CITY OF GAUTIER
MEMORANDUM

To: Samantha Abell, City Manager

From: Chandra Nicholson, Economic Development & Planning Director

Date: May 27, 2014

Subject: Consideration of an Amendment to Article XII of the Unified Development Ordinance to Revise the Corridor Overlay District to incorporate a Sign Overlay District. (City Initiated) GPC Case #14-07-UDO

REQUEST:

The City Manager directed Staff to draft an amendment to the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) pursuant to Section 4.20, to revise the Corridor Overlay District to incorporate a Sign Overlay District which would allow off-site directional signage in certain instances.

The request for off-site signage by tourism-oriented businesses has increased. The sign overlay district will be coterminous with the corridor overlay district. The district provides an incentive for tourism-oriented businesses to operate within special districts and along major arterials, by allowing a means for off-site signage with specific conditions.

BACKGROUND:

Off-Site Signage History
The City's Unified Development Ordinance does not permit off-site directional signs with business name, logo, or any other form of advertising.

The Amendment Process
Amendments to the Unified Development Ordinance may be initiated by the City Council, the Gautier Planning Commission (GPC), the City Staff, or by a citizen. The process requires that the GPC review and forward a recommendation to the City Council on the proposed amending ordinance(s).

The City Council may consider approval after a public hearing based on the application and the relevant support materials, testimony at the public hearing, the GPC recommendation, and the Staff Report.

DISCUSSION:

The City's UDO does not currently allow businesses to erect off-site signage that contain the business name, logo, or any other advertisement. The city has many tourism related businesses

that are not visible from major arterials, therefore, making it difficult for visitors and tourists to find the businesses or to know they exist.

The proposed amendment to Article XII, "Signs, Billboards and Advertising Materials," of the UDO, will revise the sign code for the Sign Overlay District to encompass the mixed use Mary Walker Waterfront District, the Town Center District, and lands located within the Corridor Overlay District.

The proliferation of off-site signs throughout the city should be discouraged in order to prevent excessive visual competition, vehicular distractions, and also prevent the proliferation of "ghost signs" and abandoned signs. However, the overlay district will allow off-site signage while preserving and enhancing town character by requiring new and replacement signage appropriate for tourism-rated activity, expressive of the identity of individual proprietors or the community as a whole, and appropriately sized in its content. The sign overlay encourages the use of the city's sign and design guidelines by requiring the marquees to use a minimum of two architectural elements from Gautier's official "Nature's Playground" sign scheme for appropriate commercial signage, to adequately aid communication and orientation, identify uses and activities, and express local character (see attached ordinance).

Staff finds that the Sign Overlay District will encourage tourism and enhance the feel of a destination place. Stated above, the overlay district will allow off-site signage while preserving and enhancing town character by requiring new and replacement signage appropriate for tourism-rated activity, expressive of the identity of individual proprietors or the community as a whole, and appropriately sized in its content.

Staff further finds the request is consistent with the policies of the Comprehensive Plan.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Gautier Planning Commission and Staff recommend that City Council approved the proposed UDO Amendment.

The City Council may:

1. Approve the Planning Commission's unanimous recommendation of the proposed UDO Amendment;
2. Approve the proposed UDO Amendment with changes; or
3. Deny the proposed UDO Amendment.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Draft Ordinance
2. GPC Staff Report with Back-up
3. GPC Minutes Excerpt

ORDINANCE

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF GAUTIER, MISSISSIPPI, PROVIDING AUTHORITY & INTENT; AMENDING ARTICLE XII, SIGNS, BILLBOARDS AND ADVERTISING MATERIAL, OF THE UNIFIED DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE, BY REVISING THE CORRIDOR OVERLAY DISTRICT TO INCLUDE A SIGN OVERLAY DISTRICT TO ENCOMPASS LANDS COTERMINOUS WITH THE CORRIDOR OVERLAY DISTRICT, FOR THE PURPOSE OF ENCOURAGING TOURISM AND A DESTINATION PLACE; AND SETTING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF GAUTIER, MISSISSIPPI, THAT THE UNIFIED DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF GAUTIER IS AMENDED AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. Authority & Intent

A. The authority for enactment of this ordinance is contained in Section 4.20 of the City's Unified Development Ordinance.

B. The Gautier Planning Commission held a public hearing, after giving due public notice and considered of this ordinance, on May 1, 2014. The City Council conducted a public hearing on June 3, 2014.

C. The Planning Commission finds that there is a need for Off-Site Directional Sign Marquees for tourist-related businesses and that the creation of a Sign Overlay District will encourage tourism and enhance the feel of a destination place.

D. The Planning Commission finds the creation of a Sign Overlay District to be consistent with the goals of the Comprehensive Plan.

Section 2. Amendment of Article XII

Article XII, Signs, Billboards and Advertising Material, is hereby amended to wit (delete strike-thru):

Section 12.11 Off-Site Directional Signage – Add the following subsection at the end of Section 12.11:

<u>F. An off-site directional sign shall not contain the name of the business, logo, or any other advertising materials, except as allowed by Section 12.18 Sign Overlay District. Any sign that meets the requirements and applicability of the Sign Overlay District section will be referred to as an Off-Site Directional Sign Marquee.</u>

Section 12.18 Sign Overlay District – Add the following Section at the end of Article XII after Section 12.17:

<u>Section 12.18 Sign Overlay District</u>

12.18.1 District Creation and Purpose

The Sign Overlay District is hereby created and includes lands coterminous with the Corridor Overlay District.

