

CODE OF ORDINANCES SAVANNAH, GEORGIA

DIVISION II

PART 8- PLANNING AND REGULATION OF DEVELOPMENT^[1]

GEORGIA, CHATHAM COUNTY

I certify that the foregoing is a true and exact copy of the original which appears on record in this office.

In witness whereof, I have this day 22nd of March, 2024 affixed the city seal and my signature.


Mark Massey, Clerk of Council, City of Savannah

Total Number of Pages: 11 (eleven)

CHAPTER 3. - ZONING (EFFECTIVE SEPTEMBER 1, 2019)

ARTICLE 6.0 SPECIAL PURPOSE DISTRICTS

Sec. 6.1 Planned Development District

6.1.1 District Description

- a. A Planned Development (PD) district allows projects that would not otherwise be permitted under this Ordinance because of the strict application of zoning district development standards or general site standards. Generally, the PD district is intended for sites where a developer proposes and the Mayor and Aldermen desire to achieve a certain mix of uses, appearance, land use compatibility and/or apply special sensitivity to the character of the site surrounding area.

In return for greater flexibility in site design requirements, planned developments are expected to deliver innovative and exceptional quality community designs that preserve environmental, historic and cultural resources; incorporate creative design in the layout of buildings, open space and vehicular and pedestrian circulation; assure compatibility with surrounding land uses and area character; and, provide greater efficiency in the layout and provision of roads, utilities and other infrastructure that would not otherwise be possible within a base zoning district.

- b. The PD district encourages innovative land planning and design concepts by:
 - i. Reducing or eliminating the inflexibility that sometimes results from strict application of zoning and development standards that were designed primarily for individual lots or developments;
 - ii. Encouraging the assembly of properties that might otherwise be developed in unrelated increments;
 - iii. Ensuring orderly and thorough planning and review procedures that will result in a cohesive development;
 - iv. Allowing greater freedom in providing a mix of land uses in the same development, including a mix of housing types, lot sizes, densities and nonresidential uses to encourage variety and to avoid monotony;
 - v. Allowing development to take advantage of special site characteristics, locations and land uses to protect environmentally sensitive areas and to promote better design; and
 - vi. Encouraging allocation and improvement of common open and recreational space in residential areas as well as providing for the maintenance of the open and recreational space.
- c. Planned Developments shall be classified as either a Large-Scale PD (L-PD) or a Small-Scale PD (S-PD), based on size, as defined and outlined in Sec. 6.1.6.
- d. Planned Developments shall not be permitted within the boundaries of the Savannah Downtown Historic Overlay District.
- e. Because each planned development is unique, it is therefore governed by its approved General Master Plan.
- f. The PD district shall not be used as a means of circumventing adopted land development regulations for routine developments.

6.1.2 Applicability

At the election of the applicant, the Planned Development district may be requested to allow flexibility with regard to principal uses and development standards. The provisions of this Section shall apply to amendments to the official Zoning Map of the City of Savannah for a Planned Development district.

6.1.3 Initiation of a Rezoning

An application for a Planned Development rezoning may be initiated by any person, or agent for such person, who seeks to rezone his or her own property.

6.1.4 Neighborhood Meeting Requirement

The applicant shall hold a neighborhood meeting as provided in Sec. 3.2.7.

6.1.5 Required Public Notice

Public notice shall be provided in accordance with the procedures in Sec. 3.2, Public Notice.

6.1.6 Types of Planned Developments

Planned Developments shall be classified as either Small-Scale (“S-PD”) or Large-Scale (“L-PD”) Planned Developments, based on project size.

a. **Small-Scale PDs**

- i. Small-Scale PDs shall be limited to projects containing zero (0) to two (2) acres.
- ii. Small-Scale PDs shall be permitted in locally designated historic overlay districts and other areas of the city.

b. **Large-Scale PDs**

Projects containing greater than two (2) acres of land shall be classified as Large-Scale PDs. These minimum sizes shall not apply to Planned Developments existing as of the Effective Date of this Ordinance.

c. **Exceptions**

Small-Scale and Large-Scale PDs shall not be permitted in the Savannah Downtown Historic District.

