

GREATER LOWNDES PLANNING COMMISSION  
AGENDA ITEM

SUBJECT: Text Amendments to the Lowndes County Unified Land Development Code (ULDC)

DATE OF MEETING: March 25, 2024

Regular Meeting (x)

Work Session (x)

BUDGET IMPACT: N/A

Recommendation (x)

Policy/Discussion ( )

FUNDING SOURCE: ( ) Annual ( ) SPLOST ( ) Capital (X) N/A

Report ( )

ACTION REQUESTED ON:

TXT-2024-01

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HISTORY, FACTS AND ISSUES:

ULDC Text Amendment TXT-2024-01 includes general amendments to the Code regarding signage, submittal requirements, procedures, updates required by changes in state law (OCGA), and administrative and/or clerical changes. To help organize these amendments, they have been grouped together and organized by number. Short versions of the proposed amendments are included as a part of this case in strike-through and underline format. For reference, a timeline of previous and planned actions and additional background on the groups is also attached. The TRC considered the proposed amendments, and found no technical objections. Based on updates and direction from the County Attorney and County Leadership, Planning Staff recommends approval of Amendments 1 through 6.

OPTIONS: 1. Approve      2. Approve with Conditions      3. Table      4. Deny

DIVISION: Planning    Staff: JD Dillard, Trinni Amiot, Jason Davenport, Glen Coyne (GMC Network)

Action and Motion by the Board: \_\_\_\_\_

## Planning Division Amendment Notes

### Timeline

#### Completed:

1. 2/26/24 LCBOC WS Preview (Public Meeting Update)
2. 2/26/24 GLPC Preview (Public Meeting Update)
3. 2/27/24 ZBOA WS Preview (Public Meeting Update)
4. 2/28/24 Preview Released to LAKE (Open Records)
5. 03/05/2024 General/Brief Discussion at ZBOA Regular Meeting
6. 03/07/2024 Preview Emailed to ZBOA
7. 3/1/24 Application Deadline
8. 3/2024 Moody Staff Preview (OCGA Commander/County Manager Contact Not Required)
9. 3/6/2024 LCBOC Retreat (Public Meeting)
10. 3/2024 Attorney Review
11. 3/12/2024 ZBOA Update (Public Meeting)
12. 3/18/2024 GLPC WS (Public Meeting)
13. 3/20/2024 TRC E-mail Drafts
14. 3/2024 Contact GLPC, ZBOA, Chamber, HBA, VLDA, and Sign Companies

#### Planned:

15. 3/26/2024 TRC Review
16. 3/2024 VDT Advertisements Published (Public Notice)
17. 3/2024 TRC Recommendation
18. 3/2024 Website Update
19. 3/2024 Updated Drafts Released to GLPC, ZBOA, Chamber, HBA, VLDA, and Sign Companies
20. 3/2024 Social Media Post 1
21. 3/25/2024 GLPC (Public Hearing and Public Meeting)
22. 3/2024 Website Update
23. 3/2024 Social Media Post 2
24. TBD Website Update
25. 4/8/24 LCBOC WS (Public Meeting)
26. 4/9/24 LCBOC (Official Public Meeting and Public Hearing)
27. TBD Website Update
28. TBD Social Media Post 3

**Amendment 1 Sign Regulations (5.01.00 & 5.04.00)** – Approximately 33% of the variances in 2023 have been to the sign ordinance. A broader update to the ordinance is planned in the next cycle of amendments; the focus currently is on number of wall signs, size of menu boards, height of directional signs, compliance with federal sign regulations, and a greater compatibility with standard sign packages for incoming development.

**Amendment 2 Conservation Subdivisions (4.05.01)** – Clarifies water and sewer system usage and locations.

**Amendment 3 Vehicle Repair Shops (4.03.11)** – Specifies the number of vehicles able to be stored on the property in addition to those for sale.

**Amendment 4 Procedures for Conducting Public Hearings (10.00.07)** – Clarifies the procedures applicability to the Board of Commissioners only and outlines the time and order of the public hearing portion of the meeting.

**Amendment 5 Submittal & Platting Requirements (10.00.00)** – The digitization of local governmental processes should be reflected in the processes outlined in the local ordinance, including submission of materials, signatory responsibilities and notifications to applicants.

**Amendment 6 Notice for Variance Advertisements (10.03.00)** – Changes in State Law require extended advertisement periods that should be reflected in local ordinances.

