

### Summary of Ordinance

The purpose of this Ordinance is to amend Section 16.00.02, Lake County Code, Appendix E, Land Development Regulations (LDR), entitled *Wellness Way Development Standards*, for the following purposes:

- (1) To incorporate *The New Yard Pattern Book* as Section 16.00.04;
- (2) To incorporate *Landscape and Irrigation Plan Examples* as Section 16.00.05;
- (2) To integrate principles consistent with Florida-Friendly Landscaping™;
- (3) To provide for enhanced landscaping standards; and
- (3) To provide references to official websites for approved plant lists.

This Ordinance also amends LDR Chapter II to include Compost and Plant Bed definitions.

Changes are shown as follows: ~~Strikethrough~~ for deletions and Underline for additions to existing Code sections. The notation “\* \* \*” shall mean that all preceding or subsequent text remains unchanged (excluding any renumbering or relettering that might be needed).

### ORDINANCE NO. 2026-\_\_\_\_

**AN ORDINANCE OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF LAKE COUNTY, FLORIDA; REGARDING THE FOLLOWING SECTIONS OF THE LAKE COUNTY CODE, APPENDIX E, LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS: AMENDING SECTION 16.00.02, ENTITLED *WELLNESS WAY DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS*; INCORPORATING THE NEW YARD PATTERN BOOK AS AN OFFICIAL EXHIBIT; INTEGRATING PRINCIPLES CONSISTENT WITH FLORIDA-FRIENDLY LANDSCAPING™; REVISING LANDSCAPING STANDARDS WITHIN WELLNESS WAY; PROVIDING REFERENCES TO OFFICIAL WEBSITES FOR APPROVED PLANT LISTS; AMENDING CHAPTER II, ENTITLED *DEFINITIONS*; CREATING SECTION 16.00.04, TO BE ENTITLED *THE NEW YARD PATTERN BOOK*; CREATING SECTION 16.00.05, TO BE ENTITLED *LANDSCAPE AND IRRIGATION PLAN EXAMPLES FOR WELLNESS WAY*; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR INCLUSION IN THE CODE; PROVIDING FOR FILING WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.**

**WHEREAS**, the Wellness Way Area Plan (WWAP) was adopted by the Board of County Commissioners (Board) in 2016, through Ordinance 2016-01, which created Goal I-8 of the Lake County Comprehensive Plan; and

**WHEREAS**, the intent of the WWAP, which is an Urban Service Area as defined under Section 163.3164(53), Florida Statutes, is to create a long-term master plan for the South Lake region which promotes significant economic development while encouraging fiscally efficient and well-balanced development patterns that minimize environmental impacts and leverage existing resources; and



1 ~~The landscape in all required buffer areas in Wellness Way shall be composed 100% of native Florida~~  
2 ~~species<sup>8</sup>. Through the PUD process, exceptions may be granted for designs that receive irrigation~~  
3 ~~solely from retained stormwater.~~

4 5.1.1 Landscape Irrigation *Water Supply – Reclaimed Water*

5 All landscape irrigation shall be provided by reclaimed water. Another type of non-potable  
6 water supply may be used for landscape irrigation if reclaimed water is not available to the  
7 PUD. In no instance shall potable water be used for landscape irrigation unless authorized  
8 by the St. Johns River Water Management District pursuant to part II of Chapter 373, F.S.  
9 Conservation programs, system interconnections and alternative water supply options such  
10 as reclaimed water reuse and storage, shall occur when accessible. All development  
11 containing irrigated open space shall be required to accept reclaimed water for irrigation  
12 when such reclaimed water is available adjacent to the development's boundary. Connection  
13 shall be made at the developer's cost.

14 5.1.2 Irrigation and Landscape Plan Submittal

15 A detailed irrigation and landscape plan for nonresidential and residential development shall  
16 be submitted by a certified irrigation contractor, engineer, architect, or landscape architect  
17 in accordance with the Florida Water Star Silver Certification criteria.

18 The irrigation plan can be a part of the landscape plan or a separate plan. For residential  
19 lots, a master irrigation and landscape plan may be submitted for typical lots. Irregular lots  
20 require individual plans. The plan shall be submitted for review and approval prior to the  
21 installation of an irrigation system.

22 5.1.3 Water Efficient Irrigation

23 1. Irrigation control equipment shall be installed to foster water efficiency. For any new  
24 or redeveloped property, a functioning soil moisture sensor (SMS) and SMS-based  
25 controller or a weather-based controller accompanied by a rainfall shut-off  
26 device/rain sensor shall be required on all irrigation systems. SMS and rainfall shut-  
27 off devices shall be installed according to the manufacturer's guidelines. Rainfall  
28 shut-off devices must be properly installed and placed where they will receive  
29 unobstructed rainfall, with consideration to vegetation growth.

