

**AMENDMENT(S):**

**AMD-2021-001**



To: Members of the Planning Commission  
From: Josh Campbell, Planning Director  
Date: July 22, 2021  
RE: Planned Park Neighborhood Special Use

### **AMD-2021-001 Planned Park Neighborhood**

Staff has prepared a proposed amendment to the Zoning Ordinance. The proposed amendment would add a special use called a “Planned Park Neighborhood” in R-140, R-100, R-75, IRD\*, RM-6, and RM-8 residential zoning districts. The special use would seek to incentivize the preservation of sensitive environmental areas such as wetlands, streams, and floodplains, promote the development of a robust neighborhood amenity package, and provide flexibility of design, while remaining density neutral.

To use the Planned Park Neighborhood district, an applicant would be required to go through the zoning process and get approval for the special use just like other uses that are allowed with a special use permit within those districts. The proposed ordinance would require plans to be developed with the involvement of certified design professionals. Design expectations are included within the ordinance. No minimum lots sizes or district development standards are included with this special use. The intent would be that these standards would be set during the special use permit process. Application requirements would include the provision of plans that show the existing conditions including environmentally significant areas and a proposed concept plan that would show the proposed layout of homes, roads, opens spaces/recreations area/conservations areas, and stormwater facilities.

Applications would be required to explain how they are consistent with the City’s Comprehensive Plan. The ordinance requires that projects be approved to a concept plan. Architectural standards would be established during the zoning process. Evaluation and approval of the concept plan is up to the discretion of the City Council. Once a project is approved by Council, development would be required to proceed based on the approved concept plan. Staff would be authorized to approve minor deviations to the concept plan with more significant changes requiring Council approval.

\*It is important to note that the IRD district is only eligible for use within the Downtown Development Authority boundaries and as such the Planned Park neighborhood would only be allowed for use in the IRD within the Downtown Development Authority boundary.



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**ADD “PLANNED PARK NEIGHBORHOOD” AS A SPECIAL USE TO SECTION 500 R-140, SECTION 501 R-100, SECTION 502A. R-75, SECTION 503. RM-6, SECTION 504. RM-8, AND SECTION 512.2 IRD.**

**ADD NEW SECTION 515. Planned Park Neighborhood.**

**A. PURPOSE**

The purpose of the Planned Park Neighborhood special use permit is to allow for flexible neighborhood design, while remaining density neutral, encouraging preservation of environmentally sensitive areas (such as wetlands, floodplains, and streams), and promoting the provision of a robust neighborhood amenity package.

**B. MINIMUM DESIGN REQUIREMENTS**

1. Consistency with Comprehensive Plan. All projects must be reasonably consistent with the goals and intents of the City of Suwanee Comprehensive Plan.
2. Variations to Development Standards. The special use is intended to provide flexibility as it relates to district development standards.
3. Design Expectations.
  - a. Projects should incorporate traditional neighborhood design principles. Interconnectivity, pedestrianism, good design, architectural detail, and appropriate scale are essential elements.
  - b. Project should include traffic calming measures, such as designated on-street parking, street trees, roundabouts, raised pedestrian crossings, etc.
  - c. Projects should have a professionally prepared Master Plan for the entire project. It must be designed and incorporated together to provide a harmonious transition from one housing type to another and must provide convenient access from homes to park spaces. Common architecture, themes, significant natural features, connectivity and other items must be included.
  - d. Projects should have a community green, park, or other focal point must be included to create character and identity. Homes in the project should have easy access to neighborhood amenities.
  - e. Projects should include a variety of single-family housing types (distinguished by lot size, unit size, layout, etc.)
  - f. Projects should minimize disturbance of and impacts to environmentally sensitive areas including wetlands, streams and floodplain. Impacts to these areas are sometimes unavoidable. Impacts should be noted at the time of SUP application.
  - g. Projects should be sensitive to existing adjacent neighborhoods.
  - h. Projects should have adequate and appropriate access.
  - i. Project should incorporate other standards, as outlined in the City of Suwanee Comprehensive Plan Design Guidelines, which are appropriate for the site’s specific location and character area should be included.