(Ord. of 10-10-2019(37), § 1)

Effective on: 10/10/2019

6.1.7 General Master Plan and Final Master Plan

Planned Developments shall require the submittal and approval of General Master Plans and Final Master Plans. Concurrent General Plan and Final Master Plan approval shall be permitted for Small-Scale PDs as outlined in Sec. 6.1.11.

- a. General Master Plans shall be defined as plans that convey the overall concept for the entire development and guide and coordinate any phased development. General Master Plans shall include drawings and documentation illustrating the general layout of proposed uses, identify development conditions, and document impacts that the proposed development will have on public facilities and services. Submittal requirements for General Master Plans are provided in Sec. 6.1.17.
- b. Final Master Plans shall be defined as plans that provide additional details regarding dimensions, building and structure locations, roads, utilities, parks, open spaces and other infrastructures, enhancements to public services, and principal site development features. Submittal requirements for Final Master Plans are provided in Sec. 6.1.18.

6.1.8 Permitted Uses

- a. A planned development may contain any or all of the uses specified in the approved PD General Master Plan. A wide range of uses is possible in a PD district, and the specific uses allowed may be different in each PD district, therefore the use table in Sec. 5.4, Principal Use Table does not include the PD district. All uses that are identified in an approved General Master Plan shall be permitted uses within the planned development. Any uses not

identified in the General Master Plan shall not be permitted. The Mayor and Aldermen have the discretion to require that certain uses be classified as limited uses or special uses.

***Commentary:** If all uses within a specific base zoning district are desired, the approved General Master Plan must reference the zoning district rather than listing all the uses within that zoning district. If a use is proposed to change in type (i.e., permitted, limited or special) from its listed type in the base district, the use should be identified by its “new” type in the PD district. Similarly, any use conditions that are proposed to change should also be identified in the approved General Master Plan.*

- b. Mixed use developments are strongly encouraged in Planned Developments including the mixing of principal residential uses with principal nonresidential uses. Mixed use development may occur by having two (2) or more different principal uses located in the same building or by having two (2) or more different principal uses located in different buildings sited on the same lot or parcel.
- c. A single use residential development is not permitted unless there are at least three (3) housing types as identified in Sec. 5.4, Principal Use Table.

6.1.9 Accessory Structures and Uses

Accessory structures and uses shall be permitted only when clearly incidental and subordinate to a principal use and shall meet the standards located in Sec. 8.7, Accessory Structures and Uses and/or as identified in the approved General Master Plan.

6.1.10 Large-Scale Planned Development (L-PD) Procedures

The Large-Scale PD approval process shall require that the applicant participate in a pre-application conference with the Planning Director and follow these procedures:

a. **General Master Plan - Consideration by Planning Commission**

The petitioner shall submit to the Planning Commission a completed Large-Scale Planned Development application and a General Master Plan, subject to the submittal requirements of Sec. 6.1.17. General Master Plans for Large-Scale Planned Development shall be considered by the Planning Commission at a public hearing prior to a public hearing by the Mayor and Aldermen.

b. **Standards and Criteria**

The Planning Commission shall review and make a recommendation on the proposed PD rezoning and General Master Plan based upon the required review criteria in Sec. 6.1.12, Review Standards for Planned Development Applications.

c. **Planning Commission Recommendation**

The Planning Commission shall prepare a recommendation on the proposed PD rezoning and General Master Plan and forward such recommendation to the Mayor and Aldermen. Based on the findings required by Sec. 6.1.12, a recommendation shall indicate if the proposed Planned Development rezoning should be:

- i. Approved;
- ii. Approved with conditions, where conditions may be attached to the proposed Planned Development as established in Sec. 6.1.13, Conditions for Approval;
- iii. Continued to the next hearing or to a date certain; or
- iv. Denied.

