



Planning Commission Report on Development Regulations Update September 23, 2025

Over the past several months, the Georgia Planning Commission has been working with our planning consultant to complete an update of our Development Regulations. This update is in direct response to align our development regulations with our most recent Town Plan, adopted January 6, 2025. The previous Georgia Town Plan was adopted in January of 2017. The Planning Commission, as well as the Selectboard, has held three public meetings. The Development Regulations have gone through three updates: V2.3, V2.4, and V3.0. This summary report serves to identify significant changes being made to the development regulations in V3.0.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

This bylaw update aims to align the Town of Georgia Development Regulations with the current Town Plan, adopted January 2025, and make associated corrections and improvements to the code. The regulations help to promote an increase in housing and commercial businesses and lessen the tax burden on the citizens of Georgia. The goal of the final document was to balance property rights and maintain open space with the directive from the State of Vermont to increase housing availability. In areas where the State of Vermont has oversight, the language in the regulations has been lessened or removed so as not to conflict with state regulations.

SIGNIFICANT CHANGES

Although this update was intended to align local regulations with the newly adopted Town Plan, the Georgia Development Regulations were redeveloped as a completely new document, formatted to improve overall organization, readability, and functionality. A majority of the existing regulations text was carried over into the new document and edited as necessary. The following notable changes were incorporated:

LAND USE: The land uses and zoning map have been updated to reflect the land use vision in the adopted Town Plan, with changes to districts described further below.

SECTION 2 ZONING DISTRICTS: Changes clarifying parcels in more than one zoning district were made, requiring 45% of a parcel to be in that zoning district to use that district's dimensional requirements. A correction for parcels affected by a previous change in the determination of acres

was made, allowing for parcels not currently meeting the acreage requirement for further development to have the parcel recognized as the next larger parcel for minimum lot size requirements only.

AR DISTRICT (AR-1). The AR-1 district has been renamed “AR—Agricultural/Rural Residential.” Its geographic extent has been reduced in some areas, while expansion has occurred in other districts. The acreage requirement for building was reduced from 5 acres to 2 acres. The AR district is the remaining area where farms exist in town. Over the years, the number of farms has reduced significantly. The reduction in the acreage requirement will allow the remaining farms to lessen the impact on their land when there is a need to sell parcels for building lots. The AR district promotes condensed housing through the PUD process and the newly formed Cottage Courts, allowing open space protection and keeping contiguous expanses of agriculture, forestry, and other important land.

R DISTRICT (AR-2). The existing AR-2 district has been renamed “R - Residential”. The geographic extents of this district have been enlarged to include areas along Route 7, Polly Hubbard Road, and Mill River Road. The minimum lot size in this district has been reduced from 2 acres to 1 acre, with reductions in lot road frontage, side, and rear yard setbacks to meet the acreage change.

RN DISTRICT (AR-3). The existing AR-3 District has been renamed “RN - Residential Neighborhood”. The minimum lot size in this district has been reduced from 1 acre to 0.5 acres, with reductions in lot road frontage, front setback along Route 7, side and rear yard setbacks.

NEW RV DISTRICT—A new zoning district named “RV—Residential Village” has been created. The geographic extents of this new district include former AR-3 lands on the east and west sides of Route 7, south of the Village Core (Formerly SV) district. It also includes some parcels along Route 104A that were formerly in the SV district. The minimum lot size in this district has been established at 0.25 acres.

LF DISTRICT (L-1). The existing L-1 district has been renamed “LF - Lakefront”. The geographic extents of this district have been reduced from 500 feet from the edge of the water down to 250 feet. The minimum lot size in this district has been reduced from 1 acre to 0.5 acres, with some reductions in lot road frontage, front yard setback, shoreline frontage, and side and rear setbacks. The limitation on building height in the LF district has been increased from sixteen feet to twenty-six feet. Because the area and bulk requirements of the current regulations were variable depending on distance from the water and lot size, some of these reductions would not modify requirements on certain lots. The area and bulk requirements have now been standardized for this district. While a shoreland setback has been changed in the district, state and federal regulations control any increase in impervious surface within the district.

