
Sec. 110-256. Construction in public rights-of-way.

- (a) *Utilities to be in rights-of-way or easements; underground utilities, exceptions.* All public utilities must be constructed within a public street right-of-way or an appropriate public utility easement. When a proposed water or sewer line or a drainage facility will be placed adjacent to a public road maintained by the Texas Department of Transportation, a separate specific use easement document must be provided for each utility or drainage facility. Public utilities must be placed underground in new subdivisions absent a compelling demonstration that this requirement is unreasonable or unfeasible.
- (b) *Underground utilities at rear of lot (October 13, 2003, to November 10, 2003).* In residential subdivisions with final plats approved on or after October 13, 2003, and on or before November 10, 2003, underground electric utilities may be allowed in an easement not greater than 10 feet wide along the front or side property lines as long as above-ground electrical transformers and other electrical appurtenances in such subdivisions do not exceed 36 inches in height, are placed on a concrete pad not exceeding 18 square feet in area enclosed on three sides by living evergreen plant screening at least ten inches higher than the transformer, but not exceeding four and one-half feet in height, with the open side away from the nearest street. The owner of the lot where the transformer is located is responsible for the initial planting of the plant screening, which must be in place prior to final inspection of the house on such lot. In the event the homeowner's association wishes to install the plant screening, it may do so before any home receives final inspection. The homeowner's association is responsible for the maintenance of the screening in either case. The foregoing requirements are exclusive, and the remaining subsections of this section shall not apply.
- (c) *Underground utilities at rear of lot (after November 10, 2003).* In residential subdivisions platted after November 10, 2003, all new residential subdivisions require electrical, telecommunications and cable facilities, including new service drops, to be placed underground in an easement at the rear lot line. Where rear lot utilities are located on corner lots, above ground appurtenances must be located a maximum of five feet from the side building line.
- (d) *Transformers.* All electrical transformers must be accessible by a seven foot wide dedicated Onco utility easement that extends to the transformer. Physical access to the transformer will be provided via a five-foot wide removable fence panel or gate located in the easement. Property owners will be responsible for providing security for the transformer and will make sure that the transformer is free from obstruction. The city will make reasonable efforts through communication and code enforcement to assure that residents provide unobstructed access including unlocked gates. The necessity for removal of minimal fencing and/or landscaping within easements to permit the replacement of facilities, appurtenances, and equipment is considered to be within the definition of reasonable access.

Transformers and other appurtenances shall not exceed 36 inches in height and transformers shall be placed on a concrete pad not exceeding 18 square feet in area. Fire hydrants and traffic signal controllers are exempted from the rear lot or tract line requirement.

In all cases, before construction of facilities commence, the easement shall be reduced to final grade, at developer's sole cost and expense. Additionally, if such easement is located within a floodplain, the entire surface of the easement shall be raised above the floodplain elevation, at developer's sole cost and expense, before construction of the facilities commences. Sight visibility easements and horizontal clear triangles are not appropriate locations for the placement of aboveground facilities, appurtenances, and equipment as they would create safety concerns by blocking or impairing the visibility of vehicular traffic.

- (e) *Exceptions.* Exceptions to the rear lot location may be granted by providing facts and circumstances to the planning and zoning commission to demonstrate rear lot utility location is not technically or environmentally feasible. Since the impact of technical and environmental factors may differ, exceptions for each utility will be considered separately and on a stand-alone basis.

(f) *Requirements for nonrear lot locations.* Service lines, aboveground appurtenances and equipment locations for utility service approved by the planning and zoning commission for other than the required rear lot locations must follow the guidelines below:

- (1) Underground utility service lines must be located within a ten foot wide easement, equally divided and paralleling the side property line of two adjacent lots. Aboveground electrical transformers and other utility appurtenances located within such easements must be located five feet from the front building setback line.
- (2) Transformers will be hinged to provide rear service access. Access to the rear must be free from obstructions. Additionally, the use of surface "hand boxes" versus pedestals for electric utilities is required.
- (3) Screening of the above ground appurtenance by a live vegetative screen is recommended for the street front and sides of the pad. Maintenance of the optional screening shall be the responsibility of the owners of the adjacent lots where the appurtenance is located.
- (4) In situations where the grade requires retaining walls, the transformer pad will be located on the lower grade and the retaining walls will be "jogged" to accommodate the transformer pad and provide adequate service access.
- (5) Exceptions to any requirement must be resolved at the preliminary plat stage.

Nothing herein shall be construed as to require utility companies to place underground existing or new electric facilities, nor to prohibit the upgrading, reconstruction or reconductoring of existing overhead facilities in the city's public rights-of-way.

(Ord. No. 3847, § 1(Exh. A), 4-22-2024)