetics, etc.).
- Expanded and strengthen standards related to façade articulation, breaking up planes, and roof form variation.
- Improve fenestration requirements by customizing standards dependent on the type of building (e.g., mixed-use, multifamily) and the zoning district (e.g., nonresidential and mixed-use).

- Enhance building design standards for duplexes.
- Discuss what the desired level of quality for development is (industrial, commercial, mixed-use, downtown, multi-family, single family, etc.).
- Discuss whether or not an exterior metal finish appropriate. If so, under what circumstances?
- Consider carrying forward the contents from current Subchapter 13, *Site Design Standards*.

### Exterior Lighting

- Expand the current minimal standards for light and glare found in Section 35.13.12.
- Establish exterior lighting requirements including types of lighting, illumination requirements, and dimensional requirements for lighting.

### Electric Standards

- Carry forward most of the standards from current Subchapter 24, *Electric Standards*, with no major substantive revisions.
- Relocate content specific to subdivisions, procedures, or other topics to their corresponding section of the DDC.

### Water and Wastewater

- Carry forward most of the standards from current Subchapter 21, *Water and Wastewater Standards*, with no major substantive revisions.
- Relocate content specific to subdivisions, procedures, or other topics to their corresponding section of the DDC.

## SUBCHAPTER 7: SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS

This subchapter contains the regulations that deal with the subdivision of land within Denton. Major elements include platting procedures and other specific requirements related to public improvements associated with serving new developments. The subchapter will be based on the requirements contained in the Texas Local Government Code.

### Major Proposed Changes

- Coordinate lot and block standards with lot and building standards of the proposed lineup of zoning districts.
- Relocate content specific to procedures to the Administration and Procedures section of the DDC.
- Introduce flag lot and irregular lot standards.
- Create standards and incentives for conservation and/or cluster subdivisions.
- Discuss possible incentives to encourage conservation and efficient subdivision design (e.g., flexible lot sizes, increased building lot coverage, etc.).
- Streamline and eliminate inconsistencies within the current DDC, municipal code and the Texas Local Government Code.
- Explore the use of a development plat for nonresidential development.

- Explore lot line adjustments, unity of title, and declarations in lieu of unity of title as alternate to replatting as a way to streamline the process and length of time.

## **SUBCHAPTER 8: DEFINITIONS**

This subchapter includes definitions of terms used throughout the DDC. It will be based generally on the existing Subchapter 23, *Definitions*.

### **Major Proposed Changes**

- Consolidate, add to, and revise definitions to ensure there are no duplicates or conflicts.
- Remove unused terms.
- Relocate standards from definitions to the corresponding DDC section.
- Simplify and revise definitions for clarity.