

# Development Code Update

**Frankfort/Franklin Co.**

Public Open House  
February 26, 2026





# Agenda

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**1.... Welcome and Introductions**

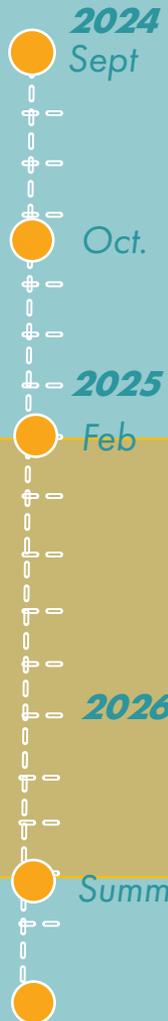
**2.... Overview Presentation**

**3.... Questions and Answers**

**4.... Open House Format – Circulate to Boards**

**5.... Adjourn**

# PROCESS



## PHASE 1 Project Initiation

### TASKS by Phase

- Discussions with City and County
- Review relevant zoning applications
- Review of code for zoning-related recommendations
- Review of code documents

## PHASE 2 Diagnosis & Outline

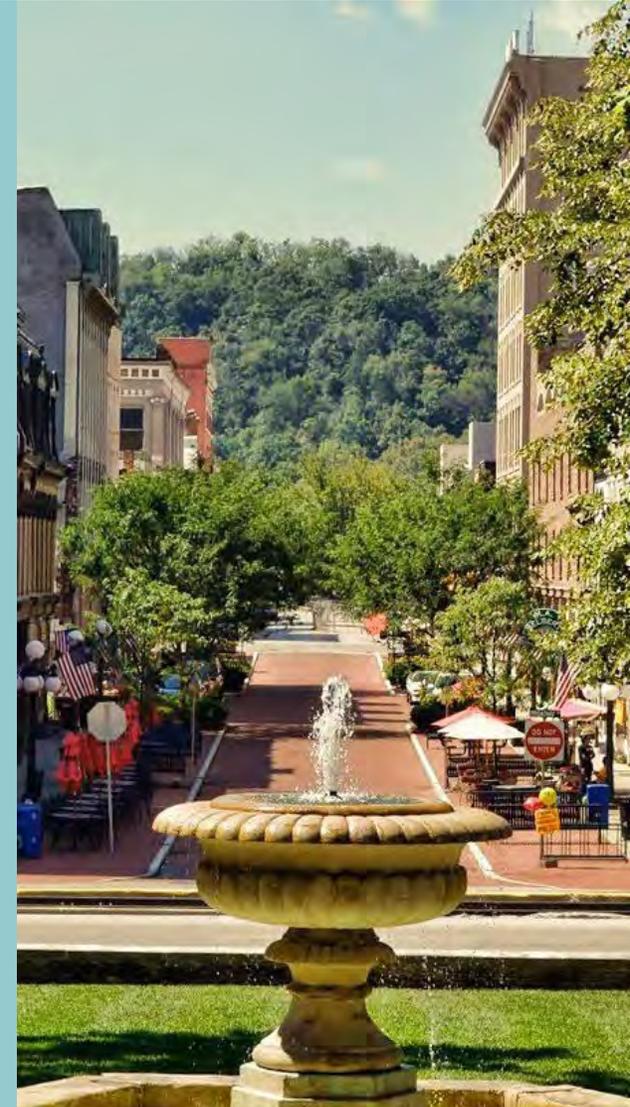
- Draft code diagnosis and annotated outline
- Draft code template
- Diagnosis review by city / county

## PHASE 3 Drafting of Regulations

- **Drafting**
- **Meetings with city / county**
- **Planning Commission update**
- **Committee / stakeholder review**

## PHASE 4 Review and Adoption

- Prepare consolidated draft
- Committee / stakeholder review
- Prepare adoption draft
- Workshops and Adoption Process



# FOCUS: Rural Areas and Environmental Protection



## EXISTING CODE CHALLENGES

- Rural protection relies heavily on large-lot zoning
- Limited differentiation between rural contexts
- Environmental standards spread across various articles

## DRAFT CODE (2026)

- Agricultural District tied to Farms and Natural Landscape future land use designation of *Distilled Together*
- Rural character reinforced through “-R” community character designation
- Agritourism and ecotourism standards
- Standalone Riparian and Flood Damage Articles
- Clear buffering and landscaping requirements between incompatible uses

## KEY TAKEAWAY:

*Rural protection is clearer, stronger, and more intentional*

# FOCUS: Housing & Neighborhoods



## EXISTING CODE CHALLENGES

- Heavy reliance on single-family zoning
- Duplexes, townhomes, small apartments often discretionary
- Residential and accessory use inconsistency
- Infill treated the same as greenfield development

## DRAFT CODE (2026)

- Introduces Residential Flex (RF) and Residential Mixed (RM) districts
- Duplexes, townhomes, and small multi-family uses allowed by right (with standards)
- Accessory Dwelling Units clearly defined and permitted (with standards)
- Context sensitive infill development standards to protect neighborhood scale and compatibility
- Larger multi-family addressed by character area
  - Urban (-U); Suburban (-S); Rural (-R)

## KEY TAKEAWAY:

*More housing options without eliminating neighborhood character*

# FOCUS: Economic Development and Mix of Uses



## EXISTING CODE CHALLENGES

- Rigid separation of uses
- Outdated commercial categories / uses
- Mixed-use often challenging to appropriately approve
- Corridor development negotiated case-by-case

