What you'll see in UDC version 3

SUMMARY OF CHANGES TO THE PROPOSED UNIFIED DEVELOPMENT CODE

June 4, 2020
WHAT YOU’LL SEE IN UDC VERSION 3

Agenda

1. How we got to UDC version 3
2. What’s next
3. Major changes and highlights
4. What you’ll see online
5. How to give feedback
The draft zoning code overhaul, known as the Unified Development Code (UDC), is an effort to modernize the city’s 1960s-era land use regulations and implement the community’s vision in *Map for Mobile*, our comprehensive plan.
1. The zoning code (UDC) sets rules, standards, and procedures to guide new development or redevelopment in Mobile.

2. The UDC will help Mobile strengthen neighborhoods, remain economically competitive, and create great places for people.
BALANCING OPPOSING INTERESTS

**Neighborhoods**
“You’ll allow anything to be built anywhere…”

**Development**
“You’ve made it so hard, no one will develop here…”

YOU’RE GOING TO RUIN OUR NEIGHBORHOOD!

YOU’RE GOING TO DESTROY OUR BUSINESS!
SMART GROWTH IS SMART FINANCE

Walkability Adds Value
Green Building Goldmine
Form-Based Codes Induce High-Value Development

You should look at land and think about the tax yield per acre.

Realtors® & Smart Growth
on common ground
SPRING 2019

ZONING FOR DOLLARS
UPDATING DEVELOPMENT CODES TO SAVE MONEY AND BOOST PROSPERITY

By David Goldberg

From day one, zoning has been about money. When it debuted in the United States in the early 1900s, the concept of banning various industrial and other uses from residential areas was fundamentally about enhancing property values, and thereby the local tax base.

“When industry got trucks and could go anywhere, they were invading residential areas,” said William A. Fisher, professor of economics at Dartmouth College and author of 2015’s “Zoning Reboot.” “When they brought down the value of homes the real estate tax value went down. That was one of the reasons towns across the country adopted zoning.”

Today, however, a growing cadre of experts makes a compelling case that zoning, as it is typically practiced these days, threatens to rob current and future generations of prosperity. And more and more localities are pursuing the fiscal and economic benefits of an approach to zoning and development that looks more like that of 100 years ago.

In the early days of zoning, relatively few Americans had cars, so development codes usually allowed shops and other daily commercial use to remain close to residential areas. But by the prosperous period of rapid suburbanization following World War II, cars were becoming ubiquitous. In the burgeoning suburbs, zoning evolved toward a system that allowed more and more development from light manufacturing to heavy industry to spread out. In the process, development codes were raised to a new level of importance.

The result, Fisher said, has been for many communities to spread out development to keep more roadways manageable, but certain areas are no longer served by development. Zoning codes fell silent on the uplands. In the burgeoning suburbs, zoning evolved toward a system that allowed more and more development from light manufacturing to heavy industry to spread out. In the process, development codes were raised to a new level of importance.

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FORM-BASED CODES
INDUCING HIGH-VALUE DEVELOPMENT ACROSS THE COUNTRY

By Brad Broberg

Buffalo Wild Wings did the city of Chattanooga an unintended favor when it built one of its restaurants in a choice downtown location.

It was the latest in a series of underwhelming projects growing at the development potential of prime downtown real estate — and the last straw for folks who worried that low-value development was consuming the heart of their city.

“As soon as that building went up, people were saying, ‘What did you let that happen? Why did you let this happen?’” said Karen Hundt, director of the Community Design Group in the Chattanooga-Hamilton County Regional Planning Agency.

For many years the city relied on “an advice and persuasion mode” to convince developers to follow good urban design practices like placing buildings near the street and moving parking to the rear even though the zoning code didn’t mandate it, Hundt said.

Then times changed. “As we saw more national chains moving in, they knew they didn’t have to go along with High-value development maximizes the potential of a piece of property to welcome growth.

what we asked,” Hundt said. “As long as they were following our code, they were OK.”

But many Chattanoogans weren’t OK with the quality of development that occurred as a result — single-story, single-use buildings surrounded by parking lots like those found in suburbia.

“The perception was the development we were getting wasn’t very high value,” Hundt said. “Not to pick on a particular company, but Buffalo Wild Wings was the example everyone held up.”

What exactly is high-value development? It’s development that maximizes the potential of a piece of property to welcome growth, generate tax revenues, drive economic activity and enhance quality of life — all in conjunction with the infrastructure required to support it.

