

Boone County, Illinois

Unified Development Ordinance Recommendations Report

February 21, 2025

SIGHTLINE
PLANNING AND ZONING

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Introduction

Over the last several years, Boone County has made a concerted effort to focus on planning for land use throughout the community. In 2019, the County created the Boone County Comprehensive Plan 2029 with a vision for an inclusive county that cherishes its rural heritage while also maintaining its high quality of life. In May 2024, the County partnered with Northern Illinois University's Center for Governmental Studies, Egret + Ox, Sightline Planning and Zoning, and Chastain Associates to update the Comprehensive Plan and to create a unified development ordinance (UDO).

The goal of creating a UDO is to update the zoning and subdivision standards as a single entity to make it easier for the County to manage development. The staff of Sightline is leading the effort to assess the existing Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances and develop recommendations to guide the creation of the UDO. The current Zoning Ordinance has not been comprehensively updated since 2008. The current Subdivision Ordinance has not been comprehensively updated since 2001. Boone County continues to evolve and its development regulations must be updated to serve the community's land use needs now and into the future.

Purpose

The purpose of this Recommendations Report is to provide the County with initial recommendations for the UDO as a point of discussion before the drafting process begins. The Recommendations Report provides a general assessment of the County's existing development regulations, highlights significant issues, and suggests preliminary recommendations for the UDO. The goal of this phase of the project is to reach a consensus with the County on key issues facing the community prior to drafting the standards that will make up the Ordinance.

The Recommendations Report also helps the project team identify issues that may require further research, analysis, and discussion prior to the drafting phase of the project. In addition, the Recommendation Report is a public facing document that allows residents, property owners, and community stakeholders to understand the major themes of the project and provide feedback. The standards for the UDO will be drafted during the next phase of the project.



Overall Recommendations

This section of the Recommendations Report presents overall recommendations that will be applied throughout the UDO.

Organize development regulations to make them easier to use

The UDO will be organized in a logical and streamlined format to make it easier to use for both new and experienced users. Figure 1. Structure of Proposed UDO shows each of the sections that will make up the new UDO. Figure 2. Recommended Reorganization of Existing Ordinances shows where the sections of Boone County's existing Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances fit within the structure of the UDO. The proposed structure would streamline the development regulations by consolidating similar types of information to avoid unnecessary repetition.

Chapters 1.00 through 5.00 of the UDO would serve as the administrative foundation of the Ordinance, and would include title and applicability, administrative bodies and notice, zoning and subdivision application procedures, planned development procedures, and nonconformities. Chapters 6.00 through 8.00 would make up the core of the Ordinance with standards pertaining to subdivision development, bulk and setback for the County's various zoning districts, and standards for principal, accessory, and temporary uses and structures. Chapters 9.00 through 11.00 would include regulations for off-street parking and loading, landscaping, and signs. Chapter 12.00 would serve as the final section of the Ordinance and include all relevant definitions.

Figure 1. Structure of Proposed UDO

Structure of Proposed UDO
Chapter 1.00 Title and Applicability
Chapter 2.00 Administrative Bodies and Notice
Chapter 3.00 Zoning and Subdivision Application Procedures
Chapter 4.00 Planned Development Application Procedures
Chapter 5.00 Nonconformities
Chapter 6.00 Subdivision Development Standards
Chapter 7.00 Zoning Districts
Chapter 8.00 Uses
Chapter 9.00 Off-Street Parking and Loading
Chapter 10.00 Landscape
Chapter 11.00 Signs
Chapter 12.00 Definitions

Figure 2. Recommended Reorganization of Existing Ordinance

Chapters of the Existing Zoning Ordinance	Location Within UDO
1 General Provisions	1.00 Title and Applicability 12.00 Definitions
2 Administration, Enforcement, and Procedures	2.00 Administrative Bodies and Notice 3.00 Zoning and Subdivision Application Procedures 4.00 Planned Development Application Procedures
3 District and General Provisions	7.00 Zoning Districts
4 Design Criteria for Specific Uses	8.00 Uses 5.00 Nonconformities
5 Development and Design Standards	8.00 Uses 9.00 Off-Street Parking and Loading 10.00 Landscape 11.00 Signs

Chapters of the Existing Subdivision Ordinance	Location Within UDO
I General Provisions	1.00 Title and Applicability
II Definitions	12.00 Definitions
III Decision Making, Administration, and Enforcement Responsibilities	2.00 Administrative Bodies and Notice 3.00 Zoning and Subdivision Application Procedures
IV Subdivision Review Procedures	2.00 Administrative Bodies and Notice 3.00 Zoning and Subdivision Application Procedures
V Required Improvements	6.00 Subdivision Development Standards
VI Park, School and Other Public Purpose Contributions	6.00 Subdivision Development Standards
VII Public Improvement Guarantees and Acceptance Procedures	6.00 Subdivision Development Standards
VIII Stormwater Protection and NPDES Permits	*Remain as Appendix B Stormwater Protection and NPDES Permits

**Note: We recommend not including Chapter VIII Stormwater Protection and NPDES Permit of the Subdivision Ordinance in the UDO and locating these regulations as a standalone Appendix B within the County Code.*

Streamline repetitive provisions

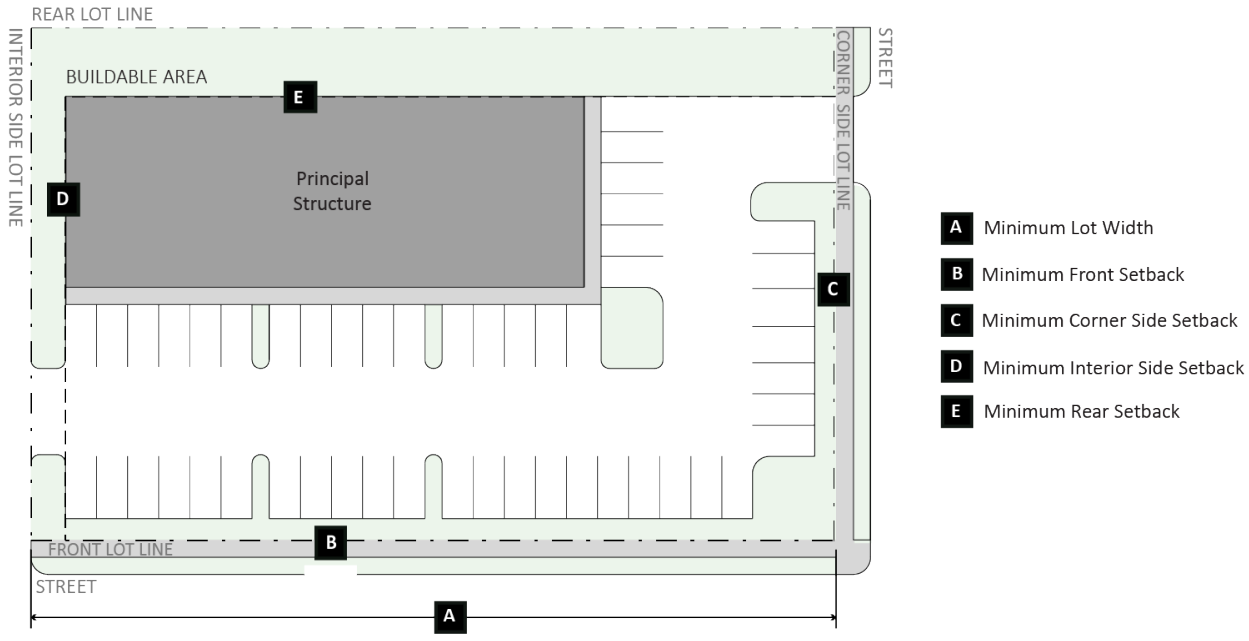
Over the course of the last several years, the County's development regulations have been amended as new land use requirements are necessary. This targeted approach to maintaining the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances ensures that the regulations are modern and up to date. However, there is so much information located in the development regulations that inconsistencies inevitably develop over time. The UDO will consolidate repetitive provisions, remove unnecessary information, and clarify standards that cause confusion.

