



wood.

"BIG IDEA" MEETING

OCTOBER 22, 2020

A photograph of a forest landscape with tall trees and a cloudy sky, serving as a background for the bottom section of the slide.

HARRIS COUNTY
UNIFIED DEVELOPMENT CODE UPDATE

AGENDA

- Project Recap
- Discussion of “Big Ideas”
 - BIG IDEAS* → Proposed General Approach to Address Key Issues, Needs, and Ideas Identified Throughout The UDC Update Project
- Next Steps: Big Idea Meeting
- Q & A – 2 stages:
 1. Q & A with BOC and Planning Commissioners
 2. Q & A with Members of the Public in Attendance

PROJECT RECAP

County Planning involves **Policy** and **Regulations**

- Comprehensive Plan, Board of Commissioners and Planning Commission sets Policy Intent for Future Land Use/Development
- Land Development Codes (zoning & development regulations) are critical tools in the broader Harris County planning process
 - Guide monthly process of planning/zoning
 - Coordinate with policy (Comprehensive Plan)
 - Clearly communicate what is expected in development (Permitted uses, restrictions, lot & building standards, density, etc.)
- Unified Development Code (UDC) structure helps make regulations clear, user-friendly and accurate to policy intent



Comprehensive Plan 2019



PROJECT RECAP: Purpose & Goals

- **Streamline & Consolidate:**
 - Compile land use, design, & development regulations into a single, unified document
 - Logical organization
 - Minimize redundancy
- **Update & modernize** zoning and development regulations and associated graphics/illustrations
- **Coordinate** with other planning documents (Comprehensive Plan & supporting studies)



to create a

Unified Development Code

PROJECT RECAP: Process

Community Input (survey, meetings, workshops)

- To-Date.*
- Survey (*ongoing*)
 - Project Kick-Off (*March 3rd*)
 - Focus Groups (*July – Sept*)
 - Community Workshops (*Sept. 22nd – 23rd*)
 - Big Idea Meeting (*Oct. 22nd*)

- Upcoming.*
- Review Meeting
 - Open House
 - Adoption Hearings

Technical Analysis (land development codes)

Issues Identification

Draft Document

Review & Adoption

PROJECT RECAP: Survey Summary

Responses
to-date: 533

• Planning Issues – Top 3:

- Development Standards
(Building & lot standards: lot size, setbacks, building height; density)
- Strategic Growth Management
(Align infrastructure planning with development)
- Regulations & Restrictions on Uses



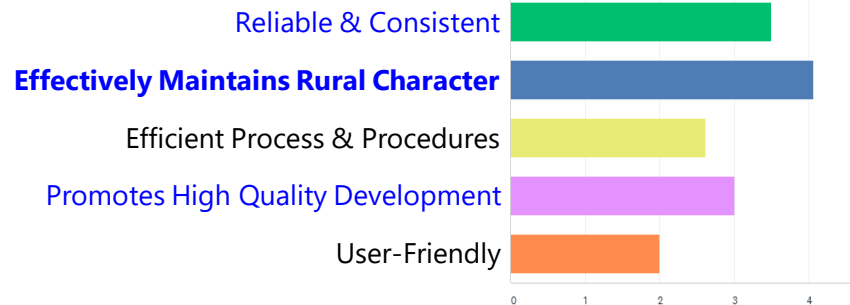
• Purpose of UDC – Top 3:

- Promote Health, Safety, Welfare
- Implement Comprehensive Plan
- Protect Investments
(i.e., private property)



• UDC Attributes – Top 3:

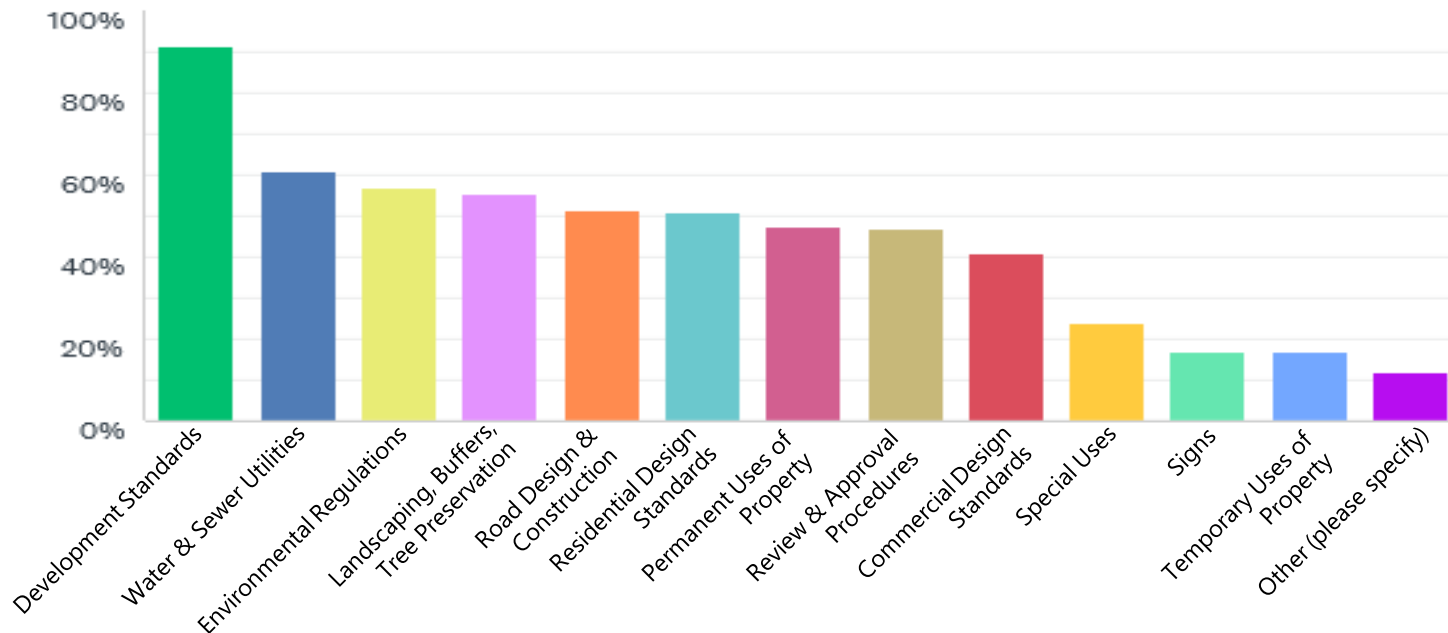
- Effectively maintains rural character
- Reliable and consistent
- Promotes high quality development



PROJECT RECAP: Survey Summary

■ Top 5 Issues Most Interested in or Concerned About:

1. **Development Standards** *(Building & lot standards: lot size, setbacks, building height; density; etc.)*
2. **Water/Sewer Utilities** *(Including coordinating infrastructure & development)*
3. **Environmental Regulations** *(Regulating development in and preserving environmentally sensitive areas)*
4. **Landscaping & Buffers Requirements** *(Between incompatible development & certain types of residential development)*
5. **Road Design & Construction** *(Road design, construction & related issues)*



Refer to project webpage for full summary

BIG IDEAS: Key Issues to Address

- The following slides provide an overview of **key issues/ideas** to address in the UDC Update that have been identified throughout the process:
 - ❖ UDC Format
 - ❖ Update Use Table Format
 - ❖ Modernize Land Use Allowances
 - ❖ Rural vs. Suburban Requirements
 - ❖ Minimum Lot Size & Lot Width
 - ❖ Conservation Subdivisions; Senior Housing Development; Master Planned Development
 - ❖ Minor & Major Subdivisions
 - ❖ Infrastructure Design Standards: Roads; Water/Sewer Utilities
 - ❖ Buffers and Landscaping Requirements
 - ❖ Economic Development Supportive Zoning
 - ❖ Permitting & Procedures: Process; Application Requirements; Public Involvement