## DRAFT CODE (2026)

- “Mixed-Commercial” districts
  - MCL – Mixed-Commercial Local
  - MCC – Mixed-Commercial Community
  - MCR – Mixed-Commercial Regional
- Mixed-use explicitly permitted
- Performance standards for key uses
- Context sensitive development standards
- Employment (prior Industrial) Districts
  - EE – Enterprise, Employment
  - EG – Enterprise, General

## KEY TAKEAWAY:

*More flexibility where growth is desired, but with clearer expectations*

# Overall Approach and Philosophy



## Big Picture Shift:

*From Euclidean Zoning to Modern Plan-Aligned Zoning*

### EXISTING CODES

- Separate City and County zoning regulations and frameworks
- Coordinated, but not fully unified
- Heavy use-segregated districts (residential vs. commercial vs. industrial)
- Development standards embedded inconsistently across articles
- Less explicit linkage to the Comprehensive Plan
- Incremental amendments layered over decades

### DRAFT CODE (2026)

- Single, unified zoning code for the City + County
- Reorganized into a clear, modular structure
  - Districts → Uses → Form → Procedures
- Explicitly aligned with *Distilled Together Comprehensive Plan (2024)*
- Uses a Use Table + Standards-Based Approach
- Emphasizes predictability, flexibility, and design outcomes

### Why this matters?

This is not just a rewrite – it is a policy modernization that makes the code easier to administer, easier to explain, and more defensible



# WE'RE GLAD YOU'RE HERE!

The City of Frankfort and Franklin County are in the process of updating their zoning regulations and subdivision regulations into a unified Development Code. The Development Code will be a consolidation of the City and County's zoning regulations and subdivision regulations into a single document.

The Development Code establishes rules that developments and site improvements must follow including uses allowed, building location and height, landscaping, signage, parking, and lighting. The Development Code update was started on the heels of the adoption of the Frankfort Franklin County Comprehensive Plan: Distilled Together in 2024.

Revisions to the existing codes are being crafted to implement the vision, goals, policies, and strategies of Distilled Together. The update process involved a diagnosis of the existing codes, drafting of targeted regulations, and input from stakeholders and the public. These boards summarize the major updates proposed in the draft Development Code.

## CODE UPDATE GOALS

- 1 **Reorganize and Reformat Existing Codes**
  - Modernize the format and organization
  - Illustrate key concepts
  - Formatting and capitalization styles
- 2 **Modernize and Improve Development Regulations**
  - Signage & Lighting
  - Parking, Loading, and Stacking Standards
  - Landscaping and Buffering
  - Infill Development Standards
  - Non-residential Development Standards
- 3 **Implement *Distilled Together***
  - Expand design and aesthetic standards
  - Improve and modernize off-street parking requirements to allow for appropriate sized development
  - Enhance buffering requirements between different land uses
  - Review and expand housing types permitted within the City and County
  - Review and update overlay and special districts to incentivize sensitive development for site context

## AN EASY TO USE DEVELOPMENT CODE

- Existing City and County codes are spread across many separate articles, making them difficult to navigate.
- Information is often split across multiple sections, requiring additional time to identify related regulations
- Update consolidates and groups topics (such as uses, development standards, and administration) into fewer, clearer sections.
- Most used regulations move to the front; longer and less-frequently used material moves to the back. Development Code to read as a logical sequence of events in development.
- Definitions relocated to the end, functioning like a glossary for ease of reference

## REORGANIZATION

The existing City of Frankfort Zoning Regulations are divided into 21 articles (two of which are reserved) while there are 17 articles within the Franklin County Zoning Regulations. The current organization and flow of each code is improved to make information easier to find while reducing the need to refer to several articles in order to find certain regulations.

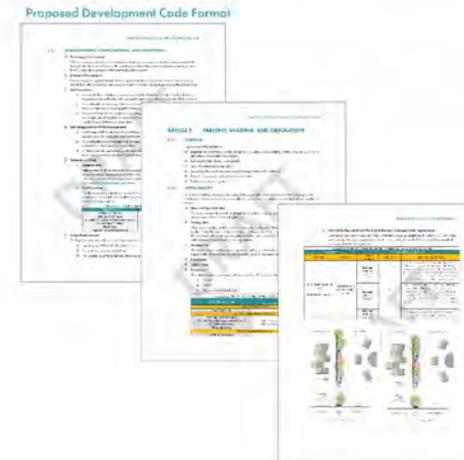
**Existing Zoning Code Organization Structure**

City of Frankfort	Franklin County
Zoning Districts	Use Districts
Administrative	Administrative and Enforcement
Signage	Signage
Lighting	Lighting
Landscaping	Landscaping
Off-street Parking	Off-street Parking
Storage	Storage
Development Standards	Development Standards
Special Districts	Special Districts
Subdivision Regulations	Subdivision Regulations
Definitions	Definitions

**Proposed Development Code Organization**

City of Frankfort	Franklin County
General Provisions	General Provisions
Administrative and Enforcement	Administrative and Enforcement
Signage	Signage
Lighting	Lighting
Landscaping	Landscaping
Off-street Parking	Off-street Parking
Storage	Storage
Development Standards	Development Standards
Special Districts	Special Districts
Subdivision Regulations	Subdivision Regulations
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## MODERNIZE FORMAT



