

STONECREST

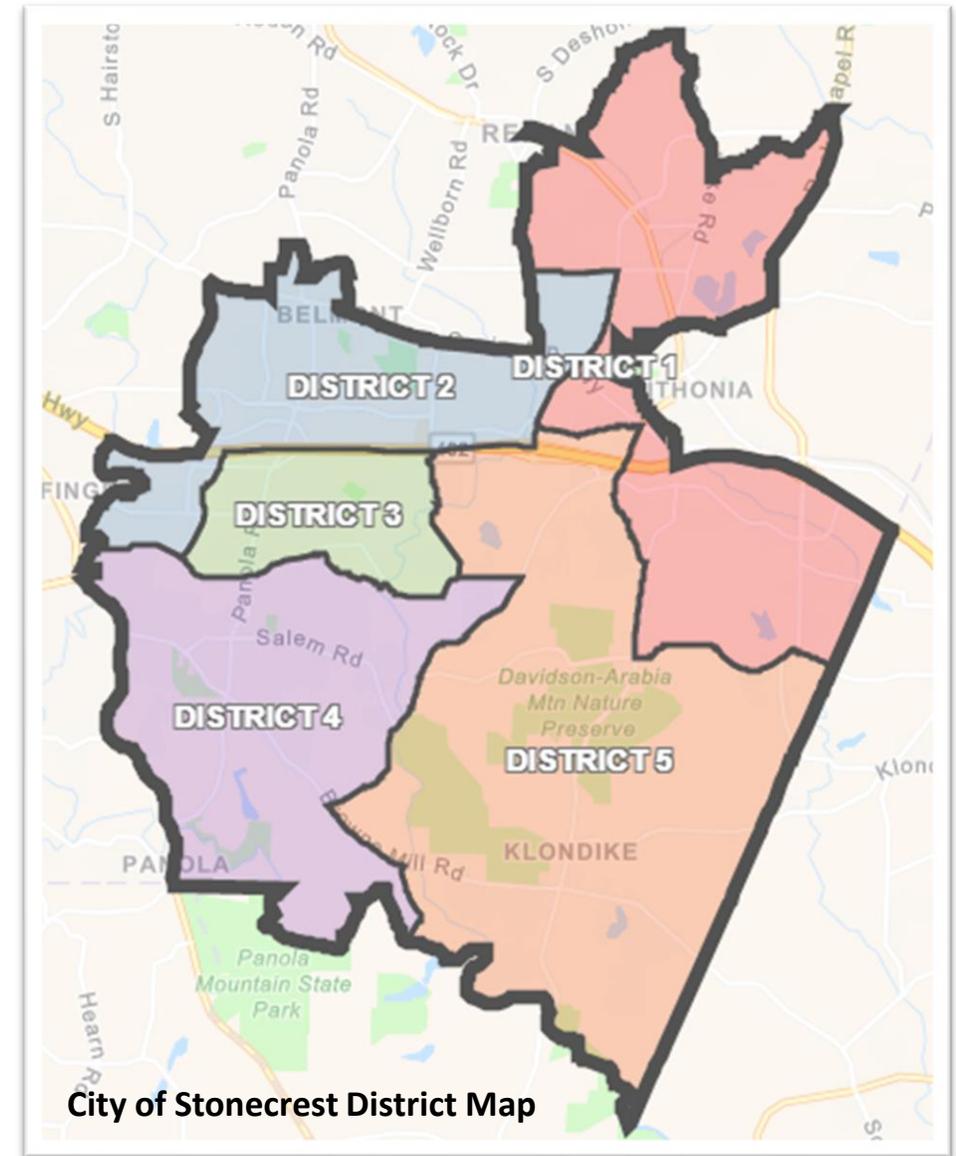


THE  
COLLABORATIVE  
FIRM

City of Stonecrest Zoning  
Code Update: Draft  
Recommendations Report

# Recommendations Report Outline

1. Introduction
2. Zoning Districts Recommendations
3. Overlay Districts Recommendations
4. Uses and Supplement Regulations Recommendations
5. Site Design and Building Form Standards Recommendations
6. Recommendations Takeaways



# Introduction

The City of Stonecrest incorporated in 2017 and adopted a modified version of the DeKalb County Zoning Code in order to aid in the transition. Thereafter the City conducted a planning process to create a Comprehensive Plan, which it adopted in 2019. The plan establishes a long-term vision and action plan for the future development of Stonecrest. To implement the plan, the City commissioned The Collaborative Firm (TCF) to update the current zoning code to reflect the aspirations of the citizens of Stonecrest as expressed in the Comprehensive Plan.

In order to ensure that the zoning code is updated to reflect the overall goals of the City, TCF conducted a series of working meetings with staff and reviewed a range of supporting documents, including the Comprehensive Plan, the DeKalb County Zoning Code, and the MARTA I-20 East Transit Plan. Information gained from these meetings and reviews contributed to a list of overall goals to consider throughout the update process.

An overarching goal that emerged was to ensure the zoning code supports development specific to the City but also protects established neighborhoods and residents. Additionally, Staff expressed a desire to create a more practical and accessible zoning code that outlines clear regulations for staff, applicants, and developers. These goals, in addition to some other more specific considerations, are listed below.

- Maintain the character of the City’s existing neighborhoods especially the large-lot residential and conservation areas in the Arabia Mountain Overlay District
- Enhance the design quality of new development citywide
- Support multi-modal transportation options and inter-parcel connections
- Create a more “user-friendly” zoning code that is accessible to both residents and developers, including an expanded definitions section
- Recognize the potential for MARTA transit stations as an opportunity to focus development
- Encourage higher density and mixed-use development in the City’s centers, particularly around Stonecrest Mall

A Needs and Options Assessment was completed based on the outlined goals. The Needs and Options Assessment presented several choices for revising the code and was reviewed by staff. Staff then provided direction to identify the most viable options and to guide the development of this Recommendations Report. The purpose of this report is to present specific recommendations that provide updates which align with the vision of the City.

Firstly, it is recommended that the entire zoning code is reviewed and updated with a consistent format that will make information easy to access and create a Table of Contents that can be easily updated. While updating the format, the firm will evaluate the arrangement of the articles and overall composition of the code. This revision process will also integrate several amendments that have been passed by the City since the adoption of the DeKalb County code. The firm will also provide administrative and user guides for amendments to ensure consistency in the future.

Another overall recommendation for the update is for the City to begin using Municode, an online database for maintaining City Codes. Many of the smaller Cities around Atlanta use this service and it has proven to help maintain a consistently updated code and provide easy online access to citizens.



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# Zoning Districts Recommendations

After taking into consideration the current zoning map, existing uses on the ground as well as the goals outlined in the Comprehensive Plan, it appears that the City has been maintaining some un-used and undesired zoning districts. This is likely due to the direct adoption of the current code from Dekalb County, which addresses a much larger area and as a result requires more districts to meet land use needs. The City of Stonecrest is a more concentrated area, and therefore has the ability to focus in on more specific needs and manage the permitted uses of their districts more closely. Fewer zoning districts with more specific permitted uses and design requirements will make the code easier to use and more likely to meet City policy goals. As such, it is recommended that the City eliminate the following zoning districts from the code.

## Commercial Districts Recommended to be Removed

- OIT – Office Intuitional Transitional
  - There are only 5 parcels in the City zoned OIT. These parcels can easily fit into other zoning districts that are appropriate for their current uses such as OI or OD, which guarantees that the elimination of this district will not result in new non-conforming uses.
  - The original intent of the District was to provide a commercial use in buildings no longer viable for residential use. The Comprehensive Plan focuses on redevelopment of properties to meet the specific character of the Stonecrest, which indicates that the intent of this district is not desired within the City.

## Residential Districts Recommended to be Removed

- RLG – Residential Large Lot
  - There are no parcels with this zoning in the City.
  - The RNC, RE, and R-100 Districts are already prevalent in the City and more closely provide the Estate and Conservation Residential options that are preferred in the Comprehensive Plan. The City would prefer a rezoning to one of these choices rather than RLG.
- MHP – Mobile Home Park
  - There are no parcels with this zoning in the City.
  - There is one Mobile Home Park that is partially within the City Limits at 7062 Rogers Lake Rd, Lithonia, GA 30058. Current Zoning is M – Light Industrial.
  - Mobile Homes only received 0.2% of votes for preferred housing types according to the comprehensive plan and don't appear to be desired in the City.
- HR-1, HR-2 and HR-3 – High Density Residential
  - There are no parcels with these zonings in the City.
  - These zonings allow densities from 40-120 units/acre. The Comprehensive Plan indicates that this high of density is only desired in a mixed –use development that provides additional amenities **rather than a stand-alone** multi-family development.
  - The Mixed-Use Districts will still allow for the desired higher density development around Stonecrest Mall area.

