



THE CITY OF UNION CITY ZONING ORDINANCE UPDATE

A photograph of a large, three-dimensional, reddish-brown metal sign spelling out 'UNION CITY' in all caps. The sign is mounted on a stone wall, and a waterfall flows over the top of the wall, creating a misty spray of water around the letters.

UNION CITY

STAKEHOLDER MEETING

Introductions

Project Task II





CONSULTANT TEAM



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PROJECT OVERVIEW

ULTIMATE GOAL

To create a modern Ordinance based on best practices and case law that supports the goals of the Comprehensive Plan.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN vs. ZONING ORDINANCE

Comprehensive Plan:

- Policy guide for long-term community growth,
- Establishes vision, goals, and strategies,
- Non-regulatory but influences zoning decisions,
- Updated periodically to reflect community priorities.

Comprehensive
Plan → Zoning
Ordinance



Zoning Ordinance:

- Regulatory tool that controls land use and development,
- Legally enforceable standards (setbacks, height, density),
- Implements the vision of the Comprehensive Plan,
- Updated through public hearings and council approval.

Existing Ordinance: Issues & Gaps

Zoning Process and Procedures

Assessment of the Existing Zoning Ordinance

Participant Insights and Examples

EXISTING ORDINANCE: ISSUES & GAPS

ZONING PROCESS & PROCEDURES

GEORGIA ZONING PROCEDURES LEGISLATION

ZPL – O.C.G.A. §36–66

1. Legislative Decisions - Govern adoption and amendment of zoning ordinances and maps. Require public notice and hearings before any zoning change. Policy-based and made by elected officials.
2. Quasi-Judicial Decisions - Apply established criteria to specific cases such as variances and special exceptions. Require impartial hearings and evidence-based findings. Typically handled by appointed boards such as the Board of Zoning Appeals.
3. Appeal Procedures - Provide a structured process for reviewing administrative or quasi-judicial decisions. Appeals must be filed within prescribed time limits and follow procedural requirements. Legislative bodies cannot re-hear quasi-judicial matters without proper authority.

EXISTING ORDINANCE: ISSUES & GAPS

ZONING PROCESS & PROCEDURES

GEORGIA ZONING PROCEDURES LEGISLATION

ZPL – O.C.G.A. §36-66

Due Process: Means that the public must receive fair notice, a meaningful opportunity to be heard, and an impartial decision-maker whenever a local government makes zoning decisions. To comply, a city must follow the minimum procedures in O.C.G.A. §36-66, (which are designed specifically to ensure due process and transparency for the general public.

Required minimum procedures:

1. Proper public notice
2. Public hearings before zoning decision
3. Adoption of written hearing procedures
4. Impartial Decision makers for quasi-judicial actions
5. Boards that are delegated zoning authority must follow review procedures that comply with the ZPL's due-process standards.
6. Availability of Judicial Review

EXISTING ORDINANCE: ISSUES & GAPS

ZONING PROCESS & PROCEDURES

GEORGIA ZONING PROCEDURES LEGISLATION ZPL – O.C.G.A. §36-66

KEY GEORGIA CASE LAW

City of Cumming v. Flowers, 300 Ga.820 (2017)

It reinforces that local governments must strictly follow the procedural requirements of the Zoning Procedures Law — especially public notice and hearing requirements — or their zoning decisions can be overturned.

Jackson County v. Earth Resources, Inc., 280 Ga. 389 (2006)

Clarifies that quasi-judicial zoning decisions (like variances and conditional use permits) must follow due process standards, including impartial decision-makers, evidence-based findings, and a proper hearing record.

EXISTING ORDINANCE: ISSUES & GAPS

ASSESSMENT OF THE EXISTING ZONING ORDINANCE

Form-Based Code: Where in Union City would a form-based approach (focused on building form and street character) create the most predictable and successful development outcomes?

Sustainable Development Code: What sustainability standards would be most feasible and valuable for development in Union City?

Overlay Districts: Do current overlay districts add clarity or complexity, and how should they be improved or consolidated to better support development?

Competing Mixed-Use Districts: How should Union City streamline or modernize its multiple mixed-use districts to reduce confusion and better match market needs?

Density Bonuses: What types of public benefits would make density bonuses attractive and workable for the development community?