# BOARD 2 | Districts & Character Areas

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## EXISTING CODE CHALLENGES

- City and County districts do not always align cleanly
- Numerous and similar districts
- One-size-fits-all dimensional standards within each district type
- Limited ability to tailor standards to urban vs. suburban vs. rural contexts
- Over-reliance on overlays, PUDs, or variances to achieve context sensitivity

## DRAFT CODE (2026)

- Consolidation and renaming of districts when appropriate
- Explicit district equivalency table tying existing districts to proposed districts
- Strong narrative purpose statements for each district
- Relate each district to the Distilled Together
- Introduces character suffixes – consistent with subdivision regulations approach
  - Applied across select, and multiple base districts
  - Intent to appropriately site density, setbacks, accessory structures, development standards, and site layout



# ZONING DISTRICTS & CHARACTER AREAS

## DISTRICTS ESTABLISHED

- FNL, Farms and Natural Landscape** Existing AG, Agricultural District

The Farm and Natural Landscape (FNL) district is intended to preserve and protect prime farmland, hillside, floodplains, forests, and other resource-based uses. This district accommodates agricultural production, natural resource conservation, rural homesteads, and low-intensity residential development while controlling urban encroachment and preserving the natural landscape. This district also accommodates conditional use related to agri-business, agritourism, and adventure tourism where appropriate. This district should be established in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan's recommendations for the "Rural Farms and Natural Landscapes" land use category. This district does not include Community Character Designations.
- RR, Rural Residential** Existing RE / RR District

The Residential Rural (RR) district is intended to preserve the rural character and scenic quality of Franklin County's outer areas by accommodating very low-density residential development on large lots. This district supports agricultural uses, homes with limited infrastructure service needs, and cluster subdivisions, acting as a transition between agricultural lands and more suburban or urban development. This district should be established in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan's "Rural Residential" land use category. This district does not include Community Character Designations.
- RL, Residential, Low Density\*** Existing SA & RB Districts

The Residential Low-Density (RL) district is designed to support low-density, single-family residential neighborhoods with traditional subdivision and neighborhood patterns. This district is typically located within areas of planned or existing infrastructure, while encouraging contextually appropriate density, design, and connectivity. This district should be established in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan's "Residential Neighborhoods" land use category. This district does not include Community Character Designations.
- RT, Residential, Traditional** Existing FC District

The Residential Traditional (RT) district promotes compact, walkable, and traditional neighborhood development within established neighborhoods and the urban core. This district supports small-lot single-family homes and compatible infill development while maintaining historic neighborhood patterns, encouraging reinvestment, and supporting access to nearby supporting amenities and services. This district should be established in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan's "Urban Neighborhoods" land use category. This district does not include Community Character Designations.
- RF, Residential, Flex\*** Existing K3 & RD Districts

The Residential Flex (RF) district allows an integration of housing types—including single-family, duplexes, townhomes, and small-scale multi-family buildings. This district is intended to provide adaptable housing opportunities and facilitate transitions between single-family, multi-family, and commercial areas. This district should be established in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan's "Urban Neighborhoods" land use category. This district includes Community Character Designations as established by Table 2.03-1 (Community Character Designations).
- RM, Residential, Mixed-Density\*** Existing R1 & RH Districts

The Residential Mixed-Density (RM) district is intended to accommodate moderate to high-density residential development, including apartments, condominiums, and senior or workforce housing. Located along key corridors or in areas with adequate infrastructure and access to services, serving as a buffer between commercial areas and lower-density residential areas. This district should be established in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan's "Multi-Family Neighborhood" land use category. This district includes Community Character Designations as established by Table 2.03-1 (Community Character Designations).
- MCL, Mixed-Commercial, Local** Existing CL District

The Mixed-Commercial, Local (MCL) district is intended to serve the daily retail and service needs of nearby residential neighborhoods. Development in this district is designed on a pedestrian scale, with a focus on small businesses such as convenience retail, personal services, and neighborhood-oriented restaurants. This district should be established in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan's "Neighborhood Mixed-Use" land use category. This district includes Community Character Designations as established by Table 2.03-1 (Community Character Designations).
- MCC, Mixed-Commercial, Community** Existing CG District

The Mixed-Commercial, Community (MCC) district provides for a broader range of commercial uses and services that meet the needs of multiple neighborhoods or the larger city population. Typical developments include grocery stores, pharmacies, sit-down restaurants, general retail, and professional offices. This district should be established in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan's "Neighborhood Mixed-Use" and "Regional Mixed-Use" land use categories. This district includes Community Character Designations as established by Table 2.03-1 (Community Character Designations).
- MCR, Mixed-Commercial, Regional** Existing CH District