## Current Zoning Districts

### Residential Single-Family Districts

RE - Residential Estate  
RLG - Residential Large Lot  
R-100 – Residential Large Lot  
R-85 - Residential Medium Lot  
R-75 - Residential Medium Lot  
R-60 - Residential Small Lot  
MHP - Mobile Home Park  
RNC - Neighborhood Conservation

### Medium/High-Density Residential Districts

RSM - Small Lot Residential Mix  
MR-1 - Medium Density Residential  
MR-2 - Medium Density Residential  
HR-1 - High Density Residential  
HR-2 - High Density Residential-2  
HR-3 - High Density Residential-3

### Mixed Use Districts

MU-1 - Mixed-Use Low Density  
MU-2 - Mixed-Use Low-Medium Density  
MU-3 - Mixed-Use Medium Density  
MU-4 - Mixed-Use High Density  
MU-5 - Mixed-Use Very High Density

### Non-Residential Districts

NS - Neighborhood Shopping  
C-1 - Local Commercial  
C-2 - General Commercial  
OD - Office-Distribution  
OI - Office-Institutional  
OIT - Office-Institutional-Transitional  
M - Light Industrial  
M-2 - Heavy Industrial

# Zoning Districts Recommendations

## Mixed-Use Districts

In addition to the Commercial and Residential Zoning Districts, the Mixed-Use Districts were also assessed. The Comprehensive Plan indicates that Stonecrest has a strong desire to cultivate more mixed-use development in the future. Currently, there are 5 mixed-use districts in the zoning code, but only one is represented in the City (MU-4). The current districts provide relatively small ranges of densities and little incentives to make them more attractive than the stand-alone multi-family options. It is recommended that the City condense these districts from 5 to 3. This simplification would give developers more flexibility when choosing to rezone to a mixed-use district. In addition, the new 3 mixed use districts would match up with the scales indicated by The Comprehensive Plan and shown on the Future Land Use Map. Creating consistency between the zoning code and future policy will provide clarity to staff and developers on the City’s goals for where these developments should be located.

### Comprehensive Plan on Mixed-Use Density

- **Neighborhood Scale** – up to 24 units per an acre (pg. 149)
- **City Scale** – up to 60 units per an acre
- **Regional Scale** – up to 120 units per an acre (pg. 161)

In order to ensure high quality development, the code should be altered to ensure developers would be required to provide additional amenities to reach these maximum allowed densities. These amenities include enhanced open spaces, community gathering spaces, work-out facilities, and other attractive features.

Current Mixed-Use Districts	Density (units/acre)	Recommended Mixed-Use Districts	Proposed Density (units/acre)
MU-1	4-8	MU-1	4-12 (up to 24 units with bonus)
MU-2	8-12		
MU-3	12-24	MU-2	12-40 (up to 60 with bonus)
MU-4	24-40		
MU-5	40-60 (up to 120 with bonus)	MU-3	40-60 (up to 120 with bonus)

## Remaining Zoning Districts

The remaining zoning districts were determined to be essential to the Stonecrest’s overall vision should be maintained in the code with minor adjustments. For example, references to other relevant sections of the code will be added in where applicable so that the user can easily maneuver through the different articles.

Further evaluation of the remaining zoning districts revealed that some of these categories are under utilized within the City. First, there are no parcels within the City zoned RNC – Neighborhood Conservation District, but this district closely aligns with the Comprehensive Plan’s emphasis on conservation and single family residential in the rural parts of the City, especially in the Arabia Mountain Overlay District. Staff noted that there was a recent rezoning to the RNC District that was approved by Council, which further highlights the desire for this type of use. As a result, it is recommended that the City allow this zoning district in additional Land Use Categories. See recommended revised matrix on page 6.

Another district that is under utilized is the NS – Neighborhood Shopping District. This district provides for low intensity commercial uses that are more compatible with a neighborhood setting, including grocery stores, dry cleaners, or other personal services. This zoning is designed to provide citizens with the services they most frequently use without changing the character of the neighborhood they reside in. There are several areas in the City that are designated on the Future Land Use Map as Neighborhood Centers that would be perfect candidates for this zoning district. One option to increase the prevalence of this districts is to consider some government-initiated rezoning. There are a few areas within the City that could benefit from this type of action, but it is important to consider the parcels current zoning and work closely with property owners to ensure support. This report provides an example of a potential area to be rezoned on the next page, however, it is recommended that this proposal be further evaluated and reviewed with property owners before any action takes place.

# Zoning Districts Recommendations

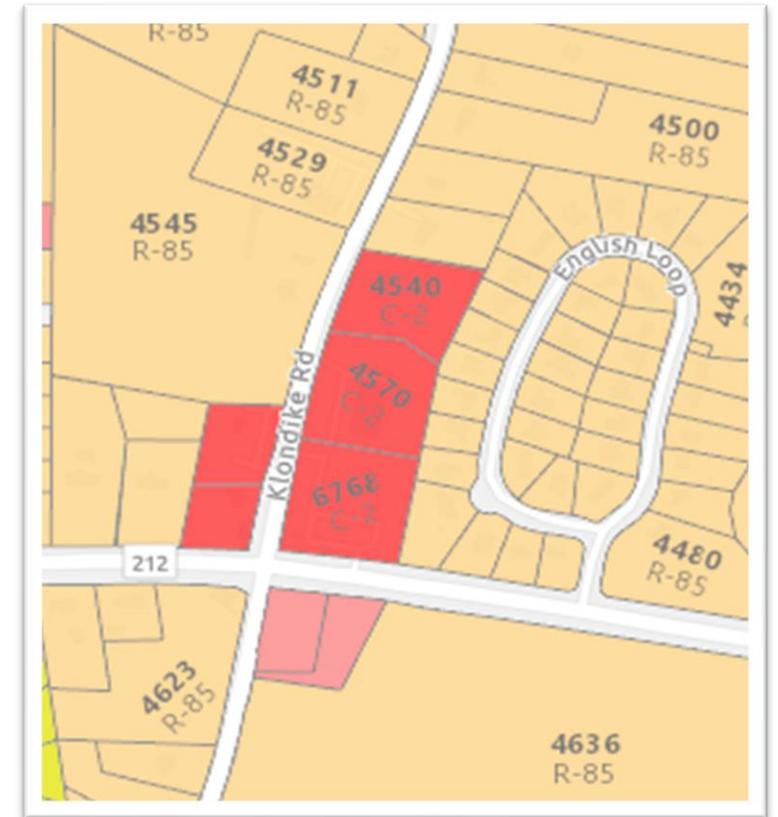
## Recommended Government-Initiated Rezoning Example

The assessment identified several “mis-matches” between what the recently adopted Future Land Map shows for a parcel compared to what existing zoning allows. This is likely due to the recent adoption of the updated Comprehensive Plan, which evaluated the best and highest uses for the City moving forward. Governments may enable a property to be developed in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan by entitling it for the desired use via a “government-initiated rezoning”. For example, the intersection of Browns Mill Road and Klondike Road is designated as a Neighborhood Center (dark red) on the Future Land Use Map because it is located at a major intersection in a dominantly residential area. However, these parcels currently have the zonings of C-1 (light red), C-2 (bright red), and R-85 (light orange). According to the Neighborhood Center designation in the Comprehensive Plan, these parcels should be developed with personal services and small-scale retail needed by the community.

