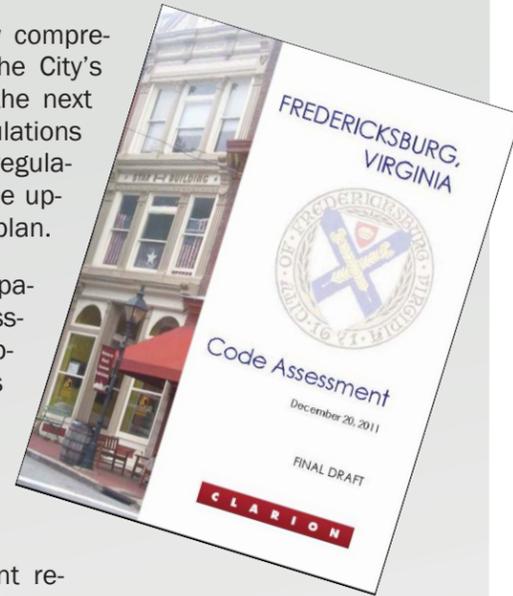


PROJECT INTRODUCTION

In September 2007, the City adopted a new comprehensive plan. The comprehensive plan is the City's vision for its growth and development over the next 20 years. The City's current development regulations (the zoning ordinance and land subdivision regulations) are almost 30 years old, and need to be updated to better fit with the new comprehensive plan.

One of the first steps in the process is the preparation of a "code assessment". A code assessment is a review of the city's current development regulations against the stated policies and goals in the new comprehensive plan. The code assessment describes the areas where the current development regulations need to be revised to help the City achieve its vision for the future. It also includes a comparison of the City's current development review procedures and standards against national best practices used in other communities across the country. The code assessment also includes a recommended structure and organization for the City's new regulations.

