



Omnibus Text Amendments

Staff: Britany Waddell, Anna Scott Myers, Charnika Harrell, Josh Mayo, & Tas Lagoo

Meeting Date: November 19, 2025

Project Overview

This omnibus text amendment was first discussed by Town Council on October 22, 2025. Council will have the opportunity to adopt the text amendment at its November 19, 2025, meeting. Topics covered by the omnibus text amendment include:

1. Site Plan Review:

- a. Remove Planning Commission "site plan review" for most development projects.
- b. Streamline site plan review requirements in Northside and Pine Knolls where the process is required by Neighborhood Conservation District rules.

2. Concept Plan Review:

- a. Remove concept plan review.

3. Conditional Zoning:

- a. Streamline the conditional zoning process.

4. Special Use Permits:

- a. Allow projects with existing SUPs to add new permitted uses or development that is compliant with LUMO.

5. Two-Family Housing Options

- a. Increase maximum size limits for duplexes, ADU's, and cottages.
- b. Lift parking maximums for duplexes.

6. Parking Regulations

- a. Eliminate minimum parking requirements.
- b. Ease front-yard parking restrictions for 1- and 2-family developments.

7. Subdivisions – Procedural Improvements

- a. Make Town staff responsible for all subdivision approvals.

8. Subdivisions – Lot Layout Standards

- a. Reduce minimum lot sizes and related dimensions.
- b. Allow zero-frontage lots and flag lots.

9. Subdivisions – Infrastructure

- a. Ease requirements for new lots on "local" streets to provide infrastructure improvements.

10. Manufactured Home Communities

- a. Make existing manufactured home parks a permitted use.

11. Sign Regulations

- a. Ease various sign regulations and update which types of signs are allowed in residential zoning districts.

12. Miscellaneous Updates

- a. Allow multiple permitted uses on the same property.
- b. Update the Town Code to allow shared driveways.

Staff Recommendation and Changes to "Ordinance A" Since October 22 Meeting



Staff recommend that Council **approve the text amendment**, detailed in Ordinance A and explained below.

Plat Requirements

The only substantive changes to Ordinance A are updates to the plat requirements for new subdivisions. The updated language is found in Module 5 of Ordinance A.

LUMO currently includes highly detailed requirements for how a plat (the map that officially documents a new subdivision) is prepared. Over time, these requirements can easily fall out of sync with industry standards. In contrast, neighboring jurisdictions use much less detailed language in their development ordinances and direct staff to establish the appropriate requirements.

The updated provisions in Ordinance A follow the example of neighboring jurisdictions and direct staff to establish requirements for how new plats are prepared. The update is intended to ensure that Town requirements for new plats remain current and properly reflect industry standards.

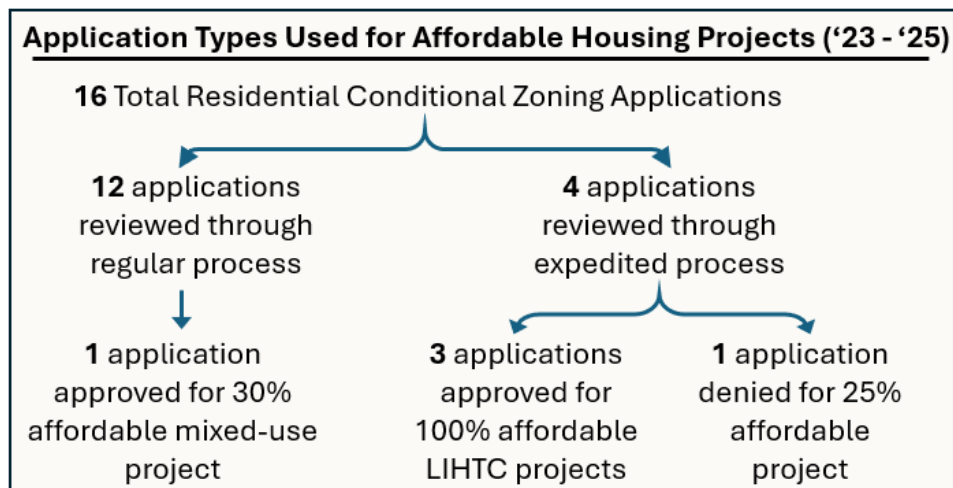
Additional Information

Conditional Zoning

Streamlining the conditional zoning process will involve consolidating the three existing conditional zoning processes used by the Town. This consolidation will make the affordable housing expedited review process the standard for all conditional zonings.

