

CITY OF EL PASO, TEXAS
AGENDA ITEM DEPARTMENT HEAD'S SUMMARY FORM

DEPARTMENT: Department of the City Manager, Development & Infrastructure Services

AGENDA DATE: (A) Introduction, March 25, 2008
Public Hearing, April 1, 2008

(B) Introduction, March 25, 2008
Public Hearing, April 15, 2008

CONTACT PERSON/PHONE: Patricia D. Adauto, Deputy City Manager, (915) 541-4853

DISTRICT(S) AFFECTED: All Districts

CITY CLERK DEPT.
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SUBJECT:

- (A) ORDINANCE AMENDING TITLE 19 (SUBDIVISIONS), CHAPTER 19.16 (IMPROVEMENT STANDARDS AND DESIGN PRINCIPLES), SECTION 19.16.010 (GENERAL DESIGN PRINCIPLES) OF THE EL PASO CITY CODE BY ADDING A SECTION ON SMART GROWTH GENERAL DESIGN PRINCIPLES. THE PENALTY IS AS PROVIDED IN CHAPTER 19.04.190 OF THE EL PASO CITY CODE.
- (B) AN ORDINANCE AMENDING TITLE 20 (ZONING), CHAPTER 20.12 (DENSITY AND DIMENSIONAL STANDARDS) OF THE EL PASO CITY CODE BY ADDING A SECTION ON SMART GROWTH GENERAL DESIGN PRINCIPLES. THE PENALTY IS AS PROVIDED FOR IN CHAPTER 20.24 OF THE EL PASO CITY CODE.

BACKGROUND / DISCUSSION:

In an effort to better respond to City Council's direction that staff more earnestly reforms the type of development occurring in the community, the attached amendments more clearly define the smart growth design principles to be considered as part of zoning and subdivision applications. These principles are intended to be used as a guide to evaluating proposed applications, and apply only to developments of three or more gross acres in size. Within a subdivision application, the plat itself shall incorporate the applicable design criteria. Particular to zoning applications, a detailed site development plan shall be required for these developments that incorporate the design criteria enumerated.

The current Zoning Code allows options to property owners to develop mixed-use zoning that encourage these types of smart growth design criteria, as does the Subdivision Code permit modifications that would permit alternative subdivision design standards that would accommodate these same types of development. These are optional, however, and a formal process to give greater assurances that the development actually adheres to the smart growth goals prescribed by City Council is necessary. The proposed Code amendments provide a stronger legal framework to support the City Council's policy goals, as well as providing the development community with certainty on the types of development that is favored.

PRIOR COUNCIL ACTION:

As part of the strategic sessions held with the Urban Land Institute in January 2006, the City Council supported the smart growth principles developed by the Congress for New Urbanism. These are positive trends that reflect the belief that communities can do more to ensure that development improves their economy, community, and environment. The City Council directed that the current regulations be modified to incorporate these principles as alternatives to more conventional development. The smart growth principles are:

- Mix land uses
- Take advantage of compact building design

- Create a range of housing opportunities and choices
- Create walkable communities
- Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place
- Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty, and critical environmental areas
- Strengthen and direct development toward existing communities
- Provide a variety of transportation choices
- Make development decisions predictable, fair, and cost-effective
- Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration in development decisions.

AMOUNT AND SOURCE OF FUNDING:

N/A

BOARD / COMMISSION ACTION:

The proposed ordinances are scheduled for review and recommendation as follows, and actions taken will be reported at the time of the public hearing of the ordinances:

Planning & Development LRC – March 19, 2008, 1:00 pm
 City Plan Commission – March 27, 2008, 1:30 pm

*****REQUIRED AUTHORIZATION*****

LEGAL: (if required) _____ **FINANCE:** (if required) _____

SECTION HEAD:

APPROVED FOR AGENDA:

CITY MANAGER: Patricia D. Aduato, Deputy City Manager **DATE:** March 17, 2008

CITY CLERK DEPT.
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ORDINANCE # _____

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING TITLE 19 (SUBDIVISIONS), CHAPTER 19.16 (IMPROVEMENT STANDARDS AND DESIGN PRINCIPLES), SECTION 19.16.010 (GENERAL DESIGN PRINCIPLES) OF THE EL PASO CITY CODE BY ADDING A SECTION ON SMART GROWTH GENERAL DESIGN PRINCIPLES. THE PENALTY IS AS PROVIDED IN CHAPTER 19.04.190 OF THE EL PASO CITY CODE.

