Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) Update

November 12, 2025

ROCKDALEUDO.COM

Welcome Back!

Today's Agenda...

1. Project Timeline
2. Homework: What did you find out?
3. Convergence of Policy and Regulation
4. We need you!
5. More opportunities - spread the word!
6. Next Steps

Project Timeline

Complete

- *Data Collection*
  - *Analysis of Prior Plans and Policy Documents*
- *Review Existing Ordinances with Recommendations*
  - *Comprehensive Review of Ordinances*

October 2025

- Draft Code
  - Develop Draft Ordinance

November/ December 2025

- Document Preparation
  - Integrate Ordinance Edits
  - Develop Graphic/Illustration Edits

January 2026

- Public Draft Release

February/ March 2026

- Public Hearings
  - Official Turn Over of All Finalized Materials
  - Adoption Process

Previous Homework

HOUSING GOAL – PURPOSE: Assure housing availability across all demographic sectors, with a focus on safe and sustainable communities, both economically and environmentally.

REFLECTION: Identify how the housing goal in the Comprehensive Plan is (or could be) implemented through the UDO.

What's Missing?

- What types of housing are hardest to find in our community?
- Who's being left out of current housing options?

What Gets in the Way?

- What rules or processes make it harder to create the housing we need?
- What changes to zoning or permitting could help?

Where Could It Go?

- What parts of town make sense for new or different housing?
- Are there areas that could be redeveloped or better used for housing?

How Can We Be More Inclusive?

- How can the UDO help reduce the costs of housing in the long run?
- How can we make sure housing meets the needs of seniors, families, and young adults alike?
- What mix of housing types would make our community more balanced and resilient?

What Should It Look and Feel Like?

- What design or quality standards make housing feel safe, welcoming, and lasting?
- How can new housing fit well with existing neighborhoods?

Planning vs. Zoning

- Planning
  - Defines community's long-term vision
  - Focuses on high-level area or district
  - Serves as policy and decision-making guide
- Zoning
  - Acts as the implementation tool for the plan
  - Applies to individual properties and parcels
  - Serves as a regulatory document that enforces the plan

How is Policy Informing Content?

Vision → Regulatory Concepts → Ordinance Text

- Supplemental space to activate the sidewalk
- Street furniture
- Wide, hardscaped pedestrian clear zone
- Tree planting zones
- Street lighting
- Building placement

Streetscape

- Streetscape improvements, multi-use trails and other pedestrian facilities shall be provided along all street frontages within the boundaries of the Central Business District in accordance with the regulations of this section:
- Streetscapes shall consist of 2 or 3 parts: a landscape zone, sidewalk zone, and in some cases, a supplemental zone.
  - The landscape zone starts at the back of the curb and extends inward (toward the lot) for the minimum distance and no more than the maximum distance indicated in Table 2-A. This area is generally intended to accommodate trees, plants, street furniture, lights, trash receptacles and similar streetscape elements.
  - The sidewalk zone starts at the inner edge of the landscape zone and extends inward (toward the lot) for the minimum distance and no more than the maximum distance indicated in Table 2-A. This area is intended exclusively to accommodate unimpeded pedestrian movement. The pedestrian zone may also be used to accommodate multi-use trails when the zone is at least 10 feet in width.
  - The supplemental zone starts at the inner edge of the pedestrian zone and extends inward (toward the lot) for the minimum distance and no more than the maximum distance indicated in Table 2-A. This area is intended to accommodate active uses along the street frontage with amenities such as outdoor seating and landscaping. Buildings shall abut required supplemental zones in accordance with Building Type standards in Tables 1-A and a-B…

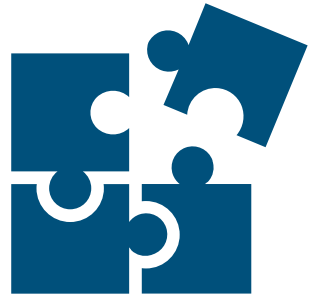
Type A Street	
Streetscape Component	**Dimensions**
Travel Lane	10 feet
Landscape Zone	3-6 feet
Sidewalk Zone	10 feet minimum
Supplemental Zone	10-15 feet
Curb Cuts	not permitted [1]
On-street parking	permitted

[1] Unless no other access available

Translating Policy into Action

- Vision Translated into Regulation
  - Character Areas (in the Comprehensive Plan) describe the intended look, feel, and function of different parts of the community in the long term.
  - Zoning Districts (in the UDO or zoning ordinance) set specific rules for land use, density, setbacks, height, and more to implement that vision.
- Informing Zoning Updates
  - Character areas guide zoning map and code updates so that the zoning aligns with the desired future development pattern.
- Compatibility, Not One-to-One
  - A single character area may support several zoning districts that fit the character area's intent.

