



Marion County

Land Development Regulation Commission

Meeting Agenda

Monday, July 20, 2026

5:30 PM

**Growth Services Main Training
Room**

ROLL CALL AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Acknowledgement of Proof of Publication

1. ADOPT THE FOLLOWING MINUTES

1.1. [July 15, 2026](#)

2. SCHEDULED ITEMS

2.1. [Workshop: Discussion on the Approved Marion County Land Development Code \(LDC\). The Land Development Regulation Commission \(LDRC\) will Discuss and Provide Recommendations Regarding Division 7 Tree Protection and Replacement](#)

2.2. [Workshop: Discussion on the Approved Marion County Land Development Code \(LDC\). The Land Development Regulation Commission \(LDRC\) will Discuss and Provide Recommendations Regarding Division 8 Landscaping](#)

2.3. [Workshop: Discussion on the Approved Marion County Land Development Code \(LDC\). The Land Development Regulation Commission \(LDRC\) will Discuss and Provide Recommendations Regarding Article 1 Administration, Division 2 Definitions](#)

3. NEW BUSINESS

3.1. [The Next LDRC Workshop is Scheduled for July 29, 2026, at 5:30 p.m., Followed by the LDRC Public Hearing on August 5, 2026, at 5:30 p.m., in the McPherson Governmental Campus Auditorium](#)

ADJOURN



Marion County

Land Development Regulation Commission

Agenda Item

File No.: 2026-23691

Agenda Date: 7/20/2026

Agenda No.: 1.1.

SUBJECT:
July 15, 2026

DESCRIPTION/BACKGROUND:
Minutes from the previous LDRC Workshop.

The Marion County Land Development Regulation Commission met on July 15, 2026, at 5:30 p.m. in the Growth Services Main Training Room, 2710 E Silver Springs Blvd, Ocala, Florida.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman David Tillman called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m.

ROLL CALL & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Kimberly Lamb called roll, and the quorum was confirmed.

Board members present were Chairman David Tillman, Richard Busche, Robert Stepp, Erica Larson, Alternate Marco Mariti and Jimmy Gooding.

Staff members present were Chief Assistant County Attorney Dana Olesky, Growth Services Director Chuck Varadin, Growth Services Deputy Director Ken Weyrauch, Project Coordinator Susan Heyen, Development Review Coordinator Elizabeth Madeloni, and Administrative Staff Assistant Kimberly Lamb.

Chairman David Tillman led the Pledge of Allegiance.

There were members of the public present.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF PROOF OF PUBLICATION

Kimberly Lamb read the Proof of Publication and advised that the meeting was properly advertised.

1. ADOPT THE FOLLOWING MINUTES

LDRC Board Member Robert Stepp made a motion to adopt the minutes from the July 1, 2026, meeting. The motion was seconded by Board Member Erica Larson. The motion passed unanimously (4-0).

2. SCHEDULED ITEMS

2.1. Workshop: Discussion on the Approved Marion County Land Development Code (LDC). The Land Development Regulation Commission (LDRC) will Discuss and Provide Recommendations Regarding Division 7 Tree Protection and Replacement

2.2. Workshop: Discussion on the Approved Marion County Land Development Code (LDC). The Land Development Regulation Commission (LDRC) will Discuss and Provide Recommendations Regarding Division 8 Landscaping

2.3. Workshop: Discussion on the Approved Marion County Land Development Code (LDC). The Land Development Regulation Commission (LDRC) will Discuss and Provide Recommendations Regarding Article 1 Administration, Division 2 Definitions

Dana Olesky, Chief Assistant County Attorney, provided the Board with an overview of the scheduled items on this evening's agenda and informed members that updated language will be presented for open discussion. She noted that the revisions were not finalized in time for tonight's meeting, and additional dates were subsequently discussed and agreed upon.

3. NEW BUSINESS

3.1 The next LDRC Public Hearing will be scheduled for August 5, 2026, at 5:30 pm at the McPherson Auditorium

The next LDRC Workshop will be July 20, 2026, at 5:30 pm in the Growth Services Main Training Room, with an additional Workshop on July 29, 2026, at 5:30 pm in the Growth Services Main Training Room.

ADJOURNMENT

The workshop adjourned at 6:01 p.m.

Attest:

David Tillman, Chairman

Kimberly Lamb, Administrative Staff Assistant

Land Development Regulation Commission Attendance Report

2026		January 7	January 21	February 4	February 18	February 25	March 4	March 11	March 25	April 15	May 6	May 20	June 3	June 17	July 1	July 15	August 5	August 19	September 2	September 16	October 7	October 21	November 4	November 18	December 2	December 16
David Tillman	Chairman	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X										
Chris Howson	Board Member	X	X		X	X	X		X		X															
Gene Losito	Vice Chairman	X	X		X		X			X	X	X	X	X	X											
Richard Busche	Board Member	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X										
Robert Stepp	Board Member		X	X					X			X	X	X	X	X										
Erica Larson	Board Member	X			X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X										
Nate Chambers	Board Member *As of 1/20/26	*		X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X											
Jimmy Gooding	Alt. Board Member *As of 6/17/26	-												*		*										
Marco Mariti	Alt. Board Member *As of 6/17/26	-													*	*										

- N/A

X Present: attendance is counted towards the quorum

* Alternate Present; attendance not counted towards quorum



Marion County

Land Development Regulation Commission

Agenda Item

File No.: 2026-23692

Agenda Date: 7/20/2026

Agenda No.: 2.1.

SUBJECT:

Workshop: Discussion on the Approved Marion County Land Development Code (LDC). The Land Development Regulation Commission (LDRC) will Discuss and Provide Recommendations Regarding Division 7 Tree Protection and Replacement

DESCRIPTION/BACKGROUND:

The Board of County Commissioners approved Division 7 Tree Protection and Replacement on July 8, 2026. At that time, the Board directed staff to work with the Land Development Regulation Commission (LDRC) and the Development Community to review the approved Ordinance in relation to items that may become more burdensome to the Development Community.

DIVISION 7. TREE PROTECTION AND REPLACEMENT

Sec. 6.7.1. Purpose and intent.

- A. The purpose of this division is to regulate the protection, removal, replacement, and maintenance of trees on public and private property, excluding existing residential properties. Tree protection and replacement shall work cooperatively with landscaping requirements to preserve and enhance the aesthetic quality of Marion County, complementing the natural and built environments, while providing shade and habitat through:
- (1) Preservation of existing trees and native plant communities;
 - (2) Replacement of trees that are removed;
 - (3) Maintenance of trees;
 - (4) Prevention of tree abuse; and
 - (5) Enforcement.
- B. The preservation of trees, along with the planting of new trees as required in Division 8, shall be considered as a priority in the development of improvement plans. The process of site design, from the PUD/Master Plan level, through construction design details, shall take the protection of existing trees and the mature sizes of proposed trees into consideration.

Sec. 6.7.2. Exceptions.

The preservation and replacement of trees and protected plant species shall apply to all development with the following exceptions:

- A. The removal of trees for purposes of conducting bona fide agricultural uses such as field crops, landscape nursery, citrus nursery, forest crops, animal husbandry, greenhouses, aquaculture, silviculture and the like, on lands with an agricultural zoning classification.
- B. Property used for bona fide agricultural use, as listed in Section 6.7.2.A above, zoned other than agriculture and possessing an agriculture classification from the County Property Appraiser per § 193.461 FS.
- C. On lands where either of the two exemptions in Sections 6.7.2.A and B above has enabled tree removal without a permit, no applications for any land use or zoning changes from rural to urban designations shall be accepted within two (2) years of the tree removal date unless:
- (1) The applicant provides tree replacement at 100 inches DBH of native trees per acre, or lower based on the pre-clearing density of existing trees; or
 - (2) The applicant/owner provides payment into a Tree Mitigation fund in the equivalent amount of planting 100 inches DBH of native trees per acre, or lower based on the pre-clearing density of existing trees.
- D. Any removal conducted under an agricultural exemption within two (2) years prior to an application for land use or zoning changes, or site plan approval, shall be presumed to have been conducted in anticipation of development. For any parcel where trees were removed within the preceding two (2) years, the tree mitigation and replacement requirements shall be based on the canopy density and tree count shown in aerial photography provided by the Marion County Information Technology Department, flown between December 2023 and February 2024, representing the legally mandated January 1, 2024 benchmark. To rebut this

presumption, the application must provide a sworn affidavit and evidence (e.g. crop yields, livestock sales, or timber receipts) proving that the clearing was part of a bona fide agricultural operation.

- E. The removal of trees which have a DBH of less than 20 inches, except those trees which have been designated replacement and conservation trees pursuant to Section 6.7.9.G.
- F. The removal of trees on an individual parcel of record used or to be used for single-family or duplex dwelling units.
- G. The removal of trees associated with construction, rehabilitation, or routine maintenance of roads, utilities, and drainage systems within public rights-of-way or easements, by the County or agencies having local jurisdiction.
- H. The removal of trees associated with the rehabilitation or routine maintenance of roads, utilities and drainage systems within private rights-of-way or easements.
- I. Tree removal or trimming for the construction of firebreaks and firelines by the County or agencies having local jurisdiction and surveying associated with this construction.
- J. The removal of trees which pose an immediate and direct threat to persons or property, and the removal of trees that are dead or dying due to natural causes as determined by a Landscape Architect or a Certified Arborist.
- K. Transplanting of any size tree.
- L. Removal of trees required by a development plan which has been fully approved by the County.
- M. Removal of exotic or nuisance tree or plant species as listed by the UF/IFAS Assessment of Non-native Plants, "Prohibited" or "Invasive - Not Recommended" tables, as updated.

