

Blount County

Planning and Development Services

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Blount County Board of Commissioners

FROM: Thomas A. Lloyd, AICP 
Director
Blount County Planning & Development Services

DATE: June 5, 2025

SUBJECT: Call for a public hearing on draft resolution from the Blount County Regional Planning Commission to amend Section 7.20.C of the zoning regulations specific to the open space requirement of cluster developments

Attachments

- (1) Draft Resolution
- (2) Selection of minutes from March 27, 2025 Planning Commission
- (3) Resolution from Alcoa Regional Planning Commission (adopted 5/15/25)

Discussion:

In 2023, the Blount County Zoning Regulations were amended to incorporate comprehensive regulations for cluster developments. At that time, it was recognized that such types of development could serve as a possible means to achieve some balance between growth and preservation of open space in rural and suburban settings by clustering homes on a smaller proportion of land than a traditional subdivision while protecting the balance as common open space.

At the March 2025 meeting, Commissioner David Wells brought discussion of the cluster development regulations back before the Planning Commission. He noted that, to date, there have been no cluster subdivisions considered under the new regulations. He suggested that was likely because the minimum open space requirements in the current regulations were too onerous, and recommended that they be reduced from 40% to 30%, with no other changes to the regulations proposed. After deliberation, the Commission voted 5-3 to recommend that the County Commission amend the regulations accordingly.

At their May 15, 2025 meeting, the Alcoa Regional Planning Commission similarly considered and recommended for approval (Attachment 3).

Amendments to the Zoning Regulations: Amendments to the Zoning Regulations require approval from the Legislative Body (County Commission), but also require a recommendation from the “Regional Planning Commission of the region in which the territory covered by the ordinance is located”. Since the Alcoa Regional Planning Commission’s region extends beyond the city’s corporate limits into area over which the County’s zoning is applicable, then review and recommendation will be required from both the Blount County and the Alcoa Regional Planning Commissions prior to consideration by the County Commission. As noted above, both Regional Planning Commissions have considered the proposed and have provided favorable recommendations. The County Commission must now call for and hold a public hearing with due notice prior to taking action on this amendment.