This would include businesses such as hairdressers, small groceries, markets, locally owned restaurants, and other low impact commercial uses. These uses more appropriately align with the NS – Neighborhood Shopping Zoning District. Additionally, this government-initiated rezoning would not likely negatively impact property owners. The uses allowed in NS are very similar to those in C-1 and C-2 just at a smaller scale and most these parcels are vacant or undeveloped. The developed parcels are a small box discount store and a gas station with a convenience store. Both uses are already currently legal non-conforming due to prior updates and text amendments passed by the City. First, a gas station at this location would now be required to obtain a Special Land Use Permit. Next, a new small box discount stores would be prohibited at this location because it is in the Arabia Mountain Overlay District. As a result, a government-initiated rezone of the parcels designated as a Neighborhood Center to the NS – Neighborhood Shopping District would not cause any new legally non-conforming uses and has the potential to revitalize the intersection by bringing attention to the needs of the area. It is recommended that the City further pursue this rezoning by speaking with property owners and other stakeholders in this area.



Future Land Use Map



Current Zoning Map

# Zoning Districts Recommendations

## Zoning Districts Relationship to the Comprehensive Plan

The Stonecrest Comprehensive Plan updated the Future Land Use categories within the City to more closely align with the Council’s long-term vision for the community. As a result, the zoning code needs to be updated to reflect these changes. The recommended land use categories are based on the recently adopted Comprehensive Plan and the Future Land Use Map. In addition, the current code contains a matrix (see below) that indicates which zoning districts are appropriate in each of the land use categories. This matrix assists staff and applicants in viewing intended zoning districts and uses for properties throughout the City. This tool can help to explain support or opposition for a rezoning or special land use permit application. It is recommended that the City adopt an updated matrix comparing the recommended zoning districts with the recommended future land use categories similar to the one on the next page. This recommended matrix was developed using information from the Comprehensive plan and the Future Land Use Map.

Land Use Category Currently Listed in Zoning Code	Recommended Land Use Categories Based on Comprehensive Plan
A. Rural Residential.	A. Conservation/Open Space
B. Suburban.	B. Institutional
C. Traditional Neighborhood.	C. Rural Residential
D. Neighborhood Center.	D. Suburban Neighborhood
E. Town Center.	E. Urban Neighborhood
F. Regional Center.	F. Neighborhood Center
G. Industrial.	G. City Center
H. Light Industrial.	H. Regional Center
I. Institutional.	I. Office Professional
J. Office Park.	J. Light Industrial
K. Commercial Redevelopment Corridor.	K. Heavy Industrial
L. Scenic Corridor.	
M. Highway Corridor.	

Current Matrix Comparing Future Land Use Categories and Zoning Districts

	Rural Residential (max 4 du/a)	Suburban (max 8 du/a)	Traditional Neighborhood (max 12 du/a)	Neighborhood Center (max 24 du/a)	Town Center (max 60 du/a)	Regional Center (max 120 du/a)	Office Park (max 30 du/a)	Institutional	Industrial	Light Industrial	Commercial Redevelopment Corridor (max 18 du/a)	Highway Corridor (max 30 du/a)
RE	RE	RE	R-60	RSM	MR-1	HR-1	R-100	M	C-2	RSM	HR-1	
RLG	RLG	RLG	RSM	MR-1	MR-2	MU-1	R-85	M-2	OD	MR-1	MU-1	
R-100	R-100	R-100	MR-1	MR-2	HR-1	MU-2	R-75	OD	OI	MR-2	MU-2	
R-85	R-85	R-85	MR-2	HR-1	HR-2	MU-3	R-60	C-2	M	MU-1	MU-3	
R-75	R-75	R-75	MU-1	HR-2	HR-3	MU-4	RSM		M-2	MU-2	MU-4	
RNC	R-60	R-60	MU-2	MU-1	MU-1	NS	MR-1			MU-3	C-1	
MHP	RNC	RNC	MU-3	MU-2	MU-2	C-1	MR-2			NS	C-2	
NS	MHP	RSM	NS	MU-3	MU-3	C-2	MU-1			C-1	OD	
	RSM	MR-1	C-1	MU-4	MU-4	OIT	MU-2			C-2	OI	
	MU-1	MU-1	OI	MU-5	MU-5	OI	MU-3			OI	OIT	
	NS	MU-2	OIT	OI	OI	OD	OI			OD	M	
	C1	NS		OIT	OIT		OIT			OIT	M-2	
	OIT	C-1		C-1	C-1							
	OI	OIT		C-2	C-2							

\*du/a = dwelling units per acre

# Zoning Districts Recommendations

Recommended Matrix Comparing FLU Categories and Zoning Districts Based on Comprehensive Plan.



Zoning District

ALL	ALL	RNC	RNC	RNC	RSM	RSM	MU-1	MU-1	MU-3	C-2
		RE	R-100	R-100	MR-1	MR-1	MU-2	MU-2	C-2	M
		R-100	R-85	R-85	MR-2	MR-2	MU-3	OI	M	M-2
			R-75	R-75	MU-1	MU-1	OI	NS	OD	OD
			R-60	R-60	OI	MU-2	C-1	C-1		
			RSM	RSM	NS	OI	C-2			
			OI	MR-1	C-1	C-1				
			NS	MR-2		C-2				
				MU-1						
				NS						
				C-1						

Note: Zoning districts that are recommended to be eliminated are not included in the matrix.

# Overlay Districts Recommendations

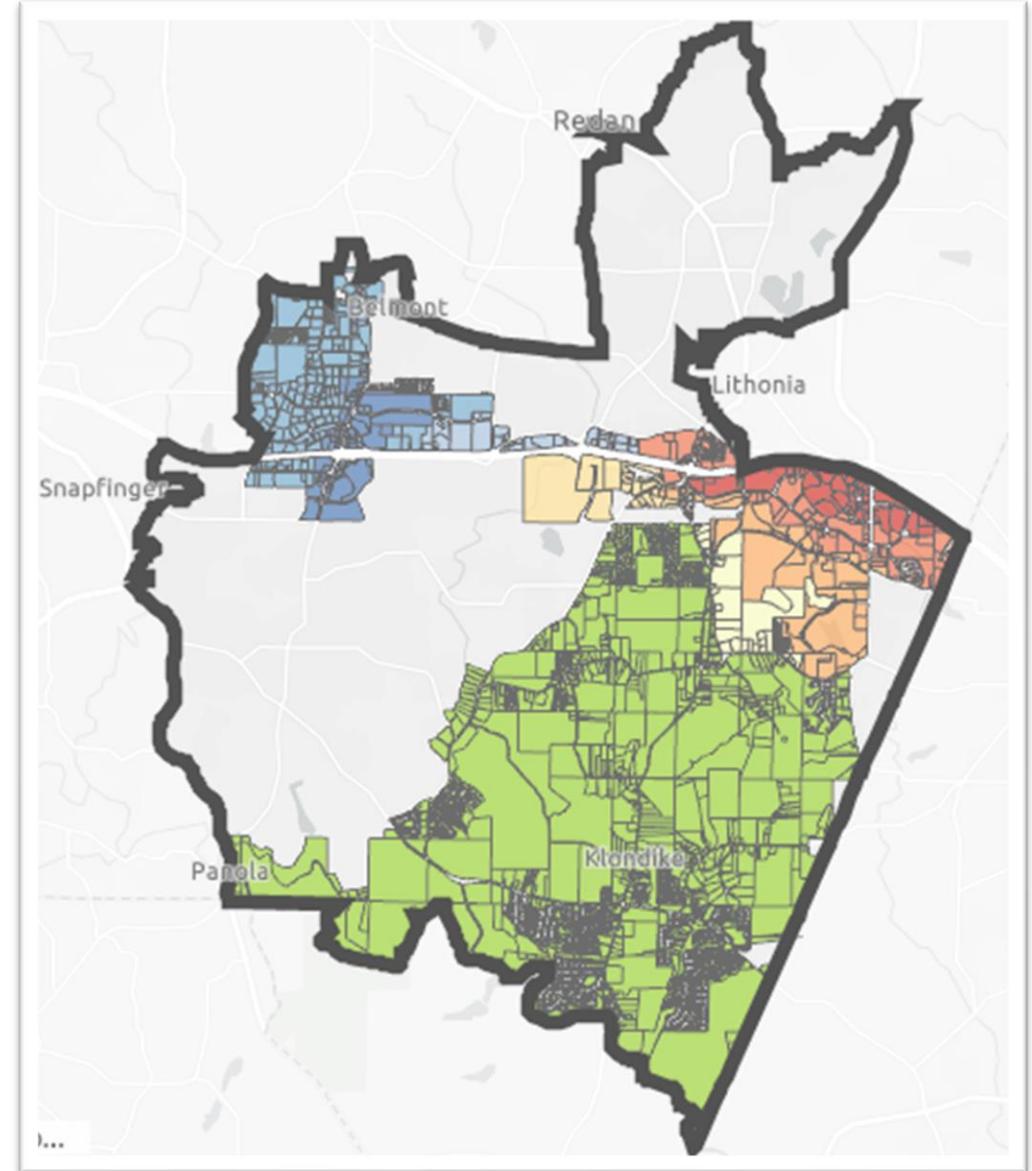
A review of the current overlay districts showed a desire to control permitted land uses as well as the design in specific areas of the City. This appears to be working in the Arabia Mountain Conservation Overlay District. However, the extensive tiers and separate design guidelines involved in the current overlay regulations of the Stonecrest Area Overlay and Interstate 20 Corridor Compatible Use Overlay are much more difficult for staff to enforce and for developers to understand. Furthermore, Article 5 - Site Design and Building Form already requires most of the design standards indicated by the overlays for the entire City. Considering the small size of Stonecrest and strong desire to increase the quality of development in the City, it is recommended that all overlay design standards are compared with Article 5 and additional standards for each overlay are added directly into the code. This recommendation is further discussed later in the report for each specific overlay district.

