

# Planners Post

*Planning Tomorrow's Future Today*

## Inside...

<i>Parking in the Residential Parking Overlay District</i>	2
<i>P&amp;Z Division Welcomes Valdosta Main Street</i>	2
<i>Be Mindful of Where You Place Political Signs</i>	3
<i>Gornto Road Extension Opens</i>	3

APA OCT  
National Community Planning Month 2013

## PEOPLE AND PLACES

CITY OF VALDOSTA  
Planning and Zoning Division  
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## Celebrating Community Planning Month

Along with the cooler weather October brings, it also means that it is National Community Planning Month once again. The City of Valdosta continues its celebration of this annual observance with a variety of planning-focused events during the month. National Community Planning Month, created by the American Planning Association, recognizes the efforts of professional and citizen planners who commit themselves to creating great places to live and work.

This year's theme for Community Planning Month, "People and Places," highlights the focus of planners in envisioning the future while appreciating the past, addressing needs of citizens, and creating sustainable communities. It also recognizes that people are at the heart of planning for our communities, as well as the planner's responsibility to build a solid foundation for future generations through fiscally, environmentally, and socially conscious decisions.

The City of Valdosta employs four full-time planners within the Planning and Zoning division. Together, this division is responsible for several aspects of community planning, including development review, zoning administration, historic preservation, and long-term growth management. The division works closely with other city departments to ensure development and infrastructure improvements are consistent with the city's Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Regulations.

The month-long observance kicked off with a proclamation signing event, on Tuesday, October 8, at Valdosta City Hall. Valdosta Mayor John Gayle was joined by Lowndes County Commission Chairman Bill Slaughter and Lowndes County Planner Jason Davenport, South Georgia Regional Commission Transportation Planner/MPO Coordinator Corey Hull, as well as planning staff from the city, in acknowledging the month-long agenda of events observing Community Planning Month.



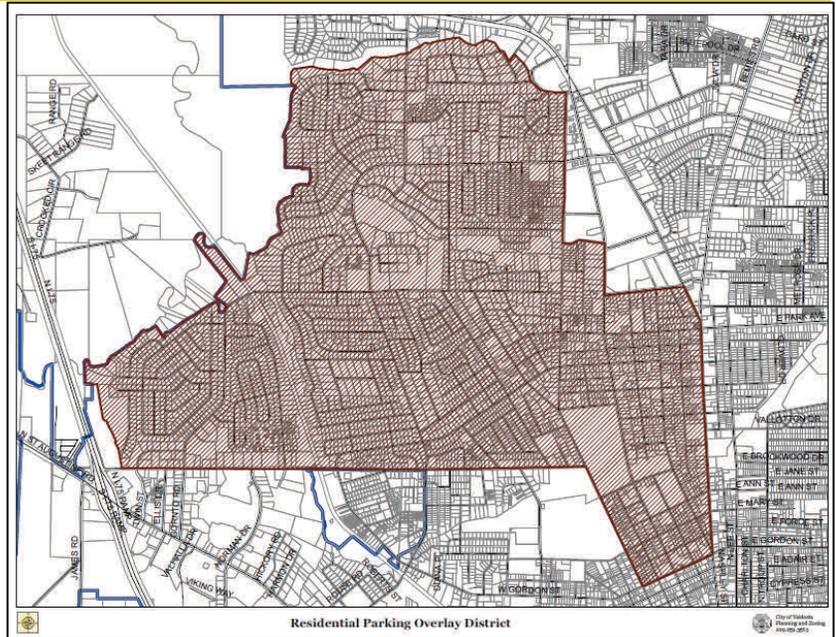
To view Valdosta's Community Planning Month events, please visit: [www.valdostacity.com/planning](http://www.valdostacity.com/planning), or contact Alexandra Arzayus at the Planning and Zoning Division at (229) 259-3563 or [arzayus@valdostacity.com](mailto:arzayus@valdostacity.com).

## Parking in the Residential Parking Overlay District

Sometimes finding a parking place near Valdosta State University can be difficult, even if you live in the neighborhoods surrounding VSU. Because of the increased traffic and demand for parking around the University, the Residential Parking Overlay District was created in an effort to regulate parking in a manner that accommodates multi-tenant parking, and also respects the traditional residential character of the neighborhoods within it.

Many homes within this Overlay District are single family houses that have been converted to rental properties. These types of properties often serve the VSU student population and have a number of tenants living in and visiting them. Although the City cannot legally limit through its zoning code the number of people allowed to live in a dwelling unit (other city-enforced codes, such as Building, Fire, and Life Safety Codes, can limit occupancy), zoning can regulate the “symptoms” resulting from multiple tenants. Parking multiple vehicles in the front yard is often such a symptom.

The Overlay District limits parking in the front yard of a residential property to five vehicles, and vehicles must be parked upon an “improved surface,” such as asphalt, concrete, gravel, brick pavers, or loose aggregate contained within a suitable border. However, no more than 25% of a front yard may be covered in an improved surface; the reason for this is to maintain a residential yard appearance to the



property, so that the property does not end up looking like a parking lot.

The southeastern portion of this Overlay is also within the Valdosta Historic District, and any new parking surface or driveway requires Certificate of Appropriateness approval through the Historic Preservation Commission.

It is important to be aware of the regulations concerning parking in this Overlay District in order to avoid getting a costly citation by the Community Protection Division—Valdosta’s City Marshals.

For questions concerning this Overlay District, please contact the Planning & Zoning Division at (229) 259-3563.