Activity



- ***Part 1*: Connecting the Comprehensive Plan to the UDO.**
- **Review Your Assigned Residential District.**
  Each stakeholder (or small group) will evaluate all 5 residential districts.
- **Identify Relevant Comprehensive Plan Goals.**
  Using the provided list of housing and related policy goals from the Comprehensive Plan, determine which goals best align with each district's *Purpose and Intent* statement.
- **Evaluate Alignment.**
  For each district, ask:
  - Do the goals and the district's purpose support the same housing and development outcomes?
  - Are there goals or policies that *should* apply but are not clearly reflected?
  - Does the purpose/intent language feel too broad, too narrow, or inconsistent with the plan's direction?
- **Document Your Observations.**
  Note which Comprehensive Plan goals align with each district's purpose and which do not. Be prepared to share examples or suggestions for improving consistency.

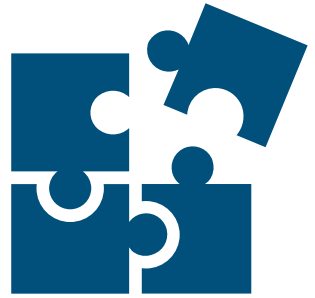
Influence of the Housing Study

- Create series of **new zoning tools** that allow projects aligning with community housing goals to move forward more easily.
- Use **flexible standards** that reward projects including public benefits, like preserving green space.
- Allow **accessory dwelling units (ADUs)** - smaller homes or secondary units on existing lots.
- Explore **opportunities for churches** to add community-serving or housing options.

Influence of the Housing Study

- Support **senior-friendly housing options** through targeted zoning updates.
- Allow **smaller housing units,** where appropriate, to increase affordability and diversity of options.
- Adjust **lot and building standards** to make redevelopment of existing smaller sites possible.
- Consider **special neighborhood provisions** tailored for areas like High Rock, Sunrise, Lakeview, and Honey Creek.

Upcoming Homework



- ***Part 2*: Preparing for the Built Environment Exercise.**
  Using the district(s) you were assigned during Part 1 – noted by your ★ sticker, search for visual examples through a **photo scavenger hunt**, where you'll connect the *Purpose and Intent statements* (either current or with proposed adjustments) to the *real-world development patterns* seen across the County.
- **Evaluate Alignment.**
  Ask:
  - Does the built environment **actually reflect** the community's goals and zoning intent? And where are there gaps or inconsistencies?
- **Good Examples.**
  Developments that represent the **desired outcomes** of the Comprehensive Plan housing/community goals and the UDO purpose/intent language.
- **Not Good Examples.**
  Developments that **do not support** the Comprehensive Plan's housing/community goals or the district's purpose/intent language.

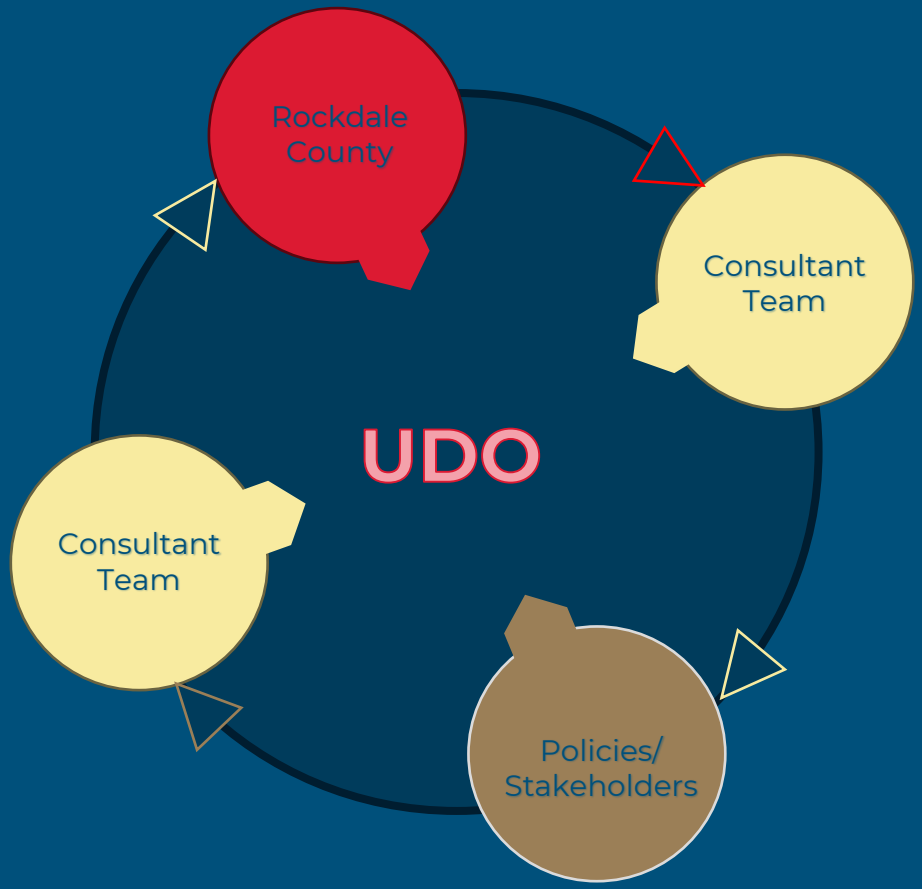
We need you!

