

**STAFF REPORT ON PETITION FOR ZONING ORDINANCE TEXT AMENDMENT**

**ZOTA 2019-4: AMENDMENT TO ARTICLE 8: B-2 ZONES FOR TOWN BRANCH COMMONS**

INITIATED BY: Urban County Planning Commission

PROPOSED TEXT: See attached. Underlined text indicates an addition, ~~stricken through~~ text indicates a deletion to the current Zoning Ordinance.

**STAFF REVIEW:**

The Urban County Council initiated a text amendment on June 6, 2019 to Article 8 of the LFUCG Zoning Ordinance to require compliance with the Town Branch Commons Masterplan and Design Standards between the Town Branch Commons Corridor and development that is adjacent to, connected to, or interacts directly with the Town Branch Common Corridor. This requirement will only apply in the Downtown Business zones (B-2, B-2A, B-2B). The following provision has been proposed for the special provisions for the B-2, B-2A, B-2B zones:

*For any development that is located adjacent to, connects to, or interacts directly with the Town Branch Commons corridor, such development of the site shall comply with the Town Branch Commons Masterplan & Design standards; taking precedent over the Downtown Streetscape Master Plan where conflicts occur.*

By incorporating compliance with the Town Branch Commons Masterplan and Design Standards for those properties adjacent to, connected to, or interacts directly with the Town Branch Common Corridor, subsequent development will need to consider the impacts that they may have to a vital portion of the community's multi-modal infrastructure, but also the surrounding context of their development. It is necessary to apply such standards within the context of the downtown area, as these developments will be a major beneficiary of the improvements made by the city, but can also lead to the most detrimental impacts to the trail, if not regulated. Furthermore, by maintaining consistent design standards along the Corridor, the Urban County Government will be able to create a more enticing space for potential residents, visitors, and businesses into the downtown commercial area.

The incorporation of the Masterplan and Design Standards for the Corridor is supported by the 2018 Comprehensive Plan as it supports the Complete Streets concept, prioritizing a pedestrian-first design that also accommodates the needs of bicycle, transit and other vehicles (Theme D, Goal #1.a). Additionally, through the implementation of the Masterplan and the Design Standards, the Urban County will also be providing quality of life opportunities that attract young, and culturally diverse professionals, and a work force of all ages and talents to Lexington (Theme C, Goal #1.d).

The Town Branch Commons Masterplan and Design Standards was also adopted as Appendix B of the 2018 Comprehensive Plan. The adoption of the documents is outline in Placemaking Policy #1, which stresses the importance of the implementation of the Masterplan for access management, design guidelines, economic development, green infrastructure, and continued education. Beyond the inclusion of the Appendix B, the Comprehensive Plan references the importance of the Town Branch Commons in several different sections. Growth Policy #2 indicates that it is important to capitalize on the current momentum of downtown development and how projects like the Commons can be catalytic in spurring additional smaller developments downtown. Livability Policy #8 stresses the importance of regional greenspace to promote quality of life aspects, as an attraction to new businesses and residents. Finally, Sustainability Policy #4 stresses the need for connected greenspace and community centers.

In addition to the language recommended by the Urban County Council, staff is recommending the deletion of two sections of the LFUCG Zoning Ordinance: 8-17(o)(1) and 8-19(o)(1). Each of these sections references the Urban Renewal Project Area and the Urban Renewal Plan. Both of the Area and the Plan are outdated and are no longer utilized by the Planning Commission in review of development in the B-2 and the B-2B zones.

**The Staff Recommends: Approval of the Staff Alternative Text**, for the following reason:

1. The proposed text amendment to Article 8 of the LFUCG Zoning Ordinance to require compliance with the Town Branch Commons Masterplan and Design Standards between the Town Branch Commons Corridor and development that is adjacent to, connected to, or interacts directly with the Town Branch Common Corridor supports the Complete Streets concept, prioritizing a pedestrian-first design that also accommodates the needs of bicycle, transit and other vehicles (Theme D, Goal #1.a). Additionally, through the implementation of the Masterplan and the Design Standards, the Urban County will also be providing quality of life opportunities that

attract young, and culturally diverse professionals, and a work force of all ages and talents to Lexington (Theme C, Goal #1.d).

2. The proposed text amendment will implement Appendix B of the Comprehensive Plan, while also supporting the Policies of the Comprehensive Plan (Growth Policy #2, Livability Policy #8, and Sustainability Policy #4).