

Summary of Ordinance

The purpose of this Ordinance is to amend Section 16.00.02, Lake County Code, Appendix E, Land Development Regulations (LDR), entitled *Wellness Way Development Standards*, for the following purposes:

- (1) To incorporate *The New Yard Pattern Book* as Section 16.00.04;
- (2) To incorporate *Landscape and Irrigation Plan Examples* as Section 16.00.05;
- (2) To integrate principles consistent with Florida-Friendly Landscaping™;
- (3) To provide for enhanced landscaping standards; and
- (3) To provide references to official websites for approved plant lists.

This Ordinance also amends LDR Chapter II to include Compost and Plant Bed definitions.

Changes are shown as follows: ~~Strikethrough~~ for deletions and Underline for additions to existing Code sections. The notation “* * *” shall mean that all preceding or subsequent text remains unchanged (excluding any renumbering or relettering that might be needed).

ORDINANCE NO. 2026-____

AN ORDINANCE OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF LAKE COUNTY, FLORIDA; REGARDING THE FOLLOWING SECTIONS OF THE LAKE COUNTY CODE, APPENDIX E, LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS: AMENDING SECTION 16.00.02, ENTITLED *WELLNESS WAY DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS*; INCORPORATING THE NEW YARD PATTERN BOOK AS AN OFFICIAL EXHIBIT; INTEGRATING PRINCIPLES CONSISTENT WITH FLORIDA-FRIENDLY LANDSCAPING™; REVISING LANDSCAPING STANDARDS WITHIN WELLNESS WAY; PROVIDING REFERENCES TO OFFICIAL WEBSITES FOR APPROVED PLANT LISTS; AMENDING CHAPTER II, ENTITLED *DEFINITIONS*; CREATING SECTION 16.00.04, TO BE ENTITLED *THE NEW YARD PATTERN BOOK*; CREATING SECTION 16.00.05, TO BE ENTITLED *LANDSCAPE AND IRRIGATION PLAN EXAMPLES FOR WELLNESS WAY*; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR INCLUSION IN THE CODE; PROVIDING FOR FILING WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

WHEREAS, the Wellness Way Area Plan (WWAP) was adopted by the Board of County Commissioners (Board) in 2016, through Ordinance 2016-01, which created Goal I-8 of the Lake County Comprehensive Plan; and

WHEREAS, the intent of the WWAP, which is an Urban Service Area as defined under Section 163.3164(53), Florida Statutes, is to create a long-term master plan for the South Lake region which promotes significant economic development while encouraging fiscally efficient and well-balanced development patterns that minimize environmental impacts and leverage existing resources; and

WHEREAS, Objective I-8.1 states that the County shall develop a comprehensive economic development and branding strategy that achieves a target jobs-to-housing ratio by focusing on growth and retention of target industries and the complimentary land uses and infrastructure needed to support them; and

WHEREAS, to achieve the Goals and Objectives of the Comprehensive Plan for the WWAP, it is necessary to adopt Land Development Regulations that establish standards for development in the area; and

WHEREAS, the Board did adopt Ordinance 2022-23, on May 3, 2022, which created Chapter XVI, Lake County Code, Appendix E, Land Development Regulations, entitled *Wellness Way Area Plan Development Standards*; and

WHEREAS, to achieve the Goals and Objectives of the Comprehensive Plan for the WWAP and in protection of the Lake Wales Ridge, the Board finds it necessary to develop additional Land Development Regulations for the *Wellness Way Area Plan Development Standards* to encourage water conservation through drought-tolerant species and water budgets, reduce the use of fertilizers and pesticides, and encourage the use of Florida Native species to promote biodiversity; and

WHEREAS, the Board recognizes the importance of the WWAP area to the Florida Wildlife Corridor;
and

WHEREAS, the Board now finds it is in the best interests of the citizens of Lake County to amend the development standards as provided for in this ordinance.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the Board of County Commissioners of Lake County, Florida as follows:

Section 1. Legal Findings of Fact. The foregoing recitals are hereby adopted as legislative findings of the Board of County Commissioners and are ratified and confirmed as being true and correct and are hereby made a specific part of this Ordinance upon adoption hereof.

Section 2. Amendment. Section 16.00.02, Lake County Code, Appendix E, Land Development Regulations, is hereby amended to read as follows

(All sections prior to Section 5 shall remain unchanged.)

