

Eddie D. Melton
Mayor



Marco Molina
City Attorney

CITY OF GARY PLAN COMMISSION PUBLIC MEETING

Thursday, DECEMBER 20, 2025 @ 3:30 PM

Conference Room, Hudson Campbell Sports Center,
455 Massachusetts St., Gary, IN 46402

AGENDA

Roll call

ALAN HARRELL – **PRESENT**
WILLIAM ALLEN - **PRESENT**
TOM CERA – **PRESENT**
ADAM HALL – **PRESENT**
WILLIE MILLER - **PRESENT**
SHERMAN WILSON - **PRESENT**
BILL COOK – **ABSENT**
JEREMIAH KING – **ABSENT**
DARREN WASHINGTON – **PRESENT**

MEETING MINUTE APPROVAL

Motion to approve November minutes: Adam Hall

Seconded by: Sherman Wilson

Motion passed with a vote of 6-0

Member	T. CERA	W. ALLEN	A. HARRELL	A. HALL	W. MILLER	S. WILSON	B. COOK	J. KING	D. WASHINGTON
Vote	YES	ABSENT	YES	YES	YES	YES	ABSENT	ABSENT	YES

OLD BUSINESS

⊕ PC UDO – UNIFIED DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE

Corrie sharp highlighted the key changes made to the UDO. The updated Unified Development Ordinance consolidates multiple existing ordinances, including subdivision, floodplain, airport, and zoning regulations, into a single comprehensive code for easier reference. New definitions have been added, including “emergency shelter,” along with updates to the land-use matrix to include additional categories such as package liquor stores, crematoriums, and cannabis-related uses. The PUD and railroad district use tables have also been completed.

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Residential district standards have been clarified, including updated district definitions, increased maximum structure heights in R4 and R5, and new limits on accessory structure quantities. Business district definitions have been expanded, including the creation of a new B4 automotive district. Accessory structure limits and new minimum building square footage requirements have been added to various business districts to reinforce design integrity and protect assessed value. Parking standards have been revised to include specific requirements for auto-oriented uses and to regulate maximum parking capacity.

Height limits in the entertainment district, civic and destination districts, and downtown mixed-use areas have been increased or removed to support future development. Pedestrian orientation standards have been revised to include connectivity requirements for adjacent pedestrian networks. A new railroad district section has been added to regulate setbacks, fencing, and signage limitations on private rail property.

New design standards for accessory dwelling units have been added to clarify ownership, occupancy, permitted use, and minimum size. Regulations for non-commercial solar energy systems have been introduced to ensure safety and protect easements. A new development plan review section establishes requirements, including traffic study mandates, for significant projects.

Sign regulations have been updated to prohibit LED outline lighting and flashing or animated illumination, with additional restrictions for fueling stations. A Lake Michigan coastal dune buffer has been added to protect shoreline ecology, regulate disturbances, and specify acceptable walkway construction. Parking standards now include requirements for convention centers.

Lighting regulations now prohibit non-holiday accent strip lighting for non-residential uses. Updates to sexually oriented business standards adjust permitted operating hours and remove restrictions on alcohol sales. Membership rules for the Plan Commission have been amended to eliminate alternates, and Board of Zoning Appeals membership rules have been updated to align with state statute. New variance definitions have been added to guide BZA decision-making.

Application notification requirements have been clarified to ensure compliance with state law while allowing flexibility in application materials. Finally, the enforcement

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section has been rewritten to strengthen language and align procedures with the City of Gary's practices.

- **Public Comment:**

Dorreen Carey, representing Gary Advocates for Responsible Development, outlined several community concerns regarding the draft zoning code. She explained that residents are concerned about the ongoing spread of semi-truck parking sites throughout the city and want clear limits on existing and future truck parking, storage areas, and related traffic. She emphasized the need for mandatory traffic impact studies for any business that generates significant truck activity, along with consideration of associated air-quality impacts. She stated that the public wants to prevent planned unit developments from being used to permit non-conforming or uncharacteristic land uses and noted her appreciation that this issue appears to have been addressed. She also stressed the importance of ensuring that stormwater and air-pollution ordinances remain aligned with the updated zoning code. Carey highlighted community support for adopting a city ordinance that follows state limits on the number of liquor stores allowed per population, including enforcement against stores that violate distance or safety requirements. She noted that based on the current population, the city should have no more than ten liquor stores. She also expressed appreciation for the new dune protection ordinance but urged the city to develop stronger protections for the industrial shoreline along Lake Michigan. She suggested establishing a Lake Michigan protection district to create vegetative or other buffers between industrial operations and the shoreline to reduce runoff and contamination risks. According to Carey, such measures would improve environmental conditions, create greener industrial spaces, and safeguard public natural resources.

Carolyn McCrady, 8241 Locust Ave, a member of GARD, asked whether the city could impose restricted operating hours on liquor stores in the same way the draft code proposes restricting hours for sexually oriented businesses. In response, Councilman Washington explained that such restrictions would likely require collaboration among the city, the state, and federal authorities, as liquor-store regulations depend heavily on state-issued licenses and state law. He clarified that local government may not have the authority to limit hours of operation independently, especially since liquor-store hours are often tied to consumer demand and state licensing rules. He emphasized that any effort to change these regulations would require coordinated discussions with the mayor's office, state legislators, and relevant agencies.

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Motion to continue public hearing w/ public comment: Darren Washington
Seconded by: Adam Hall

Motion passed with a vote of 7-0

Member	T. CERA	W. ALLEN	A. HARRELL	A. HALL	W. MILLER	S. WILSON	B. COOK	J. KING	D. WASHINGTON
Vote	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	ABSENT	ABSENT	YES

PLANNING/ZONING DEPARTMENT

Adjournment