

FILE NUMBER: DCA 256-007(MW)

DATE INITIATED: March 25, 2026

TOPIC: Allowing “Tattoo or body piercing” in Article XIII Form Districts.

COUNCIL DISTRICTS: All

CENSUS TRACTS: All

PROPOSAL: Consideration of amending Section 51A-13.306 of the Dallas City Code to list tattoo and body piercing as an example of permitted personal service uses instead of as an example of prohibited personal service uses in form-based zoning districts.

SUMMARY: In Article IV of Chapter 51A, tattoo and body piercing establishments are considered personal service uses and allowed wherever personal services are allowed. However, Article XIII (Form Districts) lists tattoo or body piercing as one of three prohibited personal service uses. This amendment considers bringing tattoo or body piercing into alignment with the majority of personal service uses and with the intent of form districts, which emphasize the built form and land use flexibility over highly-detailed use allowances.

ZOAC RECOMMENDATION: Approval.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Approval.

Code Amendments Webpage: <https://dallascityhall.com/departments/pnv/Pages/Code-Amendments.aspx>

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1. Background

On March 25, 2026, the City Council authorized a public hearing to consider removing “Tattoo or body piercing” as an example of a prohibited personal service use in Chapter 51A, Article XIII Form Districts, and adding it to the list of examples of permitted personal service uses. The authorization had been considered by the Economic Development Committee of the City Council on March 2, 2026.

The Zoning Ordinance Advisory Committee considered this item on May 19, 2026, recommending adoption of the text amendment.

2. Analysis

a. Regulatory function

The intended function of allowing tattoo or body piercing in Article XIII districts is to allow uses compatible with the intent of “...creat[ing] walkable urban neighborhoods where higher-density mixed uses and mixed housing types promote less dependence on the automobile.” [Section 51A-13.101(b)]

b. Existing regulations

The definition of a “Tattoo or body piercing shop” in Section 51A-13.201(31) is “a business which produces an indelible mark or figure on the human body by scarring or inserting a pigment under the skin using needles, scalpels, or other related equipment and a facility where the piercing of body parts, other than ears, is performed for purposes of allowing the insertion of jewelry.”

This use is considered a Personal Service use but is prohibited from any Article XIII development type and district. (As a reminder, Article XIII districts are “Form-Based districts”, allowing land use categories in certain development types, and only allowing certain development types per district. For example, a WMU-12 allows the development type “Mixed Use Shopfront” but not “Single-Story Shopfront”; the land use category “Multifamily living” is allowed in upper stories of Mixed Use Shopfront but not in any Single-Story Shopfront. This three-step process moderates the presence of any given use while still providing flexibility within each development type.)

Personal Service uses are allowed in the Mixed Use Shopfront (ground story and upper stories) and General Commercial development types, which are allowed in all WMU districts; Personal Service uses are also allowed in the Single-Story Shopfront development type, which is allowed in WMU-3, WMU-5, WR-3, WR-5, and the Shopfront Overlay.

The prohibition on tattoo and body piercing in Article XIII is found in the original 2008 draft of the establishing Article XIII ordinance without a written rationale. The definition of a “personal service” land use is: “Facilities involved in providing personal services or repair services to the general public.” Examples of permitted personal service uses include:

- Hair, nail, tanning, massage therapy, personal care service, or barber or beauty shop
- Funeral home, mortuary, undertaking establishment, or commercial wedding chapel
- Tailor, milliner, upholsterer, or locksmith
- Palmist, psychic or medium
- Modeling studio

Only three examples of prohibited personal service uses are listed:

- Massage parlors
- Tattoo or body piercing
- Taxidermists

Of note, in Article IV zoning districts, the City has interpreted tattoo parlors as a “Personal service use”, described in Section 51A-4.210(b)(23), and allows it wherever personal service uses are allowed unless specifically prohibited.

e. Locations

See Appendix A for maps showing existing Article XIII districts, or Planned Development Districts (“PDs”) based on Article XIII.

The following PDs are based on Article XIII districts and follow Article XII’s prohibition of Tattoo or body piercing shops by reference.

