



## TOWN OF CARRBORO

NORTH CAROLINA

### TRANSMITTAL

### PLANNING DEPARTMENT

**DELIVERED VIA:** ☐ HAND ☐ MAIL ☐ FAX ☐ EMAIL ☒ MEETING AGENDA

**To:** David Andrews, Town Manager  
Mayor and Board of Aldermen

**From:** Patricia J. McGuire, Planning Director

**Date:** February 6, 2015

**Subject:** Neighborhood Protection and Commercial Development

Board members have requested information in support of a discussion of neighborhood protection and commercial development scheduled for the annual retreat on February 15<sup>th</sup>. This transmittal seeks to respond to that request by summarizing the zoning/regulatory framework, including relevant overlay districts in relation to the concept of managing the interface between non-residential and residential areas.

The current framework of zoning districts and development policy was primarily established by adoption of the 1977 Land Use Plan. Implementing regulations followed in 1979 with existing zoning district boundaries remaining in place. Detailed studies, planning, and outreach in the first half of the 1980s resulted in comprehensive commercial and residential rezonings. Watershed protection and Joint Planning area policies and regulations, underway concurrently, were finalized within the next few years. Strategic policy-making framed changes in land use after the adoption of the Year 2000 Task Force Report in 1989. Community engagement in 1999 focused on updating that report and lead to adoption of Carrboro Vision 2020 in December that year. Particular emphasis on increasing the town's commercial square footage resulted in amendments to maximum building heights in the downtown.

Carrboro's jurisdiction encompasses approximately 6.5 square miles/7,700 acres. Thirty-five zoning districts, five of them overlay zones, have been established to operationalize a regulatory framework that seeks to be flexible while separating uses when necessary and/or optimal. In almost all cases, zoning districts are mapped so that permissible uses 'step

down' from more intensive to less intensive, with districts and development standards establishing areas of transition at the interface. This stepping down is accomplished in several ways:

- 1) Transitioning districts – the zoning map included as Attachment C shows B-1(g) districts mapped between the B-1(c) and adjoining non-residential areas. Similarly, an R-10 area was mapped between the B-4 and the R-20 at the Lloyd property/Plantation Acres interface.
- 2) Hierarchy of land use permitting – Article X, Table of Permissible Uses <http://www.ci.carrboro.nc.us/DocumentCenter/Home/View/691> presents and defines the structure of land use permitting. Definitions for districts, the B-1(g) in particular, <http://www.ci.carrboro.nc.us/DocumentCenter/Home/View/686>, note the expected look and feel of a district, and describe more stringent requirements associated with the proximity to residential areas.
- 3) Density and Dimensions – the range of permissible uses is reduced in number and intensity in less intensive non-residential districts and in residential districts. Setback requirements and maximum building height are modified where non-residential and residential properties meet along a common boundary.
- 4) Specified overlay requirements – Five overlay zones have been established in town. Among them, the Downtown Neighborhood Protection Overlay zoning district has as its focus limiting intensity within a specified buffer area adjacent to the areas of the downtown where maximum building potential resulted from the increased building heights approved following the 2001 Downtown Visioning. Section 15-185.1, found in Article XII at <http://www.ci.carrboro.nc.us/DocumentCenter/Home/View/693>, establishes the dimensional requirements that apply in this area.

A map showing the noted locations is in preparation and will be forwarded separately. The variety and detail included in the current regulations speak to the community's long-held value of protecting existing neighborhoods. These tools were not established at one time and have been tweaked, massaged, and reworked over time in relation to interests and concerns of the community and the active involvement of stakeholders in expressing the need for something to change and working to make it happen. Other variations on the current themes are possible, and some additional zoning-type tools may be useful. Planning efforts, such as more focused urban design or master planning, may be most beneficial in examining the particular characteristics and opportunities at these interfaces to provide for the maximum use and enjoyment of current property owners and to set the stage for these areas in the years ahead.