

**CITY OF SAN ANTONIO  
INTERDEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE  
PLANNING DEPARTMENT**

**TO:** Mayor and City Council

**FROM:** Emil R. Moncivais, AICP, AIA, Director, Planning Department

**THROUGH:** Terry M. Brechtel, City Manager

**COPY:** Jelynn LeBlanc Burley, Assistant City Manager, Florencio Pena, File

**SUBJECT:** Corridor Districts Enabling Ordinance

**DATE:** December 19, 2002

**SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The proposed enabling ordinance will amend Article III, Division 4 of the Unified Development Code (UDC) with a new §35-339.01 "Corridor Districts." To correct cross references and to specify procedures for obtaining a variance from the sign provisions of this ordinance, §28-238 and §28-247 of Chapter 28, Signs and Billboards, is also recommended for revision.

The purposes of these zoning overlay districts are to provide a framework to develop theme-based, compatible development along the City's major thoroughfare corridors through development and sign standards. The attachment contains the enabling ordinance text for the Corridor District Overlays and is formatted to conform to the standards of the UDC. Separate ordinances will be required in order to designate each individual Corridor District and will be processed as a zoning amendment with the statutory notice provisions specified in §35-403 of the UDC.

Staff recommends approval of the ordinance.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

The 1997 *Master Plan* called for the City to "review and strengthen the urban corridor regulations." (*Master Plan Policies*, page 24) The UDC as adopted on May 3, 2001 did not incorporate corridor districts because of amendments to the City Code including the 1994 Sign Ordinance, 1994 Landscape Ordinance, and various provisions contained in the new UDC for buffering and screening.

A six-signature memorandum from the City Council dated March 13, 2001, directed the Planning Department to prepare a new corridor overlay district to preserve and enhance the City's unique corridors. In mid-2001, a consultant was retained using independent resources to assist with the preparation of this enabling ordinance. The Planning Department presented the consultant's ordinance to the City Council Balanced Growth Committee meeting on February 13, 2002. At that time staff requested an additional 30 days to review the ordinance and receive consultation from Mark White, the UDC Consultant. The ordinance was revised based on input from the consultant,

Balanced Growth Committee, and additional data gathered by the Planning Department. On March 13, 2002 the Balanced Growth Committee recommended that the enabling ordinance go to the UDC TAC for a briefing, to the Zoning Commission for a recommendation and to City Council for consideration. The UDC TAC was briefed on March 29, 2002.

The Zoning Commission was briefed on this item in its worksessions on March 19 and June 18, 2002. To receive additional comments, public hearings were held during the Zoning Commission meetings on July 16, September 17 and October 15, 2002. As a result of these public hearings, a series of stakeholder meetings have been held with the San Antonio Restaurant Association, the San Antonio Sign Association, the San Antonio Auto Dealers Association, the San Antonio Board of Realtors, the Real Estate Council of San Antonio, COSA Development Services, and the District 8 City Council Office. The attached ordinance represents a compromise between the various stakeholder positions in terms of development and sign standards.

### **POLICY ANALYSIS**

The purpose of a Corridor Ordinance is to promote attractive and cohesive developments along the city's major thoroughfares in a way that protects the City's cultural, natural, and economic fabric. As a management tool for new growth, the overlays can protect capital projects and other public investments to stabilize and strengthen property values within the corridors and promote a quality environment that would assist in strengthening the economy of the city. Corridor Districts are both consistent with and encouraged through the mandates and policy statements of the CRAG initiative and the 1997 *Master Plan Policies*.

For an individual corridor district, the Planning Department staff will develop a unique set of development standards, which may include building materials, site layout, and signage based on the elements identified and supported by the residents and business and property owners within the district. These standards will be applied through a development review process to new construction projects within the boundaries of the established district. Corridor District status would not affect the use of property, nor require a property owner to rehabilitate existing structures to conform to development standards. Specifically, Article 7 of the UDC shall govern expansions and remodels of existing structures and Chapter 28 of the City Code shall govern nonconforming signs.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

The proposed Corridor District Ordinance is the enabling legislation. Adoption of the enabling ordinance does not obligate the City to any financial commitment. One Corridor District would be established as a model project. Current resources can administer one corridor district. Subsequent adoption of additional Corridor Districts would require additional staffing to prepare development standards, conduct public outreach, and review site plans.

### **COORDINATION**

Review of the proposed enabling ordinance was coordinated with the following departments: City Manager's Office, City Attorney's Office, Asset Management, City Public Service, Development Services, Neighborhood Action, Parks and Recreation, Planning, Public Works, San Antonio Water System, the Metropolitan Planning Organization, the Alamo Area Council of Governments, the

Texas Department of Transportation and VIA Metropolitan Transit. Mark White, the UDC Consultant, has also reviewed the proposed ordinance for consistency with the UDC.

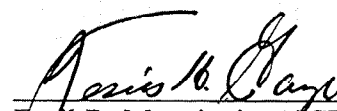
The draft ordinance was placed on the Planning Department's website on March 14, 2002. Announcement of the proposed new ordinance was mailed to all registered Neighborhood Associations and Community Organizations as well as the UDC Stakeholder Mailing List. Two public input workshops were held in April. Briefings on the proposed ordinance have been provided to the UDC Technical Advisory Committee and the Board of Adjustments. Following briefings to the Zoning Commission, a series of stakeholder meetings were held between various groups and city staff, as mentioned previously. Responding to requests to create incentives to reduce the number of freestanding single-tenant signs the enabling ordinance allows the participation of an individual corridor to provide sign consolidation incentives. In addition, at the request of stakeholders provisions were added to this ordinance to create a new dual tenant sign category and master sign development plans will be permitted pursuant to this ordinance.

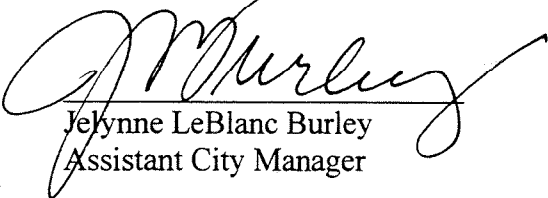
The current version of the proposed ordinance incorporates a significant number of stakeholder recommendations and provides for an effective regulatory tool for San Antonio that strengthens current provisions pertaining to corridors while providing flexibility to develop an overlay based on the character defining elements of a particular corridor.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY COMMENTS


None.

#### SIGNATURES

  
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Approved:

  
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