(Ord. No. 13-20, § 2, 7-11-2013)

Sec. 6.7.3. Tree Protection, General.

- A. Design for the protection of trees.
 - (1) Site development shall consider tree preservation by balancing the requirements of site and utility design with preserving existing trees in an integrated manner across the site.
 - (2) The preservation of existing trees and vegetation for use as perimeter land use buffers shall be considered early in the site design process to provide required buffers while preserving habitat and lowering the cost of development.
 - (3) In all cases, a post-development ratio of Shade Trees to of the site must be provided as required in Section 6.7.4.
 - (4) All Regulated trees shall be considered protected trees.
 - (5) After a Tree Survey is completed, an evaluation by a Certified Arborist or Landscape Architect shall be made to determine if existing Regulated Trees, or groups of existing Regulated Trees, are suitable candidates for preservation before final site plans are developed. If the applicant proposes preserving existing trees, or if the site contains Specimen Trees, this evaluation shall be submitted with the PUD Master Plan, Site Plan and/or Improvement Plan. The evaluation shall be used to guide decisions about tree preservation, tree protection, and tree removal and shall include:
 - (a) Identification of species of tree(s) proposed for preservation;

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- (b) Evaluation of the condition of the tree(s) to be preserved based on the species, age, observations of internal or external signs of disease or impacts, and possible longevity based on species type, site conditions, or location. If no evaluation is provided, all Regulated trees are considered viable;
 - (c) Assessment of the size (DBH) and canopy of the tree(s) to be preserved;
 - (d) Identification of Specimen Trees; and
 - (e) Illustration of TPZ and CRZ areas for trees to be preserved.
- B. Tree protection measures shall be denoted on tree removal permit or site development review plans by illustrating and dimensioning the following:
- (1) Tree protection standards are based on successful implementation of ANSI A300 (Part 5) – Construction Management Standards manual.
 - (2) Extents of the Tree Protection Zone (TPZ) for trees proposed for preservation. For tree protection requirements, the TPZ shall be indicated on the grading and utility construction sheets as well as the Tree Removal and Preservation Plan or Landscape Plan as required in Section 6.7.6.E.
 - (3) Extents of the Tree Critical Root Zone (CRZ) for trees proposed for preservation when construction within the TPZ is planned.
 - (a) No excavation, construction, or otherwise disruption of the root zone is allowed within the CRZ. Hand-digging and construction under the direct supervision of a Certified Arborist is allowed.
 - (b) The CRZ is established by definition or based on an on-site review and assessment by either a Landscape Architect or a Certified Arborist prior to construction.
 - (4) No reduction of the TPZ or removal of barricades may occur without prior written authorization from a Certified Arborist or the County's Landscape Architect.
 - (5) The TPZ may be temporarily reduced in size and/or barricades may be temporarily removed to allow for minor construction or maintenance within the TPZ, as approved by a Certified Arborist or the County's Landscape Architect prior to construction activities. Barricades shall be reinstalled as soon as work within the TPZ is completed.

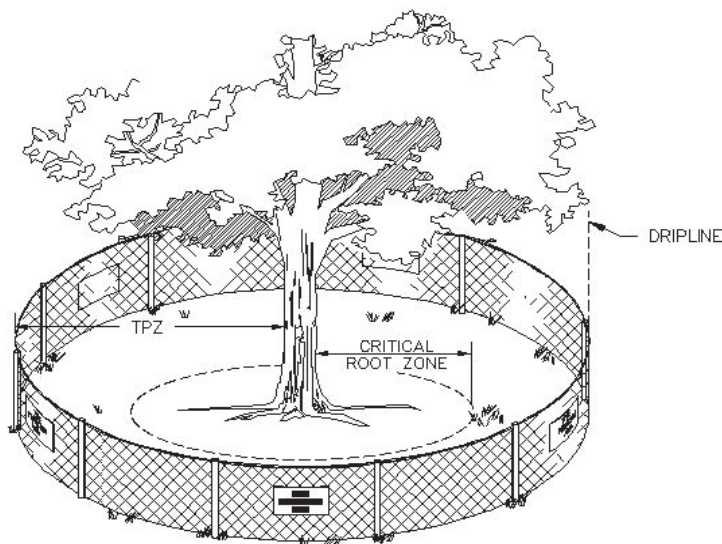


Figure 6.7-1 Tree Protection Zones

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- C. Tree protection barricades shall be:
- (1) No less than four feet (4) in height;
 - (2) Constructed of rigid material capable of surviving for the duration of the construction; and
 - (3) Posted with highly visible signs placed on the tree protection barricades at each quadrant of single protected trees and along driplines of groups of trees being protected at 50-foot intervals or less. Signs shall include the words "Tree Protection Zone."
- D. Pre-construction tree protection.
- (1) The owner, applicant or Design Professional of Record shall be responsible for ensuring that all possible measures are taken to avoid damage to trees not approved for removal.
 - (2) Prior to any clearing, grubbing, or any construction, tree protection barricades shall be erected around all trees, or groups of trees, within the construction area which are to be preserved.
 - (3) The County's Landscape Architect or their designee shall be given a 10-day notice requesting a pre-clearing/grubbing/grading on-site review of all required tree protection barricades.
- E. Tree protection shall continue throughout construction. The following requirements shall be conditions of tree removal permits, all permits for private construction in public rights-of-way, and all development permits issued under and pursuant to this Code:
- (1) No cleaning of construction equipment or material or the disposal of waste materials including but not limited to, paint, oil, solvents, asphalt, concrete, and mortar shall be permissible within the TPZ of any tree which is being protected.
 - (2) The movement of equipment or the storage of equipment, materials, debris, or fill within the TPZ of any tree which is being protected is not allowed.
 - (3) The contractor shall inspect all tree protection barricades and signs on a weekly basis throughout construction. Any barricade or sign which has been damaged or is missing shall be replaced immediately.
 - (4) If any tree which has not been approved to be removed is destroyed, or receives major damage during construction, with the exception of natural events, so as to place its long term survival in question, the tree(s) must be replaced at an inch-to-inch basis of the total (combined) DBH of the tree(s) so destroyed or damaged. The replacement tree(s) shall be of comparable species of the destroyed or damaged tree(s) with a minimum replacement size of 3.5-inch caliper. The County reserves the right to establish a replacement value for such trees and payment into the Tree Mitigation Fund may be authorized by the County's Landscape Architect.

(Ord. No. 13-20, § 2, 7-11-2013)

Sec. 6.7.4. Shade Trees, Minimum Requirements

- A. The post-development ratio of Shade Trees to the area of the site for all developments excluding single-family or duplex residential developments shall be as follows:
- (1) For the first five (5) acres, a minimum of one (1) Shade Tree per 3,000 square feet.
 - (2) For the remaining acres, a minimum of one (1) Shade Tree per 5,000 square feet.
- B. Shade trees may include:
- (1) Specimen Trees; and/or
 - (2) Protected and preserved trees with a favorable assessment; and/or

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- (3) Trees as required for buffers, parking areas, vehicle use areas, screening, and building areas; and/or
 - (4) Trees as required as tree mitigation replacement trees.
 - C. Priority shall be given to preserve Specimen Trees and those existing trees that are the highest rated per the tree assessment.
 - D. Credits towards the Shade Tree requirement shall be given for preserved existing Regulated Trees as follows:

Preserved Regulated Tree (DBH)	Number of Shade Trees Credited
10" – 19"	One
20" – 29"	One
30" – 35"	Two
36" – 47"	Three
48" and above	Three

- E. Required Shade Trees shall meet the minimum size requirements in Section 6.8.10.D.(3)(a)
(Ord. No. 13-20, § 2, 7-11-2013)

Sec. 6.7.5. Tree trimming and tree removal permit.

- A. For tree removals not associated with any development as outlined in this division, refer to Section 2.22.4. For all other tree removal applications, the approved development plans shall serve as the tree removal permit.
- B. A tree removal permit shall be required for the removal of any Regulated Tree except for exempt activities as outlined in Section 6.7.2. A tree removal permit shall be obtained from the County's Landscape Architect or their designee prior to any site clearing, grading, or for any construction which requires a permit from the Marion County Building Department. The failure to obtain any such permit when required shall be a violation of this Code, subject to penalties provided herein.
- C. A tree removal permit shall be obtained by any public or private utility or communications company undertaking construction activities that require tree removal. Prior to trimming or removal of any trees in the public right of way, related to the utilities operations and not associated with road construction or road maintenance activities, the contactor shall:
 - 1. Contact the County's Landscape Architect and provide a map of where all vegetation management practices and tree trimming or removal will be performed.
 - 2. Conduct an on-site review of the vegetation management and/or tree removal to review potential impacts.
 - 3. Consideration will be given to the removal of trees and palms which have been topped or have been "directionally pruned" to the extent that the appearance and/or the long-term viability of the tree or palms is unlikely.
 - 4. After removal of trees all stumps must be ground to a depth of no less than two (2) inches below grade and remove grinding refuse.
 - 5. Stabilize all disturbed areas in an acceptable manner
- D. Tree removal permits shall expire within one year or upon expiration of the building permit, whichever comes first. Trees authorized to be removed may not be removed after the permit expires unless a new permit is obtained pursuant to this division.

