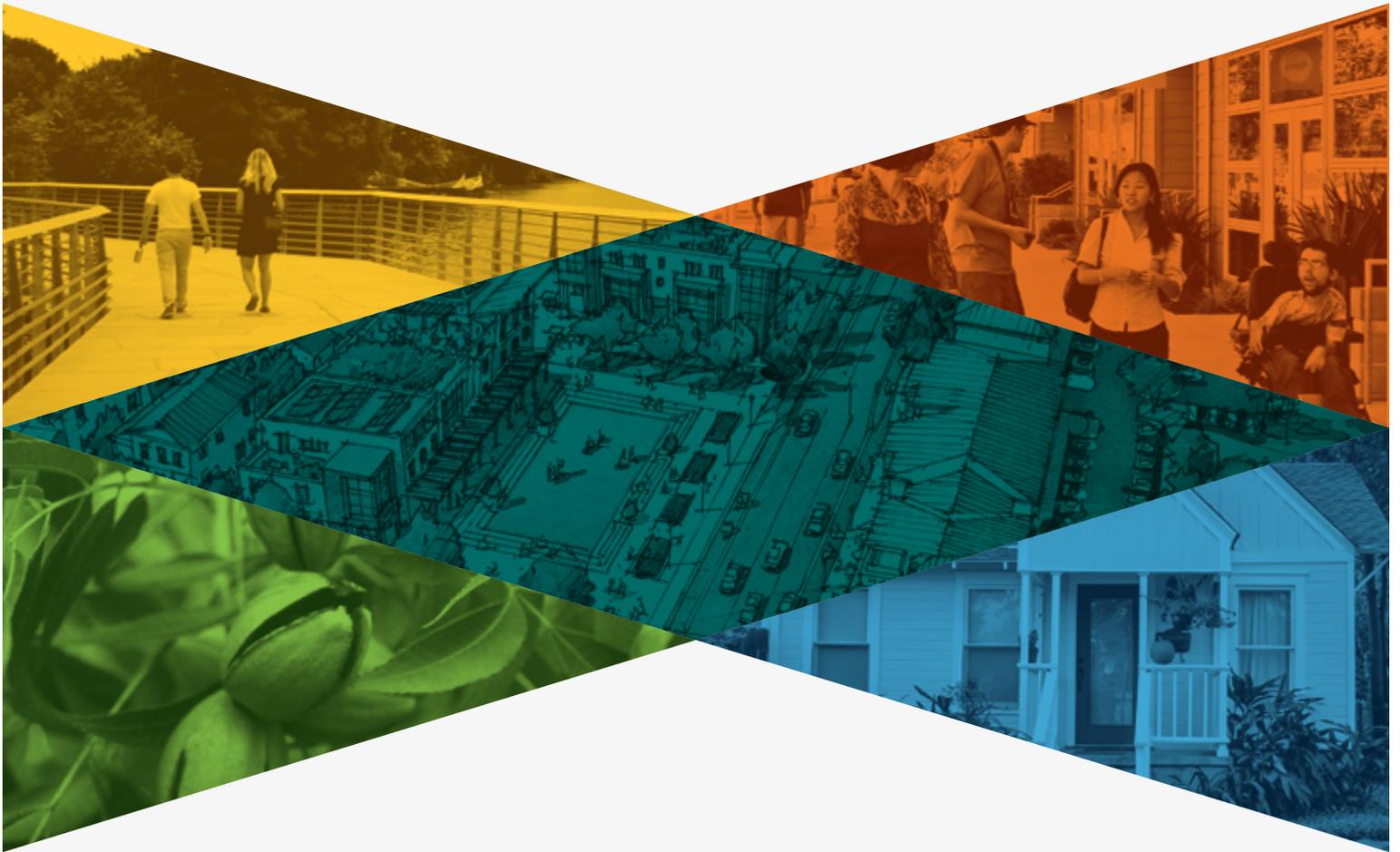


AUSTIN LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE

Code Draft 2 Preview
2017 – 2018



CODENEXT

SHAPING THE AUSTIN WE IMAGINE

2017-
2018

Our existing Land Development Code was written 30 years ago, when Austin’s population was half the size it is now. After three decades of amendments, new regulations, and development, the current code is outdated, overly complex, and inconsistent.