EXISTING ORDINANCE: ISSUES & GAPS

ASSESSMENT OF THE EXISTING ZONING ORDINANCE

LAND USE COMPATIBIITY

- The idea that certain types of development work well next to each other and others do not.
- Permitted Uses-activities allowed by right in a zoning district when basic standards are met.
- Prohibited Uses-activities not allowed in a zoning district under any circumstances.
- Special/Conditional Uses—activities allowed only if they meet a certain set of criteria. Often require MCC approval.
- Accessory Structures and Uses -accessory structures and accessory uses are the extra things you can have on a property that support the main building or main activity—but are not the primary reason the property exists.

EXISTING ORDINANCE: ISSUES & GAPS

ASSESSMENT OF THE EXISTING ZONING ORDINANCE

Non-conforming Use, Lot, & Structures –refers to properties or uses that were legal when they were first established, but that no longer comply with current ordinances. Instead of requiring owners to immediately conform, the law often allows those properties to continue under what is known as a grandfathered status.

Spot Zoning –. the process of singling out a parcel(s) for a use classification different and inconsistent with the surrounding area, for the benefit of a particular owner.

EXISTING ORDINANCE: ISSUES & GAPS

ASSESSMENT OF THE EXISTING ZONING ORDINANCE CON'T

Modification Procedures – procedures to modify an approved rezoning or site plan ensure that any changes are reviewed transparently and evaluated for consistency with the original approval and public expectations.

- ✓ Minor modifications - approved administratively based on specific parameters,
- ✓ Major modifications—impacts use, density, traffic, standards or conditions require public notification and public hearing process to protect due process and maintain legal defensibility.

Term of Decisions – a zoning ordinance should clearly state how long a board or council has to decide on a petition or begin the permitting process, so applicants and the public know what to expect and the city avoids open-ended or inconsistent timelines.

EXISTING ORDINANCE: ISSUES & GAPS

ASSESSMENT OF THE EXISTING ZONING ORDINANCE

COMPONENTS OF A MODEL ZONING ORDINANCE

- Purpose and Definitions
- Zoning Districts
- Allowed Uses
- Building Rules
- Development Standards
- Design and Appearance
- Environmental Rules
- Procedures
- Nonconforming Uses
- Zoning Map

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

APPROACH TO MODERNIZE A ZONING ORDINANCE:

- Does the Ordinance align with Comprehensive Plan
- Do the regulations need to be consolidated?
- Do the zoning districts need to be modernized?
- Do the design standards need to be enhanced?
- Do the procedures need to be streamlined and comply with GA ZPL?

