PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE DALTON–WHITFIELD–VARNELL UNIFIED ZONING ORDINANCE

URBAN PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT (UPUD) ZONING DISTRICT

Purpose of Amendment

The purpose of this amendment is to provide additional flexibility within the Urban Planned Unit Development (UPUD) Zoning District by allowing residential lots to be subdivided around a shared greenspace courtyard, while maintaining high-quality urban design, connectivity, and long-term access and maintenance assurances.

Section XX: Greenspace Courtyard Subdivision Option

A. Applicability

   Within the Urban Planned Unit Development (UPUD) Zoning District, a development may utilize a Greenspace Courtyard Subdivision design option, subject to the requirements herein. All other applicable standards of the UPUD district shall remain in full force and effect unless expressly modified by this section.

B. Greenspace Courtyard Configuration

   1. Residential lots may be arranged around a central greenspace courtyard, with dwelling units oriented toward and fronting the courtyard.
   2. The courtyard shall function as a shared open space and pedestrian-oriented amenity for the development.
   3. A shared parking area shall be provided and may be located adjacent to or connected to the courtyard to serve the surrounding residential units.

C. Subdivision and Ownership

   1. Lots may be subdivided off of the greenspace courtyard, provided that:
      a. Each lot has direct pedestrian access to the courtyard; and
      b. Vehicular access is provided via the shared parking area or other approved access points.
   2. The greenspace courtyard shall not be subdivided into individual lots.

D. Easement and Perpetuity Requirements

   1. The greenspace courtyard shall be placed within a permanent access easement that provides for ingress, egress, and pedestrian circulation.
   2. The easement shall:
      a. Be recorded with the final plat;
      b. Be referenced within the deed of each affected lot; and
      c. Run in perpetuity, ensuring permanent access and use.
   3. Maintenance responsibility for the courtyard shall be clearly defined through a homeowners' association, covenant, or other legally binding mechanism acceptable to the Governing Authority.

E. Sidewalk and Pedestrian Standards

   1. A sidewalk with a minimum clear width of six (6) feet shall be provided within the greenspace courtyard.
   2. The sidewalk shall:
      a. Front each dwelling unit facing the courtyard; and
      b. Provide continuous pedestrian connectivity around or through the courtyard.
   3. Sidewalk materials, alignment, and construction shall be consistent with applicable Governing Authority's standards.

F. Relationship to Existing UPUD Standards

   1. Except as expressly modified by this amendment, all existing design standards, dimensional requirements, and performance criteria of the UPUD zoning district shall remain applicable, including but not limited to:
      a. Building setbacks and orientation;
      b. Landscaping and buffering;
      c. Parking standards;
      d. Open space requirements; and
      e. Architectural and design guidelines.

Intent

This amendment is intended to encourage:

- Walkable, pedestrian-oriented residential design;

- Efficient land use through shared open space and parking;

- Community interaction through centrally located greenspace; and

- Long-term protection of shared amenities through permanent legal mechanisms.

PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT SUMMARY

Proposed Text Amendment to the Dalton–Whitfield–Varnell Unified Zoning Ordinance

URBAN PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT (UPUD) ZONING DISTRICT

Purpose of Amendment

The purpose of the proposed amendment is to provide additional design flexibility within the UPUD district by allowing residential lots to be subdivided around a **shared central greenspace courtyard**, while maintaining existing UPUD design standards and ensuring long-term access, connectivity, and maintenance.

The amendment is intended to encourage:

- Pedestrian-oriented development,
- Efficient land use,
- Shared open space amenities, and
- Long-term protection of common areas through permanent legal mechanisms.

Summary of Proposed Standards

The amendment would allow the following, subject to the requirements outlined in the ordinance text:

- Residential lots may be subdivided around a central greenspace courtyard**.**
- The greenspace courtyard must:
- Be connected to a shared parking area serving the surrounding dwellings;
- Be placed within a permanent easement for ingress, egress, and pedestrian access**;**
- Be recorded with the final plat and tied to each lot deed in perpetuity**.**
- A minimum 6-foot-wide sidewalk shall be provided within the courtyard and shall front each dwelling unit oriented toward the courtyard.
- Maintenance responsibilities for the courtyard must be clearly defined through recorded covenants, a homeowners' association, or other approved legal mechanism.
- All other existing UPUD zoning district standards remain applicable unless explicitly modified by the amendment.

Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan

The proposed amendment is consistent with the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan related to:

- Walkable neighborhood design,
- Efficient use of land and infrastructure,
- Provision of usable open space,
- Diverse housing types and layouts within planned developments.

Impact on Surrounding Properties

The amendment does not permit additional uses beyond those already allowed in the UPUD district. Instead, it provides an alternative layout option that emphasizes internal open space and pedestrian connectivity. When implemented, development utilizing this option is expected to be compatible with surrounding land uses and consistent with existing zoning regulations.

Public Facilities and Services

The amendment does not, by itself, increase density or intensity beyond what is currently permitted in the UPUD district. Any future development proposals utilizing this option will be subject to:

Site plan review,

Infrastructure capacity evaluation, and

Compliance with applicable utility, transportation, and stormwater standards.

Illustrative Rendering - Greenspace Courtyard Subdivision Concept