



UDO Code Diagnosis

Overview with Boards and Commissions



TOWN OF CARRBORO • NC

May 21, 2026
June 4, 2026

OVERVIEW



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PROJECT BACKGROUND

Work to Date, Project Objectives, Priorities

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CODE DIAGNOSIS

Purpose, Contents

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KEY THEMES FOR IMPROVEMENT

Recommendations

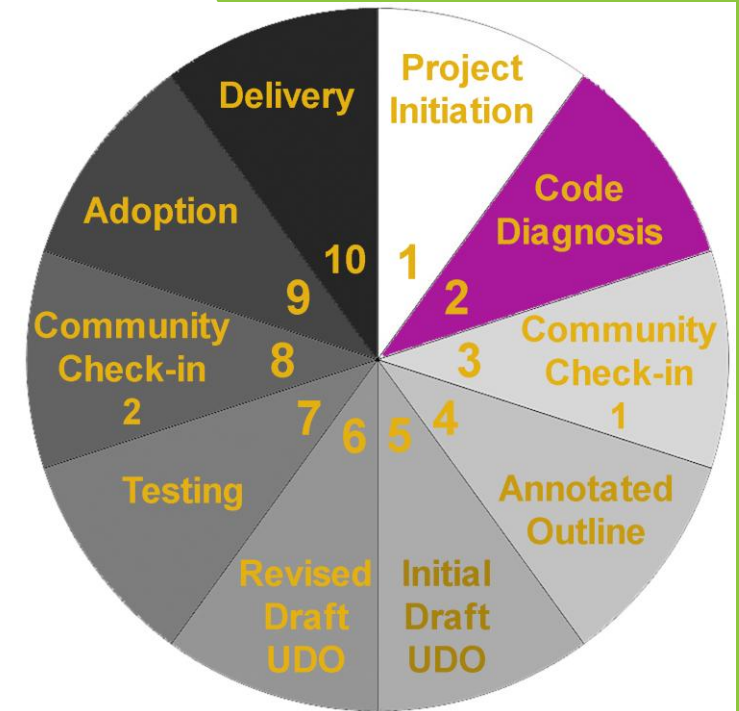
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NEXT STEPS

Where We Go from Here

WORK TO DATE

Interested Party (23) Discussions	Late 2024 to early 2025
Development Interests Meeting	Late 2024
Town Council Project Introduction Meeting	Late 2024
Town Council Work Session 1	Feb 2025
Public Forum 1	March 2025
Earth Day/Open Streets Engagement	April 2025
Follow-Up Council Meetings	May 2025
July 4 Engagement	July 2025
Town Council Work Session 2	Sept 2025
Code Diagnosis Staff Review	Early 2026



PROJECT OBJECTIVES

1. INCREASE PREDICTABILITY	2. FOSTER MORE HOUSING CHOICE	3. ENHANCE CLIMATE RESILIENCY	4. PROMOTE PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT
- Clarify Text - More Illustrations - Delegate to Staff - Add Process Efficiency	- Wider Range - Higher Densities - More Incentives for Affordable	- Reduce VMT - Manage Stormwater - Tree / Open Space Protection	- Maintain Town Commitment - Prioritize

BALANCING PRIORITIES

Stronger Standards	Managing Costs
Procedural Streamlining	Public Participation
Redevelopment	Downzoning Limitations
Increased Densities	Environmental Protection
Mandates	Incentives



CODE DIAGNOSIS

- ‘Road Map’ for the new UDO
- Framework for discussion about potential changes to the current UDO
- Explores gaps between policy guidance and development rules
- Provide recommendations for change

CODE DIAGNOSIS CONTENTS

SUMMARY OF KEY THEMES FOR IMPROVEMENT

SIMPLIFY THE UDO

- 1.1 Restructure from 21 to 11 Chapters
- 1.2 Use More-Intuitive Chapter Names in Alphabetical Order
- 1.3 Place 'Like' Material Together in the Document
- 1.4 Update the Page Layout with More Navigational Aids for the Reader
- 1.5 Use Numbered Statements Instead of Prose
- 1.6 Increase Use of Summary Tables
- 1.7 Add More Illustrations and Flow Charts
- 1.8 Replace 'Legalese' with Plain English
- 1.9 Self-Codify the UDO