d. **Action by the Mayor and Aldermen**

Within seven (7) days of the Planning Commission’s recommendation, the Planning Director shall forward the recommendation of the Planning Commission to the Mayor and Aldermen for final action.

i. Public Hearing

The Mayor and Aldermen shall hold a minimum of one (1) public hearing to consider the proposed Planned Development rezoning after receiving a recommendation from the Planning Commission. Within seven (7) days of receiving the Planning Commission recommendation, the Mayor and Aldermen shall notify the applicant of the scheduled date for the public hearing.

ii. Standards and Criteria

The Mayor and Aldermen shall evaluate the proposed PD rezoning and General Master Plan using the standards in Sec. 6.1.12, Review Criteria for Planned Development Applications.

iii. Action by the Mayor and Aldermen

Following the public hearing and based on the findings required by Sec. 6.1.12, the Mayor and Aldermen may take one of the following actions on the zoning and General Master Plan:

1. Approve;
2. Approve with conditions, where conditions may be attached to the Planned Development as established in Sec. 6.1.13, Conditions for Approval;
3. Continue to the next hearing or to a date certain;
4. Remand to the Planning Commission; or
5. Deny.

e. Final Master Plan – Consideration by Planning Commission

Following approval of the General Master Plan and rezoning to a PD district by the Mayor and Aldermen, the applicant shall submit a Final Master Plan to the Planning Commission, pursuant to the submittal requirements of Sec. 6.1.18. A Final Master Plan shall be submitted for each phase, if applicable. The Planning Commission shall review the Final Master Plan for consistency with the General Master Plan. The Planning Commission shall take one of the following actions on the Final Master Plan:

- i. Approve;
- ii. Approve with conditions, where conditions do not alter the intent of the General Master Plan approved by the Mayor and Aldermen;
- iii. Continue to the next hearing or to a date certain; or
- iv. Deny if the Final Master Plan is not consistent with the approved General Master Plan.

(Ord. of 10-10-2019(37), § 1)

Effective on: 10/10/2019

6.1.11 Small-Scale Planned Development (S-PD) Procedures

The Small-Scale PD approval process shall require that the applicant participate in a pre-application conference with the Planning Director and follow these procedures:

a. Concurrent General/Final Master Plan – Consideration by Planning Commission

The applicant shall submit a completed Small-Scale Planned Development application. If desired by the applicant, the Planning Commission shall be authorized to review and make a concurrent recommendation on zoning and a combined General/Final Master Plan for Small-Scale Planned Developments. Combined General/Final Master Plans shall meet the submittal requirements for Final Master Plans contained in Sec. 6.1.18. If the applicant does not desire concurrent review, the applicant shall proceed with separate General and Final Master Plan review and approval subject to the procedure provided in Sec. 6.1.10. All PD rezoning and combined General/Final Master Plans for Small-Scale Planned Development shall be considered by the Planning Commission at a public hearing, prior to a public hearing by the Mayor and Aldermen.

b. Standards and Criteria

The Planning Commission shall review and make a recommendation on the proposed PD rezoning and General/Final Master Plan based upon the required review criteria in Sec. 6.1.12, Review Standards for Planned Development Applications.

c. Planning Commission Recommendation

The Planning Commission shall prepare a recommendation on the proposed PD rezoning and General/Final Master Plan and forward such recommendation to the Mayor and Aldermen. Based on the findings required by Sec. 6.1.12, a recommendation shall indicate if the Planned Development rezoning should be:

- i. Approved;
- ii. Approved with conditions, where conditions may be attached to the proposed Planned Development as established in Sec. 6.1.13, Conditions for Approval;
- iii. Continued to the next hearing or to a date certain; or
- iv. Denied.

d. Action by the Mayor and Aldermen

Following the public hearing and based on the findings required by Sec. 6.1.12, the Mayor and Aldermen may take one of the following actions on the General/Final Master Plan:

- i. Approve;
- ii. Approve with conditions, where conditions may be attached to the Planned Development as established in Sec. 6.1.13, Conditions for Approval;
- iii. Continue to the next hearing or to a date certain;
- iv. Remand to the Planning Commission; or
- v. Deny.