In addition to design, an analysis of existing uses and future vision for each overlay was conducted. This helped to highlight what the code should strive to emphasize and what redundancies can be removed to avoid confusion. Recommended updates for each overlay are included in the following section. These updates will provide a more functional code that will assist in achieving the City's long-term objectives.

The table and map to the right show the overlay districts and tiers that are currently in the City.

Current Overlay Districts	
<b>Arabia Mountain Conservation Overlay District (AMCOD) - Green</b>	
<b>Stonecrest Area Overlay District</b>	Tier I: High-Rise Mixed-Use Zone – Dark Red Tier II: Mid-Rise Mixed-Use Zone – Light Red Tier III: Low-Rise Mixed-Use Zone - Orange Tier IV: Transitional Mixed-Use Zone – Light Orange Tier V: Cluster/Village Mixed-Use Zone - Yellow Tier VI : Viewshed Zone – Lightest Blue
<b>Interstate 20 Corridor Compatible Use Overlay District</b>	Tier 1: High Intensity – Dark Blue Tier 2: Medium Intensity – Light, Bright Blue Tier 3: Low Intensity – Not Shown

Stonecrest Overlay Map

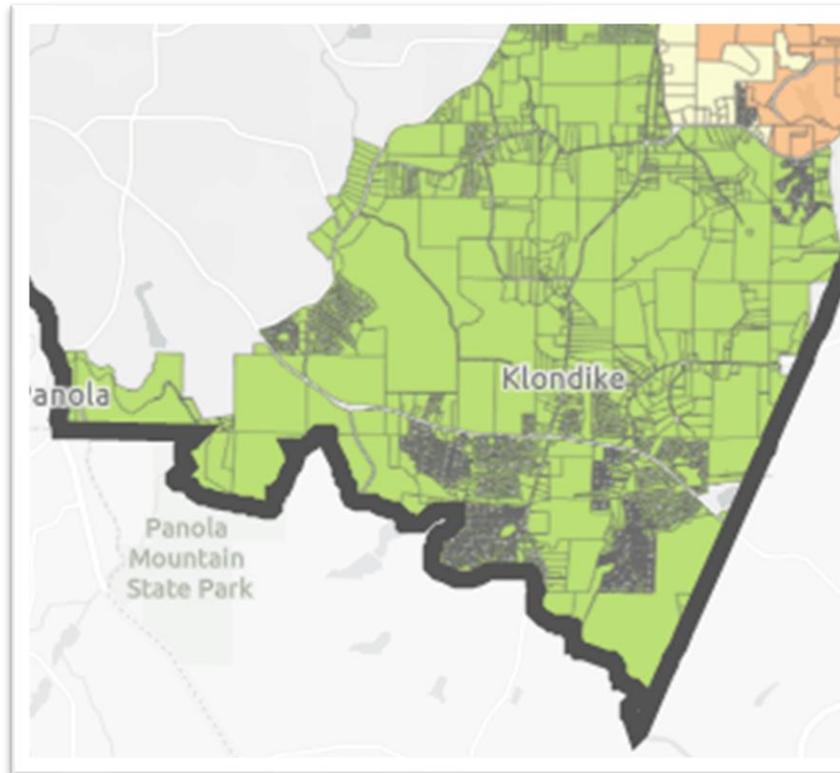


# Overlay Districts Recommendations

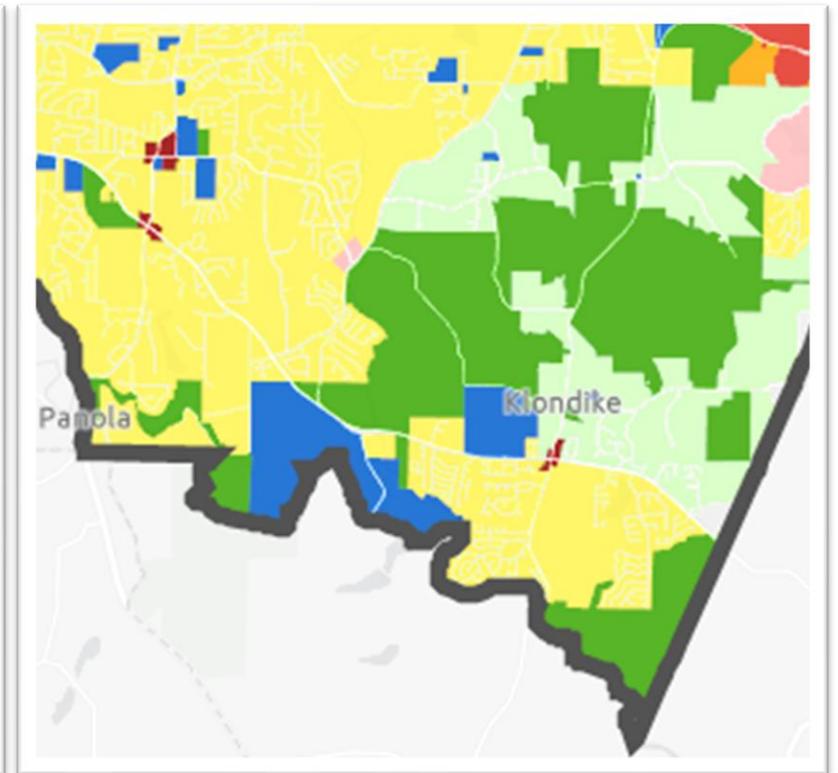
## Arabia Mountain Conservation Overlay District

Evaluation of the AMCOD indicated that the current overlay regulations have been preserving the intended residential usage and conservation for the area. The permitted uses in this overlay are based on the allowable uses of the underlying zoning district except for a list of prohibited uses. The overlay consists of mostly RE- Residential Estate and R-85 – Residential Medium Lot zoning districts, which are compatible with the desired large lot residential uses for this area. Most of the existing uses in the overlay include single-family homes on large lots and conservation green space associated with parks and other recreational activities, which also match the future land use intent for this area. Although the AMCOD has continued to be developed in accordance with City’s intent, this area is lacking basic commercial amenities such as grocery stores and personal service options.

Arabia Mountain Overlay Map



Arabia Mountain Overlay Future Land Use Map



Considering the vast amount of citizens who reside in this section of Stonecrest, additional amenities are clearly needed. Earlier in the report an example of government-initiated rezoning was mentioned for several parcels at the intersection of Browns Mill Road and Klondike Road, which is within the AMCOD and a major intersection in the area. This rezoning example presents one option to help combat the lack of commercial resources in this part of the City. Small scale retail and commercial services that are allowed by the NS – Neighborhood Shopping district would be appropriate to allow and encourage in this overlay. This district has the potential to allow some of the desired amenities for citizens while not threatening the low-density environment and conservation goals of this overlay. Therefore, it is recommended that small scale retail and personal services are added to Sec. 3.4.5. - Principal uses and principal structures of the AMCOD. Adding these uses to this section will ensure a smooth process if a government-initiated rezoning is pursued or if other development aligned with the above goals is proposed.

