

Gwinnett County UDO Advisory Committee

AGENDA

Gwinnett County Unified Development Ordinance

UDO Advisory Committee Meeting #4

October 20, 2011

Participants

UDO Advisory Committee: Carol Hassell, Chuck Warbington, Eric Johansen, Joe Allen, Marcia Bumbalough, Matt Houser, Maureen Kelly, Wylly Harrison, Michael Sullivan, P.K. Hale, Taylor Anderson, Teresa Cantrell

Gwinnett County Staff: Bryan Lackey, David Tucker, Donna Joe, James Pugsley, Jeff West, Kathy Holland, Nancy Lovingood, Patricia Huguenard, Patrick Quinn, Vince Edwards, Grant Guess

JACOBS: Gary Cornell, Jim Summerbell, Amanda Hatton

Urban Collage: Matt Cherry, Eric Bosman

Notes

Welcome

Bryan Lackey began the meeting by welcoming Advisory Committee members and thanking them for attending. The project team is finishing up Title 2 and will be beginning Work on Title 3. Bryan advised the group that Gary Cornell and team members would be providing a presentation and that Committee members are encouraged to ask questions and provide suggestions throughout the presentation.

Review Meeting #3, Structure of the UDO and Progress to Date

Gary Cornell briefly reviewed the agenda for the meeting, highlighting what was accomplished at the last Core Team meeting and what has been done since.

The notes from the third Advisory Committee Meeting were available in hard copy and are also posted online at the County's UDO site.

Numbering of UDO – At the last meeting, concerns about the numbering system for the UDO were raised. As a result, the UDO chapters have been renumbered, starting with Chapter 100 for Title I Administration, Chapter 200 for Title II Zoning, and Chapter 300 for Title III Development Standards.

Gary provided a broad review of the UDO structure, summarizing the key elements of Title I, Title 2, Title 3, and the Appendices.

Staff is currently making final reviews to Title 2 chapters. Work will begin soon on Title 3. The Appendices are underway.

Zoning Districts, Overlays, Use Standards, and Dimensional Standards - Review

Gary briefly reviewed the comprehensive list of zoning districts to be included in the UDO, which includes some new districts and removal of other districts that will become inactive. Highlights of the new zoning districts were provided. The group had several comments and questions about the specific districts, reflected in the below dialogue which ensued. Most comments related to the *Urban Center Form-Based Overlay District*.

INACTIVE DISTRICTS

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One Committee member asked for clarification on how existing districts that are becoming inactive are being treated. This item was initially raised at the previous Advisory Committee meeting.

These districts are being moved to the UDO Appendix and will become inactive. The project team, with help from the Advisory Committee, needs to identify any changes needed to these districts. People will still be able to develop property under these regulations if their property is zoned to one of the districts that will become inactive at the time of UDO adoption.

UCFB DISTRICT

Overview - Gary emphasized the difference between the Urban Center Form-Based Overlay District and the Regional Mixed-Use District (MU-R) district. The former is an overlay district and the latter is a base zoning district. Several questions and comments were made about this new overlay district.

- People have two options: they can apply to develop their property under the new overlay district via an Administrative Review Permit or develop under the conditions of the property's current zoning.
- Right now the overlay only would apply in the Gwinnett Place and Gwinnett Village CID areas.
 - Why is this district not applicable in the Park Place CID area? *The Park Place area is currently treated differently.*
 - *The County is considering making the purple area on the Future Development Map (this is an area within the Evermore CID) eligible for development within the UCFB district.*
- Is a permit all that is required to have the UCFB district apply to a property with the UCFB boundaries? *Yes, an administrative review permit will be required.*
- How would the public involvement occur for enforcing the UCFB? *It is occurring now and at the time that the overlay is accepted. Otherwise, as is, no other outreach would need to occur per the new regulations.*
- Can we call this process something different instead of "overlay"? It is a confusing term because other overlays have different administrative rules.
- Residents and property owners within 1,000 feet of where the UCFB Overlay District is to be applied should be informed prior to these new regulations being voted into law. A letter should be sent. Multiple people agreed with this.
- Will this overlay conflict with the other overlays that already apply in the area? *They should not.* One person pointed out that there may be some conflict with the inter-parcel access requirements in the Mall of Georgia overlay district.
- The MU-R base zoning district is available to property owners in other areas of the county; it, however, developing under its regulations requires a rezoning request and consistency with the Future Development Map.