(Ord. of 10-10-2019(37), § 1)

Effective on: 10/10/2019

6.1.12 Review Standards for Planned Development Applications

When reviewing any application for rezoning to a Planned Development district, all of the criteria listed below shall be considered.

a. Rezoning Standards Applicable

All the standards from Sec. 3.5.8, Review Standards for Rezoning Applications, shall be considered.

b. Compatibility

The rezoning proposal will be constructed, arranged and operated so as to be compatible with the immediate vicinity and not to interfere with the development and use of adjacent property in accordance with the applicable district regulations.

c. Resource Protection

The rezoning proposal will not result in the destruction, loss, or damage of any resource determined by the Mayor and Aldermen to be of significant natural, scenic or historic importance. Such historic resource shall be listed or eligible to be listed on the local or National Register of Historic Places.

d. Design Review

The rezoning proposal will be compatible or complimentary with the adjacent properties. The architectural style, materials, other treatments, etc., to be utilized within a Planned Development shall be considered by the Planning Commission and Mayor and Aldermen as part of the overall review process.

Planned Developments within local historic districts shall be subject to the design standards and Certificate of Appropriateness process contained in Article 7.0.

(Ord. of 10-10-2019(37), § 1)

Effective on: 10/10/2019

6.1.13 Conditions for Approval

The Mayor and Aldermen may include conditions or limitations as part of the approval. When a rezoning is approved with conditions, those conditions will be enforceable and must be included in any subsequent development applications for the subject property.

6.1.14 Limitations on Rezoning Applications

If the Mayor and Aldermen denies an application for the rezoning of property, the applicant shall not resubmit an application to rezone any part or all of the same property for a period of six (6) months from the date of the decision by the Mayor and Aldermen.

6.1.15 Development Standards

a. General Standards

Development in a planned development shall be subject to all applicable overlay district standards in Article 7.0 (Overlay Districts), all applicable use standards set forth in Article 8.0 (Use Standards), all applicable general standards set forth in Article 9.0 (General Site Standards) and all applicable general standards set forth in Article 10.0 (Natural Resource Standards) unless otherwise waived or modified by the Mayor and Aldermen as part of General Master Plan approval. The General Master Plan must list any adjustment(s) being requested in conjunction with any proposed use or development standard identified in the above Articles. Certain standards, as specified in Sec. 6.1.16, cannot be waived or modified through an approved General Master Plan.

In case of any conflict between a specific regulation set forth in this Section and any regulation set forth in Articles 5.0, 7.0, 8.0, 9.0 and 10.0, the regulation in this Section shall apply unless otherwise expressly allowed.

b. Underground Utilities

All utilities, excluding necessary boxes and similar installations, shall be located underground unless otherwise approved by the City Manager or his or her designee.

c. Transportation and Circulation System

The Final Master Plan shall demonstrate to the City Manager or his or her designee a safe and adequate on-site transportation network that addresses vehicular, transit, bicycle and pedestrian circulation. The on-site transportation system shall be integrated with the off-site transportation circulation system.

d. Off-street Parking and Loading

The Final Master Plan shall comply with the off-street parking and loading requirements of [Sec. 9.3, Off-Street Parking and Loading](#), except that modifications from these standards may be permitted if an alternative parking and loading plan in accordance with [Sec. 9.3.8](#) for the development is submitted as part of the Final Master Plan. The alternative parking and loading plan shall demonstrate that it is consistent with the intent and purposes of the off-street parking and loading standards of this Ordinance and that it is suitable for the proposed development.

e. Landscaping, Screening and Buffers

Landscaping, screening and buffers shall comply with the standards of [Sec. 9.5, Screening and Buffers](#), except that modifications of these standards may be permitted where it is demonstrated that the proposed landscaping sufficiently buffers uses from each other, ensures compatibility with land uses on surrounding properties, creates attractive streetscapes and parking areas, and is consistent with the urban design objectives and/or character of the area.

