



# UDO Code Diagnosis Town Council Update



TOWN OF CARRBORO • NC

June 16, 2026

# OVERVIEW



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**PROJECT OBJECTIVES**

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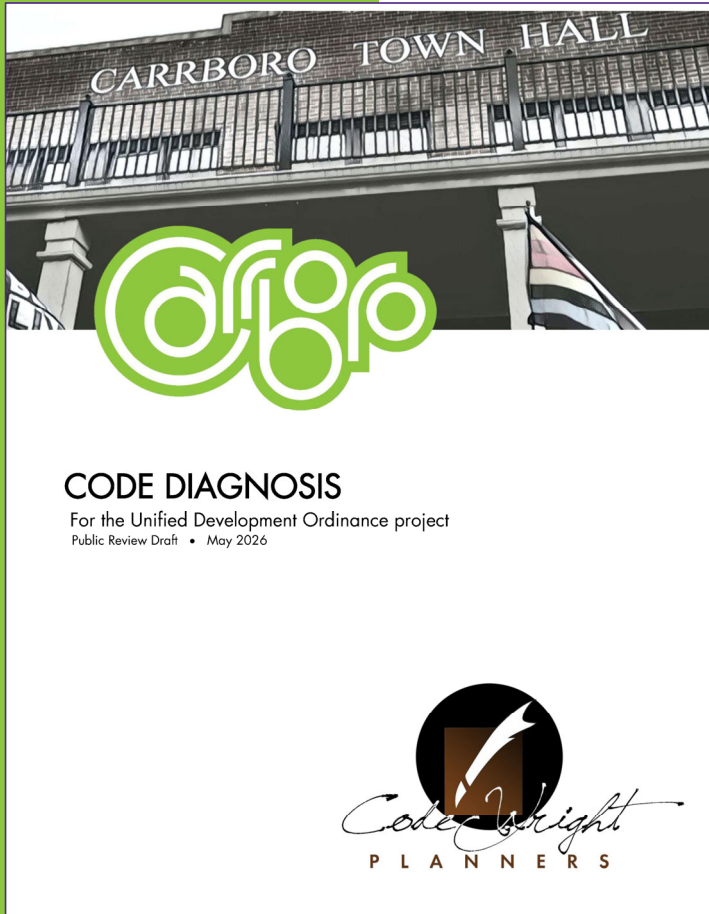
**BALANCING PRIORITIES**

03

**KEY THEMES FOR IMPROVEMENT**

04

**SUGGESTED DIRECTIONS**



# 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

# PROJECT OBJECTIVES

<b>1. INCREASE PREDICTABILITY</b>	<b>2. FOSTER MORE HOUSING CHOICE</b>	<b>3. ENHANCE CLIMATE RESILIENCY</b>	<b>4. PROMOTE PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Clarify Text</li><li>- More Illustrations</li><li>- Delegate to Staff</li><li>- Add Process Efficiency</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Wider Range</li><li>- Higher Densities</li><li>- More Incentives for Affordable</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Reduce VMT</li><li>- Manage Stormwater</li><li>- Tree / Open Space Protection</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Maintain Town Commitment</li><li>- Prioritize</li></ul>

# BALANCING PRIORITIES

Stronger Standards

Managing Costs

Procedural Streamlining

Public Participation

Redevelopment

Downzoning Limitations

Increased Densities

Environmental Protection

Mandates

Incentives

# KEY THEMES

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

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## 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

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## 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
- 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

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## 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

# KEY THEMES

**4** Address Housing Choice

**5** Integrate Other Policy Guidance

**6** Increase Predictability

## 4 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

## 5 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

## 6 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

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## Ensure Legal Sufficiency

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## 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)

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

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# NEXT STEPS...



Discussion /  
Revision of  
Code  
Diagnosis

Public  
Engagement  
Opportunity

Annotated  
Outline  
Preparation