To: Historic Preservation Commission
From: Sara Varvarigos, AICP – Senior Planner
Date: May 7, 2026
RE: Coordination of Draft Historic Preservation Ordinance Revision with 2040 Dripping Springs Comprehensive Plan

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I. Overview

The City has developed a draft revision of Ord. Ch.30, Exhibit A, Section 4, Division 2 (Historic Preservation) and 3 (Historic Districts), which has been informed by a workshop with the Historic Preservation Commission on April 2, 2026.

- A key consideration of this draft revision is the development of Ordinance subsections 4.3.5, 4.3.6, and 4.3.7, with the goal of defining the unique "Purpose, Preferred/Prohibited Uses & Design Standards" for Mercer, Old Fitzhugh, and Hays Historic Overlay Districts.
- During the workshop on April 2, 2026, the HPC was invited to provide input on potential land use distinctions within each Historic District. There is an interest in developing a unique list of permitted uses for each of the Mercer, Old Fitzhugh, and Hays Historic Overlay Districts, in the context of:
    a. developing subsections 4.3.5, 4.3.6, and 4.3.7, of the Historic District Ordinance and
    b. refining Ord. Ch.30, Exhibit E – Zoning Use Regulations (Charts), which currently contains one designated list of permitted land uses under a single Historic Overlay heading - "HO".

In addition to the draft revision of the Historic Preservation and Historic District Ordinance, the City has also developed a draft 2040 Dripping Springs Comprehensive Plan update, which has been informed by multiple public meetings, stakeholder discussions, and joint workshops with City boards and commissions, including the Historic Preservation Commission.

- A key element of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan is the definition of Place Types in Chapter 3, the Land Use Chapter.
- Place Types provide character-based land use designations which will help guide and identity future land use and development, as illustrated by the 2040 Future Land Use Map (FLUM).
- Staff is proposing to integrate the Place Types defined in Chapter 3 of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan, which have been assigned to the Mercer, Old Fitzhugh, and Hays Historic Overlay Districts on the 2040 FLUM, into subsections 4.3.5, 4.3.6, and 4.3.7 of the revised Ordinance.

- Staff considers that the integration of these Place types into subsections 4.3.5, 4.3.6, and 4.3.7 of the revised Ordinance will define the unique mix of land uses that will be permitted in the Mercer, Old Fitzhugh, and Hays Historic Overlay Districts moving forward.

II. Other updates to the draft revision of Ord. Ch.30, Exhibit A, Section 4, Division 2 (Historic Preservation) and 3 (Historic Districts)

In addition to the proposed updates outlined is section I of this memorandum, Staff used the input provided by the Historic Preservation Commission during the workshop on April 2, 2026, to make the revisions listed below in the draft Ordinance:

- Paragraph added to subsection 4.2.6, to state that dead, dying, or diseased Heritage Trees do not require a waiver from the DRC prior to their removal (however proof of the tree's status must be provided to City prior to removal).

- Additional information on the consequences of violating Ord. Ch.30, Exhibit A, Section 4, Division 2 (Historic Preservation) and 3 (Historic Districts), (refer to sections 4.2.6 and 4.3.10; this now includes the loss of eligibility for Historic Preservation Incentives listed in Resolution No.2015-26, Attachment A).

- Paragraph added to subsection 4.2.13, to state that a predevelopment meeting with the Planning Department is required prior to submitting an application for a COA.

The proposed updates outlined in sections I. and II of this staff memorandum are intended to enhance the overall clarity, coordination, and cohesiveness of the City's Ordinance, while also integrating the 2040 Dripping Springs Comprehensive Plan, which is set to be adopted by the Fall of 2026.