



**A RESOLUTION TO AMEND THE HAMILTON COUNTY
ZONING REGULATIONS TO AMEND ARTICLE II.
DEFINITIONS AND ADD A NEW P-R PARKS AND
RECREATION DISTRICT AND TO AMEND ARTICLE VI.
SPECIAL PERMITS BY HAMILTON COUNTY COMMISSION TO ADD A RURAL RETREAT**

WHEREAS, the current Hamilton County Zoning Regulations as adopted do not have a zone district that permits outdoor recreation and park uses and their related accessory uses; and,

WHEREAS, the P-R Parks and Recreation District is intended to create, preserve, and enhance public open space to meet the passive and active park and recreational needs of Hamilton County; and,

WHEREAS, the P-R Parks and Recreation District will provide public amenities and places to gather in improved and unimproved park and recreation lands. Facilities may include, but are not limited to, structures or other active, play-oriented facilities such as playgrounds, recreational fields, ballfields, sport courts, dog parks, marinas, cemeteries, golf courses, cultural facilities such as museums and libraries, county fair and associated accessory facilities such as recreation and community centers, park administrative offices, and restroom facilities; and,

WHEREAS, the P-R Parks and Recreation District will permit uses, such as agritourism, eating and drinking establishments, special events, and farmer's markets that will help attract the public to the park lands and activate the space to create a sense of place and community in Hamilton County; and,

WHEREAS, adding a Special Permit for a Rural Retreat would allow and encourage resorts, hotels, conference centers, and associated used to located in an attractive and rural setting with natural amenities such as lakes, rivers, mountain, woodland, and other desirable landscape characteristics; and,

WHEREAS, this amendment was recommended for approval by the Chattanooga-Hamilton County Regional Planning Commission on August 12, 2024 to the Hamilton County Board of Commissioners; and

WHEREAS, the Hamilton County Board of Commissioners in their regularly scheduled meetings deferred action on the proposed amendment until after the adoption of Plan Hamilton; and,

WHEREAS, as there was no specific date noted for the adoption of Plan Hamilton staff requested that this amendment been withdrawn and was approved for withdrawal by the Hamilton County Board of Commissioners and to bring back after Plan Hamilton was adopted.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Chattanooga-Hamilton County Regional Planning Commission on April 13, 2026, does hereby recommend to the Hamilton County Commission that the Hamilton County Zoning Regulations be amended as follows:

Amend Article II. Definitions by inserting the following definitions:

AGRICULTURE. Land and associated structures used to grow crops and/or raise livestock for sale, personal food production, donation, and/or educational purposes. The agriculture use includes single-family dwellings and any additional dwellings that are accessory to the principal activity of agriculture. Agriculture also includes the use of farmstands for the sale of crops grown on the premises.

AGRITOURISM. A form of commercial enterprise that links agricultural production and/or processing with tourism, through promotion and advertising, facilities, and activities, to attract visitors, guests and vacationers onto a farm, ranch, vineyard, or other agricultural business for the purposes of entertaining and/or educating the visitors and generating income for the farm, ranch, or business owner. This includes the sales of agricultural products produced on site.

other overhangs, that is or may be covered by buildings and accessory structures.

CAMPGROUND. Land used for transient occupancy by camping in tents, camp trailers, cabins, travel trailers, recreational vehicles, yurts, or similar movable temporary sleeping quarters.

COMMUNITY CENTER. A building, park, playground, swimming pool, or athletic field operated by a local community organization, association or Hamilton County government.

CONSERVATION AREAS: Designated open space that is protected by a conservation easement that preserves and protects natural features, wildlife, and critical environmental features, as well as undeveloped sites of historical or cultural significance. A conservation area may include opportunities for passive recreation, such as hiking trails and lookout structures, and environmental education.

COUNTRY CLUB. An establishment open to members, their families, and invited guests organized and operated for social and recreation purposes and which may have indoor and/or outdoor recreation facilities, eating and drinking establishments, meeting rooms, and similar uses.