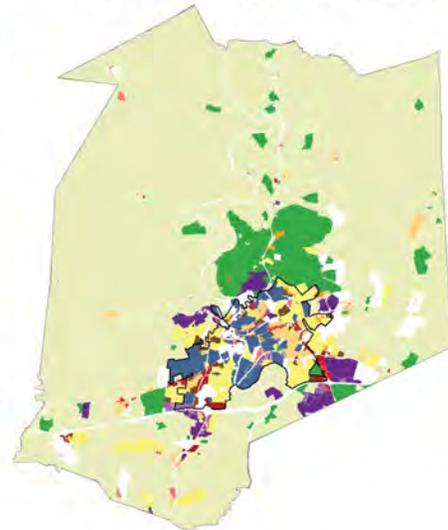
The Mixed-Commercial-Regional (MCR) district is intended to support large-scale commercial and retail uses that draw customers from across the city and surrounding counties. This includes big-box retailers, shopping centers, hotels, auto dealerships, entertainment venues, and regional medical or institutional facilities. This district should be established in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan's "Regional Mixed-Use" land use category. This district includes Community Character Designations as established by Table 2.03-1 (Community Character Designations).
- PI, Public & Institutional** Existing SG District

The Public & Institutional (PI) district is intended to accommodate public and semi-public governmental, civic, educational, and cultural uses that serve the local, regional, or state level. Typical uses include schools, libraries, government offices, public safety facilities, community centers, places of worship, and major state institutions. The district supports the long-term use of land for public purposes while ensuring compatibility with surrounding development. This district should be established in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan's "Civic and Institutional Facilities" and "Parks and Open Space" land use categories.
- EE, Enterprise, Employment** Existing FO & IC Districts

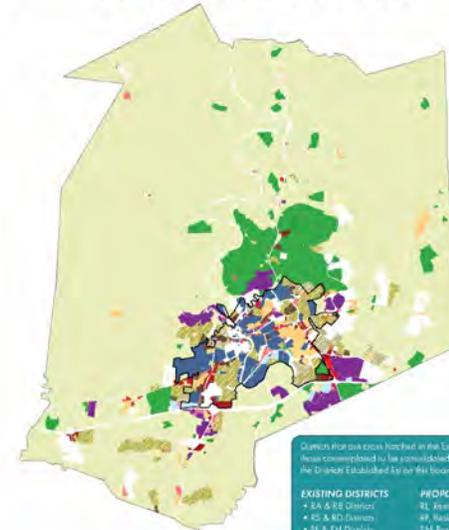
The Enterprise, Employment (EE) district is intended to accommodate light industrial, advanced manufacturing, research and development, logistics, and office uses in a high-quality business park or campus-like setting. This district supports clean, low-impact employment-generating activities that are compatible with adjacent non-industrial uses and are typically located near key transportation routes and infrastructure. This district should be established in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan's "Light Industrial and Employment Center" land use category. This district includes Community Character Designations as established by Table 2.03-1 (Community Character Designations).
- EG, Enterprise, General** Existing IG Districts

The Enterprise, General (EG) district is designed to support a full range of industrial and logistics activities, including manufacturing, warehousing, distribution, fabrication, and other intensive operations that require larger sites, outdoor storage, and freight access. This district is intended for locations with appropriate infrastructure, highway or rail access, and separation from residential neighborhoods. This district should be established in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan's "Medium-Heavy Industrial" land use category. This district includes Community Character Designations as established by Table 2.03-1 (Community Character Designations).

## DRAFT CONCEPT ZONING MAP



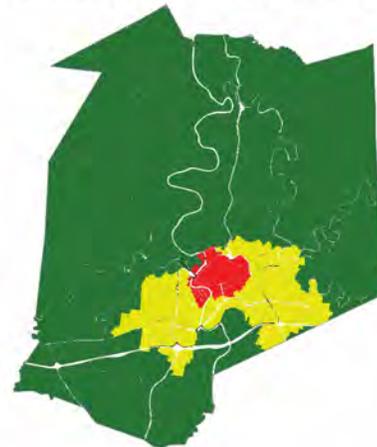
## EXISTING ZONING MAP



Changes that are not included in the Existing Zoning Map are noted as being recommended to be considered with an in-lieu district as noted in the Districts Established by the Board. These districts include:

EXISTING DISTRICTS	PROPOSAL
• EA & EB District	EA Residential Low-Density District
• CA & CB District	CB Residential Flex District
• NA & NB District	NA Residential Mixed-Density District

## COMMUNITY CHARACTER DESIGNATIONS



### Purpose and Intent

To ensure that new development is compatible with and complements the surrounding built and natural environment, each of the Zoning Districts established under Section 2.02 (Zoning Districts Established) is assigned a community character designation. These designations provide the specific dimensional and design standards that guide development within each area. The community character designation suffixes are as follows:

- "U", Urban Sub-Area Designation**

The "-U" Urban designation is applied to zoning districts intended to support a compact, mixed-use, and walkable environment. The standards for these areas are designed to encourage moderate to high-density development, foster a vibrant sense of place, and promote efficient use of existing infrastructure.
- "S", Suburban Sub-Area Designation**

The "-S" Suburban designation applies to zoning districts that accommodate moderate-density growth. The intent is to provide a transition between the urban core and the expansive rural landscape.
- "R", Rural Sub-Area Designation**

The "-R" Rural designation is applied to zoning districts where the primary intent is to preserve agricultural land, natural landscape, and open space. Standards in these areas are designed to limit development density, protect the rural character of the county, and allow for principal and accessory structure placement that is appropriate for this area.

