

TURNING VISION INTO ACTION

Mobile's Unified Development Code

Since the adoption of Map for Mobile, the City's comprehensive plan in 2015, Mobile has been working hard to implement its exciting vision for preservation, revitalization, and growth. One of the most important steps in bringing the vision to reality is to update the City's zoning and development regulations. The complete draft zoning code overhaul, known as the Unified Development Code (UDC), addresses many issues important to you and reflects modern planning and zoning best practices.

Here are a few ways the UDC works to improve Mobile.



Improving Neighborhoods...

...through design standards for future development that will ensure the protection of your investments, property values, and quality of life.



Protecting the Environment...

...by introducing new provisions for protecting natural resources that will result in long-term environmental benefits.



Supporting Development...

...through clearer standards and a streamlined approval process that is more predictable and consistent.



Strengthening our Economy...

...by incorporating best practices in land use planning that address modern economic development needs and challenges.





IMPROVING NEIGHBORHOODS

Mobile's Unified Development Code

The UDC works to ensure the protection of your investments, property values, and quality of life so that our neighborhoods continue to thrive. Design standards for residential areas, centers, and corridors are included that will help to ensure future development reflects the appropriate character of distinct areas throughout the city. Examples include:

Zoning Sub-districts are applied to all residential and many non-residential areas. They include site and building design concepts for new development to complement existing neighborhood character. They vary by existing context and generally correspond to urban or suburban development patterns within the city.

Neighborhood Conservation Overlays are defined for some areas to preserve the unique characteristics of existing established neighborhoods. These overlays have additional site, building, and streetscape design standards beyond those contained in the underlying zoning. Initially, neighborhood conservation overlays are defined for Africatown, the Peninsula, and Spring Hill, but additional areas could be added to the UDC in the future.

Buffers are potentially required for new development adjacent to RL or RM Districts, to reduce impacts from higher intensity uses.

Neighborhood meeting process is included for designated projects such as re-zonings, conditional use permits, and other applications, in specific locations. These meetings are public forums hosted by applicants and attended by members of the community to discuss potential disputes and address concerns.

Requirements for civic spaces and open spaces in new commercial and residential developments so that residents and the public may enjoy new public space amenities, enhanced landscape features, or access to natural open space areas.



To learn more about the UDC, visit...

www.MapforMobile.org/udc/



PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT

Mobile's Unified Development Code

The City of Mobile is committed to incorporating meaningful measures for natural resources stewardship into the Unified Development Code, consistent with the guidance of Map for Mobile. The UDC introduces new provisions for protecting Mobile's natural resources which will result in long-term environmental benefits. Examples include:

Riparian Buffers are introduced in the UDC (a first for Mobile). Riparian buffers help to protect water quality, reduce erosion, and support wildlife habitats by preserving natural areas adjacent to waterways and flood prone areas. Width of buffer varies, from 50' up to 105', dependent upon waterway characteristics.

Low Impact Development (LID) is encouraged based on recommendations expressed by The Peninsula of Mobile, Mobile Bay National Estuary Program, Mobile Baykeeper, and others. Low impact development (LID) is a design approach for managing stormwater runoff. It emphasizes conservation and the use of on-site natural features to protect water quality. While the LID provisions are encouraged in the UDC, they are optional in all areas except in the Peninsula Overlay where they are required.

Conservation Subdivision Development is required within the RL(C) Sub-District. This provision clusters development within non-environmentally sensitive areas of a development site.

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SUPPORTING DEVELOPMENT

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A vibrant real estate market corresponds to a strong economy. The building and real estate community works with the City's code on a daily business as part of their livelihood. With that in mind, the UDC provides a modern and flexible approach to regulating development. While the code requires a little more work up front, that effort pays off in the end with a streamlined approval process, which is more predictable and consistent. Attributes include:

Increased range of by-right use

allowances means that there are fewer situations where a proposal must involve a public hearing. Many uses can be approved administratively, reducing uncertainty and shortening the time to receive approval.

An Efficient and Consolidated

document, the UDC is designed to be efficient to use. It is written and organized in a way that allows readers to quickly find information that is of interest to their property or neighborhood.