Incorporate new and updated tables and illustrations

The development regulations could be improved through greater use of tables and illustrations to communicate information more effectively to users. Written standards can be summarized in tables and illustrations that complement the narrative text so that it is easier for users to absorb. While the existing Zoning Ordinance includes several useful tables, the UDO process is an opportunity to include new tables and illustrations that more effectively communicate information. For example, a combination of tables and graphics could be used to communicate the regulations of each of the zoning districts in the UDO. Figure 3. Example Bulk and Yard Table and Site Illustration shows the standards of a sample zoning district utilizing a bulk and yard table and a plan-view graphic.

Figure 3. Example Bulk and Yard Table and Site Illustration

Bulk Requirements		
	Minimum Lot Area	10,000 sf
A	Minimum Lot Width	100 ft
	Maximum Principal Building Height	40 ft
Setback Requirements		
B	Minimum Front Setback	75 ft
C	Minimum Corner Side Setback	30 ft
D	Minimum Interior Side Setback	10 ft
E	Minimum Rear Setback	30 ft



Key Recommendations by Chapter

The following recommendations are organized by the structure of the proposed UDO that is outlined in Figure 1: Structure of Proposed UDO, rather than by the organization of the existing Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances. The analysis of each chapter begins by stating the intent of each chapter and a table that shows how the chapter relates to the corresponding sections of the existing ordinances. The corresponding sections of the existing ordinance are designated "(ZO)" for Zoning Ordinance and "(SO)" for Subdivision Ordinance. Each table is followed by major recommendations related to the content of each section. The major recommendations for some chapters are more detailed than others due to the nature of each chapter.









Chapter 1.00 Title and Applicability

This Chapter introduces the UDO's overall purpose and applicability.

Proposed Organization	Corresponding Sections from Existing Ordinances
1.01 Title	1.1.1 Short Title (ZO) 100 Resolution, 101 Title (SO)
1.02 Authority and Purpose	1.1 Purpose and Applicability (ZO) 102 Purpose (SO)
1.03 Applicability	1.1.2 Scope of Regulations (ZO) 1.1.7 Relationship to Other Laws (ZO) 103 Scope (SO) 106 Conflicting Regulations (SO) 107 Private Agreements (SO) 124 Municipal Jurisdiction (SO) 125 Plats Straddling Municipal Boundaries (SO)
1.04 Transition Rules	120 Effect on Existing Building Permits and Zoning Certificates (SO)
1.05 Interpretation	1.2.2 Rules (ZO) 104 Interpretation, 111 Illustrations (SO) 115 Rules of Construction (SO)
1.06 Enforcement	2.5.9 Violations (ZO) 307 Enforcement (SO)
1.07 Safe Harbor Authorization	New Section of the UDO
1.08 Severability	1.1.5 Severability (ZO) 108 Separability (SO)
1.09 Effective Date	1.1.8 Effective Date (ZO) 121 Effective Date (SO)

Consolidate language from the existing ordinances

Chapter 1.00 Title and Applicability of the UDO will consolidate standards currently spread across several sections of the existing zoning and subdivision regulations into one dedicated section, which will reduce confusion and improve usability. The new section will consolidate key standards regarding authority and purpose, applicability, severability, and enforcement.

Add new provisions to explain the transition to the new ordinance

Section 1.04 Transition Rules of the UDO will include provisions regarding how the County will transition from the existing Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances to the UDO. Transition rules allow users to understand how existing uses, buildings, and structures will be affected by the adoption of the UDO. Transition rules often apply to permitted uses that become special uses in the UDO, special uses and variations that were approved prior to the effective date of the UDO, and zoning applications that were submitted to the County prior to the effective date of the UDO. This information will be complemented by more detailed standards in Chapter 5.00 Nonconformities and Chapter 8.00 Uses.

Chapter 2.00 Administrative Bodies and Notice

This Chapter specifies the responsibilities of officials, staff, and applicants for development applications.

Proposed Organization	Corresponding Sections from Existing Ordinances
2.01 Purpose	New Section of the UDO
2.02 County Board	305 The County Board (SO)
2.03 Zoning Board of Appeals	2.3 Zoning Board of Appeals (ZO)
2.04 Regional Planning Commission	New Section of the UDO
2.05 Subdivision Review Committee	303 Subdivision Review Committee (SO)
2.06 Zoning Administrator	2.1 Zoning Administrator (ZO) 113 Disclosure of Parties of Interest (SO) 301 Office of the County Planner (SO)
2.07 Zoning Enforcement Officer	2.2 Zoning Enforcement Officer (ZO)
2.08 Application Procedures	2.5 Project Review Procedures (ZO)
2.09 Notice	New Section of the UDO
2.10 Public Hearing	New Section of the UDO

Outline the roles and responsibilities of the County's decision-making bodies

The existing ordinances discuss the roles and responsibilities of the County's officials and staff in Chapter 2 of the Zoning Ordinance and Article III of the Subdivision Ordinance. We recommend outlining these roles and responsibilities to reflect the revised organization of the UDO. The UDO will focus on the approval and recommending authority of the County Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, Regional Planning Commission, and Zoning Administrator, among others. Information related to the creation, meetings, and officers of each entity should be moved to the appropriate location within the County Code. The Zoning Administrator will continue to have a key role within the development process, serving as the point person for receiving applications, setting up meetings, and routing approvals to staff and officials.

Consolidate zoning application information to create a consistent procedure

The existing Ordinance includes separate sections detailing procedures for variations, special uses, amendments, and a number of other zoning applications. The UDO will continue to include separate steps and approval standards for each application. It will also consolidate procedural information in this section of the UDO that applies to all applications. For example, this section will provide information regarding procedures for filing zoning applications, including what parties are authorized to file applications. In addition, this section will indicate how applicants may withdraw existing applications if necessary or make successive applications if the initial application is denied.