- Find examples of the good and the bad representation in the district you have been assigned.
- Email them, along with your descriptions to emitchem@cplteam.com.

DISCLAIMER:

Any images uploaded may be used in the code itself. Please only use images you own the rights to.

Feedback Loop



Template examples…

4. ***Shopfront***. The Shopfront façade is intended for use as a mixed-use building located close to the sidewalk. The most distinctive element of this Façade Type is the ground floor façade with large amounts of storefront glass, regularly spaced entrances, and intricate architectural elements present in existing historic storefronts, typically for retail and service uses.

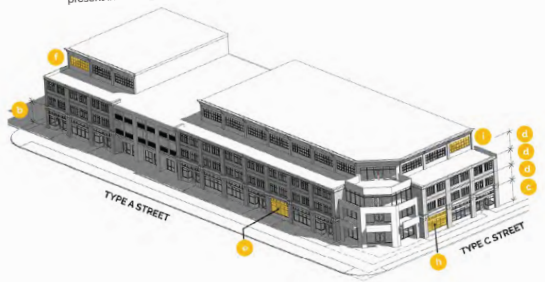


Figure 3.2.9.B.5 - Shopfront Façade Type

C. *Shopfront Design Standards*.

1. The ground story of all shopfront façades in CBD-2 and CBD-3 shall contain the following elements as illustrated in **Figure 3.2.9.C**:
   a. *Cornice/Articulated Floor Line*. The cornice visually separates one floor from the adjacent floor(s). The cornice can be articulated with a change of color, pattern, or material.
   b. *Sign Board*. A sign board shall be an area between the cornice and window system where a wall sign is placed. The sign board shall be a minimum of two (2) feet in height and shall extend the width of each architectural bay.
   c. *Transom*. Transoms are horizontally articulated windows located below the sign board. The window system shall extend the full width of the architectural bay or tenant space but may be separated by mullions and muntins consistent with the design aesthetic. Grilles are prohibited.
   d. *Recessed Entry*. Recessed entries are important to the retail experience to protect the users from inclement weather, increase the amount of space in which to display merchandise, and to ease the transition

Figure 3.2.9.C - Shopfront Design Standards

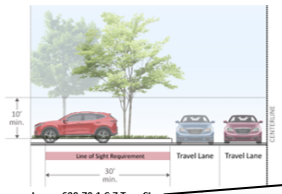


Image 600-70.1.C.7 Tree Clear

D. Soil Quality. These standards shall be applicable to all de… exempted from this section.
   1. Topsoil Certification. All topsoil imported into pla… invasive weeds, soil-borne pathogens, and contan… required.
   2. Soil Testing in Tree Preservation Areas. In existing t… shall be conducted to identify gaps in soil composi…
   3. Prescriptive Amendments Report. All soil amendm… shall be prescribed in a report prepared by an ISA-c… architect, or registered forester. The report shall be… tree and landscape plans per this UDO.

600-70.2 Species List Requirements.

The following outlines the requirements for replacement varieties. T… administratively update the Gwinnett County Species Lists in the App… standards, site suitability, sustainability considerations, or other relev…

A. Tree Species List Requirements. Tree species eligible for… identified in the Appendix and categorized by size class… tree species listed in the Appendix shall be credited tow… requirements of this chapter, unless a modification is ex…
B. Shrub Species List Requirements. Approved shrub specie… shrubs included in the approved list shall be credited tow… regulatory requirements of this chapter, unless a modific… Director.
C. Prohibited Plant Species List.
   1. The Gwinnett County Prohibited Plant Species List inc… covers, vines, and grasses identified as invasive or exo… on classifications established by the Georgia Invasive S…

a. Vehicular access shall be designed in a manner that minimizes disruption to motorized travel, non-motorized travel and the streetscape.
b. Vehicular ingress and egress shall be provided from an alley or secondary street. When alley access or side-street access is not possible, then vehicular ingress and egress shall be permitted from the primary street.
c. Free-flow parking garage entries (i.e., without attendants, gates or ticket-dispensing machines) shall provide at least one off-street vehicle stacking space per entry lane.
d. Parking garage entries that include automatic ticket-dispensing machines or automatic key readers at entries shall provide at least two (2) off- street vehicle stacking spaces per entry lane.
e. Parking garage entries that include manual ticket-dispensing machines at entries shall provide at least three (3) off-street vehicle stacking spaces per entry lane.
f. Required vehicle stacking spaces at entries shall be located so that they do not obstruct sidewalks.