(Ord. No. 13-20, § 2, 7-11-2013; Ord. No. 17-08, § 2(Exh. A), 4-11-2017)

Sec. 6.7.6. Submittal requirements.

The following requirements shall apply to the application for stand alone tree removal permits and site development review plans and are in addition to the Minimum Plan Requirements:

- A. Depending on the density of existing trees, the applicant may provide a separate "Tree Removal and Preservation Plan." For development sites with lower density of trees, such information may be indicated on the Site Plan or the Landscape Plan. Either method used shall indicate the location of all Regulated Trees to be removed and trees to be preserved. Preserved trees and replacement trees shall be indicated on the Landscape Plan to demonstrate the final appearance of the site.
- B. Tree calculations shall include:
 - (1) The total numbers of existing Regulated Trees within the site and the respective DBH of each tree; and
 - (2) The pre-development ratio of Regulated Tree inches-per-acre; and
 - (3) The total DBH inches of Regulated Trees to be removed; and
 - (4) The total DBH inches of Regulated Trees to be preserved; and
 - (5) The native status of trees to be preserved.
- C. A tree protection detail which graphically indicates the requirements of tree protection as required by this division.
- D. Listing general prohibitions as stated in Section 6.7.3.E.
- E. Indication of all TPZs on the site plan, grading plan and on whichever plan is used to demonstrate tree preservation and replacement.
- F. Fees required for review and issuance of tree removal permits, inspections, and restoration plans shall be established by the Board, by resolution. Tree removal permit application fees for projects associated with any development (excluding stand alone permits) shall be included in the overall plan review and application fees available at the Office of the County Engineer.

(Ord. No. 13-20, § 2, 7-11-2013)

Sec. 6.7.7. Review and approval procedures.

- A. During review of tree preservation submittals, the County's Landscape Architect or their designee may determine that modifications of the proposed plans or calculations are necessary. Conditions that may require changes include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - (1) Required preservation of any Specimen Trees;
 - (2) Proposed grading or clearing activities within the TPZ; and/or
 - (3) Proposed habitat destruction which conflicts with the requirements in Division 6.6.
- B. The applicant will be required to revise and update the tree preservation information according to review comments.

(Ord. No. 13-20, § 2, 7-11-2013)

Sec. 6.7.8. Protected tree replacement requirements.

Regulated Trees that are proposed for removal shall be replaced in accordance with the minimum standards set forth below.

- A. Removal of Regulated Trees less than 36 inches DBH is permissible if the following replacement requirements are met:
 - (1) Existing trees measuring 20 inches DBH to 29 inches DBH shall be replaced with 75% of inches removed.
 - (2) Existing trees measuring 30 inches DBH to 35 inches DBH shall be replaced with 100% of inches removed.
 - (3) Replacement trees must be a minimum of 3.5 inch caliper, unless otherwise approved by the County Landscape Architect.
- B. Removal of Specimen Trees is permissible following review and approval by the County's Landscape Architect. Such approval shall be given if:
 - (1) The Specimen Tree does not have a favorable assessment per a Certified Arborist or Registered Landscape Architect; or
 - (2) The Specimen Tree is located within the proposed building footprint, required fire access, required utility corridors, or required parking or drainage areas and the applicant demonstrates that an alternative site configuration has been evaluated; and either (a) or (b).
 - (a) Preservation of the Specimen Tree would prevent compliance with zoning standards or reduce the site's buildable area or required parking; or
 - (b) Redesign would require elimination or reduction of a permitted principal use or result in disproportionate site inefficiencies not customarily required for similar development.
 - (3) The determination of the County Landscape Architect may be appealed to the Development Review Committee.
 - (4) If approved for removal, Specimen Trees shall be replaced with 200% of inches removed and the minimum replacement tree size is 3.5-inch caliper.
- C. Existing trees that have experienced tree abuse as part of landscape maintenance or site development activities that cause critical impact as determined by the County Landscape Architect will require mitigation. Tree abuse may include:
 - (1) Hatracking a tree; or
 - (2) Destroying the natural habit of tree growth; or
 - (3) Pruning which leaves stubs or results in a flush cut or splitting of limb ends; or grading and/or clearing and grubbing resulting in ripping and tearing of roots within the TPZ of trees to be preserved; or
 - (4) Removing tree bark to the extent that if a line is drawn at any height around the circumference of the tree, over 1/3 of the length of the line falls on portions of the tree where bark no longer remains; or
 - (5) Using climbing spikes, nails, or hooks, except for purposes of total tree removal or as specifically permitted by standards set by the ANSI, as updated; or
 - (6) Pruning that does not conform to standards or recommendations set by the ANSI A300 Part 1, as updated; or
 - (7) Pruning of live palm fronds which initiate above the horizontal plane; or
 - (8) Overlifting a tree; or

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- (9) Shaping a tree; or
 - (10) Removing more than 25% of the tree's canopy.
- D. Existing trees that have had their CRZ or TPZ impacted by activities prohibited above will require tree mitigation. Replacement trees for these impacted trees will be determined on a case-by-case basis by the County's Landscape Architect.
 - E. If replanting replacement trees on site is not practical per best landscape design practices, then a fee in lieu of planting may be provided as per Section 6.7.10.
 - F. Trees removed pursuant to a permit for construction in rights-of-way, approved by the County, State or Federal authority, are exempt from protected tree removal requirements if such authority demonstrates that such trees conflict with proposed utilities, drainage, or roadway construction.

(Ord. No. 13-20, § 2, 7-11-2013)

Sec. 6.7.9. Replacement trees.

- A. Replacement trees are a part of the comprehensive tree program and shall work in combination with required shade trees, buffer trees, and any other required landscaping.
- B. All trees and/or palms used for tree replacement purposes shall be nursery grown and Florida No. 1 quality or better, as established by Grades and Standards for Nursery Plants, Department of Agriculture, State of Florida, as amended.
- C. Replacement trees shall meet the minimum tree requirements established in Section 6.7.8.
- D. Replacement trees shall be Florida native species compatible to the site.
- E. Palms may only be used to replace palms that are permitted for removal. Replacement palms shall have a clear trunk height of 10-foot minimum. The use of palms shall comply with the required palm ratio as required in Section 6.8.10.C.
- F. For trees removed pursuant to a stand alone tree removal permit or development plan approval, required replacement trees shall be located within the parcel boundaries and shown on the site plan. If space constraints are such that the replacement trees cannot be located within the parcel boundaries using sound horticultural and design principles, then the replacement trees may be located on public property at the County Landscape Architect's discretion as determined at the time of the permit or site development review. The public property location shall be specifically designated by the County, and such replacement trees shall be donated to the County. The County will be responsible for planting and maintenance of donated trees on public property.
- G. The preservation of existing Regulated Trees with a favorable assessment will count towards satisfying the required Replacement Tree amount at the following ratios:
 - (1) Preserved trees measuring 10 inches DBH to 19 inches DBH shall count towards the replacement tree criteria at a ratio of one (1) inch of replacement value per one (1) inch preserved.
 - (2) Preserved trees measuring 20 inches DBH to 29 inches DBH shall count towards the replacement tree criteria at a ratio of two (2) inches of replacement value per one (1) inch preserved.
 - (3) Preserved trees measuring 30 inches DBH to 35 inches DBH shall count towards the replacement tree criteria at a ratio of three (3) inches of replacement per one (1) inch preserved.
 - (4) Specimen Trees preserved shall count towards the replacement criteria at a ratio of six (6) inches of replacement per one (1) inch preserved.

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(Supp. No. 5)

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- H. As an alternative to replacement, the property owner may comply with the requirement of Section 6.7.8 by designating existing trees on site which are native tree species and less than 20 inches DBH as conservation trees, provided that the property owner takes steps to designate and protect such conservation trees. If the owner chooses to utilize this provision, then the location, number, size, and type (genus and species) of those trees or groups of trees requested as conservation trees shall be included in the tree survey.
 - I. A property owner designating conservation trees shall record in the covenant and restrictive deeds, a notice to subsequent property owners that the site contains conservation trees, subject to maintenance requirements, with reference to the development plan on file with the County designating such trees. A copy of such recorded notice on a form provided by the County shall be supplied to the Growth Service Director or their designee prior to the issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy.

(Ord. No. 13-20, § 2, 7-11-2013)

Sec. 6.7.10. Tree mitigation fund.

- A. The Tree Mitigation Fund has been created in the general trust fund of Marion County for the purpose of accepting and disbursing the contributions made to the Board as part of the tree replacement monies deposited for tree replacement purposes. This fund shall be used to enhance tree replacement in Marion County and to enhance the Marion County Parks system.
- B. An application to pay in lieu of installing any required tree mitigation replacement trees is made through the County's Landscape Architect. The "pay in lieu" option shall only be used for tree mitigation replacement trees.
- C. At the County's discretion, in lieu of installing replacement trees, a permittee may pay a fee into the Tree Mitigation Fund at the per-inch replacement rate provided to the Development Review Committee by the County's Landscape Architect.
- D. Payment into the Tree Mitigation Fund shall be approved by the County's Landscape Architect and approved by the Board prior to issuance of the tree removal permit or development approval.
- E. The County Landscape Architect shall provide an annual report to the Board describing the available funds, annual expenditures, and a narrative describing the disbursement and utilization of tree mitigation funds.