f. Open and Recreational Space

Reserved

***Commentary:** This standard is not in lieu of the required 20% greenspace requirement of the [City Code Part 4, Chapter 10, Landscape and Tree Protection Ordinance](#). The provisions of this section are in addition to the [Landscape and Tree Protection Ordinance](#).*

g. Accessibility to Nonresidential Uses

Planned developments containing both residential and nonresidential uses shall be designed, located and oriented on the site so that nonresidential uses are directly accessible to residents of the development. For the purposes of this Section, “directly accessible” shall mean pedestrian and vehicular access by way of improved sidewalks or paths and streets and/or internal driveways that do not involve leaving the planned development.

h. Waivers

The development standards may be waived or varied within a PD zoning district by the Mayor and Aldermen as provided in [Sec. 6.1.16](#).

6.1.16 Waiver or Modification of Certain Development Standards

Notwithstanding [Sec. 6.1.15](#) above, in no case shall the Mayor and Aldermen waive or modify the following for a proposed PD zoning district:

- a. Any standard not contained within the Planned Development text unless approved by the Governing Body or administrator responsible for such standard;
- b. Any standard that requires approval of the Historic Preservation Commission or the Downtown Savannah Historic Board of Review;
- c. Any variation from the minimum state-mandated stream buffers without requisite approval from the appropriate state agency;
- d. Any protected river corridor buffer standard;
- e. Any groundwater recharge area standard; and
- f. Any wetland or marsh buffer standard.

6.1.17 Items to be Provided on General Master Plan

The City Manager of his or her designee may eliminate those requirements that do not apply, but only those requirements that are under the purview of the respective department or agency for each team member. The following shall also be included on the General Master Plan:

- a. A proposed narrative discussing the market concept of the project, explaining the manner in which the criteria of Sec. 6.1.12 have been satisfied, and providing evidence of compatibility with the Future Land Use Plan and adjacent land uses;
- b. All proposed land use classifications;
- c. Total acreage of the overall development and for each land use classification;
- d. Total number of dwelling units and density for the overall development and for each phase;
- e. Proposed square footages of nonresidential uses, if applicable;
- f. Existing conditions, including the existing zoning districts, locations of existing buildings, streets, alleys driveways, parking areas, etc.;
- g. Proposed buffers, perimeter and internal, if applicable;
- h. Curb cut locations on primary roads, internal road system (if applicable) and connectivity to adjacent tracts (if applicable);
- i. Locations of sidewalks or trails adjacent to roadways or within buffers, including width, if applicable;
- j. Open space, including identification of passive and active recreational areas, including wetlands;
- k. Plans to protect or alter wetlands, if applicable;
- l. Maximum number of trips to be generated by the development;
- m. Any development condition(s) that may be part of a development agreement;
- n. General utility plan;
- o. Phasing plan, in accordance with Sec. 6.1.20;
- p. Delineation of any tree preservation areas to be set aside for Tree Quality Point and Landscape Quality Point credit as noted in the City Code Part 4, Chapter 10, Landscape and Tree Protection Ordinance; and
- q. General Location of new buildings and structures, streets, alleys, driveways, parking areas, etc.
- r. At the discretion of the applicant, any items that would be required in 6.1.18.