### Stonecrest Overlay FLU Map

- Regional Center - Red
- Conservation – Green
- City Center - Purple
- Urban Residential – Gold
- Suburban Residential – Light Yellow
- Office Professional – Pink
- Institutional – Blue
- Rural Residential – Light Grey

# Overlay Districts Recommendations

## Stonecrest Area Overlay District

The Stonecrest Overlay covers the Stonecrest Mall and surrounding area, which is a major regional shopping district in Metro Atlanta. Considering the location of Interstate 20 as well as the Stonecrest Mall, maintaining an overlay in this part of the City is vital to appropriate development and high-quality design. Maps showing the parts of the City under the overlay and comparing the future land use map are available on the next page. The Stonecrest Overlay has helped to guide development along the I20 corridor leading to the Mall and provide design guidelines that contribute to a unified look and feel in the City. However, the current guidelines have been difficult to enforce due some outdated details, redundancies and excessive administrative provisions. These obstacles can be combated with a few recommended changes.

First, it is recommended that the design guidelines be incorporated into the code as overlay standards rather than maintained as a separate document. This will help both maintain the standards and institutionalize their use by both staff and applicants, rather than having to track and update a separate document independent from the Zoning Code. Originally, the design guidelines were housed in a different document to keep the code from becoming cumbersome. However, most of the extra design standards required by the overlay will now be included in Article 5 – Building Form and Standards and be enforced for the entire City. Due to the City’s incorporation from DeKalb County, the staff can require a higher quality of design for every development, not just ones in the overlays. Any additional requirements for the overlays not included in Article 5 can now easily be added directly into Article 3 – Overlay Districts without being overwhelming to the user. It is also recommended that the design guidelines specific to overlay be updated to match the City’s current vision for this area. This will include updated lighting and pedestrian amenity requirements.

In addition to design updates, it is recommended that the City **reduce the number of Tiers within the Stonecrest Overlay from 6 to 3.** Reducing the amount tiers within the overlay will help to make the code more manageable and contribute to an even more unified feel for this area. For example, Tier I and Tier II are focused around the mall and should allow similar uses and densities to encourage similar development of this area. Combining these two tiers into one would allow these parcels to become more clearly related and developed in a more unified way. The same concept is true for Tier III and Tier IV. These tiers are the parcels that separate the high-density areas around the mall from single-family homes and other low density residential. These two tiers could be combined into the same tier, which would allow for medium density development, proper transitions and less intense uses with more distance from the mall. The chart below shows how the current tiers fit into the recommended tiers.

Current Overlay Tiers	Recommended Overlay Tiers
Tier I	Tier 1
Tier II	
Tier III	Tier 2
Tier IV	
Tier V	Remove (So Underlying Zoning Regulates)
Tier VI	Tier 3

# Overlay Districts Recommendations

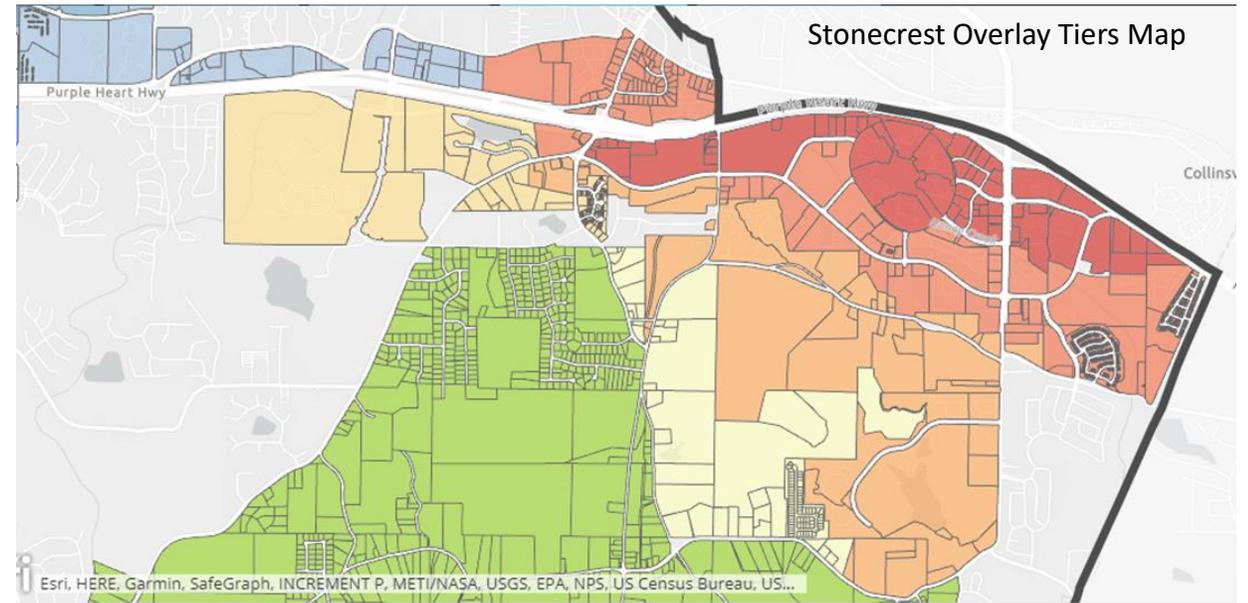
## Stonecrest Area Overlay District Continued

Tier V consists of primarily large lot single family homes that are appropriate for the area according to the future land use map. As a result, enforcing overlay regulations that desired primarily for commercial and mixed-use development are difficult to adapt and enforce in this Tier. Removing Tier V from the overlay and allowing the underlying zoning districts to govern these parcels is recommended. Considering the parcels in Tier V are all zoned residential and an overwhelming amount of them are zoned R-100, the area will continue to develop in line with the future land use map and provide the large lot residential desired for the area.

Finally, Tier VI should be maintained as a Viewshed Overlay that allows for the underlying zoning district to determine the land use. This tier is important to maintain in order to require these parcels to meet the design standards which contribute to the unified design of the City.

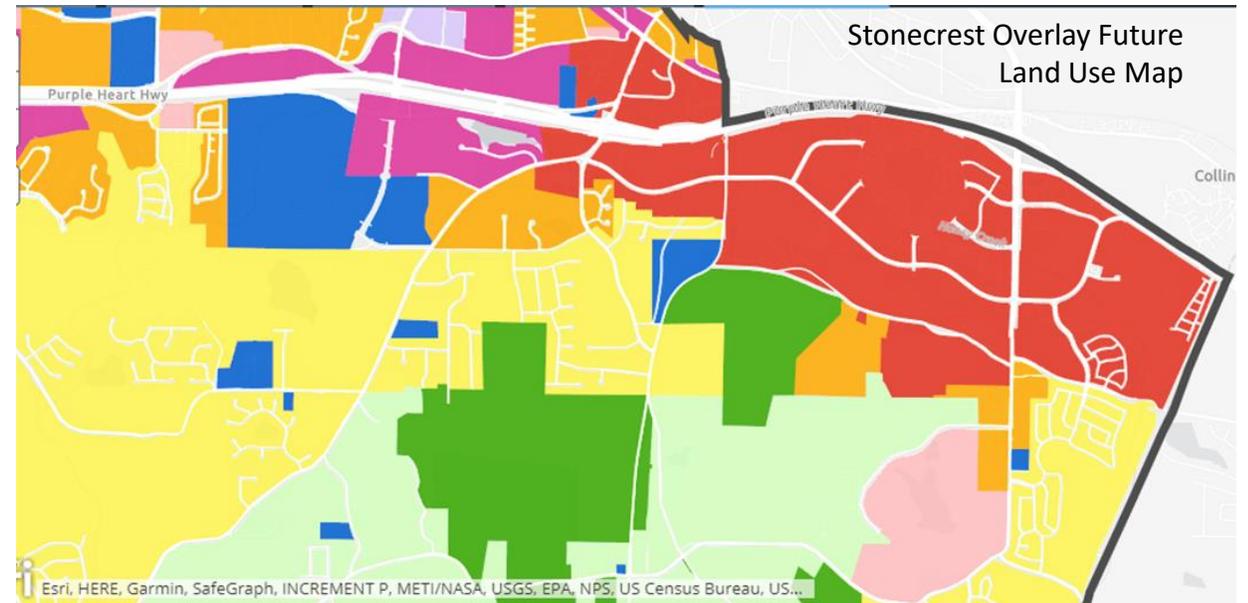
### Stonecrest Overlay Tiers Map

- Tier I - Dark Red
- Tier II - Light Red
- Tier III - Orange
- Tier IV - Light Orange
- Tier V - Yellow
- Tier VI - Light Blue