CULTURAL FACILITY. A facility open to the public that provides access to cultural exhibits and activities including, but not limited to, museums, cultural or historical centers, non-commercial galleries, historical societies, and libraries. A cultural facility may include typical accessory services such as, but not limited to, retail sales of related items and restaurants.

EATING AND DRINKING ESTABLISHMENT. An establishment where food and/or drinks are prepared and provided to the public for on-premises consumption by seated patrons or for carry-out service. Eating and drinking establishments may have outdoor dining/seating areas. Restaurants and bars are considered eating and drinking establishments.

FAIRGROUNDS. An area wherein buildings, structures and land are used for agricultural related offices, animal shows and judging, carnivals, circuses, concerts, food booths and stands, games, rides, rodeos, sales and auctions, indoor storage, and theaters.

FARMER'S MARKET. A market where retail sales and demonstration of home-grown products, including produce, ornamental crops, meat, eggs and other agricultural products; homemade value-added products, including baked goods, jams and jellies, pickles and relish, dried fruits, syrups and honey; handmade arts, crafts, and unique local goods are conducted by the vendor engaged in the production of such products. The term does not include the sale or demonstration of mass produced items, used clothing, appliances, and other similar products.

Fast Food Restaurant: An establishment whose principal business is the sale of pre-prepared or rapidly prepared food directly to the customer in a ready-to-consume state for consumption either within the restaurant building, in vehicles on the premises, or off the premises. This definition does not include mobile food units (trucks/vendors).

FLEA MARKET. A retail market or sale operated outdoors, or beneath unenclosed shelters and doing business on a continuing basis, or for as many as six (6) days during a sixty (60) day period, where inexpensive and/or second hand items are offered for sale by one or more vendors and including rummage sales, garage or attic sales, and similar undertakings when operated in such a manner as to fall within the limits of this definition.

GARDEN, COMMUNITY. An area of land managed and maintained by a nonprofit or group of individuals to grow and harvest food and non-food crops for personal or group use, consumption, or donation.

GARDEN, MARKET. An area of land managed and maintained by an individual, group, or business to grow and harvest food and non-food crops to be sold for profit on-site, off-site, or both.

GOLF COURSE/DRIVING RANGE. A tract of land design with at least nine holes for playing a game of golf and improved with tees, greens, fairways, and hazards. A golf course may include a clubhouse, restrooms, snack-bar, and pro-shop as accessory services. A driving range may be designed as a standalone facility or included as part of a golf course, which is defined as a tract of land equipped with distance markers, clubs, balls, and tees for practicing the hitting of golf balls.

MOBILE FOOD UNIT. Any motorized vehicle or trailer attached to a motorized vehicle that includes a self contained kitchen in which food is prepared or processed and from which food is sold or dispensed to the ultimate

consumer. Mobile food units must be mobile and on wheels at all times during operation.

PUBLIC PARK. A facility that serves the recreational needs of residents and visitors. Public park includes, but is not limited to, playgrounds, ballfields, football fields, soccer fields, basketball courts, tennis courts, dog parks, skateboard parks, passive recreation areas, and gymnasiums. Public parks may also include non commercial indoor or outdoor facilities, including zoos and amphitheaters, accessory services such as, but not limited to, restaurant and retail establishments, and temporary outdoor uses such as festivals and performances.

RETAIL GOODS ESTABLISHMENT. An establishment that provides physical goods, products, or merchandise directly to the consumer, where such goods are typically available for immediate purchase and removal from the premises by the purchaser. Retail goods establishment do not include specialty food service or retail liquor stores.

RESORT: A facility for transient guests where the primary attractions are recreational features or activities.

RURAL RETREAT: A facility owned and operated by an entity for the purpose of providing a rural setting in which lodging, conferences, banquet facilities/restaurants, day spas, recreational amenities and meeting/event facilities are provided with or without compensation. Rural retreat does not include a farm engaged in agriculture as defined by state law.

