

New Mesquite ordinance will limit number of dollar stores

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The city of Mesquite is taking steps to limit the number of dollar-type stores in the growing city.

Zoning changes have been approved by the council that may make it harder for the stores to open there. The changes are about the future public and economic health for the city with almost 150,000 residents and 7,000 more single family homes being planned.

Dollar-type variety stores are popular everywhere. There are more than 15 stores in Mesquite since 2008, and there are plans for more.

“We considered a moratorium,” said Mesquite City Manager Cliff Keheley. “But the council was able to come together very quickly and put together rules and regulations which addressed their concerns and the things that we're hearing from the residents.”

Residents like store manager Vilma Ortiz say there are too many.

“I think so, with mesquite being so small,” she said. “I like them because its cheap.”

The city amended the zoning ordinance to limit the number and location of dollar-type stores.

“The main guideline was a spacing guideline stores would have to be at least 5,000 feet from another variety store,” Keheley said. “And for new stores that are coming in, we're requiring at least a ten percent dedication of floor space to fresh fruits, fresh meats and dairy products.”

A resolution said “variety stores offer inexpensive, energy-dense, low-nutritive foods and beverages rather than fresh, nutritious food.”

Mesquite wants more of supermarkets with a super selection of fresh food.

“They're fresh,” said Kroger shopper Martha Ware. “It's good fruit, and they have good prices.”

“We want to make sure that we provide as many opportunities for grocery stores to develop. We want the full service grocery store in our community,” Keheley said. “We're not against dollar stores. We just feel a concentration a proliferation of them would be detrimental to the long term development of our neighborhoods.”

MESQUITE CODE:

3-510 VARIETY STORES Ord. 4583 / 07-16-2018

- A. Variety stores are prohibited unless the proposed use is located more than 5,000 feet from another variety store.
- B. Incidental outdoor display is prohibited at allow variety stores.
- C. If located at least 5,000 feet from another variety store, this use is permitted by conditional use permit (“CUP”) only. In addition to the criteria for a CUP set forth in Section 5-303. B, when reviewing a request for CUP for a variety store use, the City Council shall consider:

1. Whether the proposed variety store will likely have a detrimental impact on the development of grocery stores and other businesses that sell fresh and healthy food items in the area to be served by the proposed use.

2. The availability of healthy food options in the area of the proposed use including the proximity of full-service grocery stores within one-half mile of the proposed use and effect of the use on the retail food environment index as defined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

3. Whether the proposed use is within a food desert as defined by the United States Department of Agriculture at the time of application.

D. A CUP approved under this section must stipulate that a minimum of 10 percent of the floor area of the variety store must be dedicated to fresh produce, meat and dairy products.

E. A nonconforming variety store in existence on August 1, 2018, may relocate on the same parcel or within the same area shopping center that it currently exists without obtaining a CUP provided the nonconforming variety store has not been terminated as provided in Section 1-304, Termination of Nonconforming Situations, of Part 1 of the zoning ordinance and the use complies with all other applicable regulations.