



Lumpkin County Land Use and Development Regulations Review Committee

342 Courthouse Hill Planning Commission Meeting Room

August 24, 2026

5:00 PM

Members Present: Rhett Stringer, Vanessa McGrath, Martin Durand, Chris Adams, Trevor Eudy, Kathy Lacy-Eglian, Greg Hayes, Don Becker

Staff Present: Alan Ours

Meeting called to order at 5:06 pm

Minutes from Aug 11, 2026 were approved by motion and raised hands.

Land Use Framework and Category Revisions

- The group is refining land use categories, aiming to simplify to Residential Development and Restrictive Development
- Classes 5–6 Subdivision or “residential growth,” confine to sewer service areas.
- Proposed categories under review: Agricultural Preservation, Restrictive Development, General Development, Industrial, and a potential Gateway Corridor Overlay District.
 - Combine Agricultural Preservation and Restrictive Development due to similar definitions. No decision was made.
 - Create a distinct Gateway Corridor Overlay to tie specific uses (e.g., mixed-use, multifamily) to that corridor.
 - Reevaluate or eliminate the general Industrial category, concentrating industrial uses in two designated industrial parks.
- Industrial definitions need modernization; the 2022 comp plan language framing industrial as “likely to have negative impacts” was criticized. The group considered a more positive “light industrial” definition and further subcategories (e.g., limited vs. extensive manufacturing).
- Distinction between commercial and industrial (e.g., satellite manufacturing) remains unsettled, including what qualifies as “industrial” outside industrial parks or within the Gateway Corridor.
- Alignment with the comprehensive plan is pending; proposed code changes will be shared with Adam as the plan update progresses.

Lot Size, Affordability, and Economic Impact

- Minimum lot size remains contentious:
 - Three-acre minimum deemed too restrictive, harming affordability and future tax base.
 - One-and-a-half-acre minimum also seen as a step toward “killing affordability.”
 - Market context: one-acre parcels sell for 50,000-70,000, challenging younger buyers.
- Concerns: Overly large minimums could skew demographics older, reduce taxable value (due to exemptions), and threaten long-term fiscal sustainability.

- Land constraints: Steep terrain in certain “gold mining” sections limits achievable densities; even three-acre densities can be difficult, explaining slower development relative to peer counties. Many residents are satisfied with current zoning; arbitrary changes risk backlash.

Industrial/Residential Interface, Buffers, and Enforcement

- Land use conflicts persist where industrial uses abut residential areas. Examples: egg processing and chicken processing producing odors despite filtration attempts.
- A 3,000-foot buffer for extensive manufacturing was questioned, especially inside dedicated industrial parks.
- Article Two’s performance standards (access, setbacks, buffers) are viewed as the backbone for reducing conflicts, but enforcement is inconsistent. The group emphasized having legally sound, enforceable standards rather than aspirational rules.

Multifamily and Duplex Standards

- Case study: A three-building apartment complex (60 units total; ~240 residents on 14.92 acres) showed “sixteen bedrooms per acre” density can appear high on paper yet have low visual/traffic impact.
- Current multifamily rules:
 - Four-acre minimum tract size for multifamily.
 - Triplexes/quadplexes require at least four acres; driven by septic/well separation and infrastructure needs.
 - A single duplex can be approved on 1.5 acres by the Planning Commission, raising questions why Commission review is required if all standards are met.
- Proposed process changes:
 - Allow staff-level approval for by-right duplexes meeting all requirements; Commission review reserved for variances/special exceptions.
 - Mixed views on permitting duplexes within subdivisions; some consider it a step too far.
 - Safety note: Allowing inspected duplexes may reduce unsafe, illegal basement conversions.
- Technical inconsistencies identified:
 - Conflicting multifamily width (e.g., “no less than 60 feet”) vs. buffers/setbacks (75-foot buffers; 100-foot setbacks).
 - Chart/text conflicts (e.g., “two acres per unit” references; “250, 250, 250” figures) that could effectively prohibit smaller multifamily types.
 - Agreement that charts and text need comprehensive reconciliation into a single authoritative standard.

General Development, Traffic, and Large Project Thresholds

- Suggestion to add explicit traffic-infrastructure considerations (e.g., heavy truck trip generation from warehouses) to General Development criteria.

- Discussion on whether very large projects (e.g., large warehouses) should trigger different procedures or thresholds; no conclusion reached.

Governance and Code Language Updates

- Section 26-605 references to “the commissioner” are outdated; language should specify “Board of Commissioners” or “designated representative.”
- Clarify inspection/investigation authority on public/private property and associated safety protocols.

Affordable Housing Benchmarks

- Affordability discussion:
 - Proposed price points: 195,000-250,000 for single-family detached; median household income ~\$77,400 implies 232,000 affordable mortgage (3x income).
 - Market comps: mobile homes ~\$150,000 on an acre; doublewides near \$250,000.
 - Example developer proposal: 60 homes on 10 acres raised density feasibility concerns within city limits; potential county siting with grants/tax credits discussed.
- Need for a framework tying price points to incomes, density, infrastructure, and septic feasibility, especially outside sewer areas.

External Benchmarking

- Habersham County spent 24 months revising land use to protect rural character (published Q1 this year). The group is open to a stakeholder call to learn from their process rather than reclassifying every lot locally.

Meeting adjourned at 6:32 pm

Next Arrangements

- ☐ Research and propose updated, positively framed definitions for Industrial and its subcategories; consider focusing industrial uses within designated parks.
- ☐ Review and refine the land use chart; decide whether to combine Agricultural Preservation and Restrictive Development; scope a Gateway Corridor Overlay with tailored uses.
- ☐ Analyze buffer requirements (e.g., 3,000-foot for extensive manufacturing) by context, especially within industrial parks.
- ☐ Investigate non-enforcement issues of existing industrial/residential buffer and performance standards; recommend enforcement mechanisms.
- ☐ Clean up multifamily/duplex standards: reconcile width, buffers, setbacks, acreage/density; compile and resolve all chart/text conflicts (including “two acres per unit” references).
- ☐ Consider staff-level approval for by-right duplexes; clarify whether duplexes are allowed within subdivisions.

- ☐ Define thresholds/procedures for large-scale projects (e.g., warehouses) to address traffic and infrastructure impacts.
- ☐ Add explicit traffic impact language to General Development criteria.
- ☐ Update Section 26-605 to replace “commissioner” with “Board of Commissioners or designated representative” and clarify inspection authority.
- ☐ Develop an affordability framework linking price points, income data, septic/sewer capacity, and density standards.
- ☐ Coordinate proposed code changes with the comprehensive plan team (Adam) and establish an integration timeline.
- ☐ Contact Habersham County stakeholders to schedule a call on their land use revision process.
- ☐ Define procedural thresholds for large developments with clear traffic/infrastructure review.