If that’s what Chattanoogans wanted, something had to change. And it was the old zoning code with its indifference to low-value development. “A lot of us realized … that it wasn’t generating the kind of taxes, for instance, that we should be getting out of new development,” Hundt said.

In 2016, the city replaced its old zoning code with a form-based code covering downtown and several surrounding neighborhoods.

The old code — like most conventional codes — focused on separating uses. Certain types of residential here, but
That sense of place like in Charleston or Savannah, Mobile has plenty of that. It’s good codes and enforcement of those codes that help to create that character.

Mike Rogers, Rogers & Willard President

It’s a huge undertaking, but updating the zoning code is essential to achieve many of the great ideas in the Map for Mobile.

Kelly Warren, Family Health Clinical Services Executive Director

The UDC will improve Mobile’s quality of life and help people have more pride in where they live.

Makeda Nichols, State Farm Insurance owner and agent

When we adopt the UDC it will raise quality of life and our ability to recruit. We are going to have a heck of a place to live.

Daniel Dennis, Roberts Brothers Inc President

The UDC will help our city address today’s technology while being flexible for the future.

David Clark, Visit Mobile President and CEO

People will be happy to know that their input meant something, because a lot of people were wondering what would come of this.

Alberta Richardson, Lafayette Heights resident
HOW WE GOT TO UDC VERSION 3

Map for Mobile Adopted
Nov 2015

Future Land Use Plan and Major Streets Plan Adopted
May 2017

2014 2015 2016 2017

Zoning Code Rewrite Process (Unified Development Code)

UDC version 1 public review
Oct 2017 - Jan 2018

UDC Version 2 public review
Jan - Mar 2019

UDC Version 3 public review
Mar 2020

Map for Mobile Process
Over 500 citizens participate in the Map for Mobile process at various workshops through 2014 and 2015.

Future Land Use Plan and Major Streets Plan Process
Public workshops held in late 2016 and early 2017.
WE HEARD YOU

During the public review period for UDC version 2...

- 75+ small group meetings were convened
- 600+ comments were collected on the draft zoning map
- 400+ comments were collected on the draft articles
UDC V3 COMMENT PERIOD

A 30-day comment period delayed due to COVID-19

The draft UDC articles, a summary of changes, and supporting information are now available on MapforMobile.org
WHAT YOU’LL SEE IN UDC VERSION 3

Major changes and highlights
Major Changes and Highlights

1. The existing zoning map and district names will be retained.

- UDC Version 3 uses the City’s existing zoning map. Map changes are no longer proposed as part of the UDC.
- Keeping existing district names reduces confusion and improves consistency between other adopted plans and ordinances.
MAJOR CHANGES AND HIGHLIGHTS

2. Commercial Warehouse and Maritime zoning classifications have been retained from Version 2 but will not be mapped.

• Provides potential future zoning options for property owners.
MAJOR CHANGES AND HIGHLIGHTS

3. The table of uses has been clarified creating three categories of uses: ‘Permitted by Right’ (R) uses, ‘Conditional’ (C) uses, and ‘Special Exception’ (S).

- Uses that previously required Planning Approval are now either a Conditional Use or a Special Exception.
- Conditional uses is reserved for the most intense uses and will still require two public hearings.
- Special Exception uses require a public hearing with the Board of Adjustment.
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MAJOR CHANGES AND HIGHLIGHTS

4. Form-based standards have been simplified and limited to apply to multifamily and commercial developments only and to reflect the complexities of existing urban/suburban development patterns.

- The most valuable design standards from Version 2 have been retained but defined in a simpler format within one article in Version 3 (Article 3).
- Some zoning districts now have two versions, or subdistricts, either ‘Suburban’ or ‘Urban.’
## FORM-BASED STANDARDS

### Protecting neighborhoods
- Design requirements to improve the quality of development
- Reflect existing development patterns and community identity

### Supporting development
- Flexible standards, allowing many options for compliance
- When requirements are met, approval does not require a public hearing
BUILDING DESIGN

menu

Pick at least one feature from each category (more if you’re feeling fancy!)

“Easy to swallow options for every palate”

site frontage
Sidewalk frontage
Landscape area
Patio area
Terrace
Pedestrian courtyard
Vehicular courtyard

height
Pitched roof element
Raised parapet
Tower

wall
Notch
Offset
Projection

architectural feature
Balcony
Porch
Stoop
Storefront
Awning/canopy/marquee
Projected/recessed entry
Arcade/gallery/colonnade

Applies to new multi-family, commercial, maritime and mixed-use development
SITE FRONTAGE

At least one of these...

