

BOARD OF ALDERMEN

ITEM NO. D(4)

AGENDA ITEM ABSTRACT

MEETING DATE: Tuesday, December 18, 2001

TITLE: REPORT: Rezoning for Apartments, Condominiums, and Townhouses

DEPARTMENT: PLANNING	PUBLIC HEARING: YES __ NO <u>X</u> _
ATTACHMENTS: A. Resolution B. Section 15-15 (88-91) C. Excerpt from Table of Permissible Uses D. Maps of Development Opportunity	FOR INFORMATION CONTACT: Patricia McGuire – 918-7327

PURPOSE

During a review of infill development on March 27, 2001, the Board of Aldermen requested that the Agenda Planning Committee schedule a discussion of possible areas that could be rezoned to accommodate apartments, condominiums, and townhouses. A report has been prepared. A resolution receiving the report is recommended for the Board's approval.

INFORMATION

The Board of Aldermen has exhibited a continuing interest in considering mechanisms for increasing residential density in order to maintain and enhance housing affordability, foster a greater sense of community, and maximize the efficiency of urban services. Reviews of infill development and the development of a revised R-SIR (Residential – Suitable for Intensive Residential) zoning district have occurred on several occasions in the years 2000 and 2001.

During a discussion of infill development on March 27, 2001, the Board of Aldermen directed the Agenda Planning Committee to schedule a discussion of possible areas that could be rezoned to accommodate apartments, condominiums, and townhouses.

Information on these uses, the locations in which they are currently permitted, the range of densities at which these uses area currently developed (both within Carrboro's jurisdiction and elsewhere) and the locations of areas that might be suitable for rezoning to such densities has been compiled. This information is presented below.

Regulatory and Policy Context for Multi-Family Housing Units

A variety of multi-family, residential uses are defined in Section 15-15 (88-91) of the Land Use Ordinance (*Attachment B*). Additional two-family uses are defined as well.

Condominiums are not explicitly defined, as this use is a form of individual land ownership without subdivision that would be considered multi-family apartments.

While some jurisdictions establish residential zoning districts based on use, Carrboro's Land Use Ordinance has always used a different approach. Multi-family uses, other than single-room occupancy units and projects without limits on the number of bedrooms, are permitted in all but the most intensive commercial and watershed zoning districts (*Attachment C*). This decision follows clearly from policies to provide for a mix of housing types for households of varying means that were initially included in the *Housing Element of the Land Use Plan* (1977), and were reaffirmed in the *Year 2000 Task Force Report* (1989), and the *Facilitated Small Area Plan for Carrboro's Northern Study Area* (1999).

With regard to the question of density, the NSA Plan emphasized mixed-use, village development, and ordinance provisions establishing parameters for this use were adopted in 1999. The plan also includes density parameters for such development, as follows:

The overall target densities for the mixed-use area are 5 dwelling units per acre. The overall target density for the entire Study Area is approximately the same as the current density of Carrboro: 2.1 dwelling units per acre...The village, mixed-use areas will host a variety of housing types, styles, and prices, including single-family residences, townhouses, and rental apartments. Cap densities for market-rate housing at 3 dwelling units per acre so that bonus densities of 4 to 5 dwelling units per acre could be offered while still allowing for a minimum of 40 percent of the developable land being designated as open space (connected with the town wide greenway network).

A development proposal for a village is currently under development, with an overall target density of between 3 and 5 dwelling units per acre.

The most recent policy related to this issue is included in *Carrboro Vision2020* (2000).

- 6.11** Town policy should accommodate a variety of housing styles, sizes and pricing. It should also address issues of density, funding and rezoning to allow for more non-detached housing, mixed-use development, and communal living options.

Existing Conditions – Multi-family Development

Carrboro's housing stock may be characterized as roughly 40 percent single-family, detached, and 60 percent multi-family. Census figures for 2000 indicate that Carrboro's housing unit density averages 2 persons for rental housing and 2.63 for owner-occupied housing. The community's population density in 2000 was over 3,600 persons per square mile or nearly 6 persons per acre. Owner-occupied housing made up 31.5 percent of the total housing stock and renter-occupied housing, 68.5 percent. Average densities of a few developments in Town are noted below:

Project Name	Density
Villages V	10.73 units/acre
Fidelity Court	15.86 units/acre
Highland Hills	5.74 units/acre
Rock Creek	14.46 units/acre
Autumn Woods	14.52 units/acre
Lake Hogan Farms	1.3 units/acre
Morgan Ridge (Proposed)	2.5 units/acre

Summary of Development Opportunities

An evaluation of undeveloped properties has been conducted in order to identify possible locations where additional density may be allowed in order to improve the chances that multi-family housing types will be developed. Maps of the northern, southern, and central portions of town are attached (*Attachment D*). Information on the parcels and their suitability in several areas is presented in the following table. Please note that a minimum parcel size of ten acres of vacant/sparsely-developed land was used in this evaluation and that contiguous parcels have been combined into the areas noted below. Properties located along arterial streets will be required to set aside 100 foot buffer areas between their development projects and the street itself.