Consolidate information on public notice

The UDO will consolidate information on public notice that is currently scattered across many different sections of the existing Zoning Ordinance. Required notice is an essential part of the public hearing process and can be provided in published, mailed, and posted formats. Internal references within the UDO will allow applicants to determine what type of notice is required for each type of development application and who is responsible for providing it.

Chapter 3.00 Zoning and Subdivision Application Procedures

This Chapter discusses the procedures and standards for each of the County's development applications.

Proposed Organization	Corresponding Sections from Existing Ordinances
3.01 Purpose	New Section of the UDO
3.02 Site Plan Review	New Section of the UDO
3.03 Special Use Permit	2.7 Special Uses (ZO)
3.04 Variation	2.8 Variations (ZO) 306 Variations (SO)
3.05 Administrative Variation	2.8.8 Administrative Variations (ZO)
3.06 Zoning Text or Map Amendment	2.10 Text and Map Amendments (ZO) 306 Amendments (SO)
3.07 Appeal	2.9 Appeals (ZO)
3.08 Ordinance Interpretation	New Section of the UDO
3.09 Zoning Certificate	2.4 Zoning Certificates (ZO)
3.10 Temporary Use Permit	4.2.6 Issuing Temporary Use Permits (ZO) 4.2.7 Permit Form, 4.2.8 Permit Renewal (ZO) 4.2.9 Permit Fees, 4.2.10 Permit Revocation (ZO)
3.11 Sign Permit	5.6.10 Sign Permits, 5.6.14 Sign Permit Fee (ZO)
3.12 Comprehensive Plan Amendment	2.10 Comprehensive Plan Amendments (ZO)
3.13 Subdivision Application	116 Recording, 117 Sale, 118 Permits (SO) 126 Owner-Imposed Restrictions (SO) IV Subdivision Review Procedures (SO)

Remove submission requirements for development applications from UDO

The current Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances are weighed down by submittal requirements for various zoning applications, as in Section 2.11.6 regarding Planned Developments. We recommend removing these requirements from the UDO. These application materials should be located in separate documents outside of the UDO that are available online and from staff. This will give Boone County staff the opportunity to proactively update the applications without having to process an amendment to the UDO.

Include flow charts to illustrate the zoning application process

Process flow charts, such as the graphic in Figure 4. Example Application Process, will be created for all development applications within the UDO. These illustrations provide additional clarity for users of the Ordinance, particularly first-time applicants and residents that would like to understand the process at a glance. Figure 4. Summary of Zoning Applications shows which decision-making bodies would be responsible for each of the types of zoning applications received by the County.

Figure 4. Example Application Process



Figure 5. Summary of Zoning Applications

Application Type	Zoning Administrator	Regional Planning Commission	Zoning Board of Appeals	County Board
Site Plan Review	Decision	No Action	Authority for Appeal	No Action
Special Use Permit	Review & Recommendation	No Action	Public Hearing, Review & Recommendation	Public Meeting, Decision
Variation	Review & Recommendation	No Action	Public Hearing, Decision	Authority for Appeal
Administrative Variation	Decision	No Action	Authority for Appeal	No Action
Text Amendment	Review & Recommendation	No Action	Public Hearing, Review & Recommendation	Public Meeting, Decision
Map Amendment	Review & Recommendation	Public Meeting, Review & Recommendation	Public Hearing, Review & Recommendation	Public Meeting, Decision
Appeal	Review & Recommendation	No Action	Decision	Authority for Appeal
Ordinance Interpretation	Decision	No Action	Authority for Appeal	No Action
Zoning Certificate	Decision	No Action	Authority for Appeal	No Action
Temporary Use Permit	Decision	No Action	Authority for Appeal	No Action
Sign Permit	Decision	No Action	Authority for Appeal	No Action
Comprehensive Plan Amendment	Review & Recommendation	Public Meeting, Review & Recommendation	No Action	Public Meeting, Decision
Subdivision Application	Review & Recommendation	No Action	No Action	Public Meeting, Decision
Planned Development	Review & Recommendation	Public Meeting, Review & Recommendation	Public Hearing, Review & Recommendation	Public Meeting, Decision

Improve the process for administrative variations by the Zoning Administrator

We recommend that the County maintain two processes for zoning relief: 1) the typical variance application approved by the Zoning Board of Appeals, and 2) an improved administrative variation application approved by the Zoning Administrator. The administrative variation application would build on the procedures of Section 2.8.8 (Administrative Variations) of the existing Zoning Ordinance. It would allow the Zoning Administrator to approve minor deviations from a select number of zoning requirements. This procedure would allow the County to approve straightforward variation requests efficiently and reduce the timeline for simple requests.

The UDO will clearly state the standards that are eligible for administrative variations, and limit eligibility based on a maximum percentage in relation to the existing requirement. For example, a request for a 10 percent (or less) variation from a front setback would continue to go to the Zoning Administrator for an administrative variation, rather than the Zoning Board of Appeals. A request greater than 10 percent would continue to utilize the typical variation procedure with a recommendation from the Zoning Board of Appeals.

Revise the site plan review process to ensure balanced development and clear procedures

We recommend that the County revise its site plan review application as part of the UDO. A site plan is a detailed document, including text and illustrations, that shows how an applicant intends to develop a site. Site plan review is the process of reviewing the documents and drawings required by the UDO to ensure that a proposed development meets prescribed standards. The goal of site plan review is to make sure that development and redevelopment occurs in a manner that is harmonious with surrounding properties. The Zoning Administrator should continue to be responsible for reviewing the site plan to make sure that it meets the development standards of each zoning district. This application would update the existing processes of County staff to make it easier for new users of the code to understand the site plan review process.

Create a zoning interpretation application

Since it is impossible for even the most comprehensive UDO to adequately address every possible regulatory issue, many modern ordinances include a process for zoning interpretations. This allows property owners to file a written application with County staff to clarify the text of the UDO. Staff's interpretation then serves as a precedent if similar cases arise in the future. The County may already have an ad hoc process for zoning interpretations, but this process should be codified in the updated administrative provisions as a foundation for future Boone County staff and officials.

Chapter 4.00 Planned Development Application Procedures

This Chapter outlines the standards and procedures for planned development (PD) applications.

