



# CAMDEN COUNTY, NC

UNIFIED DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE

**Adoption Draft**

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



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# USING THIS UDO

This document is the draft version of the Camden County Draft Unified Development Ordinance (or “UDO”). It contains the rules that control how land can be used in the County, what kinds of uses may be located in particular locations, and how new development must be configured. The following paragraphs explain some of the attributes of this document.

The draft UDO is prepared in accordance with the Evaluation Report and Annotated Outline documents reviewed and discussed by the public and the County Commissioners in late 2016. It is intended to update and replace Chapters 151 and 152 of the current County Code of Ordinances, upon adoption by the Board of County Commissioners. While this document implements the county’s adopted policy guidance, like the County’s 2035 Comprehensive Plan, it is regulatory (not advisory) in nature, and is a legal document.

The County’s zoning map is the graphical depiction of the location of the zoning districts, and is adopted by reference in current Chapter 151. The new UDO adds a few new zoning districts and changes the names to other existing zoning districts, but the UDO does not anticipate or call for wide-scale rezoning of land in the County. There are zoning district translation provisions that describe how the current zoning districts are translated to corresponding zoning districts with new names.

This draft document contains 11 articles, or chapters, that consolidate similar kinds of provisions, like procedures, zoning districts, use standards, or development standards. The structure and organization of the document is further described on Pages 28 through 33 of the Evaluation Report. The first page of each article in this draft document includes the article’s number in yellow, along with a text box describing the key changes between the current regulations and the draft regulations proposed in that particular article. The second page of each article is a table of contents for the article. The digital version of this UDO includes dynamic links within each table of contents, so users may click a particular table of contents entry, and the document will automatically scroll to the selected location.

This draft document includes a text formatting system comprised of numbered section and subsection headings that are designed to help code users understand how the text in the document is organized. Section headings include different color backgrounds and subsection headings use underlining to help them be more visible.

The top of almost every page includes a listing of the particular article number and name, as well as the appropriate section number and name of the text on that particular page. Users may use the tops of pages to navigate the document. Page numbers are included at the bottom of each page. Page numbers include the article number so that a user may quickly see what article a particular page is located in (which is helpful for navigating the document). Some articles, like Article 151.2: Procedures, also include an introductory section that explains how the regulations in the article are structured and how to use them effectively.

Throughout this draft document, users will see yellow **highlighted** text. Highlighted text shows cross references to other sections or subsections in the document, or to the date the draft document is made effective (which may be the adoption date, or a subsequent date, as decided by the Board of County Commissioners). As with the table of contents entries, users of the digital version of this document will be able to click on a cross reference, and the digital document will automatically scroll to the location in the document being cross referenced. This dynamic cross referencing function will be integrated following adoption, and the yellow highlighting will be removed.

Most pages of the draft version of the document include footnotes at the bottom of the page. Each footnote has a unique number that shows up in the field of text on the page, as well as at the bottom of the page. Some footnotes may continue to the next page, depending upon their length. These footnotes are used to show the origin of draft text, to call attention to new provisions, or to pose questions for the County’s consideration during the drafting process. Footnotes including the word “NOTE” at the beginning indicate important notes for consideration. All the footnotes will be removed from the document after it is adopted.

As described on Page 31 of the Code Assessment, this new UDO will be supplemented with graphics and illustrations. Graphics are not prepared and inserted until the later stages of the project after the draft text has been completed, but prior to the adoption process. This delay helps ensure funds are not expended for graphics that support text not included in the adoption version of the UDO. This draft document includes individual table cells in various locations in the text that depict the approximate placement of a graphic or illustrations. Each of these tables is shown in yellow highlight and start with the words *Graphics Placeholder*. Additional text in the table cell describes the type of illustration anticipated for that particular location.

Prior to completion of the adoption version of the document, an index of key terms will be prepared so that users may quickly find the portion of the desired regulations. In addition to the index, the digital version of this document is fully searchable. The document also includes a number of other helpful features such as procedural flowcharts, a glossary of abbreviations, and tables that summarize information.

Following adoption, this section of the UDO will be replaced with a series of specific questions and answers about how to obtain information, accomplish typical development tasks, or apply for a particular permit type. This is general information included for the sake of convenience for UDO users. These questions and their answers are not part of the UDO, and in the event of conflict between this section and the adopted UDO text, the UDO text will control.