UDC Format

Key Issues/Needs:

- Consolidate land development codes (zoning & development regulations) into updated, user-friendly document
 - Current land development codes are spread out in different sections and/or in multiple separate pieces making them difficult to use and
 - Current codes are vague, difficult to interpret, and outdated – need to make them easier to use, understand, and administer
-
- Clarify, consolidate, and reorganize zoning and development regulations
 - Organize according to new framework that follows the land development process
 - Establish new format and updated content, including graphics and tables

UDC Format: Organization

Logical organization:

What can I do with my property? →

How do I make plans for its development? →

What engineering and construction standards must I follow? →

What are the procedures for developing or using my property? →

How will the UDC be administered? →

Typical UDC Organization

Article 1 Adoption, Purpose & Applicability

Article 2 Use of Land & Structures

Article 3 Restrictions on Particular Uses

Article 4 Lot & Building Standards

Article 5 Subdivisions & Planned Developments

Article 6 Parking & Loading Requirements

Article 7 Sign Regulations

Article 8 Buffers & Landscaping

Article 9 Environmental Protection

Article 10 Project Design & Construction Standards

Article 11 Erosion Control & Stormwater Management

Article 12 Procedures & Permits

Article 13 Administration & Enforcement

Article 14 Interpretation & Glossary

USE TABLE: Organization

Key Issue/Need: Update Use Table & coordinate with business license classifications

- Create one matrix chart for **Principal Uses**
 - Uses allowed by zoning district, specifically:
 - **By Right** & if approved as a **Special Use**
- Create one matrix chart for **Accessory Uses**
- Organize Principal Uses under the following headings:
 - Agriculture
 - Residential Uses
 - Administrative and Professional Offices
 - Commercial Services
 - Arts, Entertainment and Recreation
 - Retail Trade
 - Manufacturing, Wholesaling and Warehousing
 - Transportation, Communications and Utilities
 - Public and Institutional Uses

USE TABLE: NAICS Codes

→ Principal uses tied to **NAICS Codes**:

- North American Industry Classification System (U.S. Department of Commerce)
- NAICS assigns classification numbers to businesses and industries based on the primary business activity in which the company is engaged
- Business activity usually corresponds to land use type, and therefore can be easily assigned to appropriate zoning districts