- PD 468 (“Oak Cliff Gateway Special Purpose District”) – Approximately 842 acres southwest of Downtown, generally bounded by Interstate 30, Interstate 35E, the Trinity River, Zang Avenue, and Beckley Boulevard. The stated purposes of PD 468 are accommodating the existing mix of uses, protecting the internal and adjacent residential neighborhoods, encouraging historic designation of certain sites, strengthening neighborhood identity, creating a more desirable pedestrian environment, and periodically reviewing proper zoning of the area.
- PD 887 (“Galleria Area Special Purpose District”) – Approximately 445 acres north of Interstate 635, bounded by LBJ Freeway, Dallas North Tollway, Preston Road, and Southern Boulevard. The stated purposes of PD 887 are encouraging a diverse mix of compatible buildings designed to support transit and active transportation, creating a

network of high-quality open spaces, and creating a network of multi-modal public and private streets.

- PD 903 – Approximately 6.2 acres located on the northeast corner of Arapaho Road and Dallas Parkway)
- PD 1090 – Approximately 1.23 acres located southwest of Cleveland Street between Park Row Avenue and South Boulevard)
- PD 1101 – Approximately 2.685 acres located within Haskell Avenue on the north and east, the Santa Fe Trail on the south, and Ash Lane on the west)
- PD 1121 – Approximately 12.175 acres located southwest of the intersection of Elam Road and Buckner Boulevard.
- PD 1123 – Approximate 0.17 acre located along the southeast line of Kimsey Drive northeast of Maple Avenue

PDs 595 (South Dallas/Fair Park Special Purpose District) and 784 (Trinity River Corridor Special Purpose District) are based partly on Article XIII districts, but explicitly prohibit tattoo or body piercing shops in the ordinance language and would therefore not be impacted by this code amendment.

Council District 1 contains the largest land area subject to Article XIII districts which could be impacted by this code amendment, containing PD 468 and recently rezoned areas along South Hampton Road (the “Hampton Clarendon Authorized Hearing”) and South Edgefield Avenue (the “Downtown Elmwood Authorized Hearing”). Other significant clusters of Article XIII zoning are found in Council District 7 along Martin Luther King Jr Boulevard between Interstate 45 and Botham Jean Boulevard, and in Council District 11 at the northwest corner of Interstate 635 and Preston Road.

d. Discussion

Consideration of the compatibility of tattoo and body piercing shops within Form Districts can be analyzed through its similarity to other permitted personal service uses; appropriateness in the Form District model compared to Euclidian zoning; and historical perception versus the state of these industries today.

The rationale for a distinction in land use regulations between a tattoo or body piercing shop and “Hair, nail, tanning, massage therapy, personal care service, or barber or beauty shop” can be difficult to identify. Both address a person’s appearance without significant odor, noise, or fumes on an individual client-by-client basis, often with pre-set appointments. (The ammonia frequently used in hair coloring or perming, and acetone used for nail care, are often quite odorous compared to chemicals used for tattooing or piercing.) And while a tattoo or

body piercing shop may be open later hours than a typical beauty shop, its activity is entirely indoor and on a small, client-by-client scale, severely limiting customer coming and going. Conversely, by encouraging law-abiding customers to visit commercial areas after normal business hours, these shops activate an area and bring “eyes on the street” at times to which the area may be otherwise unattended.

In contrast, a taxidermist, another prohibited personal service use, uses chemical agents to break down biological materials and involves chemical storage, odors, and hazardous waste. A tattoo or body piercing shop may store small, retail-sized containers of pigments, isopropyl alcohol, detergents, topical anesthetics, and sterilization chemicals, compounds that are considered stable and without significant odors or fumes that cross property lines or produce chemical runoff. Similarly, while a taxidermist produces biological waste and chemical-laden waste waters from tanning, the used needles and gloves stored as medical waste by a tattoo or body piercing shop are easily contained in puncture-proof, sealed biohazard containers.

Additionally, the nature of Article XIII Form Districts differs from strict Euclidian zoning. Form districts focus on generalized land usage within a prescribed built form rather than prescribing detailed standards for a high number of very specific land uses. Form districts, especially those intended to create a walkable lifestyle, may bring services closer to residences in order to reduce reliance on automobiles and encourage the benefits of a vibrant street life. When such a service is positioned near retail, food service establishments, or other personal services, such proximity offers the benefits of a transit-friendly neighborhood center with flexibility for transitioning uses over time.

