



CITY OF BERKELEY LAKE

UNIFIED DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE

FACT SHEET: OVERVIEW BY ARTICLE

V1 DRAFT JUNE 11, 2026

<https://www.berkeleylakecode.com>

The new Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) combines zoning, subdivision, site development, environmental, and administrative standards into one document. The UDO is intended to make these rules easier to use, protect Berkeley Lake’s natural resources and established neighborhoods, and guide high-quality redevelopment in existing commercial and industrial areas.

What the UDC Does

Simplifies

Combines scattered regulations into one document.

Protects

Reinforces neighborhoods, Lake Berkeley, trees, and buffers.

Modernizes

Updates uses, parking, landscaping, lighting, signs, and procedures.

Guides

Implements local plans and supports quality development.

The UDC Process

Most of the work involved in creating the UDO focused on reorganizing and modernizing regulations to make them consistent, understandable, and user-friendly. This includes rewriting provisions in plain language, reducing the use of *legalese*, and incorporating graphics and tables when practical to improve ease of use.

That said, the UDO is more than a reorganization of the existing code. A diagnostic review conducted at the start of the project identified opportunities to update Berkeley Lake’s regulations to better reflect current community goals and best practices. The Diagnostic Report can be viewed [here](#).

These potential updates were then discussed and refined through community surveys, a kickoff meeting, and stakeholder discussions. The feedback received directly informed the updates proposed in this Draft V1.

However, the process is not finished. Draft V1 is intended for discussion purposes only. We anticipate, and encourage, significant community feedback on the draft. That feedback will be used to refine the UDO and prepare Draft V2, which is scheduled to be considered for adoption later this year.

Phase 1: Diagnostic Review

Early 2024



Phase 2: Diagnostic Report

Mid - Late 2024



Phase 3A: Code Draft

Early 2025 - Late 2026



Phase 3B: Final Code

Late 2026



Overview by Article

The following summarizes key updates by article.

You can review and comment on the draft by visiting the [draft library](#) or using the QR code at right.



Article 1

General Provisions

Key Updates

- » Updates legal requirements to better align with State and federal law.
- » Renames existing zoning districts (see below).
- » Establishes new zoning districts to better implement the comprehensive plan (see below).
- » Clarifies which portions of the UDO constitute the City’s zoning ordinance and therefore must follow State of Georgia zoning procedures law.

Residential Districts		Formerly
R-1	Single-Family Residential	R-100, Gwinnett Co. R-100
R-2	Cottage Residential	RMD
R-3	Age-Restricted Residential	New
Mixed-Use & Business Districts		Formerly
C-1	Neighborhood Business	C-1, Gwinnett Co. C-1
C-2	General Business	Gwinnett Co. C-2
O-I	Office-Institutional	O-I, Gwinnett Co. O-I
MX-1	Neighborhood Mixed-use	New
MX-2	Corridor Mixed-use	New
M-1	Light Industrial	M-1, Gwinnett Co. M-1, Gwinnett Co. M-2

Special and Overlay Districts

[Reserved]

Article 2

Rules Applicable to All Districts

Key Updates

- » Establishes consistent definitions and measurement rules for:
 - Sites and lots
 - Setbacks and yards
 - Building height
 - Building and lot coverage
- » Updates standards for what types of structures are allowed in required setbacks.
- » Creates two types of open space standards:
 - Greenspace (preserved natural areas)
 - Amenity space (other open spaces)
- » Allows naturalistic, low impact development (LID) stormwater facilities to count toward open space requirements under certain conditions.
- » Introduces transparency standards, blank-wall limits, and pedestrian access requirements in some districts.
- » Establishes architectural standards for nonresidential and mixed-use development.
- » Establishes limited architectural standards for R1 (e.g., R-100) and R2 districts:
 - Prohibits exterior walls made of metal, plywood (including T1-11), and vinyl.
 - Requires exposed foundations to be faced in mortar, hard coat stucco, brick, or manufactured or natural stone to contrast with exterior wall materials.
 - Requires garage doors facing a street to be at least 10 feet behind the front wall plane, not including porches, and limits them to 50% of the house’s width.

Residential Districts

Key Features

R-1 Single-Family Residential (existing R-100)

- » Retains the City’s traditional large-lot single-family neighborhood pattern.
- » Continues lake setback protections.
- » Maintains low-density residential standards.
- » Protects existing R-1 neighborhoods
 - Prohibits rezoning from R-1 to R-2 or R-3.

