

**POLK COUNTY  
DEVELOPMENT REVIEW COMMITTEE  
STAFF REPORT**

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| <b>DRC Date:</b> February 19, 2026 | <b>Level of Review:</b> 4  |
| <b>PC Date:</b> March 4, 2026      | <b>Type:</b> LDC Text Amendment  |
| <b>BoCC Date:</b> April 21, 2026   | <b>Case Numbers:</b> LDCT-2026-1                                       |
| <b>Date:</b> May 5, 2026           | <b>Case Name:</b> Wahneta Main Street Overlay (MSC) LDC Text Amendment |
| <b>Applicant:</b> Polk BoCC        | <b>Case Planner:</b> Mark J. Bennett                                   |

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| <b>Request:</b>                  | This is a County-initiated request for an LDC text amendment to add a Section 403.01.L. to establish the Main Street Corridor (MSC) Overlay, plus reinstate Table 3, Wahneta Neighborhood Plan Temporary Uses Modifications. |
| <b>Location:</b>                 | Wahneta Neighborhood Plan, Rifle Range Road  |
| <b>Property Owner:</b>           | n/a  |
| <b>Parcel Size (Number):</b>     | n/a  |
| <b>Development Area:</b>         | Neighborhood Utility Service Area (NUSA), Suburban Development Area (SDA)  |
| <b>Nearest Municipality:</b>     | Winter Haven   |
| <b>DRC Recommendation:</b>       | Approval   |
| <b>Planning Commission Vote:</b> | Pending  |

**Among the changes to Section 403.01, Wahneta Neighborhood Plan, are:**

- Establish the Main Street Corridor (MSC) Overlay
- Reinstate Table 3, Wahneta Neighborhood Plan Temporary Uses Modifications

**Summary:**

This is a County-initiated request to add Section 403.01.L. to establish the Main Street Corridor (MSC) Overlay, plus reinstate Table 3, Wahneta Neighborhood Plan Temporary Uses Modifications.

On November 5, 2024, the Board of County Commissioners approved a Comprehensive Plan text Amendment (LDCPAL-2024-2) to establish the Wahneta Main Street Commercial (MSC) Overlay District. This amendment, which was initiated by the County and the request of area property owners, added new policies, plus mapped the Overlay on the Future Land Use Map. The purpose and intent of these changes is to promote the redevelopment of properties along Rifle Range Road and provide a focal point for non-residential activities in Wahneta by allowing for a “main street” of non-residential development, thereby implementing the Basic Principles identified in the Wahneta Neighborhood Plan.

As part of the Comprehensive Plan policy that established the Overlay, there is a requirement that land development regulations be created to implement this policy. This proposed amendment to the Land Development Code contains the proposed regulations. These regulations address items such as allowed uses, right-of-way setbacks, Compatibility Zones, signage, and parking. These proposed regulations were developed with input from the Wahneta community, based on a public workshop that was held on April 10, 2025.

## Findings of Fact

- *LDCT-2026-1 is a County-initiated request for a Land Development Code (LDC) text amendment to add a Section 403.01.L. to establish the Main Street Corridor (MSC) Overlay, plus reinstate Table 3, Wahneta Neighborhood Plan Temporary Uses Modifications.*
- *On November 5, 2024, The Board of County Commissioners approved a Comprehensive Plan Amendment (LDCPAL-2024-2) to establish the Wahneta Main Street Commercial (MSC) Overlay District.*
- *LDCPAL-2024-2 consisted of adding new policies to Section 2.124-A of the Wahneta Neighborhood Plan and mapping the Overlay on the Future Land Use Map.*
- *Included with the proposed text amendment are regulations that address allowed uses, conditional use standards, review/approval requirements, right-of-way requirements, compatibility zones, signage, and parking.*
- *The proposed regulations were developed with input from the Wahneta Community, based on a public workshop that was held on April 10, 2025.*
- *Table 3, Wahneta Neighborhood Plan Temporary Uses Modifications, was inadvertently removed from the Land Development Code.*
- *Table 3 regulates the location of Temporary Uses such as Food and Retail Stands, Produce Stands, Meeting Places, and Special Events.*

### Development Review Committee Recommendation:

The Land Development Division, based on the Findings of Fact, finds that the proposed text change request is **CONSISTENT** with the Polk County Land Development Code and the Polk County Comprehensive Plan. Staff recommends **APPROVAL** of LDCT-2026-1.