2. *Design*.
   a. Ramps and sloping floors shall be located so as not to be visible from the front-street facing sides of the parking garage.
   b. In order to de-emphasize the horizontal nature of the parking garage, vertical divisions at least two (2) feet in width and extending the full height of the parking garage structure are required at least every 30 feet (measured horizontally).
   c. A parking garage shall not span more than 200 feet on any block face, unless fully lined and concealed by habitable/occupiable spaces on all floors.
   d. All parking garages shall provide pedestrian access from the ground level parking to the public sidewalk or building entrance.
   e. Perimeter landscaping is required pursuant to **Section 6.3.4 - Landscaping for Parking Garages**.
   f. **Table 6.2.5 - Design Standards for Parking Garages** illustrates the required design standards for garages based on street frontage types and adjacency to City Open Spaces.

Table 6.2.5 - Design Standards for Parking Garages

Adjacent Street Type or Use	Design Standard		
	Lined with ground floor habitable/occupiable floor space	Similar architectural materials to match the primary building	Ornamental grillwork, artwork, or similar architectural features to conceal the deck openings
● - Required ○ - Permitted			
Type A/City Open Spaces	●	○ (only for upper stories)	–
Type B	○	●	–
All other street types	○	○	●

Section 6.2.6 - EV Readiness

All new developments in any commercial, mixed-use, and MF-zoned districts are required to provide Electric Vehicle Supply Equipment (EVSE) infrastructure to accommodate the future installation of Electric Vehicle Supply Equipment. The infrastructure shall be provided per this section.

A. The EVSE infrastructure shall be installed per the requirements of the current edition of the National Electrical Code (NFPA 70), as adopted and amended by the State of Georgia.
   1. The off-street parking provided shall have EVSE infrastructure installed at the parking spaces dedicated for the use of the building.

APPENDIX C – SIGN CODE

26. Sign. Any device, fixture, placard or structure, including its component parts, which draws attention to an object, product, place, activity, opinion, person, institution, organization, or place of business, or which identifies or promotes the interests of any person, and which may be viewed from the private property of another or from any public road, street, highway, right-of-way, or parked areas (collectively referred to as a "public area"). For the purposes of this **Appendix C--Sign Code**, unless otherwise stated, the term "sign" shall include the structure upon which a sign face is located.

27. Sign Face. The surface upon, against, or through which a sign copy and/or graphic is displayed or illustrated, inclusive of any border and trim but excluding the base, apron, supports, or other structural members.

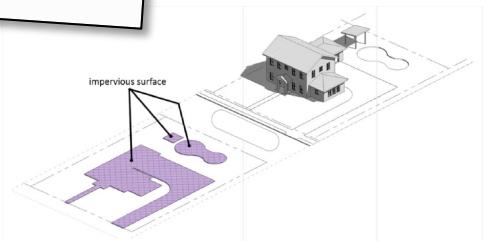
28. Wall Face. An exterior facade made up of the aggregate of the surface areas of all façade portions oriented along the same general plane. This is calculated either by tenant for common developments or for the whole façade in single occupant or common entrance buildings.

…nimals weighing less than 150 pounds and cared for by the members of …t raised for commercial gain or considered livestock as defined herein.

…he passage of water.

…hat has been compacted or covered with a layer of material that is highly …. Examples are buildings, roads, driveways, parking lots, decks,

…easurement of the area or percentage of a lot that is covered by buildings, …reets, sidewalks, patios, driveways, parking areas, and other impervious



Improvement. Any permanent structure that becomes part of, is placed upon, or affixed to real estate.

Incidental. Subordinance and minor in significance or bearing a relationship to the principal use.

Industrial Waste. Any liquid, gaseous chemical, or solid residue or by products of an industrial process.

Inoperative Vehicle. Any vehicle at present inoperable but capable of being repaired to place it in operation condition without exceeding its present estimated value and repair cost. An inoperative vehicle shall include any motor vehicle, trailer, automobile, contrivance, or part thereof (except farm equipment) which is either dismantled/partially dismantled and inoperative; or wrecked and inoperative; or abandoned/discarded; and which does not have a current Georgia State Motor Vehicle Tag, if required, attached there- to. Abandoned/discarded shall mean any automobile, motor vehicle, trailer (except farm equipment) of any kind or type, or contrivance or part thereof, which does not have

Next Steps & Opportunities

- **Submit homework – by December 5**
- **Review draft December/January**
- **Provide feedback**
- **Direct community members to Rockdale UDO Website**
- **Open House – January 14**
- **Adoption Process – February/March**

Questions & Answers