



Lumpkin County Land Use and Development Regulations Review Committee

342 Courthouse Hill Planning Commission Meeting Room

August 3, 2026

5:00 PM

Members Present: Rhett Stringer, Vanessa McGrath, Martin Durand, Chris Adams, Greg Hayes, Don Becker

Staff Present: Alan Ours

Meeting called to order at 5:03 pm

Minutes from July 20, 2026 were approved by motion and raised hands.

Sewer Service Area Boundaries and Policy Scope

- Ordinances governing sewer service area boundaries were reviewed to determine if they should restrict or allow expansion. Properties outside the boundary require approvals from the Planning Commission, Board of Commissioners, and Water Authority to connect.
- The boundary was affirmed as a regulatory checkpoint to deter unwanted high-density expansion outside designated zones.
- Debate continued on whether rules should be applied via the Gateway Corridor overlay or the sewer service area, noting parcels inside the sewer area but outside the overlay may seek character area changes for density rather than aesthetics.
- Conclusion: Maintain the sewer boundary as a multi-body review checkpoint and develop policy language addressing both overlay and sewer service area contexts, anticipating density-focused character area change requests.

Mixed-Use Framework: Class 5/6, Percentages, and Consolidation

- Current Class 6 mixed-use rules (caps at 50% multifamily and 50% commercial) were said to deter development. Participants considered removing strict caps and shifting to flexible “mix” language, while some advocated “must” language with defined minimum percentages to prevent token commercial additions.
- Options discussed:
 - Set minimum commercial percentage (e.g., 20%) to ensure true mixed-use; clarify what qualifies as commercial (retail, office) versus non-commercial amenities (clubhouse).
 - Consider a maximum multifamily share (e.g., 70%) and require at least two of three components (multifamily, single-family, commercial).
 - Loosen mixed-use percentage language to “may include a mix” to attract developers, alongside tighter rules for standalone multifamily.
- Combining Class 5 and Class 6 was considered, including removing the 30-acre minimum and adjusting green space/buffer requirements.
- PUDs or flexible mixed-use ordinances are needed to enable cohesive, large-scale projects with appropriate flexibility.

- Conclusion: No final decision on consolidation or exact mix thresholds; general agreement to revise Class 6 to incentivize “live-work-play” projects, with either minimum mix percentages or flexible language paired with objective approval criteria.

Density Standards and Housing Types

- Multifamily: Current allowance of up to 16 bedrooms/acre with public water and sewer plus sprinkled was questioned for gateway objectives and feasibility under 3-story limits and sewer capacity. Interest in lowering caps (e.g., 10–12 bedrooms/acre) and ensuring density aligns with height, parking, and sewer constraints.
- Single-family: Existing cap of one unit per gross acre was challenged as too low for corridor goals. Options discussed included higher single-family density (e.g., ~3–4 homes/acre, quarter-acre lots), potential zero lot lines to manage prices, and revisiting setbacks (front ~30 feet, side/rear ~20 feet) and fire code implications for smaller lots. A preliminary placeholder proposed minimum lot size of ~0.585 acres were debated against quarter-acre concepts.
- Conclusion: Reassess and recalibrate multifamily bedroom-per-acre and single-family units-per-acre to balance outcomes, improve feasibility, and align with gateway aesthetics, with interest in scrapping bedroom-based metrics for single-family and adopting clear units-per-acre standards.

Design, Aesthetics, and Gateway Corridor Standards

- Strong emphasis on defining a consistent aesthetic for the Gateway Corridor (Highway 60/400), moving from “should/may” to enforceable “shall/must” standards.
- Prohibitions and orientation: Corrugated metal buildings prohibited; buildings should face internal access roads; limit height to three stories; all utilities underground; signage limited to monument or building-mounted, not visible above the tree line.
- Parking: Large lots between buildings and state highways are prohibited; allow a maximum of two parking aisle rows fronting the building; ensure parking minimums and shared-use strategies to mitigate traffic.
- Landscaping and buffers: Desire for measurable, enforceable standards (buffer depths, planting densities, tree caliper requirements, species lists, maintenance obligations). Proposals included a substantial front setback (e.g., 100 feet) with the first 50 feet as undisturbed planted buffer on state highways, context-sensitive exceptions where sites are naturally screened, and clear maintenance/enforcement mechanisms (HOA or equivalent for mixed-use/commercial).
- Conclusion: Strengthen overlay aesthetics with mandatory buffers, materials, and landscaping, clarify signage and parking rules, and require master plans for Class 6 to ensure cohesive design.

