

Building Connections

Your Connection to Development Services News

July 2024



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Transforming Site Plan Review



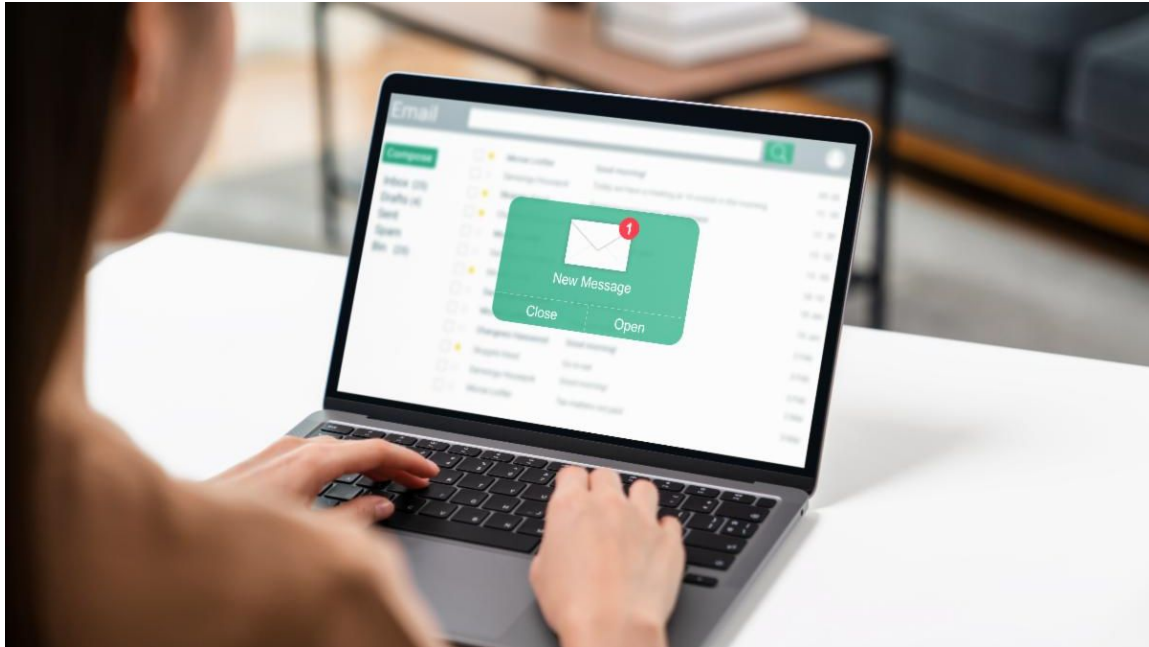
Update on Transforming Site Plan Review Initiative

This month we launched a new site plan Master Comment Report design ([Initiative #17](#)) as part of the [Transforming Site Plan Review](#) project. This new template

included updates to the overall usability of the document based on applicant feedback. Our reviewers are now using these templates, and you will see them reflected over the next several weeks. If a review was completed before July 22, but the Master Comment Report was not sent, it may reflect old templates.

All these improvements will make the Master Comment Report easier to use. We are also nearing completion of rolling draft comments ([Initiative #30](#)) and plan to launch these new email notifications in August.

Thank you for your support as we improve the site plan review process. If you have any questions about these changes, please email DSDCommunications@austintexas.gov or visit publicinput.com/site-plan.



