

Bastrop may extend development moratorium as it continues land-use rules overhaul

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The Bastrop City Council will soon consider whether to extend a [90-day development moratorium](#) it issued in August as officials examine whether the city's development codes are effective enough in preventing adverse effects on drainage.

Bastrop Mayor Pro Tem Lyle Nelson told the Bastrop Advertiser on Monday that the City Council will deliberate extending the moratorium at its Nov. 13 meeting as officials wade through an overhaul of the city's land-use rules.

"We owe to our citizens and neighbors to get this right," Nelson said. "If more time is needed to do so, then it is possible that the moratorium will be extended."

Development in the city, however, hasn't stopped. According to the city's latest [exemptions list](#), the City Council has approved a development exemption for the Burleson Crossing development to make way for a HomeGoods. The council has also approved exceptions for several projects.

Nelson said the moratorium has allowed the city to work with everyone that has applied for a development permit and seeks an exemption or exception to ensure they are able to continue their project without negatively impacting drainage.

[RELATED: Bastrop approves development moratorium exemption for Homegoods](#)

"I want to remind everyone that the council's intent is about guiding responsible development that honors our authentic past and prepares for our sustainable future," Nelson said. "The moratorium was called for due to the significant drainage issues we have had in Bastrop. Just look at the flooding concerns from the past week. With the amount of rain that fell, we're lucky it wasn't any worse."

When the city issued its development moratorium it also approved an emergency ordinance to evaluate the potential impact of development on stormwater flow throughout the city.

Building Bastrop

City officials along with Simplecity Design, the development consultant hired to help guide the development code's overhaul, are analyzing data from Bastrop's most successful development and creating models that show what a fiscally sustainable development looks like as the city explores reforming its land-use regulations as part of Building Bastrop, an initiative the city kicked off Aug. 14 to analyze and modify its development code to properly address the city's infrastructure needs.

On Oct. 18 the city hosted a Building Bastrop open house where Simplecity Design presented an in-depth analysis of the city's downtown DNA and how it functions as a neighborhood. At an Oct. 23 council meeting, Matt Lewis with Simplecity Design presented an extensive evaluation of the city's existing development rules.

"It's evident from that evaluation that we need to make several changes from a regulatory standpoint to support the future development we want to see as Bastrop grows," Nelson said.

On Saturday, the city hosted two walking tours for residents to explore downtown and offer feedback on what they want to see in future developments.

Nelson said the city received "great" feedback from the tours and "there is varied interest from the big picture of our overall goals, timeline and costs for this initiative, down to specific questions about parking and accessibility. It has always been the intent to have optimum feedback throughout the process, and we will continue to discuss these questions as a community through the upcoming events including our design and code rodeos in November and December."

"Our hopes are that everyone recognized from the tour that the city is committed to do this right," Nelson said. "It is also our hope that the participants have a greater appreciation for the incredible development that makes downtown Bastrop unique, and a better understanding of the changes that need to be made to our land-use regulations to promote fiscally sustainable development moving forward."

On Nov. 29-30 the city will host a design rodeo and on Dec. 13-14 it will host a code rodeo for residents to help design and code the city, respectively, and offer feedback on examples of the updated building code.

"We hope that folks that have been involved stay involved while we continue to provide opportunities for more of our citizens to get involved in the Building Bastrop process," Nelson said. "This really is a community effort; we want everyone to have a voice in the process to ensure the future codes reflect the priorities of our residents and local businesses."