

Legislation Text

File #: 24-615, **Version:** 1

PRESENTER:

Jean Drew, AICP, CNU-A, Planning and Development Services Assistant Director

SUBJECT:

Approval of the second and final reading of an ordinance regarding amendments to Chapter 144 Zoning, Section 5.1 Parking, loading, stacking, and vehicular circulation.

DEPARTMENT: Planning and Development Services
Economic and Community Development

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: All

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Staff Contact: Amanda Mushinski, CNU-A
Planner
830.221.4056
amushinski@newbraunfels.gov

The City Council held a public hearing on April 22, 2024, and unanimously approved the first reading of the ordinance (6-0-0).

The Downtown Parking Exception Area was established in the Fall of 2012 following the adoption of the 2010 Downtown Implementation Plan. The boundary of the Area spans 184.07 acres and encompasses 306 parcels.

The establishment of the Downtown Parking Exception Area was a significant decision made by the city to address the evolving needs of New Braunfels' Downtown and immediate surrounding area. At its core, the creation of the Downtown Parking Exception Area aimed to strike a balance between preserving the downtown's character, preserving historic buildings, and fostering economic growth.

One of its most significant features is the provision that allows buildings to be modified and to change use within a limited area without triggering additional parking requirements. This aspect of the ordinance effectively expands the range of options available to property owners, granting them more flexibility in utilizing their buildings. Additionally, the ordinance stipulates that buildings undergoing reconstruction or those being brought back into use after vacancy are also exempt from additional parking requirements.

The ordinance does mandate additional parking for expansions exceeding ten percent of a building's current size. This aspect ensures responsible growth while still allowing for reasonable development within the downtown area.

By allowing these exemptions, the Downtown Parking Exception Area has effectively increased downtown visitor activity. Moreover, it has played a crucial role in preserving greenspace and existing historic structures, preventing unnecessary demolition. Furthermore, it has contributed to reducing development costs, and facilitating economic opportunities while maintaining the city's unique character.

ISSUE:

The proposed expansion of the Downtown Parking Exception Area aims to incorporate parcels currently within the existing Downtown boundary and additional ones currently zoned Commercial and Industrial within and proximate to the Downtown boundary. The proposed amendments would also provide clarity and consistency in the application of these rules. The expansion includes an additional 132.75 acres (261 separate parcels) proposed to be added to the 184 acres included in the original boundaries. This expansion is expected to improve economic opportunity and mobility by reducing development costs, preserving greenspace and existing structures for efficient land use, and supporting diverse local business development to maintain the vibrancy of Downtown.

Properties that are solely residential lying adjacent to the existing Downtown Parking Exception Area are excluded from the proposal. This exclusion is intended to help preserve housing in the downtown area which will, in turn, support local businesses. It is recommended that outfitters, special events, and event venues not be eligible for the parking exception due to their unique parking demands and their impacts on the Downtown and surrounding neighborhoods.

Envision New Braunfels: This amendment would be consistent with the following actions from Envision New Braunfels:

- **Action 1.11:** Update policies and codes to achieve development patterns that implement the goals of this plan.
- **Action 2.5:** Encourage diversification of commercial activity Downtown to build on and sustain existing historic resources and maximize structure utilization for economic expansion.
- **Action 2.26:** Achieve and update Downtown Implementation Plan goals for quality places downtown and along South Castell Avenue.
- **Action 3.6:** Proactively provide a regulatory environment that remains business and resident-friendly.

Downtown Implementation Plan: This amendment would be consistent with the following actions from the Downtown Implementation Plan:

- **Action Item P4.4:** Reduce or eliminate parking requirements in the Downtown for new development.

Strategic Plan Priorities and Objectives: This amendment would be consistent with the following objectives in the **Economic Mobility** Strategic Priority from the City of New Braunfels Strategic Plan:

- **Objective 1:** Incentivize mixed-use developments and redevelopments in targeted locations to create a built environment with integrated housing, commercial centers, and opportunities for improved connectivity.
- **Objective 2:** Support Confluence, the New Braunfels Chamber of Commerce Economic Development Strategic Plan, by helping to ensure a community that supports the targeted industries and increases the diversity of job opportunities in the community.
- **Objective 3:** In partnership with the New Braunfels Economic Development Corporation (NBEDC) and New Braunfels Utilities, develop a cohesive framework for economic development incentives that encourage a built environment that results in enhanced walkability, mixed housing types, and the co-location of commercial and residential uses.

FISCAL IMPACT:

N/A

RECOMMENDATION:

Approval.

Resource Links

- Chapter 144, Sec. 5.1-1 (Parking, loading, stacking, and vehicular circulation) of the City's Code of Ordinances:
https://library.municode.com/tx/new_braunfels/codes/code_of_ordinances?
- 2010 Downtown Implementation Plan:
www.newbraunfels.gov/DocumentCenter/View/25113/2010-DOWNTOWN-IMPLEMENTATION-