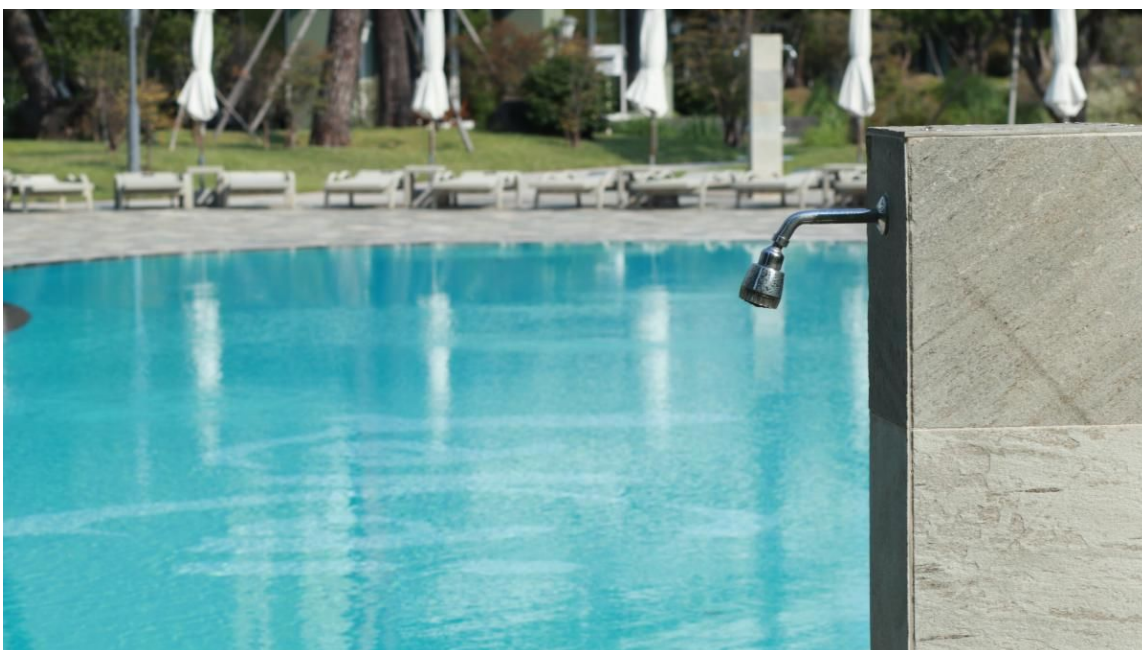
DSD Moving Email Platforms

In August, the Development Services Department is moving email platforms. Our new platform offers new features and promises higher delivery rates. This will even further enrich our newsletters and other important updates. This means that our "from" address will look different, so save DSDCommunications@austintexas.gov in your contact list to ensure our next issue of Building Connections arrives in your inbox.



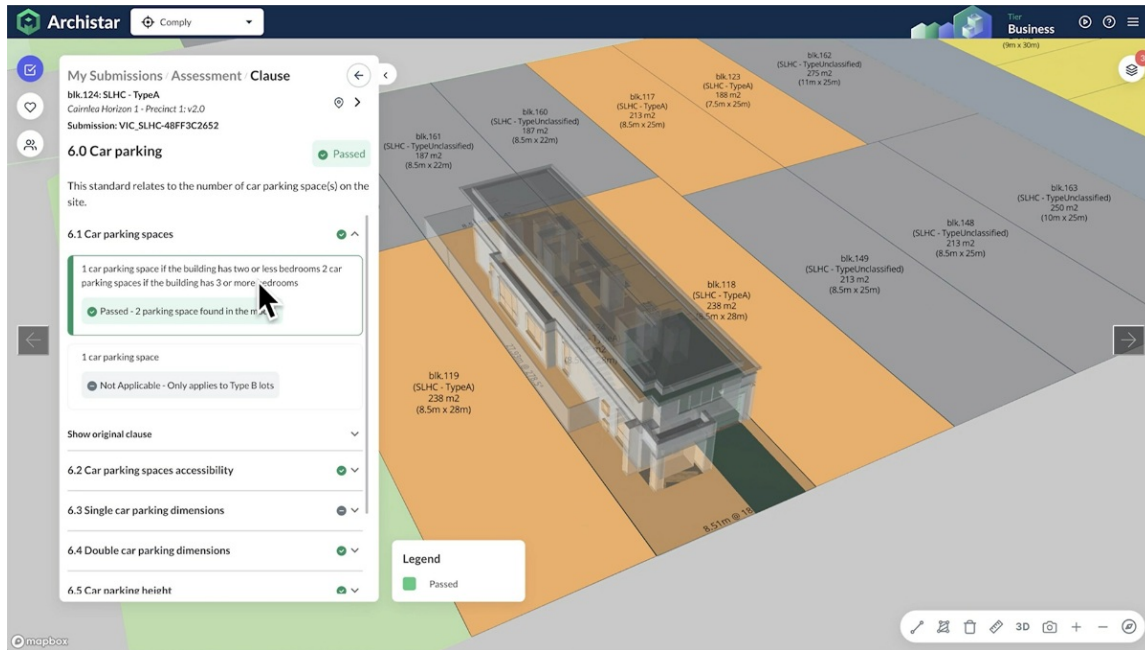
International Existing Building Code Now Open for Comments

The 2024 [International Existing Building Code](#) (IEBC) has been added to the [2024 Technical Code Changes Engagement website](#) and will be open for feedback until Aug. 26. This code, along with the international Building and Residential codes, are scheduled for review by the [Building and Fire Code Board of Appeals](#) on Aug. 28. The Austin City Council is scheduled to consider this code, along with six others, on Oct. 24. Four other amended codes are on track for consideration Sept. 12. See the [project webpage](#) for details and updates as they become available.



Code Interpretation for Pool Code Rescinded for Revisions

The [Code Interpretation for the International Swimming Pool and Spa Code](#) (Policy Memo CI2023-0002, dated May 9, 2023) has been rescinded to allow for revisions. A portion of the interpretation that addressed shower requirements for some pools requires an update. The interpretation will be published in the [Code Interpretation](#)



DSD Partners with ICC for AI Pilot

We are excited to announce that we are partnering with the International Code Council (ICC) for a second pilot program with Archistar. Using Archistar's eCheck technology and ICC's Code Connect service, we will digitize our building code, allowing applicants to submit designs for a pre-check assessment. This pilot will focus on multifamily, mid-rise housing projects and bring faster approval times, timely updates for applicants, reduced rework between staff and applicants, improved efficiency, and an overall enhanced customer experience.

We are excited about the positive impact this pilot program will have and look forward to seeing the benefits for residents and stakeholders. We are finalizing details on the pilot program, so stay tuned for more information.