- j. When determining the appropriateness and viability of a proposed project, the City shall consult the City of Suwanee Comprehensive Plan. Projects that prove that the use of innovative or creative design will benefit the City may be considered for said Special Use Permit.

#### C. USES PERMITTED

Uses specifically allowed by the underlying district are allowed within the Planned Park Neighborhood. Any allowed uses with conditions are still subject to those conditions. Special uses listed in the underlying district still require the approval of City Council through the special use permit process.

#### D. NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

1. No minimum lot sizes or shapes shall be required, except as may be established as part of the site development plan review.
2. No minimum distance between on-site structures shall be required, except as may be established as part of the site development plan review. However, Fire Code requirements shall be met.
3. No minimum yard setbacks shall be required, except as may be established as part of the site development plan review.

#### E. LANDSCAPING

Landscaping shall meet or exceed all of the minimum requirements of the City's Zoning Ordinance. The preservation of mature trees and tree stands is strongly encouraged. Street trees included as part of the project shall count towards tree density units for the project.

#### F. UNDERGROUND UTILITIES

All on-site utilities shall be installed underground. Large transformers shall be placed on the ground within pad mounts, enclosures or vaults. The developer shall provide adequate landscaping to screen all above-ground facilities.

#### H. ARCHITECTURAL STANDARDS

Architecture of all buildings or structures are subject to compliance with architectural standards specifically approved for the planned residential park neighborhood.

#### I. COMMON/OPEN SPACE REQUIREMENTS

1. All designated common open spaces shall be preserved by one or more of the following methods:
  - a. Public dedication, subject to acceptance by the City Council by formal vote.
  - b. Conveyance to a property owners' association or nonprofit land conservation organization.
  - c. Retention of ownership, control and maintenance by the developer with a permanent conservation easement donated to a nonprofit land conservation organization.

2. All privately-owned common open space shall conform to its intended use and remain as expressed in the approved site development plan through the inclusion in all deeds of appropriate covenants. Said deed restrictions shall run with the land.

#### J. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

Protections of wetlands, creeks, and streams should be provided where practical.

#### K. APPLICATION PROCEDURES

1. The following procedures, applications and exhibits shall be required when applying for a Special Use Permit for a Planned Park Neighborhood:
  - a. Pre-application conference: Before submitting an application for Special Use Permit for Planned Park Neighborhood, the applicant shall confer with the Director to determine the feasibility for the proposed plan and its relationship to the City's Comprehensive Plan.
  - b. Professional service requirement: Plans or exhibits developed as part of an application for a Planned Park Neighborhood shall certify that the services of two (2) or more of the following professionals were utilized in the design or planning process:
    - i. A planner who is a member of the American Institute of Certified Planners;
    - ii. A landscape architect registered by the State of Georgia;
    - iii. An architect licensed by the State of Georgia; and/or
    - iv. A professional civil engineer registered by the State of Georgia.
2. Review information required site development plan: All applications for a Special Use Permit for a Planned Park Neighborhood shall include the following information on the site development plan and supporting documents:
  - a. A recent boundary survey with north arrow and scale.
  - b. A full legal description of the property with attached copies of any instruments referred to such as deeds, plats, covenants or restrictions.
  - c. The names and addresses of the owners of the property to be rezoned and evidence of unified control of the property.
  - d. The total area of the site in acres and square feet.
  - e. A map indicating the location, arrangement and dimensions of the following existing features within and immediately adjacent to the property: Vegetation including tree preserve areas, state waters, wetlands, 100-year floodplain, cemeteries, archeological sites, land uses, utilities, drainage ways, easements, public street rights-of-way, railways, and property lines.
  - f. A statement as to how the proposed project conforms to the City's adopted Comprehensive Plan Design Guidelines.
  - g. Plans showing the location of different housing types, areas of preservation, areas adjacent to existing residential neighborhoods, recreational areas, open spaces, trails arrangement and dimensions; building setbacks from perimeter boundaries and from public rights-of-way; proposed buffers with dimensions and status/extend of



