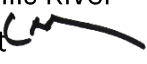


To: Michael Malecek, Town of Mills River
From: Chad Meadows, CodeWright 
Date: 10.29.25
CC: File, Karen Mallo, Jake Petrosky
RE: Imagine Mills River
Task 3, Annotated Outline Trip Notes



MESSAGE

These are the meeting notes from the Imagine Mills River new UDO project Task 3 Annotated Outline trip conducted in Mills River on 9/24/25 through 9/26/25. These notes document the activities conducted during the trip and summarize the discussion. Copies of presentation slides are also included.

Imagine Mills River is an effort to consolidate and update the Town's development regulations into its first unified development ordinance (or "UDO"). The new UDO is proposed to implement *Making Mills River*, the Town's new Comprehensive Plan (adopted in 2021). In addition, the new UDO will establish a comprehensive set of development application review procedures, new review criteria, measurable standards, consistent terminology, best practices, and innovations such as incentives for preferred forms of development. The project includes a review of current zoning districts and strives to protect the community's rural character while also ensuring sustainable and beneficial growth in appropriate areas.

The Annotated Outline is a document that provides the outline of the proposed UDO contents, formatting, style, and structure. Considered the "dress rehearsal" for the UDO, the Annotated Outline is completed just prior to the actual drafting of the UDO so that Town staff, elected officials, and stakeholders understand the new organization and basics of the UDO elements. The consulting team prepared a preliminary Annotated Outline and then traveled to Mills River to meet with the public, Town staff, Steering Committee, and Town officials. Trip 3, Annotated Outline, included the following six activities:

1. Proposed Zoning Map Review Meeting with staff and the mapping consultant (Stewart Engineering);
2. Project Steering Committee Meeting 2;
3. A meeting with Town staff;
4. Public Forum Two – An open house detailing the Imagine Mills River Project and the Annotated Outline;
5. Conducting Presentation at Meeting Two with the Town Council; and
6. Office Hours;

These trip notes provide additional details on the activities undertaken during the Task 3 trip conducted in September 2025.

codeWright



1. Zoning Map Review Meeting

On Wednesday, September 24th, 2025 members of the CodeWright team, the Town’s planning staff, and the Team’s mapping consultant from Stewart, met to discuss the proposed Zoning Map, version dated 9.5.25. Information discussed and suggestions for edits included the following:

- Remove the aerial ortho photo layer to improve readability of the map
- Remove green areas located outside the Town limits (like the Pisgah National Forest)
- Include road names
- Add lot lines
- Darken the floodplain hatch; eventually add this as an overlay district to a separate map
- Create additional overlay district Map (separate in order to provide readability) for WSO (Water Supply Watershed Overlay) and FHO (Floodplain Hazard Overlay)
- Town staff has site specific edits based on current land uses

There was a bit of discussion on the criteria used to classify each of the new zoning districts. The initial classifications are based on the following:

CON	Conservation	Town owned or designated, conserved property, publicly owned parks
AGR	Agricultural Residential	Vacant, residential, or ag lots greater than 3 acres
RUR	Rural Residential	Lots between 1.5 and three acres
LDR	Low Density Residential	Old MR-30, under 1.5 acre lot size
MXR	Mixed Residential	Developed, mixed use, non-residential in NC or MU
GLC	General Commercial	Old MR-GB
TNC	Town Center	Located at crossroads, variable lot size, mix of uses
IND	Industrial	Old MR-LI

Discussion also included a cursory review of the DRAFT Land Use Table. The following are the comments related to the Table:

- Religious institution must be allowed in the same districts as a Fraternal Club or School
- Ag Products is inclusive of existing Farm / Produce Stands
- Amusement is already occurring on Bona-Fie farms which are exempt from regulation
- Recreation is classified as either indoor or outdoor as well as private (commercial) or public (institutional)
- Level 2 and Level 3 SES (Solar Energy Systems). Allow Level 3 permit in ICZ only and remove Level 2 from AGR
- Extractive Industry, allow as SUP in LI
- Prohibited Uses include but not limited to: Infectious Waste, Nuclear Reactors, RV Residences
- Do not regulate Short Term Rentals
- Combine all Schools (Elementary, Middle, High) into one use category





2. Project Steering Committee Meeting 4

The consulting team conducted the fourth meeting with the project Steering Committee during the evening of September 24, 2025. The presentation focused on the Imagine Mills River project goals; the work program; the Annotated Outline chapters, organization, formatting, and content; the Future Land Map; the existing and proposed Zoning Maps; and the accelerated project schedule.

During the presentation, the following seven topics were discussed:



1. Expedited Timeline

- The Town is the only municipality in the State of North Carolina to be granted an exemption from SB 382.
- UDO adoption by the Town is required by July 1, 2026 in order to comply with the exemption allowance.
- Currently four months behind as we waited for the legislature to determine direction to move forward.
- Steering Committee suggested that Council members be brought along during the process and members be invited to attend Steering Committee meetings so they are aware of the proposed changes with the new UDO.
- The group talked about how best to organize material for review and the need for additional virtual discussions.

2. Agricultural Use Exemptions

- Agricultural uses are currently exempted from the Town's development regulations, with the exception of subdivision and Water Supply Watershed. These exemptions will be continued to the UDO, but Agricultural uses will be made subject to the Town's newly-adopted Floodplain Hazard standards.
- Farm activities or non-farm activities are happening on non-exempt farms and the abuse of the exemption rules on bona fide farms should be restricted. Look to provide guardrails in the UDO but exempt from zoning when meeting particular criteria as outlined in the General Statutes.

3. Proposed Zoning Districts

- Agricultural Residential (AGR) has a three acre minimum. This was picked as a starting criteria based on typical lot sizes seen throughout Town. What happens to existing farms that are under three (3) acres? They can still exist because bona fide farms are exempt from zoning.
- Agricultural Residential is a confusing name as it does not require agricultural uses yet it is a permitted use.
- Lots within floodplain areas (that are now subject to the Town's Flood Hazard provisions) remain zoned with a base zoning district designation because the boundaries of a floodplain area can change. Further, portions of individual lots may be located outside the floodplain.
- Consider an Agricultural Conditional Zoning but only if Ag uses not exempt from zoning.

4. Agricultural Uses

Review and reconsider how agricultural uses or farm uses are classified. The current use table lists a broad array of agricultural activities, some of which may take place on a bona fide farm (and would therefore be exempted from zoning). This distinction needs to be made more clear somehow. Consider a general farm





IMAGINE Mills River – new Unified Development Ordinance

Trip 3, Annotated Outline Trip Notes

10.29.25

use as there are typically many different types of activities that can occur on different kinds of farm, such as agricultural processing, animal husbandry, and ag product sales. Difficult to determine primary and secondary uses when all used equally. Staff expressed a desire for some sort of basic requirement for farms or agricultural uses to “check-in” with the Town when initially established. This check in is not a permit, nor is there a fee. It is needed as a mechanism for the Town to be aware that a bona fide farm exists and to help ensure the bona fide farm exemption is protected.