### Analysis:

On November 5, 2024, The Board of County Commissioners approved a Comprehensive Plan text Amendment to establish the Wahneta Main Street Commercial (MSC) Overlay District. This amendment, which was initiated by the County and the request of area property owners, added new policies, plus mapped the Overlay on the Future Land Use Map. The purpose and intent of these changes is to promote the redevelopment of properties along Rifle Range Road and provide a focal point for non-residential activities in Wahneta by allowing for a “main street” of non-residential development, thereby implementing the Basic Principles identified in the Wahneta Neighborhood Plan.

As part of the new policy that established the Overlay, there is a requirement that land development regulations be created to implement this provision. This proposed amendment to the Land Development Code contains the proposed regulations.

After adoption of the text amendment, the next step in the process was to obtain community input on the proposed regulations. On April 10, 2025, a community meeting was held at the Guadalupe Mission Catholic Church on Bomber Road in Wahneta that was conducted by the Central Florida Regional Planning Council (CFRPC) and Land Development Division staff.

Listed below is the summary of the meeting, included as part of the Summary document prepared by the CFRPC staff and included with this report:

*“The April 10, 2025, Wahneta community meeting provided a valuable platform for residents, business owners, and stakeholders to share ideas and concerns about the future of the area. Overall, community members are eager to see new businesses and revitalization efforts that enhance the character and economic vitality of Wahneta. There is a desire for adaptable development regulations (such as setbacks, compatibility zones, and parking) to better accommodate site-specific needs and encourage reinvestment. The community showed a clear preference for simplified regulations to encourage investment and revitalization within the Wahneta Main Street Commercial (MSC) Overlay.*

*A major theme raised was the condition of Rifle Range Road, which many felt is currently inadequate for the volume of traffic and unsafe for pedestrians and cyclists. As the area grows, residents want to see infrastructure improvements but expressed concern about the potential impact on nearby businesses if road widening is pursued.*

*The meeting reflected a community that is eager for positive change but also mindful of the need for balanced, context-sensitive planning that protects local character and ensures accessibility for all.”*

Based on this input, the proposed ordinance was created, and includes the following provisions:

1. Allowed Uses – the Overlay contains a list of allowed uses. These allowed uses are in addition to the list of permitted and conditional uses already listed in Table 4: Wahneta Neighborhood Plan - Use Table (Allowable Uses and Districts) for the underlying Future Land Use Districts.
2. Conditional Use Standards – This section outlines the following:
  - Level of Review (C1 or C2)
  - Additional Requirements
  - Exemption of certain use-specific development requirements contained in either Section 303 Conditional Use Standards and/or other provisions of the Wahneta Neighborhood Plan.
3. Review/Approval Process – Outlines the process for uses listed in the Section L1. that are not already listed in Table 4 within the NACX and LCCX Land Use Districts.
4. Right-of-Way Setbacks – This section allows for reductions in the right-of-way setback to promote flexibility in site design and promote a more urban, walkable community.
5. Compatibility Zone – A reduction in the required Compatibility Zone is provided for (up to 25 feet), subject to approval as a variance by the Land Use Hearing Officer.
6. Signage - Within the Overlay, Pole-mounted Free-standing Signs would be prohibited, with only Ground-mounted Free-standing and Monument Signage allowed.

7. Parking - No food truck parking shall be allowed in parking lots that receive the 60% reduction per Section 403.01. F.9. unless additional spaces are included for the food truck and related parking.

### **Benefit-Cost Analysis of the Amendment**

#### *Who does it help?*

This amendment directly benefits landowners of residential and institutional properties that are in the Main Street Corridor Overlay. By allowing certain types of neighborhood commercial and office uses, there will be increased opportunities available for property to be developed or redeveloped, thereby promoting development activity and potentially new businesses in Wahneta. The proposed regulations are also intended to provide a greater flexibility in site design than typically permitted in other areas of the County.

#### *Who does it hurt?*

There is the potential for existing residents living next to the Overlay to deal with impacts caused by new activity along the Corridor. However, because the new regulations still require that the compatibility provisions in Section 220 of the Land Development Code must still be met, the potential for any adverse impacts should be minimized.

#### *What is the cost?*

Any new development/redevelopment within the Overlay will be restricted to only ground-mounted free-standing and monument signage. This requirement may result in additional cost. Also, any site that has already obtained the 60% parking space allowed in Wahneta but subsequently wants to contain a food truck must then provide additional parking to account for the food truck use.

