

KEY ISSUES, NEEDS, & IDEAS

DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS & STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT

The topics below relate to Development Standards & Strategic Development and represent key themes identified through the public engagement process and technical analysis thus far. These themes will be translated into more detailed issues, needs, and ideas for the Unified Development Code Update.

LOT STANDARDS (size, setbacks, dimensions, types of lots)

- Minimum Lot size
 - *Opinion:* Larger lot sizes preserve rural atmosphere of Harris County and promote high quality development
 - *Opinion:* Need more flexibility in lot sizes to avoid sprawl and inefficient land development; smaller lot sizes are OK in certain areas and can be high-quality
- Incentivize larger lot sizes to help maintain rural environment;
- Review building setbacks from front, side and rear property lines
- Review distance requirements between buildings on a lot to ensure there is adequate space between them
- Establish different standards for larger, agricultural/rural single family residential lots compared with lots within a typical major subdivision where the lots are much smaller.
- Provide appropriate differences in lot standards across different zoning districts
- Provide flexibility in lot dimension requirements (i.e., lot width) to accommodate challenging topography in Harris County

ACCESSORY STRUCTURES

- Consider alternative requirements/standards for the location of accessory structures on large lots in agricultural/rural areas that are not part of a subdivision
- Consider differentiating between different types of accessory structures (type, size, use, etc.)
- Provide flexible standards for certain land uses that require a variety of accessory structures and facilities

STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT

- Promote development where existing infrastructure (roads, water, sewer, etc.) exists (cities; interstate exits; other areas where adequate infrastructure exists)
- Guide new (higher density; commercial; mixed-use) development to certain areas, where most appropriate, but maintain a lower density residential environment in Harris County
- Incentivize more intensive development (economic development) in certain areas, where appropriate
- Diversify tax base so tax burden is not just on residential property owners; Need more industrial/commercial development in proper/appropriate planned locations to share tax burden

ACTIVITY: Place a sticker by the topics/themes you agree or disagree with:

- **Strongly Agree:** Use GREEN sticker
- **Somewhat Agree:** Use YELLOW sticker
- **Disagree:** Use RED sticker

To leave a comment: Use a sticky note to add your comment and stick it near the topic it addresses. You can also fill out a comment form and leave it on the table.

VIRTUAL PARTICIPANTS:

Please email your comments to zoningcode@harriscountyga.gov

KEY ISSUES, NEEDS, & IDEAS

PROJECT DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION STANDARDS

The topics below relate to Design & Construction Standards and represent key themes identified through the public engagement process and technical analysis thus far. These themes will be translated into more detailed issues, needs, and ideas for the Unified Development Code Update.

ROADS

- Consider curb and gutter design for certain types of development (vs. roadside drainage swales & driveway pipes)
- Improve construction standards to maintain road quality
- Consider requirements for acceleration/deceleration lanes for new subdivision development to minimize impact to existing roads and improve safety
- Increase maximum length allowance for dead-end streets/cul-de-sacs
- Evaluate requirements for number of entrances to a new subdivision
- Consider provisions for private easement roads that may be shared
- Encourage internal road connectivity within subdivisions and to external road network

WATER & SEWER UTILITIES

- County should limit and carefully manage any sewer expansion
- Require water/sewer infrastructure to be considered in early stages of new development
- Long range planning for water/sewer and other utilities must be coordinated with new development to ensure adequate capacity is accommodated
- Consider requirement for water lines in new developments to be looped to minimize health and safety issues associated with "dead-end" water lines

BUFFERS & TREE PRESERVATION

- Require buffers, greenbelts, or similar standards around more dense development (subdivisions, planned unit development)
- Consider landscaping requirements, buffer requirements, and/or tree preservation requirements for new residential development
- Use County codes to promote retaining existing wooded areas and to minimize clear cutting in new development
- Require natural, vegetated buffers along roadways to screen development from public right-of-way

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ZONING DISTRICTS & PLANNED DEVELOPMENTS

The topics below related to Zoning Districts & Planned Development represent key themes identified through the public engagement process and technical analysis thus far. These themes will be translated into more detailed issues, needs, and ideas for the Unified Development Code Update.