5. Business / Privilege Licenses

Town should consider implementing privilege licenses (this is outside the scope of the UDO, and is a policy matter) and not charge for these licenses. The privilege license process is helpful to track the type of development and businesses in Town, especially agricultural uses (and exempt changes that wouldn't otherwise require zoning compliance or a permit)

6. Moving Forward / Review procedures

- Code Wright will prepare UDO text in batches. We will submit to Mike, edit with his comments, and resubmit for submission to Steering Committee.
- Will be in three batches: Districts/Land Uses, Standards, and Procedures
- 2 Rounds of Review – 1st one is long (chunks), 2nd is quicker (consolidated, whole document)
- Zooms / Teams calls with Steering Committee to facilitate more frequent discussions.
- Will be writing from October through March

The following pages includes the slides from Steering Committee Meeting 3:

1 **Imagine Mills River**
unified development ordinance
Annotated Outline
Steering Committee Meeting 4 9.24.25

2 **OVERVIEW**
• Project Background
• Annotated Outline
• Discussion
• Next Steps

3 **PROJECT GOALS**
1. Protect Community Character
2. Implement Town Policy
3. Create a User-Friendly Code
4. Protect the Environment
5. Increase Housing Options
6. Promote Development Quality
7. Modernize Uses

4 **WORK PROGRAM**
JUN 2024
MAY JUN 2024
JUN-DEC 2024
JAN-APR 2025
MAY MAY 2025
JUN-DEC 2025
• About 4 months behind due to SB382
• We will make up time in Tasks 4 & 5
• The document needs to be adopted by July 2026

5 **CODE DIAGNOSIS**
1. The 'Road Map' for the new UDO
2. Explores the gap between the policy guidance and the current development regulations
3. Provides a framework for discussion about how the development rules should be updated
4. Makes recommendations

6 **07 Code Diagnosis**
The Code Diagnosis outlines the issues in the new UDO. It summarizes the input we have collected and makes recommendations organized into SEVEN KEY THEMES. Each of the 7 Themes are listed below.

7 **ANNOTATED OUTLINE**
1. Refinement of concepts discussed in Code Assessment (Task 2)
2. UDO document format
3. Article & Section organization
4. Procedures, Districts, Uses
5. Exploration of proposed Development Standards

8 **DOCUMENT BASICS**
TABLE OF CONTENTS
CHAPTER 1: Administration..... 5
CHAPTER 2: Applications..... 10
CHAPTER 3: Districts..... 20
CHAPTER 4: Land Uses..... 40
CHAPTER 5: Nonconformities..... 70
CHAPTER 6: Standards..... 80
CHAPTER 7: Violations..... 100
CHAPTER 8: Word Usage..... 120
CHAPTER 9: Appendices..... 130

9 **CHAPTER 10. HEADING 1**
10.1. HEADING 1
10.2. HEADING 1
10.3. HEADING 1
10.4. HEADING 1
10.5. HEADING 1
10.6. HEADING 1
10.7. HEADING 1
10.8. HEADING 1
10.9. HEADING 1
10.10. HEADING 1
10.11. HEADING 1
10.12. HEADING 1
10.13. HEADING 1
10.14. HEADING 1
10.15. HEADING 1
10.16. HEADING 1
10.17. HEADING 1
10.18. HEADING 1
10.19. HEADING 1
10.20. HEADING 1
10.21. HEADING 1
10.22. HEADING 1
10.23. HEADING 1
10.24. HEADING 1
10.25. HEADING 1
10.26. HEADING 1
10.27. HEADING 1
10.28. HEADING 1
10.29. HEADING 1
10.30. HEADING 1
10.31. HEADING 1
10.32. HEADING 1
10.33. HEADING 1
10.34. HEADING 1
10.35. HEADING 1
10.36. HEADING 1
10.37. HEADING 1
10.38. HEADING 1
10.39. HEADING 1
10.40. HEADING 1
10.41. HEADING 1
10.42. HEADING 1
10.43. HEADING 1
10.44. HEADING 1
10.45. HEADING 1
10.46. HEADING 1
10.47. HEADING 1
10.48. HEADING 1
10.49. HEADING 1
10.50. HEADING 1
10.51. HEADING 1
10.52. HEADING 1
10.53. HEADING 1
10.54. HEADING 1
10.55. HEADING 1
10.56. HEADING 1
10.57. HEADING 1
10.58. HEADING 1
10.59. HEADING 1
10.60. HEADING 1
10.61. HEADING 1
10.62. HEADING 1
10.63. HEADING 1
10.64. HEADING 1
10.65. HEADING 1
10.66. HEADING 1
10.67. HEADING 1
10.68. HEADING 1
10.69. HEADING 1
10.70. HEADING 1
10.71. HEADING 1
10.72. HEADING 1
10.73. HEADING 1
10.74. HEADING 1
10.75. HEADING 1
10.76. HEADING 1
10.77. HEADING 1
10.78. HEADING 1
10.79. HEADING 1
10.80. HEADING 1
10.81. HEADING 1
10.82. HEADING 1
10.83. HEADING 1
10.84. HEADING 1
10.85. HEADING 1
10.86. HEADING 1
10.87. HEADING 1
10.88. HEADING 1
10.89. HEADING 1
10.90. HEADING 1
10.91. HEADING 1
10.92. HEADING 1
10.93. HEADING 1
10.94. HEADING 1
10.95. HEADING 1
10.96. HEADING 1
10.97. HEADING 1
10.98. HEADING 1
10.99. HEADING 1
10.100. HEADING 1

