

ARTICLE III. ESTABLISHMENT OF ZONING DISTRICTS

Section 300. Establishment of Zoning Districts.

The City of Northport, Alabama is hereby divided into zoning districts of such number and character as are necessary to achieve compatibility of uses within each district, to implement the Official Zoning Map of Northport, and to serve the other purposes of this Ordinance, which are detailed in Article I.

Section 301. Zoning Districts.

For the purpose of this Ordinance, all land and water areas in Northport are hereby divided into six (6) “General” zoning districts, as follows:

Agricultural	AG
Residential “Single Family”:	RS-1 through RS-4
Residential “Multi-Family”:	RM-1, RM-2, RM-3
Office-Institutional:	O-I
Commercial:	C-2 “Neighborhood Commercial” C-3 “General Commercial” C-6 “Highway Commercial”
Manufacturing:	M-1 “Light Industrial” M-2 “Heavy Industrial”

Additionally, two (2) “Overlay” zoning districts have been established, as follows:

Special District:	SD
Flood Protection Areas:	FP, FW

Several “Carryover” zoning districts will also be address by this ordinance, they are:

Planned Development: PD-1, PD-2, PD-3

Appropriate RS district have been assigned to existing PDs and a Special District “SD” designation has been assigned to signify the requirement of a master plan for these districts. All special district standards will be applied as of the affective date of this ordinance.

Mobile Home Park

MHP

This is a “carryover” zone which will be shown on the map for existing mobile home parks; however, no new areas will be created in this district. Existing parks may continue as they exist, but may not be enlarged. All new manufactured home developments will fall under the criteria for Manufactured Home Subdivisions covered as a Conditional Use in an appropriate Residential District.

Downtown/Riverfront Districts: The zoning criteria for the areas of Northport described in the Northport Downtown/Riverfront Master Plan and its associated Northport Core City Zoning & Design Standards are a separate and distinct document adopted by Ordinance #1688. For ease of access, the Zoning & Design Standards are depicted in this document as Article VII. If desired, the entire Downtown/Riverfront Master Plan document may also be acquired separately.

Section 302. Map of Zoning Districts.

Zoning districts established by this Ordinance are bounded and defined as shown on the Official Zoning Map of Northport, which, together with all explanatory materials contained thereon, is hereby made a part of this Ordinance.

Section 303. Interpretation of District Boundaries.

In the event of uncertainty with regard to their location, it is the duty of the Planning Director, or his/her designee, to interpret the location of the zoning district boundaries. Where a district boundary line divides a lot held in single and separate ownership at the effective date of this ordinance, the Planning Commission shall determine, based on findings of fact from the Planning Director, the disposition of said boundary line.

The following rules shall be used to determine the precise location of any zone boundary shown on the Official Zoning Map of Northport:

303.01. Boundaries shown as following, or approximately following, the limits of any municipal corporation shall be construed as following such limits.

303.02. Boundaries shown as following, or approximately following, streets shall be construed to follow the centerlines of such streets.

303.03. Boundary lines which follow, or approximately follow, platted lot lines or other property lines as shown on the Northport Tax Maps shall be construed as following such lines.

303.04. Boundaries shown as following, or approximately following, section lines, half-section lines, or quarter-section lines shall be construed as following such lines.

303.05. Boundaries shown as following, or approximately following, railroad lines shall be construed to lie midway between the main tracks of such railroad lines.

303.06. Boundaries shown as following, or approximately following, shorelines of any lakes shall be construed to follow the mean high waterlines of such lakes, and, in the event of change in the mean high waterline, shall be construed as moving with the actual mean high waterline.

303.07. Boundaries shown as following, or approximately following, the centerlines of streams, rivers, or other continuously flowing water courses shall be construed as following the channel centerline of such water courses taken at mean low water. In the event of a natural change in the location of such streams, rivers, or other watercourses, the zone boundary shall be construed as moving with the channel centerline.

303.08. Boundaries shown as separated from, and parallel or approximately parallel to, any of the features listed in paragraphs 303.01 through 303.07 above shall be construed to be parallel to, and at such distances from, such features as are shown on the map.

Section 304. Maintenance of Official Copy of Zoning Map.

At least one official copy of the zoning map shall be maintained in the office of the City Planner, upon which shall be recorded, after the passage thereof, every amendment to this ordinance which effects a change in any zoning district boundary. Such official copy of the zoning map shall be attested by the City Administrator/Clerk, and shall be available at all times for inspection by the general public.

The City Planner may distribute copies of the zoning map to the general public and other officials, for reference purposes. However, the official copy of the zoning map maintained in the office of the City Planner, plus official records of the City Administrator/Clerk regarding actions of the City Council to amend district boundaries shall constitute the only official description of the location of zoning district boundaries, and persons having recourse to this ordinance for any purpose are hereby so notified.

Section 305. Statement of Purpose and Intent of Zoning Districts.

The following sections specify the purpose and intent of the zoning districts established by this Ordinance.

