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City of Asheville Staff Report

Planning and Zoning Commission Meeting Date: August 5, 2026

Staff Resources: Chris Collins, AICP, Interim Planning and Urban Design Director

Action Requested: Consideration of a zoning text amendment to the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO), Chapter 7 of the Asheville Code of Ordinances, to amend UDO sections 7-2-5, 7-8-1(d), 7-16-1(28) regarding zoning permission for Duplexes and Townhomes.

Project Contacts:

- Applicant: City of Asheville

Summary of Petition:

- The zoning text amendment proposes to change the current allowances for duplexes and townhomes as follows:
    - Allows duplexes as a by-right use in the following districts where the use is not currently allowed:
        - RS-2, RS-4, RS-8, NB, RAD-NT, RAD-LYH, RAD-RES
    - Revises the special requirements for Townhomes (Dwellings, townhouse) to allow a maximum of two attached townhomes in RS-2, RS-4 and RS-8;
    - The townhouse changes are intended to allow a duplex to take advantage of the lot width, setback, and area requirements so that a duplex may be subdivided along with the land each unit occupies for ownership purposes.
- From April of 2025 to April of 2026, the City received 18 applications to permit duplex construction.
- This proposed amendment is supported by and promotes City-initiated but non-adopted plans and studies as follows:
    - Affordable Housing Plan (2024):
        - Goal 3.2 - Reduce regulatory barriers [to housing] citywide
    - Missing Middle Housing Study (2023:
        - Zoning Recommendation 4 - Allow Wider Range of Housing Options through By-Right Review.

- This proposed amendment aims to increase the available land for duplex construction and allow for individual ownership of duplex units,202 thereby expanding the potential for housing unit development and ownership opportunities.
- City staff held a stakeholder engagement event on May 20, 2026. This event included representation from neighborhood organizations (including Legacy Neighborhoods),

home builders, realtors, and other stakeholder organizations. A summary from this event is attached to this staff report as Exhibit B.

Staff Recommendation:

- Staff recommends approval of this zoning text amendment request based on the reasons provided within this report.

Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan and Other Plans:

Living Asheville Comprehensive Plan (2018)

- The proposed rezoning supports several goals in the Living Asheville Comprehensive Plan, including:
    - **Increase and Diversify the Housing Supply** - by promoting zoning policies to encourage more housing (p. 179).
    - **Encourage Responsible Growth -** by promoting small-scale residential units on residential lots with limits aimed at encouraging compatibility and creating flexibility within the planning, permitting, and construction process (p. 130).

Council Vision 2036 Focus Area(s):

This proposal supports the following:

- **Quality Affordable Housing** - By enabling a range of innovative housing options throughout the City.
- **Well-planned and Livable Community -** By enabling a range of housing choices at a small scale that does not harm neighborhood safety while promoting socioeconomic diversity.

Committee(s):

- N/A

Pro(s):

- May promote the development of additional housing options by entitling more land within the City for duplex development.
- Promotes home-ownership opportunities by including a mechanism for the subdivision and individual ownership of each duplex unit.

Con(s):

- None

Summary of Amendment

Current UDO Requirement	Proposed UDO Requirement	Summary of Change
Duplexes are allowed in 27 zoning districts	Duplexes are allowed in 34 zoning districts.	Increase in the allowance of duplexes by the inclusion of 7 more zoning districts.
Townhomes are allowed in RM districts with special standards with a minimum of 3 townhouse units.	The allowance for townhouses expands into the RS zoning districts with special standards limiting developments to a maximum of 2 attached townhomes.	Allows a duplex in the RS districts to take advantage of the lot width and area flexibility of the townhouse regulations, enabling the subdivision and sale of each duplex unit.

Suggested Motion to Approve:

- I move to recommend approval of the proposed wording amendments to Chapter 7 of the Asheville Code of Ordinances and find that the proposed amendments are reasonable, are in the public interest, are consistent with the City's comprehensive plan and meet the development needs of the community in that the amendments will: 1) Promote zoning policies to encourage more housing; and, 2) Promote small-scale residential units on residential lots with limits aimed at encouraging compatibility and creating flexibility within the planning, permitting, and construction process.

Attachment(s):

- This document contains the proposed, marked-up zoning text amendments - Marked-Up Proposed Revisions
- This document contains the summary of the engagement event held on May 20, 2026 - Public Engagement Summary Report