3. ZOAC Recommendation

On May 19, 2026, the Zoning Ordinance Advisory Committee voted to recommend striking Tattoo and body piercing shop from the list of prohibited personal service uses in Section 51A-13.306(d)(6)(D) and adding them to the list of examples of permitted uses in the same section.

Zoning Ordinance Advisory Committee (ZOAC) Meeting Minutes

Discussion:

1. DCA 256-007(MW) Tattoo Parlors in Article XIII

Michael Wade, Chief Planner

Mr. Wade presented the code amendment. Chair Housewright led the Committee in discussion. Mr. Wade, Ms. Wimer, Mr. Pepe, and Ms. Morrison answered Committee questions. Two speakers spoke.

Motion: Allow Tattoo and body piercing in Article XIII districts by Specific Use Permit only.

Moved by:	Carpenter
Seconded by:	Wheeler-Reagan

Result:	FAILED	2-7
Absent:		Rieves

Motion: Approve of staff's recommendation to allow Tattoo and body piercing in Article XIII districts by right.

Moved by:	MacGregor
Seconded by:	Carden

Result:	PASSED	7-1
Absent:		Rieves, Wheeler-Reagan

**Proposed Chapter 51A
Amendments**

**Chapter 51A Dallas Development Code: Ordinance No. 19455,
as amended.**

**Article XIII.
Form Districts**

SEC. 51A-13.306. USES.

...

(d) Use Categories.

...

(6) Service and Entertainment Use Categories.

...

(D) Personal Service

(i) **Definition.** Facilities involved in providing personal services or repair services to the general public.

(ii) **Examples of Permitted Uses.**

Animal care (animal grooming, animal hospital, veterinary clinic, pet clinic, animal boarding, animal shelter, kennel, or doggy day care). No outside runs are permitted.

Catering establishment (small-scale) or small-scale cleaning establishment.

Dry-cleaning or laundry drop-off facility, laundromat, cleaning, pickup station, or coin-operated pickup station.

Drop-in child care center.

Funeral home, mortuary, undertaking establishment, or commercial wedding chapel.

Hair, nail, tanning, massage therapy, personal care service, or barber and beauty shop.

Modeling studio.

Photocopy, blueprint, package shipping and quick-sign service, printing, and publishing.

Palmist, psychic, or medium.

Security service.

Appliance, bicycle, canvas product, clock, computer, jewelry, musical instrument, office equipment, radio, shoe, television or watch repair.

Tailor, milliner, upholsterer, or locksmith.

[Tattoo or body piercing.](#)

(iii) Examples of Prohibited uses.