Incentives - Gary reiterated that the UCFB district offers several incentives to be eligible for extra gross floor area (GFA). Several actions are eligible for this. If you provide more than 20% common area, you receive extra GFA. This includes hardscape and greenspace.

- A concern was raised that we need to highlight the need for greenspace and not just group it all under the term common space.
 - *One option is to establish a ratio of common space that should be greenspace. Right now there are no ratios for what should make up common space. The problem with this is that it sets a standard that is low.*

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- Currently, there's an option and flexibility within the UCFB for multiple property owners to share one larger greenspace if the County accepts it; this allows for more meaningful common space than if each owner provided the space individually.
- One Committee member provided the example of a "common" pond. How is the share of the pond provided? The property owner of the pond gets the bonus density.
- The overall concern is the term "common area".
- Regional stormwater and common area should be linked if possible. We should include language in the UDO that links these two elements. A caveat is that as you regulate you limit the creative capabilities of the development community.
- One participant highlighted the fact that redevelopment is a risky endeavor and has limited implementation in Gwinnett. More regulations can sometimes dis-incentivize redevelopment from happening. The UCFB should not be too prescriptive.
- Another participant then asked, how do we prevent bad development from happening?

UCFB Buffers - Would the overlay district include buffers? *Not in the UCFB; there's no traditional buffer included. There is a transitional height plane that requires a step down for spacing. Should there be a vegetative buffer?* One Committee member pointed out that there are tiers in the overlay to prevent a 15 story building from being built adjacent to a residential area.

Does tree preservation ordinance and buffer ordinance apply in the district? The same tree density applies (but you can move some of the trees around); however, the buffer requirements do not.

UCFB Outreach – The point was brought up again that the community must be informed about the overlay to be adopted. Letters should be sent to residents. The CIDs can also help get the word out about the overlay.

OTHER OVERLAYS

Gary briefly reviewed the other new districts included in the UDO

USE STANDARDS & DIMENSIONAL STANDARDS

Gary briefly reviewed these chapters and gave examples of what the corresponding tables will look like. They are works in progress. The County has reviewed them in detail and will get them up on the website – hopefully tomorrow. There will be another rendition of the use table.

Bryan Lackey emphasized that the Advisory Committee should review the tables in detail and provide feedback.

BREAK - There was a short 5-minute break before continuing with meeting.

I. Parking, Signs, Non-Conforming Uses and Procedures

PARKING

Gary provided a brief summary of changes within the parking regulations (Chapter 250). Developers now can get credit for on-street parking. A reduction in parking (up to 10%) can now be applied for with an Administrative Review Permit

Is there a variance for interior tenant changes? What does the County think about this? *The County previously had a set standard for shopping centers – did not matter who the tenant was. The County prefers that this approach remains.*

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Should the size of parking space change?

Cut-off luminaires and light spill-over lighting will be addressed in the Development Regulations.

Representative uses from the Use Table will be compiled in table. Gary provided an example of what the table would look like.

Automotive, bulk vehicle – needs to be corrected; see page 5, the minimum and maximum parking spaces is off.

Can the aisle dimensions be wider?

The drive widths were reduced in the past to help reduce impervious surface. Variances are available for certain uses.

One Committee member stated that the development community should be able to plead their case without having to get a variance.

Depth of stall – how that affects aisle width – can we look at this again?

Gary gave an example of a shared parking calculation table and offered to share the Excel file that provides the calculations with anyone if he/she is interested in seeing how the numbers work out for a particular use.