New Planned Development Zoning District

allows for a master planned development that cannot feasibly comply with the standards in any of the other zoning districts, which demonstrates a high degree of design quality or accomplishes an important public purpose. In a planned development, as defined in the UDC, the permitted uses and development standards are established during the rezoning process and are unique to that development. The PD zoning provides a high level of flexibility to accommodate unique projects.

Downtown Waterfront and Maritime Mixed Use Districts

provide new options for residential types and mixed use projects that do not currently exist in Mobile.

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STRENGTHENING OUR ECONOMY

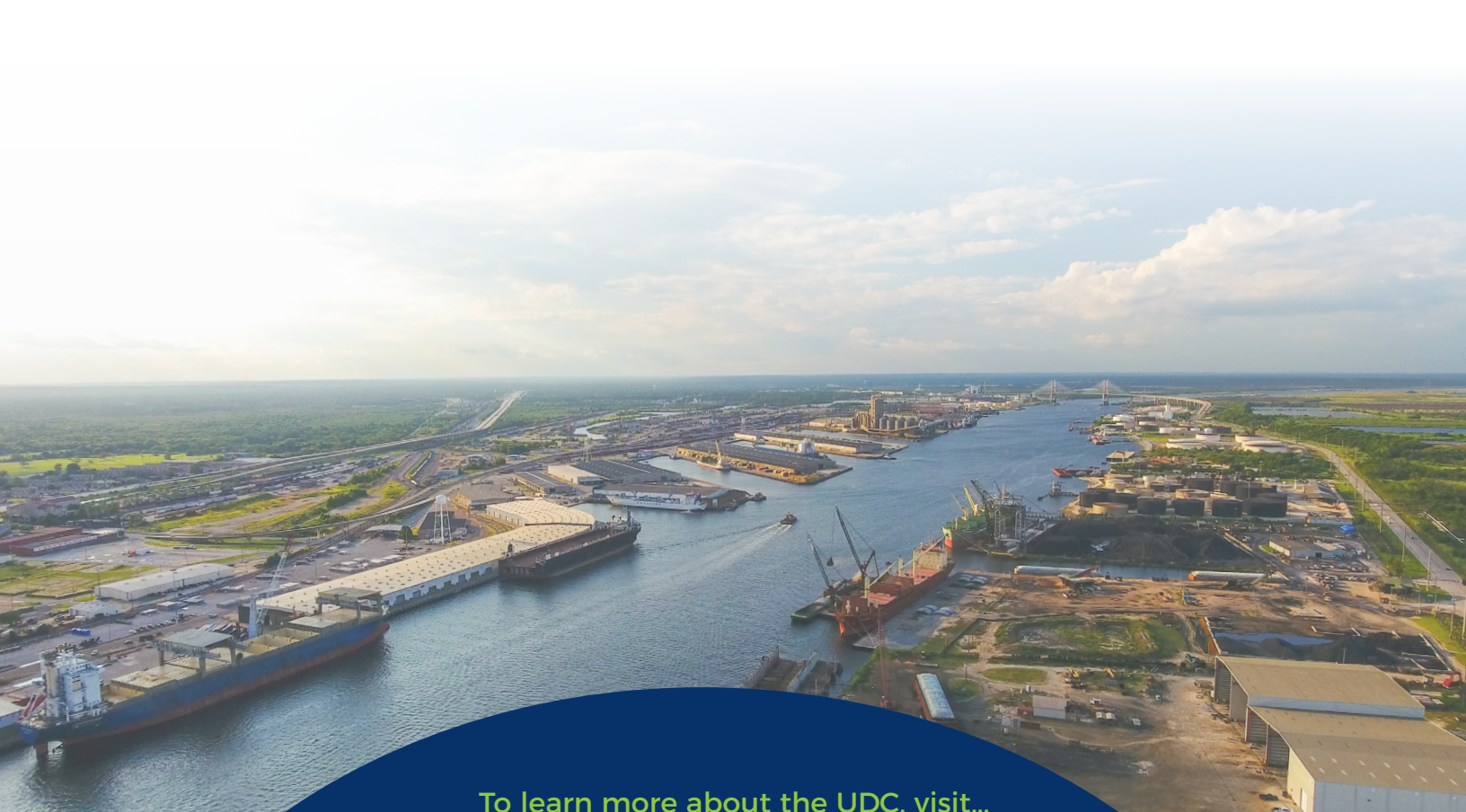
Mobile's Unified Development Code

Map for Mobile affirms the need to maintain, strengthen, and diversify the area's economy. Accordingly, the UDC encourages investment through its streamlined development approval process. The code also contains new provisions that reflect modern practices in land use planning to support economic development. Examples include:

Maritime zoning districts are established to embrace our working waterfront and preserve deep water resources. Through the Table of Uses, typical Heavy Industrial activities are no longer allowed in the Maritime districts, preserving these areas for water dependent uses. A Maritime sub-district also allows for more recreational uses and public access to waterfront areas.

Commercial warehouse zoning district provides areas designated for uses supporting intermodal warehousing and distribution activities.

Mixed use opportunities for integrating commercial and residential development projects are afforded throughout various zoning districts. An updated table of uses as well as new design standards are included.

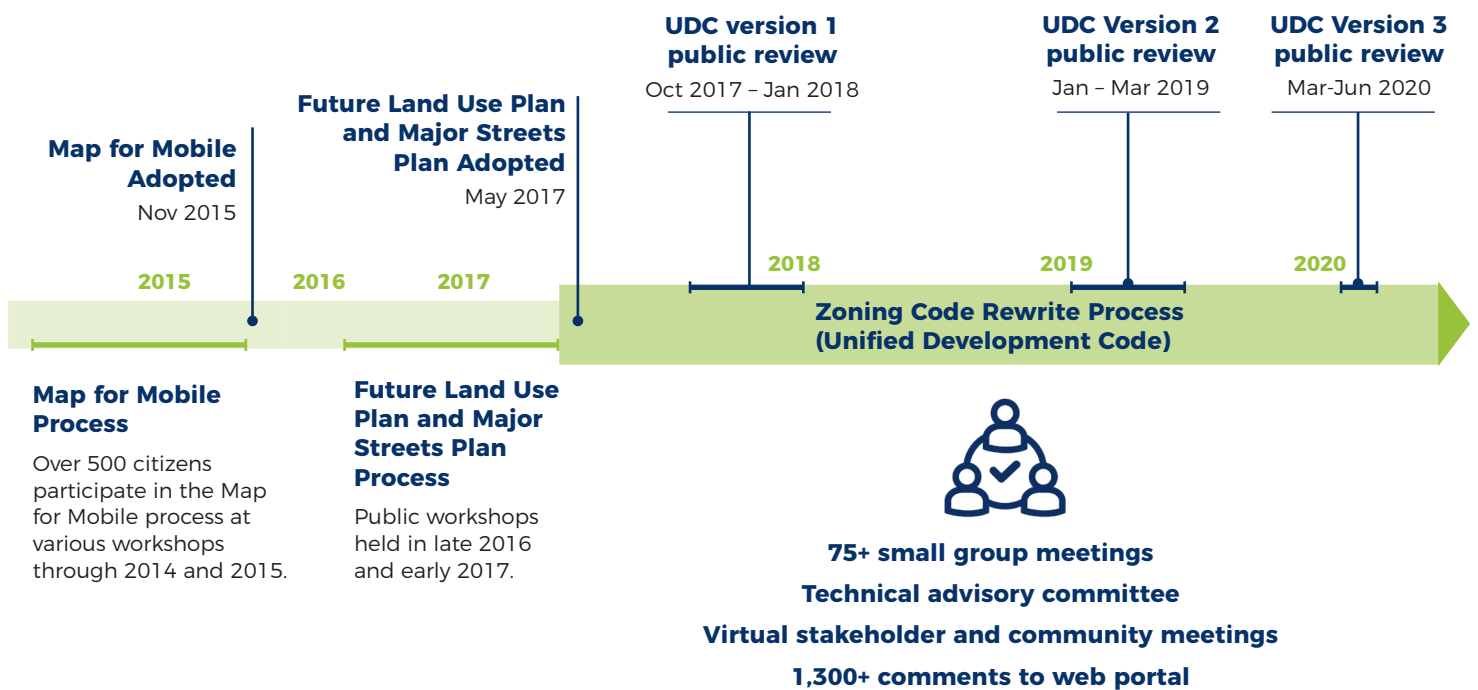


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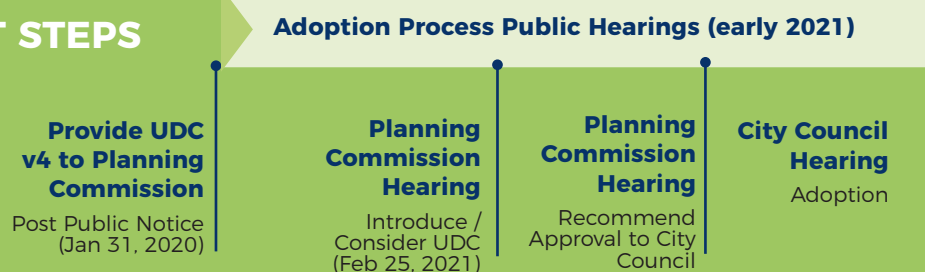
www.MapforMobile.org/udc/

The UDC Process involved many opportunities for public and stakeholder input.

The initiative of modernizing the City's zoning code came out of the extensive public input process for the Map For Mobile. The City kicked off the process of developing the UDC in January 2016. Multiple small group and neighborhood meetings were convened in each phase of the process. Thousands of public comments were collected and used to guide the regulations. The proposed draft regulations have undergone several iterations in response to feedback.



UDC NEXT STEPS



COMMON QUESTIONS ABOUT THE UDC

1. What is the UDC? When adopted, the Unified Development Code (UDC) will be the City law that sets rules, standards, and procedures for new development or redevelopment in Mobile. It will replace the existing zoning code and subdivision regulations and other land development ordinances.

2. How is the UDC different from a typical zoning ordinance? A unified development code is a modern approach to regulating development. It is an adopted law of the city that combines the zoning ordinance and other land development regulations into a single document. The zoning ordinance defines different districts that govern the types of uses and the location and size of development in each district. It also includes provisions that establish the procedures for how development proposals are reviewed and approved or denied, and development and form standards such as those covering parking, landscaping, signs, building location and form, and resource protection. The land development regulations, also part of the UDC, regulate the division and platting of land, prior to its development. They include regulations that govern lot division, road layout and standards, and other infrastructure requirements.