Amendment Cuts  
(Short Versions the Proposed Amendments)

DRAFT AMENDED SECTIONS:

**5.01.02 Standards for All Home Occupations**

M. Only one wall (1) **sign** shall be permissible in associated with the **home occupation**. The **sign** shall comply with the following standards:

1. The **sign** shall not exceed ~~eight-six (26)~~ square feet in area ~~in residential zoning districts, not including the Residential Agriculture zoning district;~~
- 1.2. The **sign** shall be motionless.

**5.01.03 Standards for Agricultural Home Occupations**

F. Only one (1) wall **sign** shall be permissible in association with the agricultural **home occupation**. The **sign** shall comply with the following standards:

- 1.3. The **sign** shall not exceed eight (8) square feet in area;
- 2.4. The **sign** shall be motionless; and
5. The **sign** shall not be lighted.

**5.04.05 Provisionally Exempt Signs**

**Signs** identified in this section may be placed without a **permit**, provided that such **signs** comply with the standards in Table 5.04.05.

**Table 5.04.05. Standards for Provisionally Exempt signs.**

Type of sign	Standards
Identification signs, including parking identification signs	<p><u>Auto-oriented Entrances/Exits:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Five (5) s.f. or less in area, and</u></li> <li>• <u>Maximum height of three (3) feet</u></li> </ul> <p><u>Semi-truck Entrances/Exits:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eight (8) s.f. or less in area, and</li> <li>• <u>Maximum height of five (5) feet.</u></li> </ul>
"No trespassing" or "no dumping" signs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eight (8) s.f. or less in area</li> </ul>
Menu/ <u>preview</u> boards or price lists for drive-through facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maximum of two (2) such boards <u>per drive-thru lane</u>, and</li> <li>• Maximum area of <u>sixty (60) s.f. per board and a maximum of one hundred s.f. (100) per drive thru lane</u>, and</li> <li>• Located adjacent to and oriented <u>for visibility only within</u> the drive-through area(s)</li> </ul>
Real estate signs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sixteen (16) s.f. or less in area in R-10, R-21 and R-1 zoning districts, or</li> <li>• Thirty-two (32) s.f. or less in all other zoning districts, and</li> <li>• Located on property for sale or rent, and</li> <li>• Located only during the period of offering for sale or rent</li> </ul>

**Table 5.04.05. Standards for Provisionally Exempt signs. (continued)**

<p><b>Construction signs</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sixteen (16) s.f. or less in area in R-10, R-21 and R-1 <b>zoning districts</b>, or</li> <li>• Thirty-two (32) s.f. or less in all other <b>zoning districts</b>, and</li> <li>• Located on property where a valid <b>building permit</b> has been issued and has not expired</li> </ul>
<p><b>Yard or Garage sale signs</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eight (8) s.f. or less in area, and</li> <li>• Located on the property on which a sale is being conducted, and</li> <li>• Limited to the period of the sale, but not to exceed two (2) weeks per year per <b>lot</b></li> </ul>
<p>Occupant or owner <b>identification sign</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Four (4) s.f. or less in area when located in a <b>residential zoning district</b></li> </ul>
<p>Pennants</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual pennants shall not exceed twelve (12) inches on any one (1) side. The length of the pennant streamer shall not exceed the length of the <b>street frontage</b> of the property on which the pennants are located.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Directional signs</b></p>	<p><u>Auto-oriented Entrances/Exits:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Five (5) s.f. or less in area per sign or a cumulative total not to exceed twenty (20) s.f. and</u></li> <li>• <u>Maximum height of three (3) feet</u></li> </ul> <p><u>Semi-truck Entrances/Exits:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Eight (8) s.f. or less in area per sign or a cumulative total not to exceed twenty (20) s.f. and</u></li> <li>• <u>Maximum height of five (5) feet.</u></li> </ul>

### 5.04.07 Tables of Sign Standards for Permanent On-Site Signs

Table 5.04.07(E)(3). Number and Types of Permanent On-site signs

Sign Type:  Zoning District Categories <sup>1</sup> (2.01.00 and 2.03.03):	Freestanding	Canopy	Wall	Awning	Projecting
Residential Uses in Residential,  Residential Uses in Rural, and  Residential Uses in Mixed Use (All)	See Section 5.01.00 for Home Occupation Signage  See Section 5.04.07(I) for Residential Development Signage				
Non-Residential Uses in Residential <sup>2</sup> ,  Non-Residential Uses in Rural, and  Non-Residential Uses in Mixed Use  (Includes MAZ Zonings Without Frontage on Bemiss Road (State Route 125))	1	0	1 per non-residential building (Cumulative total not to exceed 4 non-residential building signs per lot),  If a wall sign is chosen then the wall sign shall not exceed 10% of the signable area of the wall		
Commercial, Office, Institutional, Industrial, Intensive, and Non-Residential Uses in Mixed Use  (Includes MAZ Zonings With Frontage on Bemiss Road (State Route 125))	1 per <b>street Frontage</b>	1 per <b>Canopy side</b>	1 sign per building wall, not to exceed 30% of the signable area of the wall	1	1