30 2. All permitted sites must have a separate landscape irrigation meter.

31 3. Newly installed sod will be permitted to have an establishment period not to exceed  
32 forty-five (45) days. During this establishment period, the landscaping irrigation  
33 schedules set forth in Section 21-33, Lake County Code, shall not apply.

34 5.1.4 Soil Amendments.

35 To ensure water conservation efforts and provide best management practices for  
36 establishing and maintaining landscape material, soil amendments shall be required as  
37 indicated below:

38 1. *Compost Product.* Compost products utilized for soil amending purposes shall be  
39 certified by the U.S. Composting Council's Seal of Testing Assurance (STA)  
40 Program. Where certified compost is not available, compost test results shall be  
41 provided to the County for examination of organic matter, Carbon/Nitrogen ratio,  
42 and pH level, to ensure the compost quality meets the intent of this Code.

1                    2.        *Practical Instructions for Amending Post-Construction Soils Preparing the Area to*  
2                    *be Amended.*

3                    (a)        Soil amending should not occur until all on-site construction traffic has  
4                    ended. All building construction, including outdoor pavement, and  
5                    installation of major utilities should be completed. Installation of irrigation  
6                    lines and components should occur after amending is complete to avoid  
7                    risk of damaging irrigation lines during tilling.

8                    (b)        The soil surface should be graded smooth and free of any construction  
9                    debris, or trash.

10                   3.        *Applying Compost to Disturbed Soils.*

11                   (a)        Compost should be spread evenly over the surface at the prescribed rate  
12                   of 4 yd<sup>3</sup> / 1,000 ft<sup>2</sup>, which is a depth approximately between 1-2 inches.

13                   (b)        Level out any shallow or deep compost areas to ensure even depth. No  
14                   areas of bare soil should be visible.

15                   (c)        Retain copies of receipts for compost (volume yd<sup>3</sup>) delivered to the site, as  
16                   they can be used during inspection to verify post-construction soil standards  
17                   have been met.

18                   4.        *Incorporation of Compost.* Using a rotary tiller, incorporate compost to a depth of 4-  
19                   6 inches into the soil.

20                   5.1.5 *Landscaping Standards.* Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ principles conserve water  
21                   and protect the environment. Florida native plants are adapted to conditions in which they  
22                   are indigenous and contribute to biodiversity. Florida native plants used should be site  
23                   specific. The principles of Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ include planning and design,  
24                   appropriate choice of plants, soil analysis which may include the use of solid waste compost,  
25                   efficient irrigation, practical use of turf, appropriate use of mulches, and proper maintenance.  
26                   More information regarding Florida-Friendly Landscaping can be obtained from the  
27                   University of Florida, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, located in Gainesville,  
28                   Florida, or found at this link: <https://ffl.ifas.ufl.edu/resources/publications/>.

29                   1.        *Design Standards.*

30                   (a)        Installed trees and plants shall be grouped together into landscape plant  
31                   zones according to water and cultural (soil, climate, and light) requirements.

32                   (b)        All residential development on vacant single family and duplex family  
33                   residential lots within a platted subdivision or on a lot of record shall  
34                   maintain a minimum of five (5) shrubs for every two-thousand square foot  
35                   (2000') of gross lot area.

36                   (c)        Plant groupings based on water requirements are as follows: low,  
37                   moderate, and high drought tolerance. For the purposes of this code, plant  
38                   beds must be designed so that at maturity the plant material must provide  
39                   coverage of sixty percent (60%) of the plant bed.

40                   (d)        Residential (single family and duplex): A maximum of twenty-five percent  
41                   (25%) of the landscape area may be planted with irrigated turf grass. All

1 other areas shall be planted with drought-tolerant turf grass that is not  
2 irrigated, or Florida-Friendly plants and Florida native plants which utilize  
3 low-volume irrigation, when needed.

4 (e) Commercial and Multifamily: Commercial, multifamily, common green  
5 areas in subdivisions and retention ponds shall use Bahiagrass or other  
6 approved drought-tolerant ground cover.

7 (f) A layer of mulch to a minimum depth of three (3) inches shall be specified  
8 on the site plan in plant beds and around individual trees in turf areas. Non-  
9 organic mulch (rubber) is prohibited. The mulch shall not be placed directly  
10 against the plant stem or tree trunk.