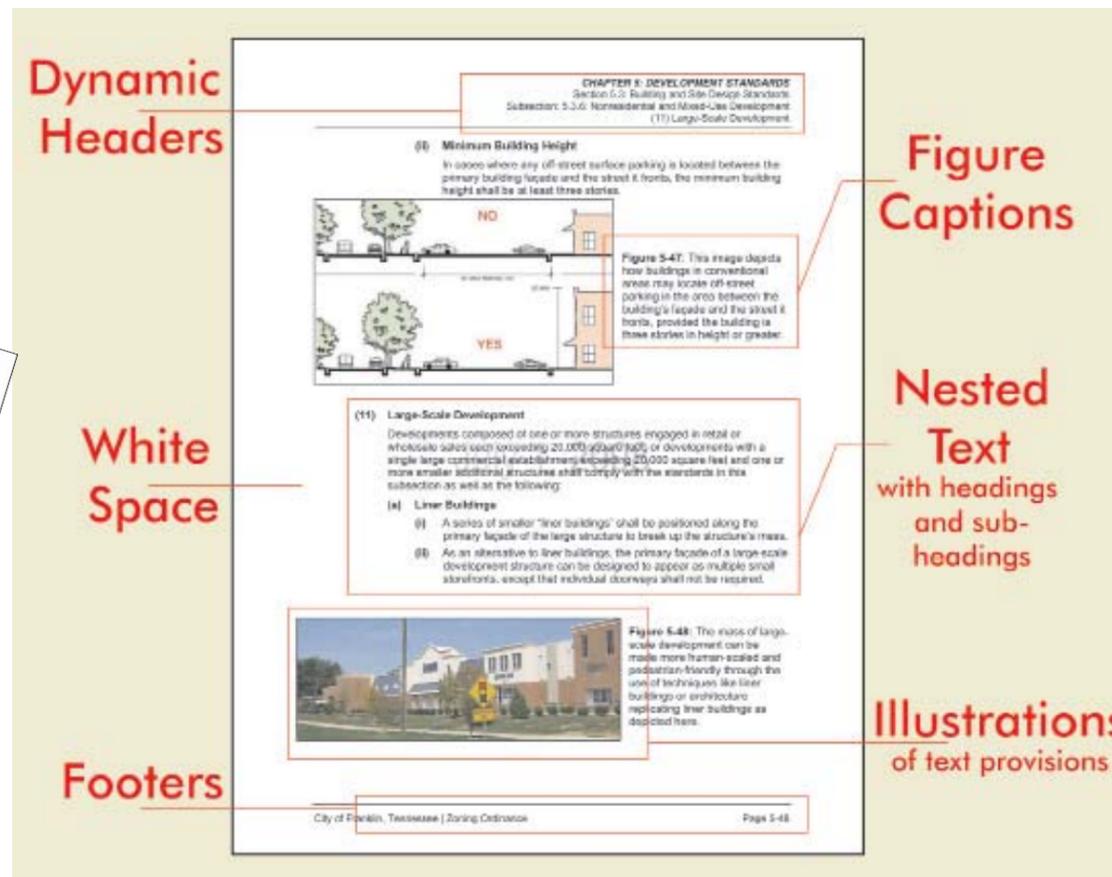


This brochure is an executive summary of the code assessment. It summarizes the six key themes for improvement in the City's current development regulations. Each key theme for improvement describes changes that should be made to the current requirements to bring them into closer alignment with the City's planning goals and best practices used in other communities. The six key themes are:

1. **Unify the current regulations into a single unified development ordinance, or UDO**
2. **Improve the overall user-friendliness of the regulations – make them easier to use**
3. **Improve the efficiency of the development application review procedures**
4. **Update the zoning district requirements – make them more modern**
5. **Update the development standards to foster higher development quality**
6. **Implement the comprehensive plan**

The code assessment and other project information is available for review on the City's web page at

www.fredericksburgva.gov.



Improving the efficiency of the development review process is critical for long term viability. Examples include:

- Removal of overlapping review authority
- Inclusion of clear, measurable standards
- Delegation of decision authority to professional-level staff, where appropriate
- Incorporation of flexibility mechanisms
- Incentives for preferred development forms

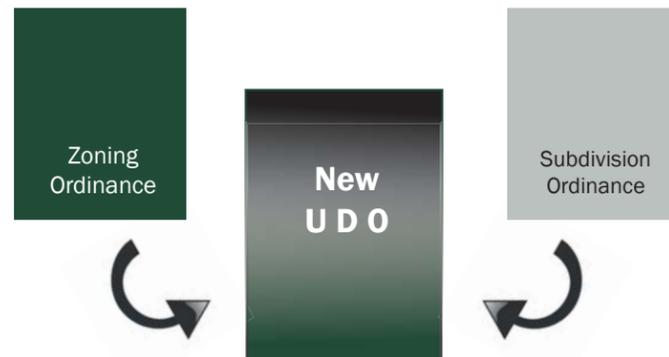
The new UDO should add new use-specific standards and reduce the number of uses requiring a special use permit. Some procedures, like final plats, minor subdivisions, and some site plans should be decided by City staff (instead of elected officials). The UDO will include an administrative adjustment procedure that acts as a "safety valve" that allows minor reductions from standards (like setbacks) under certain conditions, like beneficial redevelopment. Flexibility should be built into the parking, landscaping, and exterior lighting that will allow applicants to propose alternative means of compliance to foster redevelopment, infill, and sustainable development patterns. Incentives should be included for tree protection and preferred development forms like mixed-use.



Unify the Regulations



The City's current development regulations are contained in several different documents such as the zoning ordinance and the subdivision regulations. This kind of organization can result in confusion, repetition, and inconsistent application of the rules. Combining the various sets of standards into a single unified development ordinance (a UDO) will remove repetition, help limit inconsistency, increase predictability, and make the standards easier to understand.



Increase User-Friendliness

The graphic in the panel above demonstrates some of the structural and substantive improvements that will make the City's new UDO easier to use, such as:

- A page format that incorporates headings and sub headings with different type faces (to help readers understand how information is organized)
- Dynamic headers and footers that help readers navigate the document more easily
- A table of contents for each article
- Cross references that direct readers to other relevant information
- Illustrations and graphics (supplemented with captions) that help explain and clarify the standards
- Summary tables and flow charts that better organize content
- Reorganization from 42 divisions into 9 discrete chapters
- Removal of technical phrasing in favor of plain English
- Review criteria specified for each procedure
- Use of clear, measurable standards, where possible