LV DISTRICT (L-2). The existing L-2 district has been renamed “LV - Lakeview”. The geographic extents of this district now begin 250 feet closer to the edge of the water, but extend

inland the same distance (2,000') from the water as currently zoned. The minimum lot size in this district has been reduced from 3 acres (4 for two-household dwellings) to 1 acre. Reductions in lot road frontage, side, and rear yard setbacks have also been established.

NEW BH DISTRICT - A new zoning district named "BH - Business Hamlet" has been created. The geographic extents of this district include parcels within Georgia Center hamlet, on both sides of Route 7, extending from the intersection with Ballard Road to beyond Cadieux Road. It also extends on both sides of Plains Road. The minimum lot size in this district is 1 acre. The BH zone is intended to promote a mix of smaller-scale commercial and residential living.

B DISTRICT. The existing "B - Business" district has been reduced in geographic area in one location and expanded with a new area elsewhere. In the vicinity between Route 7 and Interstate 89, the B district has been reduced. A new B district area has been added at the north end of town on the east side of Route 7, bounded by the railroad tracks and Conger Road. On the west side of Route 7, the new B district is established on the north side of Mill River Road.

VC DISTRICT (SV). The existing SV district has been renamed "VC—Village Core." The geographic extents of this district have been expanded to include an additional parcel to the west and reduced to exclude several parcels to the east. The maximum building height in this district has increased from 50 feet to 55 feet. In keeping with the intent of a walkable village district, changes to this district now allow for a single-family dwelling to occupy the first floor of a multi-level dwelling, lowering the amount of commercial offset needed to maintain the commercial/residential requirement of the district, and allowing public amenities to be used in place of or in addition to the commercial requirement as a part of some developments. Changes in commercial structures now allow for the second floor of the building to not be habitable.

I DISTRICT (I-1 & I-2). The I-1 and I-2 districts have been combined and renamed "I-Industrial". The geographic extents of this combined district have been expanded to include additional parcels to the east of the railroad tracks and expanded south to include parcels fronting on Route 104A.

NR DISTRICT (R-1 & N). The existing R-1 and N districts have been combined and renamed "NR—Natural/Recreational." The geographic extents of these combined districts remain unchanged. The minimum lot size in this district has been reduced from 20 acres to 10 acres.

ARTICLE 3 LAND USES. Updated table 3.1 outlining land uses for all districts. Updated the language for home-based businesses to include Home Office, Home Occupation, and Home Industry. Added language for man-made ponds. Updated language around the use of recreational and camping vehicles on both developed and undeveloped lots. A new licensing requirement for short-term rentals and seasonal mobile food units has been added, which will be enacted through an ordinance by the Selectboard.

HOUSING. The new regulations have been modified to broaden allowable housing types and provide safer and affordable housing availability. Single-household dwellings and two-household

dwelling are now considered the same category of land use and are allowed in identical fashion. Multi-household dwellings have been added as potential uses in the newly created RV and BH districts. A new housing type, “Cottage Court,” has been added to the regulations as a permitted use in all but the I and LF districts. Group Homes (8 persons or less) are now permitted in all but the Industrial district. Multi-tenant housing for older persons has been added to the new RV and BH districts. Most districts have added accessory dwelling units and adult day care homes as permitted uses. With the increasing popularity of Accessory Dwelling Units, the regulations have lessened the restrictions on ADUs by increasing the allowable minimum square footage from 900 SF to 1,200 SF and removing the residential requirement of the landowner.

SIDEWALKS. The code has been clarified/augmented to require or encourage public sidewalks and/or shared-use paths, focusing on the VC and RV districts for future sidewalk and public path construction.

WETLAND & VERNAL POOLS. Removed much of the language that was repetitive to state and federal standards.

SPECIFIC USE REQUIREMENTS. The code now includes specific requirements for many particular uses, such as childcare, group homes, contractor yards, heavy equipment sales, motor vehicle repair, and short-term rentals.