Key Updates

R-2 Cottage Residential (New)

- » Creates a new district allowing:
 - Smaller detached homes
 - Duplexes (2 attached or detached units)
 - Cottage courts (3 to 12 detached units)
- » Allows more housing options while maintaining a neighborhood-scale character.

R-3 Age-Restricted Residential (New)

- » Creates an age 55+ district.
- » Requires open space and urban design standards.



Mixed-Use and Business Districts

Key Updates

Mixed-Use Districts (New)

- » Creates two new districts:
 - MX-1 Neighborhood Mixed-Use
 - MX-2 Corridor Mixed-Use
- » These districts support:
 - Walkable development patterns.
 - Mixed residential and commercial uses.
 - Buildings closer to streets.
 - Pedestrian-oriented site design.
 - Ground-floor activation requirements.

Existing Business Districts

- » Updates commercial district standards:
 - More walkable development patterns.
 - Buildings closer to streets.
 - Pedestrian-oriented site design.
 - Ground-floor activation requirements.
- » Modernizes industrial district regulations and applies urban design standards that historically were not part of industrial zoning.



Article 5

Special Purpose Districts

Reserved to provide a framework for future overlay or special districts without requiring code restructuring.



Courtesy KUA Urbanists



Courtesy City of Decatur

Article 6

Use Provisions

Key Updates

Comprehensive Use Table

- » Replaces scattered use regulations with a unified use table.
- » Clearly identifies:
 - Permitted uses
 - Special-use permit uses
 - Prohibited uses

Modernized Use Categories

- » Standardizes terms and definitions to align with best practices and State law.
- » Organizes uses into:
 - Residential
 - Civic
 - Commercial
 - Industrial
 - Accessory
 - Temporary uses
- » Adds new housing definitions and standards for:
 - Cottage courts
 - Townhouses
 - Multifamily housing
 - Age-restricted housing
 - Family suites and accessory dwelling units

- » Consolidates regulations for accessory structures and uses into one location.

- » Establishes modern regulations for:
 - Farmers markets
 - Seasonal sales
 - Outdoor events
 - Temporary outdoor sales and displays

- » Prohibits all vehicular-uses to reduce impacts on the lake. Examples include gas stations, car washes, car sales and repairs, truck stops, etc.

Site Development

Key Updates

Parking

- » Replaces older parking requirements with modern parking standards.
- » Establishes parking standards for uses that previously lacked clear standards.
- » Includes provisions for:
 - Shared parking
 - Remote parking
 - Mixed-use parking calculations
- » Restricts parking in front and side street yards in many circumstances.
- » Modernizes loading standards.

Screening

- » Creates citywide screening standards for:
 - Parking lots and drive-throughs
 - Mechanical equipment and utilities
 - Dumpsters
 - Outdoor storage