Improve Efficiency



UDO STRUCTURE

- Article 1: General Provisions
- Article 2: Administration
- Article 3: Zoning Districts
- Article 4: Use Regulations
- Article 5: Development Standards
- Article 6: Subdivision Standards
- Article 7: Nonconformities
- Article 8: Enforcement
- Article 9: Definitions & Interpretations

The zoning districts and allowable uses are the heart of any development code. Some of the updates anticipated for the Fredericksburg UDO include:

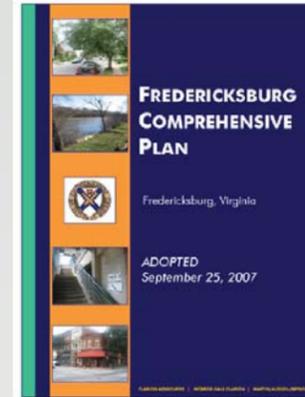
- Allowance for and encouragement of more mixed-use development citywide
- Establishment of a new mixed-use district for use in some key commercial corridors
- Revisions to the conservation subdivision standards to reflect modern best practices
- Inclusion of highly graphic, two-page base zoning district summaries
- Incorporation of a new summary use table (instead of tabular lists, by district)
- Use of a new three-tiered use classification system that adds modern uses like internet cafes, elderly life-stage developments, and flex space
- Inclusion of use-specific standards that apply to a use, regardless of the district where it is located

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The City's 2007 comprehensive plan sets out the City's vision for the future in the form of a series of policy and goal statements. The zoning and subdivision regulations are two of the primary means of implementing the comprehensive plan (as well as the 2006 Jump-Start Plan and the 2010 Historic Preservation Plan). Chapter 18 sets out the range of identified actions and priorities to be addressed by the UDO, including:

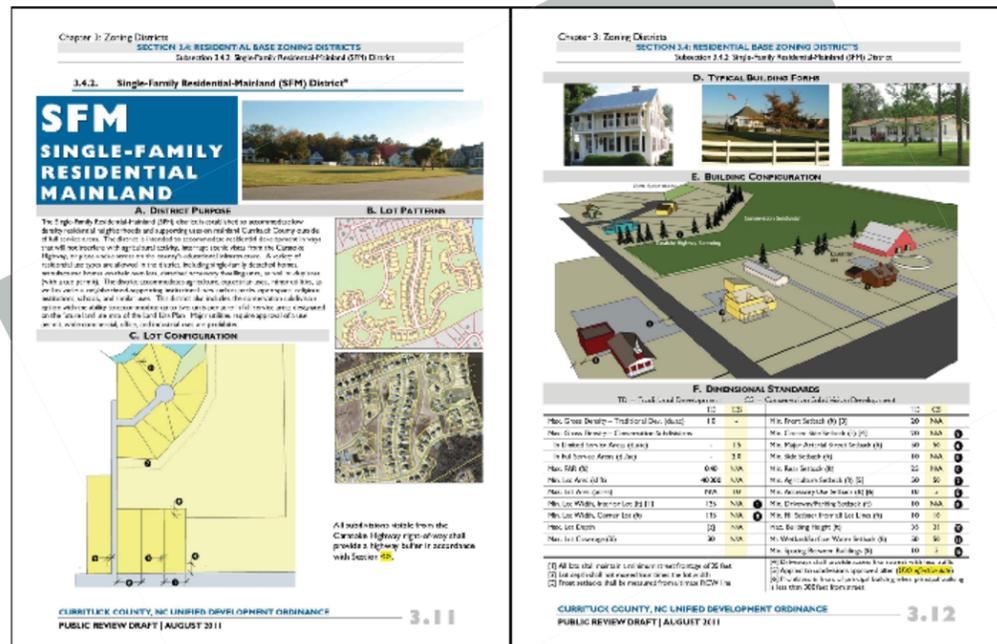
- Adjusting parking requirements citywide, with particular focus on downtown
- Allow for and encourage mixed-use development, particularly within key commercial corridors
- Improving commercial development appearance through increased landscaping standards



Update Zoning Districts

Improve Development

Implement City Vision



The image above is from a modern development code and shows how all pertinent zoning-district related information can be organized onto two opposing pages. These provisions include a purpose statement, images of preferred development forms, lotting patterns, dimensional standards, and a three-dimensional depiction of how buildings relate to streets, lot lines, and to one another. This kind of organization is proposed for the City's UDO.