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

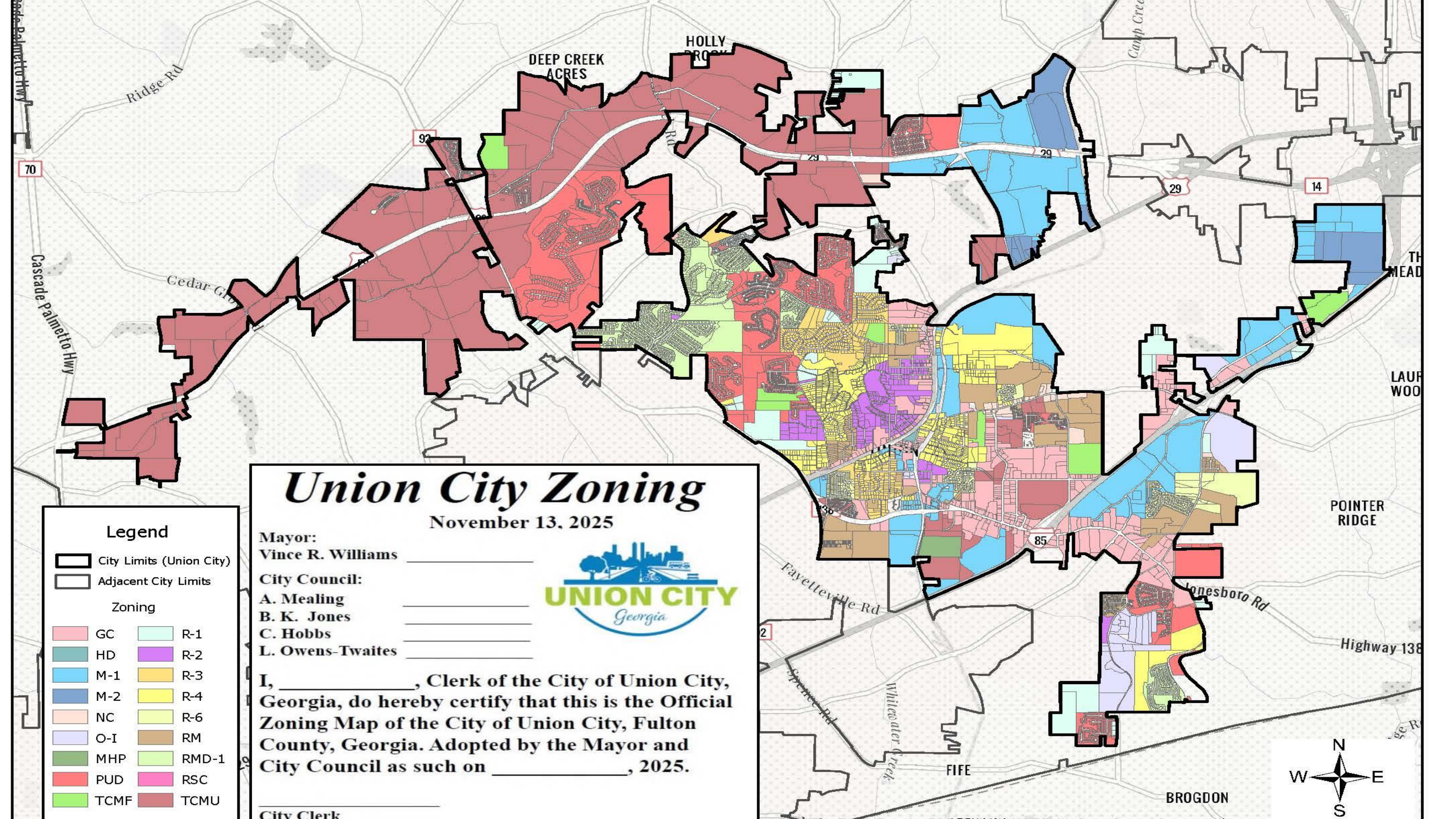
ORDINANCE ALIGNMENT WITH BEST PRACTICES

1. Use clear, plain, consistent language
2. Organize the Ordinance in a logical, user-friendly structure
3. Align all procedures with the Georgia Zoning Procedures Law (ZPL)
4. Separate legislative and quasi-judicial functions
5. Provide objective, measurable decision criteria
6. Include clear, predictable timelines
7. Modernize and standardize definitions
8. Provide clear standards for modification to approved plans
9. Integrate the Comprehensive Plan
10. Use graphics, tables, and illustrations
11. Ensure transparency through public access to information
12. Provide method for appeals

