Lowndes

Insights

Charter Amendments Pass in Orange County and Seminole County

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On Tuesday, voters approved several Charter amendments on the ballot in Orange County and Seminole County that will significantly affect development in these areas.

Orange County

In Orange County, voters approved several amendments to its Charter:

- **Amendment 6:** This amendment increases the number of County Commission districts from six to eight. Effective for the 2026 General Election, the County Commission will consist of nine members: eight Commissioners and the County Mayor. Our current understanding of the County's plan regarding the new districts is that the redistricting committee will be appointed in January of 2025 and will work on the redistricting process throughout most of 2025. In 2026, Districts 2, 4, 6, and the newly created Districts 7 and 8, along with the Mayor, will be up for election. The winners of the races for Mayor and Districts 1, 4, 6, and 8 will serve four-year terms, while the winner of the District 7 race will serve a two-year term.
- **Amendment 9:** This amendment establishes a Rural Area (unincorporated lands located outside the County's Urban Service Area, municipal joint planning areas, Growth Centers, Innovation Way Overlay, Horizon West Villages, and Boggy Creek Expansion Area) and requires a supermajority vote by the entire County Commission to increase density or intensity and to remove land from the Rural Area.
- **Amendment 10:** This amendment establishes a process for voluntary municipal annexation, with Orange County's comprehensive plan and land development regulations exclusively governing in the Rural Areas when lands are subsequently annexed into a municipality. It also requires a supermajority vote by the entire County Commission to approve or deny voluntary annexations.

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We previously reported on the proposals for Charter Amendments 9 and 10 in Orange County Clarifies Proposed Charter Amendment to Apply to All Voluntary Annexations and Approves New Rural Boundary and Orange County Continues to Push Charter Amendments Pertaining to the Rural Boundary and Voluntary Annexations.

Currently, there are seven members on the Orange County Board of County Commissioners, meaning a supermajority is 5 out of the 7 members. When Amendment 6 goes into effect and the Board is expanded, a supermajority requirement will mean that 6 out of the 9 members of the Board must approve the action.

Seminole County

Seminole County also approved two amendments to its Home Rule Charter:

- **Natural Lands:** Voters approved a County Charter Referendum to require a supermajority vote by the County Commissioners to transfer or change the use of any property designated as Natural Lands within Seminole County.
- **Rural Area:** Voters approved a County Charter Referendum to require a supermajority vote by the County Commissioners to remove any property from the County's designated Rural Area.

Seminole County has a five-member Board of County Commissioners, so the supermajority requirement means that 4 out of the 5 Commissioners must approve any action to transfer or change the use of Natural Lands or to remove property from the Rural Area. The Natural Lands and Rural Area designations are both discussed and regulated in the County's Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Code.

If you have any questions about the Charter amendments or their potential impact on your property, please contact the Lowndes Land Use Team.