Overview of the "Community Priority Process for Affordable Housing"

Council adopted the expedited conditional zoning process (officially the "Community Priority Process for Affordable Housing") on [November 16, 2022](#). As summarized in the diagram below, the three years since the expedited review process was adopted have provided substantial evidence of the impacts of the process.



The three-year track record of the expedited process suggests it is effective at supporting Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) projects but is not a strong incentive for mixed-income developments. In its first three years, the expedited process has successfully supported the approval of three 100% affordable Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) developments. In that same time, however, the expedited process has not resulted in the approval of any mixed-income developments that provide at least 25% affordable units. One mixed-income project was reviewed through the expedited process but was denied by Town Council.

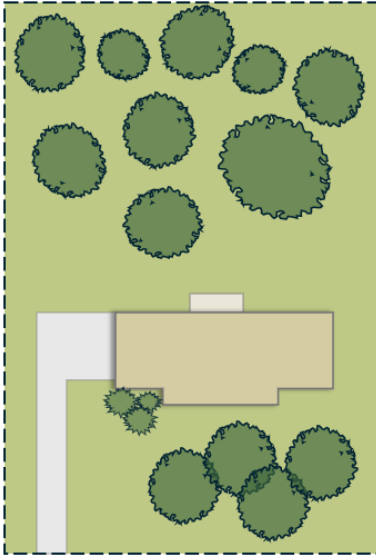
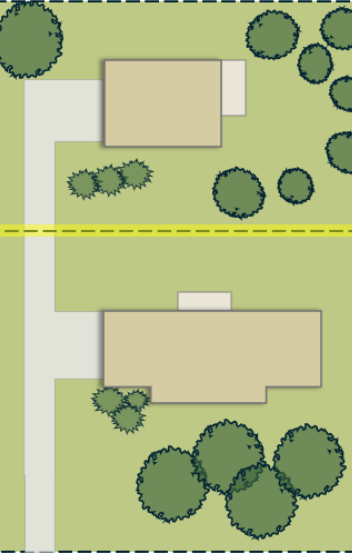
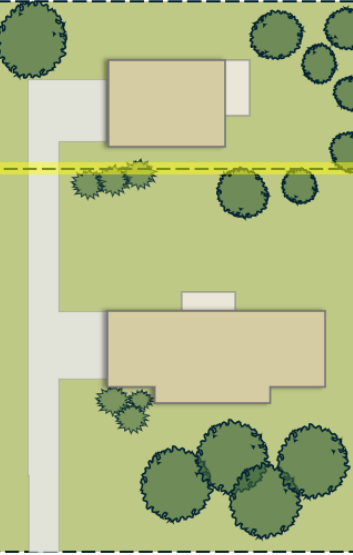
This does not mean that the process is a failure. To the contrary, the expedited process has been a critical component of the success of the three approved LIHTC projects. The timelines and applications submission requirements of the new consolidated process will continue to benefit LIHTC projects while also significantly improving the development process for other projects. Additional measures to support LIHTC projects and smaller mixed-income projects will be included in the full LUMO rewrite.

