



OVERVIEW OF CHANGES TO THE BELLE MEADE ZONING ORDINANCE



BACKGROUND

The Belle Meade Zoning Code is the set of local standards that help create the quality and type of residential development envisioned by the Belle Meade community. The zoning code regulates land use, building size and placement, parking, landscaping and parcel size. These regulations use “zoning districts” to allow different standards that best fit the existing character of the different neighborhoods and define how property within the city limits may be developed or redeveloped.



BACKGROUND

The existing zoning regulations have not been comprehensively updated since 1997. In the past few decades, development patterns and building trends have changed in some significant ways. The current Zoning Ordinance needs to be rewritten to better fulfill the vision to preserve the “thoughtfully curated” character and distinctly “beautiful city in a meadow” described within the Belle Meade Together Plan.



BACKGROUND

In 2021, a consulting company was retained by the City to re-write the Zoning Ordinance. However, upon presentation of the final draft of that Ordinance, the City determined that it lacked the needed clarity and attention to detail necessary for a uniqueness of Belle Meade. Therefore, that draft Zoning Ordinance was not adopted.



BACKGROUND

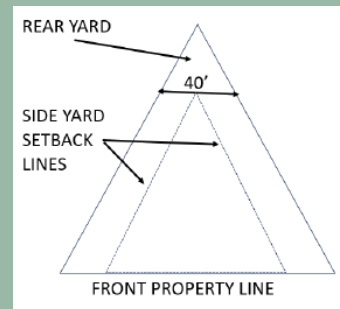
An internal review team was formed consisting of Commissioner Haley Dale, Municipal Planning Commission member Larry Wieck, City Manager Jennifer Moody, Planning Director Mary Samaniego, in consultation with City Attorney Doug Berry. This taskforce worked for several months to complete a comprehensive rewrite of the code that is easy to use, clarifies procedures and legal requirements, and incorporates some policy changes.



OVERVIEW OF CHANGES

EASE OF USE

- Overall consolidation and re-organization so all regulations for an issue (parking, detached garages, fences, Board of Zoning Appeals requirement, etc.) are in one section.
- Several new illustrations were added to clarify intent of said regulation.





OVERVIEW OF CHANGES

EASE OF USE

- A table has been created to streamline the setbacks, lot width, and minimum lot sizes of the different zoning districts.

TABLE 1. District Bulk and Setback Regulations

ZONING DISTRICT	Lot Area	Lot Width 5	Front Yard Setback 3	Side Yard & Corner Yard Setback 6	Rear Yard Setback 7
Estate A	200,000 SF	125'	800'	4	100' 1 120' 2
Estate B	75,000 SF	125'	125'	4	90' 1 100' 2
Residence A	70,000 SF	125'	75'	4	70' 1 100' 2
Residence B	40,000 SF	125'	75'	4	60' 1 85' 2
Residence C	20,000 SF	120'	65'	4	40'



OVERVIEW OF CHANGES

EASE OF USE

- Communication Facilities are now a Conditional Use in the Appendices.
- Deleted previously stated requirement redundancies in the Appendices.
- Moved non-conforming section from Appendices to new Code section.



OVERVIEW OF CHANGES

EASE OF USE

- A large table has been created to clarify Board of Zoning Appeals approval, whether a structure is Gross Floor Area or Hardscape, building envelope placement, and conditions of approval.

TABLE 2. USE SPECIAL APPROVAL, CALCULATIONS, PLACEMENT, AND CONDITIONS

Use	BZA Approval	Calculated as Gross Floor Area	Counted as Hardscape	Building Envelope Required	Special Conditions
Cabana	Yes - CU	No	Yes	Yes	None
Child Playhouse	No	No	Yes	No	Not to exceed one hundred (100) square feet in floor space, less than eight feet (8') in height and diminutive in scale and design, and similar children's recreational facilities; provided they are to the rear of the dwelling and are at least ten feet (10') from the rear and side lot lines.



OVERVIEW OF CHANGES

EASE OF USE

- Many new definitions are added, and some existing definitions are expanded and clarified.
- Old provisions related to volume calculations have been deleted.
- Simplified setback calculation of triangular lots.
- Trucks larger than a pick-up truck are no longer prohibited but conditions added under the parking section.



OVERVIEW OF CHANGES

CLARIFYING PROCEDURES/LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

- Corner lot setback exemptions would be approved by Board of Zoning Appeals as a Variance and not the Planning Commission.
- Requirements related to subdivision of property to be moved to Subdivision Regulations.
- Overall Zoning Ordinance purpose statement added.



OVERVIEW OF CHANGES

CLARIFYING PROCEDURES/LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

- Clarified swimming pool requirements in relation to building code requirements.
- Revised temporary sign provisions to follow Zoning Case Law.
- Add approval process for the Historic Zoning Commission from the adopted City of Belle Meade design guidelines.



