

§7-5 INTERCHANGE AREA DEVELOPMENT

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[See Commentary]

§7-5-1 TITLE

This Resolution [Ordinance] shall be known and may be cited as the “Interchange Area Development Resolution [Ordinance] of _____ County [City of _____].”

§7-5-2 FINDINGS

Interstate highway interchanges and the areas that surround them are magnets for development. Traditionally, lands near interchanges on limited access highways generate stronger development interest and command high prices. These lands tend to be developed quickly for high revenue-producing activities. In some cases, developers attempt to maximize return on investment with little consideration to the long-term impact of their development on the surrounding community.

The Board of Commissioners [Mayor and City Council] finds that the interchange area(s) subject to regulation by this Resolution [Ordinance] has specific development pressures and unique conditions that are not found elsewhere in the County [City]. These unique conditions of greater traffic counts and more intensive development pressures justify regulation in a specific area of the County [City] that would not be justifiable in other areas of the County [City], due to the absence of such conditions.

§7-5-3 PURPOSE AND INTENT

The purpose of this Resolution [Ordinance] is to encourage managed, sensible interchange development by providing protective measures that promote safety, minimize the impact to the natural environment, and promote highway beautification. This Resolution [Ordinance] is intended to ensure that new development will be compatible with respect to signage, lighting, screening, and access points. It is not meant to recommend or dictate specific land uses within the area regulated. Rather, it is intended to ensure that, if development does occur within the area, it will meet a minimum set of standards. This Resolution [Ordinance] is also intended to

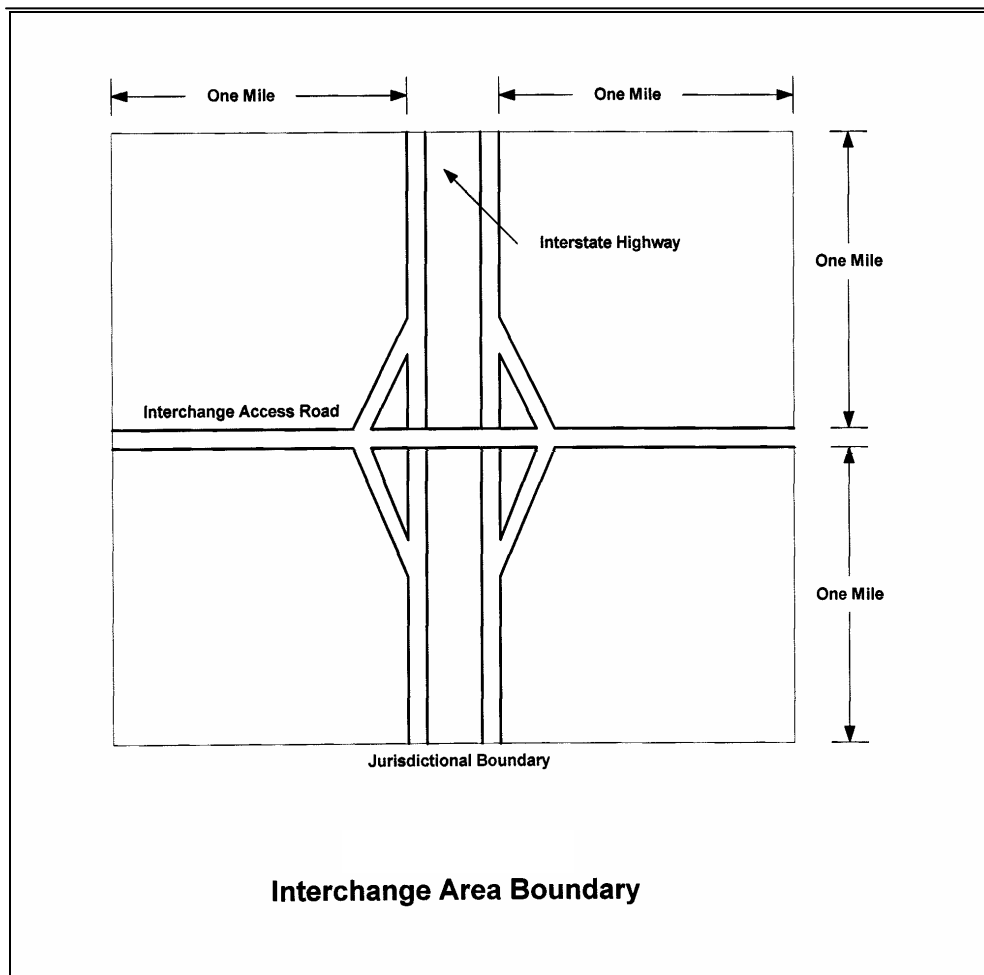
help developments within the interchange area maintain their initial appeal by protecting them from potential adjacent substandard development.