(Ord. No. 13-20, § 2, 7-11-2013)

Sec. 6.7.11. Tree maintenance and management.

- A. The following requirements shall be conditions of any tree removal permit which includes a requirement for replacement trees:
 - (1) Replacement trees required in conjunction with a commercial or industrial development or subdivision approval shall be considered required improvements and shall be subject to certification of satisfactory completion contained in this Code.
 - (2) All replacement trees shall be maintained in a living, healthy condition, or else be replaced, by the owner, successor, or assignee.
 - (3) The permittee or the property owner shall record in the covenants and restrictive deeds appropriate notice to subsequent owners of the maintenance period or replacement requirement for replacement trees with reference to the development plans on file with the County identifying such trees. A copy of such recorded notice shall be supplied to the County prior to the issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy.
 - (4) For developments where tree preservation and replacement requirements may be fulfilled by future or subsequent developers or builders, the developer shall require future property owners of lots where

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(Supp. No. 5)

protected trees have been preserved to continue to protect and preserve such trees. Such requirements shall run with the parcel until replacement of the tree(s) is required due to age, declining health, or for the protection of public safety.

(Ord. No. 13-20, § 2, 7-11-2013)

Sec. 6.7.12. Tree inspections.

The following tree preservation and/or replacement inspections shall be required to ensure compliance with this division and with the requirements of permits issued hereunder. No Certificate of Occupancy or Certificate of Completion, as appropriate, may be issued for any development involving the removal of trees requiring a permit until all the following inspections have been completed and approval is granted:

- A. A preconstruction inspection shall be conducted by the County's Landscape Architect or their designee prior to any demolition or site construction in order to confirm that the permittee has marked trees permitted to be removed and has installed tree protection barricades around trees, or groups of trees, to be preserved prior to any clearing, grubbing, or construction. Any deficiencies noted during this inspection shall be cause to withhold approval until they are corrected by the permittee and reinspected. Approval, after preliminary inspection, shall be noted by the County's Landscape Architect or their designee on the permit and shall constitute notice to proceed with tree removal.
- B. A final inspection shall be conducted by the County's Landscape Architect or their designee after completion of tree removal and replacement in accordance with the approved plans. It is the Owner's responsibility to notify the County's Landscape Architect of completion of tree removal activities. Approval, after final inspection, shall be noted by the County's Landscape Architect or their designee on the permit and shall constitute notice of commencement of the required maintenance period of replacement trees if replacement is required.
- C. During the final inspection, if trees preserved towards tree preservation credits, Shade Trees, or any other preserved Regulated Trees, which are damaged during site construction and deemed unviable by the County's Landscape Architect or their designee, may require replacement at the ratios provided in Section 6.7.9 prior to final approval.

(Ord. No. 13-20, § 2, 7-11-2013)

Sec. 6.7.13. Violation and enforcement.

It shall be a violation of this Code to fail to obtain a tree removal permit when required, to fail to comply with any condition of any tree removal permit issued, or to violate any provision of this division. When such violations occur, the following sanctions apply:

- A. If unauthorized tree removal or site grading occurs, the County's Landscape Architect or their designee may issue a stop work order for the project and all related site work will cease until a restoration plan is prepared by the owner, developer, contractor, or agent, and then submitted to, and approved by the County's Landscape Architect or their designee.
- B. If a restoration plan is not presented within 30 days, the owner, developer, contractor, or agent will be cited by the County's Landscape Architect, or designee, and referred to the Code Enforcement Board.
- C. A Certificate of Occupancy will not be granted until all trees and vegetation shown upon the approved restoration plan have been installed and all site grades restored.
- D. All trees and vegetation shown upon the approved site restoration plan must be installed on the property and the site grade restored even if project termination occurs before completion of the project. Failure to complete

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the approved restoration plan is a violation of this Code and the owner, developer, contractor, or agent will be cited by the County's Landscape Architect or their designee and referred to the Code Enforcement Board.

- E. In addition to all other remedies provided herein, the County may seek injunctive relief or the imposition of fines and penalties for any violation of this division, if no restoration plan is submitted. Fines may be assessed by the County based on pre-development density of trees per acre discovered through aerial photos and at the same rate established by the County for use in the Tree Mitigation Replacement Rate in 6.7.10.C. Fines shall be assessed at up to 100" per acre across entire site affected by unauthorized tree removal.

(Ord. No. 13-20, § 2, 7-11-2013)



Marion County

Land Development Regulation Commission

Agenda Item

File No.: 2026-23693

Agenda Date: 7/20/2026

Agenda No.: 2.2.

SUBJECT:

Workshop: Discussion on the Approved Marion County Land Development Code (LDC). The Land Development Regulation Commission (LDRC) will Discuss and Provide Recommendations Regarding Division 8 Landscaping

DESCRIPTION/BACKGROUND:

The Board of County Commissioners approved Division 8 - Landscaping on May 18, 2026. During the Public Hearing on July 8, 2026, the Board directed staff to work with the Land Development Regulation Commission (LDRC) and the development community to review the approved ordinance, focusing on items that may be more burdensome to the development community.

DIVISION 8. LANDSCAPING

Sec. 6.8.1. Purpose and intent.

The purpose and intent of this division is to provide landscaping guidelines establishing minimum standards and criteria for the design, installation, and maintenance of landscaping which enhances the aesthetic appearance of Marion County, complimenting the natural and built environments, reducing noise and glare, improving air and water quality, providing shade and habitat, and buffering the aspects of development.

(Ord. No. 13-20, § 2, 7-11-2013)

Sec. 6.8.2. Landscape plan requirements.

A landscape plan which indicates the following is required for all development except for individual single-family homes and duplexes:

- A. All existing landscaping, indigenous open space, and natural features;
- B. Locations of existing protected trees, labeled and with sizes provided, groups of trees, landscaping and other vegetation to be preserved;
- C. Vegetation and tree protection barricades;
- D. All replacement trees as required per Section 6.7.8;
- E. All proposed landscape areas, labeled and with sizes of each landscape area provided;
- F. Construction details as applicable, including but not limited to:
 - (1) Tree protection;
 - (2) Tree, palm, and shrub installation;
 - (3) Details for specialized installations;
 - (4) Elevation drawings of walls proposed for buffers and/or screening; and
 - (5) Cross section of proposed walls/berms/combo for buffers.
- G. Plant schedule:
 - (1) A key matching the plants being specified (may be plant symbols or written)
 - (2) Quantities of plants being specified
 - (3) Common plant names
 - (4) Scientific plant names
 - (5) Plant specifications including height, spread, and spacing
 - (6) Native status
- H. Calculations for required landscaping:
 - (1) Tree preservation and replacement

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- (2) Shade tree requirements
 - (3) Buffers
 - (4) Parking areas
 - (5) Vehicle use areas
 - I. Proposed street and/or parking lot light pole locations.
 - J. All proposed sign locations, including advertisement and internal vehicular control signs.
 - K. Notes including installation instructions and special requirements related to contractor licensing, utility locating, tree protection, maintenance, fertilizer use, and watering.
 - L. Tree barricade locations and details as well as notes regarding tree protection and inspections as outlined in Section 6.7.3 and 6.7.12 shall also be provided on the landscape plan sheets.

(Ord. No. 13-20, § 2, 7-11-2013)

Sec. 6.8.3. Landscape design standards.

- A. All new landscapes in Marion County shall be designed to protect the County's unique natural resources by conserving water, protecting the quality of groundwater, reducing waste and pollution, creating wildlife habitat, and preventing erosion by implementation of Florida-Friendly Landscaping (FFL) by UF/IFAS and FDEP, including but not limited to:
 - (1) Right plant, right place;
 - (2) Water efficiently;
 - (3) Fertilize appropriately;
 - (4) Mulch;
 - (5) Attract wildlife;
 - (6) Manage yard pests responsibly;
 - (7) Recycle yard waste;
 - (8) Reduce stormwater runoff; and
 - (9) Protect the waterfront.
- B. Prohibited Plants. Prohibited vegetation based on the following sources:
 - (1) Florida Invasive Species Council Category I & II List of *Invasive* Plant Species,
 - (2) Prohibited Aquatic Plants per F.A.C. 5B-64.011, and
 - (3) Center for Aquatic and *Invasive* Plants, University of Florida, IFAS.
- C. Removal and eradication of Prohibited Plant species shall be a condition of development approval. For areas on-site not developed, a containment management plan is required for all Prohibited Plant Species.
- D. Landscaping within rights-of-way shall require approval by the County Engineer or his designee.
- E. Trees shall not be located in areas that will cause conflict with overhead or underground utilities. Shade trees shall not be located within 30 feet of overhead electric lines. Alternative design strategies may be approved by the County's Landscape Architect or their designee when conflicts with existing utilities cannot be avoided.

(Ord. No. 13-20, § 2, 7-11-2013)

Sec. 6.8.4. Non-residential development.