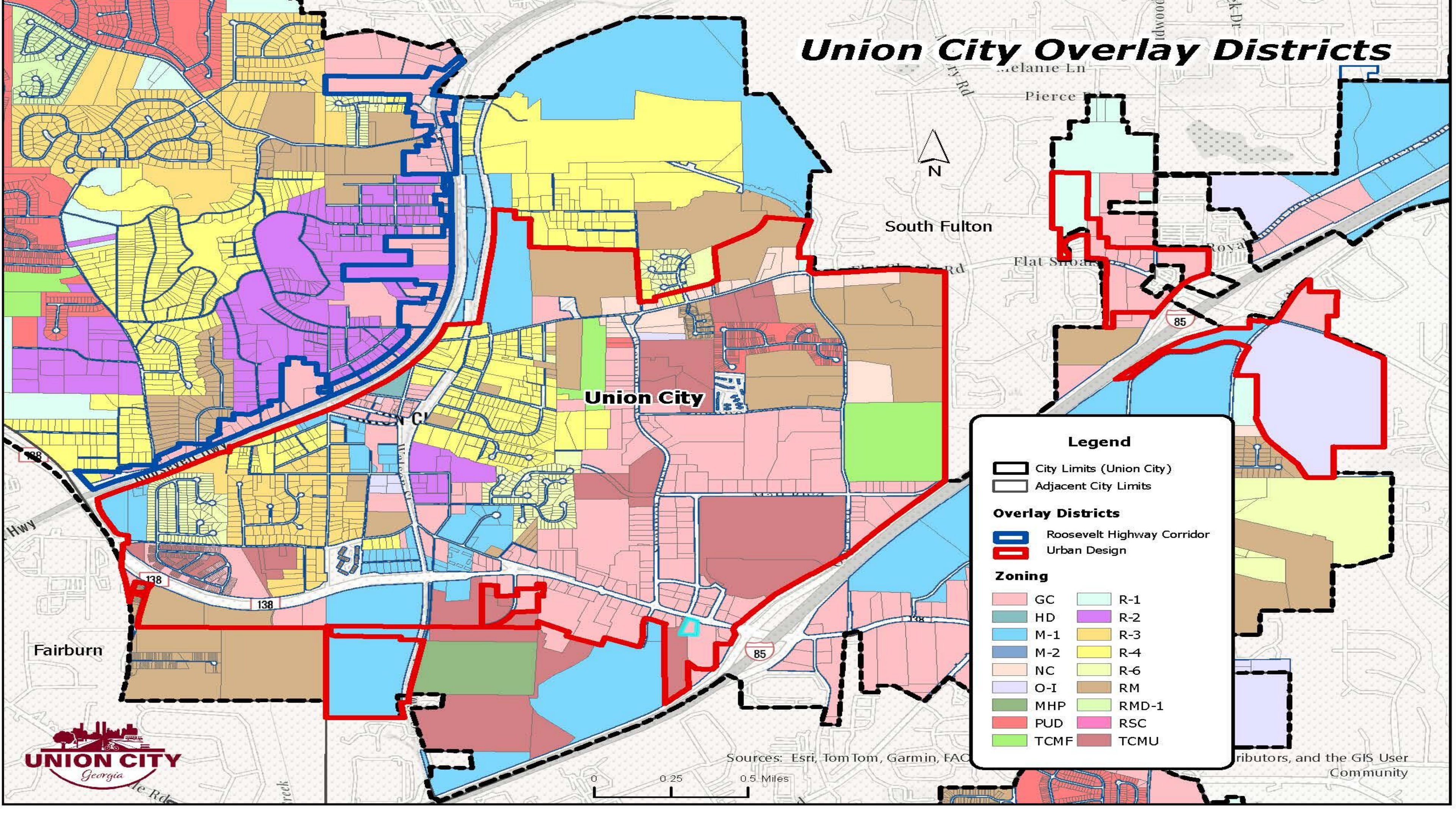
OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