Lot Layout Standards

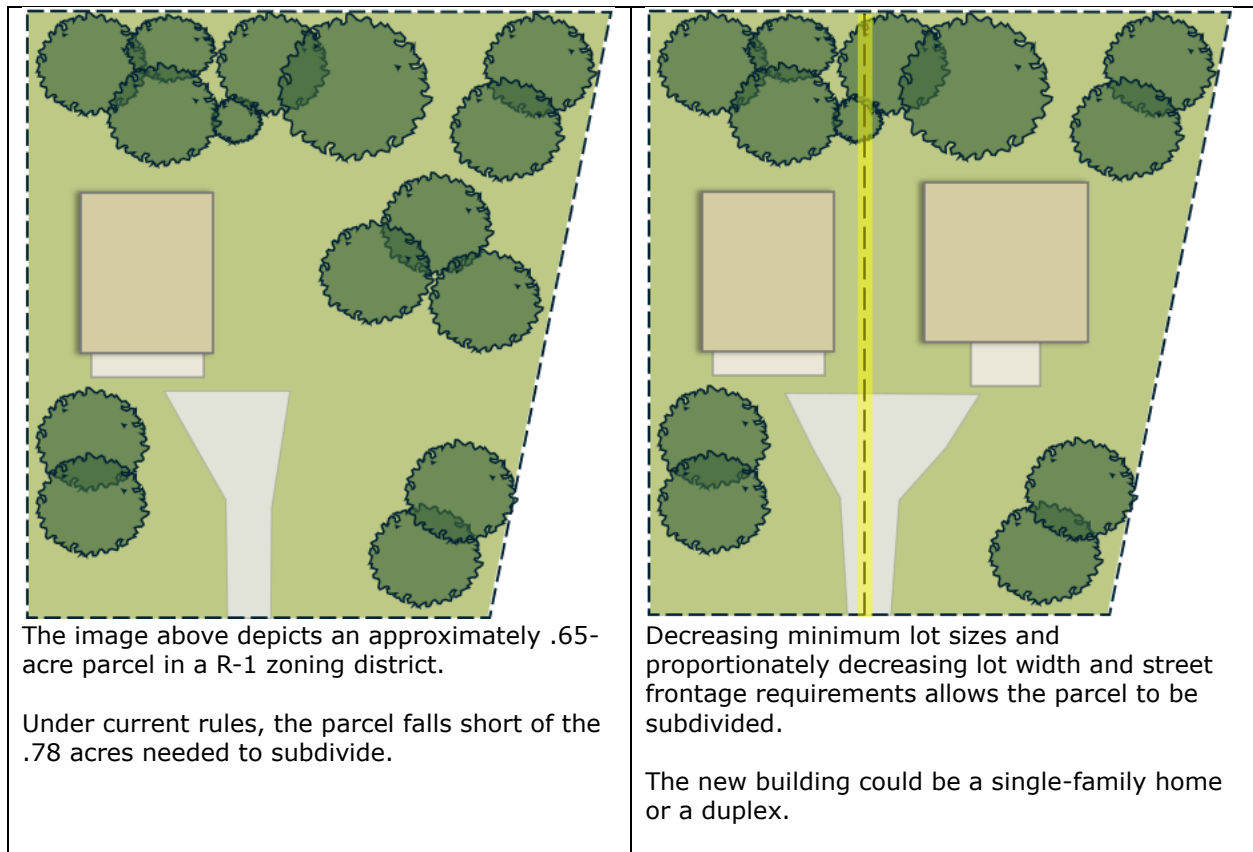
Examples of Small-Scale Subdivisions

Updating lot layout standards can support incremental in-fill development in various ways.

As shown below, the proposed reforms can make it easier to subdivide lots that are already significantly larger than required in their zoning district.

		
The image above depicts an approximately 1-acre parcel in a R-1 zoning district. The parcel is significantly larger than the existing .39-acre minimum lot size. The rear portion of the parcel cannot be subdivided due to restrictions on flag lots and zero frontage lots.	Allowing flag lots and zero frontage lots opens the door to subdividing. But large minimum lot sizes mean that existing homeowners must give up more of their land.	Reducing minimum lot sizes can allow existing homeowners to retain more land. The new building could be a moderately sized single-family home or a small duplex.

The proposed reforms can also support subdividing lots that were previously too small to be subdivided.



Estimating Impact

Staff analyzed the R-1 through R-4 zoning districts, which represent most of the residentially zoned land in Chapel Hill. There are approximately **10,700 lots** in these zoning districts.

Some of the most basic criteria for whether a lot may subdivide are (1) the size of the lot and (2) whether the lot is impacted by stream buffers. Under today's rules, there are approximately **1,500 lots** that are large enough to subdivide and outside of stream buffers.

With the proposed minimum lot sizes, the number of lots that are both large enough to subdivide and outside of stream buffers increases to about **3,100 lots**. These lots are distributed throughout Chapel Hill's residential areas.

These numbers are only a starting point and overestimate the number of lots that may be subdividable – likely by a wide margin. The following factors would significantly reduce the number of lots that may be subdividable. These factors are either impossible to accurately assess or would require resource-intense analysis that is beyond the Town's capacity.

- **Restrictive covenants:** Many neighborhoods are subject to restrictive covenants that prohibit further subdivision of lots. Town staff cannot make any representations

regarding where these covenants may be in effect. We generally know that they are more likely to exist in newer neighborhoods.

- **Site-specific constraints:** A desktop review only provides a superficial image of conditions on the ground. Lots that are technically large enough to subdivide may be infeasible to develop further because of challenging topography, unique lot shapes, or the location of existing homes. Determining which lots are poor candidates for subdividing due to these factors would require a resource-intensive lot-by-lot analysis.
- **Individual choice:** Each lot that *may* be subdividable represents a distinct set of individual choices. Personal preferences alone could mean that many homeowners who could subdivide would choose not to.

Given the factors at play, it is reasonable to conclude that the total number of subdividable lots is significantly lower than the 3,100 lots identified above and that the rate of subdivisions will be relatively slow. This is, in many ways, a strength – rather than a fault – of the proposal: it supports incremental development that allows existing neighborhoods to evolve over time.

Together, the full set of text amendments are intended to right-size the Town's development review processes and better align development standards with the Complete Community Strategy and other elements of the Town's Comprehensive Plan.