§7-5-4 DEFINITIONS

Interchange access road: The highest order road serving an interchange and providing access to the Interstate Highway.

Interchange area: An area, consisting of slightly more than four square miles, generally forming a two-mile by two-mile square around the center of an interstate highway interchange. Specifically, the interchange area extends one mile from the outer right-of-way boundary of the interstate highway and the interchange access road, as defined (see Figure 1).

Figure 1



Setback: The minimum distance by which any building or improvement must be separated from a right-of-way boundary.

Sign: A presentation of letters, numbers, figures, pictures, emblems, insignia, lines or colors, or any combination thereof displayed for the purpose of information, direction or identification or to

advertise or promote a business service, activity, interest or product or any otherwise lawful non-commercial use.

§7-5-5 APPLICABILITY

This Resolution [Ordinance] shall apply within the interchange area boundary, as defined by this Resolution [Ordinance], surrounding the intersection of Interstate Highway __ and Georgia State Route ___ [or county or city road name].

§7-5-6 SITE PLAN APPROVAL REQUIRED

No land use permit or building permit shall be issued by the Land Use Officer for a building, structure, or manufactured home within the interchange area boundary defined by this Resolution [Ordinance], unless the land use or building conforms to the requirements of this Resolution [Ordinance]. Prior to a land use permit or building permit being issued, the Land Use Officer shall require a site plan in sufficient detail to review the proposed development for compliance with the provisions of this Resolution [Ordinance].

§7-5-7 HIGHWAY ACCESS AND SAFETY

§7-5-7.1 Purpose. Over time, if not carefully thought through, numerous entryways can contribute to difficult turning situations and often times lead to unsafe conditions. It is therefore the intent of this section to limit the number of access points that are permitted onto the Interchange Access Road. These controlled access points will enable more careful design of turning movements, resulting in safer conditions.

§7-5-7.2 Access From Highways. Prior to submission to the County [City] for review, all plans for vehicular access to new development from the Interchange Access Road shall be submitted to and approved by Georgia DOT if a state route, or the County [City] engineer if a County [City] road. Any new right-of-way providing vehicular access from the Interchange Access Road shall be located a minimum distance of 250 feet from the point at which the exit/entrance ramp intersects the Interchange Access Road, and shall be no closer to any other such right-of-way than 800 feet, measured from centerline to centerline.

§7-5-8 BUFFER AND SETBACKS

§7-5-8.1 Buffer Along Interstate Highway. All developments shall maintain a 100-foot natural, undisturbed buffer, replanted where sparsely vegetated, between the interstate highway right-of-way and any land development.

§7-5-8.2 Setback Along Interchange Access Road. All developments shall maintain a 75-foot building and building and development improvement setback, including parking areas, from the right-of-way of the Interchange Access Road. The intent of this setback is to maintain an adequate area if the road is widened, and to maintain a landscaped frontage until such time as road widening is needed.

§7-5-9 LANDSCAPING AND TREE REQUIREMENTS

§7-5-9.1 Landscaping Plan. A landscape plan showing all landscaping required under this section for any development within the interstate area boundary shall be required to be approved by the Land Use Officer. No occupancy of any development shall take place until the landscaping has been installed in accordance with the approved landscaping plan. Landscaping

shall be maintained permanently by the lot owner, and any plant material that does not live shall be replaced within one year.

§7-5-9.2 Tree Requirement. All lots abutting the Interchange Access Road shall provide a minimum of one tree for each 40 linear feet of road frontage. All trees required shall be located within the last 30 feet of the setback, to avoid their destruction if the interchange access road is widened in the future. All required trees planted within the setback shall be of a shade-type variety with a minimum caliper of two and one-half inches at planting and an expected height at maturity of at least 30 feet.

§7-5-9.3 Parking Lot Landscaping. Interiors of parking lots shall contain at a minimum the equivalent of one tree for every 10 parking spaces. Planting islands within parking areas shall contain an area no less than 160 square feet per tree with a minimum width of nine feet (excluding curb), and shall be underlain by a minimum of two feet of suitable planting soil free of construction debris. All required trees planted within a parking lot shall be of a shade-type variety with a minimum caliper of two and one-half inches at planting and an expected height at maturity of at least 30 feet. Trees may be clustered or grouped, as may be approved by the Land Use Officer. Parking lots shall be landscaped such that at least 15 percent of the total parking area is covered by tree canopy within 10 years after construction of the parking lot.