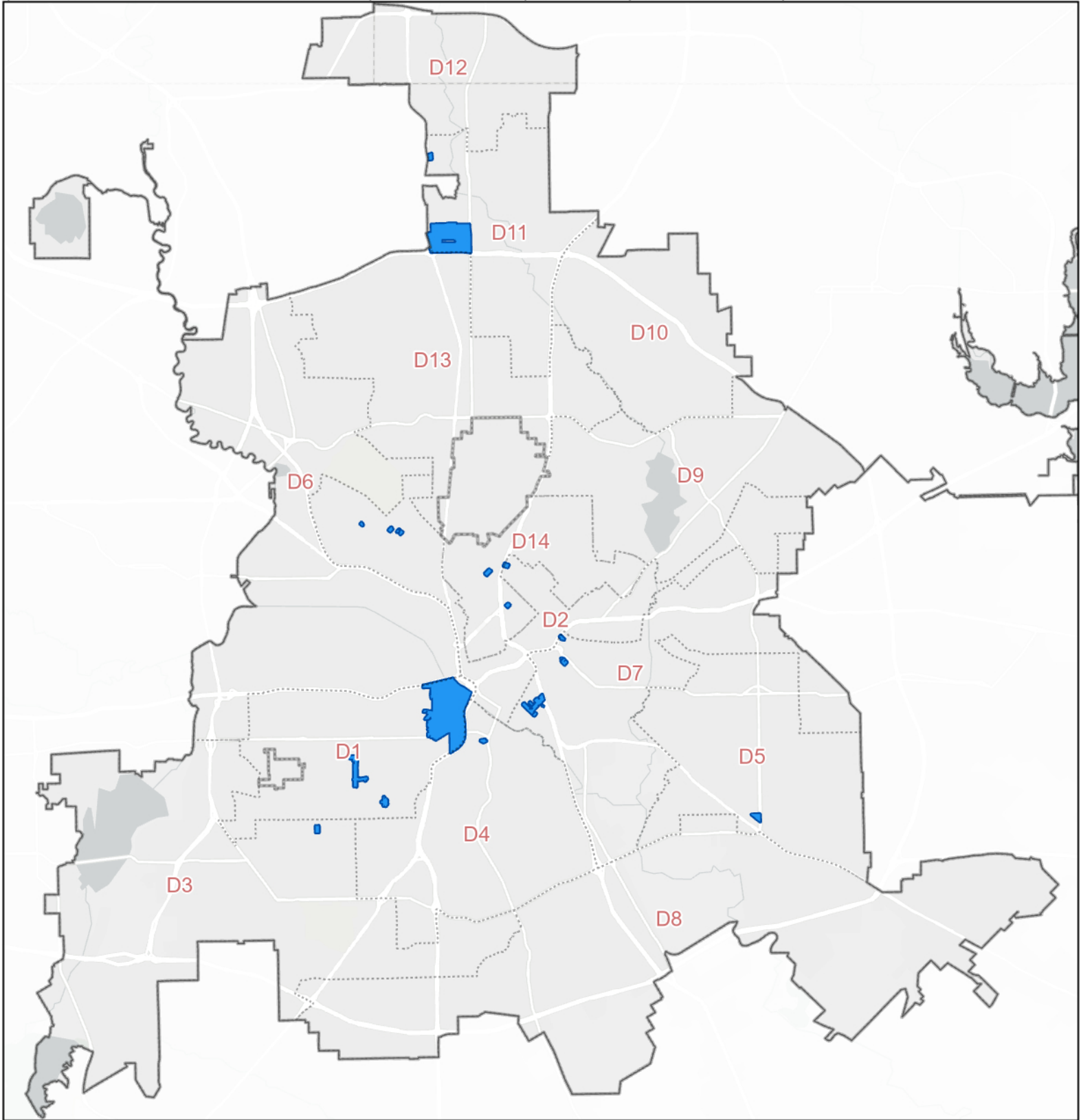
Massage parlor.

~~Tattoo or body piercing.~~

Taxidermist.

Appendix A - Citywide map of zoning based on Article XIII districts

(PD 595 and PD 784 excluded; they will not be impacted by DCA 256-007)



Legend

Areas with zoning based in Article XIII districts (PD 595 and PD 784 not shown; they are not impacted by this code amendment)

Disclaimer: The information provided is assumed to reflect the vast majority of Planned Developments (PDs) based on Article XIII (approximately 99%). However, staff have not conducted a comprehensive review of all 1,140 PDs. Exceptions may exist—for example, PDs 784 and 595 reference Article XIII but explicitly prohibit tattoo parlors. Accordingly, this information should not be interpreted as a definitive determination for every PD that references Article XIII.



Planning & Development

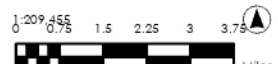
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Created By: Asma Shaikh & Michael Wade

Data Sources: Texas Parks & Wildlife, Esri, TomTom, Garmin, SafeGraph, METI/NASA, USGS, EPA, NPS, USDA, USFWS

