



LEE'S SUMMIT
MISSOURI
Development Services Department

Development Services Staff Report

File Number	PL2025-283
File Name	Unified Development Ordinance Amendments to Article 2 Applications and Procedures and Article 14 Administration
Applicant	City of Lee's Summit
Property Address	Citywide
Planning Commission Date	November 13, 2025
Heard by	Planning Commission and City Council
Analyst	Aimee E. Nassif AICP, Deputy Director of Development Services Shannon McGuire, Planning Manager

Public Notification

Community and Economic Development Committee Meeting: October 8, 2025
Newspaper notification published on: October 25, 2025

1. Project Summary

As part of our implementation work with the Ignite! Comprehensive Plan and Communities for All Ages (CFAA) Program, Staff has been researching and identifying opportunities to increase housing diversity and choice throughout the community. In addition, City Council has provided direction and guidance on efforts to advance these priority areas through process updates and zoning reform measures. Staff have been working with the Community and Economic Development Committee (CEDC) over the last several months and as a result, has prepared a series of UDO process amendments.

These updates include the following sections of the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO)

	UDO Article	UDO Section	Brief Description
A	Art 2, Div 4	2.300	Preliminary Development Plans (when required)
B	Art 2, Div 4	2.320	Preliminary Development Plans (modifications and time validity)
C	Art 2, Div 4	2.330	Preliminary Development Plans (changes)
D	Art 2, Div 4	2.400	Conceptual Plans (submittal requirements)
E	Art 14, Div 1	14.080	Administrative variance for residences

2. Research and Analysis

The recommended updates provided herein help to advance the City's housing initiatives for housing choice, diversity, and attainability. While the focus of these efforts is on residential development, many of these process updates will also improve efficiencies and coordination for commercial and industrial development proposals as well.

A. Community and Economic Development Committee Meetings

After discussions with the Community and Economic Development Committee (CEDC), Staff were directed to prepare a series of UDO updates to improve current development processes. Below is a summary of meetings held with the CEDC, and the direction Staff received.

Agenda packet items for these meetings are available at: [The City of Lee's Summit - Community and Economic Development Committee \(legistar.com\)](https://legistar.com/View/00000000-0000-0000-0000-000000000000/Item/2025-09-17-00000000-0000-0000-0000-000000000000)

1. **September 10, 2025** – Initial discussion following the City Council meeting on this topic (held June 17, 2025). Staff identified a series of potential UDO updates to improve process efficiencies. CEDC requested additional information on how these recommendations would work, research, and best practices.
2. **October 8, 2025** – Information was provided and specific details discussed on process improvement areas in Article 2 and Article 14. CEDC recommended advancing all recommendations except for Article 2, Division IV pertaining to the authority and process for modification requests. For this section, Staff was asked to prepare options for updating the review process which has been completed and is included in this report for consideration.

B. Community Research and Resources

This series of UDO updates aim to improve processes to advance housing goals identified in the Ignite! Strategic Plan and Ignite! Comprehensive Plan. As with all work we do, research is conducted to identify trends and best practices in the metro and comparable cities. Cities researched with this round of updates include Lenexa, Olathe, Overland Park, and Shawnee in Kansas; Blue Springs and Chesterfield in Missouri; and Franklin, Tennessee, and Carmel, Indiana.

In addition to looking into regulations of other communities, Staff also stays up to date with publications, studies, and research provided by national organizations. Organizations focused on housing initiatives and municipal processes include the American Planning Association (APA), Urban Land Institute (ULI), Strong Towns Initiative, American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), and International City/County Management Association (ICMA). In addition, last year the National League of Cities (NLC) and American Planning Association published the Housing Accelerator Playbook which provides a variety of recommendations and insight for review process updates to advance attainable housing efforts.

C. KCHBA Discussion

Staff meet quarterly with the KC Home Builders Association (KCHBA) to provide an open forum and opportunity to discuss city initiatives, projects, share information, and discuss items facing the home building community. At our last meeting (held on September 11, 2025) Staff advised the HBA members in attendance of this work to update review process areas of the UDO. We explained the sections involved in the updates and the enhancements in review times and submittal requirements that would be achieved. The group expressed their support and appreciation for this work.