Amend Article VI Schedule of Zone District Regulations by inserting Section 200. P-R Parks and Recreation District

**ARTICLE IV
SCHEDULE OF DISTRICT REGULATIONS**

2000. P-R PARKS & RECREATION DISTRICT REGULATIONS

2001. Intent

The P-R Parks and Recreation Zoning District is intended to create, preserve, and enhance public open space to meet the passive and active park and recreational needs of Hamilton County. The P-R District is intended to provide public amenities and places to gather in improved and unimproved park and recreation lands. The P-R District will permit uses, such as agritourism, eating and drinking establishments, special events, and farmer’s markets that will help attract the public to the park lands and activate the space to create a sense of place and community in Hamilton County.

2002. Use Regulations

A. Principal Uses Permitted

- 1) Agriculture
- 2) Agritourism
- 3) Campground
- 4) Community Center
- 5) Conservation Area
- 6) Country Club
- 7) Cultural Facility
- 8) Fairground
- 9) Farmer’s Market
- 10) Garden, Community
- 11) Garden, Market
- 12) Golf Course/Driving Range
- 13) Greenhouse, Commercial
- 14) Greenhouse, Non-commercial
- 15) Public Park
- 16) Recreational uses such as horseback riding, bike and walking trails, and other similar uses
- 17) Stables, Boarding

- 18) Watchman/Caretaker Dwelling(s)
- 19) Group Gatherings such as: Weddings, Reunions, Business Meetings, Receptions, Classes and other similar services

B. Accessory Uses Permitted

- 1) Buildings, structures, and uses customarily incidental to any of the above uses when located on the same lot or tract, subject to the regulations or restrictions of ARTICLE V
- 2) Eating and Drinking Establishment. Fast food restaurants and drive-through's are prohibited.
- 3) Mobile Food Unit
- 4) Retail Goods Establishment

C. Prohibited Uses:

- 1) Flea Markets
- 2) Fast Food Restaurants and Drive Throughs
- 3) Adult Oriented Establishments
- 4) Commercial Dairies and Poultry Farms
- 5) Commercial Kennels, and other animal raising or feeding farms
- 6) Private recreational centers or uses

D. Additional Uses Allowed with Special Permit

- 1) **Special Permits by Chattanooga-Hamilton County Regional Planning Commission** a) Amusement Resorts – Permanent and Temporary, subject to Article VI, Sections 303 and 304
- 2) **Special Permits by Hamilton County Commission:**
 - a. Bed and breakfast operations provided that the Bed and Breakfast contain no more than nine (9) bedrooms for that purpose and the innkeeper shall reside on premises, subject to See Article VI, Section 406
 - b. Cemeteries, Mausoleums, and Crematories, subject to Article VI, Section 418
 - c. Commercial radio, television, telephone, microwave and other communication towers, subject to Article VI, Section 410
 - d. Recreational marinas, subject to Article VI, Section 422
 - e. Rural Retreat, subject to Article VI. Section 428

2003. Area Regulations

Table 2003: P-R Dimensional Standards establishes the dimensional standards for the P-R District

2003: P-R District Dimensional Standards	
Bulk	
Minimum Area for P-R Parks & Recreation District: 50 Acres	
Minimum Lot Area – Permitted Uses	Permitted Uses: None Accessory Uses: Cannot exceed more than 10% of the total acreage of the P-R zoned property
Maximum Building Coverage	20%
Maximum Building Height	50'

Setbacks (Setbacks Apply to Buildings Only)	
Minimum Front Setback	25'
Minimum Side Setback	25'
Minimum Rear Setback	25'

2004. Off-Street Parking

Off-street parking shall be provided on the same lot or on a lot adjacent to the building in accordance with the following requirements:

- (1) Parking space for any permitted use shall be an ample amount to accommodate all vehicles of transportation that are used by employees, visitors, or patrons of the permitted use. The off street parking facilities shall be designated to make it unnecessary for cars to back across sidewalks or into alleys, or otherwise to maneuver in and out of parking areas into areas for pedestrian or automotive traffic.

Amend Article VI. 400. Special Permits by Hamilton County Commission by inserting the following:

428. SPECIAL PERMIT FOR RURAL RETREATS

Rural retreats, as defined in Article 2: Definitions are permitted as a Special Permit in the P-R Parks and Recreation District.

