

# Resources on Zoning

Below is:

- an article called “Seven Steps to Influencing Zoning Change in Your Community”; and
- the Gwinnett County website with zoning information (for the most up-to-date information, go to:  
<https://www.gwinnettcountry.com/web/gwinnett/Departments/PlanningandDevelopment/Rezoning-SUP>



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# Seven Steps to Influencing Zoning Change in Your Community

February 9, 2017, by ELCR

by Christine Hughes for ELCR

If you have received a notice of a proposed zoning change, commonly known as rezoning, or you have seen a rezoning sign posted on a property, you may be wondering what you can do to influence the outcome of the rezoning action. A rezoning action goes by many different names, including zoning map amendment, land use amendment, or rezoning petition. Here are seven simple steps you can take to influence a zoning change in your community.



**1. Get a copy of the rezoning application.** This will provide you with a lot of helpful information, including who the applicant is, how to contact them, and what they are proposing for the property. Find the submitted application online or call your planning office and request a copy. Be sure to get a copy of a site plan if one is included with the request. If a site plan is included, find out if the applicant is bound to that site plan after zoning changes are approved or if the plan is only conceptual. If the rezoning petition is for a specific land use or a specific site plan, and there are conditions or special exceptions applied to an approval that run with the land, there is an additional level of certainty that can be expected. If the request is for a general or speculative rezoning, you have to assume that anything permitted within that zoning district is a potential use of the property. Find out what you are dealing with so you can best influence the outcome.

**2. Understand the codes, plans, policies, and technical issues.** Start with the zoning ordinance, the local laws governing land use. This can usually be found online or you can find a copy in your local planning office or even. The ordinance language and format may be confusing or unclear, or at least unfamiliar. Call your planning office and ask the planner handling the rezoning request to explain the ordinance to you. Be sure to understand what land uses are permitted under the proposed zoning and what uses are permitted under the current zoning. If your community has a comprehensive plan or a small-area plan that makes recommendations for the area, be sure to understand what those recommendations are and whether the proposal is consistent with any adopted recommendations and policies. Identify any issues that may be of concern to the horse community, including stormwater runoff, traffic, noise and light pollution, loss (or gain) of recreation land, loss (or gain) of buffers between horse lands and potentially non-compatible land uses.

**3. Talk to the applicant directly.** Sometimes, an applicant is required to hold a community meeting to discuss proposed changes with neighbors. Sometimes, an applicant will hold a community meeting voluntarily to help work through potential issues in advance of a public hearing. If there is a community meeting, be sure to attend. If there is not a community meeting, talk to the applicant to learn about their intentions and to share your concerns. Suggest any changes you would like to see made. The applicant can become your ally, and often, neighbors' concerns can be addressed by the applicant early in the process in a way that is mutually beneficial. Be aware, however, that a general rezoning request may not have binding conditions and that some of what an applicant offers may be nonbinding.

**4. Organize your people.** Start networking with the horsemen and women and organizations in your community. Decide who will represent your collective voice throughout the process and appoint representatives to speak on behalf of the interests of the equine community. Create an information sharing network to be sure everyone stays informed, to present a strong and unified voice for your concerns, and to help with follow-through before, during, and after a rezoning process. Identify and engage allies outside of the horse community as well, to add strength to your cause.



**5. Understand the public hearing process, who to talk to, and when and where to show up.** Be sure that you understand the process from start to finish. Contact your planning staff and ask them to explain what the applicant is asking for (the zoning classification, any specific land use, any special conditions, any special variances or exceptions), if the request is general (no binding conditions) or conditional (additional requirements that the governing board may put on an approval), when any relevant public hearings or community meetings will be held, at which meetings you will have an opportunity to speak, to whom you should send letters of support, objection, or concern (zoning board, technical review board, planning commission, city council, etc.), and what happens following approval or denial of a request. Some communities have several layers of administrative review before and after a rezoning request, in addition to public hearings. Be sure to understand if and when there are opportunities to weigh-in throughout the review process. If your planning department issues a recommendation or written staff report, request a copy.

**6. Speak up!** Using your organized group of supporters, speak up at every opportunity – every public hearing, community meeting, neighborhood gathering, any chance you get. It is critical to speak up not only in opposition, but also in support. Too often, an interest group will put a lot of work into making a positive influence on a zoning action, but fail to speak in support of the compromise. If you have used all of your resources and have worked to influence a positive outcome, speak in favor of the rezoning request. Be sure that the decision-making board hears your support, if it is warranted, so that they are aware of the issues as they are taking action and the strides taken towards compromise are not lost. Never assume that a neighbor-to-neighbor compromise is official until the board takes official action.

**7. Follow through the entire process.** Usually, if a rezoning petition is on a published and advertised agenda for action by a board or commission, it requires action by that board or commission. That action could be approval, denial, continuance, or withdrawal of the request. Do not assume a request is approved, denied, or withdrawn until there is official action on the part of the board or commission. Once official action is taken, find out what the next steps in the process are, what conditions, variances, or special permits might be considered or required in the future, and who to contact if you believe that an approved plan or request is not being properly executed.

Influencing a rezoning request can be as easy as asking for what you want. It can take some time, effort, and organization, but it can go a long way in helping to ensure that our communities remain horse-friendly. While there are often complexities related to local ordinances, plans, maps, and legal requirements, remember that your local planning staff and an organized community are your best resources to keeping public land open and accessible to horses!



