

Land Use Ordinance Update Summary

Why should the LUO be updated?

The Town of Carrboro Land Use Ordinance (LUO) was adopted in November 1980, following adoption of the Town's 1977 Land Use Plan and as the state's first Unified Development Ordinance to combine traditional zoning and subdivision regulations with other Town regulations including building and street design standards and water quality protection, among others. The LUO has been amended and updated many times over its 44-year history to 1) stay compliant with the authority granted by the NC General Assembly; 2) to reflect newer plans, studies, and policies, such as the Facilitated Small Area Plan for the Northern Study Area, the Joint Planning Land Use Plan, Bike Plans and Parking studies and plans; and 3) to respond to changing information and requests at the neighborhood and property scale.

The 2022-2042 *Carrboro Connects* Comprehensive Plan identifies overall consistency between the LUO and the plan as a priority project (Land Use Strategy 4.1). With the adoption of the 2023 Race & Equity Action Plan, 2020 Community Climate Action Plan, 2020 Update to the Bike Plan, and 2024 Language Access Plan, there is overall momentum in the Town of Carrboro to evaluate and update land use regulations to ensure that any past disparities are eliminated, the natural environment is more resilient to climate change, and everyone has the opportunity to participate in our community's development.

Who will be involved in the LUO Update?

The LUO Update will require the involvement of residents, property owners, development community, specialists in related land use and development standards development and administration, Town Council Members, Advisory Boards and Commissions, Town Attorney, and staff.

Planning staff and a consultant team will act as the main project coordinators. Specific departmental staff (e.g. Public Works and Housing & Community Services) will play a greater role in aspects of their related ordinance analyses and drafting.

How are staff preparing for the LUO Update?

Staff have looked at other municipal unified development ordinances to explore potential structural improvements as well as identify tools that allow for digital accessibility and translation of the document. For comprehensive plan consistency, the *Carrboro Connects* implementation timeline identifies benchmark LUO Updates for priority projects in or beyond 2026. Consistency with *Carrboro Connects* will result from parallel or phased impact analyses, performance standards development, and the drafting of complex legal language.

Staff are scoping the breadth of analyses identified to implement *Carrboro Connects* and compiling previous evaluations of the LUO and any existing challenges towards drafting a Request for Proposals (RFP). This project will benefit from a consultant team with experience in analysis, ordinance reorganization, and policy drafting experience in close collaboration with staff. Funding for an LUO Update has been requested for FY24-25. If approved as part of the budget for FY25, the procurement process would be expected to get underway quickly and the

update process initiated before the end of the 2024 calendar year. A time frame of 18-24 months is expected for project completion.

What does *Carrboro Connects* call for in an LUO Update?

The LUO Update will seek to accomplish three overarching objectives: increasing accessibility, structure, and presentation of the document; aligning the LUO with strategies identified in *Carrboro Connects*, the Community Climate Action Plan, and the 2009 Bike Plan and 2020 Update; and ensuring continued compliance with the Town’s regulatory authority and the NC General Statutes.

Accessibility and usability of the LUO will also be critical to the update, guided by policies and interdepartmental work from our Race and Equity team and our Communication and Engagement Team. Reorganization of definitions, use classes, performance standards, and appendix diagrams will make the ordinance easier to use by the community, applicants, and council members.

Alignment with existing plans and strategies will, for many topics, require and/or benefit from analyses of existing conditions, review of policy impacts from peer municipalities, and forecasting impacts. For example, the Town is interested in understanding the relationships between increases in residential density and intensity of development overall affects housing affordability, utility capacity and infrastructure, traffic volumes and safety, and economic and environmental sustainability.

Carrboro Connects outlines several projects with benchmarks that call for a review of the LUO and associated analyses. If such reviews and analyses find inconsistency with *Carrboro Connects*, the plan calls for updates to the LUO.

The reviews and analyses identified in *Carrboro Connects* include:

| Chapter | Topic for Review and Potential LUO Update |
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| Affordable Housing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impacts of increased provision of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) • Opportunities for increasing housing density within the water and sewer boundary |
| Climate Action & Environment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urban heat island effects and subsequent mitigation • Integration of renewable energy infrastructure in development review • Protection of streams and riparian areas |
| Transportation & Mobility | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design standards for streets and sidewalks to reduce speed and increase safety • Parking requirements impacts on housing costs and natural resources |
| Green Stormwater Infrastructure, Water, & Energy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incentive programs for stormwater management or infrastructure mitigation • Structural and non-structural measures for redevelopment and infill • Integration of green stormwater management into traffic calming |

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| Economic Sustainability | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Higher density and mixed-use development downtown• Strengthen business districts and commercial areas |
| Land Use | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increased density along transit corridor and nodes• Higher residential density in appropriate areas• Updates from recommendations of small area plans• Development review process changes |