

MARTIN COUNTY, FLORIDA  
Growth Management Department



**Amendment of the  
Land Development Regulations  
to create Article 12, Division 3, Rio  
Community Redevelopment Code**

Project	Update of the Land Development Regulations for the CRAs
Staff	Irene A. Szedlmayer, AICP
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**A. Background**

The Land Development Regulations (LDRs) governing the Community Redevelopment Areas were initially adopted between 2001 and 2006. Different consulting firms and different staff worked on different CRAs. The ordinances were codified as Article 3 of the LDRs, Zoning Districts, Division 6, Redevelopment Overlay Districts. There were significant deficiencies in those regulations regarding which standards were mandatory versus which were merely encouraged and which provisions applied only in the zoning overlays and which applied throughout the CRA. These ambiguities in the text led to varying staff interpretations over time. Furthermore, while codified in Article 3, Zoning Districts, the regulations included provisions regarding streets, landscaping, and stormwater, substantive areas that are usually included as zoning issues. Questions related to how provisions for landscaping and street design in the zoning code related to landscaping and street standards in Article 4, Site Development Standards, LDR required difficult interpretations in the face of unclear text. Additionally, the regulations included inadequate attention to the existing built environment in which they were to be implemented. The need to amend Article 3, Division 6 was recognized years ago, but in the face of constraints on staff time during boom times in land development and construction, and the magnitude of a task that was beyond staff's capacity, caused time to pass with no resolution.

In 2017 and 2018, staff recommended "glitch bills" to the Board of County Commissioners. However, the glitch bills were limited in scope. The focus was on eliminating ambiguity and inconsistency in the codes and clarification of the rules without significant substantive change. The remaining need for more substantial amendments was fully recognized.

In June 2018, the Board of County Commissioners approved a contract between the Community Redevelopment Agency and the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council to develop new

Land Development Regulations for the CRAs. The Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council has substantial knowledge and expertise in the areas of urban design, town planning and redevelopment and a long history of providing such assistance to counties, towns and cities in the region.

Dana Little, Urban Design Director, TCRPC, and Jessica Cortor Seymour, RA, LEED AP, Regional Planner, TCRPC, with cooperation from the Office of Community Development, the Growth Management Department, and input of the Community Redevelopment Agency, the Rio Neighborhood Advisory Committee and members of the public, have drafted proposed amendments of the LDRs for the Rio CRA.

***B. Article 12, Redevelopment Code, Division 3, Rio Community Redevelopment Code, Martin County LDR***

Some highlights of the proposed Article 12, Division 3, are as follows:

- a. Because the goal for the future of a vibrant, compact, walkable Rio CRA has substantially changed, the proposed LDR are intended to facilitate a built environment that is consistent with the vision established in the Rio Community Redevelopment Plan, adopted in 2001 and amended in 2009 and 2015.
- b. Rather than 20 different zoning districts and zoning overlay districts, there will be nine zoning sub-districts: Core, Corridor, General, Waterfront, Industrial, Mobile Home, Multifamily, Detached 1 and Detached 2. The zoning subdistricts are mapped on the Regulating Plan. See page 2 and 3 of Art. 12, Div. 3.
- c. The Regulating Plan recognizes that certain long and narrow lots are currently used for residential purposes but also have frontage on NE Dixie Hwy. that is within a commercial future land use or within a mixed-use future land use overlay. Those lots placed in the Detached 1 Subdistrict (residential) but a broader range of uses are permitted for a depth of 200 feet from NE Dixie Highway.
- d. Additionally, the zoning districts that implement the Institutional future land use designations, the PUD zoning district for Beacon Hills community, and the residential zoning districts for Langford Landing will remain in place and are not affected by the requested amendment of the Zoning Atlas.
- e. The permitted uses remain consistent with the permitted uses in effect now. See, Division 3, page 7.
- f. The development standards remain consistent with the development standards uses in effect now, with a few minor adjustments. See, Division 3, page 9. Some of the adjustments to the development standards include:
  - (1) Maximum Height - Whereas the current maximum height in the Town Center Zoning Overlay is three stories and 35 feet, Division 3 will allow three stories and 40 feet in

the Core Subdistrict. The Core Subdistrict is a smaller land area than the Rio Mixed-Use Future Land Use Overlay.

(2) Minimum Lot Area –

- (a) The Detached 2 subdistrict requires a minimum lot area of 5,000 square feet. The Detached 2 subdistrict primarily encompasses the R-2 Zoning District which requires a 7,500 square foot lot area. The smaller minimum lot area will have little to no effect on established neighborhoods. The platted lot areas are larger than 5,000 square feet but not large enough to be split into two lots. The neighborhood located south of NE Dixie Highway, east and west of NE Rio Avenue, consists of 25-foot platted lots of record. Most existing dwellings occupy more than two lots, but some occupy just two lots. New dwellings will be permitted on two platted lots of record.
- (b) The Detached 1 subdistrict requires a minimum lot area of one-half acre (21,780 square foot) minimum lot area. This is a smaller lot area than most dwellings currently occupy. But larger than the 15,000 square feet minimum lot area required by the R-1 Zoning District and the 10,000 square feet required by the R1-A Zoning District. Only lots that currently exceed 1 full acre would be eligible to do a lot split to create a second lot.

(3) Residential Density - The maximum residential density in the Core, General and Corridor subdistricts is 15 dwelling units per acre, consistent with the current standard for a mixed-use project in the Mixed-Use Overlay. The Core, General and Corridor Subdistricts are largely those areas now within a Mixed-Use Future Land Use Overlay.

- g. Open Space - A minimum of 20% open space is required in Core, General, Waterfront, Corridor, and Industrial subdistricts, consistent with the current standard for a mixed-use project in the Mixed-Use Overlay or conventional development on land with the General Commercial or Industrial future land use designation. The Multifamily, Mobile Home and Detached 1 subdistricts require 30 percent open space and the Detached 2 subdistrict requires that a minimum of 50 percent open space be maintained.
- h. Finally, the proposed code establishes building types and frontage types for the different subdistricts.

Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council staff will present the proposed Article 12, Division 3 at the October 3, 2019 LPA meeting. Article 12, Division 1, as approved by the Board of County Commissioners on September 24, 2019 is included in the agenda package as well.

### **C. Staff Recommendation**

Staff recommends that the Local Planning Agency review the draft Article 13, Division 3, Rio Community Redevelopment Code, listen to the presentation by TCRPC staff, ask questions, provide input and recommend to the Board of County Commissioners that Article 12, Division 3 be approved.

### **D. Attachments**

Article 12, Redevelopment Code, Division 1, General

Draft Article 12, Redevelopment Code, Division 3, Rio Community Redevelopment Code

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