So we’re writing a new one.

CodeNEXT is our effort to update our existing code into something more user-friendly and compatible with our growing city. This new code will help the city grow in sustainable, affordable, connected ways -- into the Austin we imagined in our comprehensive plan.

This document -- the Code Draft Preview -- reflects the latest draft of that code, developed with feedback from the community, elected and appointed officials, City staff, and the CodeNEXT team. Additional resources and comment tools are available at AustinTexas.Gov/CodeNEXT

TABLE OF CONTENTS

This Code Draft Preview provides insight into the process for CodeNEXT as well as its organization, functionality, and goals. It also highlights how CodeNEXT is working to remedy issues with the current land development code, as identified by the public and City staff. The preview is laid out as follows:

- Pages 4 – 5 **CodeNEXT priorities**
- Page 6 **Anatomy of the code**
- Pages 7 – 9 **How the zones work**
- Pages 10 – 11 **What do the zones mean?**
- Pages 12 – 18 **Spectrum of zones**
- Page 19 **How to get involved**



IMAGINEAUSTON

Imagine Austin is Austin’s comprehensive plan, adopted by the City Council in June 2012. It lays out our residents’ vision for a complete community that responds to the pressures and opportunities of our growing, modern city. CodeNEXT, our effort to rewrite the code, is one of the tenets of Imagine Austin. The zoning tools used in CodeNEXT will help us reach Imagine Austin’s core principles.

Imagine Austin’s Core Principles for Action include:

- Grow as a compact, connected city
- Integrate nature into the city
- Provide paths to prosperity for all
- Develop as an affordable and healthy community
- Sustainably manage water, energy and other environmental resources
- Think creatively and work together

Learn more about Imagine Austin at AustinTexas.Gov/Department/Imagine-Austin



CODE DIAGNOSIS: TOP 10 ISSUES

The City’s existing land development code is outdated and overly complex. We asked the public, City staff, and the CodeNEXT team to identify specific issues that need to be addressed. Here’s what we came up with:



- 1 Ineffective base zoning districts
- 2 Competing layers of regulations
- 3 Complicated “opt-in, opt-out” system
- 4 Lack of household affordability and choice
- 5 Auto-centric code
- 6 Not always in line with Imagine Austin
- 7 Lack of usability and clarity
- 8 Ineffective digital code
- 9 Code changes adversely affect department organization
- 10 Incomplete and complicated administration and procedures

Read the full Code Diagnosis Report, available at AustinTexas.Gov/CodeNEXT

IN AN ATTEMPT TO ADDRESS THESE ISSUES, THE NEW CODE

- uses a single spectrum of zones that includes both use- and form-based standards.
- amends the current code’s “one-size-fits-all” approach by incorporating regulations to preserve and protect the character and feeling of different places in Austin.
- applies zone standards more consistently across diverse types of development.
- allows for a broader range of standards and compatible mixed uses to encourage compact, connected, and complete communities.
- includes new requirements for block size, trail and sidewalk connectivity, and street trees to support walkability.
- increases the range of housing types to suit Austin’s growing range of residency needs.
- allows housing in more areas than in the current code.
- utilizes graphics, charts, and a clear zone organization and naming convention to improve the code’s clarity and readability.

Read more in-depth about these changes on our blog, AustinTexas.Gov/CodeNEXT: News

CodeNEXT PRIORITIES

The opportunity to update our Land Development Code means more than just making it easier to use and understand; it means creating a framework to help improve our quality of life. The Code plays an important role in guiding the future growth of the city.

CodeNEXT has identified five priorities to help shape the Austin we imagine:

MOBILITY

walkable+
CONNECTED

Today, it's difficult for many people to accomplish their daily tasks, including work and recreation, without access to a vehicle. CodeNEXT provides tools that enhance the connections between neighborhoods and offer more walkable communities.

Mobility goals addressed:

- Require Pedestrian Street Design
- Create Urban Trail Connections
- Incentivize Multi-modal Transportation
- Improve Walkability



COMMUNITY

vibrant+
PROSPEROUS

Austin is the home of many vibrant communities. We want to support existing neighborhoods and businesses, preserve the character of our diverse areas, and manage future growth.