<sup>1</sup>Zoning District Categories (2.01.00 and 2.03.03): Residential (R-1, R-21, R-10), Rural (E-A, R-A, CON), Mixed Use (MAZ-I, MAZ-II, MAZ-III, PD, PD-R), Commercial, Office, and Institutional (OI, C-C, C-G, C-H), and Industrial and Intensive (M-1, M-2, M-3, I-S)

<sup>2</sup>For Home Occupation Signage See Section 5.01.00.

Table 5.04.07(E)(4). Design Standards for Permanent On-site signs.

Sign Type:	Freestanding	Canopy	Wall	Awning	Projecting
<b>Standard:</b>					
<b>Maximum sign face area</b>	<p>For the Commercial, Office, Institutional, Industrial, and Intensive Zoning District Categories<sup>1</sup>: 5 s.f. per linear foot of <b>frontage</b>, to a maximum of 750 s.f.</p> <p>For the Non-Residential Uses in Residential<sup>2</sup>, Non-Residential Uses in Rural, and Non-Residential Uses in Mixed Use Zoning District Categories: 1.5 s.f. per linear foot of <b>frontage</b>, to a maximum of 100 s.f.</p> <p>For <b>residential</b> development signage (5.04.07(I)): a maximum of thirty-two (32) s.f.</p>	<p>Fifty (50) s.f.; or One (1) square foot per two (2) linear feet of <b>canopy</b> side</p>	<p>30% of <b>each</b> wall</p>	<p>20% of awning</p>	<p>24 s.f.</p>
<b>Sign location</b>	<p>5 ft. setback from all property lines</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>Front, sides, or rear facade</p>	<p>Front facade</p>	<p>Front facade</p> <p><b>sign</b> shall not extend more than 4 feet from the <b>building</b> face</p>
<b>Maximum sign Height</b>	<p>For the Commercial, Office, Institutional, Industrial, and Intensive Zoning District Categories<sup>1</sup>: 35 feet, or 70 feet within 660 feet of I-75 in C-H, M-1, or M-2</p> <p>For the Non-Residential Uses in Residential<sup>2</sup>, Non-Residential Uses in Rural, and Non-Residential Uses in Mixed Use Zoning District Categories: 15 feet</p> <p>For <b>residential</b> development signage (5.04.07(I)): 10 feet</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>Lowest part of awning must be a minimum of 8 feet above ground</p>	<p>Lowest part of <b>sign</b> must be a minimum of 8 feet above ground</p>



Proposed New Subsection H:

- H.** For any development arranged as a campus such as hospitals, educational facilities and religious facilities, incorporating three (3) or more buildings, the campus may be identified by a freestanding ground **sign** meeting the standards set forth in this section.
1. The area of the **sign** may be increased above the standard set forth for freestanding **signs** in Table 5.04.07(E)(4) an additional five (5) square feet for each building on the campus, to a maximum **sign** face area of 1,000 square feet.
  2. A Campus with **street frontage** of 400 feet or more may have an additional freestanding **sign** for each 400 feet of **frontage**. Any additional freestanding **signs** shall not exceed 500 square feet in **sign** face area.
  3. One (1) wall, awning, or **projecting sign** is permissible for each building on the campus. The total area of all **wall signs** in the center shall not exceed thirty (30) percent of the total wall area as described in Section 5.04.07(E)(3). Allocation of that total area to the individual establishments shall be the responsibility of the owner/operator of the campus.
  4. The overall sign package for the campus shall be submitted as a plan for original development approval and for all changes, additions and modifications.

Proposed New Subsection I:

- I.** Residential Development Signage
1. This section is intended to apply to signage placed at the entrance(s) and exit(s) of residential subdivisions and residential developments.
  2. At the entrance to each residential development, up to two (2) signs may be installed to identify the development or subdivision. Each sign shall meet the standards set forth in Table 5.04.07(E)(4).
  3. The location of the entrance signs shall be reviewed as a component of the development plans for location, size, design, setbacks, and safety.

