

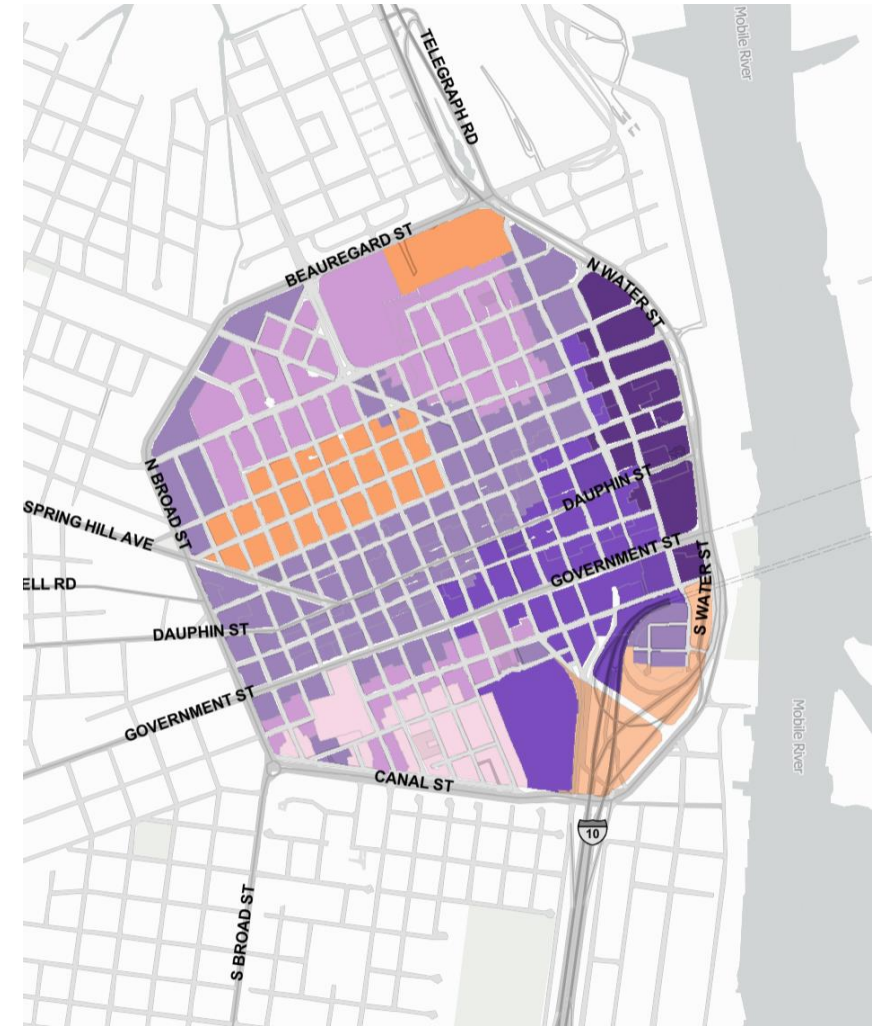
DDD Workshop

September 2, 2026



WHAT IS THE DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT CODE (DDD)?

1. A set of rules for what gets built in downtown Mobile.
2. Where the rules apply: everything inside the Downtown loop.
3. What they cover: what you can build, where it can go, how it meets the sidewalk, and what it looks like from the street.
4. Created in 2014 as part of the New Plan for Mobile. Folded into the city's zoning code in 2022.



Purposes of the DDD

Clear rules and processes, flexibility to fit real projects, promotion of walkable streets, buildings that fit their context, and respect for the historic fabric downtown.



WHY NOW

1. **First public involvement on DDD since 2014.** This is the community's first structured opportunity to shape the DDD itself.
2. **Over a decade of use.** Property owners, developers, and staff have found standards that are unclear or not producing the desired types of development.
3. **Recent work cleared the way.** We are not starting from scratch.

WHAT WE'VE DONE TO PREPARE

1. **Code user engagement (Fall 2024):**

Meetings with board members, developers, and other code users

2. **Code assessment (Fall 2024):**

DDD Assessment produced, recommending a two-phased update

3. **Phase 1 updates (2025)**

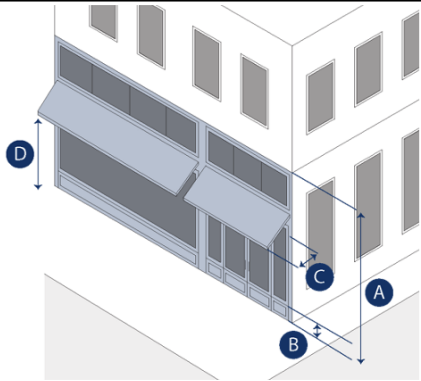
reorganization and restructure for user-friendliness

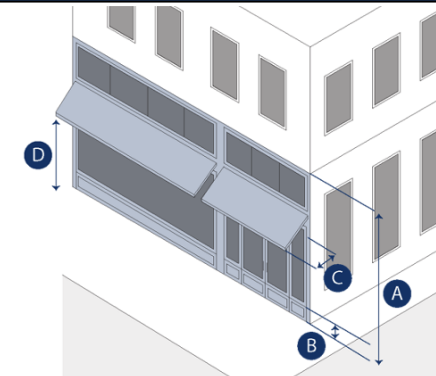
4. **Phase 1 Adoption hearings** (October-December 2025)