SAFEGUARD EQUITY

- 2.1 Where Possible, Reduce Application Review Times & Uncertainty to Ease Beneficial Development
- 2.2 Explore Differential AML Ranges for Rental (80%) Versus Ownership (60%)
- 2.3 Add Relevant Definitions (Diversity, Equity, etc.) to the UDO
- 2.4 Strengthen Standards on Short-Term Rentals
- 2.5 Review and Update Contextual Overlay District Protections
- 2.6 Explore Opportunities for Lower Application Fees
- 2.7 Ensure Required Notice is Multi-Lingual
- 2.8 Broaden Range of Districts Where Manufactured/ Mobile Homes/ Moveable Tiny Homes are Permitted
- 2.9 Soften Limitations on Home Occupations, Micro-Retail, and Some "Social Service" Uses
- 2.10 Explore Increased Use of Development Agreements for Larger Developments

ADAPT TO CLIMATE CHANGE

- 3.1 Replace Cluster Subdivisions with Conservation Subdivisions
- 3.2 Limit Plants to Native Species and Add Species Diversity Standards
- 3.3 Promote "Green" Stormwater Infrastructure
- 3.4 Ease Review Process for Renewable Energy Structures
- 3.5 Review and Update Open Space Provisions
- 3.6 Prohibit New Development in the Special Flood Hazard Area
- 3.7 Require Parking Provided Beyond Minimums to be Pervious
- 3.8 Disincentivize Mass Grading and Incentivize Contour Grading
- 3.9 Prioritize Greenways and Multi-Use Trails Over Sidewalks
- 3.10 Add Voluntary Sustainable Development Options and Incentives



Carroll County New Unified Development Ordinance

Land Use Policy Summary February, 2025

The Carroll County New Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) is an effort to rewrite the Town's Land Use Ordinance (or "LUO") to implement the 2022 Carroll County Comprehensive Plan.

Carroll County Connects is the result of a community-wide planning effort to articulate the Town's vision for its future and identify the actions needed to help that desired future become a reality.

The UDO is one of the Town's primary tools for implementing the policy guidance and desired actions in Carroll County Connects. It is the basic set of laws used by the Town to regulate land uses in order to protect public safety, support property values, protect the environment, and ensure adequate mobility. This UDO project is innovative in that it will address the basic elements included in most other development regulations while also maintaining a focus on:

- Creating greater climate resiliency;
- Promoting social justice;
- Ensuring attainable housing for current and future residents; and
- Protecting Carroll County's community character.



Carroll County New Unified Development Ordinance

Land Use Ordinance Analysis September 2025

The following table is a section-by-section review of Carroll County's current Land Use Ordinance ("LUO"). The table identifies the current articles, section numbers, section titles, and includes a short description of the current section contents. Articles are identified with green rows. The column on the right "Implementation Ideas in the New UDO" details recommendations for how to revise the current section for greater consistency with the Town's adopted policy guidance, State law, regulatory best practice, or community input received to date. In some cases, there are questions or ideas that merit further discussion or consideration included in yellow cells. Some articles are supplemented with text in a grey row found at the end of the article's contents. These grey rows suggest new sections or information that could be added to the new UDO. The ideas and information in this table form the basis for the recommendations to be included in the Code Diagnosis, the "blueprint" for the Town's new Unified Development Ordinance.

CARRBORO LAND USE ORDINANCE (LUO) ANALYSIS TABLE		
#	Title	Implementation Ideas in New UDO
Yellow cells include topics for further discussion with Town staff and officials.		
Article 1: General Provisions		
15-1	Short Title	- Changing name to Unified Development Ordinance - Include reference to Official Zoning Map and any other applicable maps in addition to the Zoning Map
15-2	Authority	- Carry forward with new references to Town Charter and include references to various NCOS statutes and special legislation
15-3	Jurisdiction	- Clarify what constitutes the "planning jurisdiction" - Suggest adding additional clarity regarding the applicability of these standards to home life forms and agricultural uses - Clarify the standards in the UDO are minimum requirements unless subject to an authorized condition of approval, approved variance, vested right, or preferred development incentive
15-4	Effective Date	- Replace with new effective date - Suggest the UDO include both an adoption date and an effective date (it is not uncommon to delay the effective date for 60-90 days to allow the Town time to update its applications forms, conduct training, etc.)
15-5	Relationship To Existing Zoning, Subdivision, and Flood Control Ordinances	- Delete. This language is from 1980. No need to carry forward. Prior approval, violations, continue as set down in a new Transitional Standards section in new Chapter 1, Administration