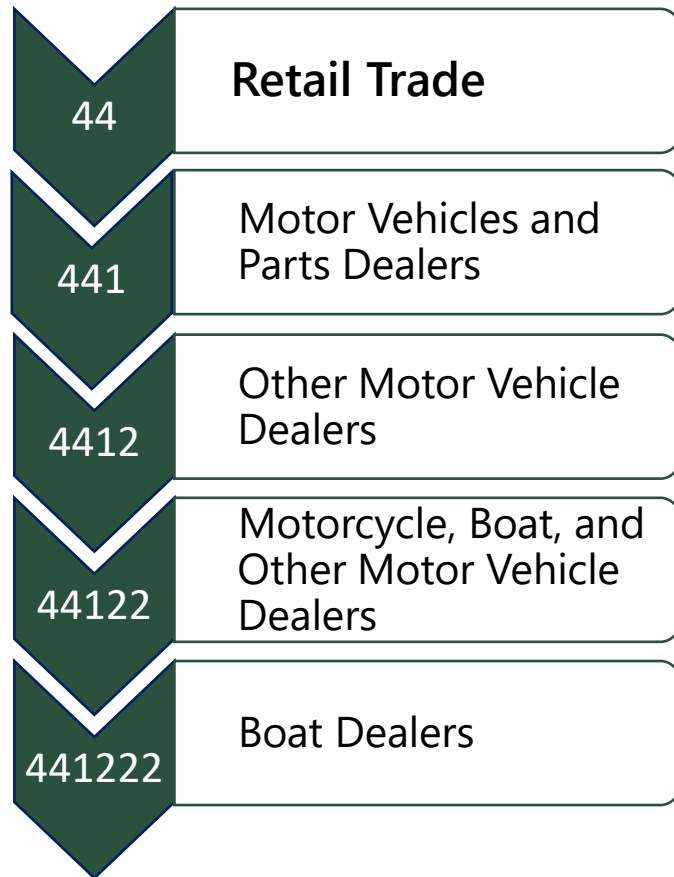
USE TABLE: NAICS Codes

→ Principal uses tied to **NAICS Codes**:

- Allows a more comprehensive list of uses; uses can be broken down into additional subcategories
- Specific prohibited uses can be identified
- Interpretation is occasionally needed for an individual use
- Intended to provide better guidance for property owners, businesses and City staff / officials
- Intended to sync with occupational tax application (business licenses)

USE TABLE: NAICS Codes

- For example:



NAICS Ref.	PRINCIPAL USES
11521	Show Arenas for Horses (including Accessory Barns)
71394	Softball, Baseball, Football or Soccer Fields
71394	Tennis Clubs and Tennis Centers
71399	Other Amusement and Recreation Uses not listed above
	Retail Trade
441	<i>Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealers:</i>
44111	New Car Dealers
44112	Used Car Dealers
44121	Recreational Vehicle Dealers
441221	Motorcycle Dealers
441222	Boat Dealers
441229	All Other Motor Vehicle Dealers
4413	Automotive Parts, Accessories, and Tire Stores
	<i>Furniture, Electronics and Appliance Stores:</i>
442	Furniture and Home Furnishings Stores
443111	Household Appliance Stores
443112	Radio, Television and Other Electronics Stores
44312	Computer and Software Stores
44313	Camera and Photographic Supplies Stores
4441	<i>Building Material and Supplies Dealers:</i>
44411	Home Centers
44412	Paint and Wallpaper Stores
44413	Hardware Stores
44419	Lumber Yards
44419	Electrical, Heating or Plumbing Supply Stores
44419	Wood or Ceramic Tile Flooring Stores
44419	Other Building Material Dealers not listed above
4442	<i>Lawn and Garden Equipment and Supplies Stores:</i>
44421	Outdoor Power Equipment Stores
44422	Nursery and Garden Centers

MODERNIZE LAND USE ALLOWANCES

Key Issues/Needs:

- Add new uses and clarify existing uses that are allowed by right or as a special use
- Add/clarify restrictions on certain uses, as appropriate

→ Key New Uses to Regulate (with appropriate restrictions):

- **Short Term Vacation Rentals**
 - Define; establish (limited) new standards and permitting procedures
- **Food Trucks**
 - Define; clarify & codify standards and permitting process for private and public use
- **Wineries, Breweries, Distilleries**
 - Establish definitions and standards
- **Tiny Homes (Accessory Dwelling Unit)**
 - Define; Accessory Use; Limit to extent that they provide flexible living options in rural setting only; Provide appropriate restrictions for running utilities, consistent with existing accessory dwelling units

MODERNIZE LAND USE ALLOWANCES

Key Issue/Need: Several existing uses were identified as needing additional restrictions or more flexibility to accommodate common Accessory Uses associated with certain Principal Uses

→ Key Existing Uses to update:

- **Agritourism Uses**
 - Expand associated uses and provide flexibility to accommodate public visitors (tourism component)
- **Special Event Venue / Wedding Venue**
 - Establish clear standards and requirements
- **Accessory Structures & Uses**
 - Ensure there are appropriate regulations and flexibility for accessory structures & uses associated with agricultural and rural land

MODERNIZE LAND USE ALLOWANCES

Key Issue/Need: Several existing uses were identified as needing additional restrictions or more flexibility to accommodate common Accessory Uses associated with certain Principal Uses