Green Space Requirements

- A 40% green space rule was deemed too restrictive for mixed-use and easily gamed (low-quality, rear-loaded green space).

- Gateway overlay and standalone multifamily currently require 20% or a 25-foot buffer.
- Trade-offs noted: High green space forces higher density on developable portions; costly corridor land is harder to reserve as green space; “double whammy” when green space stacks with setbacks/buffers.
- General consensus favored lowering green space to ~20% for mixed-use while strengthening front-facing buffer and landscaping standards along state roads. Some advocated substituting enhanced front buffers for general green space percentages.
- Conclusion: Move toward a 20% green space standard for mixed-use in the Gateway, paired with robust, enforceable buffer/landscaping requirements; finalize how buffers/landscaped areas count toward green space.

Infrastructure, Topography, Stormwater, and Tree Preservation

- Tree surveys required for 24-inch specimen trees within 75 feet of the road; save all 54-inch specimen trees. Minimize cut/fill; slopes limited to 3:1, steeper slopes require architecturally treated retaining walls (no smooth-faced concrete).
- Watershed plan currently encourages low-impact stormwater design; participants considered requiring specific low-impact practices to ensure desired outcomes.
- Commercial landscaping rules currently require 10% of net disturbed area landscaped; noted as convoluted and hard to enforce, needing simplification.
- Conclusion: Codify low-impact stormwater requirements, refine tree preservation standards, and simplify landscaping calculations for clearer enforcement.

Traffic, Parking, and Access

- Mixed-use nodes should include trip-reducing uses (e.g., grocery) and avoid uses that don’t reduce roadway load (e.g., boat repair). Emphasis on adequate parking and arterial access, with no direct access to Highway 400.
- Conclusion: Support for mixed-use nodes designed to reduce trips and manage parking impacts; adopt clear parking ratios and access management in future drafts.

Local Business vs. National Chains

- Desire to incentivize small, local businesses over national chains, acknowledging financing realities favor corporates and the visual impact of vacant chain properties.
- Conclusion: Interest in creating incentives for local ownership within mixed-use nodes; specifics to be developed.

Mobile Home Regulations (Senate Bill 213, 2023)

- State law limits local regulation of mobile home replacements (single-wide to single-wide permitted; no requirement to upgrade to double-wide or permanent foundation). Concern about older mobile homes being moved into the county.

- The county currently requires inspection before moving a mobile home
- What to ask legal it is an options for requiring demolition of old units upon replacement were questioned.
- Conclusion: Seek legal guidance on ordinance changes and enforcement options under SB 213 to manage mobile home replacements and relocations.

Meeting adjourned at 7:16 pm

Next Arrangements

- ☐ Revise Class 6 language on mixed-use percentages; decide between “must” with minimum thresholds (e.g., commercial $\geq 20\%$, multifamily cap $\sim 70\%$) or “may include a mix” paired with objective approval criteria.
- ☐ Define what qualifies as commercial for minimum percentage calculations; distinguish retail/office from residential amenities.
- ☐ Reassess density standards: set clear multifamily bedroom-per-acre cap aligned with height/sewer limits; adopt single-family units-per-acre targets (e.g., 3–4 homes/acre) and adjust setbacks/lot sizes accordingly.
- ☐ Lower mixed-use green space to $\sim 20\%$ and clarify how buffers/landscaping areas count; evaluate substituting enhanced front buffers for general percentages.
- ☐ Draft enforceable gateway aesthetics: front buffer depths, planting densities, tree caliper requirements, prohibited species, signage limits, parking placement, and building orientation; convert “should/may” to “shall/must.”
- ☐ Simplify landscaping calculations for commercial (replace 10% net disturbed area metric with clearer measures); define maintenance obligations and enforcement mechanisms for mixed-use/commercial (HOA or similar).
- ☐ Require master plans for Class 6 developments; audit and reconcile conflicts across Chapters 7, 26, 27 and overlay standards; consider a three-story height limit.
- ☐ Decide whether to consolidate Class 5 into Class 6 and eliminate minimum acreage requirements.
- ☐ Model parking minimums and shared-use strategies for multifamily/mixed-use.
- ☐ Map floodplains along Long Branch and consider impacts of future road widening on feasibility and buffer implementation.
- ☐ Consult county attorney on SB 213 to determine ordinance updates, potential demolition requirements for replaced mobile homes, and limits on relocations.