# BOARD 3 | Updated Uses and Standards



## EXISTING CODE CHALLENGES

- Long narrative lists of permitted / conditional uses
- Conditional uses used frequently to manage routine development
- Ambiguity around emerging uses (mixed-use, breweries, accessory dwelling units, etc.)
- Permitted uses may not meet intent of district

## DRAFT CODE (2026)

- Comprehensive Use Table (next slide)
- Clear treatment and intent of uses
  - Each use is defined consistently
  - Use specific standards applicable
- New and emerging uses identified
- Antiquated uses removed
- Similar uses consolidated as appropriate
- Considered permissibility based on district type, purpose, and location

## KEY TAKEAWAY:

*More predictability for applicants, fewer discretionary determinations, and clearer expectations for the community*





# BOARD 4 | Dimensional & Design Standards

## EXISTING CODE CHALLENGES

- Dimensional standards and code locations vary
- Each district standards are in its own chapter
- Limited infill-specific guidance
- Design standards applied inconsistently or by use of overlay districts

## DRAFT CODE (2026)

- Centralize all dimensional and general design standards to Article 4
- Provisions for Infill Development Standards
- District specific bulk and design standards
- Clear measurement and exceptions rules
- Use of graphics to illustrate measurement methods

### KEY TAKEAWAY:

*Improves clarify and ease of use for setbacks, height, lot coverage, and applicable design standards*



# BOARD 5 & 6 | Landscaping, Lighting, Signs, Parking



## Big Picture Shift:

*These articles collectively present as development standards*

### EXISTING CODE CHALLENGES

- Parking minimums largely fixed or pre-meditated
- Landscape and buffering requirements fragmented
- Outdated sign code structure
- Need for clear illumination standards

### DRAFT CODE (2026)

- Updated parking standards to reduce overparking and impervious surface
- Unified Landscaping & Buffering article
- Fully restructured Sign article with established exemptions, sign types and allowances, and prohibitions
- Standalone Outdoor Lighting article

### KEY TAKEAWAY:

*Integrated and consistent standards, environmental protections, and development standards compatible with vision of Distilled Together*





# SIGNAGE

This article establishes clear, content-neutral rules for signage throughout the City of Frankfort and Franklin County. The goal is to allow appropriate signage for different land uses while improving safety, protecting community character, and supporting economic activity. This is important to:

- Reduce visual clutter and protects property values
- Improve traffic and pedestrian safety
- Align sign size, design, and placement with building scale and land use
- Promote attractive, coordinated signage that reflects community identity

## OVERVIEW OF IMPROVEMENTS

- Where signs are allowed and where they are prohibited
- Permit requirements and review processes
- General standards that apply to all signs
- Clear rules for lighting, placement, size, and height
- Maintenance, safety, and removal of signs
- More consistent organization across sign type

## SIGN TYPES PERMITTED BY USE TYPE

SIGN TYPE	AGRICULTURAL USES	SINGLE AND TWO-FAMILY DWELLINGS	MULTIFAMILY DWELLINGS	PUBLIC AND INSTITUTIONAL USES	COMMERCIAL USES	INDUSTRIAL USES	OPEN SPACE ORGANIZATIONS
Awning or Canopy Signs	PS	-	-	PS	PS	PS	2.09.A
Electronic Message Boards	-	-	-	PS	PS	PS	2.09.B
Ground Mounted Signs	PS	-	-	PS	PS	PS	2.09.C
Incidental Signs	PS	-	PS	PS	PS	PS	2.09.D
Interstate Business Signs	Per Section 7.09.E.1						2.09.E
Menu Board Signs	-	-	-	-	PS	-	2.09.F
Monument Entrance Signs	Per Section 7.09.G						2.09.G
Non-Premises Advertising Signs	-	-	-	-	CS	CS	2.09.H
Pole Signs	-	-	-	-	PS	PS	2.09.I
Projecting Signs	-	-	-	PS	PS	PS	2.09.J
Wall Signs	PS	-	-	PS	PS	PS	2.09.K
Window Signs	PS	-	-	PS	PS	PS	2.09.L

PS = Permitted with Standards  
CS = Conditional with Standards  
Shaded or - = Prohibited

## DRAFT PROJECTING SIGN STANDARDS

REQUIREMENT	MAXIMUMS
Quantity	NO MORE THAN ONE SIGN
Maximum Area	1.0 sq. ft. per sign or structure
Minimum Projection	8 square feet
Sign Clearance	18 inches
Sign Placement	Bottom of Sign (Minimum): 8 feet above pedestrian walkway Top of Sign (Maximum): 15 feet above pedestrian walkway *Permitted only
Submission	FOR REVIEW BY THE BOARD OF ZONING AND PLANNING
	PLANS BY DEVELOPER AND SPECIAL DISTRICTS
	*As specified in Article 9, Planned Development & Special Districts



Projecting Sign

## SIGN TYPES ADDRESSED

- Permanent signs (such as wall, ground, monument, projecting, and window signs)
- Temporary signs with clear limits on size, location, and duration
- Electronic message boards with strict safety and brightness standards
- Special sign types including menu boards, interstate business signs, and entrance signs



Wall Sign



Ground Mounted Sign



Window Sign



Menu Board



Electronic Message Board



Incidental Sign

## ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Additional review for signs in historic and special districts
- Sign Package Plans allow coordinated signage for larger or complex developments
- Landscaping is required around many ground-mounted and freestanding signs

# PARKING, LOADING & CIRCULATION

These standards help prevent over-parking, improve site design, support walking and biking, reduce traffic conflicts, and protect air and water quality—while still ensuring adequate access for customers, residents, and deliveries.