Proposed Organization	Corresponding Sections from Existing Ordinances
4.01 Purpose	2.11.1 Purpose (ZO) 2.11.2 Objectives (ZO)
4.02 Applicability	2.11.3 Modification of District Regulations (ZO) 105 Planned Development (SO)
4.03 Procedure	2.11.5 Application Procedures (ZO)
4.04 Amendments to Approved Planned Developments	2.11.7.D Amending Final Development Plan (ZO)
4.05 Standards for Planned Developments	2.11.4 General Standards and Criteria for Planned Developments (ZO)
4.06 Provision of Community Amenities	New Section of the UDO
4.07 Expiration of Approved Planned Developments	2.11.7 Administration of Planned Developments (ZO)

Improve the PD process for the County and the applicant

As noted in the existing Zoning Ordinance, the purpose of a PD is to allow creative development that would not be possible under the strict application of the Ordinance. When appropriate, the PD process facilitates unique design by allowing developers to receive exceptions from the ordinance's typical bulk and use requirements. PDs are reviewed by County staff, the Regional Planning Commission, the Zoning Board of Appeals, and the County Board. Applications are reviewed against a defined set of approval standards to ensure that the project adheres to the County's overall land use goals.

The County's current PD process is too cumbersome and includes too many steps in the review process. The PD application process should balance careful review of the application with effective use of government resources. Currently, the County's procedure for PD applications includes a Pre-Application Conference, Concept Plan, Preliminary Plan, and Final Plan. The existing process allows applicants to adapt and improve their plans as they work with the County. Building on this foundation, Sightline recommends a four-step process that streamlines the overall PD process by slightly reducing the total number of public meetings.

1. **Pre-Application Conference:** Retain the required Pre-Application Conference to allow the applicant to receive assistance from staff from various departments.
2. **Concept Plan:** Retain the required Concept Plan process so the applicant receives comments from staff, the Regional Planning Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, and County Board.
3. **Preliminary Plan:** Retain the required Preliminary Plan process so the applicant receives additional comments from staff, the Regional Planning Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, and County Board.
4. **Final Plan:** We recommend streamlining the Final Plan by removing two meetings from the process. A Final Plan should be reviewed by the Zoning Administrator to ensure that the modifications suggested during the Preliminary Plan were captured by the applicant. This conformity check would be followed by approval by the County Board. This change would

streamline the timeline of the Final Plan by removing the additional meetings with the Regional Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals.

Ensure that the County receives desired public amenities as part of the PD process

The purpose of a PD is to encourage flexibility in development and design that fulfills the planning objectives of the County. Since the County is providing additional flexibility through the PD process, it should receive certain amenities as a result of this process. The updated Ordinance will provide a set of amenities that a potential applicant could provide to the County in return for the flexibility of the PD process. These amenities could include the establishment or enhancement of open space amenities, public facilities, natural features, and/or public infrastructure.









Chapter 5.00 Nonconformities

This Chapter addresses nonconforming uses, structures, lots of record, and site elements.

Proposed Organization	Corresponding Sections from Existing Ordinances
5.01 Purpose	4.4.1 General Nonconformities (ZO)
5.02 Applicability	New Section of the UDO
5.03 Nonconforming Uses	4.4.3 Nonconforming Uses of Land (ZO) 4.4.5 Nonconforming Uses of Structures (ZO)
5.04 Nonconforming Structures	4.4.2 Agricultural Exemptions (ZO) 4.4.4 Nonconforming Structures (ZO) 4.4.6 Repairs and Maintenance (ZO)
5.05 Nonconforming Lots of Record and Grandfathered Right to Develop or Use Property	1.1.4 Grandfathered Right to Develop or Use Property (ZO)
5.06 Nonconforming Site Elements	5.6.13 Nonconforming Signs (ZO)

Simplify and reorganize regulations

The County should consolidate all regulations regarding nonconformities in a single section of the UDO to make it easy for users to find all relevant standards. The existing Ordinance provides specific sections for nonconforming uses of land and nonconforming uses of structures which should be reorganized in the UDO to allow users to understand how to manage nonconformities. The modernization of the nonconformity regulations will allow ordinary maintenance, adaptive reuse, and limited improvements to existing nonconforming structures to help meet the County's reinvestment goals. The UDO will help implement the County's sustainability goals by allowing property owners to maintain nonconforming structures by installing rooftop solar panels and green roofs. The essential regulations in Section 1.1.4 (Grandfathered Right to Develop or Use Property) of the existing Zoning Ordinance will be retained in full and moved to Chapter 5.00 (Nonconformities) of the UDO.

Establish nonconforming site element provisions

Nonconforming site elements are physical improvements on a zoning lot, such as parking lots, landscaping, and other types of on-site development that no longer meet zoning requirements. Section 5.06 Nonconforming Site Elements could provide the County with a systematic way of addressing nonconforming site elements. For example, if an applicant wanted to significantly expand the size of a parking lot, the parking lot would then have to meet the UDO's off-street parking standards as well as the requirements for parking lot landscaping.

Chapter 6.00 Subdivision Development Standards

This Chapter pertains to the subdivision of land into lots and blocks and the provision of streets, utilities, parks, and schools.

Proposed Organization	Corresponding Sections from Existing Ordinances
6.01 General Provisions	500 Character of the Land (SO) 501 Minimum Standards and Specifications (SO)
6.02 Subdivision Design and Layout	504 Design Requirements (SO) 505 Lots and Blocks (SO)
6.03 Conservation and Cluster Subdivision Design	2.12 Traditional Neighborhood and Cluster Development (ZO)
6.04 Street Standards	507 Thoroughfares (SO)
6.05 Drainage, Stormwater, Grading, Erosion, and Sedimentation Control	508 Drainage and Stormwater Management Facilities (SO) 509 Grading (SO) 510 Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control (SO)
6.06 Required Public Improvements	109 Reasonable Conditions (SO) 110 Resubdivision of Land (SO) 503 Off-Site Improvements (SO) VII Public Improvement Guarantees and Acceptance Procedures (SO)
6.07 Cash and Land Donations	506. Requirements for Dedication of Land or Cash Contributions (SO) 513 Indemnity (SO) VI Park, School, and Other Public Purpose Contributions (SO)

**Note: We recommend not including Chapter VIII Stormwater Protection and NPDES Permit of the Subdivision Ordinance in the UDO and locating these regulations as a standalone Appendix B within the County Code.*

Update conservation and cluster design requirements to promote sustainable development

New developments should balance the growth of Boone County with the protection of natural areas by retaining the principles of conservation and cluster design. These techniques maximize open space preservation without reducing the size or number of homes by siting buildings in more compact clusters. Conservation and cluster design often require an inventory of natural resources on a property so that developed areas are not located in environmentally sensitive locations. The natural resources on the undeveloped portions of the property would then be protected as open space and maintained for the benefit of current and future residents.

Boone County already has provisions for conservation and cluster design in the form of its RC Residential Conservation and RC-2 Residential Clustering districts. Conservation development has occurred in the Stonegate, Mallard Pointe, and Creek Ridge subdivisions, but new projects of this type have not been developed in many years. Modern ordinances regulate conservation and cluster development as an optional process through the subdivision standards rather than as required zoning districts. The County understands the importance of balancing land preservation with new development so conservation and cluster design should be allowed in any zoning district that allows residential development in order to protect as much land as possible.