The intent of the rural retreat is to allow and encourage resorts, hotels, conference centers, and associated uses to locate in a rural setting with natural amenities such as lakes, rivers, mountains, woodlands, and other desirable landscape characteristics. It is also the intent of this district to allow the land to be used and developed in a manner consistent with its natural amenities and to protect the natural environment. This intent is to be achieved by appropriately designed developments resulting in clustering of buildings, minimizing the amount of roadway, maintenance of natural vegetation and vegetative buffers, landscaping, effective storm water management, maintenance of natural drainage ways, good road access to the site, and basing the intensity of the development on the availability of public utilities.

Rural retreats are subject to the following standards and requirements:

A. Primary Uses in a Rural Retreat:

- 1. Resorts
- 2. Hotels
- 3. Conference Centers/Event Center

B. Associated Recreation Uses Incidental and Subordinate to Primary Rural Retreat Use

Recreational uses incidental and subordinate to the primary Rural Retreat use are permitted and may include:

- 1. Swimming pools and related facilities
- 2. Boating facilities
- 3. Tennis and other sports courts
- 4. Equestrian facilities
- 5. Ziplines, corn mazes, and picnic areas
- 6. Golf courses and related facilities, athletic fields

7. Children's play equipment, and passive recreational facilities

C. Associated Uses Incidental and Subordinate to Primary Rural Retreat Use

The resort, hotel and conference center may include the following as associated uses:

Banquets, conferences, weddings, reunions, business meetings, receptions, classes and other similar services
Eating and Drinking Establishments.

D. Minimum Required Information

A Special Permit application for a Rural Retreat in the P-R Parks and Recreation District shall include a complete description of all activities proposed to occur on the subject property and a scaled site plan. At a minimum, the following items must be addressed on the submitted materials at the time of application:

The description of proposed activities shall include the following:

1. Total Acreage of Site
2. Property lines of area proposed to be used for the Special Permit
3. Location of the proposed hotel, resort, or conference building
4. Vehicular and pedestrian points of ingress and egress, existing and proposed
5. Proposed total floor area and height of the hotel, resort, or conference building
6. Location and identification of other activities on site: such as recreation areas, swimming pool, etc
7. Location of Parking Areas including Number of Proposed Parking Spaces
8. Location of Dumpster(s)
9. Location and type of landscape buffers proposed

- E. **Road Access.** The site shall have adequate access reviewed and approved by the Hamilton County Fire Marshall's Office and Hamilton County Engineering.

At the request of the Fire Marshall's Office or Hamilton County Development Services a traffic impact study may be requested as part of the application for the Special Permit. This traffic impact study must be reviewed and approved by Hamilton County Engineering staff. Any recommendations for road improvements must be incorporated into the overall development plan.

- F. **Setbacks:** All buildings, parking, loading, campsites, recreation areas and other indoor or outdoor use areas shall be setback a minimum of 200 feet from property lines and a minimum of 300 feet from existing residential dwelling(s) on adjacent parcels.

- G. **Off-Street Parking:** Rural retreats are subject to the off-street parking requirements as follows:

Off-street parking shall be provided on the same lot or on a lot adjacent to the building in accordance with the following requirements:

- (1) Parking space for any permitted use shall accommodate all vehicles of transportation that are used by employees, visitors, or patrons of the permitted use. The off-street parking facilities shall be designated to make it unnecessary for cars to back across sidewalks or into alleys, or otherwise to maneuver in and out of parking areas into areas for pedestrian or automotive traffic.

- H. **Setbacks for Recreational Uses:** Recreational uses incidental and subordinate to the primary Rural Retreat use are permitted and may include: swimming pools and related facilities, boating facilities, tennis and other sports courts, equestrian facilities, ziplines, corn mazes, picnic areas, golf courses and related facilities, athletic fields, children's play equipment. All recreational uses are subject to the setback requirements of section G above. The use of the recreational facilities is limited to event guests and property owners/guests. The setbacks in section G above would not apply to passive recreational areas.

Respectfully submitted,



Karen Rennich, Secretary

Date of Adoption: April 13, 2026
Parks and Recreation District