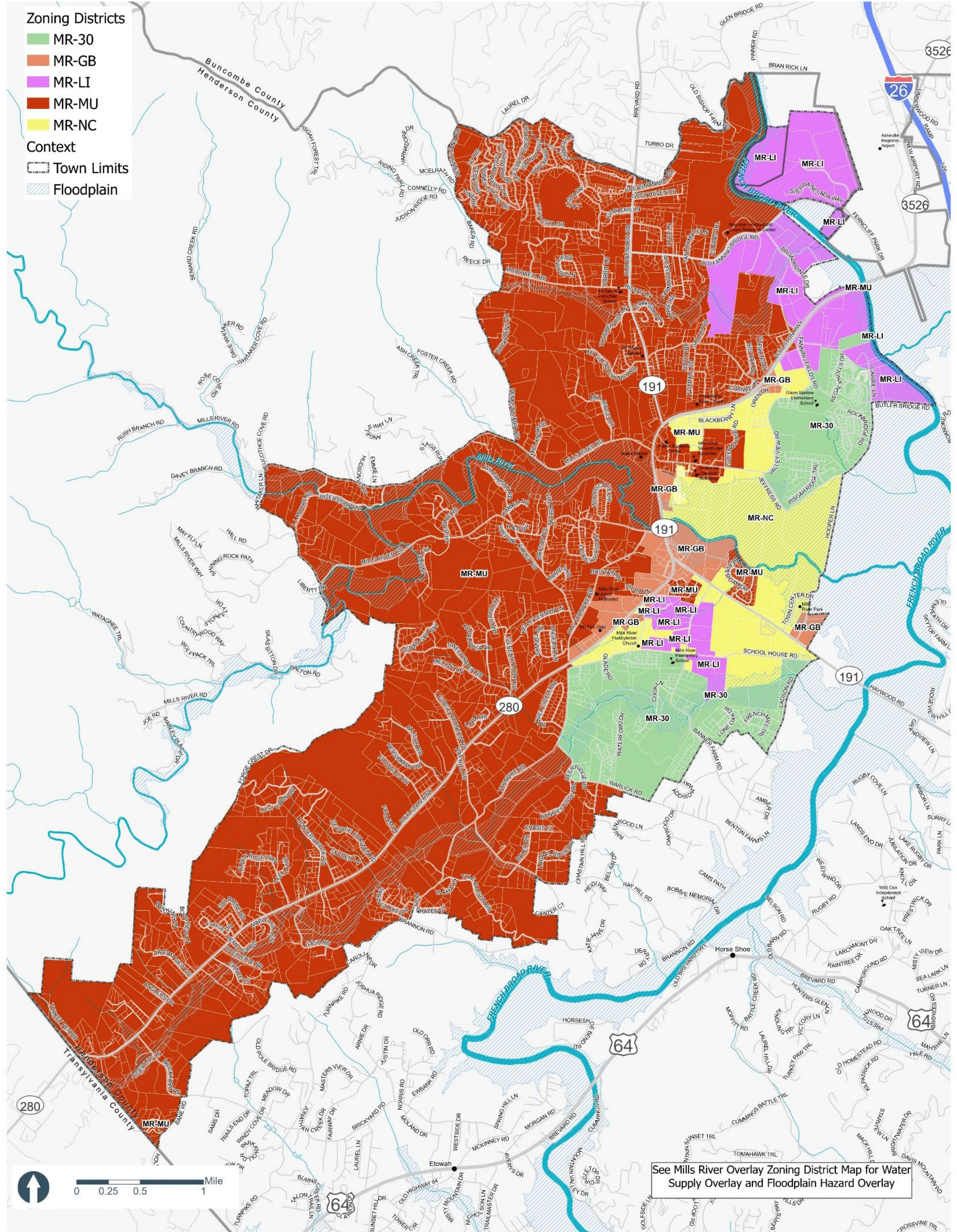


# Current Zoning Map

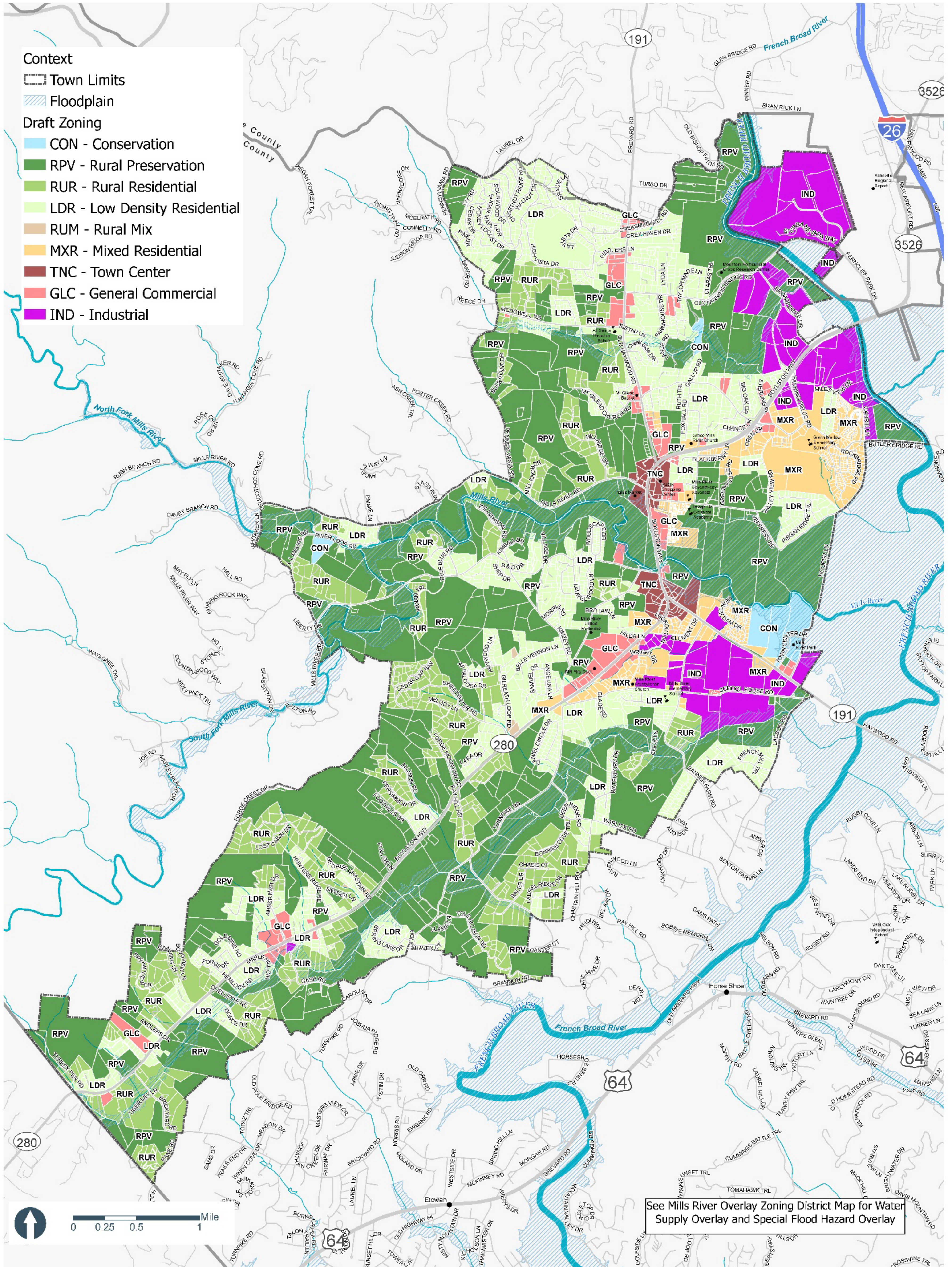


## MILLS RIVER ZONING UPDATE

- Existing Zoning Map -



# DRAFT Zoning Map (version 2)



## MILLS RIVER ZONING UPDATE

- Second Draft Zoning Map -



STEWART

Date Modified/Printed: 1/14/2026

Document Path: M:\Projects\2024\M24009\_Mills\_River\_Zoning\_Update\GIS\Mapping\Mills\_River\_Proposed\_Zoning\_DRAFT\_2026\_01\_14.aprx