→ Existing Uses to update:

- **Commercial Recreation Facilities**
 - **Campgrounds**
 - Update & clarify standards
 - **Sports Fields**
 - Improve standards
- **Solar Collection Systems**
 - Improve and update standards
- **Kennels**
 - Update & clarify standards

→ Codify conditions regularly imposed on certain uses

DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

■ Rural vs. Suburban Requirements

Key Issue/Need: Currently, development standards do not differentiate between individual property level (large lot) vs. subdivision level

- Accessory Structures:
 - Differentiate between different types of accessory structures (by use or district)
 - Add specific and appropriately flexible standards for structures associated with agricultural uses.
- Zoning Districts
 - Provide greater differentiation in development standards for different residential zoning districts (rural vs. suburban) (i.e., a house on a 10+ acre rural lot vs. a house on 2 acres or less in a subdivision)

DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

■ Minimum Lot Standards - Residential

• Density

Key Issues/Needs:

- Community preference to maintain low density and preserve rural character
 - Low population, low density development pattern, and lack of infrastructure are limiting factors to economic growth potential
 - Need to introduce innovative options that can more effectively preserve rural landscape and natural resources with future development
- Increase min. lot sizes in A-1 and R-R (for comparison, equivalent in comparable counties is typically 5 or 10 acres)
- For R-1 areas, maintain 2-acre minimum per home overall density and maximize rural landscape and natural resources preservation through conservation subdivision development approach

DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

■ Minimum Lot Standards – Residential *(cont'd)*

- Lot Width:

Key Issue/Need: Increase R-1 subdivision min. lot width to preserve rural character and improve resulting lot dimensions

→ Increase in. lot width (e.g., increase to 125* ft standard), with some flexibility for cul-de-sacs and large lots with limited road frontage (flag lots) when necessary due to challenging topography

(Current standard for typical residential development is 50' at street; 90' at building line)

→ OR, vary lot width allowances according to improvements standard (100* ft with curb & gutter or 150* ft with open ditch)

→ Adjust setbacks accordingly for lot sizes

*Note: These numbers represent example width standards based on review of similar counties in the region

SUBDIVISIONS & PLANNED DEVELOPMENT

■ Conservation Subdivisions

Key Issues/Needs:

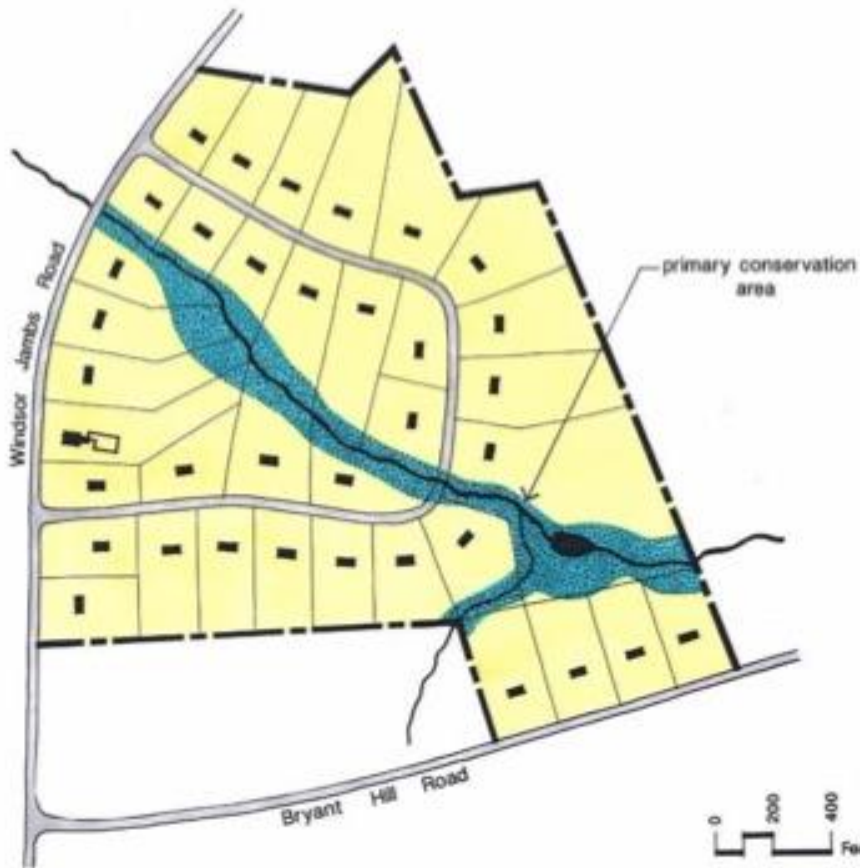
- Current patterns of typical residential subdivision development inefficiently use available land
- Need to diversify residential development options while maintain rural atmosphere and preserving land