Section 5 Landscape and Natural Resources

5.1 Landscape and Irrigation Standards.

All development, both nonresidential and residential, within Wellness Way shall be subject to the Landscaping and Irrigation Standards found in this section. Where this section is silent, Lake County Land Development Code Sec. 9.01.00 and Lake County Code Section 21-31 will apply. The following additional standards shall also apply. The New Yard Pattern Book for Florida Sustainable Single Family Homes, Second Edition, as set forth in Section 16.00.04, and the Landscape and Irrigation Plan Examples for Wellness Way, as set forth in Section 16.00.05, may be used as a guide to meet the intent of these regulations.

The landscape in all required buffer areas in Wellness Way shall be composed 100% of native Florida species⁸. Through the PUD process, exceptions may be granted for designs that receive irrigation solely from retained stormwater.

5.1.1 Landscape Irrigation *Water Supply – Reclaimed Water*

All landscape irrigation shall be provided by reclaimed water. Another type of non-potable water supply may be used for landscape irrigation if reclaimed water is not available to the PUD. In no instance shall potable water be used for landscape irrigation unless authorized by the St. Johns River Water Management District pursuant to part II of Chapter 373, F.S. Conservation programs, system interconnections and alternative water supply options such as reclaimed water reuse and storage, shall occur when accessible. All development containing irrigated open space shall be required to accept reclaimed water for irrigation when such reclaimed water is available adjacent to the development's boundary. Connection shall be made at the developer's cost.

5.1.2 Irrigation and Landscape Plan Submittal

A detailed irrigation and landscape plan for nonresidential and residential development shall be submitted by a certified irrigation contractor, engineer, architect, or landscape architect in accordance with the Florida Water Star Silver Certification criteria.

The irrigation plan can be a part of the landscape plan or a separate plan. For residential lots, a master irrigation and landscape plan may be submitted for typical lots. Irregular lots require individual plans. The plan shall be submitted for review and approval prior to the installation of an irrigation system.

5.1.3 Water Efficient Irrigation

1. Irrigation control equipment shall be installed to foster water efficiency. For any new or redeveloped property, a functioning soil moisture sensor (SMS) and SMS-based controller or a weather-based controller accompanied by a rainfall shut-off device/rain sensor shall be required on all irrigation systems. SMS and rainfall shut-off devices shall be installed according to the manufacturer's guidelines. Rainfall shut-off devices must be properly installed and placed where they will receive unobstructed rainfall, with consideration to vegetation growth.

2. All permitted sites must have a separate landscape irrigation meter.

3. Newly installed sod will be permitted to have an establishment period not to exceed forty-five (45) days. During this establishment period, the landscaping irrigation schedules set forth in Section 21-33, Lake County Code, shall not apply.

5.1.4 Soil Amendments.

To ensure water conservation efforts and provide best management practices for establishing and maintaining landscape material, soil amendments shall be required as indicated below:

1. *Compost Product.* Compost products utilized for soil amending purposes shall be certified by the U.S. Composting Council's Seal of Testing Assurance (STA) Program. Where certified compost is not available, compost test results shall be provided to the County for examination of organic matter, Carbon/Nitrogen ratio, and pH level, to ensure the compost quality meets the intent of this Code.

2. Practical Instructions for Amending Post-Construction Soils Preparing the Area to be Amended.

- (a) Soil amending should not occur until all on-site construction traffic has ended. All building construction, including outdoor pavement, and installation of major utilities should be completed. Installation of irrigation lines and components should occur after amending is complete to avoid risk of damaging irrigation lines during tilling.
- (b) The soil surface should be graded smooth and free of any construction debris, or trash.

3. Applying Compost to Disturbed Soils.

- (a) Compost should be spread evenly over the surface at the prescribed rate of 4 yd³ / 1,000 ft², which is a depth approximately between 1-2 inches.
- (b) Level out any shallow or deep compost areas to ensure even depth. No areas of bare soil should be visible.
- (c) Retain copies of receipts for compost (volume yd³) delivered to the site, as they can be used during inspection to verify post-construction soil standards have been met.

4. Incorporation of Compost. Using a rotary tiller, incorporate compost to a depth of 4-6 inches into the soil.

5.1.5 Landscaping Standards. Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ principles conserve water and protect the environment. Florida native plants are adapted to conditions in which they are indigenous and contribute to biodiversity. Florida native plants used should be site specific. The principles of Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ include planning and design, appropriate choice of plants, soil analysis which may include the use of solid waste compost, efficient irrigation, practical use of turf, appropriate use of mulches, and proper maintenance. More information regarding Florida-Friendly Landscaping can be obtained from the University of Florida, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, located in Gainesville, Florida, or found at this link: <https://ffl.ifas.ufl.edu/resources/publications/>.