Neighborhood compatible development goals addressed:

- Strengthen Neighborhoods
- Enable Small Enterprises
- Use Right-size Zoning
- Create Diverse Places
- Anticipate Future Growth



ENVIRONMENT

natural+
RESILIENT

Our growing city has to address many environmental issues: Not just preserving open spaces and natural habitats, but also providing water stewardship and flood mitigation. The new regulations can help us be smarter and more resilient as we protect our natural resources.

Environmental goals addressed:

- Promote Water Stewardship
- Encourage Flood Mitigation
- Emphasize Tree Protection
- Increase Open Spaces & Parks
- Enhance Nature in the City



HOUSING

inclusive+
AFFORDABLE

Inclusive and affordable housing is a challenge for any city. The code revisions offer more diverse housing choices and building types, along with a citywide framework for affordable housing.

Housing goals addressed:

- Develop More Diverse Housing Choices
- Allow More Units per Property
- Create Affordability Incentives
- Permit Flexible Live/Work Places
- Encourage Connected Communities



PERMITTING & PROCESS

streamlined+
USER-FRIENDLY

Today's patchwork Land Development Code is an obstacle to enabling both growth and preservation. CodeNEXT streamlines the site-planning and permitting processes, and its use of graphics and labeling make navigating the code easier for both officials and property owners.

Process goals addressed:

- Develop Clearer Zoning Districts
- Use a Single, Consistent Spectrum of Zones
- Create a Faster Site-Planning Process
- Simplify Permitting



anatomy of THE CODE



WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE:

The code document has been designed to make regulations easy to understand and clear to navigate. Strong headers and footers explain where you are inside the document. A Table of Contents is included in each new section. Graphics and illustrations visually explain regulations, and indenting, section breaks, and labeling add clarity.

WHAT'S STAYING IN THE CODE:

OVERLAY ZONES

Standards for overlay zones are intended to ensure that proposed development is compatible with existing and future development within unique parts of the city that have a particular character or open space considerations. Overlay zones included: Historic Landmark, Historic Area, Lake Austin, University Neighborhood Overlay, Waterfront Overlay, Neighborhood Conservation Combining Districts.

FOUNDATIONAL STANDARDS

For over 30 years, Austin has protected its natural resources through a number of regulatory measures including stream setbacks, floodplain protection, sensitive feature protection, tree protection, stormwater controls, and impervious cover limits. CodeNEXT will carry forward Austin's historic watershed regulations, such as the Save Our Springs Ordinance, as well as the improvements of the 2013 Watershed Protection Ordinance. The new code will build upon this solid foundation with measures to enhance the environmental function and resiliency of sites.

HOW IT'S ORGANIZED:

Relocated under a different title number, an extensive reorganization of the Land Development Code elevates community priorities, consolidates procedures, and establishes a standardized spectrum of zones.

Title 23

- 1 Introduction
- 2 Administration and Procedures
- 3 General Planning Requirements
- 4 Zoning Code
- 5 Subdivision
- 6 Site Plan
- 7 Building, Demolition and Relocation Permits; Special Requirements for Historic Structures
- 8 Signage
- 9 Transportation
- 10 Infrastructure
- 11 Technical Codes
- 12 Airport Hazard and Compatible Land Use

how the ZONES WORK

Austin's Land Development Code regulates the built environment to help ensure the safety and well-being of Austinites, while also regulating certain aspects

of the thousands of individual lots and buildings that make up the city's private realm. Through the application of zones to each specific parcel within the city, these regulations help inevitable change to occur in a manner that supports a high quality of life for Austinites and contributes to the unique character that makes the city such an attractive place to live.

New and revised zones are named and organized according to use and intensity, and provide varying degrees of form control along a spectrum that better matches the conditions and character of Austin. The **Spectrum of Zones** provides more tools to help protect the physical character of Austin places while implementing the vision established in Imagine Austin, including:

REFINED USES

Allowed uses are refined to improve neighborhood compatibility. For example, new Mixed-Use zones include uses that are more tightly calibrated for compatibility with surrounding neighborhoods than zones available in the current code.