→ Establish standards for Conservation Subdivisions:

- Alternative to conventional subdivisions that result in efficient and sustainable rural landscape
- Emphasis on Open Space Preservation – Preserves primary conservation areas and open space while maintaining net density
- Density neutral – same net density as conventional subdivision development

SUBDIVISIONS & PLANNED DEVELOPMENT

Conventional Subdivision



Conservation Subdivision



Source: Randall Arendt, *Rural by Design*

SUBDIVISIONS & PLANNED DEVELOPMENT

■ Conservation Subdivision Design Approach

Density:

- Density neutral. If existing standards allow 1 unit per 2 acres, then conservation subdivision is also 1 unit per 2 acres net density

Open Space Conservation:

- Includes both 'undevelopable' land (Primary) and 'developable' land (Secondary) – preferably in range of 50% of total

Process:

- First, designate open space (Primary and Secondary)
- Second, locate house construction sites
- Third, connect with roads and paths
- Last, draw lot lines

Source: Randall Arendt, *Rural by Design*

SUBDIVISIONS & PLANNED DEVELOPMENT

■ Senior Housing Developments

Key Issue/Need: Accommodate senior housing developments or retirement communities that would allow residents to “age-in-place”

→ Establish standards for senior housing developments (e.g., 62+ age restriction; retirement community; assisted living; etc.)

■ Master Planned Developments

Key Issue/Need: Provide standards that can support mixed use community development and commercial services in Harris County at appropriate locations served by adequate infrastructures

→ Modify Planned Residential Development (PRD) to emphasize commercial and office/live work in mixed use development, and enhance standards and requirements for community design and infrastructure (e.g. sewer access, I-185 access, commercial development requirements, design and materials requirements, etc.)

SUBDIVISIONS & PLANNED DEVELOPMENT

■ Minor & Major subdivisions

Key Issue/Need: Clarify & update standards for minor subdivisions and provide consistency with Health Department Regulations

→ Update definition of major subdivision regulations to be consistent with Health Department regulations (understood to be 5 or more lots)

INFRASTRUCTURE DESIGN STANDARDS

■ Roads

Key Issue/Need: Need higher road design and construction standards for certain types of residential development

- Establish separate suburban and rural road standards, which are appropriate to different conditions and expectations
 - Establish different requirements for stormwater drainage infrastructure (e.g., curb & gutter vs. roadside drainage swales)
 - Promote Low Impact Development (LID) best practices where feasible
- Codify & clarify road standards that are commonly required as a condition to approval or waived during the development review process
- Add graphics and illustrations to supplement engineering standards

INFRASTRUCTURE DESIGN STANDARDS

■ Water / Sewer Utilities

Key Issues/Needs:

- Coordinate water/sewer utilities and development needs earlier in process
 - Clarify design standards for water utilities
-
- Establish clear review procedures early in the development application process to ensure there is sufficient infrastructure (roads, water, sewer) capacity to support new development
 - Codify common development application conditions (looping water lines; sewer/waste utilities standards compatible with jurisdictions that provide sewage treatment)
 - Add graphics and illustrations to supplement engineering standards

PROJECT DESIGN STANDARDS

■ Buffering and Landscaping

Key Issue/Need: Existing minimal requirements for buffers or landscaping that only apply to certain types of development (PUDs, commercial) need to be expanded to help preserve rural landscape

- Expand requirements for vegetated buffers and landscaping for certain types of development to support rural landscape preservation
- Establish incentives to minimize the impacts on adjacent properties from mass grading for new development
- Provide incentives for land conservation

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SUPPORTIVE ZONING

Key Issues/Needs:

- Diversify tax base
 - Leverage certain areas of County to support commercial and industrial development (i.e., limit development to certain areas)
 - Implement strategic growth management strategies that preserve existing rural environment while supporting smart growth
-
- Develop special provisions to encourage commercial and/or industrial development where sewer exists
 - Unique treatment at Interstate-185 access points
 - Industrial/Commercial use – provide flexibility for new/ changing development types and use mixtures
 - Incentivize agribusiness and agritourism uses – provide flexibility in standards for accessory buildings, accessory uses, etc.

PERMITTING & PROCEDURES

Key Issues/Needs:

- Improve zoning and development review process
 - Land development codes are interpreted and applied inconsistently for zoning and development applications
 - Zoning, development, and/or permitting process can be overly time-consuming and cumbersome
-
- Streamline review and approval process for zoning and development applications – move towards one stop shop capability and organization
 - Establish clear process criteria and requirements
 - Replace vague language and add necessary standards to minimize need for interpretation and promote consistent application and interpretation of land development codes
 - Consider development review point system like Troup County

PERMITTING & PROCEDURES

■ Application Requirements

Key Issues/Needs:

- Ensure infrastructure capacity is considered early in development process
 - Need requirements for impact studies, etc. for major development and development in more dense/high traffic areas
- Establish clear requirements for traffic study, environmental analysis, etc., in the context of rural vs. suburban setting

PERMITTING & PROCEDURES

■ Public Involvement

Key Issues/Needs:

- Perceived lack of transparency and communication with general public on zoning and development applications and processes
 - Maintain information for current zoning & development applications on County website
-
- Expand public notification and communication activities for zoning and development applications
 - Enhance overall process for public involvement, including use of County website and notifications

NEXT STEPS: *Target* Public Engagement Schedule

(10.20.20)

- To-Date:**
- Survey (*ongoing*)
 - Project Kick-Off (*March 3rd*)
 - Focus Groups (*July – Sept*)
 - Community Workshops (*Sept. 22nd – 23rd*)
 - Big Idea Meeting (*Oct. 22nd*)

Target* Public Engagement Schedule:

The orange bars represent a time period during which the meetings are expected to take place. These targeted time frames for meetings to occur may need to be adjusted to accommodate project needs as the project moves forward.

10.20.20

2020

2021

	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB
Community Workshops	9/22 - 9/23					
Big Idea Meeting		10/22				
Review Meeting						
Open House						
Adoption Meetings						
Survey						

*Schedule reflects "target" timeframe for meeting dates to occur that are subject to change.

REMINDERS:

- **Project Email:** zoningcode@harriscountyga.gov
Continue sending questions and comments to the official Project Email, which will remain active throughout the project.
- **Project Webpage:** <https://harriscountyga.gov/update-of-the-countys-land-use-and-development-codes-official-project-page/>
Visit the Project Webpage for project information and detail of project-related meetings and public engagement efforts to-date.
- **Project Survey:** https://woodplc.surveymonkey.com/r/HCga_UDCupdate
Take the project survey if you have not already! The survey will remain active through the end of November. Note that comments and questions will continue to be taken through the project email once the survey is closed.

QUESTIONS?