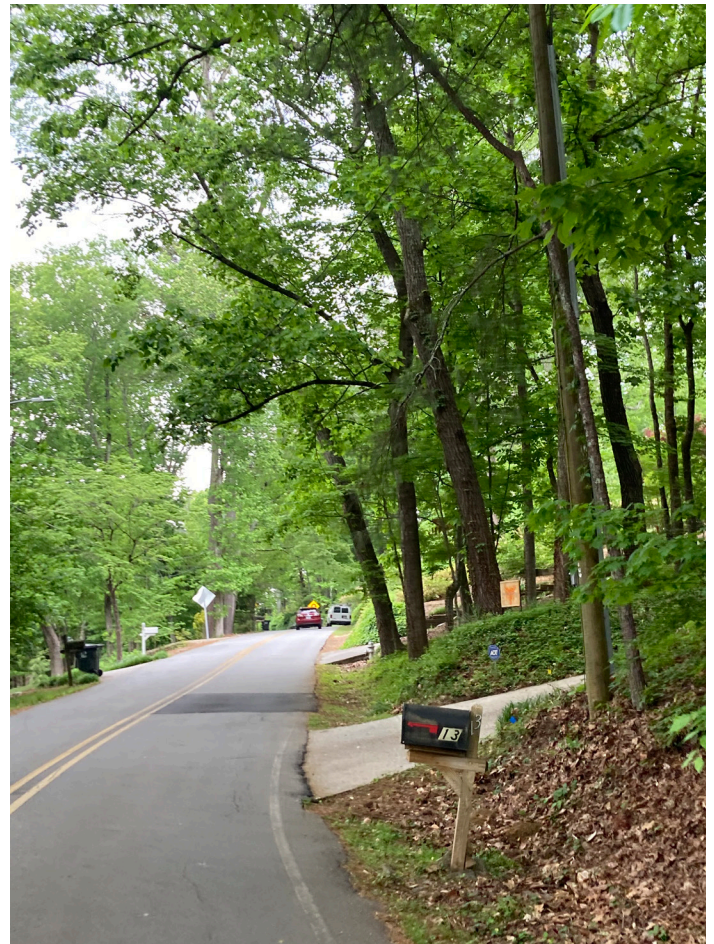
Lighting

- » Establishes comprehensive outdoor lighting regulations.



Landscaping

- » Requires landscape preservation and replanting along scenic corridors
 - Applies to single-family and two-family dwelling along Lakeshore Drive, Little Ridge Road, North Berkeley Lake Road, Ridge Road, and South Berkeley Lake Road.
- » Prohibits invasive species in required landscaping (i.e., still allowed in other areas).
- » Requires landscape upgrades when substantial redevelopment occurs.
- » Maintains buffer requirements between incompatible zoning districts.
- » Allows low-impact stormwater features within landscape areas.



Article 8

Streets and Public Improvements

Berkeley Lake currently relies on Gwinnett County’s standards. This new article customizes these existing standards to Berkeley Lake’s unique needs.

Key Updates

- » Readopts and updates Gwinnett County and GDOT standards with Berkeley Lake-specific regulations for:
 - Engineering details
 - Subdivision design
 - Street design
- » Requires interconnected street networks in mixed-use and business districts.
 - Encourages block structures and multiple route options to reduce reliance on dead-end streets and improve public safety.
- » Establishes customized driveway and access standards, including for ribbon driveways.
- » Introduces standards for:
 - Sidewalks
 - Street trees
 - Streetscape easements
 - Pedestrian infrastructure
 - Public Infrastructure



Article 9

Environmental

Other than Tree Protection, the standards in this article are existing State of Georgia model regulations that have been incorporated unchanged.

Key Updates

Tree Protection

- » Establishes protection standards that vary by zoning district, with more protection in neighborhoods and more flexibility in commercial and industrial areas.
- » Updates standards to require a permit to remove trees over 8” diameter on private lots.
- » Creates standards to:
 - Protect critical root zones;
 - Encourage the preservation of existing forested areas;
 - Promote low-impact development (LID); and
 - Discourage clear-cutting.
- » Updates tree replacement fund standards.

Grading

- » Limit how much of a site may be disturbed.
- » Establish maximum retaining wall heights to further minimize grading.



Administration

Key Updates

- » Consolidates all application and approval procedures into a single location.
- » Categorizes procedures to align with State law:
 - Legislative review (includes use permits)
 - Subdivision
 - Permit review
 - Administrative review
 - Quasi-judicial review
- » Clarifies variance procedures and criteria to better align with recent changes in State law.
- » Removes provision that allows applicants to amend the text of the UDO.
- » Modernizes standards for:
 - Nonconforming lots
 - Nonconforming structures
 - Nonconforming usesNotably, an entire property will not be deemed *nonconforming* if just one part of it is nonconforming. This will eliminate situations where relatively minor activities require a variance.
- » Consolidates enforcement and appeal procedures.



Courtesy Christian Kaindl

Article 11

Definitions

Key Updates

- » Consolidates definitions that were previously scattered throughout multiple sections of the Code of Ordinances into a single location.
- » Updates the definition of *family* to limit dwelling unit occupancy from current unlimited to a maximum of three unrelated individuals living together as a single housekeeping unit.
 - For purposes of this definition, each group of related individuals is counted as one person.
 - This change aligns Berkeley Lake’s regulations with Gwinnett County’s standard.
 - This will prevent houses from turning into rent-by-the-room facilities.
- » Adds numerous definitions to implement and clarify the UDO:
 - Dense graded aggregate
 - Invasive species
 - Organic mulch
 - Pea stone, pea gravel

