

Fort Worth City Council passes regulations to limit spread of dollar stores

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'They don't provide any vital service.' One neighborhood's fight against another dollar store

The Rolling Hills Neighborhood in southeast Fort Worth is fighting the proposed construction of a Family Dollar in their community. There are already nine Family Dollar locations within a three-mile radius, say community leaders. BY [AMANDA MCCOY](#)

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Six months after the Rolling Hills community tried and failed to [fight the opening of a new Family Dollar](#), the city of Fort Worth passed measures that would limit the opening of new dollar stores.

The city council passed the measure at its meeting Tuesday night. The vote was 8-1, with Councilman Brian Byrd being the only “no” vote.

The measure was an amendment to the city’s zoning ordinance.

It defines dollar stores as “small box discount stores” that have a floor area of less than 10,000 square feet and sell a variety of home and personal goods, and also food and beverages, but do not sell gasoline or have a prescription pharmacy. The definition also includes that small-box discount stores dedicate less than 15 percent of their space for fresh food and vegetables.

The amendment requires that future dollar stores meet two requirements: They can not be located within 2 miles of an existing dollar store, and at least 10% of the store must include fresh produce, meat and dairy products.

The first requirement addresses the issue of proliferation, and the second requirement addresses the issue of the quality of products the stores offer.

Councilwoman Kelly Allen Gray was the one to champion this amendment. Her district, which covers much of east and southeast Fort Worth, is heavily affected by the proliferation of dollar stores.

Gray says working with existing stores to offer more fresh produce is the next step, and one that she is currently working on.

“I’m excited that (the amendment) passed,” Gray said. “I think it is a really good first step at looking at how we reduce the saturation of dollar-type stores in east and southeast Fort Worth,” she said. “The next step would be to work with one of these stores to actually pilot that program so that other stores can see that that program is successful.”

As the only dissenting vote, Byrd said he did not approve of regulating what private stores should sell.

“While the proliferation of small box stores has created a retail crowding problem in parts of our city, I don’t believe that putting more restrictions on property owners is the right solution,” Byrd said. “I would

have preferred to see us work with the current store owners and neighborhoods, whether through education or introductions, to facilitate the retail of grocery produce in areas that are without.”

According to a report by the Institute for Local Self-Reliance, dollar stores operate on a business model of oversaturation, thereby crowding out competitors or potential competitors.

In rural communities, they often become the singular source for grocery needs and in poor and underserved minority communities, they proliferate until no other business wants to locate there.

The passage of this amendment only applies to future dollar stores -- it does not apply to the ones that already exist.

As of November, 14 permits for dollar stores were approved, 12 of which were new construction. This ordinance doesn't affect these new stores.

FORT WORTH CODE:

§ 5.151 SMALL BOX DISCOUNT STORE.

Small box discount store may be permitted in accordance with the use tables in Chapter 4, Articles 6, 8 and 12, the city council may consider the following criteria:

(a) The proposed location is no less than two miles from any existing small box discount store. The measurement shall be in a direct line from the property line of the proposed small box discount store to the property line of the existing small box discount store, in a direct line across intersections.

(b) A minimum of 10% of the floor area is dedicated to fresh produce, meat and dairy products.

(Ord. 23971-12-2019, § 1, passed 12-3-2019, eff. 12-11-2019)