For non-residential development, at least 20 percent of the development project area shall be landscape areas as defined below. The development project area is defined as the outer extent perimeter of all disturbed areas of the project.

- A. Landscape areas shall include:
 - (1) Buffers;
 - (2) Landscaping required for parking areas;
 - (3) Shade Trees and/or Replacement Trees;
 - (4) Landscaped side slopes and/or landscaped bottoms of dry stormwater management areas with a depth of four feet or less, and the planted littoral zones of wet stormwater management areas;
 - (5) Building landscaping;
 - (6) Service and equipment area screening.
 - B. Credit towards the landscape area requirements may be allowed on a 1:1.25 basis for all or part of preserved native habitat if the applicant demonstrates that it includes one or more of the following:
 - (1) Preserved existing trees or tree clusters including preserved native vegetation under the tree dripline.
 - (2) Preserved areas of existing native vegetation.
- (Ord. No. 13-20, § 2, 7-11-2013)

Sec. 6.8.5. New residential developments.

For new residential developments and mixed-use developments, landscape plans shall demonstrate the following:

- A. Yard Tree Requirements.
 - (1) For all new residential developments, or single-family and duplex new construction, each individual single-family or duplex lot shall contain two (2) Shade Trees. A minimum of one (1) Shade Tree shall be located in the front yard. One (1) tree shall be of a large tree species as listed in 6.8.10. Front yard trees shall be installed within the residential lot area between the road right of way and the residential structures. Yard trees may be deferred until the home construction.
 - (2) For multi-family or mixed-use developments where the residential structures are adjacent to parking areas instead of streets, the required trees for building landscaping, parking lot landscaping and screening shall serve in lieu of yard trees.
 - (3) Trees may not be planted in the right-of-way or utility easements, or within fifteen (15) feet of any foundation.
- B. In new single-family residential developments the developer shall also promote the practices and principles of FFL as described in the 'Florida-Friendly Landscaping Handbook for Home Landscapes', as amended. A program which promotes these principles shall be provided to the County as part of the development application materials, and incorporated into and made part of the restrictive covenants and shall include:

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- (1) Information about the applicable landscaping requirements under this division and under Division 6.8;
 - (2) Procedures for future owners to follow when implementing FFL on individual lots, and
 - (3) Water conservation and FFL educational materials to all new homeowners; and
 - (4) Information regarding landscape irrigation scheduling as stipulated in Section 6.9.9.
- (Ord. No. 13-20, § 2, 7-11-2013)

Sec. 6.8.6. Buffers.

- A. It is the intent of this section to eliminate or reduce the negative impacts of adjacent uses upon each other such that the long-term continuance of either use is not threatened by such impacts and the uses may be considered compatible.
- B. Buffers shall provide a year-round screen, with a maximum of 25% deciduous trees, and provide an aesthetic quality, especially along public rights-of-way, which enhance travel corridors and screen developed areas from public view.
- C. A diverse number of plant species shall be incorporated into buffer plantings to provide habitat and appeal.
- D. Buffers may consist of landscaping, buffer walls, berms, or combinations thereof which work cohesively to achieve the intent of buffering.
- E. If no buffering exists on the adjoining property, or if the existing buffer fails to meet the requirements of this section, buffering shall be required with the exception of the construction of an individual single-family residence or duplexes on an individual parcel of record.
 - (1) In interpreting and applying the provisions of buffers, development is classified into categories shown in Table 6.8-1. and as based on the project's proposed use(s).
 - (2) Table 6.8-2 provides the type of buffer required between a proposed use and an existing use, or in the absence of an existing use.
- F. If buffers are required, the length shall be measured along each property line and shall exclude driveways and other access points and easements.
- G. No buildings, structures (other than lighting, signs, buffer walls, decorative hardscape, or fences), storage of materials, or parking shall be permitted within the buffer area. Pedestrian trails, sidewalks, etc. are permitted in buffers when integrated into the design of the buffer areas.
- H. Buffers shall not be located on any portion of an existing or dedicated right-of-way, or on individual single-family residential or duplex parcels.
- I. Arrangement of plantings in buffers shall:
 - (1) Provide maximum screening to adjacent properties.
 - (2) Avoid damage to existing trees and plant material both within the development and in those areas outside of but directly adjacent to the project development.
 - (3) Account for mature growing sizes of preserved existing and proposed trees regarding shade, root damage, and interference with nearby utilities and signage.
 - (4) Offer interesting layouts where appropriate and a variety of textures and colors.
- J. Description of buffer classifications. The content and composition of each buffer type is described in the following items. Landscaping Plans for required buffers shall be prepared by a Registered Landscape Architect,

who shall use these requirements to design buffers that are thoughtfully designed and enhance the perimeter of the development site. Visual screening shall be achieved through the use of proper plant material, arrangement, and layering. The plant quantities and parameters in the buffer type descriptions may be used to develop a total quantity of plants for the entire buffer length and then utilized to achieve an appealing, comprehensive landscape design. Desirable buffers are creatively designed, minimize the implementation of evenly spaced trees or a cookie-cutter appearance, and consider the specific character and topography of the proposed development.

Required landscaping as per below shall meet Section 6.8.10 General Planting Requirements.

- (1) All landscaping required as part of a buffer shall be installed on the public view side of any buffer wall, if a wall is required. Plant selection shall be made in consideration of shade and sun patterns along walls.
 - (2) Buffer shrubs, used for screening within a buffer, if required by the following, shall be specified appropriately to reach a minimum of three (3) feet in height within one (1) year of installation and shall be spaced no further apart than 48 inches on center unless otherwise approved by the County's or their designee.
 - (3) Groundcovers, if required per the following, shall be spaced no further apart than 30 inches on center.
 - (4) Shrubs and groundcovers, if required by Table 6.8-3, shall be arranged to form a layered landscape screen. If a buffer wall is not required, then shrubs and groundcovers shall attain eighty (80) percent opacity within 12 months of planting. If a buffer wall is required, then shrubs and groundcovers shall attain fifty (50) percent opacity in front of the buffer wall within 12 months of planting.
 - (5) Buffers adjacent to the following roadways shall require a 25-foot Type C buffer width and planting requirements, and shall also require an equestrian or agricultural-themed 3-rail or 4-rail wooden fence of a 48" height at least 50% of the buffer's linear footage and distributed throughout that linear footage:
 - a) All roadways classified as a Collector or above in the following locations:
 - i. Within the Farmland Preservation Area.
 - ii. Outside of the Urban Growth Boundary, west of I-75.
 - iii. US 27 and SR 40 within the Urban Growth Boundary, west of I-75.
 - iv. US HWY 301/441 within the Urban Growth Boundary, north of the Ocala City Limits.
 - v. Classified as a Scenic Road.
 - (6) The preservation of existing natural vegetation within buffers is permitted and encouraged to meet buffering requirements. In order to utilize natural vegetation as a portion of required buffer plantings, or in lieu of required buffer plantings, the applicant may review existing trees and or vegetation on-site with the County's Landscape Architect or their designee to determine if the existing trees and or vegetation will satisfy the required buffer.
 - (7) A post-construction inspection of preserved existing natural vegetation and trees shall be conducted in accordance with Section 6.7.12. Damaged or removed vegetation, damaged or trees which are no longer considered viable, including those with heavily impacted root zones as determined by the County's Landscape Architect or their designee, shall be supplemented and/or replaced.
- K. Buffer walls and berms.
- (1) Buffer walls and berms shall:
 - (a) Not be constructed or installed in a manner which creates a threat to public safety or interferes with vehicular circulation;

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- (b) Be designed to be compatible with existing and proposed site architecture and the character of the surrounding and adjacent settings including the style and selection of materials; and
 - (c) Be situated so that the walls and berms are within the buffer limits and any required landscaping shall be installed on the public view side of the wall.
- (2) The substitution of required buffer walls along a public right-of-way requires Board approval.
 - (3) When a buffer wall is required, the buffer wall may be used in conjunction with a berm to achieve a minimum final elevation of eight (8) feet in height. When buffer walls, berms and/or combinations of each are used, they shall be constructed to ensure that historic and/or proposed drainage, stormwater, or other surface water flow patterns or facilities are not impacted.
 - (4) The maximum side slope for a berm planted with shrubs and woody groundcovers shall be 3:1. The maximum side slope for a berm planted with turfgrass shall be 3.5:1. Trees or shrubs may not be planted along the ridgeline of the berm.
 - (5) Buffer areas shall be continually maintained and kept free of all trash and debris.
- (Ord. No. 13-20, § 2, 7-11-2013)

Table 6.8-1 Buffer Type Requirements

AG	Agriculture, Rural Lands, Rural Residential, Natural Preservation
SFR	Single family or duplex residential
MF	Multi-family residential
COM	Commercial, RV parks, Commercial Recreation
IND	Industrial uses
PUB	Public Use (including Government, Institutional, and related Professional Offices)
ROW	Arterial / Collector Right-of-Way or Arterial / Collector Road Easement

Table 6.8-2 Land Use Categories for Buffers

Proposed Use		Adjacent Permitted or Existing Use						
		AG	SFR	MF	COM	IND	PUB	ROW
	AG	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	SFR	D ¹	E ³	C	A	B	C	D ¹
	MF	A/B	D	-	A	B	C	D ¹
	COM	D	B	B	-	B	C	C
	IND	B	B	B	B	-	B	C/D ²
	PUB	A/B	B	C	C	C	-	C