6.1.18 Items to be Provided on Final Master Plan

The City Manager or his or her designee may eliminate those requirements that do not apply, but only those requirements that are under the purview of the respective department or agency for each team member. The following shall also be included on the Final Master Plan:

- a. All items required to be submitted on General Master Plan, as listed in Sec. 6.1.17;
- b. Existing tree survey;
- c. Proposed retention/detention facilities;
- d. Demolition Plan;
- e. Grading Plan;
- f. Proposed building setback lines, easements, covenants, reservations and right-of-ways, and layout and dimensions of proposed lots;
- g. General location and type of landscaping proposed, noting existing trees and landscaping to be retained;
- h. Location of all off-street loading areas and method of screening, if applicable;
- i. Examples of building elevations depicting typical building materials, color, architectural features, etc.;

- j. Proposed exterior building-mounted or freestanding lighting, including fixture specifications and photometric plan;

6.1.19 Construction Plan Required

After approval of the Final Master Plan, construction plans are required to be reviewed and approved prior to the issuance of site development permits or building permits. Construction plans are reviewed by City staff under the coordination of the City Manager or his or her designee. The review process for Construction Plans is not covered in detail within this Ordinance.

6.1.20 Phased Development

- a. Final Master Plans shall be submitted for each separate phase of a PD, if applicable, subject to Final Master Plan review and approval as outlined in Sec. 6.1.10.e.
- b. Each phase of the development shall be so planned and related to the previous phase of the development within the PD (if any), surrounding property and availability of public facilities and services so that a failure to proceed with subsequent phases of the development will have no adverse impact on the completed phase(s) or surrounding property.
- c. The General Master Plan for the planned development shall set forth the phasing plan, if phasing is proposed, including:
 - i. The location of each development phase.
 - ii. The number of acres within each phase.
 - iii. The amount of each housing type proposed within each phase, if applicable.
 - iv. The square footage of each land use category within each phase, if applicable.
 - v. An infrastructure phasing plan.
 - vi. The anticipated date for final completion of the project.

6.1.21 Conditions in the Master Plan

In some cases, the ability to implement or strictly follow approved General Master Plan conditions can be problematic due to circumstances in the field (e.g. undisturbed buffers or streetscapes required by the General Master Plan) which may not be possible to implement due to road widenings, utility relocation, driveways and/or visibility triangles). In such cases, the Planning Director shall establish an alternative to the conditions in a way that most closely meets its original intent.

6.1.22 Amendments to an Approved Master Plan

Amendments to General Master Plans and Final Master Plans shall be reviewed as follows:

a. Amendments to General Master Plans

Amendments to General Master Plans may be classified as minor or major amendments, as determined by the Planning Director. Minor amendments to General Master Plans shall be subject to Planning Commission approval. Major amendments to General Master Plans shall be subject to Planning Commission review and Mayor and Aldermen approval as contained in Sec. 6.1.10.

- i. **Minor Amendments.** Minor amendments to General Master Plans shall include modifications which do not affect the overall character or intensity of the development, do not adversely or substantially affect the initial basis for granting approval, and do not adversely or substantially affect the overall PD in light of intent and purpose of such development.

- ii. **Major Amendments.** Modifications to General Master Plans which do not qualify as minor amendments shall be deemed major amendments.

b. **Amendments to Final Master Plans**

Amendments to Final Master Plans may be classified as minor or major amendments as determined by the Planning Director. Minor amendments to Final Master Plans shall be subject to approval by the Planning Director. Major amendments to Final Master Plans shall be subject to Planning Commission approval, as contained in Sec. 6.1.10.

- i. **Minor Amendments.** Minor amendments to Final Master Plans shall include modifications which are minor in nature, do not affect the overall character or intensity of the development, and do not differ significantly from the site plans, elevations or renderings approved with the original Final Master Plan approval.
- ii. **Major Amendments.** Modifications to Final Master Plans which do not qualify as minor amendments shall be deemed major amendments.

6.1.23 Amendments to Combined General/Final Master Plans (S-PD)

Where General and Final Master Plans for Small-Scale PDs were approved concurrently, amendments shall be processed under the provisions for amendments to General Master Plans contained in Sec. 6.1.22.a.

6.1.24 Zoning Map Designation for Planned Development

A PD zoning district shall be identified on the official zoning map by the designation “S-PD” or “L-PD”. The PD designation shall be supplemented with the name of the Planned Development, file number or appendix information.

6.1.25 Location of Planned Development Master Plans

A list of PD district master plans is contained in Appendix A-2.