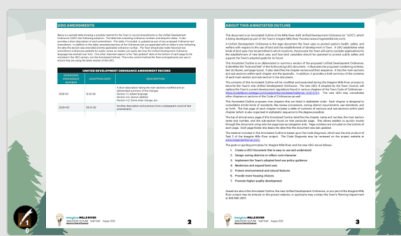




IMAGINE Mills River – new Unified Development Ordinance

Trip 3, Annotated Outline Trip Notes

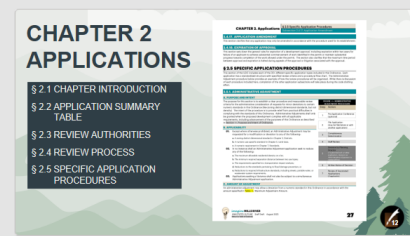
10.29.25



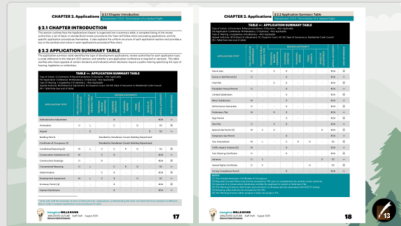
10



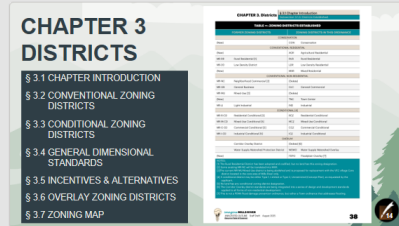
11



12



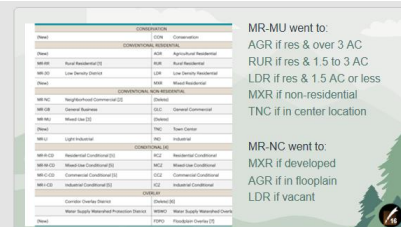
13



14



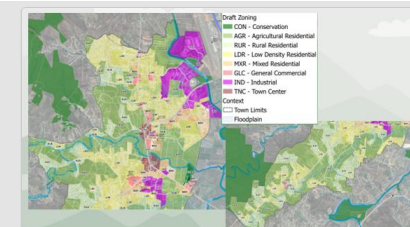
15



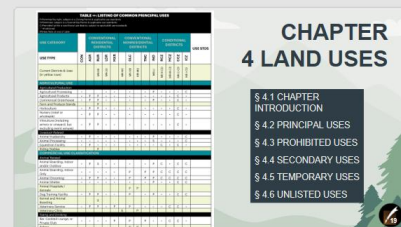
16



17



18



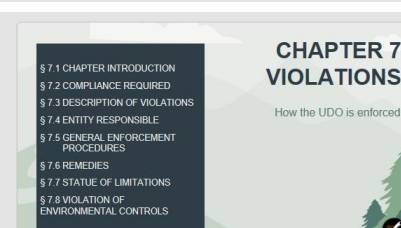
19



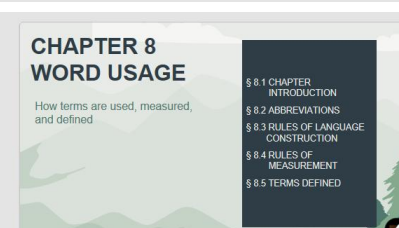
20



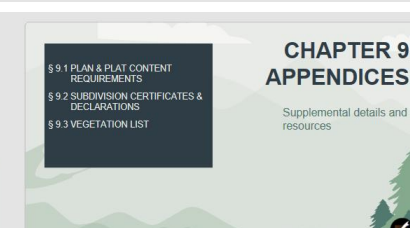
21



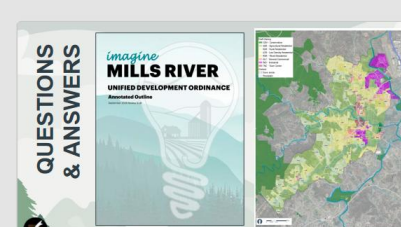
22



23



24



25



26





4. Project Status/Strategic Plan Meeting with Staff

The consulting team met with Town Planning Staff to discuss the project, recap from the Steering Committee meeting, and discuss questions remaining from the initial DRAFT of the Annotated Outline. The following is a summary of the discussion:

- **Regulation and/or Exemption of Agricultural Uses.** There is consensus that that ag uses will be subject to the water supply watershed and floodplain hazard overlay district regulations as well as those rules regulating subdivision. The definition of agriculture, bona fide farms, and farm need to be reviewed and strengthened based on state statutes. Need to define or list what is considered a “Non-farm” use. Potential creation of an Ag permit (exempt for regulations, no cost, similar to Privilege license) which allows the Town to understand what is being built and what operations are being completed so County can issue building permits when needed.
- **Elimination of Corridor Overlay and incorporation of design guidelines throughout Town.** There is a recommendation to remove the corridor overlay since it is currently applicable to most of the developable parcels in the Town and simply apply some or most of the existing standards to most new development. This would primarily include multi-family uses, both horizontal and vertical mixed uses, and commercial and industrial non-residential uses. Design guidelines for SF detached and SF attached, duplex and triplex (less than 3 stories) are options as cannot regulate as per statute. Would look to regulate these uses on frontages with visibility from roadways (primary, secondary and tertiary); regulations for materials/wall treatment. Minimal if any mention of fenestration or transparency.
- **Flood Protection.** The Town is currently drafting the final version of the Floodplain Hazard Ordinance that will be incorporated into the new UDO. This ordinance is non-FEMA/NFIP compliant but is based on the FIRM (Flood Insurance Rate Mapping) for its determination of the 100-year floodplain. The ordinance will be applicable to everyone in the Special Floodplain Hazard Area (SFHA). The Town’s Floodplain Hazard Ordinance prohibits all development in the floodplain except the following:
 1. Residential accessory structures without utilities or heating. No dwellings are permitted.
 2. Bona fide farms / agriculture including land maintenance, structures, and agricultural land uses
 3. Functionally-dependent activities (dock, tubing, fishing)
 4. Government / public utility
 5. Environmental restoration
 6. Private residential access road through floodplain to access a single-family dwelling that is located outside of the floodplain
 - Minimal fill is allowed (base fill standard – 5% of SFHA to BFE) in the floodplain.
 - Lawfully-established existing nonconforming development in the floodplain is allowed to build back.
 - No commercial or industrial uses allowed.Based on the local ordinance in Flat Rock. The consulting team expressed some concern that the ordinance may be stricter than that of the State.
- **Resource Protection.** This is proposed to be a new section in the UDO that will contain the regulations for steep slopes, ridgeline protection, outstanding waters/trout streams, and tree protection/reforestation. There was discussion on the inclusion of riparian buffers / setbacks in areas outside the water supply watershed (30’ on either side of a blue-line / perennial stream). Discussed the measuring of steep slopes and it will be determined to have steep slopes if the average slope across the site is greater





IMAGINE Mills River – new Unified Development Ordinance

Trip 3, Annotated Outline Trip Notes

10.29.25

than 25% (based on the calculation method used in Laurel Park, NC UDO). For tree protection a 30' perimeter was discussed. Also allowing developers to count preserved tree as open space. Fundamental difference in having people save trees vs. replace; incentivize. Discuss tree clearing permit process.

5. Public Forum Two

From 1:00 PM until 5:00 PM on Thursday, September 25th, the Town staff and the consulting team conducted the second public forum of the Imagine Mills River project. The open-house-style event took place at Town Hall (124 Town Center Drive). The public forum was conducted to provide an introduction to the project for those who were unable to attend the previous forum and provide new information on the proposed zoning map and annotated outline. It was also an opportunity for residents to provide feedback and address any errors or concerns regarding the proposed zoning. Only two people attended the public forum.

The following is a summary of concerns we heard, the information Boards that were only display during the public forum, and the slides from the introductory presentation that was recorded and is available for review on the project website. There were around 12-15 people who visited the open house session.

Concerns we heard

Resident concerned about property rights especially in the southern and western portions of the Town. The Town should not be telling people what to do with their property.

Some commented on the need for the project to do a better job with the public explaining what Imagine Mills River is, what it is proposed, and what the anticipated outcomes will be. It may be that a series of short videos on these topics may be developed and placed on the project webpage.

Brewery operations are industrial in nature and include processes such as food and drink processing, manufacturing, and event use.

Station 1 – Welcome and Introduction

Station 1 included a sign-in sheet, and welcome board that provided an overview of the Forum. A second Introduction Board provided an overview of the project and where the Town is in the process.

WELCOME!
We are so glad you joined us today!

- The Imagine Mills River is the update to the Town's development ordinances and creation of the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO).
- Today we are discussing the FINAL Code Diagnosis and the DRAFT Annotated Outline.
- We are presenting the newly adopted Future Land Use Map and the DRAFT Zoning Map
- Ask questions! We are here to help.

MILLS RIVER
imagine Mills River

Introduction

What is the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO)?