1. Properties within the limits of 6.8.6.J(5) shall comply with that buffer requirement
2. D Type Buffer if residential is adjacent to opposite ROW
3. A 6' opaque fence may be used in lieu of a vegetative buffer

TABLE 6.8-3 – Buffer Classification Requirements

BUFFER CLASSIFICATION	BUFFER WIDTH	PLANTING REQUIREMENTS (Per 100 lineal feet)	WALL REQUIRED?
A	40 feet	Three Shade Trees Five Understory Trees 30% Shrubs and Groundcover, excluding turf grass and with continuous shrubs	No
	30 feet	Four Shade Trees Six Understory Trees 70% Shrubs and Groundcover, excluding turf grass and with continuous shrubs	No
B	30 feet	Two Shade Trees Three Understory Trees 50% Shrubs and Groundcover, excluding turf grass and with continuous shrubs	Yes
	20 feet	Three Shade Trees Four Understory Trees 75% Shrubs and Groundcover, excluding turf grass and with continuous shrubs	Yes
C	25 feet	Two Shade Trees Three Understory Trees 50% Shrubs and Groundcover, excluding turf grass and with continuous shrubs	No
	15 feet	Three Shade Trees Five Understory Trees 80% Shrubs and Groundcover, excluding turf grass and with continuous shrubs	No
D	25 feet	Two Shade Trees Three Understory Trees 25% Shrubs and Groundcover, excluding turf grass	Yes
	15 feet	Three Shade Trees Three Understory Trees 60% Shrubs and Groundcover, excluding turf grass	Yes
E	15 feet	Four Shade Trees Single row of continuous Shrubs	No
	5 feet	Five Shade Trees Double row of continuous Shrubs	No

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Sec. 6.8.7. Parking areas and vehicular use areas.

- A. A minimum five (5) foot wide landscape area consisting of shrubs and groundcovers, excluding turfgrass, shall be provided around the perimeter of parking areas to form a landscape screen with a minimum height of three (3) feet achieved within one (1) year of planting. A land use buffer that abuts a parking area may satisfy this requirement.
- B. Landscaping adjacent to parking areas and vehicular use areas shall be protected from being damaged by vehicles using these areas. Landscaping at the nose of parking stalls shall be offset two and a half feet from the face of curb or wheelstop to allow for vehicle overhang. The area between the landscape and parking stall shall be mulched and contain no vertical irrigation components.
- C. A landscaped parking lot island shall be located every fifteen parking spaces. Where Shade Trees are required, to provide sufficient space for health root development, parking lot islands shall be a minimum of 360 square feet in size. Unsuitable soils, including limerock road base, shall be excavated and replaced with properly drained soils. For paved parking areas within a Primary SPZ, including those with permeable or porous surfaces, parking lot islands shall be completely planted with shrubs or groundcovers; the use of turfgrass is prohibited.
- D. Each row of parking spaces shall be terminated by a landscaped island.
- E. Divider medians may be used to meet parking area landscape requirements.
 - (1) The minimum width of a divider median shall be eight (8) feet.
 - (2) One (1) Shade Tree shall be provided per 50 lineal feet of divider median.
- F. To offset heat gain from paved surfaces, Shade Trees as required in Section 6.7.4 should be located to provide as much shade as possible on such surfaces.
- G. Parking lot screening must be achieved regardless of other landscaping requirements in this article. Shade trees as required in Section 6.7.4 shall be integrated into the parking area landscaping.
- H. All landscaping in parking areas and street frontages shall be placed so that it will not obstruct any sight triangle.
- I. Trees within parking areas.
 - (1) All trees required for parking areas and vehicular use areas shall be Shade Trees, unless required otherwise by provisions in this section.
 - (2) All parking lot islands, including terminal parking lot islands, shall contain one (1) Shade Tree unless site lighting fixtures are proposed in said island.
 - (3) In parking lot islands with site lighting fixtures, an arrangement of one (1) or two (2) accent/ornamental trees shall be installed depending on the size and configuration of the island.

(Ord. No. 13-20, § 2, 7-11-2013)

Sec. 6.8.8. Building landscaping.

- A. Landscape plantings shall be provided for all proposed structures to reduce the monotony of large blank walls, reduce heat gain and glare, and enhance the aesthetic appearance of the building.
- B. Building landscape shall be provided for all sides facing public or private streets, and shall extend a minimum of 60 percent of the total length of the wall, excluding those areas required for access to the building.

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- C. Landscape areas shall be a minimum of five feet wide allowing for a minimum distance of two (2) feet from the façade to the innermost plants.
 - D. Shade Trees shall not be located within 20 feet of a building(Ord. No. 13-20, § 2, 7-11-2013)

Sec. 6.8.9. Service and equipment areas.

- A. Garbage collection areas (dumpster pad) shall be screened with a wall, opaque fencing, or a landscape screen capable of reaching a minimum height of six (6) feet within three (3) years and maintained to preserve an opaque screening quality.
- B. Shade Trees shall remain fifteen feet while other trees and shrubs shall remain eight (8) feet from any fire service connection.
- C. Trees and shrubs shall remain offset three (3) feet from any electrical transformer and shall not be proposed along the access door face of the transformer within the distance provided by the power provider.
- D. Exterior air conditioning components shall be screened by locating the equipment away from public view or through the use of a landscape screen with a minimum height of three (3) feet offset a minimum of three (3) feet from the equipment.

(Ord. No. 13-20, § 2, 7-11-2013)

Sec. 6.8.10. General planting requirements.

- A. All trees, palms, shrubs, and groundcovers shall be nursery grown and Florida No. 1 quality or better, as established by Florida Grades and Standards for Nursery Plants, Department of Agriculture, State of Florida, including latest updates, ('Florida Grades and Standards') as amended.
- B. Plant selection shall be appropriate for the development site and provide the highest level of diversity as practicable.
- C. Diversity requirements: Landscape design that includes a diversity of tree and plant species is required. For projects in which 20 or more trees are required, one species may not account for more than 25% of the total number of trees unless otherwise approved by the County Landscape Architect. At least three species of shrubs or groundcover shall be specified unless otherwise approved by the County Landscape Architect.
- D. Planting specifications are listed as follows:
 - (1) Native plant requirements:
 - (a) Within the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB), a minimum of 25 percent of all proposed plant quantities, excluding turfgrass, shall be Florida native species suitable for use in Marion County.
 - (b) Outside of the UGB a minimum of 35 percent of all proposed plant quantities, excluding turfgrass, shall be Florida native species suitable for use in Marion County.
 - (c) A minimum of 50 percent of the required Shade Trees shall be Florida native species suitable for use in Marion County.
 - (2) The use of invasive plant species based on the following sources, shall be prohibited:
 - (a) Florida Invasive Species Council Category I & II List of Invasive Plant Species,
 - (b) Prohibited Aquatic Plants per F.A.C. 5B-64.011, and
 - (c) Center for Aquatic and Invasive Plants, University of Florida, IFAS.

(3) Trees.

- (a) Shade trees shall have a minimum caliper of 3.5 inches and a height and crown diameter as per Florida Grades and Standards.
- (b) Understory trees shall have a minimum caliper of two (2) inches and a height and crown diameter as per Florida Grades and Standards.
- (c) To promote a sustainable and biodiverse tree canopy, Marion County recommended trees can be found in Table 6.8-4.

TABLE 6.8-4 – Tree Recommendations for Marion County – Non-Inclusive

Scientific name	Common name (<40ft height)	Native	Zone	Mature Height (ft)	Est. Crown Spread (ft)	Lifespan (years)
Small / Medium Trees						
<i>Acacia farnesiana</i>	Sweet acacia	Yes	8B - 11	20-40	20-30	12-50
<i>Aesculus pavia</i>	Red buckeye	Yes	6A - 9A	15-30	15-25	30-50
<i>Callistemon linearis</i> / <i>Callistemon rigidus</i>	Bottlebrush	No	8B - 11	15-20	15-20	20-40
<i>Carpinus caroliniana</i>	American Hornbeam	Yes	8 - 9A	20-30	20-30	50-150
<i>Cephalanthus occidentalis</i> ¹	Buttonbush	Yes	5 -10	5-20	4-12	20-40
<i>Cercis canadensis</i>	Redbud	Yes	4B - 9A	20-30	20-35	20-70
<i>Chionanthus virginicus</i>	Fringetree	Yes	8 - 9	12-20	12-20	25-60
<i>Ilex cassine</i>	Dahoon holly	Yes	7A - 11	20-40	8-12	25-100
<i>Ilex vomitoria</i>	Yaupon holly	Yes	7A - 9B	15-25	15-20	30-75
<i>Ilex x attenuata</i> 'East Palatka'	East Palatka holly	Yes	7-9	30-45	10-15	20-40
<i>Magnolia grandiflora</i> 'Little Gem'	Little Gem magnolia	Yes	7 - 10	20-40	8-12	50-100
<i>Magnolia Xsoulangiana</i>	Saucer Magnolia	No	8 - 9A	20-30	20-30	50-120
<i>Myrcianthes fragrans</i> ¹	Simpson stopper	Yes	8B -11	10-30	15-20	20-40
<i>Ostrya virginiana</i>	Hop-hornbeam	Yes	3-9A	20-40	25-30	100-150
<i>Prunus angustifolia</i>	Chickasaw plum	Yes	6A - 9B	10-25	10-20	15-25
<i>Prunus umbellata</i>	Flatwoods or hog plum	Yes	6A - 9B	10-20	10-30	30-40
<i>Vaccinium arboreum</i>	Sparkleberry	Yes	8 - 10B	10-25	10-15	20-30
<i>Viburnum obovatum</i> ¹	Walter's viburnum	Yes	7 - 10	10-20	10-15	30-60
<i>Viburnum odoratissimum</i> ¹	Sweet Viburnum	No	8B -10A	15-30	10-25	40-60
Large Trees						
	(40*ft height)					
<i>Acer barbatum floridanum</i>	Florida maple	Yes	6B-9A	50-60	20-30	80-130
<i>Acer rubrum</i>	Red maple	Yes	4-9	60-75	25-35	80-150
<i>Betula nigra</i>	River birch	Yes	4 - 9a	50-90	25-30	50-75
<i>Carya glabra</i>	Pignut hickory	Yes	5-9	50-65	30-40	200-300