FLEXIBLE STANDARDS

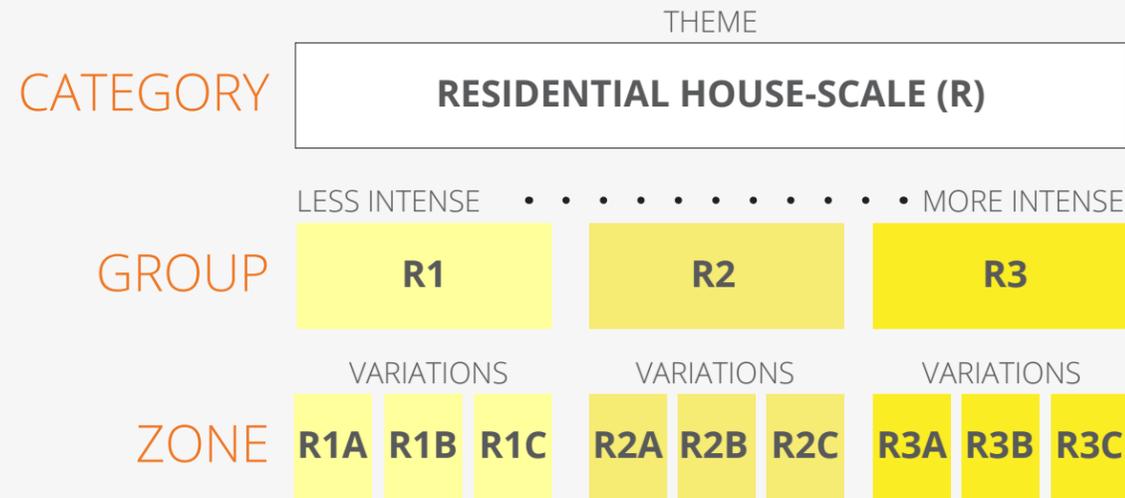
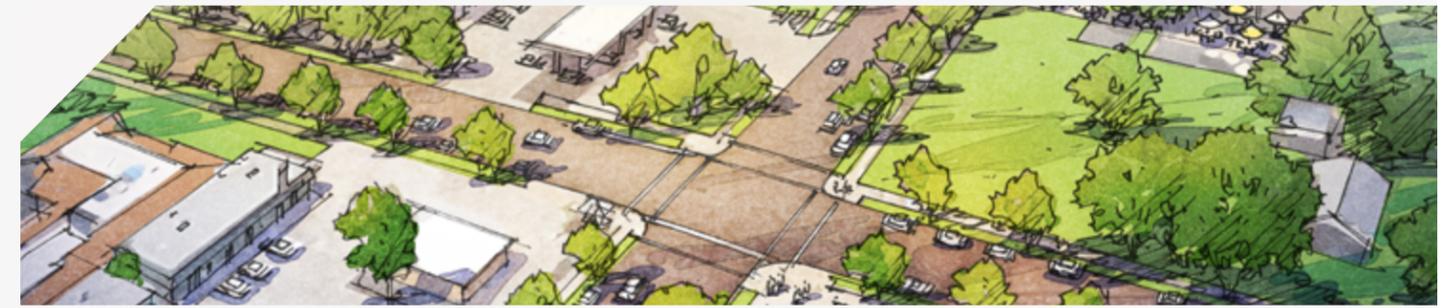
Building form standards are regulated using an approach that is similar to the Subchapter F standards and have been recalibrated to reduce the amount of nonconforming parcels that could result from a rezoning.

INCREASED HOUSING OPPORTUNITY

Most zones now allow some residential use, unless other uses allowed in the zone are incompatible with residential use. Mixed-use development can provide more opportunities for residents to access jobs, shopping, education, and entertainment by foot or by bike.



how the ZONES WORK



COMPONENTS OF ZONES

BUILDING COVER / IMPERVIOUS COVER

Building cover and impervious cover maximums protect watersheds and allow for trees and open space within neighborhoods by limiting the development footprint on a lot. More intense zoning categories tend to have higher building cover and impervious cover limits.

BUILDING TYPES

Building types are based on a combination of their form and use. They help define the physical character and function that set one neighborhood apart from another and reflect an area's scale and density.