ABANDONED AND BLIGHTED PROPERTIES. New code sections have been added to address conditions of abandoned or blighted properties.

DEMOLITION. A new permit requirement was added for demolishing any structure over 250 SF.

PERMITS & APPROVALS. Outlined a new structure for the availability of density bonuses when developing a PUD or Cottage Court.

SUBDIVISION REVIEW. Allowed for administrative review of two lot subdivisions and boundary line adjustments. Moved the application process to an all-digital process, removing the requirement for paper copies.

FLOODING. The existing code regarding “Flood Hazard and River Corridor Regulations” has been replaced in its entirety with new flood hazard and river corridor regulations from Northwest Regional Planning.

ONLINE PERMIT PROCESS. The new development regulations have been updated to accommodate a new online permit application system, which is anticipated to help streamline the permit application process for applicants and town staff. This includes the administrative approval of several common requests, such as boundary lot line adjustments and minor two-lot subdivisions.

DEFINITIONS. The code now includes many new definitions, as well as updated or clarified definitions for existing terms.

FINDINGS. This bylaw amendment aligns with and furthers the goals and policies of the Town of Georgia 2025 Town Plan, specifically with regard to the availability of safe and affordable housing. The current plan states: *“Allow for a more balanced and diverse mix of housing types that meets the needs of Georgia’s population at every stage of life.”* (pg. 90) and *“Ensure that the town is enabling the creation of adequate housing which is available and affordable for Georgia residents.”* as well as supporting Policies D1, D2, D4 and D5. These bylaws enable and encourage several additional housing types, and incorporate their potential development with reduced lot sizes in several areas in town as described in 24 VSA 4441. The provision for two-family and accessory dwelling units are treated on equal footing with single-household dwellings, and several new areas of town have been opened up for multi-household dwellings. (24 VSA 4412) These bylaws also do not unreasonably restrict essential public facilities as described in (24 VSA 4413). The bylaw establishes clear and reasonable zoning districts to regulate the use of land as described in 24 VSA 4414, and align with the future land use vision of the adopted Town Plan as prescribed in 24 VSA 4441.

VIEWING. The full version of the Development Regulations is available in the Town Clerk's Office at the Town of Georgia Municipal Offices or on the Town of Georgia website at townofgeorgia.com. Any questions can be directed to the Zoning Administrator at zoning@townofgeorgia.com or by calling 802-524-3524.

ATTACHMENTS. Attached are the table of contents and the proposed zoning map from the proposed zoning regulations.