11 2. Landscape Materials List. Sixty percent (60%) of the total landscape plant count  
12 approved for use in landscape plans, excluding turf, must be from the Florida Native  
13 Plant Society (FNPS) plant list found at <https://www.fnps.org/plants>, as amended,  
14 and up to forty percent (40%) may be from the Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ (FFL)  
15 Plant Guide found at <https://ffl.ifas.ufl.edu/resources/apps/plant-guide>, as amended.  
16 A minimum of eight (8) overall species must be used for single family homes.  
17 Commercial development, parks, and all other areas shall have a minimum of fifteen  
18 (15) species. All plant species used should be site appropriate for the Lake Wales  
19 Ridge. All landscape should utilize “right plant, right place” principles.

20 3. Buffers. The landscape in all required buffer areas in Wellness Way shall be  
21 composed of 100% of native Florida species. Through the PUD process, exceptions  
22 may be granted for designs that receive irrigation solely from retained stormwater.

23 5.1.6 Installation and Maintenance.

24 1. Installation. Installation of landscape material and irrigation shall strictly be in  
25 accordance with the approved landscape and irrigation plan. All irrigation systems  
26 shall be installed and inspected in accordance with the Florida Water Star<sup>SM</sup>  
27 Program. Landscape and irrigation are to be inspected by the County and  
28 maintained after installation. Irrigation systems shall be installed as per Appendix F  
29 of the Plumbing Volume of the Florida Building Code.

30 2. Maintenance.

31 (a) Landscape and irrigation are to be maintained in perpetuity.

32 (b) One (1) year after a certificate of occupancy is issued, a second inspection  
33 will be made to verify that all required landscaping is established, healthy,  
34 and properly maintained.

35 5.1.7 Water Management Plan. Prior to the first residential building permit application  
36 within a subdivision, the Home Builder or Master Developer shall submit a Water  
37 Management Plan to the Lake County Office of Planning and Zoning for approval.  
38 The plan shall identify all proposed irrigation water sources, outline strategies for  
39 efficient water use, establish a detailed irrigation budget, and specify the method  
40 and procedures by which compliance with the approved water budget will be  
41 monitored and reported. The Water Management Plan shall demonstrate that the

irrigation system shall not exceed twenty-five (25) inches per square foot, per lot, annually.

5.1.8 Homeowner Education. To encourage ongoing water conservation and proper maintenance of irrigation and landscapes, ongoing homeowner education is required.

1. New Homeowner Handbook. Home Builders or Master Developers shall provide new homeowners with a landscape and irrigation handbook, with explanations as to the uniqueness of the Wellness Way Landscape Code, the Florida Wildlife Corridor, and the Lake Wales Ridge. The handbook shall also include information regarding the required maintenance of irrigation and landscapes, the single family home water budget which shall not exceed twenty-five (25) inches per square foot, per lot, annually, as well as the importance of water conservation and water budgets.

2. Annual Educational Meetings for Homeowners. Annually, each HOA or CDD shall provide an educational, in-person, meeting regarding the requirements of this Code.

3. Educational Kiosks. Throughout each approved development, as per the defined area in the PUD, each Home Builder or Master Developer shall provide a minimum of three (3) educational kiosks to be placed in common areas such as neighborhood trailheads or community gathering spaces. The educational kiosks will provide information on the following:

(a) The importance of the Lake Wales Ridge for water recharge and biodiversity.,

(b) A description of how landscape and water usage affect the Lake Wales Ridge.

(c) Detail as to why the Wellness Way Landscape Code is unique.

(d) Information on water conservation and the Development's approved Water Management Plan.

(e) The importance of the Wildlife Corridor and Corridor compatibility within Wellness Way.

4. Resources. Builders, Developers, HOAs and CDDs are encouraged to contact the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS) Extension Lake County and The Florida Wildlife Corridor Foundation for resources and graphics related to the Homeowner Education section of this code.

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*(All Sections after Section 5.1 shall remain unchanged)*

**Section 3. Creation.** Section 16.00.04, Lake County Code, Appendix E, Land Development Regulations, to be entitled *The New Yard Pattern Book For Florida's Sustainable Single Family Homes, Second Edition*, is hereby created to read as follows:

16.00.04 – The New Yard Pattern Book For Florida’s Sustainable Single Family Homes.