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- [Webinar Recording: Great American Outdoors Act Webinar](#) March 16, 2021
- [Great American Outdoors Act of 2020 – Overview and Implementation](#) February 6, 2021

## Contact Us



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## Zoning Information

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## Current Planning Section and Zoning Administration

The Current Planning Section is responsible for enforcing land use regulations according to Gwinnett County's Unified Development Ordinance and maintaining the County's Official Zoning Map for private property in unincorporated Gwinnett County. This includes processing rezoning and special use permit applications, business and land use approvals (i.e. Auto Brokers, In-Home Day Care, Personal Care homes), and Zoning Certification letters. Additional information about zoning can be found in [Frequently Asked Questions](#).

## Zoning Map and Online Services

### [Geographic Information System \(GIS\) Online Data Browser](#)

Online mapping system with ability to search for a property's zoning, current planning cases, and other useful development information. **\*\*If your property is located within City Limits, you will need to contact the City for development information** (see City Contact Information [here](#) or in link under Helpful Information).

### [View Active Zoning Cases in GIS Online Data Browser](#)

Access the above link to see zoning cases that have been received, processed, and accepted by the Current Planning Section and are pending final action by the Board of Commissioners. Click [here](#) for a user guide to help find active zoning cases in the data browser.

### [Online Services Portal](#)

Access to review current planning cases, application status, and public hearing updates (found under the Zoning Tab).

### [Applications Received](#)

Listing of all Zoning Application cases submitted for the current year.

### [Planning Commission Agendas and Staff Reports](#)

To find the date, Agenda, Agenda Package, or the Staff Report for an upcoming or past Planning Commission meeting.

## Zoning Application Process

All zoning applications require public hearings before the Gwinnett County Planning Commission and the Gwinnett County Board of Commissioners. The links below provide more detailed information concerning the application process and procedures.

### [Application Forms, Checklists and Instructions](#)

The County provides fillable PDFs for completing a Current Planning Application.

### [Application Process for Rezoning, Change in Conditions, and Special Use permits](#)

A detailed explanation of what to expect when submitting an application.

### [Public Hearing Schedule \(PDF\)](#)

Important submittal deadline dates and the associated Public Hearing dates for the current year.

### [Unified Development Ordinance](#)

Gwinnett County's governing ordinance related to land use, development, and permitting.

### [Application Fee Schedule \(PDF\)](#)

List of current fees for the submittal of a zoning application processed by the Current Planning Section.

## Planning Commission

The Gwinnett County Planning Commission holds monthly public hearings to consider all zoning applications. The Planning Commission meeting videos can be viewed two to three days after the meeting. Planning Commission minutes are usually available the day after the public hearing:

[Planning Commission Meeting Notices, Agendas, Minutes and Videos](#)

The Planning Commission Public Hearing Meetings can also be viewed on [TVgwinnett Live](#).

- [Planning Commission Public Hearing Schedule](#)
- [Planning Commission Members and Responsibilities](#)
- [Planning Commission Contact Information \(PDF\)](#)
- [Planning Commission ByLaws \(PDF\)](#)

## Board of Commissioners Resolutions

Copies of the official resolutions for all zoning related cases decided on by the Gwinnett County Board of Commissioners can be found here:

[Board of Commissioners Monthly Resolutions](#)

## Zoning Certifications

#### [Zoning Certification Letter Procedures and Fee \(PDF\)](#)

This link is the requirements to obtain an official zoning certification letter for a Gwinnett County property.

#### **Auto Broker Certifications** – NOT AVAILABLE ONLINE

Auto Broker certification affidavits can be processed only **in person** at the Current Planning Section office (address below). The applicant will have to complete a County provided form, have their signature notarized (notary available onsite), and requires a fee of \$300.

#### **In-Home Family Day Care** – NOT AVAILABLE ONLINE

If you plan to operate a day care with 5 or less children within your home, the State requires you obtain Zoning Certification from the County. Completion of this certification can only be done **in person** at the Current Planning Section office (address below). The applicant will have to complete a County provided form and pay a \$50 fee to receive this certification.

## Helpful Information

#### [City Contact Information](#)

This handout provides the address, phone number and an available web address for all Cities located in Gwinnett County.

#### [Personal Care Home](#)

This handout lists the County's rules and regulations regarding Family Personal Care Homes, Congregate Personal Care Homes, host homes, community living arrangements (CLA), group homes for children and adults.

#### [In-Laws Suite](#)

If you are interested in providing a separate living space for a member of your family on your single-family detached property, please refer to this handout.

## Current Planning Section Contact Information

#### **Staff and Email**

[Ashley Nichols](#)

[Josh Ferguson](#)

[Alicia McElheney](#)

#### **Title**

Planning Manager

Planner III

Planner I

#### **Phone Number**

678.518.0000

678.518.6204

678.518.6209

#### **Location:**

Current Planning Section  
One Justice Square  
446 West Crogan Street, Suite 300  
Lawrenceville, Georgia 30046

#### **Phone:**

678.518.6000 (office)

#### **E-mail:**

[P&DZoning@gwinnettcountry.com](mailto:P&DZoning@gwinnettcountry.com)

#### **Office Hours**

8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.  
Monday through Friday

[Directions from Google Maps](#)



#### Contact

Gwinnett Justice &  
Administration Center  
75 Langley Drive  
Lawrenceville, GA 30046

Phone: 770.822.8000

Open Records Request

ADA Information

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e-Government Online

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