- Landscape area
- Sidewalk frontage
- Patio area
- Terrace
- Pedestrian courtyard
- Vehicular courtyard
BUILDING FORM: HEIGHT

At least one of these...

- Pitched roof element
- Raised parapet
- Tower
BUILDING FORM: WALL

At least one of these...

Notch

Offset

Projection
ARCHITECTURAL FEATURE

At least one of these...

- Stoop
- Balcony
- Projected/recessed entry
- Porch
ARCHITECTURAL FEATURE

Or one of these...

Arcade/colonnade/gallery
Awning/canopy/marquee
Storefront
EXISTING EXAMPLES IN MOBILE
URBAN AND SUBURBAN SUBDISTRICTS

• Provide standards compatible with existing neighborhoods and to enhance and protect the established character of traditional or environmentally sensitive communities.

• Affect lot size, lot coverage, density, yards and setbacks, landscaping and open space.
URBAN VS. SUBURBAN SUBDISTRICTS

Example (B-2)

URBAN

SUBURBAN
MAJOR CHANGES AND HIGHLIGHTS

5. Neighborhood Overlay districts have been moved from the appendices to individual articles.

• This includes the Spring Hill, Africatown, and Peninsula overlays, as well as the Historic District Overlay.

• These overlays are all mandatory standards
NEIGHBORHOOD OVERLAY DISTRICTS

The UDC contains three Neighborhood Overlay Districts: Spring Hill, Africatown, and Peninsula

1. These overlay districts were previously established and resulted from City-adopted neighborhood plans

2. Future neighborhood overlay districts could be established through a neighborhood planning process.
NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING TOOLKIT

A set of resources to help community groups proactively plan for and improve their neighborhoods.

Toolkit Components
The toolkit consists of three handbooks.

- Neighborhood Planning Handbook
- Neighborhood Engagement Handbook
- Neighborhood Initiative Handbook
MAJOR CHANGES AND HIGHLIGHTS

6. Tree protection and preservation requirements will be a new chapter of city code.

- The Mobile Tree Commission and Urban Forestry’s requirements will not be part of the UDC.
7. Definitions have been clarified to address comments and improve clarity, terms and phrases have been edited to have the same meaning throughout the UDC.
MAJOR CHANGES AND HIGHLIGHTS

8. Article names have changed

Article 2: Zoning Districts
Article 3: Development Standards
Article 4: Use
Article 5: Procedures
Article 6: Nonconformities
Article 7: Enforcement
Article 8: Definitions
Article 9: Legal Provisions

Article 10: Submittal Requirements
Article 11: Africatown
Article 12: Peninsula
Article 13: Village of Spring Hill
Article 14: Historic District
Appendix A: Downtown Development District Code
WHAT YOU’LL SEE IN UDC VERSION 3

What you’ll see online
MapforMobile.org/udc-v3/

1. Learn about the UDC
2. View the articles
3. View the interactive map
4. Provide feedback
INTERACTIVE MAP

View detail and comment on a specific property

1. Existing Zoning Map
2. Existing Neighborhood Overlays
3. New Urban and Suburban Districts
4. Future Land Use Map
INTERACTIVE MAP

1. Search or pan the map
2. Zoom in to see detail
3. Click on a property for information
4. Place a comment at that location

Note: sub-districts are the only proposed change
WHAT YOU’LL SEE IN UDC VERSION 3

How to give feedback
Comment on the articles or on the map

1. COMMENT ON A SPECIFIC LOCATION

The City has prepared an interactive map tool to help you understand the new code and to see how it applies to your property or area.

2. GENERAL COMMENTS ON VERSION 3 AND THE UDC ARTICLES

Topic

What article does your comment most pertain to?
Article 1: Introduction

Comment *
OTHER WAYS

By mail to:
Shayla Beaco
Executive Director
Build Mobile
PO Box 1827
Mobile, AL 36633

In-person at:
Build Mobile,
205 Government Street,
South Tower,
Third Floor,
Window 1
NEXT STEPS

UDC v3 Public Review

Informal Comment Period Begins
Stakeholder and advisory committee meetings
30 days

Prepare UDC v4

Review Begins
Staff review of UDC v3 Comments
30 days

Adoption Public Hearings

Provide UDC v4 to Planning Commission
Post Public Notice
Planning Commission Hearing
Introduce / Consider UDC
Planning Commission Hearing
Recommend Approval to City Council
City Council Public Hearing
Adoption
WHAT YOU’LL SEE IN UDC VERSION 3

Thank you!