305.01. Agricultural District (AG). This District is intended to protect and preserve areas of Northport which are presently rural or agricultural in character and use. The standards developed for these areas are designed to permit development compatible with the preservation of their rural character and agricultural use, while not permanently foreclosing future development.

305.02. Residential Single Family Districts (RS). These Districts are intended to preserve the character of existing neighborhoods and developments under construction at the time of adoption of this Ordinance. It is designed to prevent these neighborhoods and subdivisions from becoming nonconforming under the terms of this Ordinance. This District is also intended to provide for future development of land where a Residential District is deemed the most appropriate zoning classification, and a preliminary or final plat for development of the land has been approved by the Planning Commission. It is also intended to provide for in-filling of existing neighborhoods on vacant lots with dwellings of like kind as defined in Section 203 of this Ordinance.

Occupancy in RS zones is limited to “Family” as defined in Section 203.

Certain structures and uses required to serve governmental, educational, religious, noncommercial, recreational, and other needs of such areas may be permitted as outright or as conditional uses within such districts, subject to restrictions and requirements intended to preserve and protect the single-family residential character of the districts.

305.03 Residential Multi-Family (RM). These districts are intended as medium and high density residential areas permitting progressively higher population densities, characterized by single-family detached, two-family detached, multiple-family structures, garden type apartments, and high-rise apartments. Certain structures and uses required to serve governmental, educational, religious, noncommercial, recreational, and other needs of such areas are permitted outright or are permissible as special exceptions subject to restrictions and requirements intended to preserve and protect the residential character of the district.

305.04. Commercial Districts (C). Northport has three (3) Commercial District designations: C-2 Neighborhood Commercial; C-3 General Commercial; C-6 Highway Commercial.

The regulations for these Districts permit future development consistent with the existing character of commercial development within each. Such fixed and stable areas will be allowed to continue to exist, and develop further, under the general regulations governing the design, and construction of an approved site plan.

305.05. Office-Institutional District (O-I). This district is intended to provide areas for the development of public, semi-public and private offices; schools, healthcare and child care facilities; places of worship and special residential development. Such uses are supportive of the surrounding residential community and should gain access via an arterial or major collector road.

305.06. Manufacturing District (M). This District is intended to accommodate commercial areas that must be segregated, because of negative impacts that cannot be made compatible with other uses through the application of performance standards. The creation of this separate District for manufacturing/industrial use recognizes not only nuisances, but also infrastructure and operational incompatibilities between its permitted uses and those of other districts. Accordingly, the standards for this District are designed to accommodate intensive industrial uses that generate nuisances, which either cannot be handled by technology or which are nearly impossible to police. Location criteria for this district focus on transportation, requiring that sites have access to a railroad, an airport or a major highway.

305.07. Special District. Special districts are hereby authorized for the purpose of providing optional methods of land development, which encourages imaginative solutions to environmental design problems and provide for a mixture of uses and density of uses with associated open space and amenities. Areas so established shall be characterized by a unified building and site development program providing for coordinated open space and architectural treatment. The special districts authorized by this Article are also intended to provide means for the establishment of uses, which are generally considered to be incompatible with most other land usage.

305.08. Flood Protection Areas. It is the intent of the flood protection area to provide protection in the floodway and flood fringe from the hazards and losses caused by flooding to residences, businesses, industries and public uses and to protect the natural flood environments that might be increased or significantly altered by improper use or development.

The areas of special flood hazard identified by the Federal Emergency Management Agency in its “Flood Insurance Study” and the “Flood Insurance Rate Map” and any revision thereto are adopted by reference and declared to be a part of this Ordinance.

The degree of flood protection required by this Ordinance is considered reasonable for regulatory purposes and is based on scientific and engineering considerations. Larger floods can and will occur on rare occasions. Flood heights may be increased by man-made or natural causes. This Ordinance does not imply that land outside the areas of special flood hazard, or uses permitted within such areas, will be free from flooding or flood damages. This Ordinance shall not create liability on the part of Northport or by any officer or employee thereof for any flood damages that result from reliance on this Ordinance or any administrative decision lawfully made there under.

305.09. Downtown/Riverfront Districts.

The Downtown/Riverfront Master Plan was developed to provide a collective vision for how the areas within its boundaries should develop in the future. The preservation of natural and historic resources as well as the compatibility of future development with historic development patterns is crucial to maintaining the overall character and charm of Downtown Northport.

The Plan's Zoning & Design Standards are depicted in this document as Article VII for ease of access. These Zoning & Design Standards are intended to help implement the Plan for the "Core City". Six (6) districts and fourteen (14) sub-districts, or zones, which reflect the plan's intended primary land uses, physical form and development character are created by the Standards.

305.10. Carry Over Zones.

Mobile Home Park (MHP). This is a "carryover" zone which will be shown on the map for existing mobile home parks; however, no new areas will be created in this district. Existing parks may continue as they exist, but may not be enlarged. All new manufactured home developments will fall under the criteria for Manufactured Home Subdivisions covered as a Conditional Use in an appropriate Residential District.