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<i>Carya tomentosa</i>	Mockernut hickory	Yes	4-9	50-100	40-60	200-500
<i>Carya illinoensis</i>	Pecan	Yes	5B-9A	70-130	40-75	100-300
<i>Diospyros virginiana</i>	Persimmon	Yes	4B-9B	40-60	20-35	50-150
<i>Fraxinus americana</i>	White ash	Yes	3-9A	50-80	50-80	200-300
<i>Fraxinus pennsylvanica</i>	Green ash	Yes	3-9A	60-70	35-50	100-120
<i>Juniperus virginiana</i>	Red cedar	Yes	8 to 9	25-50	10-30	100-450
<i>Liriodendron tulipifera</i>	Tulip poplar	Yes	8 to 9a	80-100	30-50	200-300
<i>Magnolia grandiflora</i>	Southern Magnolia	Yes	8 to 9	60-120	30-50	80-120
<i>Nyssa sylvatica</i>	Black tupelo	Yes	4B-9B	65-75	25-35	150-300
<i>Pinus palustris</i>	Longleaf pine	Yes	8 to 9	60-125	30-40	250-500
<i>Quercus austrina</i>	Bluff oak	Yes	8A-9B	40-90	35-50	200-300
<i>Quercus chapmanii</i>	Chapman oak	Yes	7B-10B	10-50	10-25	200-500
<i>Quercus falcata</i>	Southern red oak	Yes	7A-9B	60-80	60-70	150-275
<i>Quercus geminata</i>	Sand live oak	Yes	8A-10B	50-90	50-80	200-300
<i>Quercus lyrata</i>	Overcup oak	Yes	6-9A	30-70	30-60	150-300
<i>Quercus michauxii</i>	Swamp chestnut oak	Yes	5-9	60-100	30-50	100-200
<i>Quercus virginiana</i>	Live oak	Yes	7B-10B	60-80	60-120	250-500
<i>Taxodium ascendens</i>	Pond cypress	Yes	8A-10B	50-85	15-30	300-600
<i>Taxodium distichum</i>	Bald cypress	Yes	5A-10B	100-150	20-35	400-1000
<i>Ulmus alata</i>	Winged elm	Yes	6A-9B	45-70	30-40	50-100
<i>Ulmus americana floridan</i>	Florida elm	Yes	8-10A	60-80	50-60	100-150
<i>Ulmus crassifolia</i>	Cedar elm	Yes	6-9	40-90	40-60	50-100

¹ Shall be specified as tree form

(4) Palms.

- (a) Not more than 25 percent of all required trees shall be palm trees unless a higher percentage is authorized as stated in Section 6.7.9.
 - (b) Additional palms may be provided in excess of the 25 percent threshold when three (3) palms are used to substitute one (1) required tree.
 - (c) Palm trees shall not be substituted for Shade Trees required to meet tree mitigation plantings.
 - (d) Palms shall have a clear trunk height of 10 feet minimum.
- (5) Shrubs shall reach a minimum height of 18 inches within one year of planting, unless specified differently elsewhere in this Section, and be spaced appropriately for the species and required maintenance.
- (6) Groundcovers shall be those species of plants with a mature growing height of 24 inches maximum and spaced up to 24 inches maximum and 30 inches on-center maximum.
- (7) Vining groundcovers shall have a minimum of three runners per plant. Vines may be spaced accordingly for the proposed use. Stakes of vines shall be removed upon planting, and vines shall be trained to the wall or fence for which they are proposed.

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- (8) Turfgrass may be of any variety which is adapted and suitable for use in Marion County and that meets FFL requirements. The use of rolled turf is prohibited on property with public access unless the supportive netting is removed prior to or during installation and the integrity of the turf is not jeopardized during installation.

E. Mulch types shall be of a renewable resource or a recycled product. The use of cypress mulch is not allowed.

(Ord. No. 13-20, § 2, 7-11-2013)

Sec. 6.8.11. Landscape installation.

- A. Any person providing landscape installation services for hire shall meet the licensing and certification requirements under Section 6.8.15.
- B. All plantings shall be installed according to current best management practices.
- C. Trees and palms shall be properly planted and guyed or staked.
- D. All plantings shall be properly irrigated for healthy growth as recommended by Florida Grades and Standards and UF/IFAS literature.
- E. Installation shall mean survival in perpetuity, and replacement if necessary, of all materials. Dead and/or dying plant material shall be replaced by the owner.

(Ord. No. 13-20, § 2, 7-11-2013)

Sec. 6.8.12. Landscape completion and ongoing inspection requirements.

- A. Upon completion of the installation of the project a Landscape and Irrigation As-Built Certification shall be signed and sealed by the design professional and submitted to the County Landscape Architect prior to the issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy.
- B. Where landscape buffers are required under this code as a condition of development approval, the responsible maintenance entity shall every 24 months prepare a written certification, on a form provided by the County, that the buffers are in good health and maintenance, and that all plantings required in the buffer are meeting the requirements of the development approval. The certification must be signed by a responsible design professional and submitted to the Growth Services Department.

(Ord. No. 13-20, § 2, 7-11-2013)

Sec. 6.8.13. Landscape maintenance.

- A. All landscape areas shall be maintained in accordance with the Florida-Friendly Best Management Practices for Protection of Water Resources by the Green Industries, FFL, UF/IFAS and FDEP.
- B. Trees or palms shall not be severely pruned or shaped. If over 25% of the crown is trimmed during one trimming, then that tree is considered critically impacted and will require replanting at the cost of the Owner. The natural growth habit of a tree or palm shall be considered during the design phase to avoid maintenance conflicts.
- C. Trees or palms which are guyed or braced shall have such guying or bracing removed within one year of planting. Damaging trees with guying devices shall be considered a violation of this Code. Damaged trees shall be replaced at the expense of the owner.

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- D. The alteration of any required and approved landscape area without obtaining prior written approval from the County is prohibited. The expansion of drought tolerant landscaping, excluding the replacement of planted areas with turfgrass, or replacing dying or diseased plants with similar plant material is excluded.
- E. Buffers and screening plantings shall provide healthy appearance year-round and be maintained at the required minimum heights.

(Ord. No. 13-20, § 2, 7-11-2013)

Sec. 6.8.14. Fertilizers and other landscape chemicals.

A. Applicability.

- (1) This section shall be applicable to and shall regulate any and all applicators of fertilizer and areas of application of fertilizer within the unincorporated area of Marion County, unless such applicator is specifically exempted by the terms of this section from the regulatory provisions of this Code. This section shall be prospective only, and shall not impair any existing contracts.
- (2) This section requires the use of BMPs which provide specific management guidelines to minimize negative secondary and cumulative environmental effects associated with the misuse of fertilizers.

B. Exemptions. The provisions set forth in Section 6.8.14 above in this section shall not apply to:

- (1) Bona fide farm operations as defined in the Florida Right to Farm Act, § 823.14 FS, provided that fertilizers are applied in accordance with the appropriate Best Management Practices Manual adopted by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Office of Agricultural Water Policy for the crop in question.
- (2) Any lands used for bona fide scientific research, including, but not limited to, research on the effects of fertilizer use on urban stormwater, water quality, agronomics, or horticulture.

