



PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION MEMORANDUM

FROM: Planning & Zoning Department **DATE:** October 3, 2024
SUBJECT: Discussion regarding underground utility service lines located at the front of residential lots.
PRESENTER: Clayton Comstock, Managing Director of Development Services

SUMMARY:

Section 110-256 of the subdivision regulations provides standards for construction of utilities in public rights-of-way and easements. In October and December 2003 amendments to the regulations were approved that required electric, telecommunication, and cable television facilities to be placed underground in easements at the rear of residential lots. These standards were approved in their current form on March 11, 2004 (Ordinance 2774) and carried over into the revised subdivision regulations adopted earlier this year.

The requirement that all electrical, telecommunication, and cable utilities be placed underground in an easement at the rear of the lots applies to all new residential subdivisions platted after November 10, 2003. The requirement includes standards for the design and location of electrical transformers

Section 110-265(e) provides that the Planning and Zoning Commission may grant exceptions to allow the utilities to be located in the front of the lot where a rear lot location is not technically or environmentally feasible. The subdivision regulations provide the following guidelines for consideration of nonrear lot locations for service lines, aboveground appurtenances, and equipment locations for utility services.

- (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 must 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 is 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 must be located on the lower grade and the retaining walls jogged to accommodate the transformer pad and provide adequate service access.

At the work session, staff will discuss these standards in context with current development trends and industry practices for utility services. Staff will also seek input from the Commission on the relevancy of these standards and whether further study is appropriate for consideration of amendments to the subdivision regulations. For reference, a copy of Section 110-256 (Construction in public rights-of-way) is attached.