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# New Zoning District Descriptions

## CONSERVATION (CON)

### **CRITERIA: TOWN-OWNED & DESIGNATED CONSERVATION LANDS**

This district is for Town-owned properties as well as properties containing conservations easements or natural resources, properties owned by the State, or property controlled by another government agency or a non-profit for the protection of natural resources, recreation, etc. The intent is to provide a district solely for protection of undeveloped resource land that will remain undeveloped.

## RURAL PRESERVATION (RPV) (FORMERLY NAMED "AGRICULTURAL RESIDENTIAL" (AGR))

### **CRITERIA: LOT SIZE IS 3 ACRES OR GREATER**

This is a new district intended to encourage and preserve agricultural and very low-density residential uses. The Rural Preservation (RPV) district is for a mix of agricultural, forestry, low-density residential, and currently undeveloped land intended for these purposes. Minimum lot size is three acres with the option for conservation subdivisions where agricultural or environmentally-sensitive lands are preserved.

## RURAL RESIDENTIAL (RUR)

### **CRITERIA: LOT SIZE IS GREATER THAN 1.5 ACRES BUT LESS THAN 3 ACRES**

This district is the former MR-RR, Rural Residential zoning district. It carries forward the intent and language from the current zoning. The purpose of the district is to facilitate orderly development in rural areas not well served by public utilities where the primary uses of land are single family residential on lots under three acres in size, agriculture, and limited institutional uses that support residential development (like schools or churches).

## LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL (LDR)

### **CRITERIA: CURRENT MR-30 AND/OR UNDER 1.5 ACRES**

This district is the former MR-30, Low Density Residential zoning district. The LDR is district is a low-to-moderate density residential district that permits development of single-family detached residential dwellings and a series of smaller-sized/smaller-lot residential development (like pocket neighborhoods and bungalow courts) subject to applicable compatibility controls. The district also permits conservation subdivisions, minor utilities, assembly and educational uses, government uses and recreational/open space uses.

## MIXED RESIDENTIAL (MXR)

### **CRITERIA: AREAS WITH UTILITIES, EXISTING MIX OF USES, SOME CURRENT MR-NC**

The MXR is a new zoning district intended for a wide range of medium-intensity residential use types on lots of around 30,000 square feet in size. The district allows a mix of medium density, single family housing and low-intensity, non-residential uses that support and are proximate to residential neighborhoods.

## RURAL MIX (RUM)

### **CRITERIA: EXISTING, RURAL DEVELOPMENT W/ PRINCIPAL RESIDENCE & PRINCIPAL BUSINESS**

The RUM is a new zoning district, available by landowner request only, intended to accommodate the typical and historically rural mixed-use development in Mills River, where two principal uses already exist on the same lot – a principal residence and a principal commercial or industrial use owned and operated by the same individual or family who also reside in the principal residence on the same lot or site.

## GENERAL COMMERCIAL (GLC)

### **CRITERIA: FORMER MR-GB, EXISTING USE**

The new General Commercial (GLC) district replaces the former MR-GB General Business zoning district. This is the Town's most intense commercial district typically found in short linear stretches along major roadways and at major highway intersections. In addition to the wide range of commercial uses, the district also permits a limited variety of residential uses such as live/work and upper-story residential uses (provided in a mixed-use development context).

## TOWN CENTER (TNC)

### **CRITERIA: AVAILABLE UTILITIES, CROSSROADS, FUTURE LAND USE, EXISTING USE**

The new Town Center (TNC) zoning district encourages the creation of small-scale, "village-style" commercial and mixed-use areas that serve as the heart of Mills River. The district encourages a mix of residential and non-residential uses in the same buildings or on the same lots along with gathering spaces in a pedestrian-oriented walkable area intended to serve as a community center.