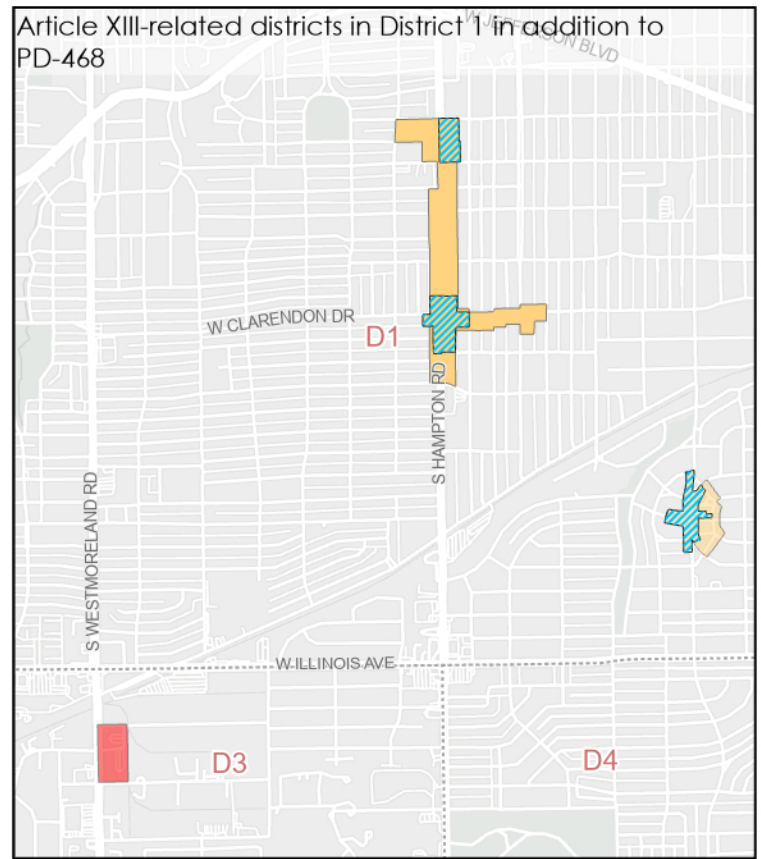
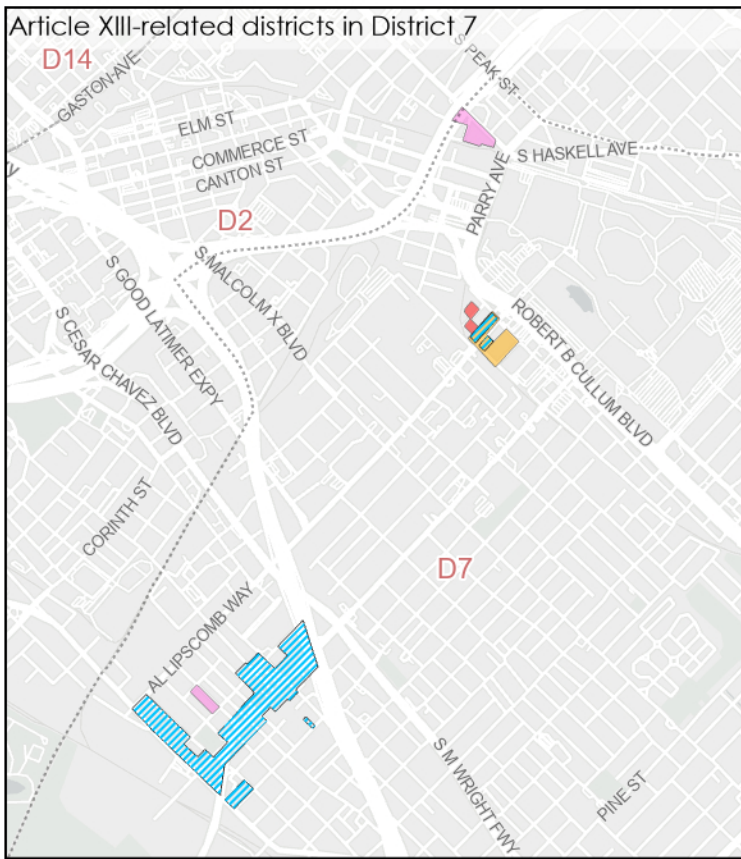
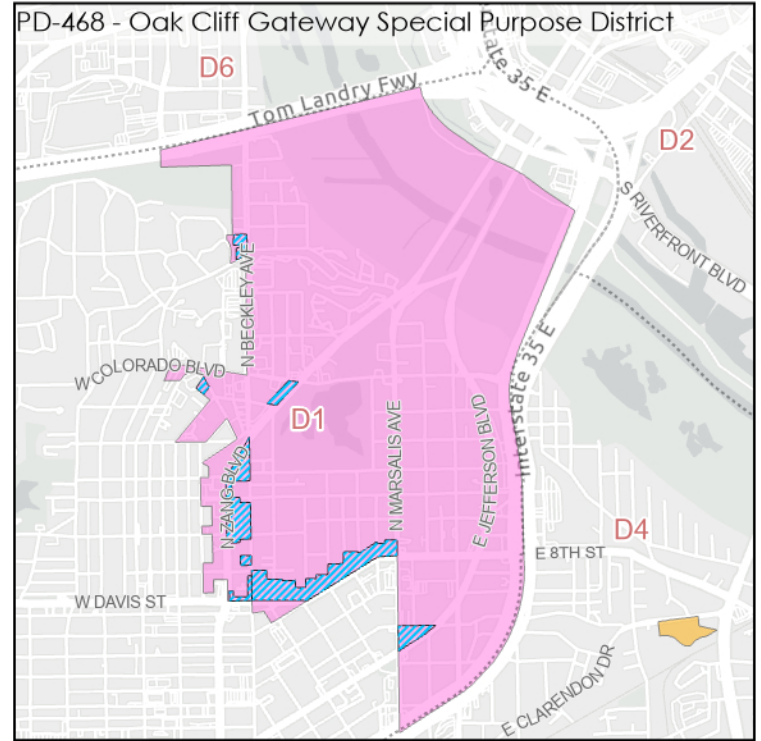
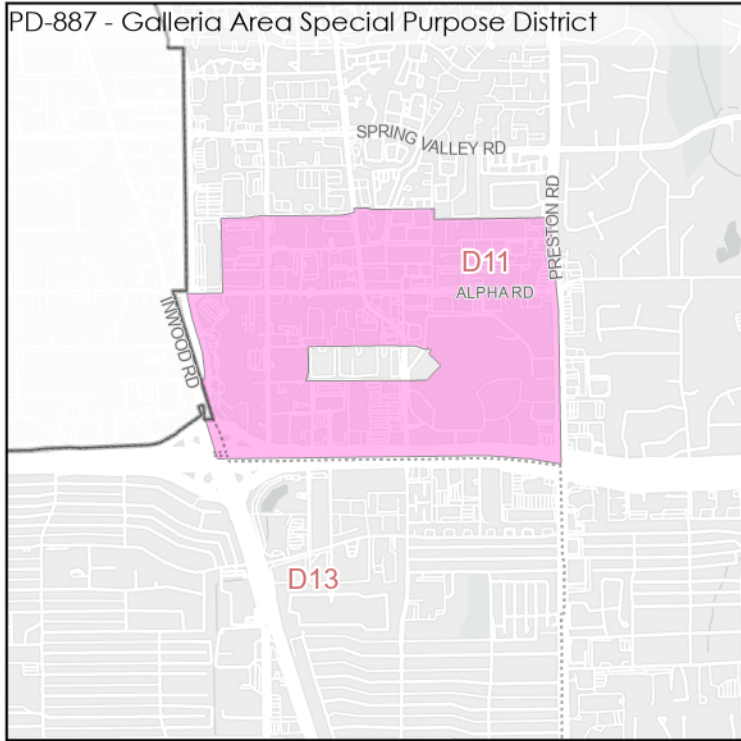
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Appendix A - Focus maps of zoning based on Article XIII districts

(PD 595 and PD 784 excluded; they will not be impacted by DCA 256-007)



- Legend**
- Shop Front Overlay
 - PD
 - WMU-3
 - WMU-5
 - WMU-8
 - WR-3
 - WR-5
 - WR-20

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Created By: Asma Shaikh &
Michael Wade

Data Sources: Baylor University, Texas Parks & Wildlife, Esri, TomTom, Garmin, SafeGraph, GeoTechnologies, Inc, METI/NASA, USGS, EPA, NPS, US Census Bureau, USDA, USFWS, Texas Parks & Wildlife, Esri, TomTom, Garmin, GeoTechnologies, Inc, METI/NASA, USGS, EPA, NPS, US Census Bureau, USDA, USFWS

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