WHEREAS, Title 19 (Subdivisions) of the El Paso City Code was adopted to promote the health, safety, morals and general welfare of the community; and,

WHEREAS, the regulations established by this amendment have been adopted with reasonable consideration, among other things, for the character of each district and its peculiar suitability for the particular uses; with a view of conserving property values and encouraging the most appropriate use of land in the City; and,

WHEREAS, the regulations established by this amendment are designed to promote the health and general welfare of the public by requiring placement of buildings, parking and open space in a manner that will reinforce safe environments, and include a framework of transit, pedestrian, and bicycle systems that provide alternatives to the automobile; and,

WHEREAS, open air and semi-enclosed public gathering spaces can act as central organizing elements in a large development helping to shape the relationship between different land uses and provide focal points and anchors for pedestrian activity; and,

WHEREAS, the City recognizes the importance of having developments that adequately accommodate automobiles while respecting the pedestrian and the spatial form of public areas; and,

WHEREAS, the El Paso City Council, having considered the recommendations and held a public hearing at which the public was allowed to comment on the proposed amendments, finds that the adoption of the regulations as submitted will further protect and provide for the public health, safety, morals and general welfare of the community, and will carry out the purpose and spirit of the policies expressed in The Plan for El Paso.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF EL PASO:

Section 1. That Title 19, (Subdivisions), Chapter 19.16 (Improvement Standards and Design Principles) Section 19.16.010 (General Design Principles) of the El Paso City Code is amended by adding the following paragraph:

19.16.010 (General Design Principles)

G. The purpose of this section is to incorporate smart growth general design principles for those proposed subdivisions consisting of three (3) or more total gross acres. The intent of these smart growth general design principles is to achieve a development that is designed to promote a pedestrian-friendly environment through connected sidewalks, pathways, parks, trails, greenbelts, plazas, open areas, or other walkable features, while accommodating a range of transportation choices where possible, including a network of transit, pedestrian and bicycle systems that provide alternatives to the automobile. These smart growth general design principles shall serve as guidelines only, and compliance with any design element within the proposed subdivision shall be determined on a case-by-case basis as part of the plat review and approval process. It is not intended that every proposed subdivision conform to all or any set number of the enumerated smart growth general design principles; provided, however, that the intent and spirit of these regulations shall be considered in evaluating the proposed subdivision application.

1. The proposed subdivision should be designed to promote a pedestrian-friendly environment through connected sidewalks, pathways, parks, trails, greenbelts, plazas, open areas, or other walkable features.

2. The proposed subdivision should accommodate a range of transportation choices where possible, including a network of transit, pedestrian and bicycle systems that provide alternatives to the automobile.

3. The streets should be of comfortable scale and interconnectivity to reduce the number and length of automobile trips, and are laid out in a network to serve both vehicles and pedestrians.

4. The design and layout of the proposed subdivision should contribute to the physical definition of streets as civic places.

5. The proposed subdivision should be designed to allow a mix of land use types and densities, as allowed by the underlying zoning, to be integrated within the proposed development and not isolated.

6. The subdivision design should be sensitive to the natural site resources – hydrology, terrain, geology, ecology, wildlife, and vegetation – and where possible, preserves these resources.

7. Overall, the proposed subdivision should enhance good urban design, scale, diversity, and proper integration of land use types to achieve quality growth.

Section 2. Except as herein amended, Title 19 (Subdivisions), Chapter 19.16 (Improvement Standards and Design Principles) of the El Paso City Code shall remain in full force and effect.

(SIGNATURES ON FOLLOWING PAGE)

APPROVED this _____ day of _____, 2008.

THE CITY OF EL PASO, TEXAS

John F. Cook, Mayor

ATTEST:

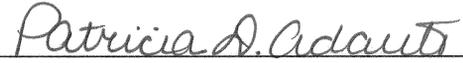
Richarda Duffy Momsen, City Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:



Lupe Cuellar
Assistant City Attorney

APPROVED AS TO CONTENT:



Patricia D. Adauto, Deputy City Manager
Development & Infrastructure Services