- A set of rules and regulations adopted by the Town Council that governs how development occurs
- Combines current zoning ordinance and subdivision ordinance and other development-related codes from Code of Ordinances
- It codifies which uses are allowed, where they are allowed, and how they are to be built and operated
- It gives standards for signs, lighting, landscaping, parking, environmental protection, streets, and design of subdivisions
- Provides procedures for development from application through construction to occupancy
- Includes the Official Zoning Map which graphically shows where the uses are permitted

What is 'Imagine Mills River'?

- Name of the project undertaken by the Town of Mills River, with assistance from CodeWright Planners, to prepare a new UDO and updated Official Zoning Map
- The use of 'Imagine Mills River' is to ensure project document and engagement effort are easily recognizable to the community

Why is the Town Doing This Now?

- Recently approved Comprehensive Plan, Making Mills River
- Legislation gives exceptions for Mills River, provided UDO is adopted by July 2026.
- Increased rates of development, escalating land costs, concern over loss of character
- Protection of sensitive environmental areas
- Moderate the pace and location of new development
- Protect public safety
- Current regulations need more refinement

Where are we in the Process?
The draft of the Annotated Outline is complete. Public review is happening now.

Process Diagram:

- TASK 1: Project Initiation
- TASK 2: Code Diagnosis
- TASK 3: Annotated Outline
- TASK 4: Zoning Draft
- TASK 5: Future Land Use Map
- TASK 6: Zoning Ordinance
- TASK 7: Zoning Map

imagine Mills River





IMAGINE Mills River – new Unified Development Ordinance

Trip 3, Annotated Outline Trip Notes

10.29.25

Station 2 – Code Diagnosis Summary

The following board was prepared for the initial Public Forum, summarizes the seven key elements or themes for improvement in the new Mills River UDO, and was displayed again during Public Forum 2.

Code Diagnosis Summary

The Code Diagnosis final document details the research on the Town's policy guidance (Comprehensive Plan) and review of current ordinances. It summarizes the interviews and meetings held with Staff, Steering Committee, Town Council, and Stakeholders during project initiation. It then consolidates those findings into SEVEN KEY ELEMENTS:

- Create a UDO Document that is Easy to Use and Understand**
 - Consolidate provisions into a UDO
 - Use an intuitive structure for chapters
 - Include navigational aids and a new dynamic page layout
 - Remove lengthy paragraphs; standardized procedural language;
 - Clear & measurable decision-making criteria
 - Add diagrams to zoning districts, rules of measurement, and development standards; add new illustrated design standards with precedent imagery
 - Incorporate summary tables wherever possible; add procedural flow charts.
- Design Zoning Districts to Reflect Rural Character**
 - Arrange zoning districts to align with future land use mapping
 - Target growth in areas where utilities are available
 - Consideration of overlays to address character areas and environmental resources
 - Ensure balance of residential and non-residentially zoned land
 - Enforce buffers, building setbacks, and viewsheds
 - Consider cluster and conservation subdivisions
 - Creation of farmland preservation standards
- Implementing the Town's Adopted Land Use Policies**
 - Manage growth through density and design standards
 - Creation of use standards
 - Creation of a unified development ordinance
 - Protection of natural resources
 - Diversity in housing
 - Update and clarify administrative rules and those of Town Boards
 - Implementation of design standards
 - Require infrastructure improvements and target growth where utilities are available
- Modernize and Expand Land Uses**
 - Remove uses from district narratives
 - Utilize a new use table
 - Incorporate a wider range of new, modern-use types with associated use-specific standards
 - Reduce reliance on special use permits
 - Add list of prohibited uses
 - Create procedure for determining untitled uses
- Protect Environmental and Natural Features of the Town**
 - Establish resource conservation areas and/or standards
 - Encourage native and habitat-forming landscape options
 - Offer incentives for tree protection; create perimeter buffer requirements
 - Update water supply watershed requirements
 - Slope protection standards
 - Implement sustainable development incentives
 - Consideration of overlays to address environmental resource areas
- Provide a Greater Range of Housing Choices**
 - Allow a wider range of by-right housing
 - Allow additional small house / small lot options
 - Encourage accessory dwelling units
 - Permit more multi-family and townhouse development subject to new standards
 - Revise standards for tiny homes and add tiny-house units
- Promote Quality Development**
 - Provide new and clear design standards
 - Add optional single-family residential design guidelines and a suite of new non-residential design standards
 - Modernize and enhance numerous development standards (parking, lighting, open space, etc.)
 - Limit off-premise signage
 - Add new use-specific standards for most uses

imagineMills River

Station 3 – Future Land Use, Existing Zoning, and Proposed Zoning Maps

The Future Land Use map (1st of the following 3 maps) is based on the findings in the Mills River Comprehensive Plan and provides a foundation for the anticipated changes to the zoning map.

The existing zoning map (2nd of the 3 maps on the next pages) is representative of the existing zoning districts included in the current ordinance. These districts are anticipated to change with the update to the UDO. Currently, ordinances allow for over 50% of the Town to be included in the MR-MU Mixed Use district, which provides little to no protection from incompatible adjacent uses.

The draft zoning map (the 3rd of the 3 maps) is the initial draft proposal for how the current zoning might change as part of Imagine Mills River. This map shows the new zoning districts (described in the Code Diagnosis and Annotated Outline) and their boundaries. This is an initial draft proposed for the sake of discussion, and is anticipated to evolve throughout the process.

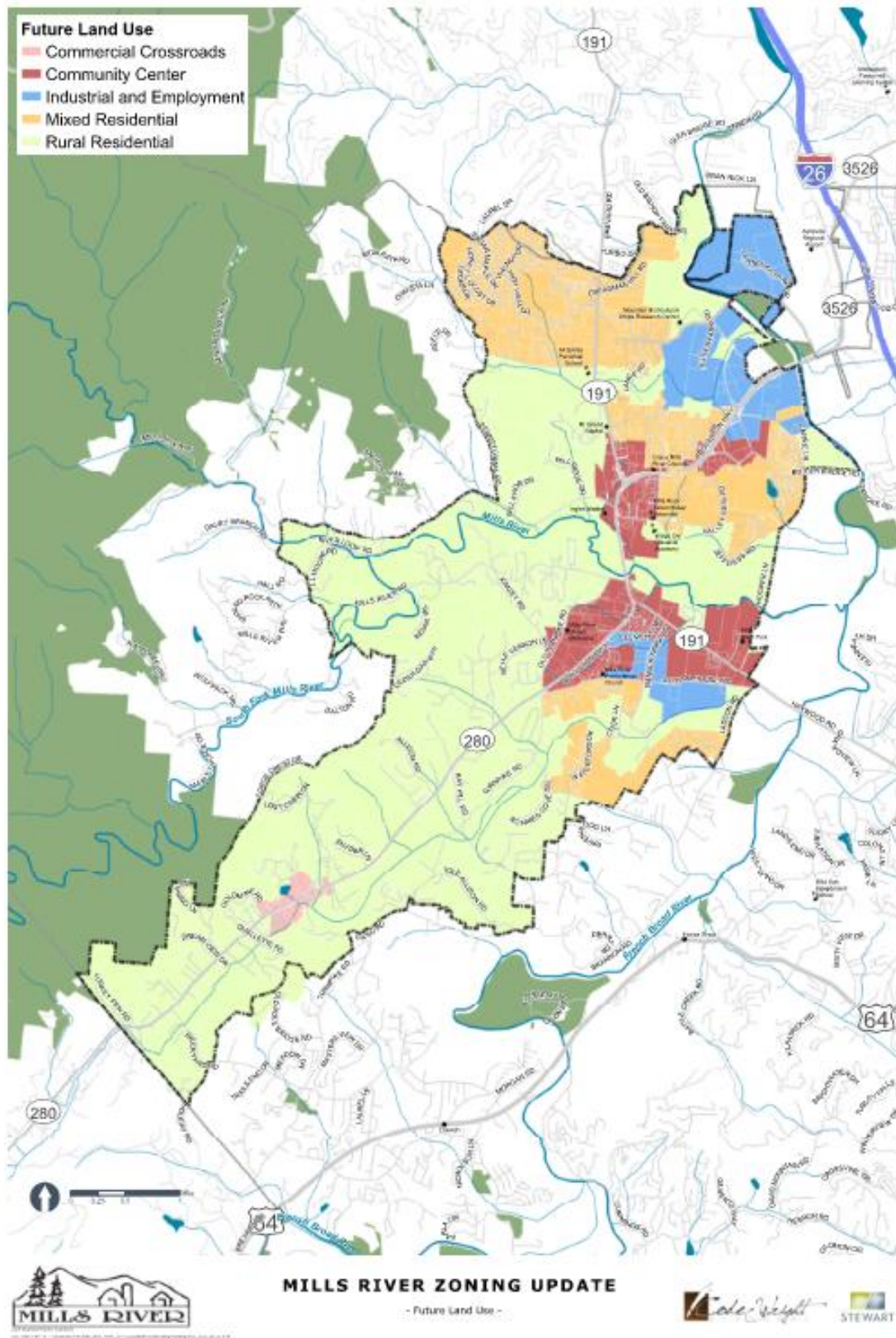
The three maps are included on the following pages.





