



To: Patrice Toney, Town Manager
Mayor and Town Council

From: Planning & Transportation Division

Date: February 27, 2026

Subject: Proposed Land Use Ordinance Text Amendment Relating to the Office-Residential Mixed Use (OR-MU) Zoning District

Overview

Section 15-140.1 of the Land Use Ordinance (LUO) describes the purpose and standards relating to the Office-Residential Mixed Use (OR-MU). The ordinance includes detailed criteria for non-residential uses and mixed-use developments but does not include similar provisions for residential-only uses. The purpose of this staff-initiated text amendment is to add language to address density and dimensional standards for residential-only uses in OR-MU district in a way that is consistent with the rest of the section.

Background

In 2006, the Board of Alderman discussed rezoning options in the Brewer Lane area over a series of meetings from March to June, directing the staff to establish a minimum amount of nonresidential development. The Board of Alderman was also considering a proposed multi-family residential project brought forward by STGL, LLC ownership group. STGL was primarily interested in residential density, and the Town was also interested in including commercial uses consistent with goals of Carrboro Vision2020. After a series of discussions with property owners, neighbors in Tin-Top, and other community members, the OR-MU conventional zoning district was adopted via text and map amendment on June 20, 2006. Key information can be found at the following links:

- June 20, 2006, Agenda Item Abstract:
http://www01.townofcarrboro.org/BoA/Agendas/2006/06_20_2006_D4.pdf
- Attachments (Previous Meeting Minutes):
http://www01.townofcarrboro.org/BoA/Agendas/2006/06_20_2006_D4A.pdf

The STGL project was never built (for various private-sector related reasons, not Town actions), and the zoning designation for the 13 lots rezoned from R-2 to OR-MU (and 7 lots rezoned R-2 to R-7.5) has remained in place.

Establishment of the OR-MU district was a conventional rezoning; conventional rezonings do not have binding site plans tied to the district. Property owners can apply for permits and develop projects on the site as long as they meet the requirements set forth in the LUO like in other base zoning districts. Whereas with conditional rezoning, projects seek and are approved for a change in zoning district with conditions attached to a specific site plan (often setting performance standards for density, stormwater, etc.).

Summary of Proposed Amendment

The existing text for the OR-MU district establishes a base residential density of R-3 (3,000 square feet per dwelling unit) for mixed-use projects but does not speak to allowances or dimensional standards (i.e. setbacks) for residential-only uses such as additions to existing homes or new construction. The proposed text amendment would apply the same R-3 dimensional standards for residential-only uses that currently apply to the residential component of mixed-use developments.

The proposed text amendment would add a new subsection (d) to Section 15-140.1 (Office-Residential Mixed Use District) to read as follows:

- (d) Any lot within the OR-MU district that exists on the effective date of this section that is used only for residential purposes, modifications to, expansions of, or new construction shall adhere to the density and dimensional standards as if the property was zoned R-3.

Consistency with Adopted Plans/Policies

Carrboro Connects Comprehensive Plan

Chapter	Staff Comments	Consistent with strategies:
Affordable Housing	The draft ordinance clarifies provisions of the LUO, which could allow existing residential properties to expand and offer additional supply with ADUs or duplexes.	LU 2.3 & LU 2.5
Climate Action & Environment	N/A	N/A
Transportation & Mobility	N/A	N/A
Green Stormwater Infrastructure, Water, & Energy	N/A	N/A
Economic Sustainability	N/A	N/A
Recreation, Parks, & Cultural Resources	N/A	N/A
Land Use	These timely and appropriate changes clarify and provisions and increase efficiency and predictability of the permit approval process.	LU 5.2

Other Plans & Policies

The original consideration of the OR-MU district was driven by the Carrboro Vision2020 Plan and the 2006 Downtown Visioning Plan. The proposed amendment is also consistent with provisions in the 2025 Downtown Area Plan that seek to preserve existing residential uses in the downtown.

Down Zoning

The proposed amendment, if adopted, would not change the allowable residential density, number or types of uses within the zoning district, and therefore would not constitute an example of downzoning (prohibited without consent by North Carolina General Statutes Chapter 160D-601(d)).

Action Requested

Staff recommends that the Town Council receive public comment and consider the draft amendment (*Attachment B*) to the Land Use Ordinance to clarify density and dimensional standards for residential-only uses in the Office-Residential Mixed Use (OR-MU) district, including modifications, expansions, and new construction.