FORM CONTROLS

Basic form controls refer to lot size and width, setbacks, impervious cover, building coverage, and building height. Additional form controls add a floor to area ratio (FAR) limitation and variable height depending on building placement.

FAR

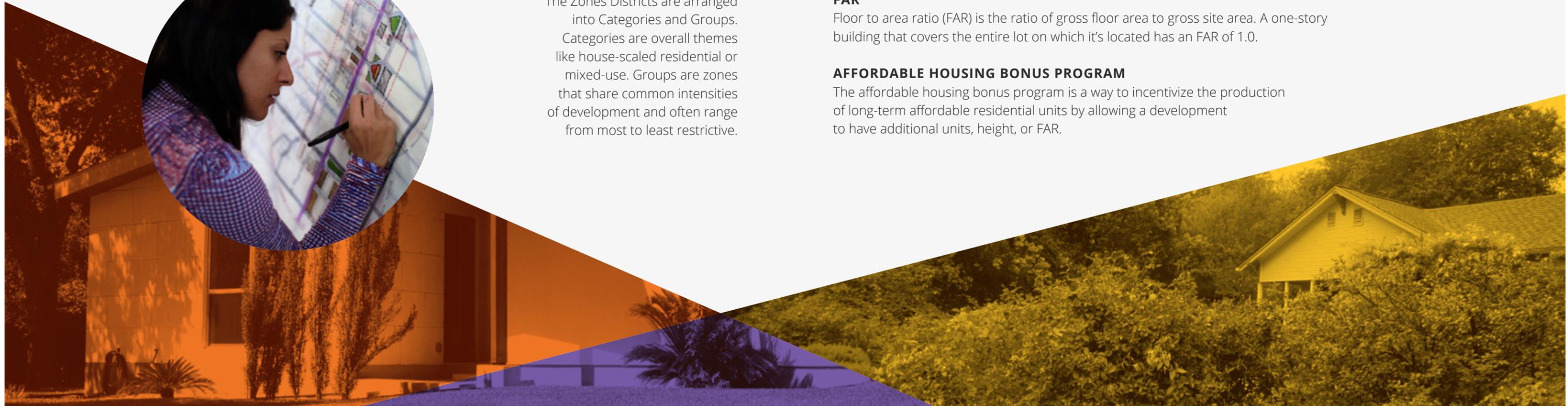
Floor to area ratio (FAR) is the ratio of gross floor area to gross site area. A one-story building that covers the entire lot on which it's located has an FAR of 1.0.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING BONUS PROGRAM

The affordable housing bonus program is a way to incentivize the production of long-term affordable residential units by allowing a development to have additional units, height, or FAR.

ZONE DISTRICTS

The Zones Districts are arranged into Categories and Groups. Categories are overall themes like house-scaled residential or mixed-use. Groups are zones that share common intensities of development and often range from most to least restrictive.



what do the ZONES MEAN?