IMAGINE Mills River – new Unified Development Ordinance Trip 3, Annotated Outline Trip Notes

10.29.25

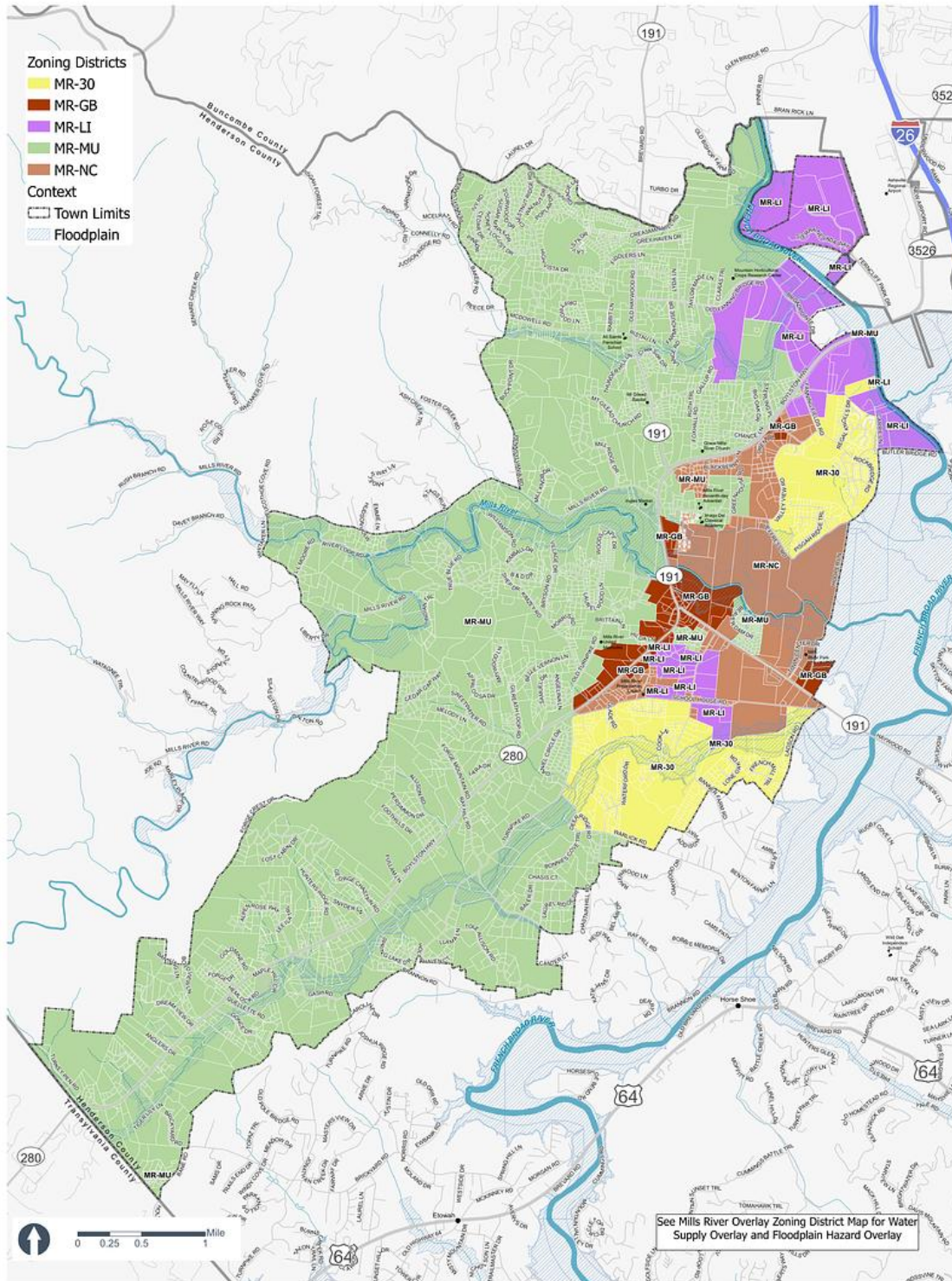




IMAGINE Mills River – new Unified Development Ordinance

Trip 3, Annotated Outline Trip Notes

10.29.25



Date Modified/Printed: 10/1/2025
Document Path: M:\Projects\2024\900\900_Mills_River_Zoning_Update\GIS\Mappping\Mills_River_Existing_Zoning_2025_09_29.aprx

