



Legislation Text

File #: 17-0685, **Version:** 1

Consider and take action on an ordinance amending Chapter 125 of the Code of Ordinances of the City of League City entitled “Zoning” by creating Section 125-76 entitled “Olde Towne Districts” and amending Section 125-280.B. entitled “Terms Defined” to create a form based code for the Downtown Revitalization Area (Interim Director of Planning and Development)

Planning & Zoning Commission recommended approval 6-0-0 with 2 absent on August 14, 2017.
Council postponed 5-1-0 with 2 absent on October 24, 2017.

January - February 2012 - Gateway Planning worked with the City to create the Main Street Implementation Plan. The Plan was adopted by City Council on February 14, 2012.

November 13, 2014 - Gateway Planning contracted with the City to develop renderings and conceptual plans for the redevelopment of Downtown League City.

May 10, 2016 - A presentation was provided by the City Manager to the City Council regarding the City’s vision and goal for the Downtown Revitalization Area.

June 15, 2016 - Huitt-Zollars conducted a Public Meeting to discuss proposed components of the Downtown Revitalization Project.

August 17, 2016 - Second public meeting held for the Downtown Revitalization Project.

September 15, 2016 - Gateway Planning contracted with the City to develop a Form Based Code for the Downtown Revitalization Area.

December 24, 2016 - First Draft of Form Based Code delivered to the Planning Department for review.

April 3, 2017 - Second Draft of the Form Based Code delivered to the Planning Department for review.

April 20, 2017 - Historic Commission held a workshop and provided staff with comments on the Form Based Code.

May 18, 2017 - Historic Commission held a public hearing and made a recommendation of approval to the Planning and Zoning Commission.

June 13, 2017 - Third Draft of the Form Based Code delivered to the Planning Department incorporating the Historic Commission’s comments and suggestions.

June 26, 2017 - City Council and Planning and Zoning Commission held a joint session, in which Gateway gave a presentation on the Form Based Code.

July 18, 2017 - Pursuant to Statute and local ordinance, notice of the forthcoming public hearings published in the GDN.

August 14, 2017 - The Planning and Zoning Commission conducted a public hearing and recommended approval, 6-0-0 with two members absent.

September 12, 2017 - City Council was scheduled to conduct a public hearing and consider ordinance on first reading. Due to the events of Hurricane Harvey, the first reading of the ordinance was delayed.

October 24, 2017 - City Council conducted a public hearing and voted to postpone the item to the November 14, 2017 City Council meeting 5-1-0 with two members absent.

November 14, 2017 - City Council is scheduled to conduct a public hearing and consider ordinance on first reading.

November 28, 2017 - Subject to approval of ordinance reading, City Council to consider ordinance on second reading.

Project Summary:

The proposed regulations for “Olde Towne” League City will be a tool to implement the vision of the Downtown Revitalization Plan. This code will create a more walkable and urban setting that will attract visitors and enhance the quality of development in the area. The goals of the Ordinance are to:

1. Promote a more functional and attractive community through quality development techniques.
2. Support property owner flexibility in land use and creativity.
3. Prescribe a higher level of detail in building design and form than in the current standards of the City’s Zoning

Ordinance.

4. Encourage better functional development patterns to create higher quality pedestrian environments along Main Street and across the railroad tracks.

The proposed text amendment to the Zoning Ordinance would provide two new zoning districts in the Downtown Revitalization Area. The proposed districts are “OT” (Olde Towne) and “OTT” (Olde Towne - Transition). The “OT” District is intended to enhance and establish historical character in the Main Street area, focusing on commercial, live-work, and upper floor residential uses. The “OTT” District allows for a range of residential, live-work, and lower intensity office and retail uses to function as a buffer between Main Street and the surrounding neighborhoods.

The ordinance consists of the following Sections:

1. Administration

The regulations of the “Olde Towne” District will take precedence if there is a conflict with another section in the ordinance. The City Planner shall have the right to administratively approve compliance with this section unless a Historic Commission review is required for a Historic Structure. This section also provides an applicability matrix that determines when the standards of the section are to be implemented.

2. Land Use Regulations

This Section establishes the land uses permitted by right and by Special Use Permit in the “Olde Towne” Districts. The “OT” (Olde Towne) District allows for uses such as restaurants, hotels, and recreation uses, while the “OTT” (Olde Towne - Transition) District allows less intensive uses that are more compatible with the surrounding residential neighborhood.

3. Development Regulations

The Development Regulations prescribe requirements including minimum lot area, lot dimensions, maximum height, setbacks, lot coverage, parking, and transparency. The setbacks in the “Olde Towne” Districts encourage buildings to locate closer to the front property line to increase the walkability of the area while maintaining a traditional downtown appearance. The standards also encourage shared driveways and parking areas when practical.

4. Building Design Standards

The Building Design Standards focus on the external building design, including architectural design and style for new and expanding non-residential and mixed-use buildings. The standards include building orientation and entrances, massing and scale, architectural elements, entrances, windows, shutters, roofs, expression lines, awnings, building materials, height transitions, parking garage regulations, and the expansion of nonconforming structures.

The Building Design Standards are a major tool in transforming downtown into the focal point of League City. To establish a downtown walkable environment, the proposed regulations require primary entrances be oriented toward the street, defined entry points, and a storefront appearance with enhanced transparency along roadways. The regulations include incorporating architectural elements into buildings and parking garages. Additional standards for parking garages include screening parking areas from rights-of-way and restricting access from Main Street where possible.

5. Streetscape and Landscape Standards

The Landscape Standards provide specific landscaping requirements on properties and within the adjacent rights-of-way for new development in the “Olde Towne” Districts. The standards require street trees where practical, the installation of sidewalks, and the flexibility in design to allow for the protection of existing trees. A preferred planting matrix is provided for developers to choose from when designing their sites.

Conformance with the Comprehensive Plan:

The revitalization of Downtown League City has been a priority of the City over the last 10 years. In a visual preference survey, mixed-use developments and urban concepts were consistently ranked favorably by League City residents who responded. The proposed ordinance is in conformance with the Comprehensive Plan. The following excerpts from the Comprehensive Plan indicate how the Plan was used to formulate ordinance requirements.

1. “Cluster commercial activity to maximize pedestrian and vehicular access. Amenities such as entries, parking, detention, and signage should be connected and shared to enhance on-site convenience and pedestrian traffic.” (Policies, Commercial, pg. 5-24)
2. “Promote flexibility in development patterns, site designs and uses by right, to the extent practical...” (Policies, Character; pg.5-23)
3. “Regulations should promote flexibility sufficient to allow for impact mitigation and creative site design.” (Policies, Economic Incentives; pg.11-7)
4. “Vibrant Main Street that is walkable, has a mixture of uses and showcases the community’s historic village character.” (Guiding Principles, pg. 3-1)
5. “Capitalize on *place based* opportunities including Main Street...” (Guiding Principles, pg. 3-1)
6. Creekside Theme: (pg. 5-8)
 - a. “Mixture of Residential and commercial uses within walking distance...”
 - b. “Village like street grid pattern, walkable and bike friendly...”

Staff Recommendation:

Staff recommends approval of the proposed text amendment creating a Form Based Code for Downtown League City.

Attachments:

1. Data Sheet
2. Proposed Ordinance
3. Exhibit A

CONTRACT ORIGINATION:

Planning and Development

FUNDING

NOT APPLICABLE

Funds are available from Account # _____

Requires Budget Amendment to transfer from Account # _____ to Account # _____