The purpose of the sign overlay district is to increase tourism in tourism-related areas of the city. It shall be the purpose of the ordinance to encourage multi-tenant free-standing signs whenever possible, but also provide for single-business free-standing signs, in order to limit the proliferation of "snipe signs" and aesthetic disharmony in high density areas.

12.18.2 District Regulations

A. General

1. Off-site directional signage located within the City may not contain business name, business logo, or other advertising material, except as allowed within the Sign Overlay District. Any sign that meets the requirements and applicability of the Sign Overlay District section will be referenced as an Off-Site Directional Sign Marquee.

2. Marquees shall be referred to as Single Off-Site Marquee or Shared Off-Site Marquee.

3. Shared Off-Site Marquees are encouraged and will be given more flexibility than single Off-Site Marquees.

B. Applicability – Only tourism related businesses may install or be located on an off-site directional sign which includes the name of the business, logo of business, or any other advertising material. A tourism-related business is defined as a business whose customer base consists largely of non-local patrons, such as hotels, specialty retail, destination shopping venues and restaurants. Franchise restaurants and retail shall be allowed to advertise on an off-site sign in such instances when the franchise is located within a multi-tenant destination center.

C. Number of Signs Allowed - A business will only be allowed one Single Off-Site Marquee. There is no limit on the number of Shared Off-Site Marquees a business may be displayed on, but a particular business may only be listed once per marquee.

D. Location and Visibility

1. Shared Off-Site Marquees may be located within the Sign Overlay District at roadway intersections or within 500' of the intersection. If roadway intersections are spaced more than ½ mile apart, an intermediate sign may be placed approximately mid-way between intersections as approved by the Economic Development Director.

2. Single Off-Site Marquees may be located within the Sign Overlay District, but shall be spaced at least 1000 feet apart along the adjacent roadway.

3. Off-Site Marquee Signs with space for three (3) or more listed businesses may be located on a parcel in conjunction with the allowable number of free-standing business signs in accordance with this Article. Off-Site Marquees Signs with less than three (3) listed businesses on the marquee may not be located on the same parcel as other free-standing business signs.

4. Visibility – Off-site Sign Marquees shall not block the visibility of another existing business or business sign. The TRC may require a temporary field representation of the location and height before approval is granted. In addition, if there is any question about visibility, the TRC or the Economic Development Director may send the Sign Marquee request to Planning Commission and City Council for a public hearing.

5. Off-Site Sign Marquees shall not be placed in the clear visibility triangle as shown in Table No. 28 in Section 11.11 of this UDO.

12.18.3 District Off-Site Sign Requirements

A. Appearance and Materials - Within the sign overlay district, the Off-Site Sign Marquee must incorporate a minimum of two architectural elements from the official Gautier entrance signs, park entrance signs, directional signs, and/or town center gateway sign. Namely, these architectural elements include: stone, brick, black aluminum, pitched copper roof type cover, copper metal backing, square wooden columns, fluted columns, natural roughhewn wood with routed lettering, or some other detail keeping with the theme "Nature's Playground" and the historic fishing village feel. In addition, the marquee may incorporate the City's crane (bird) insignia or Nature's Playground logo/theme.

B. Sign Size Limitations

1. Single Off-Site Marquees shall be limited to the same size requirements as a regular business sign.
2. Shared Off-Site Marquees shall be limited to the same size requirements as a regular business sign per business listed on the marquee.

C. Height Limitations

1. Single Off-Site Marquees shall be limited to the same height requirements as a regular business sign.
2. Shared Off-Site Marquees shall be limited to the same height requirements as a regular business sign for two (2) businesses listed on the marquee. Five (5) additional feet may be added to the maximum height of the sign per every two (2) additional businesses listed on the marquee.

Section 3. Conflicts

All ordinances or parts of ordinances in conflict with this ordinance are repealed to the extent of such conflict.

Section 4. Severability

If any word, phrase, sentence, paragraph or provision of this ordinance or the application thereof to any person or circumstance is held invalid or unconstitutional, such finding shall not affect the other provisions or applications of this ordinance which can be given effect without the invalid or unconstitutional provision or application, and to this end the provisions of this ordinance are declared severable.

Section 5. Effective Date

This Ordinance shall take effect immediately upon approval by the City Council and signature of the Mayor.

Adopted: _____ _____

Gordon Gollott, Mayor

Attest: Approved as to form and legal sufficiency.

_____ _____

Cindy Russell, City Clerk Josh Danos, City Attorney

New language is underlined.
Deleted language is ~~stricken~~.
To Be Codified.

DRAFT

Gautier Planning Commission

Regular Meeting Agenda

May 1, 2014

Sign Overlay District
UDO Amendment

VII. NEW BUSINESS

B. LEGISLATIVE

1. REQUEST TO AMEND THE UDO TO CREATE A SIGN OVERLAY DISTRICT (CITY INITIATED) (GPC #14-07-UDO)

CITY OF GAUTIER
STAFF REPORT

To: Chairman and Members, Planning Commission

From: Chandra Nicholson, Economic Development & Planning Director

Date: April 25, 2014

Subject: Consideration of an Amendment to Article XII of the Unified Development Ordinance to create a Sign Overlay District. (City Initiated) GPC #14-07-UDO

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