1. Design Standards.

- (a) Installed trees and plants shall be grouped together into landscape plant zones according to water and cultural (soil, climate, and light) requirements.
- (b) All residential development on vacant single family and duplex family residential lots within a platted subdivision or on a lot of record shall maintain a minimum of five (5) shrubs for every two-thousand square foot (2000') of gross lot area.
- (c) Plant groupings based on water requirements are as follows: low, moderate, and high drought tolerance. For the purposes of this code, plant beds must be designed so that at maturity the plant material must provide coverage of sixty percent (60%) of the plant bed.
- (d) Residential (single family and duplex): A maximum of twenty-five percent (25%) of the landscape area may be planted with irrigated turf grass. All

other areas shall be planted with drought-tolerant turf grass that is not irrigated, or Florida-Friendly plants and Florida native plants which utilize low-volume irrigation, when needed.

(e) Commercial and Multifamily: Commercial, multifamily, common green areas in subdivisions and retention ponds shall use Bahiagrass or other approved drought-tolerant ground cover.

(f) A layer of mulch to a minimum depth of three (3) inches shall be specified on the site plan in plant beds and around individual trees in turf areas. Non-organic mulch (rubber) is prohibited. The mulch shall not be placed directly against the plant stem or tree trunk.

2. Landscape Materials List. Sixty percent (60%) of the total landscape plant count approved for use in landscape plans, excluding turf, must be from the Florida Native Plant Society (FNPS) plant list found at <https://www.fnps.org/plants>, as amended, and up to forty percent (40%) may be from the Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ (FFL) Plant Guide found at <https://ffl.ifas.ufl.edu/resources/apps/plant-guide>, as amended. A minimum of eight (8) overall species must be used for single family homes. Commercial development, parks, and all other areas shall have a minimum of fifteen (15) species. All plant species used should be site appropriate for the Lake Wales Ridge. All landscape should utilize “right plant, right place” principles.

3. Buffers. The landscape in all required buffer areas in Wellness Way shall be composed of 100% of native Florida species. Through the PUD process, exceptions may be granted for designs that receive irrigation solely from retained stormwater.

5.1.6 Installation and Maintenance.

1. Installation. Installation of landscape material and irrigation shall strictly be in accordance with the approved landscape and irrigation plan. All irrigation systems shall be installed and inspected in accordance with the Florida Water StarSM Program. Landscape and irrigation are to be inspected by the County and maintained after installation. Irrigation systems shall be installed as per Appendix F of the Plumbing Volume of the Florida Building Code.

2. Maintenance.

(a) Landscape and irrigation are to be maintained in perpetuity.

(b) One (1) year after a certificate of occupancy is issued, a second inspection will be made to verify that all required landscaping is established, healthy, and properly maintained.

5.1.7 Water Management Plan. Prior to the first residential building permit application within a subdivision, the Home Builder or Master Developer shall submit a Water Management Plan to the Lake County Office of Planning and Zoning for approval. The plan shall identify all proposed irrigation water sources, outline strategies for efficient water use, establish a detailed irrigation budget, and specify the method and procedures by which compliance with the approved water budget will be monitored and reported. The Water Management Plan shall demonstrate that the

irrigation system shall not exceed twenty-five (25) inches per square foot, per lot, annually.

5.1.8 Homeowner Education. To encourage ongoing water conservation and proper maintenance of irrigation and landscapes, ongoing homeowner education is required.

1. New Homeowner Handbook. Home Builders or Master Developers shall provide new homeowners with a landscape and irrigation handbook, with explanations as to the uniqueness of the Wellness Way Landscape Code, the Florida Wildlife Corridor, and the Lake Wales Ridge. The handbook shall also include information regarding the required maintenance of irrigation and landscapes, the single family home water budget which shall not exceed twenty-five (25) inches per square foot, per lot, annually, as well as the importance of water conservation and water budgets.

2. Annual Educational Meetings for Homeowners. Annually, each HOA or CDD shall provide an educational, in-person, meeting regarding the requirements of this Code.

3. Educational Kiosks. Throughout each approved development, as per the defined area in the PUD, each Home Builder or Master Developer shall provide a minimum of three (3) educational kiosks to be placed in common areas such as neighborhood trailheads or community gathering spaces. The educational kiosks will provide information on the following:

(a) The importance of the Lake Wales Ridge for water recharge and biodiversity.

(b) A description of how landscape and water usage affect the Lake Wales Ridge.

(c) Detail as to why the Wellness Way Landscape Code is unique.

(d) Information on water conservation and the Development's approved Water Management Plan.

(e) The importance of the Wildlife Corridor and Corridor compatibility within Wellness Way.

4. Resources. Builders, Developers, HOAs and CDDs are encouraged to contact the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS) Extension Lake County and The Florida Wildlife Corridor Foundation for resources and graphics related to the Homeowner Education section of this code.