### **Limits of the Proposed Ordinance**

The proposed ordinance is limited to amending the County's Land Development Code to implement the requirements found in Section 2.134-A, Wahneta Neighborhood Plan, by:

Policy 2.134-A4 Main Street Commercial Overlay, by:

- Adding Policy 2.134-A4, Main Street Commercial Overlay.
- Reinstating Table 3, Wahneta Neighborhood Plan Temporary Uses Modifications.

### **Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan**

#### *POLICY 2.134-A4: MAIN STREET COMMERCIAL OVERLAY*

*A. Purpose And Intent - The purpose of the Wahneta Main Street Commercial (MSC) Overlay is to promote the redevelopment of properties along Rifle Range Road and provide a focal point for non-residential activities in Wahneta for a Mainstreet of non-residential development. The intent of the Overlay is to specifically allow for the implementation of the following Vision Basic Principles as identified in the Wahneta Neighborhood Plan and as revised below:*

- *Allow for a changing development environment based on pending impacts of the Thompson Nursery Road expansion.*

- *Work with the residents of Wahneta to develop an updated community strategy to encourage beautification and further define a sense of place based on the expected impacts of the Thompson Nursery Road expansion.*
- *Allow greater flexibility for the development of small businesses and community service providers to meet the changing needs of the community through a conditional use process in residential land use designations.*
- *Encourage the development of diverse employment opportunities to attract businesses that will enable the community to become self-sufficient and enhance the quality of life of the residents that is unique to Wahneta.*
- *Develop multi-modal transportation design and development standards for pedestrians, bicycles, trails, bus service, and vehicles. These standards will enable the community to encourage a more pedestrian-oriented community, particularly along the Rifle Range Road and Bomber Road corridor, while allowing for economic development that will enhance and compliment the community's workforce and residents' diverse heritages.*

*B. Designation and Mapping – The Main Street Commercial (MSC) Overlay shall only be allowed in the Wahneta Neighborhood Plan. The MSC Overlay includes the non-residential future land use designations along Rifle Range Road and selected residential areas to allow for a transition to non-residential uses, such as neighborhood commercial, office, and neighborhood-oriented institutional. Any Future Land Use designation mapping changes in the Overlay shall require a Comprehensive Plan Amendment.*

*C. Overlay Locational Criteria:*

*1. Frontage and Depth Requirements - Properties in the MSC Overlay must be of the same depth as the adjoining non-residential future land use designations. The intent of this provision is to ensure that non-residential uses are not extended into residentially designated areas further away from Rifle Range Road.*

*2. Expansion Criteria – Any extension of the MSC Overlay along Rifle Range Road shall be prohibited until such time as a holistic review of the Wahneta Neighborhood Plan is completed. Infilling of the MSC Overlay shall be limited to a depth which corresponds to the typical depth of existing development within the general area of the infill development.*

*D. Allowed Conditional Use – The following uses may be allowed in the Residential and Institutional Future Land Use designations in the MSC Overlay per the review requirements and development standards of the Land Development Code:*

*1. Residential - Multi-family*

*2. Non-Residential - Non-residential uses may include, but are not limited to, grocery stores, personal service shops, restaurants, specialized and general retail, medical and professional offices, cultural facilities, community centers, churches, schools, community-oriented policing substations, and day care centers.*

*E. Development Criteria – Development or redevelopment within the MSC Overlay shall conform to the review requirements and development standards of the Land Development Code and be subject to the following density and intensity standards*

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*1. The maximum floor area ratio shall not exceed 0.35 for non-residential development.*

*2. Residential development shall not exceed 10.00 dwelling units per acre.*

*F. Current Future Land Use Designations – The MSC Overlay does not divest any current Future Land Use designation the rights provided it in the Comprehensive Plan and the Land Development Code or the Wahneta Neighborhood Plan. This provision is included to preserve the ability for property owners to utilize their previously allowed uses to preserve their property rights.*

*G. Land Development Code - Polk County shall implement the provisions of this policy by creating flexible development regulations to incentivize development and redevelopment in the MSC.*

The ordinance implements Section 2.134-A - Wahneta Neighborhood Plan Policy 2.134-A4: Main Street Commercial Overlay, specifically Policy 2.134-A4.G: Main Street Commercial Overlay – Land Development Code, by creating flexible development regulations to incentive development and redevelopment in the Corridor.

**Comments from Other Agencies:** Wahneta Commercial Overlay Meeting Summary, prepared by the Central Florida Regional Planning Council.

**Draft Ordinance:** Under separate attachment