**MILLS RIVER
ZONING UPDATE**
- Existing Zoning Map -



Code Wright

STEWART

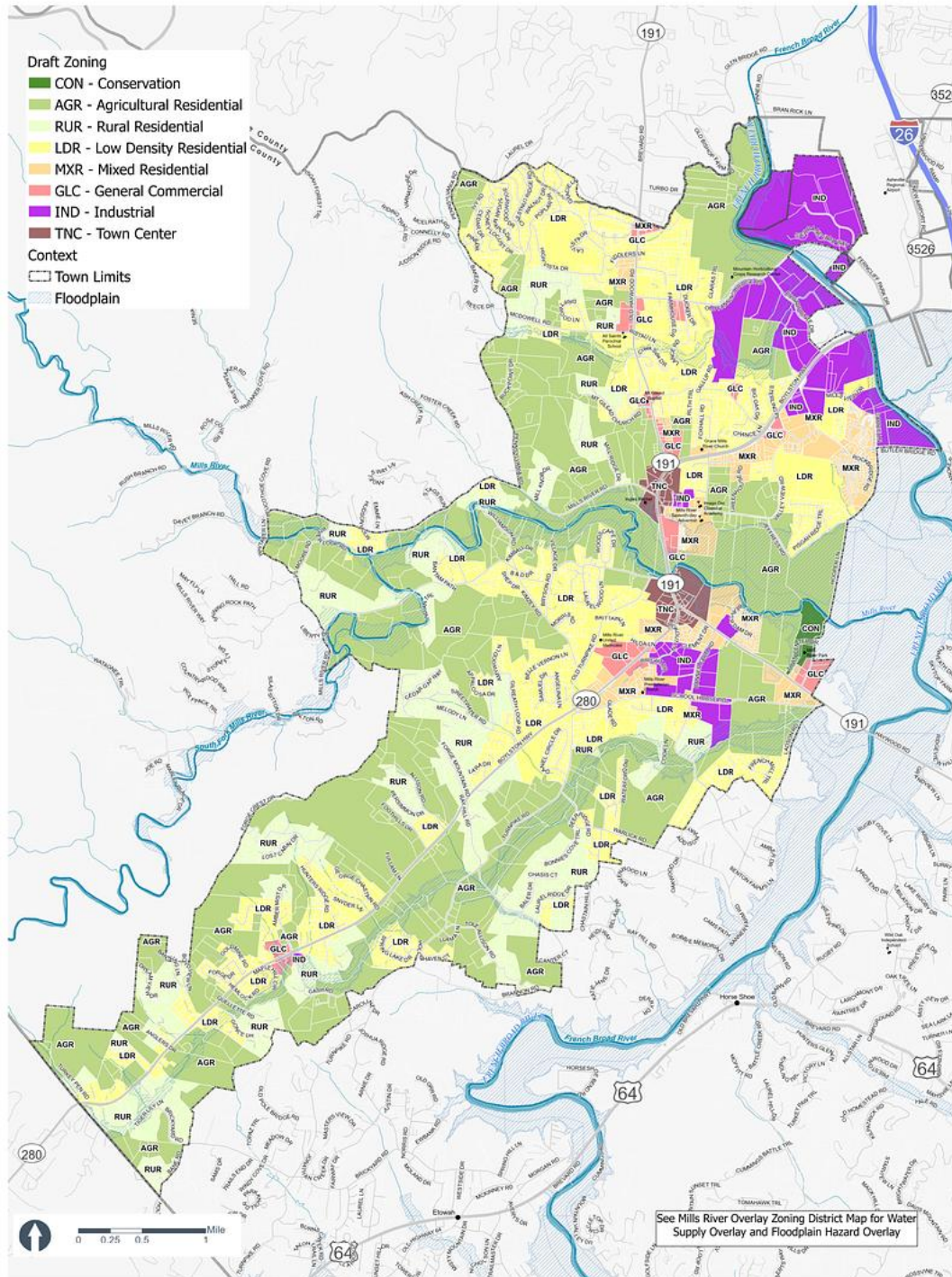




IMAGINE Mills River – new Unified Development Ordinance

Trip 3, Annotated Outline Trip Notes

10.29.25



Date Modified/Printed: 9/24/2025
Document Path: M:\Projects\2024\09\000_Mills_River_Zoning_Update\000\Map\Map\Mills_River_Zoning_Map_DRAFT_2025_09_24.aprx

**MILLS RIVER
ZONING UPDATE**
- Draft Zoning Map -



Code Wright

STEWART

Comments Provided: Concern over landowner's property rights in the future.





IMAGINE Mills River – new Unified Development Ordinance

Trip 3, Annotated Outline Trip Notes

10.29.25

Station 4 – Proposed Zoning Districts (Residential and Non-Residential)

Station four included a pair of boards that provided additional detail about each of the proposed residential and non-residential districts identified in the initial draft zoning map and in the Diagnosis document. The boards explained how current zoning districts were modified or carried forward, and provides additional detail about anticipated use types and dimensional standards in the new zoning districts.

Residential Zoning

FORMER ZONING DISTRICTS		ZONING DISTRICTS IN THIS ORDINANCE	
		CONVENTIONAL RESIDENTIAL	
(New)		AGR	Agricultural Residential
MR-RR	Rural Residential	RUR	Rural Residential
MR-30	Low Density Residential	LDR	Low Density Residential
(New)		MXR	Mixed Residential

AGRICULTURAL RESIDENTIAL (AGR)

CRITERIA: LOT SIZE IS THREE (3) ACRES OR GREATER

This is a new zoning designation intended to encourage and preserve agricultural uses. The Agricultural Residential (AGR) district will provide for a mix of agricultural, agritainment, low-density residential, and associated agricultural commercial uses (such as farm stands, commercial greenhouses, etc.). Minimum lot size will be two acres with the option for conservation subdivisions where agricultural lands are preserved.

RURAL RESIDENTIAL (RUR)

CRITERIA: LOT SIZE IS GREATER THAN 1.5 ACRES BUT LESS THAN THREE (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 large lots under two acres in size, agriculture, and light commercial uses.

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 new LDR is a low-moderate density residential district that permits development of single-family detached residential dwellings, duplexes, 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. Dimensional standards are maintained as close as possible to the current standards, and if changed, revised in ways that minimize the creation of nonconformities.

MIXED RESIDENTIAL (MXR)

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

The MXR is a new zoning district. This is a medium-intensity residential district designed to contain a mix of medium density, single family housing and low-intensity, non-residential uses that support and are proximate to residential neighborhoods.



imagineMills River

Non-Residential Zoning

FORMER ZONING DISTRICTS		ZONING DISTRICTS IN THIS ORDINANCE	
		CONSERVATION	
(New)		CON	Conservation
		CONVENTIONAL NON-RESIDENTIAL	
MR-NC	Neighborhood Commercial		(Delete)
MR-GB	General Business	GLC	General Commercial
MR-MU	Mixed-Use		(Delete)
(New)		TNC	Town Center
MR-LI	Light Industrial	IND	Industrial

CONSERVATION (CON)

CRITERIA: TOWN-OWNED OR DESIGNATED AREAS

It is intended that this district, at the onset contain, Town-owned properties or Town-designated properties. This may include properties containing conservation easements or natural resources, properties owned by the State, other government agency, or a non-profit for the protection of natural resources, recreation, etc. The intent is to provide protection of contiguous corridors for agriculture, wildlife, scenic vistas, natural resources, and open space.

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 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

A new Town Center (TNC) zoning district is created. The district encourages the creation of gathering spaces and community services through a mix of residential and non-residential uses in the same buildings or on the same lots to support increased residential densities and walkable communities.

INDUSTRIAL (IND)

CRITERIA: EXISTING MR-LI

This converts the existing Light Industrial (MR-LI) into a new IND, Industrial District. Residential uses, except social services, are prohibited. Dimensional standards are maintained as close as possible to the current standards, and if changed, revised in ways that do not create nonconformities.



imagineMills River





IMAGINE Mills River – new Unified Development Ordinance Trip 3, Annotated Outline Trip Notes

10.29.25

Station 5 – How Might the UDO Affect Me?

Station 5 asked the Question, “How Might the UDO Affect Me?”

How Might the UDO Affect Me?