(All Sections after Section 5.1 shall remain unchanged)

Section 3. Creation. Section 16.00.04, Lake County Code, Appendix E, Land Development Regulations, to be entitled *The New Yard Pattern Book For Florida's Sustainable Single Family Homes, Second Edition*, is hereby created to read as follows:

16.00.04 – The New Yard Pattern Book For Florida's Sustainable Single Family Homes.

The New Yard Pattern Book For Florida's Sustainable Single Family Homes, Second Edition, produced by Dix.Hite + Partners for the Outside Sustainable Landscape Collaborative in 2023, is codified into the Lake County Code with express written permission from the publishers dated June 20, 2025. This document is codified as a guide to assist residents and developers with meeting the intent of Section 16.00.02, Section 5.1, of these regulations. Compliance with the New Yard Pattern Book for Florida's Sustainable Single Family Homes, Second Edition, is not a requirement of this Code.

(The New Yard Pattern Book consisting of 62 pages to be inserted here)

Section 4. Creation. Section 16.00.0,5 Lake County Code, Appendix E, Land Development Regulations, to be entitled *Landscape and Irrigation Plan Examples for Wellness Way*, is hereby created to read as follows:

16.00.05 Landscape and Irrigation Plan Examples for Wellness Way

The Landscape and Irrigation Plan Examples for Wellness Way shall be codified into the Lake County Code. This document is codified to for the sole purpose of being illustrative. The Figures below shall not be submitted with a development application. All landscape and irrigation plans must be submitted by a certified irrigation contractor, engineer, architect, or landscape architect in accordance with the Florida Water Star Silver Certification criteria.

Figure 1:

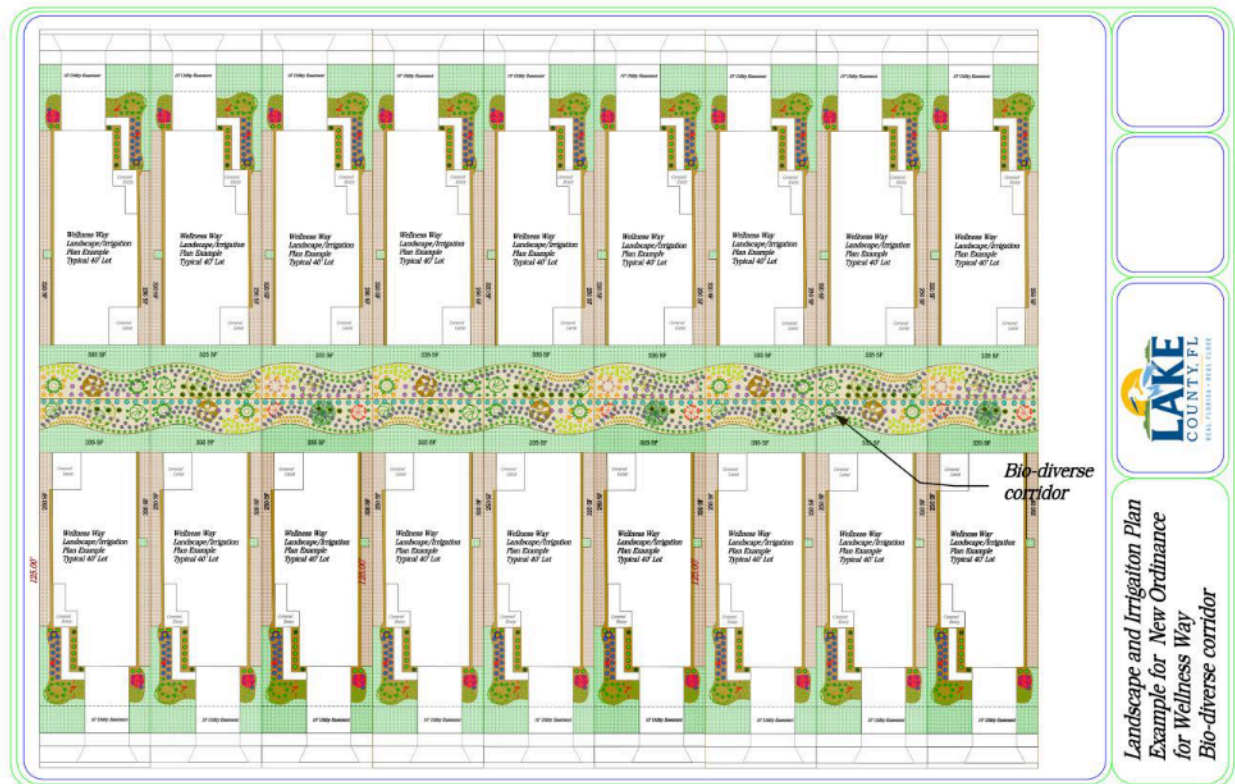


Figure 2:

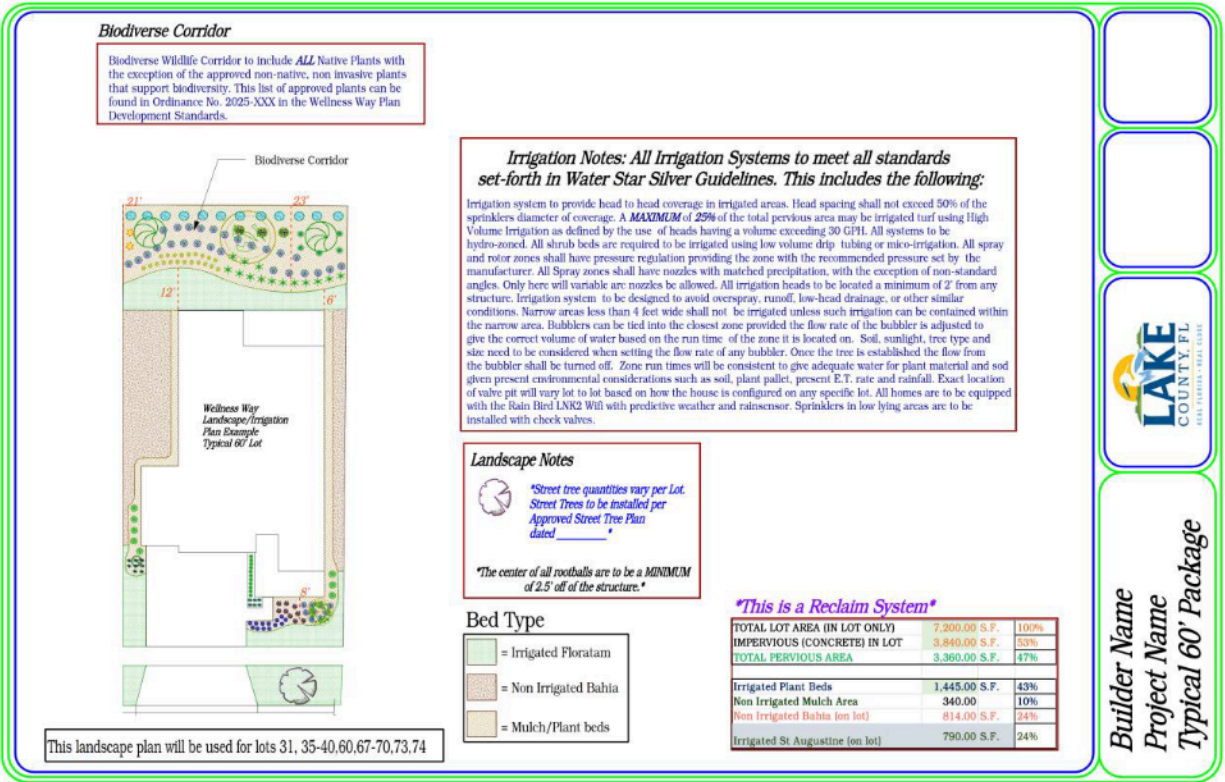
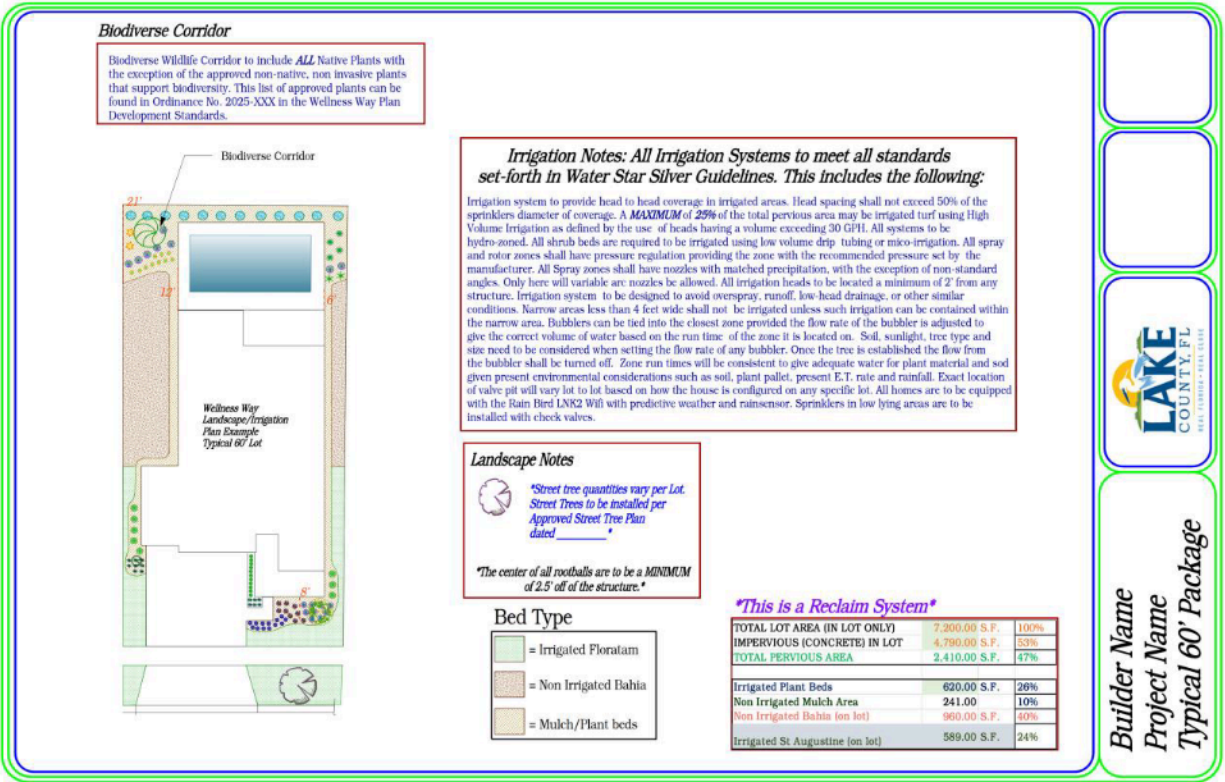