### Stonecrest Overlay FLU Map

- Regional Center - Red
- Conservation – Green
- City Center - Purple
- Urban Residential – Gold
- Suburban Residential – Light Yellow
- Office Professional – Pink
- Institutional – Blue
- Rural Residential – Light Grey



# Overlay Districts Recommendations

## Interstate 20 Overlay District

The I-20 Overlay District consists of three tiers, however, there are only two tiers represented on the official zoning map. This is likely due to the adoption of the original code of DeKalb County. A simple remedy to avoid confusion is to remove all reference to “Tier 3” in the code. Tiers 1 and 2 are appropriate to keep in this overlay as they identify high density around the City Center and medium density in the surrounding area. The intention of these tiers is indicated to be to promote more mixed-use and walkable commercial development, however the mixed zoning districts are not included in the principal uses and structures. The City should add clearer language to permit and promote mixed-use development. This recommendation includes outlining specific standards for density and height that would be permitted in each tier.

The evaluation of the I-20 Overlay District also explored how to strategically situate the City as a targeted location desired by the Film Industry; this area has attracted interest for these specific uses. As a result, it would be in the City’s best interest to expand some of the allowed uses in this overlay to incentivize these types of businesses to come to Stonecrest.

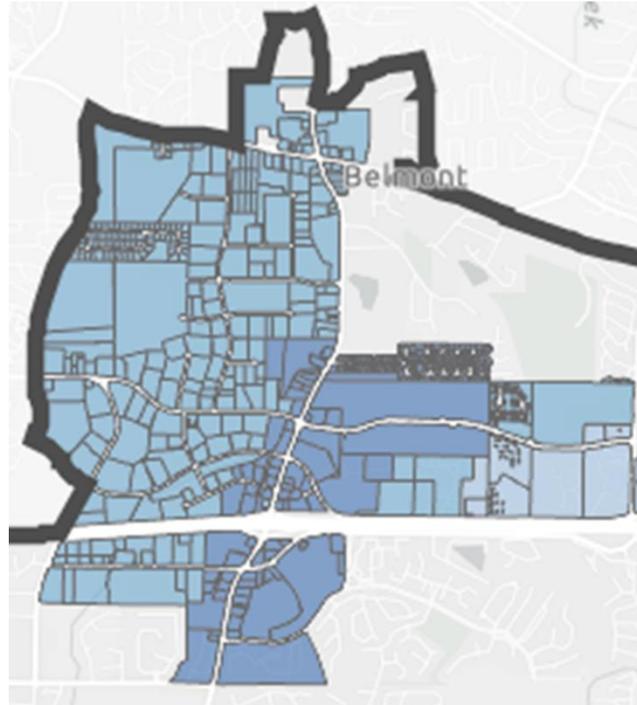
Current Overlay Tiers	Recommended Overlay Tiers
Tier 1	Tier 1
Tier 2	Tier 2
Tier 3	Remove

For example, it is recommended that language is added to allow uses specific to the Film Industry, such as short-term production housing and temporary and mobile housing . Explicitly permitting specific film uses in this overlay may attract more of these businesses to the City, which could stimulate additional investment in commercial and service amenities

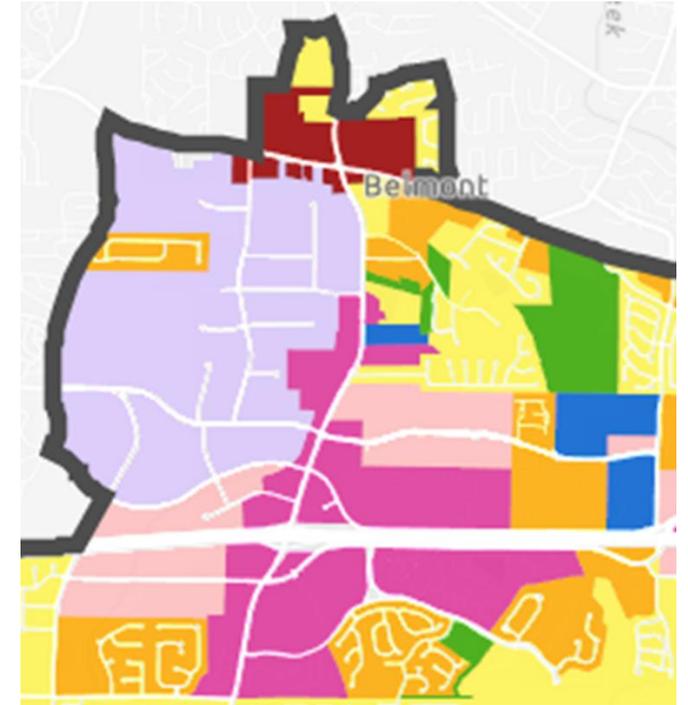
### Interstate 20 Corridor Compatible Use Overlay District

- Tier 1 – Dark Blue
- Tier 2 – Light, Bright Blue
- Tier 3 – Not Shown

Similarly to the Stonecrest Overlay, this overlay also references separate design guidelines, which are historically difficult to maintain. Adding these design guidelines directly into the code eliminates the need to adopt and maintain a separate document. This would help to prevent the design from becoming outdated and help to establish continuity between this area and the Stonecrest Overlay. Creating similar design guidelines for these overlays or integrating into a dedicated section in Article 5 can contribute to an overall unified feel and promote a sense of place within Stonecrest.



Stonecrest Overlay Tiers Map



Stonecrest Overlay Future Land Use Map

# Uses and Supplemental Regulations Recommendations

An evaluation of the Use Table and the Supplemental Regulations provided in Article 4 of the Zoning Code revealed some mismatched wording which lead to difficulty in locating the correct regulations for each use. As a result, it is recommended that the wording for each use be altered to match the wording in the supplemental regulations as well as the definitions listed in Article 9. Some examples of these are shown in the table to the right. The matching of the Use Table and supplemental regulations will ensure that it is clear to Staff and citizens which regulations apply to each specific use, and the matching to the definitions will guarantee a clear meaning for each use.

Moreover, as seen in the alcohol outlet example, it is recommended to condense the uses in the table to minimize confusion. Alcohol outlets, package stores, and liquor stores each have a slightly different definition but are all prohibited and permitted in the same districts and can therefore be considered one use in the table.

In addition, it is also recommended that the supplemental regulations section number for each use is added to the last column of the table in replacement of the current checkmark. For example, the supplemental regulations for “keeping of livestock” are in Section 4.2.7, so that section number will appear in the last box of the use table as shown in the provided excerpt. This will make the additional regulations for each use easy to find and provide clarity on which section will apply.

Use Table Language	Supplemental Regs Language	Definitions Language	Recommended Matching Update
Dog grooming or dog day care	Pet grooming or pet day care	Dog grooming or Dog day care	Pet grooming or Pet day care
Home occupation, no customer contact	Home occupation type 1	Home occupation	Home occupation type 1, no customer contact
Alcohol outlet – package store	Alcohol outlets, retail, package liquor store	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alcohol outlet</li> <li>Package store</li> <li>Liquor store</li> </ul>	Alcohol outlet including package store or liquor store

Use	RE	R-100	R-85	R-75	R-60	RSM	MR-1	MR-2	RNC	OI	NS	C-1	C-2	OD	M	M-2	MU-1	MU-2	MU-3	See Section	
<b>AGRICULTURAL</b>																					
<b>Agriculture, Forestry and Animal Related Uses</b>																					
Keeping of livestock	P	P	P	P					P						P					4.2.7	
<b>RESIDENTIAL</b>																					
<b>Dwellings</b>																					
Dwelling, single-family accessory (guesthouse, in-law suite, apartment over garage)	Pa	Pa	Pa	Pa	Pa	Pa	Pa	Pa										Pa	Pa	Pa	4.2.3
Home occupation, Type 1, no customer contact	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA	SA									SA	SA	SA	4.2.31
<b>INSTITUTIONAL/PUBLIC</b>																					
<b>Community Facilities</b>																					
Places of worship	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	4.2.42

# Uses and Supplemental Regulations Recommendations

The Use Table and Supplemental Regulations in Article 4 were also reviewed extensively with the Planning Staff. Throughout this review process several uses were flagged by the staff as ambiguous or difficult to enforce. These uses are provided in the in chart below with viable recommendations to mitigate confusion and ease future implementation. In addition, it is also recommended that the City develop guides to identify different intersecting sections of the codes for particular uses.