Chapter 7.00 Zoning Districts

This Chapter establishes the zoning districts, zoning map, and development standards for principal structures. This Chapter includes bulk and yard regulations and design requirements.

Proposed Organization	Corresponding Sections from Existing Ordinances
7.01 Purpose	New Section of the UDO
7.02 Applicability	3.1.6. Lots of Record (ZO)
7.03 General Development Standards	New Section of the UDO
7.04 Zoning Map	3.1.3 Zoning Map (ZO) 3.1.4 Boundaries (ZO) 3.1.5 Territory Not Included (ZO)
7.05 Use of Land and Buildings	3.1.7 General Setbacks (ZO) 3.1.8 Exception to Height Limits (ZO) 5.1.3. Traffic Visibility Across Corner Lots (ZO)
7.06 Establishment of Zoning Districts and Purpose Statements	3.1.1 Establishment of Districts (ZO)
7.07 A-1 Agricultural Preservation District	3.2 A-1 Agricultural Preservation District (ZO)
7.08 A-2 Agricultural Residence District	3.3 A-2 Agricultural Residence District (ZO)
7.09 R-E Residential Exurban District	3.4 Residential Exurban District (ZO)
7.10 R-1 Single-Unit Dwelling District	3.5 R-1 Single-Family Residence District (ZO)
7.11 B-1 Business District	3.9 B-1 Local Business District (ZO) 3.10 B-2 General Business District (ZO)
7.12 I-1 Industrial District	3.11 I-1 Light Industrial District (ZO) 3.12 I-2 General Industrial District (ZO)
7.13 Design Requirements for B-1 and I-1 Districts	3.14 Business Route 20 Overlay (ZO)
7.14 FPO Floodplain Overlay District	3.1.2 Overlay Districts (ZO) 3.1.9 Flood Hazard Development (ZO) 3.13 FPO Floodplain Overlay District (ZO)
7.15 Principal Structure Encroachments	
Remove: RC Residential Conservation (3.6, ZO), RC-2 Residential Clustering (3.7, ZO), RTN Residential Traditional Neighborhood (3.8, ZO), Community Separation Area (3.15, ZO).	

Update the zoning districts and zoning map to facilitate Boone County's vision for the future

Over time, certain zoning districts in a community may become out of sync with the community's vision for future development. We suggest refining Boone County's zoning district structure per Figure 6. Proposed Zoning Districts. These recommendations are based on a thorough analysis of the existing zoning district structure, discussions with County staff, and the concepts for the future land use plan that will become part of the updated Comprehensive Plan.

It is clear that many of the bulk and setback regulations in the existing Ordinance should be maintained as part of the revised Ordinance. However, there may be opportunities to update the zoning district regulations based on this review. Moving forward, the zoning district structure will no longer include zoning districts that are either underutilized or not mapped, which will allow the County to manage development with fewer zoning districts.

The Boone County Zoning Map will need to be updated to reflect any changes made to the zoning district structure. The overall goal will be to ensure that the zoning map follows the future land use plan in the new Comprehensive Plan to the greatest extent possible. For reference, please use this link to view an interactive version of the County's existing zoning map.

Figure 6. Proposed Zoning Districts

Proposed Zoning District	Existing Zoning District
A-1 Agricultural Preservation District	A-1 Agricultural Preservation District
A-2 Agricultural Residence District	A-2 Agricultural Residence District
R-E Residential Exurban District	R-E Residential Exurban District
R-1 Single-Unit Dwelling District	R-1 Single-Family Residence District
B-1 Business District	B-1 Local Business District B-2 General Business District
I-1 Industrial District	I-1 Light Industrial District I-2 General Industrial District
FPO Floodplain Overlay District	3.13 FPO Floodplain Overlay District (ZO)
Remove: RC Residential Conservation, RC-2 Residential Clustering, and RTN Residential Traditional Neighborhood.	

Clarify development regulations in the County's agricultural areas

Over the last several years, the County has done a lot of good work on the issue of lot of record as it relates to single-family residential development in the A-1 and A-2 Districts. Sightline has viewed the recordings of the Ad-Hoc Lot of Record Committee and discussed them with staff. At this time, no major changes are necessary to the way that the County regulates land in the A-1 and A-2 District. That being said, several small changes will make it much easier for the County to regulate current and future development in these areas.

A-1: Boone County's A-1 District includes 95 percent of the land in Boone County and includes almost all of the County's prime farmland. The zoning requirements of the A-1 should be clarified to protect this farmland now and in the years to come. In the existing Zoning Ordinance, bulk regulations are based on four use types: agricultural, residential less than five acres, residential five acres or more, and commercial/industrial uses. In order to preserve prime farmland, the UDO will only include two sets of standards, one for agricultural use and another for residential use of five acres or more. These bulk standards will ensure that smaller residential development, less than five acres, is *generally* not allowed in the A-1 District. Commercial and industrial uses will be regulated by the revised use table in Chapter 8.00 Uses.

A-2: The A-2 is a relatively small district in the County with approximately 99 parcels. The only modification that we suggest for the A-2 is to change the minimum lot width requirement from a proportion of the lot width to a defined numerical standard. The minimum lot width for the A-2 in the existing Zoning Ordinance is 30 percent of lot depth. We suggest changing the requirement in the UDO to a figure in the range of 150 to 200 feet, based on further GIS analysis of existing A-2 parcels.

Clarify development regulations in the County's residential areas

Even though residential development in Boone County has been down in recent years compared to the early 2000s, the County needs to update its residential zoning districts to reflect existing development and set the stage for appropriate development in the future.

R-E: The R-E serves the County well in terms of its large lot residential development so we suggest only making two small changes. First, change the minimum lot area from 90,000 square feet to 2 acres (87,120 square feet). A minimum of two acres is straightforward and will bring more parcels in the R-E into conformance. Second, like the A-2, change the minimum lot width requirement from a proportion of the lot width to a defined numerical standard. The minimum lot width for the R-E in the existing Zoning Ordinance is 30 percent of lot depth. We suggest changing the requirement in the UDO to a figure in the range of 150 to 200 feet, based on further GIS analysis of existing R-E parcels.

R-1: The R-1 is the second largest zoning classification in Boone County and it applies to approximately 5,000 parcels. In the existing Zoning Ordinance, the R-1 is a very large and very important zoning district that cannot be used since it only applies to parcels platted prior to 2001. The concept behind this standard is to prevent new development, but it creates more problems than it solves. It needs to be addressed from both a legal and development standpoint. For the UDO, the R-1 needs to once again be a usable zoning district. The UDO will include a number of regulations to ensure that the County continues to protect prime farmland and that the R-1 is used only in appropriate situations.