§7-5-9.4 Screening. Parking lots and service and loading zones shall be screened from the view as seen from the interstate highway or interchange access road with landscaping, walls, fences, hedges, shrubbery and/or earthen berms that are a minimum of four feet in height measured from finished grade.

§7-5-10 ARCHITECTURE AND UTILITIES

§7-5-10.1 Purpose. The standards in this Code Section will provide a consistency to the development character, thereby enabling the long-term preservation of property values and the promotion of economic development. All proposed development to be located within the interchange area boundary shall meet the requirements of this Code Section.

§7-5-10.2 Building Materials. To the maximum extent possible, proposed buildings shall utilize natural building materials, such as wood, stone, and brick on building exteriors, except that roofing materials may be man-made. Steel or other metals shall not be used on building exteriors, except as may be necessary for roofing, window trim, gutters, and downspouts. Unpainted concrete block, except when textured or tinted, shall not be used on building exteriors.

§7-5-10.3 Accessory Uses. Trash receptacles, mechanical equipment, outdoor storage, loading docks, and other accessory uses should be located or screened in such a manner as to be hidden from view of the interstate highway and interchange access road.

§7-5-10.4 Utilities. All utility lines serving uses proposed or developed within the interchange area boundary, including electric, telephone, cable television, etc., shall be installed underground, except for single-family dwellings constructed on lots subdivided prior to the effective date of this Resolution [Ordinance], and agricultural uses. Junction boxes, transformers, and other structures essential to utility service which, due to their function, are required to be located above-ground, shall be screened from view of public rights-of-way.

§7-5-11 SIGNS

§7-5-11.1 Purpose. The intention of this Code Section is to enable the County [City] to avoid the distracting clutter that too often result from new development.

§7-5-11.2 Regulations. All signs proposed, installed, or replaced within the interchange area boundary after the effective date of this Resolution [Ordinance] shall conform to the standards set forth herein.

- (a) The total sign area of all signage on any one lot shall not exceed 200 square feet. A double-faced sign shall be considered a single sign. However, signage designed for pedestrian viewing only, such as under canopy signage or small directional signs, shall not be included in calculating the maximum allowable sign area per lot.
- (b) No more than one ground pole sign shall be permitted on any lot. Such signs shall not exceed 20 feet in height and shall not have a maximum sign area greater than 32 square feet.
- (c) Roof signs shall not be permitted.
- (d) The main supporting structure of all signs shall be set back at least 15 feet from the edge of the right-of-way of the interchange access road. The main supporting structure of sign along the interstate highway shall be set back at least 25 feet from the edge of the interstate right-of-way.
- (e) No flashing, blinking, fluctuating, or otherwise changing light source may be permitted, with the exception of signs providing time and temperature.

§7-5-12 EXTERIOR LIGHTING

§7-5-12.1 Purpose. The intention of this subsection is to enable the County [City] to avoid the distracting glare that too often comes with new development.

§7-5-12.2 Cut-Off Fixtures. All outdoor lighting fixtures, including without limitation, ground, pole, and building-mounted fixtures and canopy lighting shall be of a design and type containing shields, reflectors, fracture panels or recessed light sources such that the cutoff angle is 90 degrees or less. For purposes herein, the cutoff angle is that angle formed by a line drawn from the direction of light rays at the light source and a line perpendicular to the ground from the light source above which no light is permitted.

§7-5-12.3 Height. Lighting fixtures shall have a maximum height of 25 feet, except that lighting used for outdoor recreational use shall not exceed 80 feet in height.

§7-5-13 STREAM AND WETLAND BUFFERS

All improvements or land disturbances within the interchange area boundary shall be set back at least 100 feet from the top of any stream bank or edge of any wetland. All existing vegetation within the setback required by this subsection shall be preserved.

§7-5-14 ADMINISTRATION AND VARIANCES

This Resolution [Ordinance] shall be administered and enforced by the Land Use Officer. The Board of Appeals, as established in Section 1-10 of this code, may upon application by the property owner consider and grant variances to the strict requirements set forth in this Resolution [Ordinance] to alleviate undue hardship that may be created by unusual physical or topographic conditions of a site, thus providing reasonable relief.