



Legislation Text

File #: 2017-4289, **Version:** 2

Consider an ordinance amending Chapter 36 and Chapter 46, Code of Ordinances (2010 Edition), regarding subdivision walls and compatibility buffers. (Second Reading)

This code amendment adopts some of the most important policy changes contained within the Round Rock Zoning and Development Code. The purpose of this item is to alter the requirements for subdivision walls and walls constructed as part of a compatibility buffer, as well as create exemptions for certain properties from the compatibility buffer requirement.

Subdivision walls are a required screening mechanism to be built by the developer between new residential subdivisions and an adjacent collector or arterial street. The current requirement calls for the individual pillars within the walls to be constructed of masonry, but the amendment will remove this requirement, allowing them to be constructed of any structurally-appropriate material. No alterations are proposed for the walls themselves.

Compatibility buffers are required where any non-residential or multifamily use is developed adjacent to a single-family or two-family zoned property in order to mitigate the effects of the more intense land uses. The buffer consists of a masonry wall or pre-cast concrete panel fence, an eight-foot wide landscaped area, and an increased setback for the non-residential or multifamily use. When a pre-cast concrete panel fence is chosen, masonry accent columns are required to be installed at every end, corner, and at intervals of 110 feet. The amendments propose to eliminate the requirement for accent columns because they provide little value for the cost (around \$1,600 per column). Support columns may still be required by the building code, however they may be constructed of pre-cast concrete as opposed to true masonry.

Additionally, the amendments will provide an exemption from the compatibility buffer requirement where the adjacent SF/TF zoned property is occupied by a place of worship, civic use (such as a fire station), park, pond, or designated open space. Finally, a property owner may apply for an exemption to be granted by the Zoning Board of Adjustment where existing site conditions render a compatibility buffer impractical. An example of this is where a commercial property backs up to a creek with a single-family property on the other side, and the property lines meet in the middle of the creek. A compatibility buffer is not likely to create any extra mitigation beyond what the creek and associated floodplain already provide. The ZBA will have the authority to waive the compatibility buffer entirely or create a modified compatibility requirement.

P&Z Recommendation: The Planning and Zoning Commission unanimously recommended approval of these amendments as part of the larger Development Code recommendation at their meeting on December 21, 2016.