Flagged Use and Current Challenge	Recommendations
Bed and Breakfast versus Short Term Vacation Rental (STVR) Regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Add clear definitions that designate that Bed and Breakfast establishments are <b>“owner occupied”</b> and the owner is present during any guest visits</li> <li>• STVR are defined as all other short-term rentals that are not owner occupied and require SLUP in any district they are permitted.</li> <li>• “Short term” - rentals less than 30 consecutive days more than 3 times a year.</li> </ul>
Fuel Pumps or Gas Station	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide clear definitions for fuel pumps and/or gas station and require a SLUP in all districts regardless of location.</li> <li>• This recommendation will provide clear and concise guidelines and will only allow future fuel pumps were the Council deems appropriate.</li> </ul>
Mini-warehouses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create new definitions that have specifics for small scale storage that is allowed in residential districts as a temporary accessory use (portable storage pods, moving pods, etc.) and large-scale self storage facilities that are allowed in commercial and industrial districts.</li> <li>• Add small scale storage as an accessory use for residential in the supplemental regulations.</li> <li>• Add large-scale self storage to the use table and allow in commercial and industrial districts.</li> </ul>
Wireless Communications (Cell Tower)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Move these regulations out of the zoning code.</li> <li>• Due to the State of Georgia’s new regulations, this is less of a zoning issue and would be more appropriating housed with building and construction regulations. Additionally, this section will continue to have edits in the future as this is an evolving market.</li> </ul>

# Uses and Supplemental Regulations Recommendations

Flagged Use and Current Challenge	Recommendations
Solid Waste and Recycling Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Add specific definitions for commercial recycling, city or county recycling, and industrial recycling</li> <li>• Only permit these uses in the most intense district: M2 – Heavy Industrial</li> </ul>
Drive Through Facilities (Restaurants, Dry Cleaner, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limit drive through establishments by requiring a SLUP for all restaurant drive through</li> <li>• Remove criteria in supplemental regulations for different character areas</li> <li>• Prohibit drive through facilities in the Stonecrest Overlay District in order to promote walkability and pedestrian friendly environment near the Stonecrest Mall</li> </ul>
Child/Day Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorporate the State of Georgia recently made changes to create consistency for both Staff and applicants</li> <li>• Currently the code defines: Childcare home (up to 5 children), Childcare facility (6 or more children for 24 hours a day) and Child day care center (more than 6 children, less than 24 hours a day).</li> <li>• The State only approves two types of childcare programs: Family Child Care Learning Home (can be in a private residence, up to 6 children) and Child Care Learning Centers (more than 7 children, commercial only).</li> <li>• Modify the supplemental regulations to clearly outline the requirements for a childcare in a private residence.</li> </ul>
Personal Care Homes/Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorporate the State of Georgia definitions to clearly define the difference between a Personal Care Home, a Community Living Arrangement, and a Personal Care Facility.</li> <li>• Modify the supplemental regulations to require owner-occupied homes for a Personal Care Home in a private residence.</li> <li>• Increase the distance requirement from other personal care or childcare homes.</li> <li>• Create a flow chart guide to assist staff and applicants in determining which category best matches their proposed use</li> </ul>

# Uses and Supplement Regulations Recommendations

Below is a list of uses that are not addressed in the code but have been requested by business license applicants. In order to properly manage these operations, it is necessary to consider future challenges and construct the appropriate guidelines.

Uses to Include in Updated Table	Background Information and Recommendations for Supplemental Regulations
Towing Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff indicated that this particular use has been popular within the City and requires some additional regulations due to the intensity associated with the operations. It is currently allowed in the M and M-2 Districts. One of the main goals of supplemental regulations for this use is to distinguish between a salvage yard and a tow yard.</li> <li>• Requiring a landscape buffers to screen car storage from the right-of-way would help to reduce the intensity of this use as well as a distinction indicating that cars associated with a towing service may only be stored on-site for up to 14 days.</li> </ul>
Non-Emergency Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff has received multiple requests for businesses licenses to operate non-emergency transportation services as a home-based business. There are concerns about these activities taking place in residential areas due to the possibility of utilizing commercial vehicles and hours of operation.</li> <li>• The current code states that “Occupations that are mobile or dispatch-only may be allowed, provided that any business vehicle used for the home occupation complies with section 6.1.3 and is limited to one (1) business vehicle per occupation”.</li> </ul>
Brewery/Winery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Because these types of businesses are continuing to grow and expand, it is in the best interest of the City to clearly define them and permit for them in the appropriate districts, distinguishing between micro-breweries/wineries and light industrial scale breweries.</li> <li>• Micro-producers should be regulated similarly to other alcohol sales facilities but be allowed in more districts due to their low intensity. Unless the establishment is proposing to operate as a late-night establishment, in which case those regulations should apply.</li> </ul>
Hookah/Cigar Lounge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This use has been trending across the country and will undoubtedly present future challenges for the City. Definitions will be added for clarity.</li> <li>• Georgia prohibits indoor smoking except for bars and restaurants that deny access to any person under the age of 18 and that do not employ individuals under the age of 18. In addition, DeKalb County County’s Clean Indoor Air ordinance prohibits the smoking of tobacco in all enclosed places that are open to the public with a few exceptions including “freestanding bars” and “retail tobacco stores”.</li> <li>• A “cheat sheet” on Hookah and Tobacco Stores is attached for reference.</li> </ul>
Solar Energy Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Considering Stonecrest’s commitment to conservation, it is appropriate to adopt specific regulations regarding the management of solar energy.</li> <li>• The Georgia Institute of Technology, Emory University, and the University of Georgia have developed a model solar zoning ordinance to provide county and city officials and other decision-makers in Georgia access to best practices and a common baseline.</li> <li>• Using the model zoning ordinance, TCF constructed a specific sample ordinance for Stonecrest. It is attached for reference.</li> </ul>

# Uses and Supplement Regulations Recommendations

## Light Industrial Permitted Uses Evaluation

The Planning Staff requested that the M1 – Light Industrial and M2 – Heavy Industrial Districts permitted uses be evaluated based on their intensity. Due to the highly industrial nature of the City, there are several areas in which incompatible zonings are located adjacent to one another. For example, there are a few places in the City that have R-100 – Residential Zoning adjacent to M1 – Light Industrial Zoning. As a result, it is recommended that a community meeting is conducted to walk through the existing maps and highlight where there are undeveloped industrial zoned parcels adjacent to residential property. Then, it is recommended that increased buffers are enforced in these areas. It is also recommended that several of the uses currently permitted in both M1 – Light Industrial and M2 – Heavy Industrial are only allowed in M2 in the future. This will limit the highest intensity uses to the heavier industrial areas in the City. Simultaneously, there are some uses that are not permitted in M1 but are compatible with the district. It is recommended that these uses be added as permitted in Light Industrial. The chart to the right indicates the recommended uses to be added and removed from the M1 district permitted uses.

## Recommended Definitions

*Light Industrial:* Any use not listed in the Use Table that involves processing, creating, repairing, renovating, painting, cleaning, or assembly of goods, merchandise, or equipment that is conducted wholly within a building or other enclosed structure. The operations do not generate any measurable noise, dust, vibrations, odor, glare or emissions beyond the property on which said building or structure is located.

*Heavy Industrial:* Any use not listed in the Use Table that involves processing, creating, repairing, renovating, painting, cleaning, or assembly of goods, merchandise, or equipment that is **not** conducted wholly within a building or other enclosed structure. The operations do generate an amount of measurable noise, dust, vibrations, odor, glare or emissions beyond the property on which said building or structure is located.