3. UDO Updates

Below is a description of each recommendation. A redline copy of all draft language is included as an attachment.

A. Article 2, Division IV, Section 2.300.A and 2.300.B (PDP Submittal Requirements)

Existing Language

The UDO currently includes a list of times in which a PDP is required and a list of times when a PDP is not required. This has the potential to create issues if a situation is presented which does not fit definitively in either list.

Also, *Section 2.300.A* currently requires a preliminary development plan (or PDP) and full 12-week process for development of vacant land in a planned district and redevelopment of any property. This conflicts with other chapters of the UDO which permit construction of a single-family home by right with appropriate zoning in place.

Recommendation

Section 2.300.A - the first recommendation is to update the requirements for when a PDP is required to include “catch all” language to account for situations which may not be identified or clear from either list. Research has found that other cities have language which provides flexibility in determining if a PDP is required. While the original direction from the City Council was to identify process efficiencies for residential development, this section along with the recommended updates would apply to all development types (residential, industrial, and commercial).

Section 2.300.B - the second update provides an exception to allow the development of no more than three (3) residential lots. This will save homebuilders significant time and expense as they would now be able to proceed directly to building permit application review. Development of three (3) lots also aligns with the minor plat process which permits platting of no more than three (3) lots. This allowance is limited to no more than three (3) residential lots and for single-family or two-family structures only.

Best practices to advance housing efforts and development include streamlining processes and removing time barriers involved with lengthy reviews. This is supported by many national organizations including the American Planning Association and National League of Cities.

B. Article 2, Division IV, Section 2.320.C and 2.320.E (PDP Modifications and Time Validity)

Existing Language

Section 2.320.C currently requires Planning Commission approval for any modification requests which are not part of a rezoning application. Modifications are requests by a developer to modify or waive a requirement that they are unable to meet with very specific criteria which must be met. This review process currently takes approximately 4 weeks and can take up to 3-4 months when City Council approval is required.

Section 2.320.E establishes that when approved, a PDP is valid for no longer than 24 months unless within that time a final development plan is submitted. While the City Council can approve an extension to a PDP for up to 12 months, this process does take four (4) weeks.

This section, along with the recommended updates pertain to all development types (residential, industrial, and commercial).

Recommendation

Section 2.320.C – recommendation is to allow for administrative review of modifications previously approved by the Planning Commission. This not only streamlines current processes but also prevents a PDP that could have been approved administratively, from requiring Commission review which doubles the review time.

Section 2.320.E – recommendation is to update the approval process so Staff can approve a 12-month extension. This update will advance the review process by 2 weeks and will be consistent with other time extension processes currently in place that are administratively approved.

Both recommendations would allow for more administrative review authority, which was one of the main discussion points and direction provided by the City Council during the housing discussion in June. While these recommendations would assist residential applications, it would also pertain to commercial and industrial development thereby providing an efficiency improvement for all development types. Identifying process improvement areas which increase review times and reduces meetings is also recommended by many organizations including Strong Towns, American Planning Association, and ICMA.

C. Article 2, Division IV, Section 2.330 (PDP Substantial and Minor Changes)

Existing Language

After PDP approval, there are instances in which a developer needs to make a change to their development plan. *Section 2.330* provides direction on what constitutes a substantial change and a minor change. Substantial changes require the full PDP process with Planning Commission review and City Council approval while minor changes are handled administratively. This section is an opportunity in the City's review process to increase efficiency with greater administrative review. This section also contains duplicative language which is unnecessary. This section, along with the recommended updates pertain to all development types (residential, industrial, and commercial).

Recommendation

Draft language provided in this agenda packet was presented to the CEDC in October. The CEDC was supportive of developing more administrative options, however concern was expressed about how this would apply to higher density projects such as multi-family. After discussion, CEDC requested that Staff present options to the Planning Commission for updating the substantial and minor change lists.

Any of these options would allow for more administrative review authority and facilitate more efficient reviews. Identifying process improvement areas which increase review times and reduces meetings is also recommended by many organizations including Strong Towns, American Planning Association, and ICMA.

Option 1

The substantial and minor change lists would be as presented by City Staff. Under this option, any change to building height, density, setbacks, FAR, or lot coverage which remains within the limits allowed in the zoning district of the subject parcel would be classified as a “minor change” and thereby approved administratively.