Carroll County New Unified Development Ordinance

Initial Zoning District Translation Table May, 2026

The following table is an initial consideration of how base and overlay districts in Carroll County's current UDO might be translated under the new UDO. Base zoning districts are generally listed in order of intensity. Columns on the left side of the table denote current districts, and columns on the right side show how the districts might be structured under the new UDO. This table is based, in part, on the dimensional standards for the Town's current zoning districts.

CARRBORO UDO INITIAL ZONING DISTRICT TRANSLATION TABLE			
CONVENTIONAL BASE DISTRICTS			
Current District	Current District	Current District	Current District
C	Conservation	CDN	Conservation
WR	Watershed Residential	WTR	Watershed Residential
RR	Rural Residential	RUR	Rural Residential
R-20	Residential - 20'	SUR	Suburban Residential
R-15	Residential - 15'		
R-10	Residential - 10'	ROR	Rogers Road Residential
HR-R	Historic Rogers Road Residential		
R-10	Residential - 10'		
R-SLR	Suitable for Intensive Residential		
R-SLR-2	Suitable for Intensive Residential - 2'	NBR	Neighborhood Residential
R-7.5	Residential - 7.5'		
R-2	Residential - 2'		
R-3	Residential - 3'		
Commercial			
CT	Corporate Town		
OM	Office		
QA	Office/Assembly		
BS	Watershed Commercial		
PF	Public Facilities		
HR-CC	Historic Rogers Road Community Commercial		

R-2.5	Residential-7.5	 Carroll County, NC UDO Current UDO Dimensional Standards Table (Based on standards in UDO Article 15)
R-15	Residential-2	
R-3	Residential-3	
Commercial		
CT	Corporate Town	The following summary table is a simplified version of the standards in UDO Article 15. The district listed is based upon Section 15-1.14, and also includes some related standards in Article 15.1. The district listed is based upon Section 15-1.14, and also includes some related standards in Article 15.1.
OM	Office	
QA	Office/Assembly	
BS	Watershed Commercial	Yellow with plus districts that are not included in Carroll County's General Ordinance.
		Some numbers in brackets are also not included in all of the county's maps.
PF	Public Facilities	Suggest the use of UDO 15.03 (supplemented with additional provisions in UDO 15.04) to encourage the following:
HR-CC	Historic Rogers Road Community Commercial	- Minimum setback from building - Minimum setback from street - Minimum open space between lots - Minimum open space between principal and accessory structures - Minimum open space between principal and accessory structures

Carroll County, NC (Current UDO Dimensional Standards Table)			
R-SLR	Suitable for Intensive Residential	10,000	10,000; 7,500; 25,000
R-SLR-2	Suitable for Intensive Residential - 2'	10,000	10,000; 25,000
R-15	Residential - 15'	15,000	15,000; 11,250; 20,000
R-20	Residential - 20'	20,000	20,000; 15,000; 25,000



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Carroll County New Unified Development Ordinance

Interim Policy Input Summary February, 2025

The Carroll County New Unified Development Ordinance Update (or "UDO") project is an effort to update the Town's development regulations, currently called the Land Use Ordinance (or "LUO"), to implement the 2022 Carroll County Comprehensive Plan and bring the current LUO into better alignment with State planning law and best planning practices. The project has a special focus on increasing climate resiliency, promoting fairness for everyone, encouraging attainable housing, and ensuring the new UDO is clear and predictable.