## 4.05.01 Conservation Subdivision (CS)

### D. Minimum requirements for water and sewer

1. ~~The~~ CS shall have access to the Lowndes County water and Lowndes County sanitary sewer systems or, or propose to install, a central sanitary sewer system.
- 1.2. ~~The~~ CS shall have access to As an alternative, wells, septic tanks, or other systems that are approved by the Board of Health, Lowndes County Utility Department, or Georgia EPD may also be utilized. a shared drain field may be proposed whereby two (2) or more lots have septic tanks which flow to a drain field in a designated common area or open space. Shared drain fields shall only be allowable when approved by the County Board of Health. A homeowner's or property owner's association shall be required for management and maintenance of the common drain field.

### ~~4.03.11~~ ~~4.03.11~~ — Vehicle Repair Shops

5. A. Drainage pits for oil and fluid change shall be located within an enclosed **structure**. Applications for vehicle repair shops providing oil and fluid change facilities and services shall include proof of compliance with State and federal regulations regarding handling and disposal of oil and automotive fluids.
6. B. There shall be no more than ~~two ten~~ (210) cars-vehicles offered for sale at any time.
7. C. There shall be no more than ~~one~~ (1) cars-junk vehicle per 350 s.f. of under roof area stored in addition to the cars offered for sale at any time.
8. D. Vehicle repair shops shall comply with the standards set forth in Table 4.03.11(D).

**Table 4.03.11(D). Standards for Vehicle Repair Shops.**

<b>Buffers</b>	2.0 times the <b>buffer</b> requirements stated in Section 4.07.06
Vibration or electromagnetic interference	Shall not be discernable on adjacent properties
Loading docks	Screened from view from adjacent properties and from the public <b>right-of-way</b> Setback a minimum of 100 feet from any <b>residentially</b> zoned property
<b>Outside storage</b>	Screened from view from adjacent properties and from the public <b>right-of-way</b> Setback a minimum of 100 feet from any <b>residentially</b> zoned property
Exterior lighting	Directed and shielded to avoid illumination of adjacent properties
Loudspeakers and paging equipment	Prohibited

## 10.00.07 Board of Commissioner Public Hearing Procedures

The following procedures shall govern Board of Commissioner public hearings pertaining to applications listed as under their responsibility in Table 10.01.03. The ZBA and the Planning Commission are not required to observe these procedures.

- A. The proposal or request to be considered shall be introduced by the Chair and presented by the **County Manager**.
- B. Public comments shall be heard in an orderly fashion. Comments and testimony shall be provided in the following order:
  - 1. Citizens speaking in opposition to the proposal or request;
  - ~~2. The applicant or applicant's agent;~~
  - ~~3. Citizens speaking in favor of the proposal or request; and~~
  - ~~4. At the discretion of the Chair of the Board of Commissioners,-~~Rebuttal.
- C. Any party may appear at the public hearing in person or by agent or by attorney.
- D. Each ~~person opponent or who proponent who appears speaks shall state shall identify himself by their~~ name and address; ~~if the person is the applicant, he shall state whether he is the owner of the property or agent for owner.~~
- E. Each applicant or other interested party who submits documents at the hearing shall identify each document. Each document submitted shall be made a part of the official record of the hearing.
- F. Time periods for testimony:

Opponents shall have a minimum of ten (10) minutes to present data, evidence, and opinions pertinent to the proposal. Proponents, ~~including the applicant and other speaking in favor of the proposal~~, shall have a minimum of ten (10) minutes to present data, evidence, and opinions pertinent to the proposal. The ~~Chair of the board hearing the request or proposal Board of Commissioners~~ may otherwise limit discussion. The ~~chair of the board hearing the request or proposal~~ Chair of the Board of Commissioners may allow additional time ~~in at the chair's~~ their discretion.
- ~~F.G.~~ G. The Board of Commissioners retains the privilege to ask any questions of the **County Manager**, other staff, or **persons** who have spoken on the matter.
- ~~G.H.~~ H. After the final action by the Board of Commissioners, the Chair shall announce the decision. The **County Manager** shall notify the applicant or agent in writing of the decision of the Board of Commissioners.
- ~~H.I.~~ I. The Board of Commissioners may table the application. The tabling shall be to a date certain. Where an application is remanded by the Board of Commissioners to the Planning Commission it shall be heard by the Planning Commission on the next available meeting date.