R-C, RC-2, and RTN: As discussed in Section 6.00 Subdivision Development Standards, conservation and cluster design should be included as an option within the subdivision standards, not as a required zoning district. The R-C includes 165 parcels in four nearby subdivisions: Stonegate, Mallard Pointe, Creek Ridge, and the development near Spring Creek Road and Town Hall Road. Approximately 65 percent of the parcels in the R-C meet the bulk standards of the R-1, which are one acre of lot area and 100 feet of lot width. It would make sense to rezone these R-C areas to the R-1 District. The RC-2 is not mapped and should not be included in the UDO. The RTN is so small (10 parcels), that it does not make sense to carry this zoning district into the UDO. Parcels currently zoned RTN should be rezoned to a residential, commercial, or industrial designation based on the principal use of each property.

Consolidate the County's business and industrial districts

In comparison to Boone County's agricultural and residential zoning districts, its business and industrial districts make up only a small proportion of the County. However, these districts are vital to the economic development goals of the County and can be reconfigured to serve residents and employers alike.

B-1 and B-2: The B-1 includes 32 parcels while the B-2 includes 78 parcels. The County should consolidate these zoning districts into a single business zoning district. There is significant overlap in the regulatory framework found in the existing Zoning Ordinance for the B-1 and B-2 and in the size and location of parcels on the ground. Most of the parcels in the B-1 would meet the minimum lot standards of the B-2, which are 20,000 square feet of lot area and 100 feet of lot width. There are subtle differences in the use allowances between the B-1 and B-2 in the existing Zoning Ordinance, but they could be more easily navigated with tailored permitted and special use categories for a consolidated business district in the UDO.

I-1 and I-2: The I-1 includes 120 parcels while the I-2 includes 24 parcels. The County should consolidate these zoning districts into a single industrial zoning district. There is significant overlap in the regulatory framework found in the existing Zoning Ordinance for the I-1 and I-2 and in the size and location of parcels on the ground. Most of the parcels in the I-1 would meet the minimum lot standards of the I-2, which are 40,000 square feet of lot area and 250 feet of lot width. There are subtle differences in the use allowances between the I-1 and I-2 in the existing Zoning Ordinance, but they could be more easily navigated with tailored permitted and special use categories for a consolidated industrial district in the UDO.

Create basic design requirements for business and industrial districts

We recommend including basic design requirements for new development in the new B-1 and I-1 Districts to improve the overall appearance of new development in key commercial and employment areas. The requirements will cover the basics of design while providing room for architectural creativity. The design requirements can specify building form and allowed building materials. These requirements will build on the building design and exterior construction material standards of Section 3.14 (Business Route 20 Overlay) of the existing Zoning Ordinance. In the UDO, these design regulations will be applied to new development throughout the B-1 and I-1 Districts, rather than just the area along Business Route 20, west of Belvidere.

Remove outdated and ineffective bulk requirements

The County has a wide array of bulk requirements to manage the size of buildings in its agricultural, residential, business, and industrial zoning districts. Key standards are minimum lot area, minimum lot width, minimum setbacks, and maximum building height. The UDO process allows the County to move away from bulk requirements that are no longer effective. We recommend eliminating the use of minimum ground floor area, density, and floor area ratio for residential development because new construction in Boone County will continue to be constrained by so many other factors.

In addition to zoning regulations, market forces will preclude the development of smaller dwelling units because land is, and will continue to be, too valuable to build small. Similarly, the density standards from the existing Zoning Ordinance should not be included in the UDO because they actually allow more housing units per acre than the standard for minimum lot area. Moving forward, the County will be using the recommendations of the new Comprehensive Plan to direct the location and density of new residential development.

Chapter 8.00 Uses

This Chapter includes regulations pertaining to permitted and special uses, accessory uses and structures, and temporary uses and structures. Use regulations will be consolidated within this Chapter to ensure that all information relating to uses is found in one place.

Proposed Organization	Corresponding Sections from Existing Ordinances
8.01 General Provisions	New Section of the UDO
8.02 Principal Uses and Structures	1.1.3 Exempted Uses, 4.1.1 General Use Criteria, 4.5 Airports and Aircraft, 4.6 Mobile Home Parks, 4.7 Earth Materials Extraction, 4.8 Wind Energy Systems, 4.9 Group Homes, 4.10 Livestock Facilities Buffer, 4.11 Accessory Relative Living Quarters, 4.12 Adult Entertainment Establishments, 4.13 Beer Garden, 4.14 Dwelling Unit Linked to Agricultural Conservation Easement, 4.15 Second Dwelling Unit for Lot of Record Exchange, 4.18 Animal Boarding, Breeding, and Shelter Facilities, 4.19 Adult Use Cannabis Establishments, 4.20 Accessory Dwelling Unit, 4.21 Agritourism, 4.22 Commercial Solar Energy Facility, 5.1.5. Conversion of Dwellings, 5.1.6 Mobile Homes Prohibited, 5.1.7 Temporary Additional Home (ZO All)
8.03 Accessory Uses and Structures	4.3 Home-Based Business (ZO) 5.1.4 Easements (ZO) 5.2 Accessory Structures or Uses (ZO)
8.04 Temporary Uses and Structures	4.2 Temporary Uses and Special Events (ZO)

Include a shorter list of use categories which will replace a longer list of specific uses

We recommend that Boone County adopt use categories for permitted and special uses rather than a long list of specific uses that attempts to address every possible land use that the County might regulate. For example, the existing Zoning Ordinance includes a number of production and assembly uses that could be grouped together because they have a similar impact on the character of the surrounding area. The use category “heavy manufacturing” could replace dozens of specific uses found in the existing Ordinance, such as production and assembly of grain, metal, fertilizers, and other materials.

This approach helps simplify the Ordinance and avoids repetition. Use categories have the advantage of being broad enough to include a wide range of uses that are similar to one another, which reduces the need for zoning text amendments as new uses develop over time. During the Ordinance update, it will be important to carefully define these terms to clarify which specific uses may be included in each use category.

The UDO will continue to call out certain specific uses to better manage their location within the County. Such uses may include adult uses and cannabis uses, which require greater oversight. These types of uses have specific impacts on community character and traffic access that can be addressed by allowing them in specific zoning districts, as a special use, or with well-defined use standards. Residential uses will not be grouped into use categories.

Update use standards to complement new use categories

Use standards are supplementary zoning requirements for land uses that help ensure that the uses remain compatible with neighboring properties. Clear use standards provide clarity in the UDO and are an important element of use categories. For example, a new truck stop would have use standards in regard to stacking spaces, landscape screening, and the need for a traffic study. The UDO will parallel the organization of Chapter 4 (Design Criteria for Specific Uses) of the existing Zoning Ordinance so it is easier to keep track of them. We recommend consolidating use standards for all districts into a new section of Chapter 8.00 Uses for both permitted and special uses. Like the existing Zoning Ordinance, use standards may also be included for accessory and temporary uses, as necessary.

Address evolving uses that have community-wide impact

For the most part, land use in the County has been relatively stable in recent years, however, a number of specific uses will require special attention in the UDO.