Task 1, Project Initiation, of the UDO update effort includes a series of interviews with interested parties about their views on what is working or not working with the Town's current development regulations and review process, as well as discussion about what makes Carroll County great (and the areas where improvement is needed). This document summarizes the input collected through a series of nine interviews with the Town Council and Town-identified interested parties. Interviews were conducted by members of the consulting team with Town staff present and took place in-person and virtually over several days from mid-December 2024 to mid-January 2025. Great care was taken by Town staff to ensure a diverse blend of perspectives and points of view were included in the interviews.

This report summarizes the comments provided. It also identifies additional parties who interviewed thought the consulting team should speak with about the project. The information collected during the interviews in December and January is not attributed to any one individual. Thoughts and ideas are paraphrased, grouped by topic, and consolidated in cases where multiple people expressed the same or similar sentiments. The input is not prioritized or listed in any particular order.

Interviewees were encouraged to share their thoughts freely, but were asked the following five questions:

1. What aspects of the Town's current regulations are problematic?
2. What parts of the Town's current application review process are in need of improvement?
3. What parts of the Town's current regulations or review process should be changed?
4. What makes Carroll County great?
5. Who else in Carroll should we speak with?

The table on the following page identifies the 23 people interviewed. We note that meaningful and representative public engagement is a cornerstone of this new UDO project and the proposed work program includes numerous other opportunities for anyone to provide input and suggestions as the project progresses.

KEY THEMES

- 1 Simplify the UDO
- 2 Safeguard Equity
- 3 Adapt to Climate Change

1 SIMPLIFY THE UDO

- 1.1 Restructure from 21 to 11 Chapters
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- 1.3 Place 'Like' Material Together in the Document
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2 SAFEGUARD EQUITY

- 2.1 Where Possible, Reduce Application Review Times & Uncertainty to Ease Beneficial Development
- 2.2 Explore Differential AMI Ranges for Rental (80%) Versus Ownership (60%)
- 2.3 Add Relevant Definitions (Diversity, Equity, etc.) to the UDO
- 2.4 Strengthen Standards on Short-Term Rentals
- 2.5 Review and Update Contextual Overlay District Protections
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3 ADAPT TO CLIMATE CHANGE

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KEY THEMES

4 Address Housing Choice

5 Integrate Other Policy Guidance

6 Increase Predictability

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ADDRESS HOUSING CHOICE

- 4.1 Remove SUP Requirements for Subdivisions Meeting Affordability Targets
- 4.2 Add Requirements for Maintaining Existing Affordable Units (NOAH)
- 4.3 Exempt Deed-Restricted Affordable Housing And "Micro" Units from Density Counts
- 4.4 Allow "Middle" Housing By-Right in All Districts
- 4.5 Establish Maximum Dwelling Unit Sizes and Minimum Densities
- 4.6 Simplify ADU Requirements Generally
- 4.7 Add More Small-Lot Options (like bungalow courts, tiny homes, pocket neighborhoods, and detached multi-family)
- 4.8 Clarify Single-Room Occupancy Development Standards

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INTEGRATE OTHER POLICY GUIDANCE

- 5.1 Explore Abolition of Minimum Off-Street Parking Standards
- 5.2 Explore Fee-In-Lieu Provisions for Pedestrian Infrastructure to Help Retrofit Existing Network Deficiencies
- 5.3 Reduce Open Space Set-Aside Amounts When Available to the Public
- 5.4 Explore Greater Use of Development Agreements for Expansion of For Sale Affordable Housing
- 5.5 Consider Converting some Residential Districts to Mixed-use Districts
- 5.6 Increase Public Participation for Certain Development Proposals

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INCREASE PREDICTABILITY

- 6.1 Reduce Application Review Times & Uncertainty to Ease Development Review
- 6.2 Add Clarity on Measurement Rules
- 6.3 Augment Definitions (to around 100 pages)
- 6.4 Identify Review Criteria for All Procedures and Decisions
- 6.5 Reduce Reliance on SUP in Favor of Codified Standards and Limit to One Review Authority
- 6.6 Use Pre-Application Conferences for Efficiency
- 6.7 Streamline/Delegate Advisory Body Reviews
- 6.8 Add Administrative Adjustment, Determination, and Alternative Plan Procedures
- 6.9 Remove the Ability to Convert By-Right Applications to Discretionary Reviews
- 6.10 Ensure All Districts List Dimensional Standards and Reduce Caveats