You may wonder how this set of laws regulating development affects you? Here are some typical ways:

- Health, safety, and welfare
- Providing for adequate housing
- Ensuring goods and services are available
- Protecting opportunities for recreation
- Transportation
- Property value protection
- Open space protection
- Environmental protection
- Agricultural stewardship
- Accessory uses (pools, in-law units, sheds)
- Sign permit
- Buffers
- Enforcement
- Balance of tax base (industrial vs residential)

Questions to Ask and What to Look For:

- What is my property currently being used for?
- What current zoning of my property?
- What is new zoning proposed for my property?
- Will current use be permitted with new zoning?
- If not, what does that mean?

LET US KNOW YOUR THOUGHTS and QUESTIONS on the board below



Each station included opportunities for forum visitors to pose questions or provide comments about the board contents or the Imagine Mills River project generally.

A summary presentation overviewing the Annotated Outline document was also given at the beginning of the public forum, and a video of this presentation is available for viewing under the *documents* tab of www.imagemillsriver.com. The following are images of the slides presented:



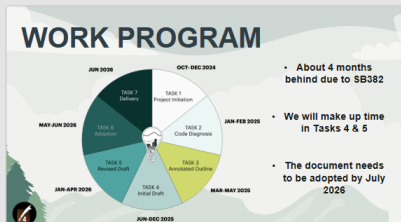
1



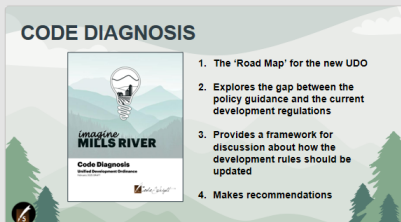
2



3



4



5



6





IMAGINE Mills River – new Unified Development Ordinance

Trip 3, Annotated Outline Trip Notes

10.29.25

PURPOSE FOR TODAY'S FORUM

1. Introduce the Annotated Outline
2. Introduce the Initial Draft Zoning Map
3. Answer Your Questions
4. Collect your input and ideas

ANNOTATED OUTLINE

1. Refinement of concepts discussed in Code Assessment (Task 2)
2. UDO document format
3. Article & Section organization
4. Procedures, Districts, Uses
5. Exploration of proposed Development Standards

UDO PAGE LAYOUT

1. New Numbering System
2. Use of Colors, Bolding, & Indentation to organize text
3. Navigational Aids
4. Flowcharts, Diagrams
5. Plain English

UDO STRUCTURE

CHAPTER	SECTION	PAGE
CHAPTER 1: Administration		5
CHAPTER 2: Applications		15
CHAPTER 3: Districts		35
CHAPTER 4: Land Uses		45
CHAPTER 5: Nonconformities		75
CHAPTER 6: Standards		85
CHAPTER 7: Violations		105
CHAPTER 8: Word Usage		125
CHAPTER 9: Appendices		130

CHAPTER 1 ADMINISTRATION

Preliminary information
Legal 'boilerplate'
Transitional standards
Vested rights

- § 1.1 APPLICABILITY
- § 1.2 AUTHORITY
- § 1.3 CONFLICT
- § 1.4 CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED POLICY GUIDANCE
- § 1.5 DOCUMENT TITLE
- § 1.6 EFFECTIVE DATE
- § 1.7 PURPOSE AND INTENT OF ORDINANCE
- § 1.8 SEVERABILITY
- § 1.9 TRANSITIONAL PROVISIONS
- § 1.10 VESTED RIGHTS

CHAPTER 2 APPLICATIONS

- § 2.1 CHAPTER INTRODUCTION
- § 2.2 APPLICATION SUMMARY TABLE
- § 2.3 REVIEW AUTHORITIES
- § 2.4 REVIEW PROCESS
- § 2.5 SPECIFIC APPLICATION PROCEDURES

CHAPTER 3 DISTRICTS

- § 3.1 CHAPTER INTRODUCTION
- § 3.2 CONVENTIONAL ZONING DISTRICTS
- § 3.3 CONDITIONAL ZONING DISTRICTS
- § 3.4 GENERAL DIMENSIONAL STANDARDS
- § 3.5 INCENTIVES & ALTERNATIVES
- § 3.6 OVERLAY ZONING DISTRICTS
- § 3.7 ZONING MAP

Town-owned properties
May add deed-restricted conservation lands too

RESIDENTIAL:
AGR = More than 3 AC
RUR = 1.5 to 3 AC
LDR = up to 1.5 AC
MXR = Variable size

COMMERCIAL:
TND & IND = based on location/FLUM
None of these exist yet

MR-MU went to:
AGR if res & over 3 AC
RUR if res & 1.5 to 3 AC
LDR if res & 1.5 AC or less
MXR if non-residential
TNC if in center location

MR-NC went to:
MXR if developed
AGR if in floodplain
LDR if vacant

THIS IS A PRELIMINARY MAP THAT WE EXPECT TO CHANGE AS WE CONTINUE TO TALK WITH LANDOWNERS

CHAPTER 4 LAND USES

- § 4.1 CHAPTER INTRODUCTION
- § 4.2 PRINCIPAL USES
- § 4.3 PROHIBITED USES
- § 4.4 SECONDARY USES
- § 4.5 TEMPORARY USES
- § 4.6 UNLISTED USES

CHAPTER 5 NONCONFORMITIES

- § 5.1 CHAPTER INTRODUCTION
- § 5.2 PRIOR NONCONFORMITIES ABOLISHED
- § 5.3 STATE & FEDERAL NONCONFORMITIES
- § 5.4 NONCONFORMITIES ESTABLISHED THROUGH CONSENT
- § 5.5 CONTINUATION OF NONCONFORMITIES

CHAPTER 6 STANDARDS

- § 6.1 CHAPTER INTRODUCTION
- § 6.2 ACCESS & CIRCULATION
- § 6.3 ARCHITECTURAL STANDARDS & GUIDELINES
- § 6.4 EXTERIOR LIGHTING
- § 6.5 FENCES & WALLS
- § 6.6 INFRASTRUCTURE
- § 6.7 LANDSCAPING & SCREENING
- § 6.8 MAINTENANCE OF PROPERTY
- § 6.9 OPEN SPACE SET-ASIDE AND PARKLAND DEDICATION
- § 6.10 OWNERS' ASSOCIATIONS
- § 6.11 PARKING AND LOADING
- § 6.12 REFUSE AND RECYCLING COLLECTION
- § 6.13 RESOURCE PROTECTION
- § 6.14 SIDEWALKS AND GREENWAYS
- § 6.15 SIGNAGE
- § 6.16 STORMWATER AND SEDIMENTATION
- § 6.17 SUBDIVISION DESIGN
- § 6.18 TREE PROTECTION

CHAPTER 7 VIOLATIONS

How the UDO is enforced

- § 7.1 CHAPTER INTRODUCTION
- § 7.2 COMPLIANCE REQUIRED
- § 7.3 DESCRIPTION OF VIOLATIONS
- § 7.4 ENTITY RESPONSIBLE
- § 7.5 GENERAL ENFORCEMENT PROCEDURES
- § 7.6 REMEDIES
- § 7.7 STATUTE OF LIMITATIONS
- § 7.8 VIOLATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROLS

CHAPTER 8 WORD USAGE

How terms are used, measured, and defined

- § 8.1 CHAPTER INTRODUCTION
- § 8.2 ABBREVIATIONS
- § 8.3 RULES OF LANGUAGE CONSTRUCTION
- § 8.4 RULES OF MEASUREMENT
- § 8.5 TERMS DEFINED

NEXT STEPS

- Presentation to Town Council 9/26/25 @ 6:30
- Office Hours 9/26/25 9-12
- Post Draft to Website
- Webinar of Final Annotated Outline 10/25
- Task 4, Initial Draft Oct 25 – Jan 26

THANK YOU!