## APPROPRIATE APPLICABILITY

New development must meet current standards. Expansions, changes in use, or parking lot changes may trigger partial or full compliance, depending on their scope. Minor renovations and small parking changes are generally exempt.

Use Type	Applicability of Parking, Loading, and Circulation Standards
NEW BUILDING CONSTRUCTION	Applicability of Parking, Loading, and Circulation Standards
NEW CONSTRUCTION	Full Compliance
REUSE/RECONSTRUCTION/RENOVATION	Full Compliance
USE FROM 2014 OR EARLIER	Full Compliance
Less than 25% of Floor Area, less than 2,000 sq. ft.	Full Compliance for additional spaces required
25 - 50% of Floor Area	Full Compliance for additional spaces required
50% of Floor Area	Full Compliance
EXTERIOR FACADE RENOVATION	Full Compliance
25% of Facade Area	N/A
25 - 50% of Facade Area	N/A
50% of Facade Area	N/A
CHANGE OF USE / REDEVELOPMENT	Full Compliance
Change in Use Only (No Expansion or Renovation)	Full Compliance for additional spaces per new use
REUSE/RECONSTRUCTION/RENOVATION	Full Compliance
Parking Lot Expansion > 10 Spaces	Full Compliance
Parking Lot Expansion > 10 Spaces	Full Compliance for New Spaces
Renovating or Reusing	N/A

## RETHINKING PARKING

Applicants must analyze actual parking demand based on use, size, hours, employees, customers, shared parking opportunities, and nearby on-street spaces. This helps avoid excessive parking that wastes land and increases runoff.

When required, a parking plan shows how vehicles, pedestrians, bikes, landscaping, lighting, drainage, and access all work together—ensuring safe, functional, and well-designed sites.

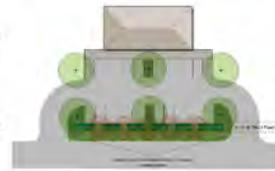


## PLACEMENT & DESIGN

Parking must be set back from streets and lot lines, placed to the side or rear when possible, separated from sidewalks, and designed so vehicles do not back into public streets.

Lots must be properly paved, drained, striped, lit, and landscaped. Permeable pavement and green stormwater practices are encouraged where appropriate, while gravel is limited based on location and context.

Required landscaping and screening reduce visual impacts, manage stormwater, and improve comfort for pedestrians and nearby properties.



## CIRCULATION AND SAFETY

Larger parking areas must include clearly defined pedestrian paths that safely connect building entrances to sidewalks, trails, transit stops, and public rights-of-way.

Parking and drive aisles must be designed so vehicles can enter and exit safely without backing into public streets or interfering with traffic flow.

Parking and drive aisles must be designed so vehicles can enter and exit safely without backing into public streets or interfering with traffic flow.



## STACKING AND LOADING

Uses like restaurants, banks, and car washes must provide enough on-site stacking space so waiting vehicles do not block parking, sidewalks, or public roads.

Commercial and industrial uses must provide appropriately sized, well-located loading spaces that are off-street, screened from neighborhoods, and designed for safe truck movement.



# BOARD 7 | Riparian Buffers



## DISTILLED TOGETHER RECOMMENDATIONS

### Natural Resource Action Item 3.4.

Adopt a Stream / Wetland Buffer Overlay throughout the County to establish a forested buffer and protect waterbodies, floodplains, wetlands, alluvial deposits, and steep slopes along the Kentucky River, Elkhorn Creek, major tributaries, and wetlands. *(Pg. 159)*

### Natural Resource Action Item 3.6.

Update the development regulations to require new development to protect water bodies, streams, steep slopes, sensitive landscapes, and habitats *(Pg. 159)*

### Natural Resources Action Item 3.19

### Natural Resources Action Item 3.20

### Natural Resources Action Item 3.21

## DRAFT CODE (2026)

- Introduction of a Riparian Area, Waterway and Wetland Protection article / chapter.
- Protects streams, rivers, wetlands, and water quality
- Establishes required buffer areas along waterways and wetlands
  - Land outside these areas not impacted
- Defines minimum buffer widths and measurement methods
- Applies mainly to new development and land disturbance within these buffer areas
- Allows limited uses within buffers based on zone type
- Prohibits activities that harm water quality
- Requires restoration when disturbance occurs
- Provides flexibility through minor modifications and variances



# RIPARIAN AREAS, WATERWAYS & WETLAND PROTECTION

## WHAT IS THIS PROPOSAL

Frankfort-Franklin County is considering new standards to protect streams, rivers, lakes, and wetlands when new development occurs.

These standards are intended to focus on:

- Protecting water quality
- Reducing flooding and erosion
- Preserving wildlife habitats
- Guiding development away from sensitive areas

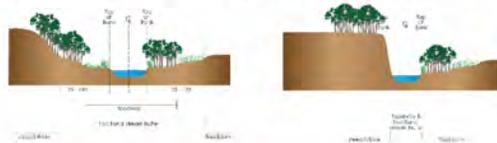
Existing homes, farms, and undeveloped properties are not required to comply unless new development is proposed.

## WHAT IS A RIPARIAN BUFFER?

A Riparian Buffer is a naturally vegetated area next to a stream, river, or wetland that:

- Filters runoff and pollutants
- Slows stormwater
- Prevents erosion
- Protects habitats

Buffers remain mostly natural and vegetated, with limited use allowance.