FEEDBACK FROM THE DEVELOPERS' ROUNDTABLE

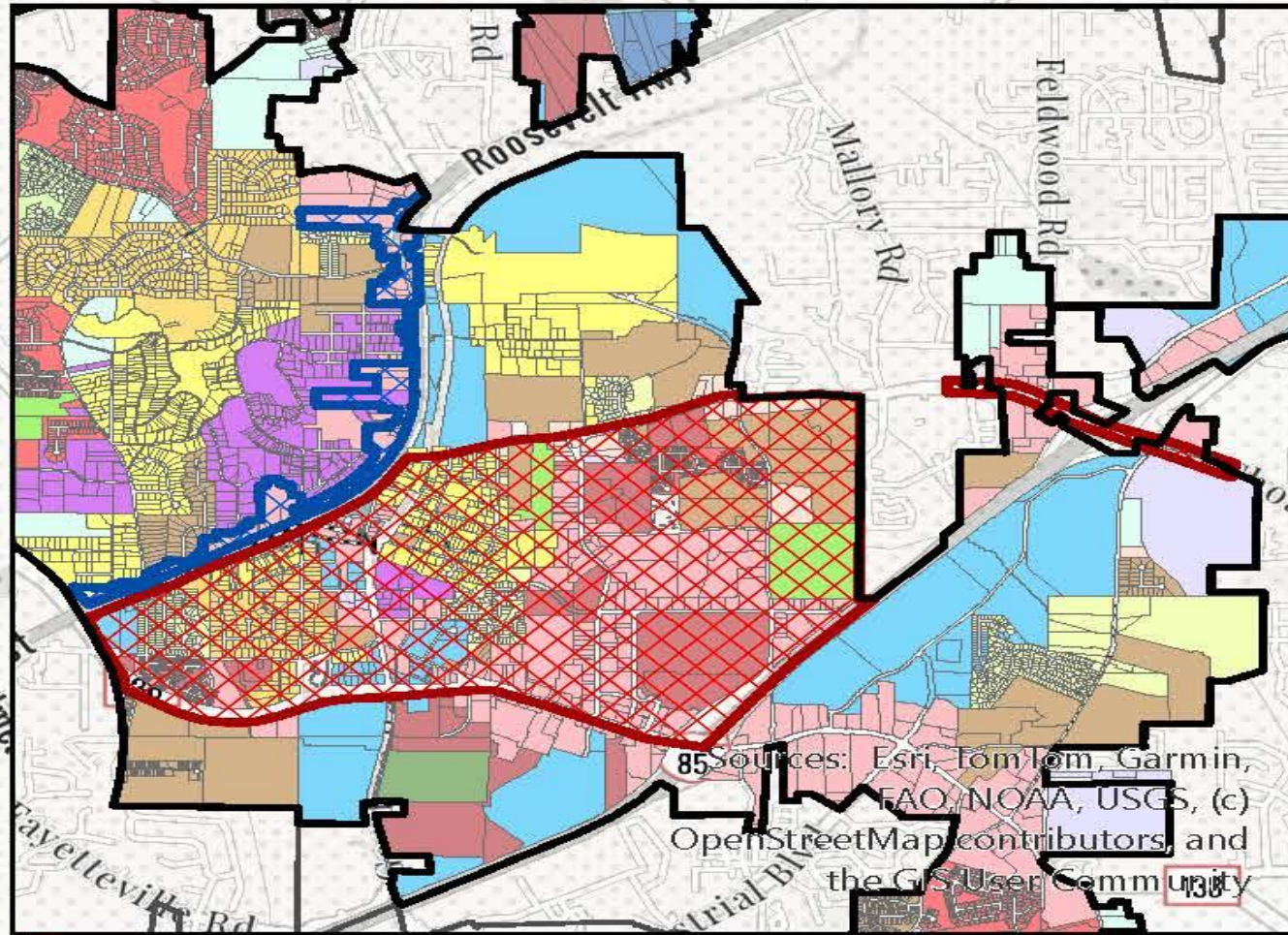
- Highlighted frustrations with inconsistent documents and unclear processes, leading to calls for a unified development code and improved pre-application engagement,
- Demand for a Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) to consolidate zoning, subdivision, and design standards into a single, coherent document was a key developer request,
- Multiple documents and conflicting regulations currently cause confusion and slow project approvals,
- Developers seek clearer, more accessible information to understand permitted uses and procedures upfront.