Georgia VT Development Regulations

Table of Contents

Quick Reference Guide.....ii
Abbreviations Used.....iv

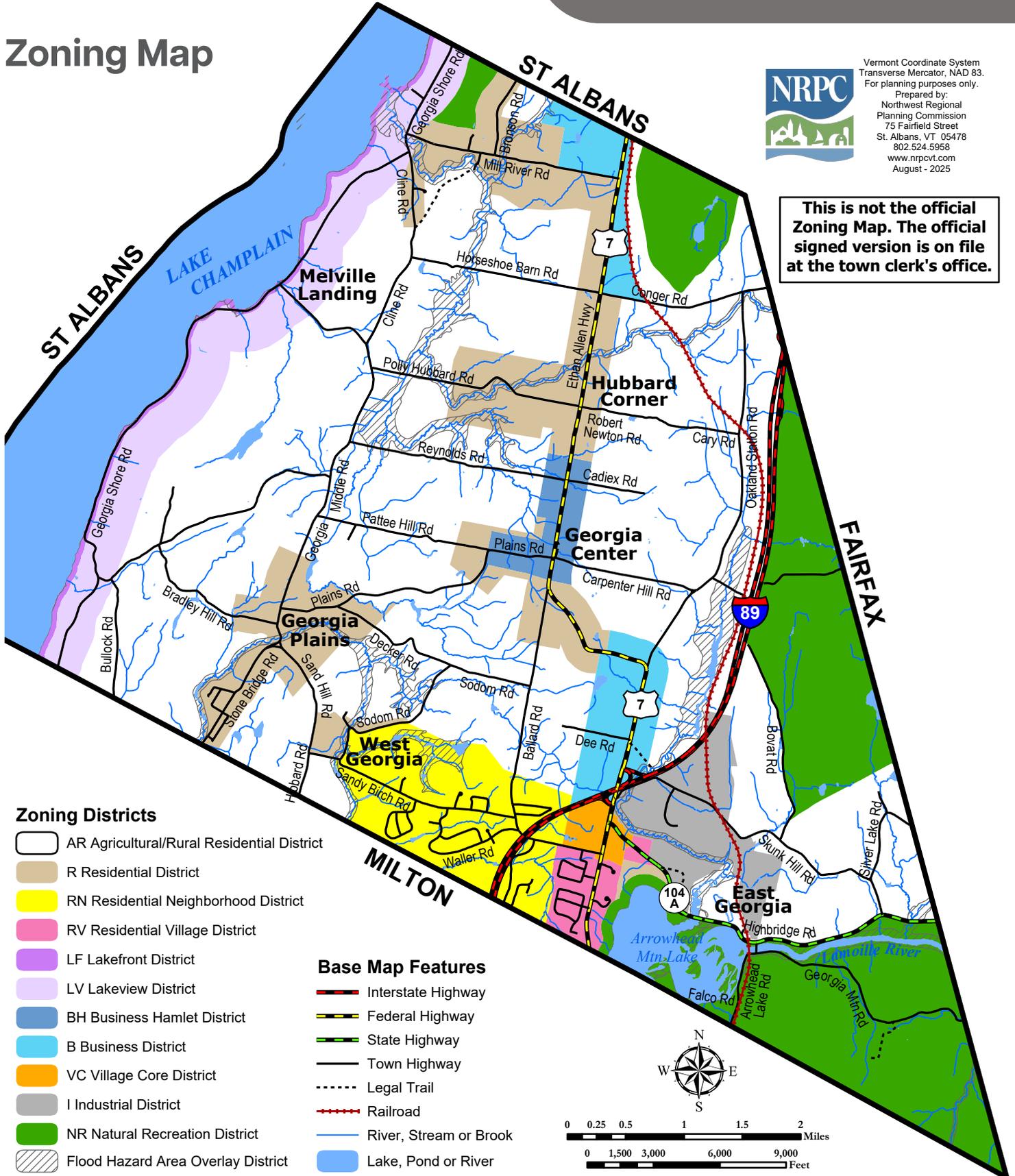
ARTICLE 1	Authority and Purpose	1-1
ARTICLE 2	Zoning Districts	2-1
ARTICLE 3	Land Uses	3-1
ARTICLE 4	General Regulations and Standards	4-1
ARTICLE 5	Planning and Design Standards	5-1
ARTICLE 6	Permits and Approvals	6-1
ARTICLE 7	Subdivision Review	7-1
ARTICLE 8	Flood Hazard Area & River Corridor Buffer Regulations	8-1
ARTICLE 9	Administration & Enforcement	9-1
ARTICLE 10	Definitions	10-1

Zoning Map



Vermont Coordinate System
Transverse Mercator, NAD 83.
For planning purposes only.
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This is not the official Zoning Map. The official signed version is on file at the town clerk's office.

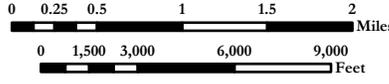


Zoning Districts

- AR Agricultural/Rural Residential District
- R Residential District
- RN Residential Neighborhood District
- RV Residential Village District
- LF Lakefront District
- LV Lakeview District
- BH Business Hamlet District
- B Business District
- VC Village Core District
- I Industrial District
- NR Natural Recreation District
- Flood Hazard Area Overlay District

Base Map Features

- Interstate Highway
- Federal Highway
- State Highway
- Town Highway
- Legal Trail
- Railroad
- River, Stream or Brook
- Lake, Pond or River



Map 2.1 - Town of Georgia Zoning Map.