Option 2

PDP changes up to the zoning district regulations may be administratively approved as a minor change for properties zoned AG, RDR, RLL, R-1, RP-1, RP-2, and RP-3 only. High density residential, industrial, and commercial zoned properties and properties zoned PMIX could still make this change request, but it would be considered a substantial change requiring Planning Commission review and City Council approval.

Option 3

PDP changes up to the zoning district regulations may be administratively approved as a minor change for properties zoned to any residential or nonresidential district except for PMIX district. Properties zoned PMIX could still make this change request, but it would be considered a substantial change requiring Planning Commission review and City Council approval.

D. Article 2, Division IV, Section 2.400.C (Conceptual Plan submittal requirements)

Existing Language

Section 2.400 establishes the city’s process for conceptual development plans. Conceptual development plans are permitted as an alternative, flexible development review for applicants prior to submitting a PDP. While this flexibility is meant to allow developers to process on a conceptual level, several of the submittal requirements do require specific information that is not known and often changes once PDP is submitted. In some cases, this review process option is not chosen because of the specific requirements.

Recommendation

Section 2.400.C – recommendation is to remove the requirement for architectural materials and colors to be provided and remove the requirement for commercial development to provide a square footage for each building.

Few cities offer this conceptual review process and of those who do only Chesterfield, MO and Lenexa, KS require either of these two items. While this information is submitted with applications now, the information is not fully identified until PDP as tenants are not identified.

This section, along with the recommended updates pertain to all development types (residential, industrial, and commercial).

E. Article 14, Division 1, Section 14.080 (Administrative review variances)

Existing Language

Article 14 established the procedures and review process for the Board of Zoning Adjustment. While most variances are heard by the Board of Zoning Adjustment, the UDO does provide for limited approval authority for staff. Currently, staff can approve a building setback variance of up to 10% but not to exceed 1 foot.

Recommendation

Section 14.080 – almost all requests for variances before the Board of Zoning Adjustment involve reducing a residential building setback; and of those, the vast majority are approved. To improve efficiencies and processes to assist homeowners, staff recommends increasing the allowable setback variance granted by staff from 10% (up to 1 foot) to 15% (up to 5 feet). This provision would not apply to multi-family development as the massing, building scale, and other criteria differ from that of other residential structures.

4. Ignite! Comprehensive Plan

Several important goals are achieved through this series of code updates to the Ignite! Comprehensive Plan.

- A. Strong Neighborhoods and Housing Choice.** Goal 3.2 of the Ignite! Plan is ***Strong Neighborhoods and Housing Choice***. As stated in the Ignite! Plan, “Strong neighborhoods and diverse housing choices attract new residents and provide affordable housing options for families, young professionals, hourly workers, empty nesters, and people with different abilities from all generations, cultures, and backgrounds”. The Strong Neighborhoods and Housing Choice goal description states: ***“maintain thriving quality neighborhoods that connect a diversity of residents throughout the community”***.

This goal (**Goal 3.2**) encompasses a variety of quality of life and housing objectives that will provide greater housing options throughout the community. Several objectives within this goal are: 1) Increase the mix of affordable housing, and 2) Preserve and protect existing housing stock, and 3) Increase overall property values by neighborhood. In addition, the City has also identified that increasing housing choice and housing options is a priority of the Ignite! Comprehensive Plan. This goal includes increasing our missing middle housing which includes small lot development as well as mid-density development such as cottage courts, townhomes, and duplexes.

A link to the Strong Neighborhoods and Healthy Choice element of the Ignite! Comprehensive Plan is provided here: [Strong Neighborhoods \(cityofls.net\)](https://cityofls.net/strong-neighborhoods)

5. Summary

Attached is a redlined copy of each of the Article updates for review. The draft language presented is a result of research of other communities, as well as research of best practices and recommendations from National League of Cities and American Planning Association to remove barriers to increasing housing choice options and inventory in the community.

As mentioned previously in this report, these recommendations were discussed with the Community and Economic Development Committee (CEDC) on October 8, 2025. A motion by the CEDC was made to advance these recommendations to the Planning Commission for public hearing as presented, and also recommended the options be provided for changes to Article 2, Section 2.330 for continued discussion.