

Zoning Text Amendment – Average Block Setback

Request	An amendment to the Zoning Ordinance which would establish the allowance of an average setback in developed blocks.
Applicant	City of League City
Acreage	Citywide
City Council	Public Hearing & First Reading – March 10, 2015; Second Reading – March 24, 2015
Zoning	All Zoning Districts
Location	Citywide in all Zoning Districts.
Attachments	1. Draft Ordinance Text

The Commission should consider the following findings in its deliberation, which shall be utilized to substantiate its findings.

Background As League City has developed throughout its history, development regulations have changed over time. Existing building setbacks in the older part of the city oftentimes vary, either based on a recorded plat or the ordinances in effect at the time, from current standards. These differing setback standards have created difficulties for property owners attempting to (re)develop properties. Compliance to current setback standards may create projects which are out of character with the surrounding neighborhood (overly large front or side yards). This proposed amendment will allow for land to be developed in conformity to neighborhood standards.

Staff Analysis This proposed amendment would establish the allowance of an average setback for developed blocks. A developed block is defined by the proposed amendment as “50 percent or more of the frontage of that block has been developed.” By limiting the average setback allowance to developed blocks, the purpose of maintaining the built character of the block is maintained.

In the course of research for this proposed amendment the other issue that appeared frequently was how to define the frontage length that would be measured to determine which lots were to be measured for the average. The length of frontage ranged in other community’s ordinances from a potential maximum of “length of frontage between two streets” to a minimum of 200 feet on either side of the subject property. Most ordinances ranged in length from 500 feet to 300 feet. This amendment would set the distance from the subject property at 250 feet.

In summary, this amendment would allow for property owners to build to similar setbacks as their neighbors. An average block setback would maintain better compatibility with the surrounding area and protect the neighborhood character. This amendment would mostly affect residents in the older portion of the city, as they are more likely to have neighboring properties that do not meet current setback standards.

Public Benefit vs. Imposed Hardship Based upon the information provided, the Commission will have to determine “the gain to public health, safety, welfare, due to denial of this application as compared to the hardship imposed upon the owner as a result of denial of the application.”

For additional information, you may contact Ryan Granata, AICP – Senior Planner at 281-554-1097 or at ryan.granata@leaguecity.com.

That Chapter 125, Section 125-140 of the League City Code of Ordinances is amended to add Section 125-140.R. as follows:

Section 125-140.R. Exceptions to Setback Requirements

Where lots in a block have been improved with buildings so that fifty (50) percent or more of the frontage of that block has been developed, the minimum setback required in front, side and rear yards and street side (corner lot) yards shall be the average of the improved lots if less than the requirements set forth in this Chapter. The average setback shall be determined using structures on the same side of the street in the same block, not to exceed 250 feet on either side of the subject property.