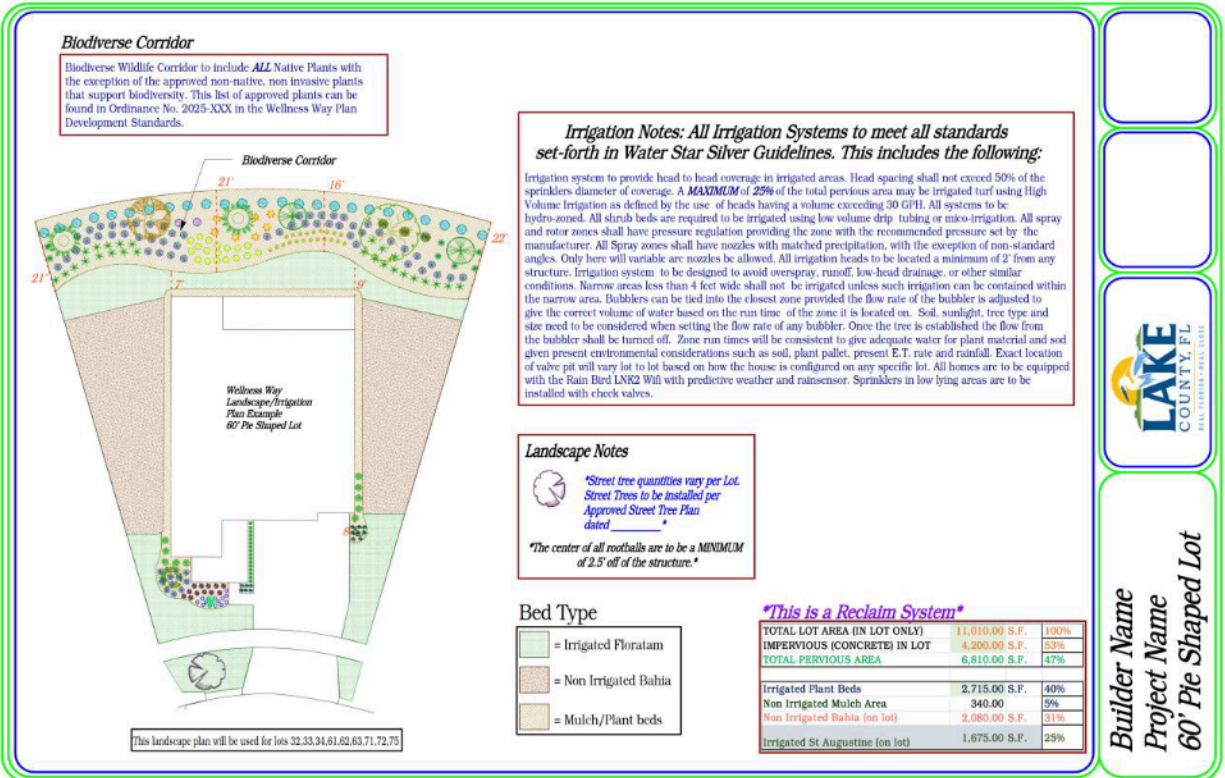