WHAT PHASE 1 CHANGED

- 1. Reorganized:** Nine sections that group similar provisions together
- 2. New tables and graphics:** Sub-district and frontage standards consolidated into one-page tables with new graphics
- 3. Process clarified.** Development review steps clarified and placed in chronological order
- 4. Administrative review updated** to reflect current City practice: the Planning Director and staff review applications for compliance
- 5. Errors corrected and ambiguities removed,** with no change to what the regulations require

Table 64-16-6.16: Shopfront Frontage Type Standards										
Site features		Sub-districts								
		T-6	T-5 (both)	T-4	T-3	Municipal	Open	SD-WH		
Finished floor elevation, first floor (max)		A	•	•	•				•	18 in (except 0 in at entry) (measured from average grade along the facade)
							•	•		As required to comply with flood elevation requirements
Shopfront, design										
Configuration			•	•	•				•	Shall be designed with a bulkhead, display window, and transom (see FIGURE A-10.a)
Height (min)		B	•	•	•				•	16 ft (measured from grade to top of base cornice)
Bulkhead, height (min max)		A	•	•	•				•	18 in 30 in
Transom windows, configuration			•	•	•				•	Include dividing muntins and no signage
Signs			•	•	•				•	If used, installed above transom window
Recessed			•	•	•		•	•	•	May be recessed up to 8 ft from facade
Shopfront, Transparency, and coverage										
Transparency of shopfront area, min.			•	•	•		•	•	•	Min 50% along each frontage, calculated by the width of the frontage and the area between the sidewalk grade and bottom of the second floor or roof structure
Coverage, min	Primary frontage		•	•	•		•	•	•	80 percent of frontage length
	Secondary frontage		•	•	•		•	•	•	30 percent of frontage length
Gallery, materials			•	•						Upper story railings shall be painted metal
Awnings and canopies [1]										
Material and Type		Awning	•		•	•	•	•	•	Fabric, fixed or movable
		Canopy								
Awnings, primary frontage, span		Ground floor	•		•	•	•	•	•	Min 80 percent of frontage without gaps except between separate businesses. If awning covers only the primary entrance, shall be the width of the primary entrance
		Other floors	•		•	•	•	•	•	•
Awnings, primary frontage										Min 6 ft projection but not beyond a terrace or awning



Phase 1 did not address the standards and rules in the DDD. That's what this effort is about.



THE UPDATE PROCESS (PHASE 2)

- | | |
|--|-----------------------|
| 1. Round 1 Public Input (in-person and online) | September 2026 |
| 2. Code Drafting | Fall 2026 |
| 3. Round 2 Public Input (webinar and online) | Fall 2026 |
| 4. Planning Commission Review | Winter 2027 |
| 5. City Council Adoption | Spring 2027 |

Setting up tonight's group work



FOUR TOPICS

1. Topic 1: Processes

Getting through the system

2. Topic 2: Design Standards

What buildings look and feel like

3. Topic 3: Uses

What happens inside (and outside) the buildings

4. Topic 4: Something Else

What we haven't thought to ask

Each group is assigned a topic to start. Other topics can be discussed based on the groups' interest.

ISSUES WE'VE HEARD (EXAMPLES AT YOUR TABLE)

How should the code address:

Process

1. **Historic district overlap.** Projects in a historic district must satisfy the DDD and get a certificate of appropriateness from the ARB.
2. **Variances.** When and where variances are required, applications go before the Board of Zoning Adjustment (BOA).
3. **Administrative flexibility.** How much authority staff should have to approve limited, site-specific adjustments, and in what circumstances.
4. **Demolition.** How demolition is reviewed downtown, and who decides.
5. **Process transparency.** Ways to recognize work happening downtown.

ISSUES WE'VE HEARD (EXAMPLES AT YOUR TABLE)

How should the code address:

Design Standards

1. **Variance-prone standards.** Height, materials, awnings, and columns come to the BOA regularly.
2. **Parking lot screening.** Lots are required to be screened from the sidewalk. Is that the right requirement and should it apply retroactively?
3. **Frontage types.** How a building meets the sidewalk: walkways, forecourts, entrances.
4. **Transparency.** Minimum window area on street-facing walls, and how it works on residential buildings.

ISSUES WE'VE HEARD (EXAMPLES AT YOUR TABLE)

How should the code address:

Uses

1. **Occupancy threshold.** At 100 occupants, a restaurant, bar, or venue moves from by-right to a BOA hearing. Is that the right threshold and is people the right measurement?

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

1. Round 1 Public Input

MapforMobile.org/ddd/

September 2026

2. Code Drafting

Fall 2026

3. Round 2 Public Input (webinar and online)

Fall 2026

4. Planning Commission Review

Winter 2027

5. City Council Adoption

Spring 2027