SIGNS

Gary provided an overview of the sign ordinance. The section includes new illumination levels that match national standards. Opportunities for more pedestrian-oriented signs, such as A-frame signs, are included.

Current ordinance would not allow a movie on a sign.

NON-CONFORMING USES

An overview of Non-conforming uses was provided; it is fairly similar to existing code. Greater than 50% change, you have to confirm to the new regulations.

Previously Existing Land Use Certificates (PELUCs) – PELUC provides an opportunity for non-conforming uses that are good for the community to continue under a legal status. This helps with financing and physical modifications to buildings. It can be considered a grandfathering certificate.

This is to make the use legal.

How common would this be? *The PELUC comes from Tallahassee Florida; they have found it helpful.*

There is an issue with items going to the Zoning Board of Approval (ZBA).

Bryan Lackey emphasized that the County would like feedback on this; there appears to be some concerns among Advisory Committee members.

ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW PERMIT

The Administrative Review feature is a new opportunity provided in Chapter 290.

There is a concern about the Neighborhood Corner Commercial Overlay doesn't have a public vetting period.

You have to apply for a rezoning to develop under this district, so a hearing is required.

Is the flexibility of the Director being defined in this section?

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Yes, Chapter 290 clarifies this opportunity.

Neighborhood commercial allows flexibility for parking.

Parking requirements should be as low as possible, as recommended by one Advisory Committee Member. The project team agrees with this perspective.

R&D Corridor Update

Gary reiterated that the project team is happy to hear comments and discuss any items in more detail after the meeting, but the meeting needed to move on to stay on schedule. Gary passed the meeting over to Jim Summerbell and Matt Cherry to discuss the R&D Corridor Sector Plan. Jim Summerbell provided an overview of the R&D Corridor Sector area plan. It is one effort to help implement the Unified Plan. An Assessment Report is currently on the website available for review. A Strategic Framework Plan is underway. It is integral to the UDO implementation.

Jim reviewed the results of the Community Workshop for the R&D Corridor Sector Plan and then summarized the Overall Strategy for implementation.

Matt Cherry summarized the process for developing the corridor framework and clarified the differences between R&D 1 and R&D 2. Four areas were focused upon – for each area, a basic conceptual plan was provided.

Jim reiterated that the details of the plan are still being worked out, ensuring that aesthetics, recreational areas, and a campus-like environment, which are attractive to R&D businesses, are addressed in the plan and potential regulations.

A big part of the recommendations is marketing and making sure the plan fits in with the other plans, like those of the Georgia BioScience Authority and the City of Lawrenceville.

Bryan Lackey pointed out that the R&D Sector plan is being coordinated well with the BioScience Authority's efforts, which address R&D connections all the way to Athens. Jann Moore is leading this effort.

Questions and Comments about the R&D Corridor Sector Plan included the following:

Was the City of Dacula included in the Community Workshop? They were invited but did not attend; the City did participate in stakeholder interviews leading up to the workshop, providing input via that avenue.

How much development can you influence by this policy? The project team responded that the policy can have a big influence. Commercial redevelopment only lasts so long before it has to be redeveloped. In addition, there is a fair amount of greenspace still on the east side of the study area.

Jim pointed out that Chapter 220 of the UDO will include new regulations for this area, likely in the form of an overlay district, for this area. The UDO Committee will be asked to review this language and provide feedback.

One Committee member pointed out that in this area it would be appropriate to specify the amount of common area that should include greenspace; parts of the study area are considered conservation areas.

Next Steps & Adjourn

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Gary gave an overview of the next steps for the project. The project team will be completing Title 2 and then start pulling together Title 3. The next meeting is tentatively planned for December 15, 2011. Some Committee members stated that this is a bad day. December 8, 2011 was provided as an alternate. No date was confirmed. The County will confirm the meeting date with the Advisory Committee later. Attendees were thanked for coming and invited to stay for additional discussion with the project team.