Impacts of New Parking Standards on Floor Area Ratio Exemptions

Recent updates to the Residential New Construction/Addition application have raised questions regarding the impact of the recent [ordinance eliminating minimum parking standards](#) on floor-to-area ratio (FAR) exemptions allowed under [Subchapter F](#) of the Land Development Code.

According to the revised standards, a single-family residential use is only eligible for a 200-square-foot parking exemption if the garage is positioned less than 10 feet to the rear of the principal structure and is either completely detached or connected by a breezeway.

For single-family residential use, the 200-square-foot exemption for an attached garage is not applicable since it does not require accessible parking spaces. However, commercial uses that have required accessible parking spaces remain eligible for this parking exemption.

The 450-square-foot exemption for a carport or detached garage may still be used for single-family residential uses but may not be combined with the 200-square-foot exemption.



I-35 Cap and Stitch Survey Open for Input

A Message from the Transportation and Public Works Department

The Transportation and Public Works Department is seeking [public input](#) on initial concept sketches for the caps and stitches that will cover significant portions of I-35 through Downtown and Central Austin.

“Caps” are platforms that will cover portions of I-35 after the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) lowers the highway as part of its Capital Express Central project. “Stitches” are widened bridges over the highway, including travel lanes for vehicles and protected paths for people biking and walking. Both caps and stitches can include landscaping, shade and multimodal enhancements. The caps could include greenspace, buildings up to two stories and community spaces.

Please visit OurFuture35.com/YourVoiceMatters to take the survey by August 2 and share it with your networks to help the City develop a vision for what activities and amenities will be incorporated into the designs unveiled at the end of September.



2024 Fee-In-Lieu Methodology for New Ownership Units Density Bonus

A Message from the Planning Department

The City of Austin is debuting a new fee-in-lieu that homebuilders will be able to use for projects that use newly created density bonus programs, such as Density Bonus 90 and Density Bonus Equitable Transit Oriented Development. This fee-in-lieu option will apply to units that are built to be sold rather than rented. It will be included in the upcoming FY 2024-2025 fee schedule and will be calculated each year using the difference between two sets of data:

- The Housing Department's most recent Development Incentive Program (DIP) Maximum Sales Price based on Median Family Income (MFI) affordability limits.
- The Austin Board of Realtors' Median Close Price from the past 12 months, by Bedroom Count, for all Mid- and High-Rise condominium units in the density bonus program's geographic area.

The new methodology does not apply to projects with rental units, but those projects must meet affordable unit requirements to participate in the density bonuses. For any questions, please contact Alan Pani at 512-974-8084.



Affordable Housing - Updated Development Incentives Application

A Message from the Housing Department

For developers who are pursuing an affordable housing incentive or bonus program, a new and streamlined process to apply for Housing Department certification is available.

The Housing Department has published a new [Housing Development Incentives Application](#) for all development incentive and density bonus programs offered by the City of Austin. This includes established affordable housing programs like S.M.A.R.T. Housing and Affordability Unlocked, as well as newer programs like Density Bonus 90 (DB90) and the Density Bonus Equitable Transit-Oriented Development (DBETOD). Applicants may apply for certification from Housing under an incentive program prior to site plan submittal.

For full information about these incentive programs and their requirements, please visit and bookmark the [Development Incentives webpage](#).

Policy Corner

Welcome to the Policy Corner. This is a new section of Building Connections that will provide important information for you on code and criteria manual updates, code interpretations, and other regulatory changes affecting the development process.

Changes to Access Control/Electrical Locking System Submittals (Effective 9/1/24)
[Austin Fire Policy](#)

Changes to Subdivision Regulations (Approved 7/18/24)
[Amendments to Subdivision Regulations and Preliminary Plat Application Requirements](#)

Code Interpretation for the International Swimming Pool and Spa Code
(Rescinded for Revisions)
[Policy Memo CI2023-0002](#)

Building Permit Expiration Rule Change (Effective 6/5/24)
[Rule No. 161-24.06](#)

Downtown Parking Modifications Phase 1 (Effective 6/10/24)
Ordinance No. 20240530-137

Citywide Compatibility (Effective 7/15/24)
Ordinance No. 20240516-004 and Ordinance No. 20240530-136

Equitable Transit-Oriented Development (ETOD) Overlay (Effective 7/15/24)
Ordinance No. 20240516-005 and Ordinance No. 20240516-003

HOME Phase 2 (Effective 8/16/24)
Ordinance No. 20240516-006

Upcoming Dates

[Tree Regulations and the HOME Initiative](#) – Public comment ends July 31

[Commercial Environmental Inspections Lunch & Learn](#) – Aug. 8

[Tree Smart Brown Bag Lunch & Learn](#) – Aug. 14

City Council Considers Adoption of FY 2024-25 Proposed Budget– Aug. 14

If you received this newsletter from a friend, we encourage you to [subscribe to our email list](#). Whether it is severe weather, important department updates, or this newsletter, we will do our part to keep you updated all year long.



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