C. Fertilizer content and application rates.

- (1) Fertilizers applied to turfgrass and/or landscape plants within Marion County shall be applied in accordance with directions provided by FAC Rule 5E-1.003(2), Labeling Requirements for Urban Turf Fertilizers.
- (2) Fertilizer containing nitrogen or phosphorus shall not be applied before seeding or sodding a site and shall not be applied for the first 30 days after seeding or sodding.
- (3) Fertilizers should be applied to turf and/or landscape plants at the lowest rate necessary. Nitrogen shall not be applied at an application rate greater than 0.7 lbs of readily available nitrogen per 1,000 square feet at any one time based on the soluble fraction of formulated fertilizer, with no more than 1 pound total nitrogen per 1,000 square feet applied at any one time, and not to exceed the nitrogen recommendations set forth below on an annual basis:

Table 6.8-3 Fertilizer Application Rates

Grass Species	Maximum N Application Rate (lbs/1,000 sf/year)
Bahia	3
Bermuda	4
Centipede	2
St. Augustine	3
Zoysia	4

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(Supp. No. 5)

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- (4) No phosphorus fertilizer shall be applied to existing turf and/or landscape Plants within the County at application rates which exceed 0.25 pounds phosphorus per 1,000 square feet per application nor exceed 0.50 pounds phosphorus per 1,000 square feet per year.
 - (5) Nitrogen or phosphorus fertilizer shall not be applied to turf or landscape plants except as provided in Section 6.8.14.C(1) above for turf, or in UF/IFAS recommendations for landscape plants, vegetable gardens, and fruit trees and shrubs, unless a soil or tissue deficiency has been verified by an approved test.
- D. Timing of fertilizer application. No applicator shall apply fertilizers containing nitrogen and/or phosphorus when soils are saturated.
- E. Fertilizer-free zones.
- (1) Fertilizer shall not be applied to turf or landscape plants within 30 feet of any pond, stream, watercourse, lake, canal or wetland. The use of macro-tab slow release fertilizer tablets for landscape plants which are installed within the plant pits during plant installation is allowed.
 - (2) Fertilizer shall not be applied to turf grass within the following areas:
 - (a) Seventy-five feet of the WBSL of any spring, pond, stream, watercourse, lake, wetland or sinkhole or other karst feature that has an opening at the surface.
 - (b) Fifteen feet from the top of the bank of any drainage retention area, canal, or from the top of a seawall, unless a deflector shield, drop spreader, or liquid applicator with a visible and sharply defined edge, is used, in which case a minimum of 3 feet shall be maintained.
 - (3) In the event an area is included in one or more of the areas described in Section 6.8.14.E(2) above, the more restrictive provision (i.e., the larger distance) shall apply.
 - (4) Newly planted turf and/or landscape plants may be fertilized in this zone only for a 60-day period beginning 30 days after planting if need to allow the plants to become well established. Caution shall be used to prevent the direct deposit of nutrients into the water.
- F. Low maintenance zones. A 10-foot low maintenance zone is required from any pond, stream, water course, lake, wetland, or from the top of a seawall. A swale/berm system is recommended for installation at the landward edge of this low maintenance zone to capture and filter runoff. If more stringent County regulations apply, this provision does not relieve the requirement to adhere to the more stringent regulations. No mowed or cut vegetative material shall be deposited or left remaining in this zone or deposited in the water. Care should be taken to prevent the over-spray of aquatic weed products in this zone.
- G. Impervious surfaces. Spreader deflector shields are required when fertilizing via rotary (broadcast) spreaders. Deflectors must be positioned such that fertilizer granules are deflected away from all impervious surfaces, fertilizer-free zones and water bodies, including wetlands. Fertilizer shall not be applied, spilled, or otherwise deposited on any impervious surfaces. Any fertilizer applied, spilled, or deposited, either intentionally or accidentally, on any impervious surface shall be immediately and completely removed to the greatest extent practicable. Fertilizer released on an impervious surface must be immediately contained and either legally applied to turf or any other legal site, or returned to the original or other appropriate container. In no case shall fertilizer be washed, swept, or blown off impervious surfaces into stormwater drains, ditches, conveyances, or water bodies.
- H. Management of grass clippings and vegetative matter. In no case shall grass clippings, vegetative material, and/or vegetative debris be washed, swept, piled or blown off into stormwater drains, ditches, conveyances, water bodies, wetlands, or sidewalks or roadways. Any material that is accidentally so deposited shall be immediately removed to the maximum extent practicable.

I. Training for fertilizer applicators.

- (1) Commercial applicators of fertilizer within the unincorporated area of Marion County, shall maintain current Limited Urban Commercial Fertilizer Applicator Certification through the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services by January 1, 2014, per § 482.1562 FS.
- (2) Any other person whose duties include the application of fertilizer not required to maintain certification in Section 6.8.14.I(1) above, shall obtain a GI-BMP Certificate of Completion within six months of assuming such duties.
- (3) Private homeowners are required to follow the recommendations of the Florida Yards and Neighborhoods Handbook by FDEP and UF/IFAS, as amended except to the extent this Code provides more stringent requirements.

J. Enforcement.

- (1) In addition to county code enforcement officers, the County Administrator may also delegate enforcement responsibility for this section to agencies and departments of Marion County government, in accordance with state and local law.
- (2) Funds generated by penalties imposed under this section shall be used by the County for the administration and enforcement of § 403.9337 FS, and the corresponding sections of this Code, and to further water conservation and nonpoint pollution prevention activities.

K. Penalties.

- (1) Violation of any provision of this section shall be subject to the following penalties:
 - (a) First violation: Written Notification and Education.
 - (b) Second violation: Written Notification and Education.
 - (c) Third violation: Fifty dollars (\$50.00).
 - (d) Fourth and subsequent violation(s): One Hundred dollars (\$100.00).
- (2) Each day in violation of this section within a 365-day period, beginning the date of the first violation, shall constitute a separate offense. The Board may take any other appropriate legal action, including but not limited to emergency injunctive action, to enforce the provisions of this section.

(Ord. No. 13-20, § 2, 7-11-2013)

Sec. 6.8.15. Landscape installation and maintenance licensing and certification.

A. Landscape installation professionals performing work for hire within the unincorporated areas of Marion County shall be landscape contractors licensed by the Marion County Building Department, unless otherwise licensed by the State of Florida.

- (1) Unless subject by Florida Statutes to certain continuing education requirements, contractors licensed under this section are required to complete a minimum of eight (8) Professional Development Hours or Continuing Education Units in Florida Friendly Landscaping Practices from a continuing education organization approved by the County before each succeeding license renewal or bi-annually, whichever is shortest. Compliance with this requirement will be confirmed at the time of license renewal, or by an approved audit procedure.
- (2) A list of required and approved courses or certifications for Section 6.8.15.A(1) above will be maintained by the Marion County Licensing Board.

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- (3) A course or certification may be added to or withdrawn from the approved list using an approved petition procedure.
- B. Landscape maintenance professionals performing work for hire within the unincorporated areas of Marion County shall possess current GI-BMP Certificate of Completion.
- C. Any person providing services for hire regarding any aspect of landscape maintenance that includes the application of fertilizer or pesticide shall meet the applicable state and County licensing and certification requirements included herein.
- (Ord. No. 13-20, § 2, 7-11-2013)



Marion County

Land Development Regulation Commission

Agenda Item

File No.: 2026-23694

Agenda Date: 7/20/2026

Agenda No.: 2.3.

SUBJECT:

Workshop: Discussion on the Approved Marion County Land Development Code (LDC). The Land Development Regulation Commission (LDRC) will Discuss and Provide Recommendations Regarding Article 1 Administration, Division 2 Definitions

DESCRIPTION/BACKGROUND:

The Board of County Commissioners approved Article 1 Administration, Division 2 Definitions on April 22, 2026, and on May 18, 2026. During the Public Hearing on July 8, 2026, the Board directed staff to work with the Land Development Regulation Commission (LDRC) and the development community to review the approved ordinance, focusing on items that may be more burdensome to the development community.

DIVISION 2. DEFINITIONS

Unless otherwise expressly stated, for the purposes of this Code, the following terms shall have the meaning indicated herein.

TREE, CRITICAL ROOT ZONE. The at grade and subterranean area adjacent and surrounding the existing tree's trunk where the tree's roots are located that provide stability and uptake of water and minerals required for the tree's survival. The tree's critical root zone, or 'CRZ',

TREE, PROTECTION ZONE. The at grade and subterranean area surrounding the trunk of an existing tree or group of trees to be preserved, intended to protect roots and soil to ensure future tree health and stability. The area is defined by the extent of the tree's canopy dripline.

TREE, REGULATED. Any existing non-invasive non-exotic tree species that is 20" diameter breast height (DBH) or larger, or any tree that was planted in compliance with an approved development order or to mitigate the prior removal of a Regulated Tree. Pine and Palm species are also considered Regulated Trees.

TREE, SPECIMEN. A Live Oak with a 36" DBH or larger, a Southern Magnolia with a 24" DBH or larger or a Long Leaf Pine with an 18" DBH or larger; in viable condition as determined from a proper evaluation by a Certified Arborist or Landscape Architect and confirmation by the County Landscape Architect; and offers value due to it's species type, ecological value, age, historic value, or other outstanding qualities. A comprehensive tree list is available from the County's Landscape Architect.

DIVISION 2. DEFINITIONS

Unless otherwise expressly stated, for the purposes of this Code, the following terms shall have the meaning indicated herein.

TREE, SHADE. A deciduous or evergreen tree characterized by a broad, spreading branching habit and dense foliage, specifically utilized to provide a high degree of shade by its canopy. These trees are typically "Large Tree" species included on the list provided in Sec. 6.8.10 and provide significant shade over impervious surfaces, such as parking lots, sidewalks, and streets.



Marion County

Land Development Regulation Commission

Agenda Item

File No.: 2026-23695

Agenda Date: 7/20/2026

Agenda No.: 3.1.

SUBJECT:

The Next LDRC Workshop is Scheduled for July 29, 2026, at 5:30 p.m., Followed by the LDRC Public Hearing on August 5, 2026, at 5:30 p.m., in the McPherson Governmental Campus Auditorium

DESCRIPTION/BACKGROUND:

For information purposes only.