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TYPES OF SUBDIVISIONS

- **Rural Design: Conservation Subdivisions**
 - Lot sizes within a conservation subdivision may be reduced in exchange for preservation of specified amount of conservation land and open space; "Greenbelt" or similar natural, wooded buffer surrounds the subdivision.
 - Clustering development and preserving space can maintain the same net density in a development (as a large lot subdivision) while requiring less infrastructure
- **Major vs. Minor Subdivisions**
 - Consider increasing number of lots in a development that qualifies as a minor subdivision
 - Ensure codes do not allow multiple connected minor subdivisions to substitute for a major subdivision

PLANNED DEVELOPMENTS

- **Planned Residential Development (PRD) Zoning District**
 - Evaluate minimum lot sizes, design standards, and other development standards
- Enhance design standards for all planned developments that typically have higher densities (curb and gutter road design, sidewalks, amenities, landscaping, architectural design standards,, etc.)
- **Senior Housing / Assisted Living Developments:**
 - Consider accommodating a planned development that allows smaller lot sizes and certain amenities for senior housing developments, including age-restricted communities; lower maintenance lots are appropriate for aging population.
- Review development standards for all types of planned developments currently addressed in land development codes

KEY ISSUES, NEEDS, & IDEAS

LAND USES

The topics below relate to Land Uses and reflect both uses in the existing Land Development Codes that need to be updated (adding regulations or restrictions), and uses that are not currently addressed in the Codes that need to be added in the update. Review the "Use Table" posters to understand what uses are allowed in the County either by right or by Special Use permit. Currently, any use addressed in the Use Table is prohibited.

GENERAL

- **Exclusionary Zoning:** Currently, if not specifically permitted in the Zoning Ordinance, a use is prohibited; Consider alternative ways to address or accommodate land uses that are not mentioned in the code
- **Permitted Uses:** Evaluate uses that are allowed by right, vs. those that require Special Use Permit

"NEW" USES (to consider adding to Use Table in update)

Food Trucks

- Add food truck regulations; this use should be allowed in more areas and not only permitted through a special event permit

Short Term Rentals (AirBnb, VRBO, HomeAway, etc.)

- Add regulations to accommodate short term rentals (AirBnB, etc.) that have potential economic benefits for Harris County

Tiny Homes / Accessory Dwelling Units

- Add regulations to accommodate tiny houses
- Add regulations to accommodate RV's on property in agricultural districts (larger lots)
- Add regulations to accommodate living spaces in barns ("barn-ominiums")

Wineries / Breweries / Distilleries

- Allow in agricultural zoning and certain industrial and/or commercial districts; update regulations for wineries

EXISTING USES (to improve or modify in update)

Agritourism Uses

- Improve current regulations to accommodate agritourism needs – Improve flexibility in categorizing agritourism uses

Kennels

- Review and improve standards for dog kennels

Gaming and Hunting

- Improve regulations and add flexibility for this type of use to support high quality hunting opportunities that landowners could capitalize on
- Consider allowance of structures typically associated with this use to be exempt from special use (or similar) permitting process

Home Occupations

- Evaluate restrictions in rural residential areas vs. subdivisions; rural home occupations should have fewer restrictions – especially if dwelling cannot be seen from public view.

Commercial Recreational Facilities

- Need to clarify where use is permitted and associated restrictions (lighting, noise, traffic, etc.)

Solar Farms

- Evaluate and update regulations for solar farms; ensure restrictions are adequate

Timber Farming

- Evaluate restrictions on timber farming - Current regulations seem too restrictive
- Allow hunting/gaming as accessory use

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KEY ISSUES, NEEDS, & IDEAS

The topics below relate to Permitting, Procedures, Public Involvement, and Code Organization & Interpretation and represent key themes identified through the public engagement process and technical analysis thus far. These themes will be translated into more detailed issues, needs, and ideas for the Unified Development Code Update.

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Permitting, Procedures, and Public Involvement

- Increase community involvement and information sharing with the public about zoning and development processes
- Streamline and improve efficiency of development review process (preliminary/final plats, rezoning applications, etc.)
- Provide clear and consistent zoning and development application requirements
- Clarify variance application criteria
- Ensure application requirements address potential impacts from major developments

UDC Content, Organization, and Interpretation

- Ensure land development codes are designed to support consistent interpretation and administration by staff and review boards; concern that the same regulations are interpreted differently by different people
- Code language should be extremely clear and reliably implemented to minimize the need for interpretation
- Regulations should be more objective, remove subjectivity, and facilitate development according to professional standards
- Ensure Harris County development regulations are consistent with Health Department regulations
- Digitize the Harris County Zoning Map and make available for public to view online
- Provide more graphics and tables in the updated Development Code to illustrate regulations