	Residential House-Scale (R) Zones	Residential Multi-Unit (RM) Zones	Main Street (MS) Zones	Mixed-Use (MU) Zones	Regional Center and Commercial Zones
PURPOSE	<p>The Residential House-Scale (R) category allows for house scale buildings with varying amounts of residential units. This zone category includes single-family detached homes, duplexes, small multiplexes, cottages, row houses, and accessory dwelling units (also known as garage apartments or granny flats). The number of units typically allowed per lot are designated by the number in the zone name (R1 is typically 1 unit, R2 is typically 2 units, etc.). The number of units can only be achieved if it also meets the site dimensions and other standards summarized in the at-a-glance chart.</p>	<p>The Residential Multi-Unit (RM) zone category covers a diverse set of zones that range from mobile home parks and three story detached buildings up to multi-story residential buildings occupying an entire block. This zone category is meant to serve as a transition between lower-intensity residential zones and higher-intensity residential zones. The RM zones are generally grouped by allowed height, ranging from 35 feet tall to a maximum of 90 feet tall. The number of units can only be achieved if it also meets the site dimensions and other standards summarized in the at-a-glance chart. Additional units beyond the base standards are available in every RM zone through the Affordable Housing Bonus Program.</p>	<p>The Main Street (MS) zone category requires a vertical mix of residential and commercial uses along corridors and activity hubs to increase walkability. The MS zones are generally grouped by allowed height. This zone is meant to provide housing and convenient access to employment, amenities, and services for nearby residents in a lower-intensity environment, located at neighborhood centers served by transit.</p>	<p>The Mixed-Use (MU) zone category is designed to provide housing and office or service employment within walking distance of low-intensity residential neighborhoods and to maintain areas with an existing pattern of commercial uses in house-scale buildings. The MU zones are generally grouped by allowed height. Mixed-Use zones allow a horizontally- or vertically oriented mix of uses along corridors and in neighborhood hubs to allow for increased walkability.</p>	<p>Regional Center zones include Commercial Center (CC), Urban Center (UC), and Downtown Core (DC). The Regional Center zone category is designed to be used in areas identified in Austin’s comprehensive plan, Imagine Austin, as regional centers with large numbers of jobs and housings. Commercial zones include Commercial Recreation (CR) and Commercial Warehouse (CW). The Commercial zone category provides standards for development related to storage and warehousing of goods.</p>
WHERE CAN I FIND THESE ZONES?	<p>These zones are applied in primarily residential areas within neighborhoods.</p>	<p>These zones are applied throughout the city in a variety of contexts ranging from smaller lots within the residential core of neighborhoods to entire blocks along corridors.</p>	<p>These zones are applied along corridors or at neighborhood nodes within the urban core to reinforce and promote walkable mixed-use development.</p>	<p>These zones are applied to commercial and mixed-use areas with lower intensity zones providing neighborhood services and higher intensity zones along corridors and major thoroughfares.</p>	<p>Regional Center zones can be found in downtown Austin. Commercial zones are mainly found near corridors and industrial sites.</p>
HOW DOES IT DIFFER FROM OTHER ZONES?	<p>Compared to other zone categories, buildings in this category must be built to house form. Uses allowed are primarily residential.</p>	<p>Similar to the Residential House-Scale zones, these zones allow primarily residential uses while allowing for more building types.</p>	<p>Main Street zones include more form controls to create an active streetscape and allow for uses conducive to that environment.</p>	<p>Mixed-Use zones provide flexibility in building form and use to accommodate varying contexts.</p>	<p>These zones are the most intense zones, appropriate for downtown and regional centers.</p>

spectrum of zones AT-A-GLANCE



Residential House-Scale

	RR	LA	R1			R2					R3				R4		
	LESS INTENSE ←																→ MORE INTENSE
	RURAL	LAKE ATX	R1A	R1B	R1C	R2A	R2B	R2C	R2D	R2E	R3A	R3B	R3C	R3D	R4A	R4B	R4C
UNIT	One	One	One	One	One	Two	Two	Two	Two	Two	Three	Three	Three	Three	Four	Four	Four
MOST SIMILAR TO	RR	LA	SF-1	SF-2	SF-2	SF-2	SF-3 & SF-4B	SF-3 & SF-4B	SF-4A	SF-4A	SF-3 & SF-4	SF-3 & SF-4B	SF-3 & SF-4B	SF-3 & SF-4B	SF-5	SF-5	SF-5
BUILDING HEIGHT (FT)	35	35	35	35	32	32	35	32	35	32	35	35	32	32	32	32	32
FRONT SETBACK (FT)	40	40	25	25	25	25	25	25	15	15	25	25	25	25	25	15	15
BUILDING COVER	20%	Varies	35%	40%	40%	40%	40%	40%	55%	55%	40%	40%	40%	40%	40%	40%	40%
IMPERVIOUS COVER	25%	Varies	40%	45%	45%	45%	45%	45%	65%	65%	45%	45%	45%	45%	45%	45%	45%
FORM CONTROLS	Basic	Basic	Basic	Basic	Add'l	Add'l	Basic	Add'l	Add'l	Add'l	Add'l	Basic	Add'l	Add'l	Add'l	Add'l	Add'l
AFFORDABLE HOUSING BONUS PROGRAM	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes

spectrum of zones AT-A-GLANCE



Residential Multi-Unit

	MH	RM1		RM2		RM3	RM4	RM5
	LESS INTENSE	←-----→						MORE INTENSE
	MH	RM1A	RM1B	RM2A	RM2B	RM3A	RM4A	RM5A
UNIT	Two	12/Acre	3-12/Bld	18/Acre	3-12/Bld	36/Acre	No unit per acre max	54/Acre
MOST SIMILAR TO	MH	SF-6	SF-5/ SF-6	MF-1, MF-2	MF-1	MF-3, MF-4	MF-3, MF-4	MF-5, MF-6
BUILDING HEIGHT (FT)	35	35	45	40	40	60	50	90
FRONT SETBACK (FT)	25	25	10	25	10	15	5	15
BUILDING COVER	N/A	40%	50%	50%	50%	60%	80%	70%
IMPERVIOUS COVER	N/A	45-55%	60%	60%	60%	70%	90%	80%
FORM CONTROLS	Basic	Add'l	Add'l	Basic	Add'l	Add'l	Add'l	Add'l
AFFORDABLE HOUSING BONUS PROGRAM	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Main Street

	MS1		MS2			MS3		
	LESS INTENSE		←-----→					MORE INTENSE
	MS1A	MS1B	MS2A	MS2B	MS2C	MS3A	MS3B	
MOST SIMILAR TO	LO	CS	LO	CS	CS	CS-V	CS-V	
BUILDING HEIGHT (FT)	35	35	45	45	45	75	75	
FRONT SETBACK (FT)	5-10	5-10	5-10	5-10	5-10	5-10	5-10	
BUILDING COVER	70%	70%	70%	70%	70%	90%	90%	
IMPERVIOUS COVER	80%	80%	80%	80%	80%	95%	95%	
FORM CONTROLS	Add'l	Add'l	Add'l	Add'l	Add'l	Add'l	Add'l	
AFFORDABLE HOUSING BONUS PROGRAM	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	

spectrum of zones AT-A-GLANCE



Mixed-Use

	MU1				MU2		MU3	MU4		MU5
	LESS INTENSE ←-----→ MORE INTENSE									
	MU1A	MU1B	MU1C	MU1D	MU2A	MU2B	MU3A	MU4A	MU4B	MU5
UNIT	3	4	12	12	12/Acre	18/Acre	36/Acre	36/Acre	36/Acre	54/Acre
MOST SIMILAR TO	LO	CS	LO	CS	NO, LO, LR	GO	GR, GR-MU	CS, CO	CS, CS-1	CH
BUILDING HEIGHT (FT)	32	32	45	45	35	40	60	60	60	80
FRONT SETBACK (FT)	25	25	25	25	20	15	10	10	10	30
BUILDING COVER	40%	40%	40%	40%	40%	60%	75%	90%	95%	70%
IMPERVIOUS COVER	60%	60%	60%	60%	60%	80%	90%	95%	95%	75%
FORM CONTROLS	Add'l	Add'l	Add'l	Add'l	Add'l	Add'l	Add'l	Add'l	Add'l	Add'l
AFFORDABLE HOUSING BONUS PROGRAM	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No

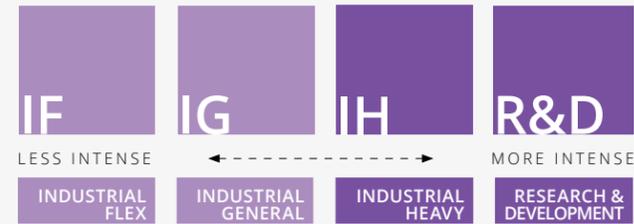
Regional Center

Commercial

	CC	UC	DC	CR	CW
	LESS INTENSE ←-----→ MORE INTENSE				
	COMMERCIAL CENTER	URBAN CENTER	DOWNTOWN CORE	COMMERCIAL RECREATION	COMMERCIAL WAREHOUSE
MOST SIMILAR TO	DMU	New Zone	CBD	CR	W/LO
BUILDING HEIGHT (FT)	Varies 120 Max	Varies, No Limit	No Limit	40	25
FRONT SETBACK (FT)	5-10	5-10	10	50	25
BUILDING COVER	95%	90%	100%	25%	50%
IMPERVIOUS COVER	95%	95%	100%	60%	70%
FORM CONTROLS	Add'l	Add'l	Add'l	Add'l	Add'l
AFFORDABLE HOUSING BONUS PROGRAM	No	Yes	No	No	No

spectrum of zones AT-A-GLANCE

Industrial



FAR	IF	IG	IH	R&D
	2	1	1	1
MOST SIMILAR TO	LI	LI, IP	MI	R&D
BUILDING HEIGHT (FT)	60	60	120	90
FRONT SETBACK (FT)	15	25	0	25
BUILDING COVER	75%	50%	75%	40%
IMPERVIOUS COVER	80%	80%	80%	50%