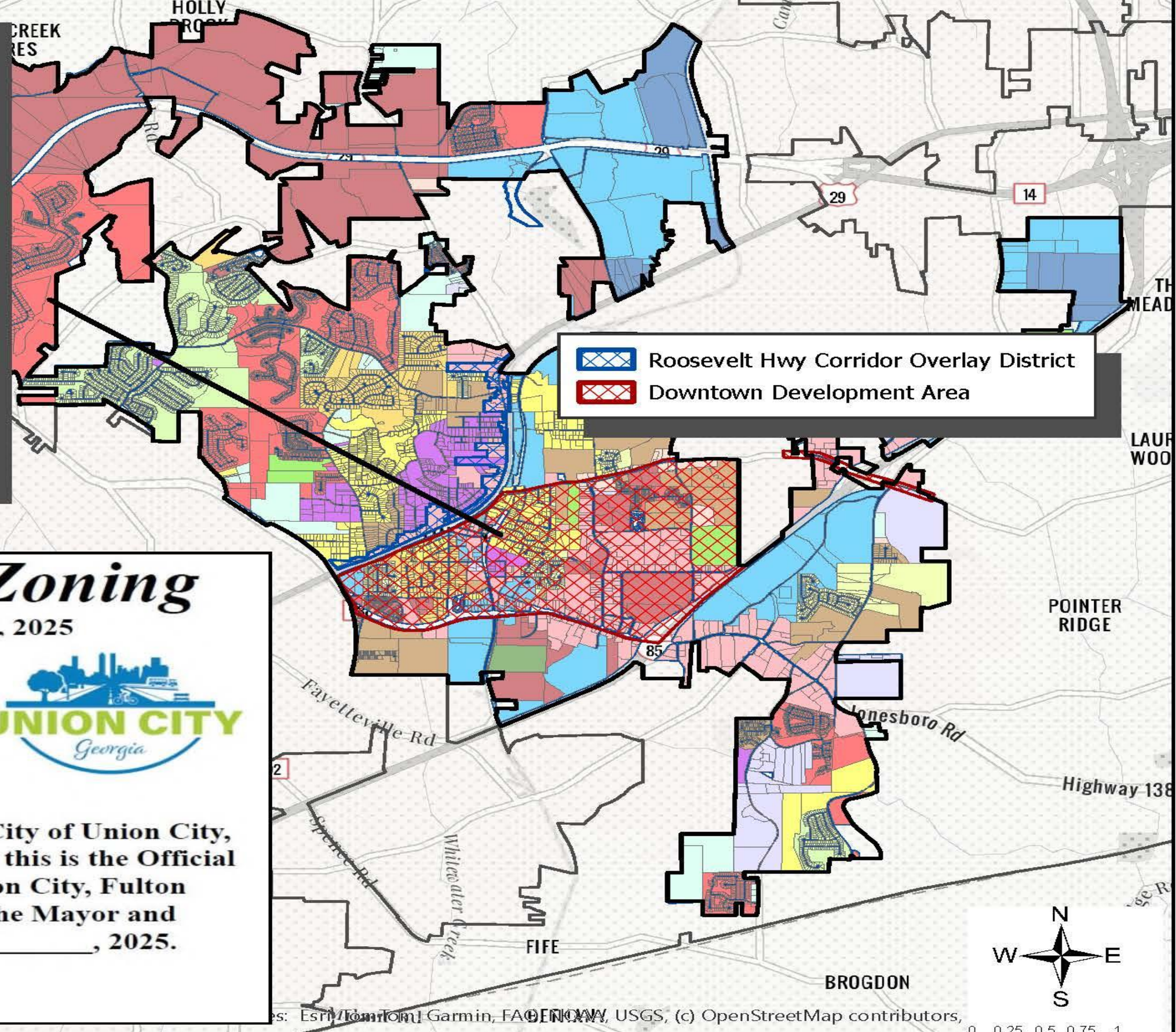
Union City Overlay Districts



INSET



85 Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community



Roosevelt Hwy Corridor Overlay District
Downtown Development Area

Union City Zoning

November 13, 2025

Mayor:
Vince R. Williams

City Council:
A. Mealing
B. K. Jones
C. Hobbs
L. Owens-Twaites



I, _____, Clerk of the City of Union City, Georgia, do hereby certify that this is the Official Zoning Map of the City of Union City, Fulton County, Georgia. Adopted by the Mayor and City Council as such on _____, 2025.