The New Yard Pattern Book For Florida’s Sustainable Single Family Homes, Second Edition, produced by Dix.Hite + Partners for the Outside Sustainable Landscape Collaborative in 2023, is codified into the Lake County Code with express written permission from the publishers dated June 20, 2025. This document is codified as a guide to assist residents and developers with meeting the intent of Section 16.00.02, Section 5.1, of these regulations. Compliance with the New Yard Pattern Book for Florida’s Sustainable Single Family Homes, Second Edition, is not a requirement of this Code.

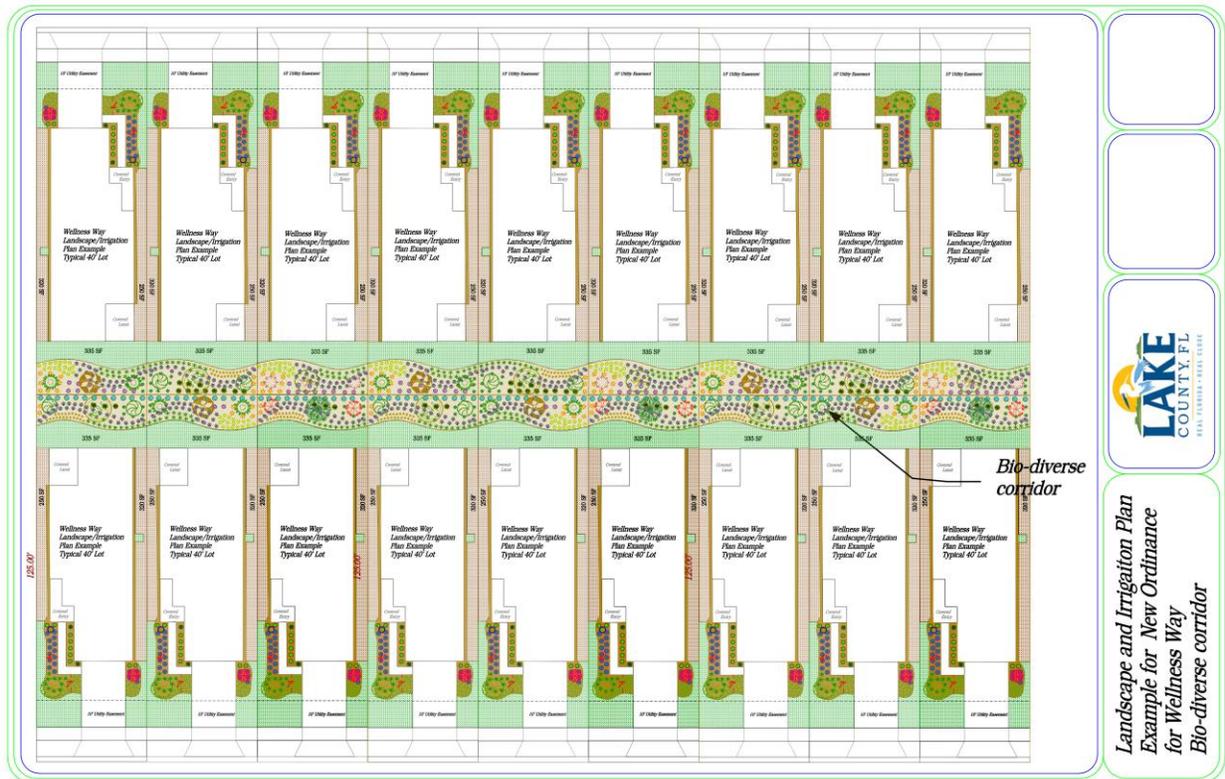
(The New Yard Pattern Book consisting of 62 pages to be inserted here)

**Section 4. Creation.** Section 16.00.0,5 Lake County Code, Appendix E, Land Development Regulations, to be entitled *Landscape and Irrigation Plan Examples for Wellness Way*, is hereby created to read as follows:

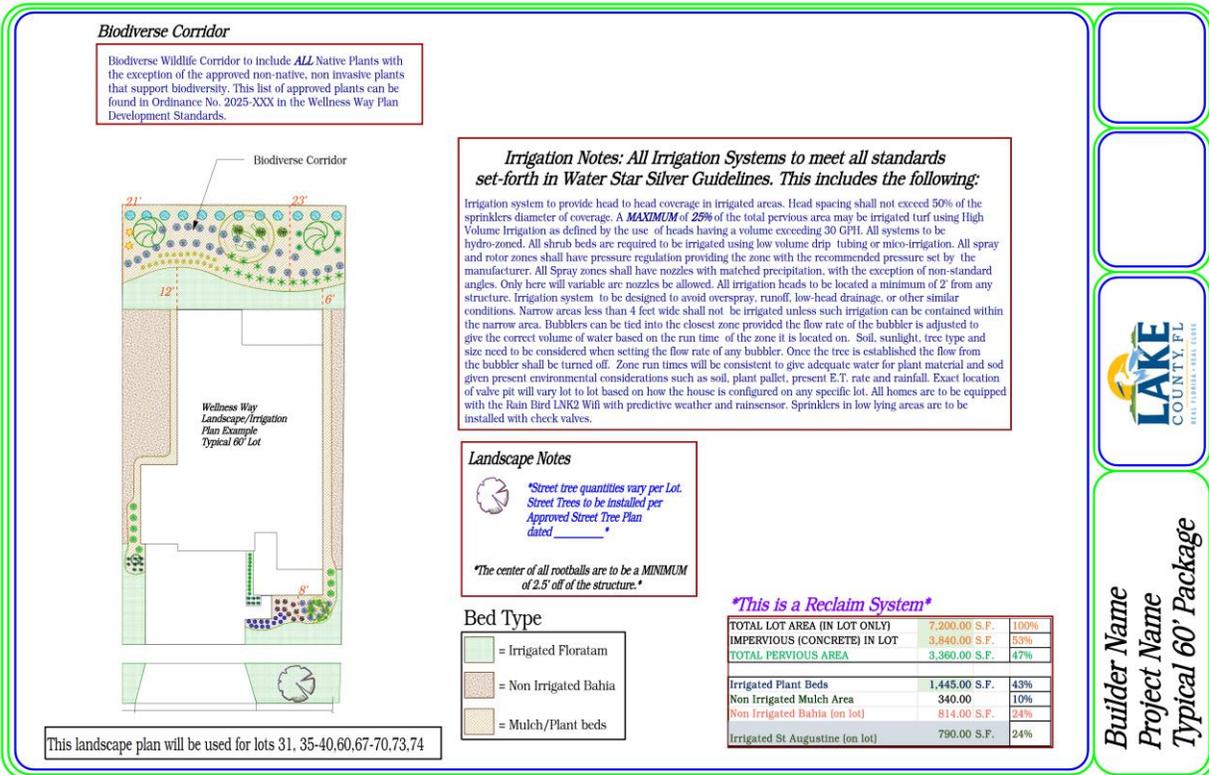
16.00.05 Landscape and Irrigation Plan Examples for Wellness Way

The Landscape and Irrigation Plan Examples for Wellness Way shall be codified into the Lake County Code. This document is codified to for the sole purpose of being illustrative. The Figures below shall not be submitted with a development application. All landscape and irrigation plans must be submitted by a certified irrigation contractor, engineer, architect, or landscape architect in accordance with the Florida Water Star Silver Certification criteria.

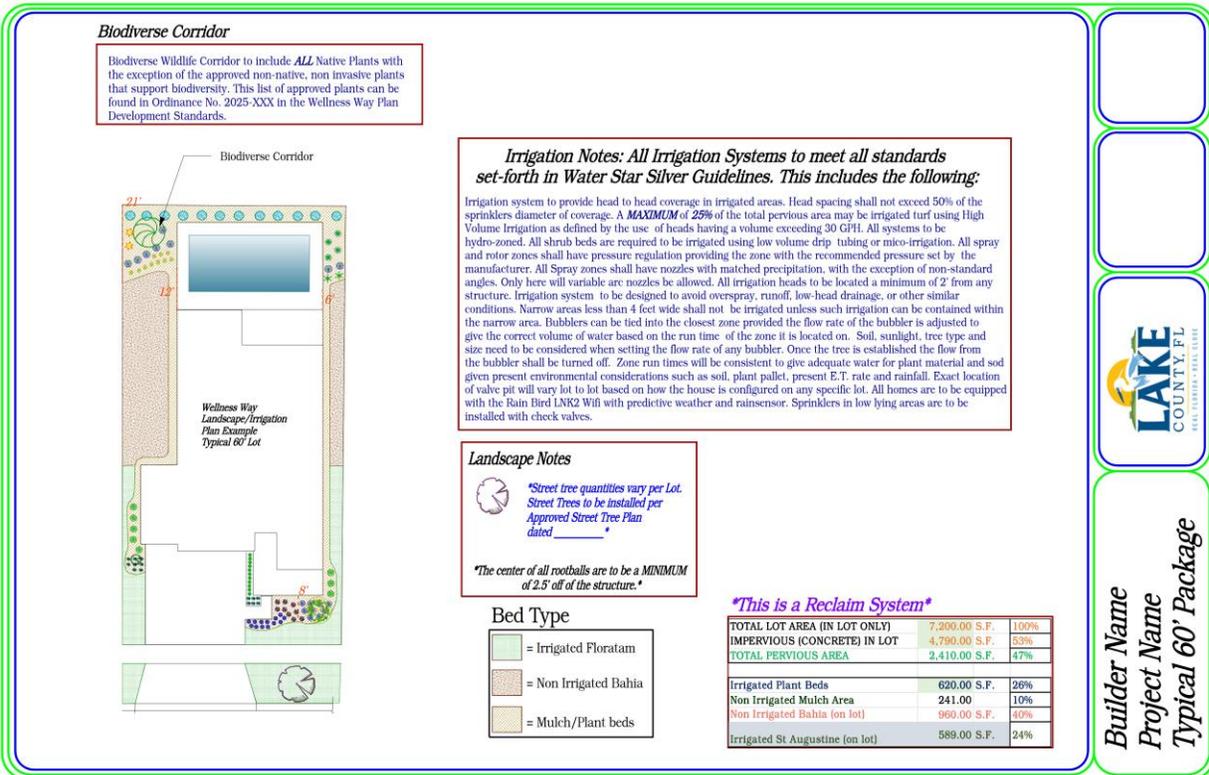
Figure 1:



1 **Figure 2:**

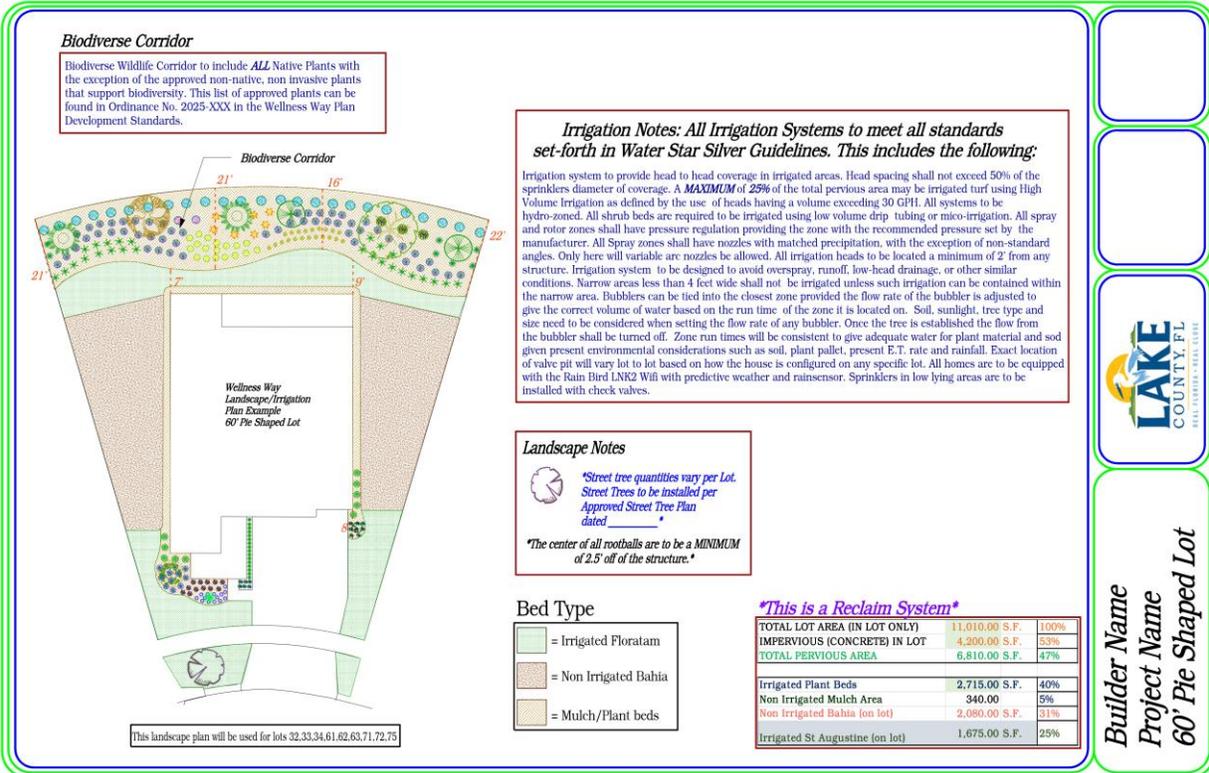


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3 **Figure 3:**

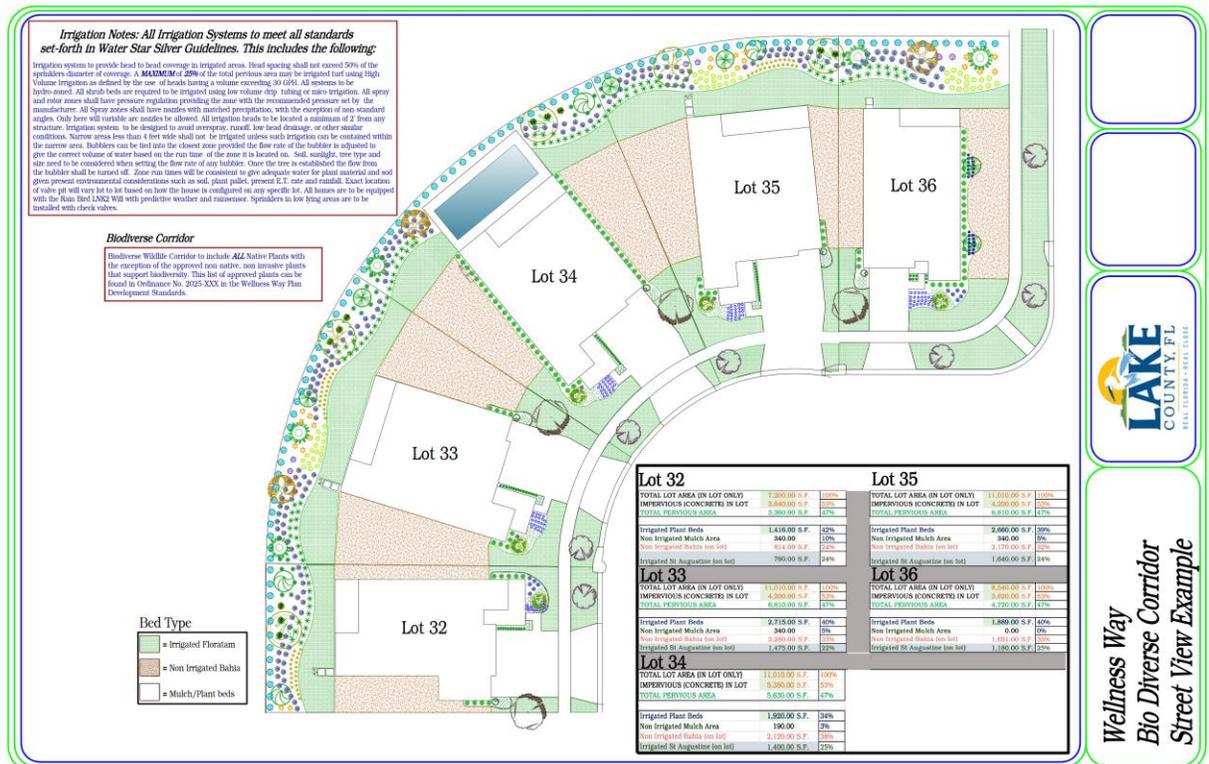


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1 **Figure 4:**



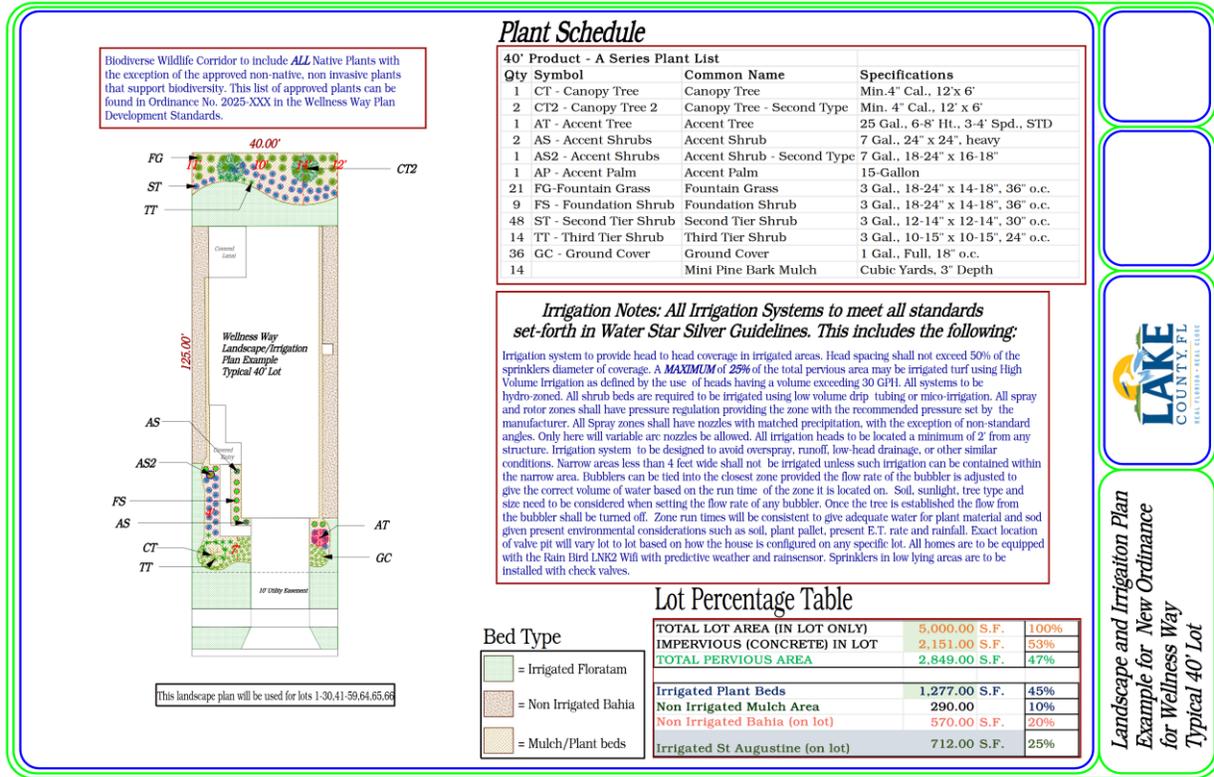
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4 **Figure 5:**



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Figure 6:



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**Section 5. Amendment.** Chapter II, Lake County Code, Appendix E, Land Development Regulations, entitled *Definitions*, is hereby amended to read as follows:

(Definitions to be added in alphabetical order)

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**Compost.** Compost is a nutrient-rich, decomposed mixture of organic materials used to improve soil structure and fertility.

**Plant Bed.** A grouping of trees, shrubs, ground covers, perennials, or annuals growing together in a defined area devoid of turf grass, normally using mulch around the plants. For the purposes of Florida Water Star, plant beds must be designed so that, at maturity, the plant material must provide coverage of sixty percent (60%) of the plant bed.