KEY THEMES

7 Ensure Legal Sufficiency

8 Incorporate Incentives

7 ENSURE LEGAL SUFFICIENCY

- 7.1 Address New Downzoning Limitations
- 7.2 Remove Criminal Penalties
- 7.3 Remove Content-Based Sign Regulations
- 7.4 Clarify that Unlisted Uses are not Prohibited
- 7.5 Clarify that Vested Rights may not be Withheld
- 7.6 Remove References to Obsolete Terms (special exceptions, conditional use permits, etc.)
- 7.7 Abolish the Construction Management Plan Process
- 7.8 Remove Design Controls Applied to Single-Family Residential
- 7.9 Clarify Authority for Schools Adequate Public Facility Standards

8 INCORPORATE INCENTIVES

- 8.1 Exclude Micro-, ADU, and some 'Middle' Housing Units from Density Counts
- 8.2 Allow By-Right Reviews for Developments Meeting Affordable Housing Targets
- 8.3 Allow Accelerated Landscaping Credit for Retained Trees
- 8.4 Exclude Structured Parking from Building Height Calculation
- 8.5 Include a Conservation Subdivision Option with Smaller Lots/ Setbacks for More Open Space
- 8.6 Add Density Bonuses for Voluntary Compliance with Single-Family Design Guidelines
- 8.7 Allow Some Mixed-Use Development by Right in Residential Districts
- 8.8 Credit Green Stormwater Features Towards Open Space
- 8.9 Add Incentives for Sustainable Development Features

SUGGESTED PROJECT DIRECTION(S)

1. On-going discussion of priority balancing
2. Non-substantive document formatting and organization for greater readability
3. Procedural streamlining with a reduced reliance on discretionary reviews
4. Increased codification of standards and review criteria
(with more staff-level decision-making)

BALANCING PRIORITIES

Stronger Standards

Managing Costs

Procedural Streamlining

Public Participation

Redevelopment

Downzoning Limitations

Increased Densities

Environmental Protection

Mandates

Incentives

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SUGGESTED PROJECT DIRECTION(S)

5. Continued focus on incentives for provision of affordable housing and sustainable development features
6. Increased use of conditional zoning and required mitigation for applicant requested relief from standards
7. More public scrutiny of text amendments and rezoning applications seeking relief from standards

BALANCING PRIORITIES

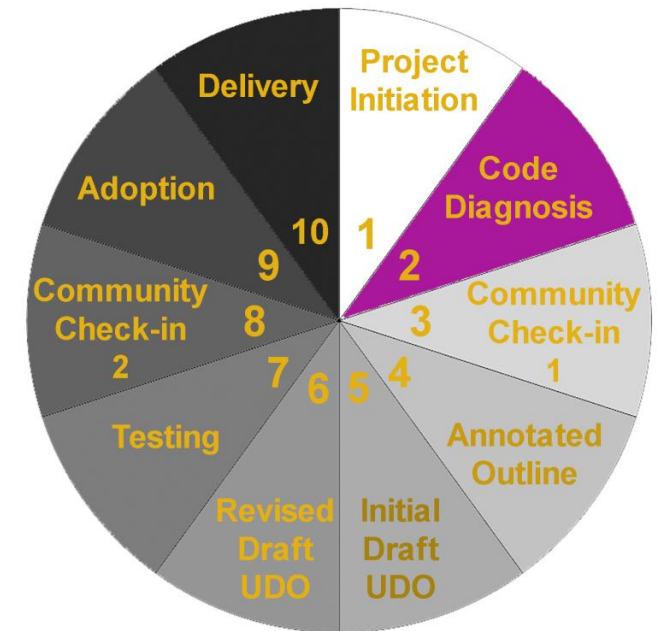
Stronger Standards	Managing Costs
Procedural Streamlining	Public Participation
Redevelopment	Downzoning Limitations
Increased Densities	Environmental Protection
Mandates	Incentives

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NEXT STEPS...



1. Council Work Session – 6/16/26
2. Public Discussion – July (?)
3. Task 4: UDO Annotated Outline – July to Oct



Discussion



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