## Planning and Zoning Division Welcomes Valdosta Main Street

For years, the Valdosta Main Street staff has worked alongside the Planning & Zoning Division staff on shared projects and toward similar goals. Due to recent organizational changes at the city, Valdosta Main Street is now under the direction of the city’s Community Development Department. Valdosta Main Street works to promote, protect, and revitalize Valdosta’s downtown through innovative planning projects, special events, and financial incentives, so the joining of these two divisions is a natural fit. Amanda Peacock, Main Street Manager, and Ellen Hill, Main Street Program Coordinator, along with the Central Valdosta Development Authority Board of Directs, comprise the talented Valdosta Main Street program. This team brings a wealth of resources to the Planning & Zoning Division, and the Division’s staff is happy to welcome them!

## Be Mindful Of Where You Place Political Signs



Citizens are reminded of the City of Valdosta's sign regulations that explain proper placement of election signs. Chapter 230-9 of the city's Land Development Regulation ([click here](#) to view regulation) states: "All signs shall be located only on or over private property and outside any street or railroad right-of-way, except where specifically otherwise authorized..." This chapter also states that signs should not be posted on trees, light poles, utility poles, or in places that block traffic signs. A copy of these regulations can be found on the city of Valdosta's website by visit-

ing [www.valdostacity.com](http://www.valdostacity.com), navigating to the Planning and Zoning Division page of the Community Development Department, or by calling 229-259-3563 for more information. City Marshals are authorized by the city to enforce city codes and to remove improperly placed signs.

Candidates are also given a copy of the Political Sign Provisions, taken from the city's sign regulations, by the Board of Elections when they qualify. Basically, signs cannot be placed on public property including right of ways, which includes intersections. All downtown property is public. Signs also cannot be placed on private property without the property owner's permission. A good rule of thumb is to locate signs behind the water meter with the permission of the private property owner.

## Gornto Road Extension Opens

The City of Valdosta is hosting a ribbon cutting event to celebrate the opening of the new Gornto Road Extension, on Friday, Oct. 18, 2013, at 1 p.m., at the intersection of Woodrow Wilson Drive and N. Patterson Street. The ribbon cutting is open to the public.

The Gornto Road Extension joins Woodrow Wilson Drive to Gornto Road and provides a new east-west thoroughfare that will positively impact the traffic flow throughout the city.

The \$1.9 million project included drainage improvements, utility adjustments, right of way acquisitions and intersection alignment. The completed three-lane road features a center turn lane, sidewalks and bike lanes, a new access road to the four existing businesses on Woodrow Wilson Drive, pedestrian lighting and LED crosswalks. In addition, the realigned intersection features mast arms with suspended signal heads that are more resilient in storms and require less maintenance. Modern detection technology has also been installed that senses when vehicles and motorcycles are present to change the traffic lights accordingly.

"This project was identified in the city's adopted Comprehensive Transportation Master Plan in 2008, and we are pleased to see the project come to fruition for the benefit of our traveling public," said City Engineer Pat Collins. The project—which was designed by LPA, the intersection and signal permit obtained by Innovate, Inc., and construction provided by Reames and Son—was completed nearly a half million dollars under the city's project estimates. "The new road, which was funded by SPLOST VI revenue, will ease traffic congestion on Northside Drive and Jerry Jones Road and will provide citizens with a primary, major east/west route to and from the large commercial area near the Valdosta Mall," said Collins. "We also expect it to reduce emergency response times for South Georgia Medical Center staff and other City of Valdosta first responders, as well as improve traffic efficiency for those using the SGMC medical campus facilities, the VSU North Campus, and the Castle Park area."

In an effort to beautify the newly asphalted area, the Valdosta Lowndes County Chamber of Commerce has provided 35 Live Oak trees from their Centennial Tree Project that have been purchased by chamber supporters. The trees should be planted by the time the road opens for motorists and will contribute to the city's beautiful tree canopy.

For more information, contact the Engineering Department at (229) 259-3530.

Contact the  
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### Upcoming Events:

#### **Zoning Board of Appeals**

10/1- 2:30pm | City Annex Multi-Purpose Room

#### **Historic Preservation Commission**

10/7 - 5:30pm | City Annex Multi-Purpose Room

#### **City Council**

10/10 - 5:30pm | City Hall

#### **Greater Lowndes Planning Commission Work Session**

10/21 - 5:30pm | Lowndes County Health Dist. Admin. Office

#### **City Council**

10/24 - 5:30pm | City Hall

#### **Greater Lowndes Planning Commission**

10/28 - 5:30pm | Lowndes County Health Dist. Admin. Office

#### **Historic Preservation Commission**

11/4 - 5:30pm | City Annex Multi-Purpose Room

#### **Zoning Board of Appeals**

11/5 - 2:30pm | City Annex Multi-Purpose Room

#### **City Council**

11/7 - 5:30pm | City Hall

#### **Greater Lowndes Planning Commission Work Session**

11/18 - 5:30pm | Lowndes County Health Dist. Admin. Office

#### **City Council**

11/21 - 5:30pm | City Hall

#### **Greater Lowndes Planning Commission**

11/25 - 5:30pm | Lowndes County Health Dist. Admin. Office

#### **Thanksgiving Day Holiday**

11/28 - City of Valdosta Offices Closed

### **VISIT OUR WEBSITE:**

[WWW.VALDOSTACITY.COM/PLANNING](http://WWW.VALDOSTACITY.COM/PLANNING)

### **Calling All Small Business Owners!**

The Valdosta Small Emerging Business (V.S.E.B.) program is a unique and exciting opportunity for small, local businesses to effectively compete and bid in what is called the "procurement" process for City contracts. Every year the City puts out to bid various jobs from construction to providing office supplies. Do you have a small business located in the Valdosta area that provides construction, contractual, product or professional services? You may be eligible to join the Valdosta Small Emerging Business Program. To find out more information about this program, including certification requirements, please contact the V.S.E.B. program office at 229-671-3623.