## 10.01.02 Determination of Completeness

A. All applications shall be complete. A determination of completeness is a determination that all required documents and plans have been submitted in sufficient number, and that all fees have been paid. A determination of completeness is not a determination of compliance with substantive standards and criteria.

B. For applications that the Board of Commissioners or the ZBA are responsible for in Table 10.01.03:

1. The County Manager shall determine, within five (5) days of receipt of an application, whether the application is complete.

2. If the County Manager determines that the application is not complete, the County Manager shall send notice to the applicant identifying the deficiencies. The applicant shall have five (5) days from the date of notice to correct the deficiencies. If the applicant fails to correct the deficiencies within the five (5) day period, the application shall be deemed withdrawn, and the fees, application, and materials submitted shall be returned.

3. If the County Manager determines that the application is complete, the application shall be processed for review and action in accordance with the procedural requirements set forth in this chapter.

C. For applications or items that the County Manager, TRC, the TRC Chair, or other staff are responsible for:

1. The County Manager shall determine internally whether an application or item is complete.

2. The County Manager shall allow review of an incomplete application or item if it has enough basic information to allow for the review.

3. Completeness shall be satisfied before the application or item is approved.

~~I. All applications shall be complete before acceptance for review and decision-making. A determination of completeness is a determination that all required documents and plans have been submitted in sufficient number, and that all fees have been paid. A determination of completeness is not a determination of compliance with substantive standards and criteria.~~

~~J. The County Manager shall determine, within five (5) days of receipt of an application, whether the application is complete.~~

~~K. If the County Manager determines that the application is not complete, the County Manager shall send notice to the applicant identifying the deficiencies. The applicant shall have five (5) days from the date of notice to correct the deficiencies. Until the applicant corrects the deficiencies, no further action shall be taken for processing the application. If the applicant fails to correct the deficiencies within the five (5) day period, the application~~

~~shall be deemed withdrawn, and the fees, application, and materials submitted shall be returned.~~

~~L. If the County Manager determines that the application is complete, the application shall be processed for review and action in accordance with the procedural requirements set forth in this chapter.~~

#### 10.01.04 Procedures for Action by the Technical Review Committee

G. Approval of combination plats

5. One (1) digital copy, ~~one (1) mylar or plastic copy, and six (6) other copies~~ shall be submitted. The ~~mylar or plastic~~digital copy will be retained by the **County Manager**.

H. Approval of exempt plats

7. One (1) ~~mylar and five (5) copies~~digital copy shall be submitted. The ~~mylar copy~~ will be retained by the **County Manager**.

#### 10.02.02 Submittal Requirements for Subdivision Plats

B. 4. ~~Two (2) original reproducible on plastic and seven (7) blue-line prints~~A digital copy of the final plat ~~plus two (2) additional copies if located on a state route~~, which will include the following:

- a. Sheet Design: The final plat shall conform to the requirements for a preliminary plat, and shall be drawn consistent with the State of Georgia Platting Act ~~on one (1) or more sheets of mylar or plastic film~~. When two (2) or more sheets are used, a key map shall be shown on each sheet. ~~There shall be a two (2) inch margin on the left end of the plat and a one-half (1/2) inch margin on the remaining three (3) sides.~~
- e. Approvals: The following spaces shall be provided in the form shown below for all agencies having jurisdiction. The placement on the plat may vary.

Approved by **Board of Health**, Lowndes County, Georgia.

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Signed \_\_\_\_\_

**Board of Health** Representative

Approved by County Engineer, Lowndes County, Georgia.

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Signed \_\_\_\_\_

County Engineer

Approved by Chairman, Technical Review Committee, Lowndes County, Georgia.

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Chairman, Technical Review Committee

Approved by Director of Engineering, Lowndes County, Georgia.

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Director of Engineering

## 10.03.00 NOTICE REQUIREMENTS

### 10.03.01 Rezoning and All Other Zoning Decisions

- A. At least fifteen (15) but not more than forty-five (45) days prior to the date of hearing, notice shall be published within a newspaper of general circulation in the County stating the date, time, place, and purpose of the hearing.

### 10.03.02 All Other Decisions Variance Requests

- A. At least ~~fifteen~~ thirty (1530) ~~but not more than forty-five (45)~~ days prior to the date of hearing, notice shall be published within a newspaper of general circulation in the County stating the date, time, place, and purpose of the hearing.