

## GENERAL INFORMATION - Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment Application

**1. APPLICANT INFORMATION:**

**Name:** Keeneland Association, Inc.

**2. ATTORNEY (Or Other Representative) INFORMATION:**

**Nick Nicholson  
Stoll Keenon Ogden  
300 W Vine St, STE 2100  
Lexington, KY 40507**

**3. REQUESTED TEXT CHANGE:**

The purpose of this text amendment is to update Article 8 Section 8-1(d)(1) regarding the ability for a horse race track to serve and sell retail alcoholic beverages.

**4. DESCRIBE THE JUSTIFICATION FOR MAKING THIS CHANGE (Use attachment if necessary.):**

See attached letter of justification.



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April 6, 2026

Lexington-Fayette Urban County Planning Commission  
Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government  
101 East Vine Street  
Lexington, KY 40507

Zone Ordinance Text Amendment Request  
for Article 8-1(d)(1) Agricultural-Rural (A-R) zone

Dear Members of the Planning Commission:

We represent Keeneland Association, Inc. (“Keeneland”), and, on its behalf, have filed a zoning ordinance text amendment to allow for a slight change to the allowable accessory uses for a horse race track in the Agricultural-Rural (A-R) zone. The proposed ZOTA will authorize accessory retail sales of alcoholic beverages for the conditional use of a horse race track in the Agricultural-Rural (A-R) zone.

As the Planning Commission is no doubt aware, Keeneland recently expanded its offerings so that it may better meet demand for access during the race meets that will continue to drive increased visitorship to Lexington by patrons from all over the world each spring and fall. This tourism draw has an annual impact of \$1.6 billion for Central Kentucky as further detailed below. In order to elevate the economic impact of Keeneland for Lexington and the region, Keeneland is proposing to sell its renowned Keeneland branded bourbon bottle collectables at its existing gift shop and future Visitors’ Center. These bottles have become synonymous with the Keeneland brand and the featured entities, such as the University of Kentucky’s sports legends.

Previously, Keeneland had a downtown mercantile store that received a package liquor license to allow for the commemorative sales of these Keeneland bottles. The mercantile store recently had to be closed and Keeneland is requesting the ability to transfer this license to the main track facility. In order to do so, it requires a slight tweak of the Zoning Ordinance. Specifically, Keeneland is requesting to change Section 8-1(d)(1) to read:

Horse race tracks with allotted race meets, including accessory simulcast facilities, accessory restaurants and/or the serving *and retail sales* of alcoholic beverages, and horse riding and training facilities.

Each year, Keeneland welcomes visitors to its race meet and sales from all over the world. A recent economic impact study conducted by the University of Louisville’s Departments of Equine Administration and Economics revealed that Keeneland’s racing operations, annual Thoroughbred auctions, supporting business lines and investment in new construction generates

an estimated \$1.6 billion for Fayette and surrounding counties. The study also noted that around 64% of racing patrons come from outside Kentucky, while around 67% of those attending and participating in the annual horse auctions come from outside the state. Of those attending the auctions from out of state, approximately 24% come from outside the U.S. Keeneland hosts race meets in October and April each year as well as four horse sales throughout each year. It is important to Keeneland's mission that it continues to welcome new visitors to its grounds, both during and outside these 61 days of heightened activity, and that it has a quality experience to offer them while they are on the property. Keeneland currently has thousands of visitors that tour the Keeneland grounds every year. Keeneland does not currently have a dedicated visitors center; however, it plans to work with professionals and other industry participants on phases to develop a state-of-the-art visitor experience, including interactive opportunities for visitors to learn more about the horse and our sport. Allowing for the retail sales of the Keeneland commemorative bottles will aide in this mission and continue to spread the Keeneland brand throughout the world. To be very clear, there is no intent or desire to operate any type of package liquor sales, merely adding a product to the existing gift shop and future Visitors' Center. The retail sales will be required to be accessory to the main operations of a horse race track and subject to the review of Keeneland's conditional use permit.

This text amendment is in agreement with the Comprehensive Plan as it adds to Lexington's Economic Development goals, increases tourism, and helps spread the brand of Central Kentucky's iconic horse industry while not endangering the surrounding agricultural area. As outlined above, the proposed project meets the following Goals and Objectives of the Comprehensive Plan:

**THEME C: CREATING JOBS & PROSPERITY.**

**GOAL 1: SUPPORT AND SHOWCASE LOCAL ASSETS TO FURTHER THE CREATION OF A VARIETY OF JOBS.**

**OBJECTIVES:**

- a. Strengthen efforts to develop a variety of job opportunities that support a living wage and lead to prosperity for all.
- b. Strengthen regulations and policies that propel the agricultural economy, including, but not limited to, local food production and distribution, agritourism and the equine industry that showcase Lexington-Fayette County as the Horse Capital of the World.
- d. Encourage development that promotes and enhances tourism.

**GOAL 2: ATTRACT A WIDE ARRAY OF EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES THAT ENCOURAGE AN ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT, AND ENHANCE OUR ABILITY TO RECRUIT AND RETAIN A TALENTED, CREATIVE WORKFORCE BY ESTABLISHING OPPORTUNITIES THAT EMBRACE DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION IN OUR COMMUNITY.**

**OBJECTIVES:**

- a. Prioritize the success and growth of strategically-targeted employment sectors (healthcare, education, high-tech, advanced manufacturing, agribusiness, agritourism, and the like), and enable infill and redevelopment that creates jobs where people live.

- c. Review and improve regulations and policies that attract and retain high paying jobs through close collaboration with agencies that focus on economic development.
- d. Provide entertainment and other quality of life opportunities that attract and retain young, and culturally diverse professionals, and a work force of all ages and talents to Lexington.

**THEME D: IMPROVING A DESIRABLE COMMUNITY.**

**GOAL 3: PROTECT AND ENHANCE THE NATURAL AND CULTURAL LANDSCAPES THAT GIVE LEXINGTON-FAYETTE COUNTY ITS UNIQUE IDENTITY AND IMAGE.**

**OBJECTIVES:**

- a. Protect historic resources and archaeological sites.
- b. Incentivize the renovation, restoration, development and maintenance of historic residential and commercial structures.
- c. Develop incentives to retain, restore, preserve and continue use of historic resources such as historic sites, rural settlements and urban and rural neighborhoods.

**THEME E: MAINTAINING A BALANCE BETWEEN PLANNING FOR URBAN USES AND SAFEGUARDING RURAL LAND.**

**GOAL 2: SUPPORT THE AGRICULTURAL ECONOMY, HORSE FARMS, GENERAL AGRICULTURAL FARMS, LOCAL FOOD PRODUCTION, AG-TECH, AND THE RURAL CHARACTER OF THE RURAL SERVICE AREA.**

**OBJECTIVES:**

- a. Protect and enhance the natural, cultural, historic and environmental resources of Lexington-Fayette County's Rural Service Area and Bluegrass farmland to help promote the general agricultural brand and ensure Lexington-Fayette County remains the Horse Capital of the World.

We will be at the May public hearing in order to make a complete presentation of this application and request your favorable consideration.

Sincerely,

Stoll Keenon Ogden PLLC



Nick Nicholson