Figure 3:



1 **Figure 4:**



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3
4 **Figure 5:**

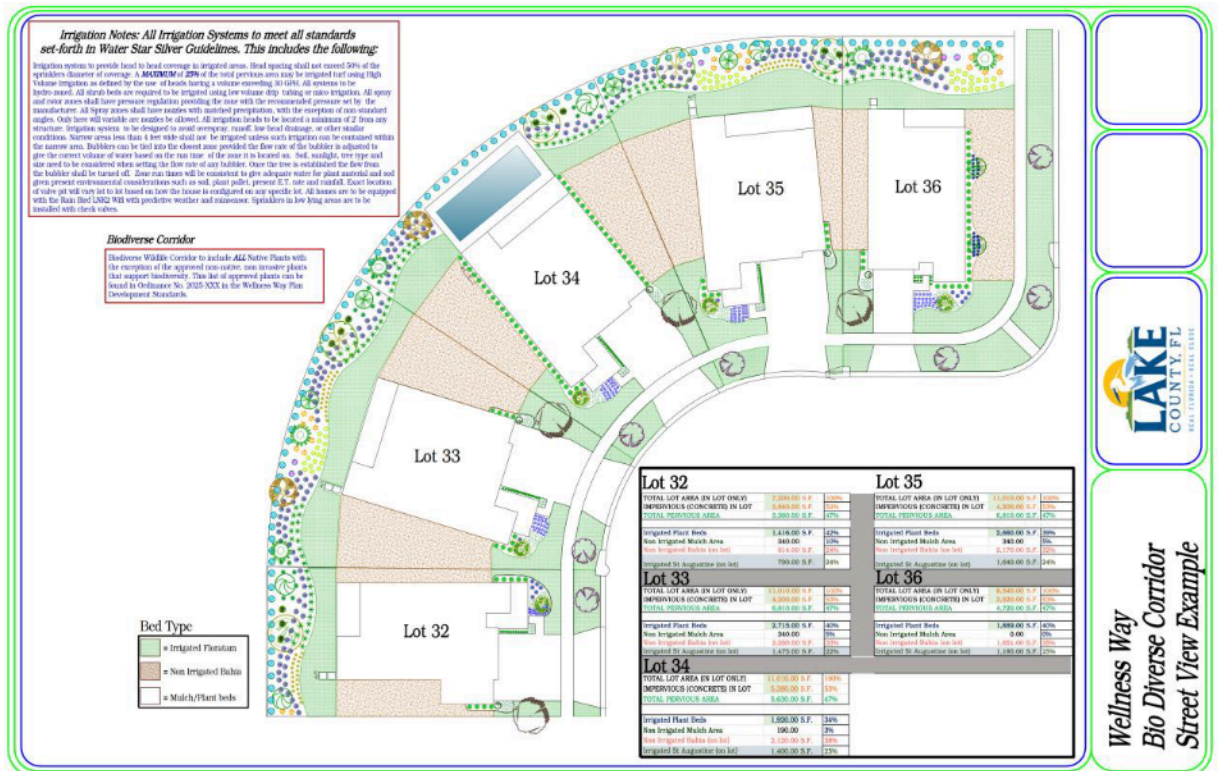
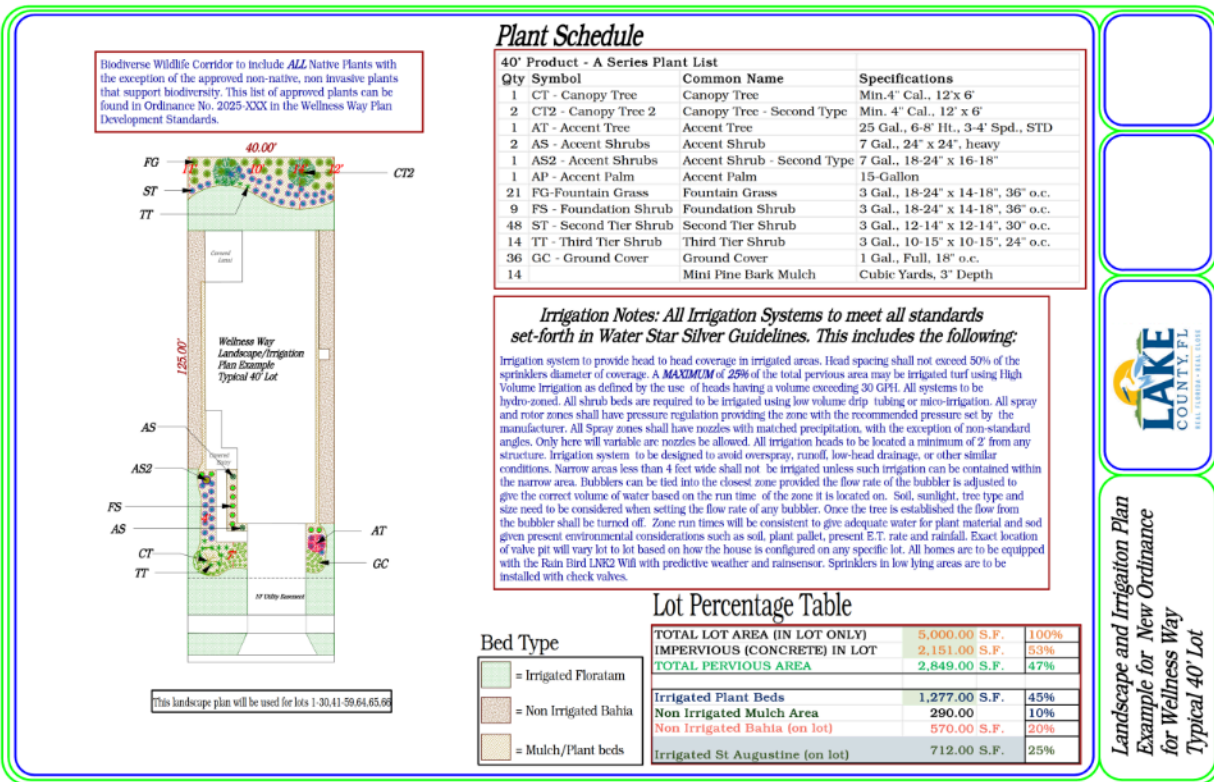