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**Section 6. Severability.** If any section, sentence, clause, or phrase or word of this Ordinance is for any reason held or declared to be invalid, unconstitutional, inoperative or void by any court of competent jurisdiction, then said holding shall in no way affect the validity of the remaining portion of this Ordinance; and it shall be construed to have been the Commissioners' intent to pass this Ordinance without such

1 unconstitutional, invalid or inoperative part therein; and the remainder of this Ordinance, after the exclusion  
2 of such part or parts shall be deemed and held to be valid, as if such parts had not been included herein; or  
3 if this Ordinance or any provisions thereof shall be held inapplicable to any person, groups of persons,  
4 property, kind of property, circumstances or set of circumstances, such holding shall not affect the  
5 applicability thereof to any other person, property or circumstances.

6  
7 **Section 7. Inclusion in the Code.** It is the intent of the Board of County Commissioners that  
8 the provisions of this Ordinance shall become and be made a part of the Lake County Code and that the  
9 sections of this Ordinance may be renumbered or relettered and the word "ordinance" may be changed to  
10 "section," "article," or such other appropriate word or phrase in order to accomplish such intentions.

11  
12 **Section 8. Filing with the Department of State.** The Clerk shall be and is hereby directed  
13 forthwith to send an electronic copy of this Ordinance to the Secretary of State for the State of Florida in  
14 accordance with Section 125.66, Florida Statutes.

15  
16 **Section 9. Effective Date.** This Ordinance shall become effective as provided for by law.

17  
18 Enacted this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2026.

19  
20 Filed with the Secretary of State \_\_\_\_\_, 2026.

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23  
24 ATTEST:

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
OF LAKE COUNTY, FLORIDA

25  
26  
27 \_\_\_\_\_  
28 Gary J. Cooney, Clerk of the  
29 Board of County Commissioners  
30 of Lake County, Florida

\_\_\_\_\_  
Leslie Campione, Chairman

31 This \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2026.

32  
33  
34 Approved as to form and legality:

35  
36  
37 \_\_\_\_\_  
38 Melanie Marsh, County Attorney