

Why is a Land Development Code (LDC) important? In the State of South Carolina, as in many states, municipalities and counties have adopted ordinances and regulations regarding the way people may use their property. These ordinances are primarily designed to protect citizens from activities that might be unsafe or disruptive, but they are also designed to improve efficiencies and reduce unnecessary costs to the community.

What makes up an LDC? In South Carolina, all Land Development Codes must have two parts – written rules and a zoning map. But before those rules and map are adopted, the community must create and adopt a community master plan or comprehensive plan as set forth in the South Carolina State Code.

When was Richland County’s LDC most recently updated? The County Land Development Code was last updated in 2005, so it is now 18 years old. In 2015, Richland County Council adopted an update to the County’s Comprehensive Plan titled “Richland County: Putting the Pieces in Place.” One of the key elements of the Plan was a recommendation to update the County Land Development Code within five years.

In 2016, County Council directed the County Administrator and his staff to prepare an update to the 2005 Richland County Land Development Code as recommended in the Comprehensive Plan. This process was substantially completed when the coronavirus pandemic occurred in early 2020 but was put on hold so resources could be dedicated to that effort.

In November 2021, County Council approved the written portion of the new Land Development Code, but not the Zoning Map.

Why was the zoning map not adopted at the same time? The Planning Commission-recommended zoning map did not exactly follow the translation table in the 2021 LDC text, and instead included “proactive” property rezonings recommended by the County Comprehensive Plan. The Council decided it wanted a zoning map that followed the translation table exactly and did not include proactive zoning changes, so it approved only the text and sent the map back to the Planning Commission.

What was the next step in the process? In March 2022, the County Council directed the County Administrator and his staff to “restart” the zoning map design process. In addition, it recommended the Planning Commission consider and recommend amendments to the previously adopted 2021 Land Development Code text.

In November 2022, the Planning Commission completed its portion of the restart process and recommended a new Zoning Map and several Land Development Code text amendments to Council.

When was community input received? From February 2023 through April 2023, the Community Planning and Development staff held public information meetings throughout Richland County informing the community of the proposed zoning map amendments.

What happened after the education meetings? On April 4, 2023, County Council received a presentation from the Planning Commission on the proposed Zoning Map and LDC text amendments. At the same meeting, Council Chair Overture Walker assigned the proposed zoning map and LDC text amendments to the D&S Committee for consideration and a recommendation to the full Council.

What did the D&S Committee do?

The D&S Committee reviewed the proposed Zoning Map and the proposed LDC text amendments, and based upon the procedural advice of the County attorney, forwarded the proposed Zoning Map to the Council for consideration and held back the proposed text amendments.

Why didn't the D&S Committee also recommend the proposed text amendments?

County Council has not yet completed the LDC Ordinance it started in November 2021. To complete that process and begin a new text amendment ordinance, Council must first adopt a Zoning Map as required by South Carolina State Code. Afterward, the D&S Committee may vote to send new LDC text amendments to Council for consideration.

If the Council approves the Zoning Map, when will it go into effect?

County Council has to include an effective date with every ordinance it adopts. In this instance, Council may choose an effective date several months after the adoption date so it can consider the Planning Commission's proposed text amendments before the 2021 LDC text and Zoning Map become effective.

Where can I view the zoning map and text amendments? The proposed zoning map and the list of text amendments recommended by the Planning Commission are available for viewing on the County website.

What is the Planning Commission's recommendation? Below is a bulleted summary of the Planning Commission's recommendations to County Council.

Zoning Map

- The PC-recommended zoning map translates zoning classifications from the 2005 LDC to their equivalent in the 2021 LDC, based on the "translation table" in the adopted 2021 LDC. The Planning Commission directed staff to exactly follow the translation table with one exception and one note. First, the Commission recommended that Council add the M-1 Zone back into the 2021 LDC text instead of following the translation table. Second, the translation table had more than one possible translation for rural zones, so the Commission had to create a metric for determining whether rural properties should be classified as AG, HM or RT. The rule was applied to Rural and Rural Residential zones and is based on size/acreage:
 - 35 acres or larger = AG;
 - 3-35 acres = HM;
 - 0-3 acres = RT

Text

- In the 2021 LDC as adopted, the RT Zone currently has a density equal to 1.3 acres per lot; the Planning Commission recommended a density equal to 1.0 acre. The HM Zone currently has a density equal to 3 acres per lot; the Planning Commission recommended a density equal to 1.5 acres per lot. The AG Zone currently requires a density equal to 6.7 acres per lot, and the Commission recommended a density equal to 3 acres per lot.
- The Planning Commission recommended removing two-, three- and four-dwelling unit structures and manufactured homes from the R-2, R-3 and R-4 zones. The Commission also recommended to remove townhouses from the R-4 zone.

- Both the existing 2005 LDC and the 2021 LDC as adopted allow a property owner to subdivide property into residential building lots that are smaller than was possible prior to 2005 as long as certain “clustering” criteria are met. The adopted 2021 LDC restricted this to a certain extent, and the Planning Commission’s current recommendation further reduces the ability to reduce minimum lot sizes and/or increase density without rezoning the property.

When will the LDC and zoning map be adopted? When are public hearings scheduled?

Below is a proposed schedule for considering the LDC and Zoning Map, and an estimate of when the public hearings for each will occur. This schedule may change depending on actions of the Committee and Council.

May 23, 2023	D&S Committee discusses proposed Zoning Map and Land Development Code text amendments and requests the preparation of Zoning Map revisions and/or text revisions for consideration at a future Committee meeting
June 27, 2023	D&S Committee forwards the Zoning Map proposed by the Planning Commission to full Council
July 11, 2023	County Council discusses review procedures, requests a work session
July 25, 2023	Council work session to discuss Zoning Map
Sept. 12, 2023	First reading Zoning Map; public hearing Zoning Map
Sept. 19, 2023	Second reading Zoning Map
Oct. 3, 2023	Third reading Zoning Map; six-month moratorium on new development applications; first reading LDC Text Amendment
Oct. 17, 2023	Work session Text Amendments; public hearing Text Amendments; second reading Text Amendments
Nov. 7, 2023	Public hearing Text Amendments; second reading Text Amendments
Nov. 14, 2023	Third reading Text Amendments
April 3, 2024	Moratorium expires