Figure 6:



Section 5. Amendment. Chapter II, Lake County Code, Appendix E, Land Development Regulations, entitled *Definitions*, is hereby amended to read as follows:

(Definitions to be added in alphabetical order)

Compost. Compost is a nutrient-rich, decomposed mixture of organic materials used to improve soil structure and fertility.

Plant Bed. A grouping of trees, shrubs, ground covers, perennials, or annuals growing together in a defined area devoid of turf grass, normally using mulch around the plants. For the purposes of Florida Water Star, plant beds must be designed so that, at maturity, the plant material must provide coverage of sixty percent (60%) of the plant bed.

Section 6. Severability. If any section, sentence, clause, or phrase or word of this Ordinance is for any reason held or declared to be invalid, unconstitutional, inoperative or void by any court of competent jurisdiction, then said holding shall in no way affect the validity of the remaining portion of this Ordinance; and it shall be construed to have been the Commissioners' intent to pass this Ordinance without such

1 unconstitutional, invalid or inoperative part therein; and the remainder of this Ordinance, after the exclusion
2 of such part or parts shall be deemed and held to be valid, as if such parts had not been included herein; or
3 if this Ordinance or any provisions thereof shall be held inapplicable to any person, groups of persons,
4 property, kind of property, circumstances or set of circumstances, such holding shall not affect the
5 applicability thereof to any other person, property or circumstances.

6
7 **Section 7. Inclusion in the Code.** It is the intent of the Board of County Commissioners that
8 the provisions of this Ordinance shall become and be made a part of the Lake County Code and that the
9 sections of this Ordinance may be renumbered or relettered and the word "ordinance" may be changed to
10 "section," "article," or such other appropriate word or phrase in order to accomplish such intentions.

11
12 **Section 8. Filing with the Department of State.** The Clerk shall be and is hereby directed
13 forthwith to send an electronic copy of this Ordinance to the Secretary of State for the State of Florida in
14 accordance with Section 125.66, Florida Statutes.

15
16 **Section 9. Effective Date.** This Ordinance shall become effective as provided for by law.

17
18 Enacted this _____ day of _____, 2026.

19
20 Filed with the Secretary of State _____, 2026.

21
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23
24 ATTEST: BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
25 OF LAKE COUNTY, FLORIDA

26
27
28 _____
29 Gary J. Cooney, Clerk of the
30 Board of County Commissioners
31 of Lake County, Florida

Leslie Campione, Chairman

32
33
34 This ____ day of _____, 2026.

35
36
37 Approved as to form and legality:

38 _____
Melanie Marsh, County Attorney