Uses to Add as Permitted in M1	Uses to Remove as Permitted in M1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agricultural produce stands</li> <li>• Beekeeping</li> <li>• Riding academies or stables</li> <li>• Structures used in production and processing of fruits, tree nuts and vegetables</li> <li>• Nursing care facility or hospice</li> <li>• Senior housing</li> <li>• Shelters for homeless persons or battered persons, 7-20</li> <li>• Shelters for homeless persons or battered persons for no more than six (6) persons</li> <li>• Transitional housing facilities for no more than six (6) persons</li> <li>• Transitional housing facilities, 7-20</li> <li>• Cemetery, columbarium, mausoleum</li> <li>• Commercial indoor or outdoor recreation and entertainment</li> <li>• Theaters with live performance, assembly or concert halls, or similar entertainment within enclosed building</li> <li>• Art gallery</li> <li>• Computer or computer software store</li> <li>• Sporting goods or bicycle sale</li> <li>• Variety store (with the exception of Small Box Discount Stores)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alternative energy production</li> <li>• Compressed gas fuel station</li> <li>• Heavy Construction, outside storage</li> <li>• Transportation equipment storage or maintenance (vehicle)</li> <li>• Heavy equipment repair service or trade</li> <li>• Outdoor storage, industrial</li> <li>• Railroad car classification yards or team truck yards</li> <li>• Recovered materials facility wholly within a building</li> <li>• Recovered materials processing wholly within a building</li> <li>• Recycling collection</li> <li>• Recycling plant</li> <li>• Rubber or plastics manufacture</li> <li>• Tire retreading or recapping</li> <li>• Towing or wreckage service</li> <li>• Fuel dealers, manufactures or wholesalers</li> <li>• Truck stop or terminal</li> <li>• Vehicle storage yard</li> <li>• Warehousing or Storage</li> </ul>

# Site Design and Building Form Standards Recommendations

Article 5 of the current zoning code provides standards for design within the City. This article should be utilized to guarantee the City receives the high-quality products it desires. Although this article already contains most of the City’s desired design standards, it is just as important for these standards to be completely clear on exactly what is required for each development. Increased clarity on the specifics for developments will prevent applicants from challenging interpretation by staff, which further guarantees the desired outcome. In addition to minimizing ambiguity, reorganization of some sections in this article can help to improve usability for staff and developers. For example, listing the permitted materials by type of development makes it much easier to determine what is allowed for the project. Below are some examples of recommended changes to increase clarity and improve enforcement.

Subject	Recommended Changes	Subject	Recommended Changes
Enclosed Porches	Add language that clarifies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “enclosed does not include roofed or covered structures”</li> <li>• Sunrooms are an example of “enclosed”</li> <li>• Enclosed are treated as an addition to the main structure</li> </ul>	Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reorganization of section to provide clarity on what applies to residential versus commercial.</li> <li>• Create two concise lists that include specifics on materials for each category.</li> <li>• Also include a consolidated list of “exceptions” – i.e. industrial buildings can have up to 40% metal.</li> </ul>
Projections Into Yards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An open, unenclosed porch, patio, balcony or hard-surfaced terrace, steps, stoops and similar fixtures of a building may project into front and rear yards and into a side yard.</li> <li>• Enclosed porches may encroach into front and rear yards, but the structure and all associated fixtures should meet the side yard setback designated by the zoning district.</li> </ul>	Arrangement of Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• These requirements are very specific but difficult to determine which buildings they apply to.</li> <li>• Remove some specifics here and make more user-friendly to both follow and enforce by designating the zoning districts where this applies</li> </ul>
Height measurement requirements and thresholds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remove the requirements in this section that were developed based on established neighborhoods throughout DeKalb County. Staff indicated that Stonecrest does not have the same residential infill concerns as other areas in the County.</li> <li>• This will allow new single-family homes to build to the maximum height requirements for the zoning district</li> </ul>	Setback Averaging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Currently a large block of text that includes ambiguous language which is difficult to follow.</li> <li>• Change to more user-friendly bullet points that indicate when setback averaging would apply and the exceptions to it. See example on next page.</li> </ul>

# Site Design and Building Form Standards Recommendations

Example of overall recommendation to reorganize information in Article 5 to be more user-friendly for both staff and applicants.

Current Language	Recommended Language
<p>C. Setback averaging. When a vacant lot located in a zoning district authorized for single-family detached dwellings is proposed for development and is located where at least sixty (60) percent of the other lots on the same block face are occupied by single family detached dwellings, then setback averaging shall apply. Where setback averaging applies, the minimum front setback for the vacant lot to be developed shall be the average of the actual front setback(s) of the existing dwelling(s) adjacent to the vacant lot and on the same blockface. Where application of setback averaging would require that the proposed dwelling be located closer to the street than the otherwise applicable minimum front setback for the zoning district where the vacant lot is located, then setback averaging shall not be applied. Where application of setback averaging would make it impossible for the proposed dwelling to comply with the applicable zoning district's rear yard setback requirement, then the proposed dwelling may be constructed closer to the street, up to the minimum front setback required in the subject zoning district, only to the extent necessary to satisfy the minimum rear yard setback requirement. If the actual front setback(s) of the existing dwelling(s) on the adjacent lot(s) on the same blockface as the vacant lot differ from each other by more than thirty (30) feet, then the minimum front setback for the vacant lot shall be the actual front setback of the dwelling closest to the street.</p>	<p><b>Setback Averaging</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applicability: Must use setback averaging when all 3 of the following apply (otherwise zoning district setback applies).               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Detached Single Family Home</li> <li>• Residential Infill on a vacant lot or build qualifies as new construction</li> <li>• 60% or more of all lots on the subject property block are single family homes</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Requirements:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The minimum front setback for the lot to be developed shall be the average of the actual front setback(s) of the existing dwelling(s) adjacent to the vacant lot.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Exceptions:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If setback averaging would require that the proposed dwelling be located closer to the street than the required minimum front setback for the zoning district, then the minimum front setback for the zoning district will apply.</li> <li>• If setback averaging would make it impossible for the proposed dwelling to comply with the rear yard setback, then the proposed dwelling may be constructed closer to the street, up to the minimum front setback required in the subject zoning district, but only to the extent necessary to satisfy the minimum rear yard setback requirement.</li> <li>• If the actual front setback(s) of the existing dwelling(s) on the adjacent lot(s) differ from each other by more than thirty (30) feet, then the minimum front setback for the vacant lot shall be the actual front setback of the dwelling closest to the street.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

The above exemplifies that while the information in the current zoning code is relevant, the way in which it is structured makes it difficult for the reader to determine its applicability. This is a common occurrence in this article of the zoning code, and although tedious, reorganizing similarly to the above using lists and tables can make information easier to find and understand for both staff and applicants.

## Recommendations Takeaways

The recommendations presented in this report are intended to update the current zoning code to meet the overarching goals to ensure the zoning code supports development specific to the City but also protects established neighborhoods and residents, and to create a more practical and accessible zoning code that outlines clear regulations for staff, applicants, and developers. Below are the Recommendations Takeaways that summarize the overall report. The Recommendations Draft Report will be provided to the Stonecrest Staff and presented to the Planning Commission for review and comment. Any comments will be incorporated into the Final Recommendations Report, which will be presented to Mayor and Council with an updated version of the Zoning Code to be adopted by the City.

- Integrating the new ordinances that were adopted by the City since incorporation, creating a Table of Contents, and assuring consistent outlining of all sections will guarantee that the code is organized in a way that makes information accessible and regulations enforceable.
- Removing unnecessary zoning districts from the code will help to streamline material and increase compatibility with the Comprehensive Plan.
- Condensing the mixed-use districts will help to align these districts with the appropriate future land use categories and encourage higher density development.
- Considering potential government initiated rezonings can guide development to align with the Future Land Use Map.
- Updating the zoning code with the information from the most recent Comprehensive Plan creates consistency for the City.
- Maintaining the AMCOD supports the City's goals to preserve the large lot residential districts and conservation areas of the City.
- Condensing the Tiers of the Stonecrest Overlay will assist in consistent regulation and enforcement of design standards.
- Adjusting the uses allowed in the I-20 Overlay District will encourage the film industry in this area.
- Reelevating the flagged uses will help to increase clarity for these uses.
- Creating regulations for uses that are not addressed in the code but have been requested by business license applicants can help to combat future challenges.
- Clarifying specific standards will guarantee the City receives the high-quality products it desires.