Legislation Text

File #: 21-4293, **Version:** 1

OA#21-0021: Public hearing to consider a zoning change from various districts to D, Downtown District and Amending the Mansfield Code of Ordinances by Amending Special Purpose District Regulations and Creating a New Section 155.071 “Form-Based Code Districts” and Section 155.072 “D, Downtown District”. The amendments necessary also including Amending Certain Sections Necessary to Enable the D, Downtown District and Repealing C-4 Downtown District and All References Related Thereto.

The D, Downtown District is a coherent and coordinated response to multiple economic development and urban planning efforts to make Historic Downtown Mansfield more attractive to investment and to restore the district and its immediate environs to its traditional role as the community center for business, commerce, and neighborhood life. The City of Mansfield efforts are captured in: the Design Guidelines for Downtown Mansfield (1991); the Downtown Design Plan (1995); the Historic Resource Survey (1998); the Mansfield Historic Preservation Plan (1999); the Discover Historic Mansfield Action Plan (2008); the Historic Mansfield Implementation Plan (2013); and the Mansfield Downtown Development Strategies (2020). In particular, the Mansfield Downtown Development Strategies recommended the adoption of a new zoning district as a key objective to fulfill the community’s vision for a walkable, multi-generational, mixed-use, and prosperous downtown. Further, the City prioritized this common vision and collective effort of public and private actors by including it within the Fiscal Year 2020-2021 Goals and Objectives.

Towards that end, the creation of a new zoning district, the D, Downtown District, is intended to preserve the traditional development patterns on approximately 228.78 acres inclusive of and immediately surrounding Historic Downtown Mansfield. The D, Downtown District is a form-based code; and it is keyed to a regulating plan that encourages diversity in land use and disciplined by a set of flexible development standards.

The new district is form-based and establishes four distinct zones to guide infill and redevelopment proposals at a variety of scales: D-1, sub-urban zone which is intended to be primarily residential with limited commercial activity adjacent to higher intensity zones; D-2, urban transition zone which supports a mixed-use, but primarily residential urban fabric; D-3, urban center zone which is high-intensity mixed-use zone; and SD-1, Broad Street Corridor which is primarily commercial and encourages the adaptive reuse of historic homes from residential to commercial use.

The four districts constituting the D, Downtown District, follow the principles of transect-based urbanism; an urban planning model that increases development intensity from the least urban to the most urban. As employed in the proposed text of the D, Downtown District, the intensity of development increases from the sub-urban edges (i.e., D-1 zones) towards the defined urban center along Main Street (i.e., D-3 zones). Special consideration has been provided to deliver an adaptive and innovative code that places higher importance on the form and function of the built environment (e.g., the aesthetic design and quality of buildings and public spaces), as opposed to use only. This

allows for a district-wide block-by-block review of development, rather than a lot-by-lot focus found in Euclidean or conventional zoning that significantly increase the challenges for creating or preserving remarkable places like Historic Downtown Mansfield. Like conventional zoning ordinances, the code regulates building use, building setback, building height and parking requirements, but with an increased emphasis on the aesthetic design and quality of streetscapes, civic spaces, and buildings.

This D, Downtown District is created with the explicit intention of retaining and attracting residents and businesses to create a distinct environment that is mixed-use, visually harmonious, and walkable. Some of the key provisions of this district include the following:

- The elimination of minimum lot sizes and lot widths to promote variety in development.
- An increase in building height to encourage variety in architecture.
- A reduction in building setbacks to ensure buildings define streets and civic spaces.
- An improved flexibility in building use.
- The introduction of building frontages to determine building typology and building use.
- The introduction of passive space to increase pedestrian activity in areas encouraging commercial and mixed-use.
- The provision of architectural standards that are derived from traditional construction technique.
- The provision of warrants to expedite development review by allowing administrative approval of deviations from the code that are justified by their purpose and consistency with the vision for Historic Downtown Mansfield.

In sum, the primary purpose of this district is to enable and encourage increased private investment in the historic downtown and in its immediate environs. It is further the purpose of this district to build on the work protecting the historic and cultural heritage of the historic downtown for the inheritance of future generations. The following policies provide further clarification on the purpose of this district:

1. That mixed-use development should be enabled and encouraged as a pattern of development to increase the residential density and the intensity of activity within the historic downtown in support of viable and diverse locally-oriented businesses and cultural institutions.
2. That development within the historic downtown should be attractive to the past, the present, and the future generations, and allow them to participate in its economic growth.
3. That small-scale, incremental development should be promoted and encouraged alongside larger development.
4. That building regulations should equitably balance the rights of the individual and the interests of the community as a whole.
5. That building form individually and collectively defines and supports the public realm.
6. That building configuration should support walkability, safe streets, and safe public spaces, creating pedestrian friendly neighborhoods.
7. That building configuration should define streets and public spaces as rooms, and should vary by context and intensity in coordination with neighboring properties.
8. That the harmonious and orderly evolution of the historic downtown and its

surrounding areas should be secured through regulating the form of buildings.

Schedule of Community Outreach and Meetings:

- **August 9, 2021:** Presented the first draft of the D, Downtown District to the City Council during Work Session and received their direction and guidance.
- **August 19, 2021:** The first two community stakeholder meetings were held at the Farr Best Theater --- one in the morning and the other in the evening (invitations were mailed to all property owners about the dates and times for all community stakeholder meetings and announcements were made publicly and on various social media platforms).
- **August 26, 2021:** The third and final community stakeholder held at Farr Best Theater in the evening.
- **September 13, 2021:** A Joint City Council and Planning and Zoning Commission Work Session held regarding community feedback on the proposed district an subsequent rezoning.
- **September 20, 2021:** The Planning and Zoning Commission conducts a public hearing regarding the text of the proposed D, Downtown District and the subsequent rezoning of Historic Downtown Mansfield and portions of its immediate environs to the D, Downtown District.
- **September 27, 2021:** The City Council will conduct a First Reading and Public Hearing on the text of the proposed D, Downtown District and subsequent rezoning of Historic Downtown Mansfield and portions of its immediate environs to the D, Downtown District.
- **October 11, 2021:** The City Council will conduct a Second (Final) Reading and Second (Final) Public Hearing.

Staff recommends approval.

Attachments:
Draft Ordinance for D, Downtown District
Exhibit A Legal Description of Properties Being Rezoned
Exhibit B Map of Proposed Rezoning: D, Downtown Districts
Exhibit C D, Downtown District Standards
Exhibit D Changes to Section 155.055 (B)(2), table
Exhibit E Changes to 155.090 (D)(1), table

Map, Existing Zoning