Other Zones

P	PUBLIC	The Public Zone is the designation for areas of the City that are appropriate for government-owned civic, public institution, or indoor and outdoor active recreation uses.
AV	AVIATION	The Aviation Zone is the designation for airport-related uses that require direct access to airport facilities or that support airport operations and services.
AG	AGRICULTURE	The purpose is to preserve areas of prime agricultural soils, concentrate urban development in and around growth centers, promote compact urban development, and preserve the environment and open spaces.
DR	DEVELOPMENT RESERVE	Development Reserve (DR) zone is a designation for a temporary use or a use that will not commit land to a particular use pattern or intensity.
PR	PARK	The Park Zone applies to areas of the City that are appropriate for Outdoor and Natural Recreation. The purpose of the PR Zone is to preserve areas for Outdoor Formal, Informal, or Natural Recreation land uses.
CL	CONSERVATION LAND	Conservation Land designates areas of the City for which the public purpose is conservation of natural land in a form generally free from development. Natural Recreation is the only Land Use allowed.
PUD	PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT	The PUD Zone is the designation for a large or complex single or multi-use development that is planned as a single contiguous development in compliance with unified control. This designation provides greater design flexibility by permitting modifications of site development standards. Development in compliance with the site development standards applicable to a PUD must be superior to the development that would occur in compliance with conventional zoning and subdivision standards.

F25 FORMER TITLE 25
This zone is for parcels that will carry forward the regulations in Title 25. Title 25 will remain in effect for properties within unique, specially-negotiated districts, such as Planned Unit Developments and Neighborhood Conservation Combining Districts, as well as a defined subset of Conditional Overlays.

HELP US GET IT RIGHT.

The CodeNEXT team received an unprecedented amount of community feedback and engagement for Draft 1, which yielded substantive improvements reflected in Draft 2. Thank you to everyone in the community who participated in the engagement process, but our work is not done just yet.

For those of you who have been involved throughout the process, it's important that you keep providing feedback and guidance. Your participation will continue to help improve the code. If you haven't been engaged in the CodeNEXT process so far, it is not too late to join in.

We have several opportunities for you to share your input with us throughout this time.

ONLINE COMMENTING

At your convenience, share your feedback using one of our many online tools available at austintexas.gov/CodeNEXT under the Get Involved tab. Please note: the City will stop taking comments regarding Draft 2 on Oct. 31 to allow time to work on Draft 3, the final staff recommendation.

- Review and comment on the draft code
- Review and comment on the map
- Email us general comments

- codenext.civiccomment.org
- codenext.engagingplans.org
- CodeNEXT@austintexas.gov

COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSES

The CodeNEXT team will have six community open houses to educate and gather input from the public. Attend any or all of these meetings to learn how the new code improves upon what we have today, and to interact directly with code writers.

For a list of all community open houses, visit austintexas.gov/CodeNEXT: [Get Involved](#).

PUBLIC HEARINGS

The public is invited to speak at any public hearings involving CodeNEXT. This includes meetings of the Planning Commission, Zoning and Platting Commission, Environmental Commission, and Historic Landmark Commission as well as special called work sessions and regular City Council meetings. For an up-to-date schedule of these meetings, visit austintexas.gov/CodeNEXT.

STAY INFORMED

The City will be updating its CodeNEXT web page – austintexas.gov/CodeNEXT – throughout the process, with blog posts, events, public hearings, and documents. While you're there, sign up for our biweekly newsletter to get a roundup of the news.

Follow us on social media and use #CodeNEXT to stay connected:

- [Facebook.com/AustinCodeNEXT](https://www.facebook.com/AustinCodeNEXT)
- [Twitter.com/AustinCodeNEXT](https://twitter.com/AustinCodeNEXT)



CODE NEXT