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Improving the development standards to ensure a higher level of quality is a key objective for the City. Three key sets of development standards targeted for revision during the UDO process are: parking, landscaping, and exterior lighting.

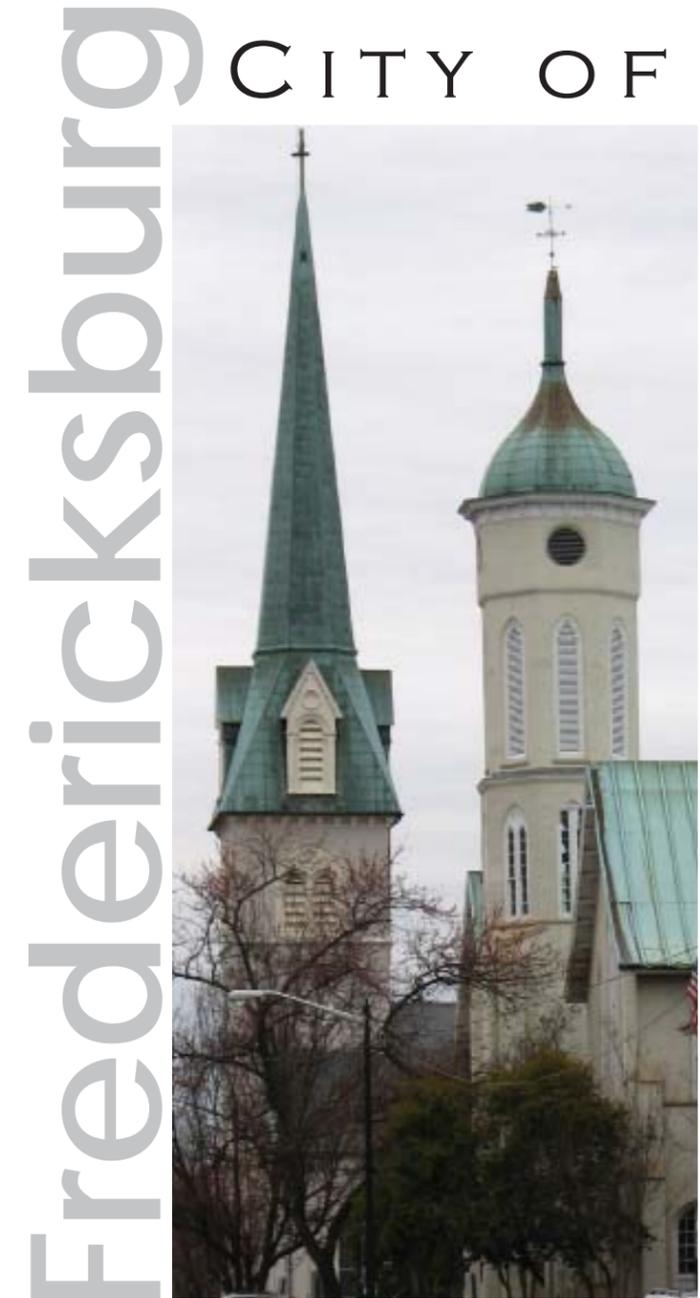
The parking standards will be modernized, reviewed for consistency with national best practices, made more flexible in downtown and redevelopment contexts, re-focused on low-impact and sustainable techniques, and revised to place greater emphasis on pedestrians and alternative transportation modes.

The landscaping standards will be consolidated, supplemented with greater flexibility, revised to incorporate more performance-based buffering standards, and enhanced with new incentives for retention and protection of existing trees.

The exterior lighting standards will be reviewed and revised to include new limitations on light trespass, glare, and excessive mounting heights.

- Strengthening the tree protection provisions to minimize tree loss
- Assure consistency with the 2010 Historic Preservation Plan through context-driven standards
- Consider variable density, height, and bulk regulations for different corridors
- Allow increased multi-family density to 30 units per acre (or possibly 40) in some locations
- Consider minimum standards for building height, multi-family density, and FAR
- Consider prohibiting ground-floor residential in JumpStart areas
- Limit the gross area/surface parking ratio
- Consider adding design standards for parking decks and structures
- Require courtyards and plazas accessible from the street for projects occupying a whole block

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Zoning Code Assessment EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

December 2011