	Area (acres) ¹	Zone	Arterial	Bus	Bike/Ped ³	Water/Sewer ⁴	Comments
<i>Northern Area</i>							
A	68	R-R	Direct	N	Proposed	Planned	Transition Area 2 prevents rezoning to greater than 1 du/acre until T1 reaches 75 %
B	34	R-R	Direct	N	Proposed	Planned	“
C	130		Direct	N	Proposed	Planned	Part in T2; contains part of Bolin Creek
D	27	R-20	Direct	N	Proposed	Planned	Contains part of Bolin Creek
E	74	R-R/R-20	Direct	N	Proposed	Planned	Contains Buckhorn Branch, tributary of Bolin Creek.
F	91	R-R	Indirect	N	Not applicable	Planned	
G	189	R-R/R-20	Direct	N	Proposed	Y	VMU Development Application Pending on part of this area.

	Area (acres) ¹	Zone	Arterial	Bus	Bike/Ped ³	Water/Sewer ⁴	Comments
H	63	R-20	Direct	N	Not applicable	Proposed	Owned by UNC- Chapel Hill “
I	79	R-20	Direct	N	Proposed	Available	
J	303	R-20	Direct	?	N	Available	
<i>Central Area</i>							
K	10	R-20	Direct	Y	Under Construction	Planned	Development application for one tract in progress
L	25	B-4/R-10	Direct	Y	Existing	Close proximity	Entranceway considerations. Remaining undeveloped B-4.
M	42	R-20	Direct	Y	Proposed	Available	Some constraints. Bolin Creek frontage
N	37	R-10	Direct	Y	Proposed	Planned	
<i>Southern Area</i>							
O	69	R-10	Indirect	Y	Proposed	Close proximity	

The areas noted above represent the existing opportunities for new development. The land area requirements and density allocations for zoning districts is noted below.

Zone	Area Required (sqft)	Effective Density	Density w/AHDB
B-4	3,000	14.52 units/acre	21.78 units/acre
R-10	10,000	4 units/acre	6 units/acre
R-20	20,000	2 units/acre	3 units/acre
R-R	43,560	1 unit/acre	1.5 units/acre

Currently, density options available in Carrboro range from no minimum density (B-1(c) to one unit per five acres (WR). Historically, the greatest opportunity for residential development has been found the R-SIR zoning district, where a total of 2,639 units could be developed on the zone’s 182 acres. The 629 acres in the R-10 district has provided the second best density opportunity where 2,519 units have been possible. In this context, and recognizing the average development of R-SIR parcels in the 1980’s (9.3 units per acre), the overall density of the town is 2.78 units per acre.

Is there an optimal density for Multi-family Residential Development?

Due to historical trends and associated differing perspectives on residential development, density ranges vary from place to place. Developers seeking to construct new housing desire density at a level that will maximize the profit of any project in its desired market niche. Anecdotal evidence from the development community is that 13 units to the acre is the minimum density needed to achieve a feasible, multi-family development. Literature associated with transit-oriented development suggests that transit-friendly

communities can be developed at 5-10 units and that successful transit development is only achieved at densities of greater than 10 units per acre. While the Economic Union’s reported classification of low-density development is anything less than 50 units per acre, density schemes in the United States are more typically in the ranges noted below:

Density Type	Density
Low density	2-7 units/acre
Medium density	7-15 units/acre
High density	15 + units/acre

Discussion

The areas noted in the discussion of development opportunity above represent approximately 1200 acres, all but 130 of which are zoned at densities of two units or less per acre. In relation to the desire to rezone areas for multi-family (apartments, condominiums, townhouses), several issues may be noted:

1. The industry standard for multi-family housing seems to be at least 5 units per acre, with densities greater than 13 units per acre most desirable/feasible.
2. The NSA plan limits overall development of the areas covered by the plan to 2.1 units per acre and limits village development to 5 units per acre.
3. The NSA plan provides for village development, but not necessarily stand-alone, multi-family development.
4. The context for development in the NSA has changed somewhat this year with the County’s purchase of 188 acres of land that was expected to accept some of the NSA’s development. Other parties to the Joint Planning Agreement may be amenable to considering changes that would facilitate rezoning to higher densities.
5. The Transition Area limits on rezoning will preclude considerations of additional density for most projects (with the exception of contiguous village developments) until 75 percent of Transition Area 1 has reached a density of greater than one unit per acre. Bu the definition included in the Joint Planning Agreement, approximately 55 percent of Transition Area 1 is currently developed at this level.
6. Based on citizen concerns and interest expressed during the development of the NSA plan, opposition to densities such as those noted as suitable for most multi-family development should be expected. There are many examples of design elements that are used to mitigate concerns about density

7. Transit service to most of the NSA (north of Homestead Road) will likely remain infeasible in the absence of additional residential density. As has been noted, densities of at least 5 units per acre are needed to support minimal transit service.

ADMINISTRATION’S RECOMMENDATION

The Administration recommends that the Board of Aldermen adopt the attached resolution (*Attachment A*) that accepts the Report: Rezoning for Apartments, Condominiums, and Townhouses.