Solar Farms: In 2023, Public Act 102-1123 changed county governments' ability to regulate new commercial renewable energy facilities and prohibits counties from banning or placing moratoriums on solar and wind development. Updated standards in the UDO should focus on mitigating the visual impact of renewable energy facilities on neighboring properties. Specifically, the UDO can include updated screening regulations to ensure that landscaping is planted to conceal the appearance of solar farms.

Short-Term Rentals: Boone County has much to offer travelers from near and far. Short-term rentals can complement the County's economic development goals by allowing small lodging uses in specific locations. Short-term rentals can attract tourists, boost local spending, and potentially contribute to increased tax revenue for the community. As currently envisioned, short-term rentals will be allowed only in the A-1 District.

Rodeos: Rodeos have been at the center of much public discussion in Boone County for the last several years. The County has made updates to the temporary use provisions in the existing Zoning Ordinance for these uses to address local concerns. The UDO will capture the revised provisions for rodeos and will not make any substantive changes to the regulations.

Chapter 9.00 Off-Street Parking and Loading

This Chapter pertains to off-street parking, loading, and parking lot design.

Proposed Organization	Corresponding Sections from Existing Ordinances
9.01 General Provisions	5.5.1 Purpose (ZO)
9.02 Off-Street Parking Spaces	5.5.2 Scope (ZO) 5.5.5 Schedule of Required Parking (ZO)
9.03 Parking Design Standards	5.5.3 General Off-Street Parking and Loading (ZO) 5.5.4 Additional Off-Street Parking Standards (ZO)
9.04 Parking Lot Walkways	New Section of the UDO
9.05 Driveways	New Section of the UDO
9.06 Vehicle Stacking Requirements	New Section of the UDO
9.07 Recreational Vehicle Parking and Storage	5.1.8 Recreational Vehicles and Trailers (ZO)
9.08 Off-Street Loading Facility Requirements	5.5.6 Loading Requirements (ZO)

Tailor minimum parking requirements to new use categories

The County should comprehensively reassess its minimum parking requirements as part of the UDO process. Over time minimum parking standards tend to become inflated, which can create excess parking, reduce the amount of developable area for buildings, increase project costs for property owners, and contribute to stormwater runoff. The Ordinance update process will examine standards for all uses in the community to make sure that the County does not require too much parking. We recommend tailoring the revised off-street parking requirements to the use categories in Chapter 8.00 Uses. The use categories in the proposed Ordinance will make the list of parking requirements shorter and more user-friendly.

Add standards to make parking lots more pedestrian-friendly and more eco-friendly

In order to ensure that parking lots are as safe for pedestrians as they are for cars, the UDO should include new standards that specifically require large off-street parking lots to include walkways. These standards would require the creation of walkways within parking lots and connections to adjacent sidewalks along the right-of-way. These regulations would apply to off-street parking facilities for uses that have parking spaces that exceed a certain threshold, such as 50 parking spaces. In addition, the UDO will include provisions to encourage the construction of electric vehicle charging stations in appropriate locations. Greater access to electric vehicle charging stations will help the County facilitate its goals around greater sustainability.

Update and simplify off-street loading requirements

Much like minimum parking requirements, excessive loading requirements can adversely affect developable area and project costs. More and more communities are updating their minimum off-street loading requirements, and we recommend that Boone County consider revising its minimum loading requirements as well. Uses that require more off-street loading spaces, such as warehousing, storage, or distribution facilities, would still be able to meet their loading needs if such uses were to be developed in the County in the future.

Chapter 10.00 Landscape

This Chapter provides requirements for landscaping, buffering, and screening for new residential and non-residential development.

Proposed Organization	Corresponding Sections from Existing Ordinances
10.01 General Provisions	5.4.1 Purpose (ZO) 511.B Landscape Plan Required (SO)
10.02 Tree Preservation	511.A Tree Preservation and Removal (SO)
10.03 Design, Installation, and Maintenance	5.4.2 Landscaping and Screening Regulations (ZO)
10.04 Street Trees	5.4.3 Additional Right-of-Way Landscaping (ZO)
10.04 Foundation Planting	5.4.5 Additional Foundation Landscaping (ZO)
10.05 Parking Lot Landscaping	4.1.1 General Use Criteria (ZO) 5.4.4 Additional Parking Lot Landscaping (ZO)
10.06 Buffer Yards	5.4.6 Additional Perimeter Landscaping (ZO)
10.07 Screening Requirements	4.1.1 General Use Criteria (ZO)
10.08 Outdoor Lighting	New Section of the UDO

Leverage the many benefits of better landscape requirements

Robust landscape standards play an integral role in the appearance of development locations and the County as a whole. In addition to their aesthetic and screening functions, well-designed landscape features provide valuable stormwater management and help to buffer the impact of new development. To maximize this potential, we recommend enhancing the County's current landscape regulations. The landscape regulations in the UDO will pertain to tree preservation, street trees, and on-lot landscaping for parking areas.

Update standards for buffer yards and community separation areas

Buffer yards are used to separate more intensive uses, like commercial and industrial businesses, from less intensive uses, like housing. The standards of the existing Zoning Ordinance should be strengthened to ensure that these objectives are met. Updated standards in the UDO will specify the length, depth, and height of the buffer yard as well as the various landscape elements, such as hedges, trees, and fences.

Similarly, the existing Zoning Ordinance includes a Community Separation Area Overlay District (Section 3.15) to provide open space buffers between communities. Open space areas are important within residential subdivisions as sound and visual buffers from nearby arterials. However, the Community Separation Area Overlay District has not been an effective buffer between the various communities within Boone County. We recommend replacing the overlay district with new future land use recommendations in the new Comprehensive Plan.

Adopt an updated tree species list

To provide a consistent standard for new tree plantings, we suggest that the County use an updated tree species list, such as the Morton Arboretum Northern Illinois Tree Species List, or a similar such resource.

By adopting the Morton Arboretum List — which is regularly reviewed by regional arborists and ecologists — the County could ensure that standards reflect current trends in plant development and pest/disease control, without the need to dedicate County resources to creating and maintaining its own tree species list.

Revise tree species requirements to improve overall tree health

Tree species requirements ensure that a community will have a diverse group of trees that grow well in their climate and are less susceptible to disease and pests, such as the emerald ash borer. We recommend adding tree species diversity requirements to the UDO, including a list of the maximum percentage of trees on a lot that may come from a specific species, genus, or family. These standards should be based on the size of the parcel, rather than the total number of trees, and should exclude very small parcels. Finally, we suggest including standards for drought- and salt-tolerant species, to ensure resilience to changing weather patterns.

Promote water conservation

Boone County is preparing to perform a detailed study of the area's groundwater reserves to better understand and implement water conservation strategies. To support this work the UDO will include landscape standards that promote water conservation. This can include standards to encourage native and drought-tolerant trees, shrubs, and grasses that require little maintenance, require water-efficient irrigation systems, and allow the installation of rain barrels and other water-saving tools.

