

This unofficial summary is by G. Bennett (6/1/01). Full details are available from Mark Walters, Neighborhood Planning Program < Mark.Walters@ci.austin.tx.us > PO Box 1088 - PECSD, Austin, Texas 78767. 499-7695.

“LAND USE” in Upper Boggy Creek

Soon residents and owners will be delivered or mailed a summary of the proposed Upper Boggy Creek Neighborhood Plan. Three steps are necessary before the Plan becomes law. (1) We approve it (informally by survey). (2) Council adopts it (as an amendment to the Austin Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan). (3) Council adopts re-zoning involved as a Neighborhood Plan Combining District ordinance (more below). As population grows and land becomes valuable, this initiative gives us some control over how our area adapts. We cannot cancel market forces. But we may be able to corral and tame them.

Base zoning districts

These are what we have now. Almost all houses are zoned single-family residential. If you have 5750 sq/ft and your lot is 50' wide, you are allowed to build a house 35' high that is 25' in from the street and 5' in from your next-door neighbor's property line. You can build cover 45% of your lot with building, driveway, patio, or anything else “impervious” (non-draining). There are a bunch of other requirements. If you have 7000 sq/ft you can build a duplex.

Along Manor Rd and the IH35 access road are commercial and multi-family (apartment) zoning. Airport Blvd, mostly residential thru our area, is industrial from Manor Rd south. MLK is a quilt of almost every zoning district in the Code. Eight lots along 38½ and Clarkson starting at Lafayette are zoned for offices. The strangest patch is an undeveloped strip along Airport south of Patterson Park; while zoned for offices, it has severe covenant restrictions imposed at an earlier time of sale. Very little can be done with it.

A few base zoning changes may be recommended in the UBC Plan. The City's regular re-zoning process would be followed, but the several cases would heard together.

Neighborhood Plan Combining District (NPCD).

An NPCD combines with (“overlays”) base zoning. It incorporates one or more Options (described below) that the UBC area selects. Listed first are Neighborhood-Wide ones that apply to any eligible property. Listed next are Specific Location ones that apply to designated tracts. Each Option has rules (lot size, building setbacks and facades, vehicle access, etc.). Neighborhood-Wide Options apply to lots meeting the rules.

Infill Options (building on an empty lot) and Redevelopment Options (renovating) work the same. Your present SF-3 zoning may change to SF-3-NP if selected Options are added on.

NEIGHBORHOOD-WIDE OPTIONS

Cottage

This Option allows a house on half the lot required for a single-family now, or on just 2,500 sq/ft. Up to 2 acres of these can be built on one site (equivalent to about 7 - 9 existing lots). Vehicle access must be from a rear alley, or the garage must be at the rear. No parking is permitted in the front yard, the entrance must be in front, and a front porch is required. Cottages may be closer to the street than standard single-family houses. A Cottage lot may not be adjacent to a standard lot (the transition must be gradual). These smaller lots are re-subdivided, and can be sold separately.

Urban Home

0 Similar, allowed on a medium-size lot (3,500 sq/ft).

Small Lot Amnesty

Older buildings on Cottage-size lots, not now legal to renovate, are cleared for remodeling that is compatible with surrounding homes.

Secondary Apartment

A separate 850 sq/ft apartment is allowed on a single-family lot. It can be a detached structure 15' behind a standard single-family home (not a Cottage or Urban Home). Or it can be added above an existing garage (not on the ground floor). An additional off-street parking space is required. Some call these granny flats or in-law apartments.

Corner Store

As long as a long list of restrictions are met, a few types of small shop are allowed on residential corners. There cannot be two within 200 yards of each other. They can only open between 6 am and 11 pm. Signs are limited. Lights cannot shine on adjacent homes. Any parking must be at the side or rear, and no drive-through is permitted. But on qualifying corners, a small soda fountain, convenience store, bike shop, or book store could operate from a garage or living room or from a structure built for the purpose.

SPECIFIC LOCATION OPTIONS

Residential Infill

This flexible Option for a designated 2- to 5-acre tract requires an approved development plan. As long as it is compatible with the surroundings, 50% - 80% single-family residential (any type), and has 5 - 10% open space (depending on the scope of the project), then allowed are mixed uses that might include retail, personal services, food sales, and restaurants.

Neighborhood Mixed-Use Building

This allows residential units in commercial, industrial, or office buildings facing streets with no more than two travel lanes. It allows apartments above stores or restaurants as long as numerous standard are met, including rear parking and facades with architectural interest. Without a Neighborhood Plan, such mixed use is forbidden now in Austin (though mixed use is quite common in urban areas around the world and in more traditional American cities).

Neighborhood Urban Center

Same as above but on a grander scale, typically combined with a transit hub. Already such a development is permitted on a 40- to 250-acre tract. New is allowing one on a 1-acre tract.