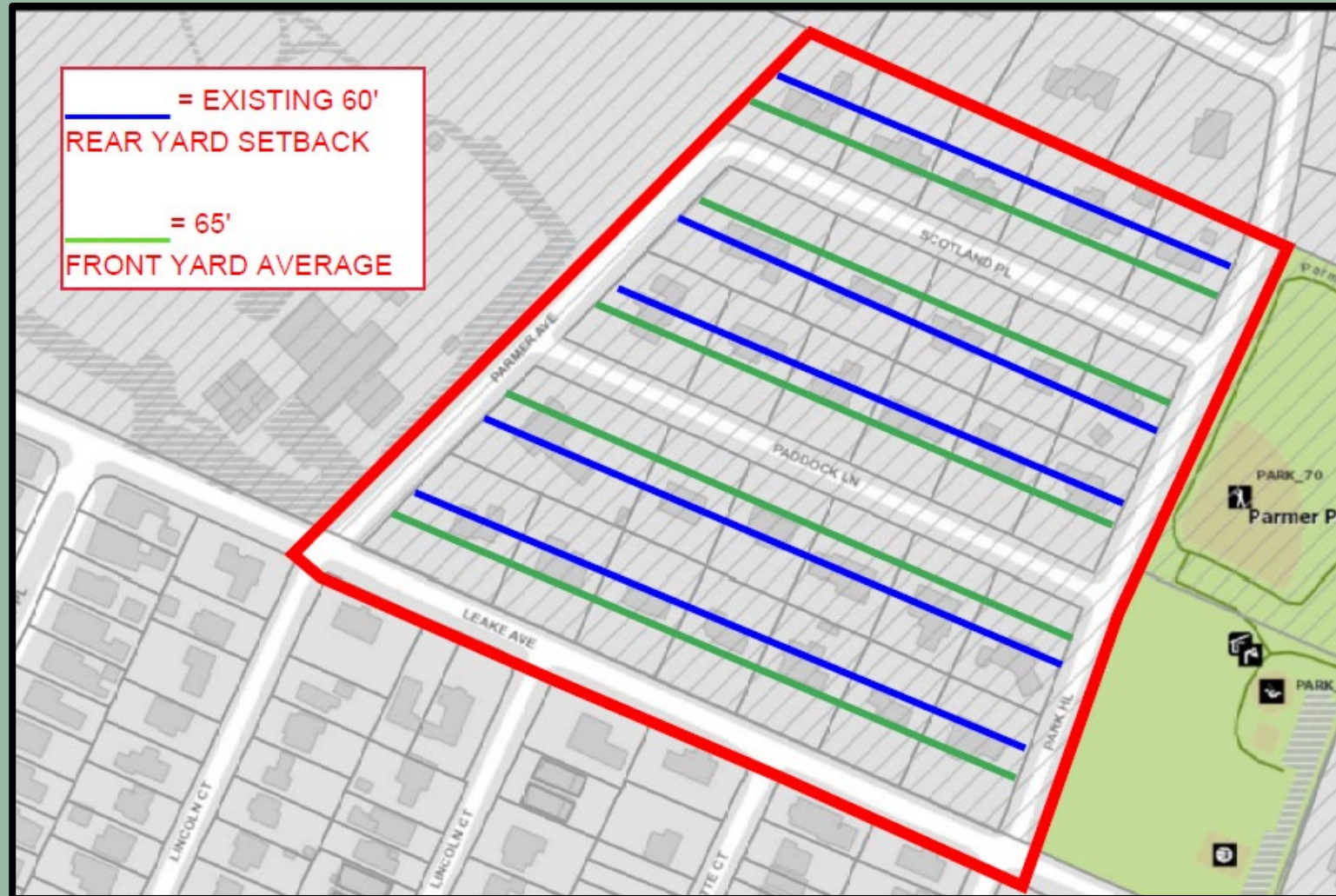
OVERVIEW OF CHANGES

POLICY CHANGES

- A new zoning district (Residence C) has been created to recognize the small lots on Scotland Place, Paddock Lane, Leake Avenue, and Parmer Avenue.



OVERVIEW OF CHANGES





OVERVIEW OF CHANGES

POLICY CHANGES

- Deleted sleeping quarters as an accessory use.
- Home-based businesses are now a Conditional Use approved by the Board of Zoning Appeals and not by right as an accessory use. The standards for this use have been clarified and broadened.



OVERVIEW OF CHANGES

POLICY CHANGES

- FAR calculates changed from
 - *For lots of more than forty thousand (40,000) square feet, the floor area ratio is .196.*
 - *For lots of forty thousand (40,000) square feet or less, the floor area ratio shall be .225. to*
 - *For zoning districts Residential A & B and Estate A & B: 0.17 and For zoning district Residential C: 0.225.*



OVERVIEW OF CHANGES

POLICY CHANGES

- A maximum of 20,000 square feet for a residence has been added City-wide.
- The calculation for gross floor area has been simplified to include everything under roof of the residence excluding basements not directly accessible from the outside.



OVERVIEW OF CHANGES

"Gross floor area" currently exempts:

- Attics less than five feet and six inches (5' 6")
- All vertical penetration areas for circulation/shaft areas that connect floors
- Cornices, pilaster, buttresses, etc. that extend beyond the exterior wall
- Roof overhangs of more than twenty-four inches (24")
- Covered but not enclosed porches
- Balconies
- Chimneys more than two feet (2') beyond the nearest wall
- Porte cocheres



OVERVIEW OF CHANGES

POLICY CHANGES

- Clarified residence height calculation and added new maximum height of 18' for all accessory structures.
- Differentiated between retaining walls and walls/fences along property lines. Walls/fence require a building permit and “good side” must face out.



OVERVIEW OF CHANGES

POLICY CHANGES

- Removed additional hardscape allowances for tennis courts.
- Added a condition for the Historic Site that no driveway to Parmer Avenue is allowed.



MOVING FORWARD

The draft ordinance is now available on the city's website for review and comment by the public. After all public comments are taken into consideration, a Final Draft Zoning Ordinance will be considered by the Municipal Planning Commission once and then it will proceed to a public hearing and consideration for approval by the Board of Commissioners during two separate meetings. According to the anticipated timeline, a new zoning ordinance could be in effect this spring.