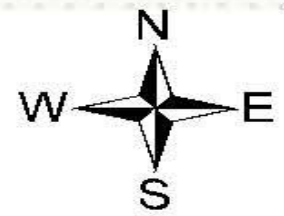
City Clerk

Legend

City Limits (Union City)
Adjacent City Limits

Zoning

GC	R-1
HD	R-2
M-1	R-3
M-2	R-4
NC	R-6
O-I	RM
MHP	RMD-1
PUD	RSC
TCMF	TCMU

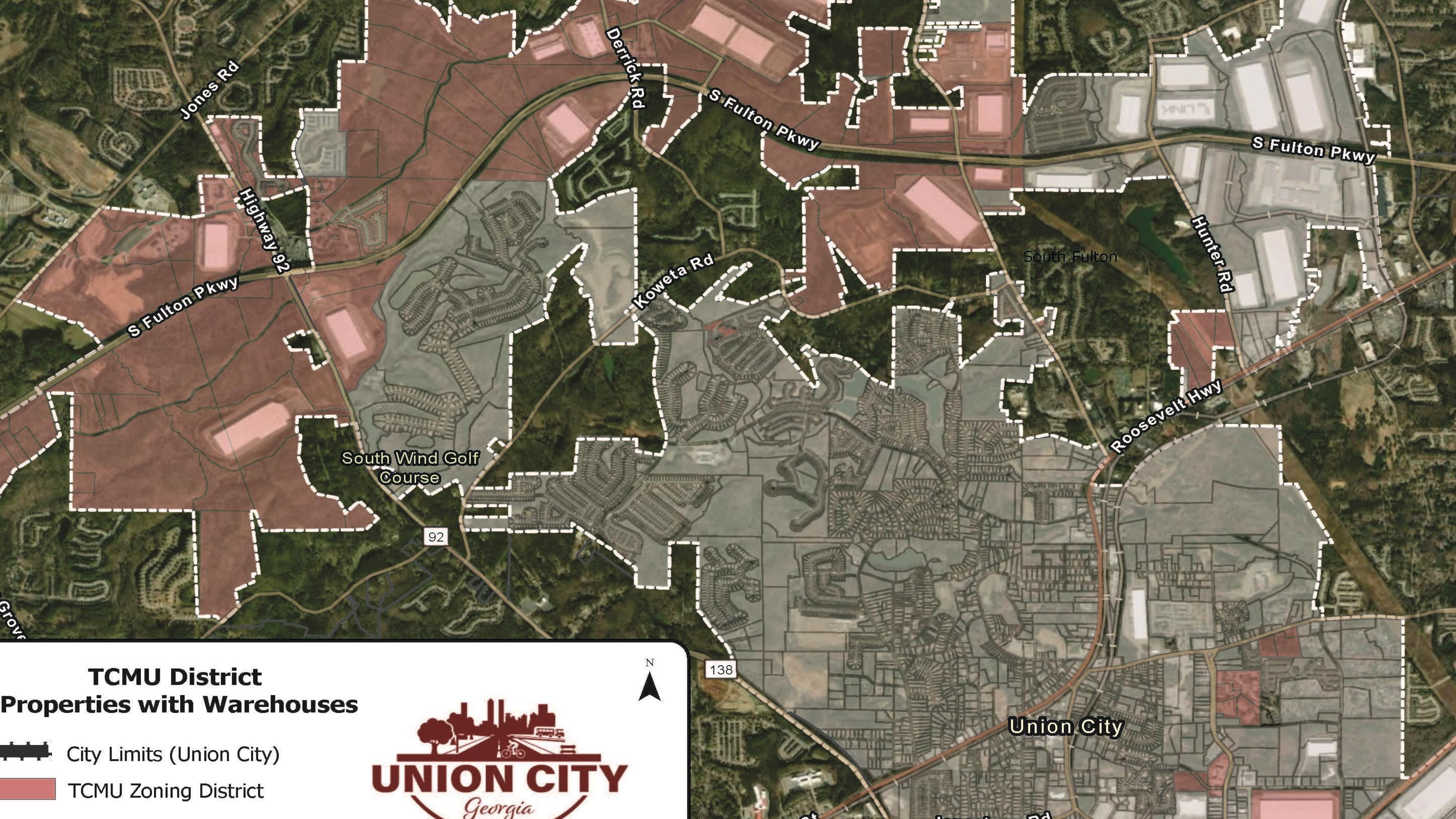


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OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

link to the interactive map. <https://sq1gis.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=974a6983fddb4fb69d54d7e0a2c0b219>



TCMU District Properties with Warehouses

-  City Limits (Union City)
-  TCMU Zoning District



OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

INDUSTRIAL USES:

- Change M1 to Light Industrial
- Change M2 to Heavy Industrial
- Remove industrial use from TCMU
- Create a Warehouse Technology District, or Technology and Innovation Office/Warehouse Park
- Require a Use Permit for data centers,
 - ✓ Multiple Buildings on same parcel
 - ✓ Size of Buildings – measured in sq. ft.
 - ✓ ARC - Development of Regional Impact Analysis
 - ✓ Sustainable Development Code – water usage and conservation, noise, and energy consumption

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

USE PERMITS/LIMITED USES/VARIANCES

1. Clearly define which uses are permitted, limited, or require a conditional use permit (CUP)
2. State conditions of administrative approval for limited uses
3. Clearly state the process for obtaining a CUP
 - ✓ Application requirements, including a site or concept plan
 - ✓ Public hearing requirements
 - ✓ Public notification requirements
 - ✓ Timeline
4. Clearly indicate the process for obtaining a Concurrent Variance

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

CONDITIONAL USES

LIMITED USES

TEMPORARY USES

EXISTING VS PROPOSED

PROJECT ENGAGEMENT

UPCOMING ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

- Union City Juneteenth Festival – Eagles Nest Complex
 - Friday, June 19th 6p – 10p
- Public Meeting #2 – August
 - Tentatively Thursday, August 6th

Get Project Information at:

www.unioncitygazoningupdate.com

Take the Survey at:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/UnionCityZoningSurvey>