**Question: What is the Unified Development Ordinance?**

*The Unified Development Ordinance (or "UDO") is the set of laws used by the County to ensure land is subdivided and used in ways that promote the health, safety, and welfare of all County residents, visitors, and landowners. It describes the kinds of allowed uses, where they are allowed, and how they may be established or changed. The UDO also includes the rules for how development sites are configured, including items like parking, landscaping, signage, fencing, and building architecture. The text of the UDO is available in the offices of the Camden County Planning Department at 117 North NC 343. It is also available online from the County's website at <http://www.camdencountync.gov/>.*

**Question: What is the Official Zoning Map?**

*The Official Zoning Map (or "OZM") is a map depicting the locations and boundaries of the zoning districts adopted by Camden County. Zoning districts control where particular uses of land may or may not be located, and how lots must be configured (size, width, and required setbacks). The kinds of uses allowed or prohibited on a particular piece of land in the County are controlled by the land's zoning district designation. The zoning district designation for a piece of land may be changed by following the requirements in the UDO. Copies of the Official Zoning Map are available in the offices of the Camden County Planning Department at 117 North NC 343. It is also available online from the County's website at <http://www.camdencountync.gov/>.*

**Question: What can I do or place on my land?**

*The kinds of development that are allowed on land in Camden County are established based on the type of zoning district designation for the land as well the range of allowable uses in the particular zoning district from Chapter 151.4 of the UDO. Bona fide farm and forestry uses are allowed everywhere in the County. Anyone with questions about what is allowed on their land should contact the Camden County Planning Department at (252) 338-1919 for more information.*

**Question: What permits do I need to build a house?**

*All single-family detached dwellings require prior approval of a Zoning Compliance Permit and a Building Permit issued from Camden County. In cases where the home is on its own well or septic system, the dwelling also requires a prior approval from Albemarle Regional Health Services to ensure the lot has a potable water supply and a method for dealing with sewage. Dwellings located in a floodplain or flood prone area also require issuance of a Floodplain Development Permit. If significant amounts of grading or soil deposition is required before the house can be built, it may be necessary to obtain a Fill Permit before construction starts. During construction, the building must be inspected by County Building Inspectors as required by State law, and a Certificate of Occupancy must be issued before the home may be occupied. Applicants seeking to place a mobile or manufactured home may be required to obtain a Special Use Permit, and should contact the County's Planning Department at (252) 338-1919 for more information.*

**Question: What permits do I need to build a porch or deck?**

*Building a porch or a deck on or near a single-family detached dwelling requires approval of a Zoning Compliance Permit and a Building Permit. In cases where the home is on a small lot of less than an acre in area or the porch or deck is closer than ten feet to a lot line, it may be necessary to also obtain a Variance.*

**Question: Do I need permits to have a home business?**

*Yes, operating a home-based business (also called a "home occupation") requires approval of a Zoning Compliance Permit issued by the County. The business may not exceed 1,000 square feet in floor area and employ no more than 2 people who do not already live in the home.*

**Question: How do I create a lot for a family member?**

*Lots may be transferred among family members using the Transfer Plat procedure in the UDO. A subdivision of land creating lots for family members must be signed by County personnel and recorded in the Office of the Camden County Register of Deeds at 117 North NC 343. Failure to record a transfer plat is a violation of the law and will interfere with the ability to obtain a building permit to build a structure on the lot.*

**Question: Do I need a permit for a sign?**

*Most forms of signage require approval of a Sign Permit by the County. Flags and political (election) signs do not require a sign permit, but are subject to the rules for signage in the UDO.*

**Question: What is the process for rezoning my land?**

*Changing the zoning district designation of your land requires a Zoning Map Amendment to be approved by the Camden County Board of Commissioners. The procedure for zoning map amendments is included in the UDO. Landowners considering a request to change their zoning should talk with the Camden County Planning Department staff at (252) 338-1919 before filing an application.*

**Question: Who makes decisions on applications?**

*Development applications are decided by the UDO Administrator, the Building Inspector, the Planning Board, the Board of Adjustment, or the Board of County Commissioners, based on the type of application. The UDO includes a summary table in Chapter 151.2 that identifies who decides which kinds of applications.*

**Question: How can I appeal a decision?**

*Yes. Any decision by a County staff member (like the UDO Administrator) may be appealed to the Board of Adjustment. Decisions from decision-making bodies like the Board of Adjustment may be appealed to the Superior Court for Camden County. There are specific deadlines from the date a decision is made within which an appeal may be filed.*

**Question: What's the best way to learn more about submitting an application for development?**

*Camden County Planning staff conducts free pre-application conferences with potential applicants. Some types of applications require a pre-application conference to be conducted. More information on pre-application conferences is in the UDO.*

**Question: How long does it take to get an approval?**

*The amount of time it takes to obtain an approval for a proposed development varies widely based on the complexity of the type of application. Building Permits, Zoning Compliance Permits, and Certificates of Occupancy can be processed quickly in a matter of a few days. Zoning Map Amendments and Preliminary Subdivision Plats can take a few months.*

**Question: Who can I call about flooding or other nuisances?**

*Persons with questions about flooding, nuisances, or potential code violations should contact the Camden County Zoning Officer at (252) 338-1919.*



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