## VEGETATION AND RESTORATION

Buffers are organized into the following three (3) categories:

- Riparian Edge Zone: Natural, forested
- Managed Edge Zone: Limited disturbance
- Outer Zone: Transitional area

If development causes disturbance, restoration is required using native vegetation.

## WHAT IS ALLOWED IN BUFFER AREAS?

Buffers are mostly protected, but some uses are appropriate depending on the buffer the use is to be located within.

PERMITTED	<b>Riparian Edge</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public flood control structures</li> <li>• Pedestrian and bike trails</li> <li>• Road crossings, where permitted</li> </ul>
	<b>Managed Edge Zone</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Utility rights of way</li> <li>• Stormwater management</li> <li>• Recreational uses (no impervious surfaces)</li> </ul>
	<b>Outer Zone</b>
	All floodplain uses are allowed in the Outer Zone except for the following:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Septic systems</li> <li>• Permanent structures or impervious surface coverage with a footprint of greater than 100 square feet, with the exception of approved recreational trails</li> </ul>
PROHIBITED	<b>All Zones</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hazardous material storage</li> <li>• Raised septic systems</li> <li>• Landfills and junkyards</li> <li>• Large impervious surfaces</li> <li>• Petroleum storage</li> <li>• Chemical application near streams</li> </ul>

## Direction from Distilled Together

The direction to investigate stream buffers in the drafting of the updated Development Code was introduced during the comprehensive planning process as a way to protect and conserve rivers, wetlands, streams, floodplains, oxbows, and drainage ways, woodlands, and mature forests to provide habitat, encourage biodiversity, manage stormwater runoff, prevent flooding, and to create a system of greenways.

### NATURAL RESOURCE ACTION ITEMS

3.4 Adapt a Stream (Riparian) / Wetland Buffer Overlay throughout the County to establish a forested buffer and protect waterbodies, floodplains, wetlands, alluvial deposits, and steep slopes along the Kentucky River, Elkhorn Creek, major tributaries, and wetlands. (pg. 129)

## HOW WIDE ARE THE BUFFERS

Buffer widths depend on:

- Stream size
- Slope of the adjacent land
- Floodplain width

Key considerations:

- Measurements taken from top of stream bank
- Buffers extended if floodplain is wider
- Steeper slopes require wider buffers
- Wetlands require a minimum 25-foot buffer

## PUBLIC INPUT:

Do you think buffer widths should vary based on site conditions?

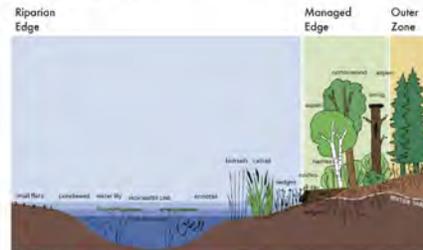
- Yes      No      Unsure

## WHERE DO THESE RULES APPLY?

Buffers are intended to apply to:

- Perennial streams (flow year round)
- Intermittent streams (flow seasonally)
- Wetlands over 0.1 acre in size
- All protected waterways in Frankfort-Franklin County.

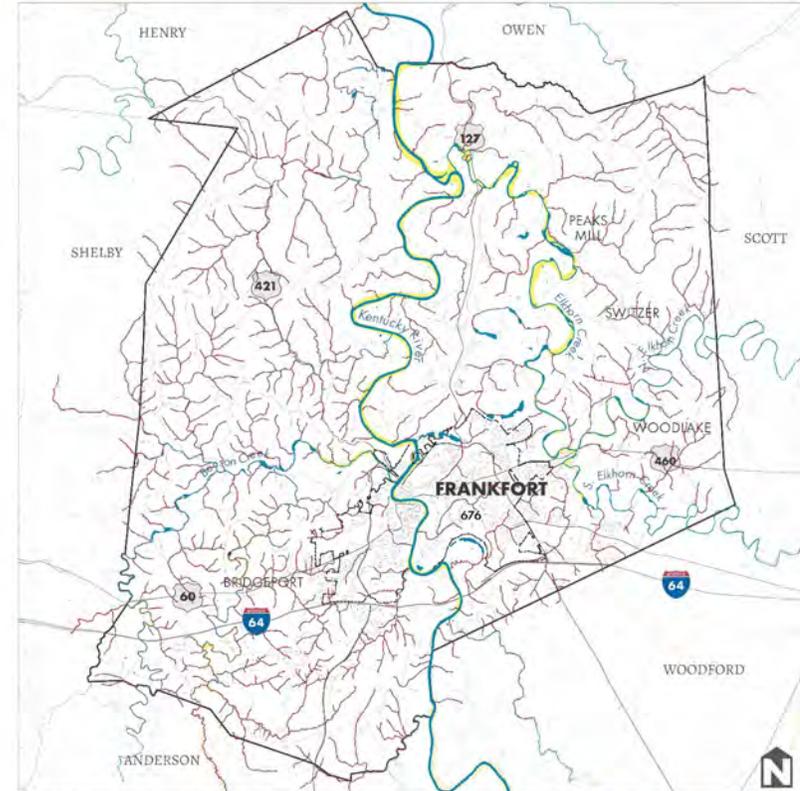
Additional rules apply where stricter overlay districts or provisions apply.



