



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**OVERLAY FOR COAL MOUNTAIN AREA OF  
NORTHERN FORSYTH COUNTY ADOPTED**

*Overlay aimed at visual unity, elevated design quality*

**Forsyth County, Georgia** – An overlay for the Coal Mountain area of northern Forsyth County was adopted by the Forsyth County Board of Commissioners at their meeting July 6. An overlay district is a defined geographic area that encompasses one or more zoning districts and that imposes additional requirements above and beyond those required by the underlying zoning district.

The Coal Mountain Overlay is intended to create visual unity through an elevated level of design quality applied throughout the area. Simultaneously, the overlay is designed to enhance the individuality of three distinct character nodes (Coal Mountain, Hammond's Crossing and Matt) whose identity has come about through historic settlement and land use.

District 4 Commissioner Cindy Jones Mills, the district commissioner for the Coal Mountain area, assembled the Coal Mountain Overlay Committee to work on this initiative and make recommendations for the overlay that Planning & Community Development staff then turned into code.

“The purpose of this process was to create a standard and to raise the bar for north Forsyth and these character areas,” said Jones Mills. “A committee came together and devoted many hours of their time to help create a lasting vision and a legacy for this area that stretches from Hammond's Crossing to Coal Mountain to Matt. Each area has different characteristics that reflect qualities the committee found important such as architecture, landscaping, lighting and signage. This is a benchmark that we can improve upon, and it is a wonderful start of many more great things to come to our area. I'm so proud to have been a part of this vision for District 4 and what it will mean for its future.”

The requirements established by the Coal Mountain Overlay are intended to improve the aesthetic of the area as well as set the stage for creating destinations in the future. Outlined in the Coal Mountain Overlay are:

- Use prohibitions
- Encouragement of civic space, interconnectivity and bicycle parking
- Building placement to reduce vehicle presence within nodes is incentivized
- Screening requirements for loading areas, dumpsters, drive-through facilities and shopping cart storage
- Sign height, size and type requirements
- Height and color restrictions on commercial and residential light poles

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- Commercial architecture requirements pertaining to material type and amount, color, projections/recesses, roofline variation and common areas
- Residential architecture requirements pertaining to multi-sided facades, material type and amount, as well as the screening and placement of trash receptacles and enclosures, utility equipment and roof equipment
- Landscape strip requirements intended to reinforce the main Highway 369 corridor as well as support the distinctive character of each node through a prescribed tree pairing; the landscape section also includes approved and prohibited plant lists and an administrative variance that supports right-of-way beautification efforts

“The committee recognized that not all pieces of property are alike and wanted to ensure there was an emphasis on quality over quantity,” said Jones Mills. “We want to encourage commercial development but not compromise beautification. Therefore, in regards to the landscape strip requirements, we put in place a beautification variance process that would allow the owner to vary the strip only by paying into a roadway beautification fund, and that money will be used to beautify rights of way and medians in that area.”

In addition to the Coal Mountain Overlay, six other overlays are currently in place in Forsyth County:

- Atlanta Highway–McFarland Parkway–Mullinax Road Overlay District
- Castleberry–Bethelview Crossroads Overlay Zoning District
- Peachtree Parkway–Bethelview Road Overlay District
- Ronald Reagan/Union Hill Overlay District
- Campground–Castleberry–Kelly Mill–Pittman–Post–Shiloh Road Overlay District
- Buford Highway Overlay District

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Contact: Jodi B. Gardner  
Director of Communications  
(770) 886-2802  
JBGardner@forsythco.com