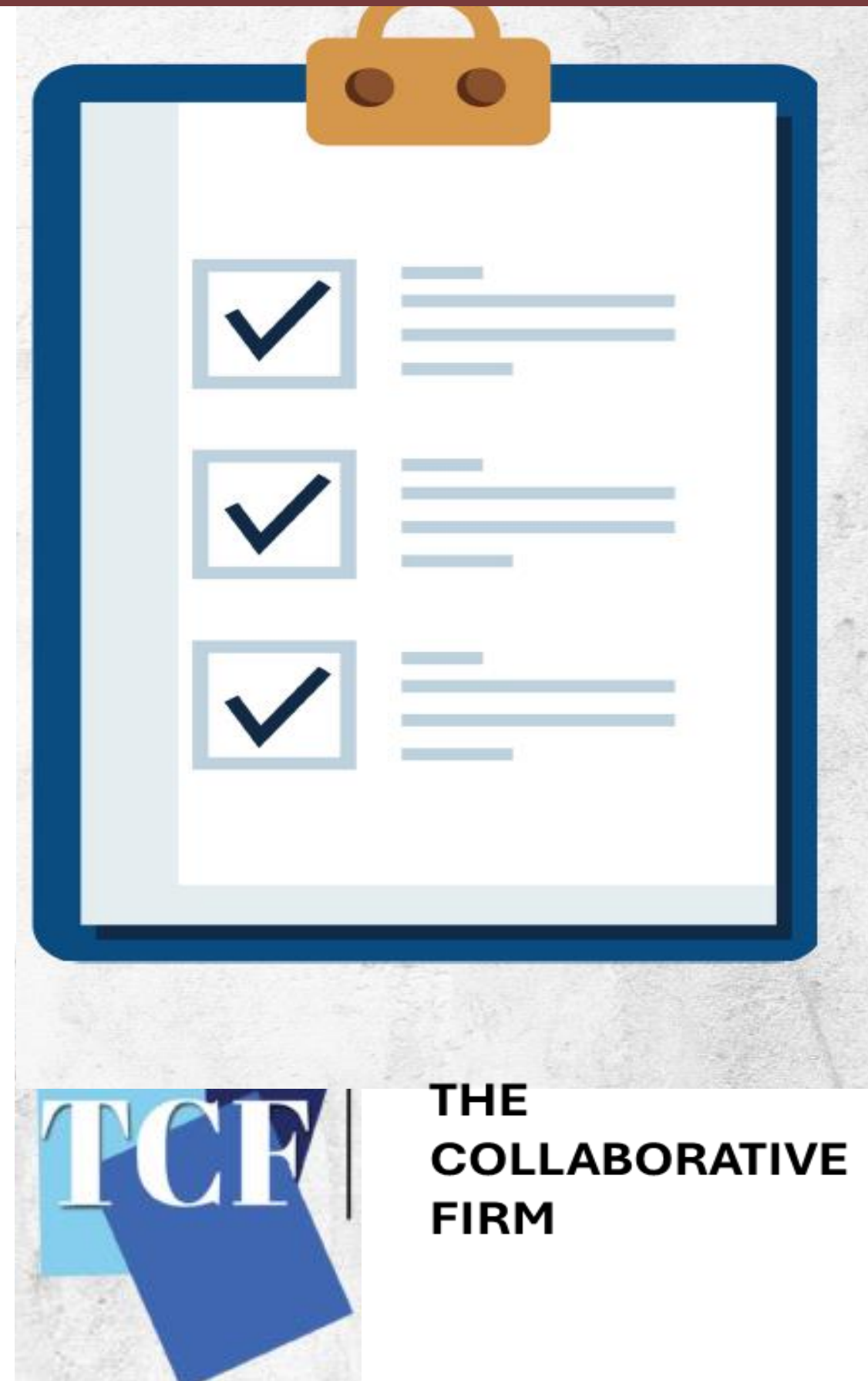


**THE
COLLABORATIVE
FIRM**

DELIVERABLES

We will provide the following deliverables as part of the project:

- ✓ **Project Work Plan and Timetable**
- ✓ **Public Engagement Plan Input Summary and Responses**
- ✓ **Initial Assessment report to identify Gaps and Recommendations**
- ✓ **Revised Conditional Use Section - (Early priority)**
- ✓ **Text amendments relating to Alcohol Package Stores and Automobile Dealerships (used) -Buy Here Pay Here Draft Ordinance (Early priority pending council direction)**
- ✓ **Updates to Official Zoning Map**
- ✓ **Final Ordinance Adoption Package including public hearings**
- ✓ **Implementation Guide for Staff**
- ✓ **Presentation Materials for Meetings and Public Outreach**



**ANY
QUESTIONS?**