For illustrative purposes only

## PUBLIC INPUT:

We want to hear your thoughts and reactions to this topic. Let us know below:



## Riparian Area & Waterway Buffers

Frankfort/ Franklin County, KY



DRAFT September 2025

- |                        |                    |             |
|------------------------|--------------------|-------------|
| Franklin County Limits | Lock Dam           | Floodway    |
| City of Frankfort      | Kentucky River     | 25' Buffer  |
| Interstate Highway     | Creeks and Streams | 50' Buffer  |
| State Route            | Tributaries        | 75' Buffer  |
| Streets                | Wetlands           | 100' Buffer |

**PUBLIC INPUT:**  
Are there locations you think should be subject to additional rules and protections?

**DRAFT**



# SUMMARY

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## WHAT CHANGES MOST...

- Unified City – County Development Code
- District framework + character areas
- Predictable and easy to navigate Use Table
- Housing flexibility to improve the “missing middle”
- Context-sensitive development and design standards

## WHAT STAYED THE SAME

- Core protections for neighborhoods
- Conditional use oversight for higher-impact uses
- Historic, floodplain, and environmental protections

### Why this matters?

Easier to administer and enforce

Clearer expectations for residents and developers

Alignment with *Distilled Together* vision and goals

Better tools to manage growth and transitions

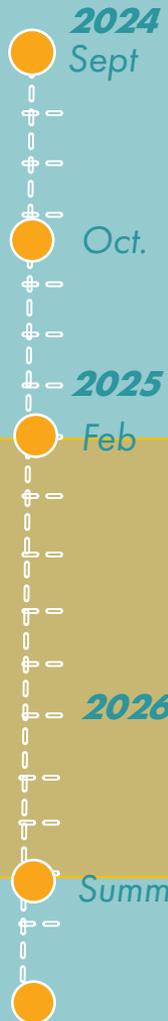
Unifies development standards within one document



# 7 WHAT NEXT?

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# PROCESS



## PHASE 1 Project Initiation

### TASKS by Phase

- Discussions with City and County
- Review relevant zoning applications
- Review of code for zoning-related recommendations
- Review of code documents

## PHASE 2 Diagnosis & Outline

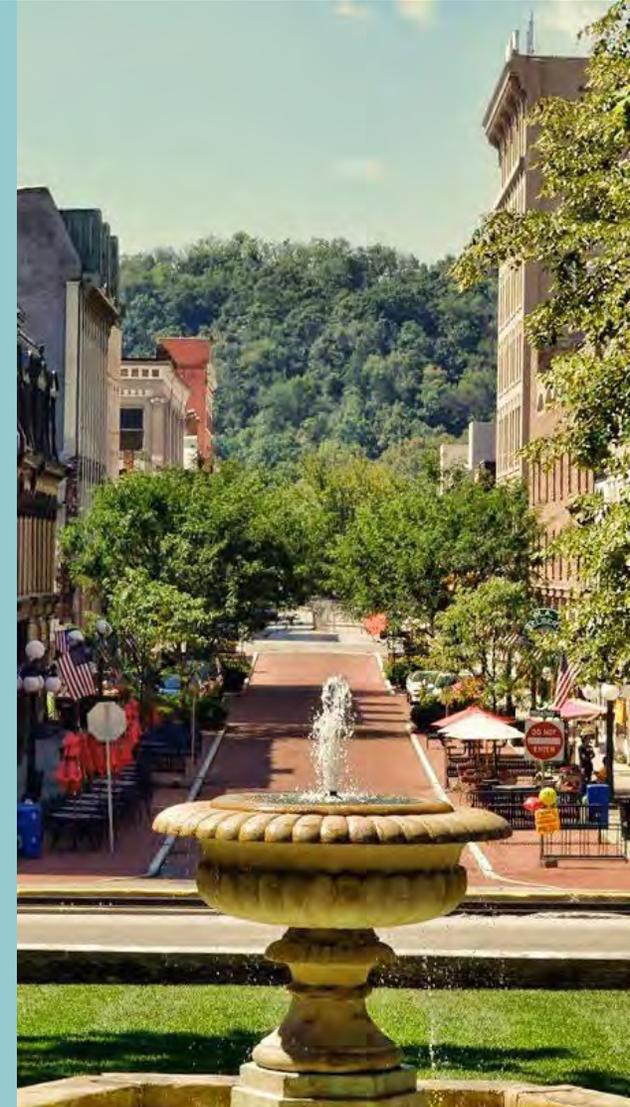
- Draft code diagnosis and annotated outline
- Draft code template
- Diagnosis review by city / county

## PHASE 3 Drafting of Regulations

- **Drafting**
- **Meetings with city / county**
- **Planning Commission update**
- **Committee / stakeholder review**

## PHASE 4 Review and Adoption

- Prepare consolidated draft
- Committee / stakeholder review
- Prepare adoption draft
- Workshops and Adoption Process





# Next Steps

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## Continue Drafting:

- Parking, Loading, and Circulation
- Riparian Area, Waterway, and Wetland Protection
- Subdivision Regulations
- Review and Refine Draft Article Based on Feedback and Input

## Additional Input & Feedback Opportunities

- Draft Code to be posted online for review
- Stay tuned for additional meetings and presentations



# Thank You

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