3. How does the UDC relate to Map for Mobile? Map for Mobile is the City's comprehensive plan that provides direction and guidance to improve Mobile and prepare it for the growth on the horizon. The plan presents goals and policies upon which future planning, regulations and decisions can be built. To implement Map for Mobile (the city's vision), the Future Land Use Plan and Future Land Use Map (FLUM) was adopted to provide more specific guidance on the character of future land use throughout the city. Map for Mobile and the FLUM are policy guides, not legally binding documents. The UDC (as proposed) would be the adopted law of the city that would implement the policies in Map for Mobile and the FLUM.

4. What is the FLUM? The FLUM is the City's adopted future land use map. It is part of the Future Land Use Plan that was adopted following Map for Mobile and is the primary guide to the future physical development of the City. The map and its corresponding land use designations describe the desired types, intensity, and spatial arrangement of the City's land uses to achieve the vision described in Map for Mobile. It is not legally binding, but is a policy guide that is used to evaluate potential zoning changes or proposals that require conditional review.

4. What is the Zoning Technical Advisory Committee? The Technical Advisory Committee consists of 15 members appointed by the Mayor that has been responsible for providing review and comment to the City and its planning consultants regarding the zoning code as drafts are prepared. The Committee includes local design professionals, representatives from major stakeholder groups (including corporate, environmental, academic communities, and neighborhood and civic groups), and users of the code.

5. What about the Zoning Map? As of Version 3 (March 2020), the UDC uses the existing zoning district names. No revisions to the zoning map are proposed in the UDC. Adoption of the UDC will not change the existing zoning map.

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