

MEMO

To: Town of Abita Springs Board of Aldermen
From: Alexandra G. Carter, President & CEO, Desire Line
Date: July 7, 2026
RE: Council Action – Reintroduction of Amended Land Development Code and Zoning Map

I. PURPOSE OF THIS MEMO. This memo is intended to support Council reintroduction of the amended Land Development Code and Zoning Map. Specifically, it summarizes the major policy issues raised since February 24, 2026 and confirms they have been addressed to the extent possible for Council consideration.

II. SUMMARY OF CHANGES SINCE INTRODUCTION (FEBRUARY 24). The July 7 amended and reintroduced Land Development Code and Zoning Map reflects substantial revisions based on public input and Council feedback, including:

- Targeted restoration and expansion of Commercial zoning in key areas.
- Remapped areas along Highway 435 between Prats Dairy Road and Main Street from Mixed Use 2 to Mixed Use 1 and to be more consistent and to better align with existing residential/commercial zoning in place.
- Responded to individual resident and property owner requests consistent with public and Council feedback over the course of meetings, public discussions, and public hearings.
- Simplification of zoning districts (removal of AMU; consolidation through Resilience Overlay; renaming of the Mixed Use Districts).
- Adjusted development thresholds (e.g., allowing 4,000–6,000 sf uses in Mixed-Use, allowing a second ADU with Conditional Use approval).
- Consolidation and clarification of land use categories and permitting processes (gas stations, event venues, home occupations, retail and incidental sales, dimensional standards, certificates of appropriateness, conditional and nonconforming uses).
- Addition and refinement of specific uses and treatment of animals (drive-thrus, boutique retail, small-scale theaters, container homes, modular homes).
- Updated Resilience Overlay standards addressing flood risk and infrastructure constraints.
- Updated parking standards to better address mixed uses.

III. STATUS OF POLICY ISSUES.

Issues Addressed and Incorporated: the following topics have been reviewed extensively and are incorporated into the April 21 draft:

- Commercial vs. Mixed-Use zoning balance
- Economic development and tax base considerations
- Resilience Overlay and flood risk standards
- Land use category consolidations and clarifications
- Retail and building size thresholds
- Hotel/motel room limits
- Permitted and conditional use adjustments
- Map amendments in response to resident and property owner feedback as of June 5, 2026.

IV. KEY FINDINGS

A. Commercial and Mixed-Use Balance

- Key commercial areas have been retained and expanded
- Existing businesses identified by the Council have been remapped to Commercial
- Mixed-Use districts continue to allow economically productive uses and better reflect local conditions

Conclusion: The revised map maintains economic opportunity while reflecting community input on scale and character.

B. Development Clarity and Investment

- The updated Code simplifies and clarifies development standards
- Streamlined processes reduce uncertainty for property owners and businesses

Conclusion: The revised Code improves the predictability and feasibility of investment in Abita Springs.

C. Legal Considerations (Downzoning).

Conservation, Commercial, and Mixed-Use zoning allows continued reasonable economic use of property.

Conclusion: The proposed changes are consistent with established zoning authority and do not constitute a taking.

D. Resilience Overlay

- Overlay standards address flood risk through elevation and fill limitations
- Consolidation simplifies administration and mapping

Conclusion: The revised approach improves clarity while maintaining flood protection objectives.

V. RECOMMENDED COUNCIL ACTION

Vote to reintroduce, as amended, INSTRUMENT 2026-02-02, where the July 7, 2026 version should be advanced as the final version.

VI. CONCLUSION. The July 7, 2026 draft Code and Map reflect over two years of public engagement, extensive Planning Commission and Council input, and review of more than 900+ public comments.

Staff and consultant recommendation: Proceed with reintroduction and final decision-making.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Alexandra G. Carter". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Alexandra" and last name "Carter" clearly legible.

Alexandra G. Carter, AICP
President & CEO, Desire Line