## INDUSTRIAL (IND)

### **CRITERIA: EXISTING MR-LI**

This converts the existing Light Industrial (MR-LI) into a new IND, Industrial District. It also allows more intense forms of commercial development and employment-generating uses. Residential uses, except social services, are prohibited.



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# Key Updates Based on Feedback:

The Staff, Steering Committee, and Town Council have been reviewing the DRAFT versions of the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) and Zoning Map to choose the best path forward in the development of policies regarding land development for Mills River.

Your feedback is crucial to the process and collectively, we are making changes to the DRAFT UDO and Zoning Map based on the input received. The following are some of suggestions that have been incorporated to make the UDO uniquely Mills River:

- **CHANGE THE NAME OF THE AGRICULTURAL RESIDENTIAL (AGR) ZONING DISTRICT TO RURAL PRESERVATION (RPV)**

The district name caused confusion as to what uses would be permitted. It also implied that all agricultural uses were being regulated. In order to reduce confusion and focus on the preservation of open, rural spaces, the proposed name of the district was **changed to Rural Preservation**.

- **ADD A RURAL MIX (RUM) ZONING DISTRICT**

After hearing from numerous residents, it was very clear that the proposed districts did not address a very established way-of-life in Mills River, where established family businesses have been operating on the same property where the family home is also located. This kind of development exists throughout Town and there needs to be a way to recognize and protect this way of life. The RUM district allows this kind of **development to continue but must be requested by a landowner based on existing conditions**.

- **REDUCE BUILDING HEIGHT ALLOWANCES**

In reviewing proposed dimensional standards for each of the districts, the Steering Committee felt that the proposed allowable heights for buildings in all zoning districts was excessive. It was further realized that these heights are permitted in the current ordinance. In order to preserve valuable view sheds and the rural look and feel of Mills River, all new building heights, especially on steep slopes, should be reduced and **not exceed two stories**.

- **MAINTAIN A MAXIMUM DENSITY OF 4 UNITS/ ACRE**

In addressing the desire for and Comprehensive Plan goal of providing opportunities for a mix of housing, there was much discussion on types of residential housing and the potential of increasing density in areas of Town where utilities and transportation network are present. However, the community felt very strongly and there is clear directive **not to permit more than 4 units per acre** with no flexibility permitted to increase beyond that threshold through incentives or conditional zoning.

- **CLARIFY BONA-FIDE FARM EXEMPTIONS FROM ZONING REGULATIONS**

In keeping with the existing regulations, all bona-fide farming activities are exempt from the zoning regulations in the UDO. By including agricultural uses in the use standards, there was confusion that agriculture was being regulated. The use table lists agricultural uses and now clarifies that **these activities are permitted by-right, whether on a bona fide farm or not**. The secondary use table also has new clarity that 'homestead' agricultural activity like gardening, keeping of livestock, and other traditional agricultural activities remain permitted as part of residential uses. Please note that all development (including bona fide farms and agriculture) is subject to subdivision and flood hazard regulations.

- **LIMIT DWELLING TYPES IN RESIDENTIAL DISTRICTS OTHER THAN MIXED RESIDENTIAL (MXR)**

There are a number of residential uses permitted in the UDO, including single-family, detached; townhomes; two-family homes; triplexes / quadplexes; bungalow courts; pocket neighborhoods; Live/Work units; and conservation subdivisions. Each of these provides an opportunity for variety in design, cost, size, and multi-generational living. The Steering Committee felt strongly that single-family detached (inclusive of manufactured homes) and two-family homes should be the only type permitted residential types in the RPV, RUR, and LDR districts in order to preserve the rural and agricultural feel of the community.

- **MAINTAIN AND CLARIFY THE FAMILY SUBDIVISION PROCESS**

In keeping with the existing regulations, the Family Subdivision alternative will continue. Family subdivisions are intended to allow multiple members of the same family to have homes on individual lots that were created from a main or "parent" property created through a very simple process that allows "family lots" created to be one acre in are or more, regardless of the minimum lot size for the zoning district.

