



To: Sylvia Carrillo, City Manager

From: Kennedy Higgins, Senior Planner- Planning & Development

Date: November 21, 2024

Subject: B3 Text Amendments

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BACKGROUND/HISTORY:

The B3 code was adopted in November of 2019, and subsequently amended in April of 2022. From 2016 to 2023, Bastrop’s population grew by approximately 34.3%. With the increased growth from Austin to the west, the availability of large land parcels, the availability of water, and abundant natural resources, the growth shows no signs of slowing.

“The intent of the Code is to establish the Standards that enable, encourage, and ensure the community achieves:

- ✓ ***Fiscal Sustainability***
- ✓ ***Geographically Sensitive Developments***
- ✓ ***Perpetuation of Authentic Bastrop” pg. 11 – B3 Code***

While the aspirational ideas envisioned in the preamble of the B3 code (as noted above) to provide for fiscal sustainability, geographically sensitive developments, and perpetuation of Authentic Bastrop, several segments of the code accomplished just the opposite.

The B3 code removed several key factors to orderly growth in favor of a community that envisions no vehicles in the future.

“Create a framework of transit, Pedestrian, and bicycle systems that provide alternatives to the automobile.” Pg 12 -The B3 Code

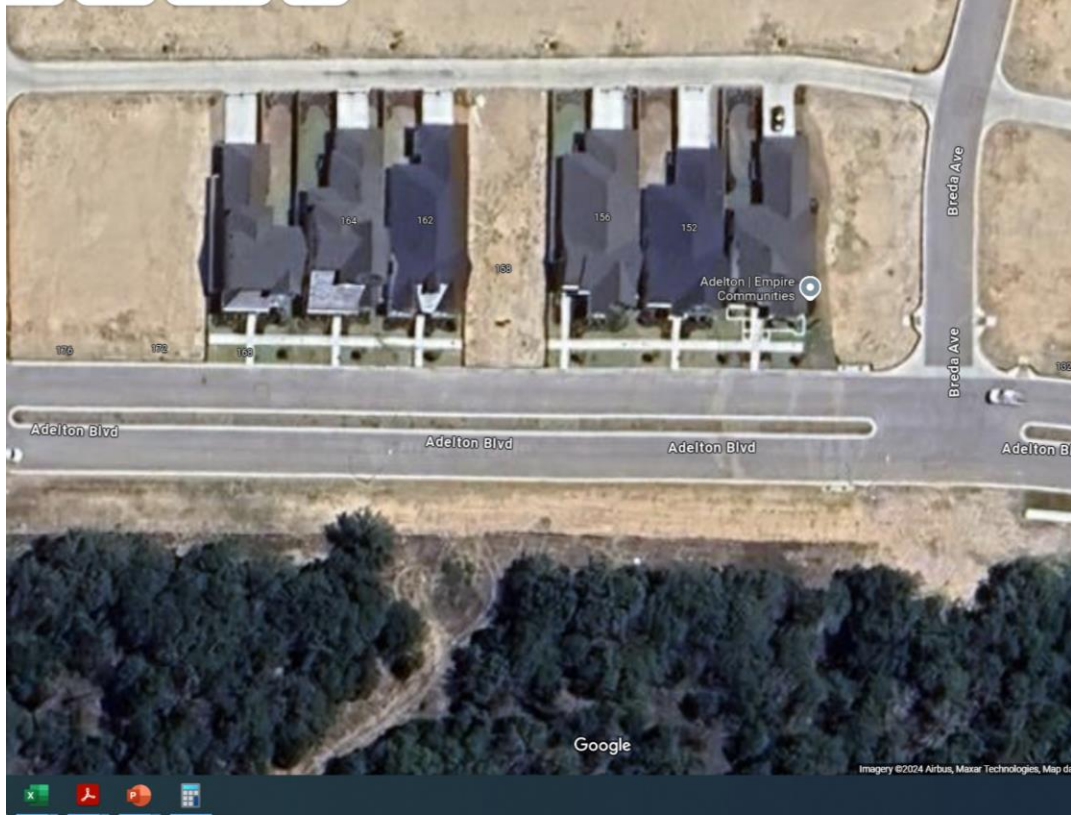
While that may be a lofty aspirational goal, without a mass transit ability, the densification of the neighborhoods allowed in the B3 creates an urban catastrophe in a suburban/rural area.

The proposed amendments for Sections 6.3.005 Alleys & Driveway Locations, Section 6.3.006 Parking, Section 2.1.006 Parking Areas (B3 Technical Manual), are proposed to rectify the original intent of the B3 code which removed the ability for a homeowner to park in the front of their home (in the first layer), instead opting to require alley entrances, and NO parking minimums.

It went from allowing this:



To requiring this but only IF parking is going to be provided per unit:



To be clear, this code amendment did not impact existing homes such as Pecan Park and Riverside Grove, UNLESS a 50% or more construction limit was reached. In which case, a home in a previously developed subdivision would need to come into compliance, as was the case of a home on Barbara Way in the Riverside Grove subdivision.





The home shown above was damaged and had to create parking at the rear of the home; this requirement forced the home to go from a 3/2 to a 2/2 home.

To compound the parking situation, the B3 Code eliminated lot size minimums, and incorporated rather high impervious cover ratios. What does this mean? You can put more homes in an area with more concrete and less greenspace, but have ZERO parking requirements, forcing those cars onto the streets. This type of development pattern does have a place in American society; however, it must be inclusive of mass transit ability.

Bastrop is a semi-rural city which lacks adequate mass transit ability without major taxation. The new urbanist approach has a place in many cities across the country, and could have a place in Bastrop, however, not at the expense of existing residents whose authenticity lies in the open spaces of Bastrop's rich natural beauty.

A master sidewalk plan has been discussed at a Planning and Zoning workshop that will be incorporated into the Master Transportation plan is much safer and comprehensive way to address pedestrian friendly and multimodal access. This is currently underway.

Onsite Parking

The existing code removed all facets of onsite parking (parking on your lot) and moved it to the street with the elimination of minimum parking ratios (MPRs)

After public input and commission input, staff is proposing a minimum of 2 parking spaces for every dwelling unit located on the lot. The commercial ratio has no proposal at this time as staff continues to weigh the impact of overparking in commercial areas as well. The code does a decent job of requiring shared parking when it does not create undue hardship, a competing car dealership for example.

The proposed amendment to the parking regulations allows residents enjoy their neighborhood without over densification, as well as create a relief to street congestion.

Lastly, it should be noted that if a developer chooses to submit a development concept scheme that allows for alley access, reduced front yards, wider sidewalks, and other similar amenities, it is allowed under the Planned Unit Development (PUD) section of the ordinance which provides Planning and Zoning Commission as well as the City Council an opportunity to have a greater say in the overall development of the community in order to reduce the negative impact of any surrounding existing neighborhoods.

Shared Access and Cross Connections

This amendment applies to the Employment Center (EC) zone. Shared access and cross connections are valuable. This amendment seeks to provide staff some latitude in the code without requiring a variance. An example is a car dealership off of Hwy 71. This type of business normally has a do not compete clause with neighboring dealerships; to require cross connection in this circumstance is not viable. The alternative is to send all of these types of decisions to the Zoning Board of Adjustment or Planning Commission for these types of decisions.

FISCAL IMPACT:

None

RECOMMENDATION:

Recommend the amendments as proposed by staff.

ATTACHMENTS:

B3 Code Proposed Amend