



office memorandum

TO: Planning Commissioners

FROM: Jane Hudson, Interim-Director, Planning and Community Development

DATE: July 8, 2019

RE: Center City Form Based Code – Presentation of Possible Amendments

DISCUSSION:

City staff presented information to City Council at their January 29, 2019 Study Session meeting regarding a possible Temporary Administrative Delay for acceptance of applications for demolition and construction, as well as rezoning applications from Center City Form Based Code (CCFBC) to Center City Planned Unit Development (CCPUD) for properties located in the Center City Study Area. Following the January 29th Study Session meeting, City Council held a Special Session meeting to discuss and vote on the possible Temporary Administrative Delay; City Council adopted Resolution R-1819-75 which implemented a six-month administrative delay for the Center City Area; this six-month administrative delay will expire on July 29, 2019.

Since the adoption of the CCFBC almost two years ago, twelve projects have applied to the Center City Design Review Team, (“DRT”) for a Certificate of Compliance (“COC”), a prerequisite to issuance of a building permit within the Center City. All twelve applications have received COC. Staff noted an increase of submittals since September 2018, with six of the twelve COC applications having been submitted between September 2018 and January 2019. In addition to those twelve projects, four Center City projects have been submitted as CCPUDs, all have been adopted by City Council.

Due to recurring concerns with implementation of the CCFBC and City Council’s observations, which indicate there was a potential “disconnect” between the Center City Vision and CCFBC implementation, including the expectations of the Center City Steering Committee and Norman citizens and property owners, staff was assigned the task of evaluating and researching the status of the CCFBC’s implementation and make recommendations for moving forward. Following staff research and conclusions of the implementation of the CCFBC and the number and density of application submittals, staff was directed to prepare a resolution placing a six-month administrative delay on permit issuance within Center City; as noted above, Resolution R-1819-75 was adopted allowing City Council, staff and the community the opportunity to revisit implementation of the CCFBC.

An Ad Hoc Committee was proposed, Center City Administrative Delay Ad Hoc Committee. Members recruited for the Center City Administrative Delay Ad Hoc Committee were polled to see if they would be willing to sit on the Committee once established; the first Ad Hoc meeting was on March 28, 2019.

AD HOC COMMITTEE:

The Center City Administrative Delay Ad Hoc Committee began meeting March 28, 2019 and continued through June 3rd with the assignment of reviewing the existing CCFBC

for needed amendments. The Ad Hoc Committee continued to meet discussing the topics of concern expressed by many on the Committee as well as residents and neighbors in the community.

Staff's observations from the various projects submitted, as well as City Council and citizen input, uncovered the following concerns with implementation of CCFBC and the Center City Vision. This list below is a summary and is not comprehensive of all items of review :

- Parking availability and public safety concerns
- Dedicated City Public Open Space
- Setback inconsistencies, including those impacting corner and irregular lots
- Requiring commercial/retail on the ground floor of the Urban General District – allowance of residential on the ground floor of the Urban General District created a conflict with the required 3' elevation for residential use while meeting the siting of the building in relation to the RBL (Required Build Line)
- Lack of architectural guidance and a disconnect of function and form
- A need for development to accomplish a walkable connection between Downtown and OU Campus/Campus Corner while still embodying the Center City Vision and promoting a walkable, "park once" environment
- Development consistent with Center City's vision for James Garner Avenue's role as a "gateway" to Downtown Norman
- Difficulties for architects, developers and staff to interpret the Code as adopted while promoting the Vision
- Evaluation of incentives for development in-line with the Center City Vision, plans for public infrastructure projects, and use of the Project Plan (TIF) adopted as O-1718-27 – alley improvements are piecemeal/partial, creating issues with grades, making it almost impossible to develop the alley behind a single lot
- Recent neighborhood downzoning from R-3 to R-1 reduces allowed density, however CCFBC now allows increased density in the same neighborhood
- Construction of large multiple-bedroom duplexes changes the character of neighborhoods and this increased density impacts existing aging public infrastructure, particularly in the older Core Norman neighborhoods
- Removal of the "Missing Middle Neighborhood" (Pink) and residual issues resulting from this removal
- Coverage/impervious area allowances
- Impact of the CCFBC on adjacent properties (Example: Park Drive)
- Do the boundaries of the CCFBC need to be reviewed
- On-street parking does not allow for placement of trees and sidewalk – Engineering needs to review and include an approved on-street/parallel parking accommodation
- Pedestrian lighting, including alleyway lighting – location, responsibility for installation and servicing
- The role of "Block" development per the Vision: with the scattered development the opportunity to fully develop an entire block; alley improvements, on-street parking, pedestrian lighting is being missed.

All of the above concerns were discussed at one point throughout the Ad Hoc Committee meetings. In addition, the Committee discussed additional concerns presented to the Committee, as follows; again, this list below is a summary and is not comprehensive of all items of review:

- Establishment of the “Neighborhood Middle Frontage District” (Pink)
- The number of dwelling units allowed per unit before a Special Use should be required
- Parking requirement of 1 parking space/1 bedroom if more than 3 bedrooms in one dwelling unit
- Presentation by Public Works/Stormwater regarding 65% coverage of developing lots
- Allowed signage, allowed square footage per frontage
- Items of discussion for a committee moving forward after the Ad Hoc Committee

COMMENTS:

The proposed revised document, coming from the Ad Hoc Committee, is a recommendation to Planning Commission. All proposed changes are noted in “pink” text for easier review of the document. There will be continued work on some of the areas within this document to clean-up design/formatting issues, as well as any verbiage that needs to be clarified as the Ad Hoc Committee reviews the final document per their votes at the last meeting on the 3rd of June, 2019.

Staff presents this information to the Planning Commission for further discussion of how the CCFBC can be a supportive document to the direction of growth, community and development in the future of Center City.

Attachment – Center City Form Based Code – July 2019 Draft

(Please note staff is working diligently on some formatting issues from the program creating this document when it was transferred to the City of Norman for amendments – staff will continue to work this out and have a clean copy prior to adoption.)