

## MEMORANDUM

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To: Community Development Committee  
From: Thomas Hawkins  
Re: February 22, 2010 Internal Review Draft of City of Gainesville, Florida Mixed Use Standards  
Date: March 1, 2010

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This memorandum presents comments on the proposed amendments to the Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Code presented at the March 1, 2010 Community Development Committee meeting. I have organized my comments into two parts: general comments on what the proposed amendments should accomplish and specific comments on the proposed amendments.

### **General comments on what proposed amendments should accomplish**

Proposed amendments should reduce the use of overlay zoning designations.

Proposed amendments should provide guidance on achieving all of the following urban design characteristics in all new development in all activity centers: a gridded, interconnected roadway network, buildings oriented toward streets, buildings that have modest (or no) front setbacks, and placement of parking to the side or rear of buildings.

### **Specific comments on the proposed amendments**

The proposed Comprehensive Plan amendments do not consistently use the same terminology for the several types of activity centers.

Proposed amendments to Future Land Use Element Policy 1.4.3 limits the requirement for “a gridded, interconnected street network” to a sub set of all activity centers.

Proposed amendments to Future Land Use Element Policy 4.1.1 would remove requirements for buildings in the Mixed-Use Low-Intensity and Mixed-Use Medium Intensity categories to face the street and have modest, or no, front setbacks.

Proposed amendments to Future Land Use Element Policy 4.1.1 would remove the requirement for buildings in the Commercial Future Land Use category to face the street and have modest build to lines.

Proposed Urban Design Element Policy 1.4.1 should require all non-residential off-street parking to be placed to the rear or side of a building and should prohibit any new development with off-street parking between a building’s front and the street.

Proposed Land Development Code § 30-64(a)(9) suggests that Gainesville can provide for compatibility between residential and non-residential uses through buffering and screening. Reject these strategies in favor of design controls that integrate adjacent uses and allow for a transition from more intense to less intense uses.

Proposed Land Development Code §§ 30-64(c)(4), 30-65(c)(8), and 30-68(b)(8) provide a connectivity standard based on block perimeter. Encouraged block perimeter should be 1,600 feet or smaller and the maximum allowed block perimeter should be 2,000 feet or smaller. The Land Development Code should provide a clear methodology for measuring block perimeter. These provisions should not explicitly provide for a waiver.

Proposed provision a. of Table 30-64A provides for too large a setback in the “Edge Area Activity Centers.”

Proposed provision c. of Table 30-64A provides for multiple structures. The rules appear to create exemptions from other standards, such as requirements for buildings to face the street and have modest setbacks. All buildings in all activity centers should front streets. Parking should never be located between a building’s front façade and the street.

Proposed provision h. of Table 30-64A provides for parking to be located between a building’s front façade and the street in edge area activity centers. All buildings in all activity centers should front streets. Parking should never be located between a building’s façade and the street.

A proposed unlettered provision of Table 30-64A immediately following proposed provision k. of Table 30-64A provides for pedestrian access in parking areas. Pedestrian access to and from surface parking areas should always be to a streetside sidewalk. All buildings in all activity centers should front streets and access from surface parking areas to buildings should be via a streetside sidewalk.

Proposed provision d. of Table 30-64B addresses building orientation. All buildings in all activity centers should front streets. Existing regulations for Central Corridors in Section 5 of Appendix A to the Land Development Code require buildings to be oriented to the street. These existing rules have allowed development of buildings oriented toward parking areas with auxiliary entrances facing the streetside sidewalk. Proposed amendments should address this shortcoming.

Proposed provision e. of Table 30-64B provides a maximum building height of three or four stories. Existing § 30-64 allows buildings to be five stories by right. Why lower the allowed maximum building height.

Proposed Land Development Code § 30-167 addresses master plans. The proposed amendments do not provide much guidance on the design of development described in master plans. The proposed rules should provide clear guidance on designing a master plan that will provide for a gridded, interconnected roadway network and facilitate pedestrian, bicycle and transit mobility.

Proposed Land Development Code § 30-68(b)(2) provides setbacks and building orientation standards for large-scale retail. All buildings in all activity centers should front streets. Parking should never be located between a building’s façade and the street.

Proposed Land Development Code § 30-68(c) requires community spaces as a component of large-scale retail. Proposed rules should provide standards for the placement and design of community spaces.

Proposed Land Development Code § 30-68(i) requires large-scale retail development to maintain a surety bond to cover the cost of demolition in case a building becomes vacant. The provision should better define the condition of vacancy.