

**Harris County Unified Development Code Update
Overview of Revised Draft Articles 1-14 Submitted to Community Development Department for
Planning Commission Review**

This memorandum accompanies the September 13, 2021 Submittal Draft Harris County Unified Development Code (UDC) Articles 1-14. The substantive changes to the June 30, 2021 posted version of the UDC are highlighted and were drawn from comments received from the public, stakeholders and elected officials through the process of multiple meetings between June and September of 2021.

The overall structure of the Harris County UDC is as follows:

- Article 1:** Adoption, Purpose and Applicability
- Article 2:** Use of Land and Structures
- Article 3:** Restrictions on Particular Uses
- Article 4:** Lot and Building Standards
- Article 5:** Subdivisions and Planned Developments
- Article 6:** Parking and Loading Requirements
- Article 7:** Sign Regulations
- Article 8:** Environmental Resources Protection
- Article 9:** Project Design and Construction Standards
- Article 10:** Erosion Control and Stormwater Management
- Article 11:** Procedures and Permits
- Article 12:** Administration and Enforcement
- Article 13:** Interpretation and Glossary
- Article 14:** Inactive Zoning Districts

Each of the above articles includes a detailed Article-level table of contents at the outset.

The following applies to all Articles:

Use of track-changes:

- Proposed changes or additions to existing content in the County's Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision Regulations and other development regulations found in the current Code of Ordinances is represented as follows:
 - Black text is existing text from existing, previously adopted land development regulations.
 - Underlined blue text is proposed new or modified text.
 - ~~Struck through text~~ is a proposed deletion of existing, previously adopted text.
 - **Yellow Highlighted text** points out substantive revisions (additions or deletions) made after June 30, 2021.
- In most cases, there has been a significant reorganization of applicable provisions and sections in comparison with the current code of ordinances, even where no change is proposed to the text itself. This presentation of existing content in a new structure is not represented via track changes.

General editorial conventions:

- "County" is used when identifying the Harris County a governmental entity; "county" is used to describe the geographic boundaries of Harris County.
- Numerals instead of text are used for all measurements to improve readability, for example: "3 feet" instead of "three feet."

UDC FRAMEWORK

Harris County Unified Development Code

ARTICLE 1 Adoption, Purpose and Applicability

Article 1 provides for the adoption of the Unified Development Code (UDC), sets out its purpose and intent, describes the lands and development to which the UDC applies, shelters approved permits from changes in the regulations, and provides for the continuation of preexisting uses, structures, lots and signs that are not in conformity with the provisions of the UDC.

ARTICLE 2 Use of Land and Structures

Article 2 defines the zoning districts in the county and identifies the specific uses to which land and structures may be put in the various zoning districts, including certain uses or structures for which special approval is required in order to be allowed. In addition, this Article identifies specific uses within each zoning district to which restrictions may apply, which are presented in Article 3 of the UDC.

ARTICLE 3 Restrictions on Particular Uses

Article 3 provides land use and development regulations applicable to specific land uses that are otherwise allowed. Unless otherwise noted, these standards are intended to be applied within all zoning districts where the particular uses are allowed, whether by right or through approval of use permits.

ARTICLE 4 Lot and Building Standards

Article 4 sets out the standards that control the size of lots, the placement of buildings and structures on a lot, and the bulk and intensity of development on a lot in each zoning district. This article also provides minimum requirements and standards for the planting of trees and other landscape material and the provision of natural and/or planted buffers between dissimilar uses.

ARTICLE 5 Subdivisions and Planned Developments

Article 5 presents the different ways that land can be subdivided and developed, ranging from conventional subdivisions to conservation subdivisions, where green space and natural features are preserved by reducing lot sizes, and master planned developments, which allow a wider variety of housing types in a well-planned mixed-use environment while also preserving green space and natural features.

ARTICLE 6 Parking and Loading Requirements

Article 6 sets out the requirements and restrictions on the provision of automobile parking spaces for each development to accommodate its residents, employees, customers, and visitors, and for adequate truck parking to serve businesses and industry. The provisions of this article apply equally to each designated use without regard to the zoning district in which it is located.

ARTICLE 7 Sign Regulations

Article 7 provides regulations for the types of signs that may be placed on a property, and regulates such characteristics as their size, number, placement, and timing (e.g. for temporary events).

ARTICLE 8 Environmental Resources Protection

Article 8 sets out the minimum requirements and standards for the protection of the natural environment within the county, including restrictions on the use of land near certain rivers and streams, within water supply watersheds, within groundwater recharge areas susceptible to pollution, and in wetlands in order to:

- a. Protect the drinking water quality of the rivers, streams, reservoirs and aquifers that supply water to the residents of the jurisdiction and the State;
- b. Protect the natural habitat of animal and plant life relative to water resources; and
- c. Limit the potentially damaging effects of flooding.

ARTICLE 9 Project Design and Construction Standards

Article 9 sets out the minimum requirements and standards for construction of subdivisions and other land development projects, including general principals of design and layout and requirements for such public facilities as streets and utilities.

ARTICLE 10 Erosion Control and Stormwater Management

Article 10 contains the requirements that relate to the impact of rainfall events on the natural and manmade environment, including the erosion and siltation effects of site grading and land disturbance activities and the control of stormwater flows.

ARTICLE 11 Procedures and Permits

Article 11 describes the process through which a rezoning or special use may be approved on a property, the review and approval process for construction of subdivisions and other land development projects, and the review and approval process for other permits required by this UDC. This article also describes the process for addressing unusual situations or unique problems that may arise from the strict interpretation or enforcement of this UDC, including appeals from an administrative decision, for a special exception, and for unique hardships restricting reasonable use of a property.

ARTICLE 12 Administration and Enforcement

Article 12 sets out the structure, procedures and responsibilities of the various administrative officers for administering, amending and enforcing this UDC, and sets out penalties for violations.

ARTICLE 13 Interpretation and Glossary

Article 13 describes how figures, words and phrases used in this UDC are to be interpreted and provides a glossary of all definitions specifically used in the text of this UDC.

ARTICLE 14 Inactive Zoning Districts

The purpose of Article 14 is to identify use and development standards that apply to individual zoning districts which are no longer active but which continue to apply to properties zoned in those classifications. No additional parcels will be rezoned to any inactive district classification.