Include outdoor lighting standards to limit light pollution

The UDO will include exterior lighting standards to limit glare and control light trespass. These exterior lighting standards would pertain to building-mounted lighting, parking lot lighting, and the illumination of buildings. Sign illumination standards will be found in Chapter 11.00 Signs. These standards will be crafted to be consistent with dark sky design principles by requiring fully shielded lighting that minimizes light pollution and maximizes the energy efficiency of each fixture.

Chapter 11.00 Signs

This Chapter includes updated and easy to use sign requirements for all uses.

Proposed Organization	Corresponding Sections from Existing Ordinances
12.01 Purpose	5.6.1 Purpose (ZO)
12.02 General Construction and Design	5.6.2 General Regulations (ZO) 5.6.3 Sign Mounting Requirements (ZO) 5.6.4 Setback Requirements (ZO) 5.6.12 Removal of Signs (ZO)
12.03 Sign Measurement	New Section of the UDO
12.04 Permanent Signs	5.6.4 Setback Requirements (ZO) 5.6.5 Requirements in Residential Districts (ZO) 5.6.6 Requirements in Agriculture Districts (ZO) 5.6.7 Requirements in Business and Industrial Districts (ZO) 5.6.8 Off-Site Signs (ZO)
12.05 Temporary Signs	5.6.4 Setback Requirements (ZO) 5.6.5 Requirements in Residential Districts (ZO) 5.6.6 Requirements in Agriculture Districts (ZO) 5.6.7 Requirements in Business and Industrial Districts (ZO) 5.6.9 Special Event Signs (ZO) 5.6.11 Temporary Signs (ZO)
12.06 Prohibited Signs	5.6.2.H Prohibited Signs (ZO)

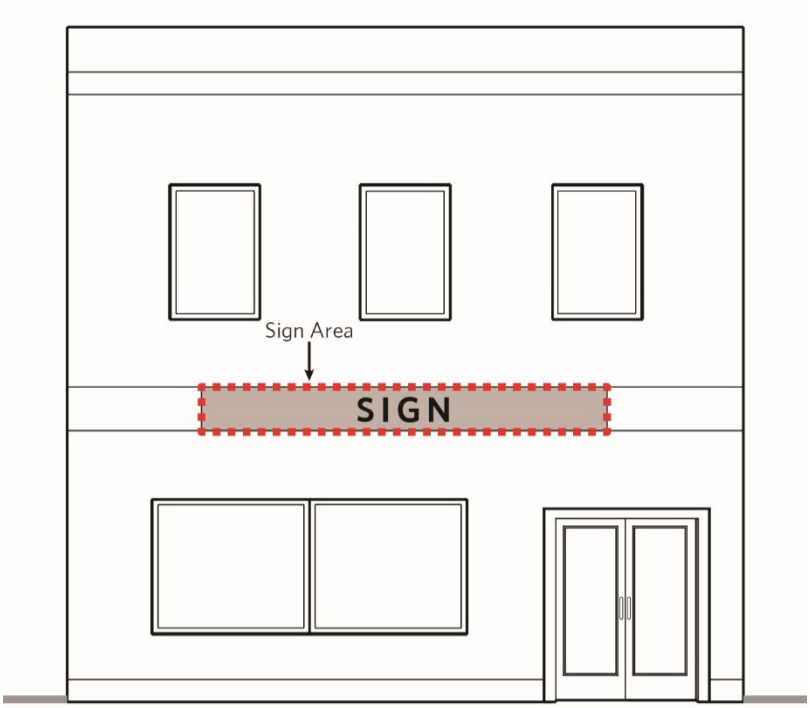
Reconsider section organization for greater consistency and ease of use

The existing Zoning Ordinance organizes sign regulations by zoning district with separate requirements in agricultural, residential, and business and industrial districts. Sightline will work with the County to modify the organization of the sign regulations so that they are easier to use and understand. The UDO will explore opportunities to consolidate sign standards by sign type, rather than zoning district, to make it easier to navigate. For example, monument signs can be found at the entrance to residential subdivisions and in front of businesses. To avoid confusion, the UDO will ensure that the regulations for monument signs are in a single location, with separate standards for the size of the sign based on the zoning district.

Enhance graphics and integrate them within key locations

The UDO can feature illustrations for major sign types using a standard illustration style that can help to convey the intent of the sign standards. The illustrations in the UDO are representations of the standards of the Ordinance and are intended to complement the text, but will not represent every circumstance that may arise in the County. For example, Figure 7. Example Wall Sign provides a simple way to demonstrate the location of a wall sign and how to measure its area.

Figure 7. Example Wall Sign



Update regulations to ensure consistency with recent court rulings on sign content

The County has made a solid effort to ensure that sign regulations are based on the structural characteristics of a sign, rather than its content. These efforts are underpinned by the findings of the U.S. Supreme Court decision in Reed v. Town of Gilbert (2015). This decision emphasizes that sign regulations are allowed to promote aesthetics and other community goals, but only when these regulations are content neutral. Communities around the country have been reevaluating their sign ordinances in light of this decision and there are opportunities for Boone County to better align its standards with the Supreme Court's findings. The regulations in the UDO should build on existing provisions that define signs by their structural type. For example, the term identification sign from the existing Zoning Ordinance could be replaced with the term monument sign in the UDO for greater clarity.

Chapter 12.00 Definitions

This Chapter defines key terms related to each section of the UDO.

Proposed Organization	Corresponding Sections from Existing Ordinances
12.01 Purpose	1.2.1 Use of Definitions (ZO)
12.02 Definition of Terms	1.2.3 Definitions (ZO) II Definitions (SO)

Add new definitions and remove outdated terms

The goal of this Chapter is to define the key terms found in the UDO. In drafting this Chapter, existing terms will be evaluated, new definitions will be added, and outdated terms will be revised to reflect modern development standards and practices. It is likely that some terms will be removed if they are obsolete or no longer used in the Ordinance. Additionally, this section of the Ordinance will define all of the use categories in Chapter 8.00 Uses. To increase the accessibility and readability of the document, supporting definitions currently found in various sections of the existing ordinances and amendments (such as definitions associated with floodplains, solar energy, and wind energy) will be relocated to this section.

Remove regulating language and terms that are no longer necessary

The revision of Chapter 12.00 Definitions will clarify the County's zoning standards so that regulating language will not be located in Definitions. Land use regulations should only be located in the pertinent regulating sections of the UDO. For example, the regulations for the quantity of animals at an animal shelter should be moved to the use standards in Chapter 8.00 Uses. Additionally, terms that are not going to be used in the UDO should be removed. For example, terms like that are rarely used in the existing Ordinance – such as "build-to-line," "development envelope," and "floor area ratio" – are not likely to be included in the UDO.







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SIGHTLINE
PLANNING AND ZONING