Questions?
www.imaginemillsriver.com



IMAGINE Mills River – new Unified Development Ordinance Trip 3, Annotated Outline Trip Notes

10.29.25

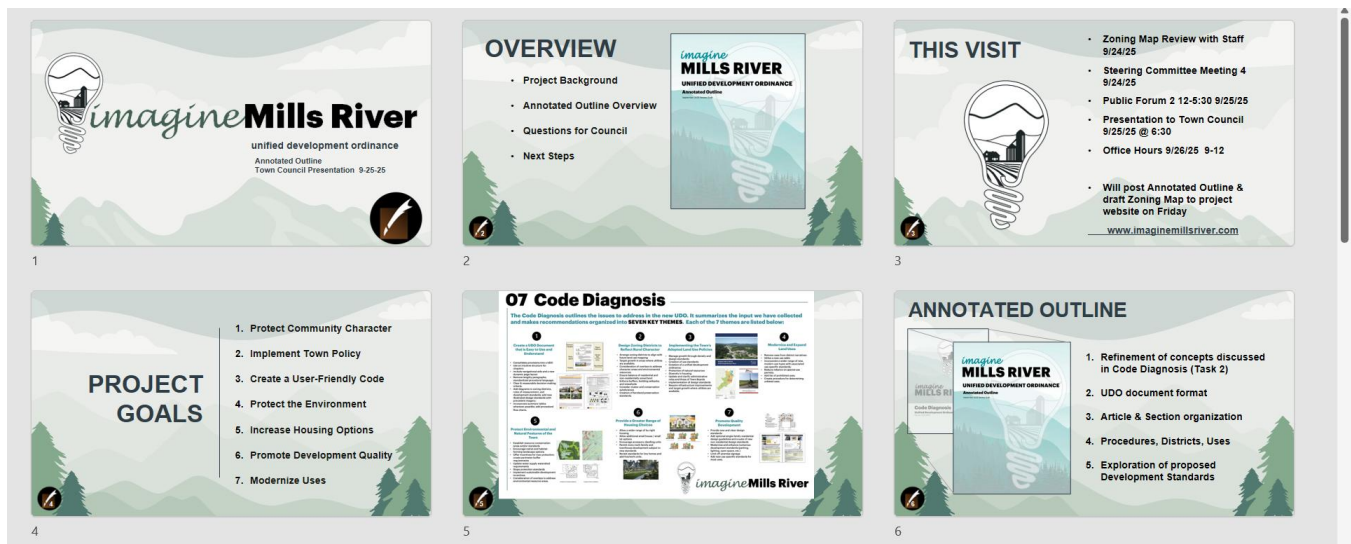
6. Presentation at Town Council Meeting (Meeting 3)

The final element of Trip 3 was a presentation to Town Council. This presentation provided details on the Imagine Mills River project background, the introduction of the Annotated Outline, and a discussion of next steps. There were a series of three questions posed to the Council during the presentation. The first was if farms and agricultural uses should be regulated (as is allowed for Towns in NC) or if they should just be exempted. The Council direction was to continue to exempt these uses.

Question 2 asked about building design standards along the highways in Town. The basic consensus among Council was that design standards should be used sparingly, and application of such standards limited to those standards that have the most impact. It may also be wise to exempt smaller buildings from standards altogether, or to not apply standards to building not visible from the highway corridor.

The third question asked about the ability of adding incentives for residential developments (likely in the form of density bonuses that allowed this kind of development to exceed 4 units per acre without need of a rezoning) that included high-quality design or that included affordable housing. There did not appear to be support for incentive-based density bonuses.

Slides from this presentation are included on the following pages:





IMAGINE Mills River – new Unified Development Ordinance

Trip 3, Annotated Outline Trip Notes

10.29.25

UDO PAGE LAYOUT

1. New Numbering System
2. Use of Colors, Bolding, & Indentation to organize text
3. Navigational Aids
4. Flowcharts, Diagrams
5. Plain English

UDO STRUCTURE

TABLE OF CONTENTS	
CHAPTER 1: Administration	5
CHAPTER 2: Applications	15
CHAPTER 3: Districts	35
CHAPTER 4: Land Uses	45
CHAPTER 5: Nonconformities	75
CHAPTER 6: Standards	85
CHAPTER 7: Violations	105
CHAPTER 8: Word Usage	124
CHAPTER 9: Appendix	130

CHAPTER 1 ADMINISTRATION

Prefatory information
Legal 'boilerplate'
Transitional standards
Vested rights

- § 1.1 APPLICABILITY
- § 1.2 AUTHORITY
- § 1.3 CONFLICT
- § 1.4 CONSISTENCY WITH ADOPTED POLICY GUIDANCE
- § 1.5 DOCUMENT TITLE
- § 1.6 EFFECTIVE DATE
- § 1.7 PURPOSE AND INTENT OF ORDINANCE
- § 1.8 SEVERABILITY
- § 1.9 TRANSITIONAL PROVISIONS
- § 1.10 VESTED RIGHTS

CHAPTER 2 APPLICATIONS

- § 2.1 CHAPTER INTRODUCTION
- § 2.2 APPLICATION SUMMARY TABLE
- § 2.3 REVIEW AUTHORITIES
- § 2.4 REVIEW PROCESS
- § 2.5 SPECIFIC APPLICATION PROCEDURES

CHAPTER 3 DISTRICTS

- § 3.1 CHAPTER INTRODUCTION
- § 3.2 CONVENTIONAL ZONING DISTRICTS
- § 3.3 CONDITIONAL ZONING DISTRICTS
- § 3.4 GENERAL DIMENSIONAL STANDARDS
- § 3.5 INCENTIVES & ALTERNATIVES
- § 3.6 OVERLAY ZONING DISTRICTS
- § 3.7 ZONING MAP

THIS IS A PRELIMINARY MAP THAT WE EXPECT TO CHANGE AS WE CONTINUE TO TALK WITH LANDOWNERS

CHAPTER 4 LAND USES

- § 4.1 CHAPTER INTRODUCTION
- § 4.2 PRINCIPAL USES
- § 4.3 PROHIBITED USES
- § 4.4 SECONDARY USES
- § 4.5 TEMPORARY USES
- § 4.6 UNLISTED USES

CHAPTER 5 NONCONFORMITIES

This chapter is likely to evolve further over the course of UDO drafting as the consulting team works with staff to craft regulations in response to changing State laws regarding downzoning

- § 5.1 CHAPTER INTRODUCTION
- § 5.2 PRIOR NONCONFORMITIES ABOLISHED
- § 5.3 STATE & FEDERAL NONCONFORMITIES
- § 5.4 NONCONFORMITIES ESTABLISHED THROUGH CONSENT
- § 5.5 CONTINUATION OF NONCONFORMITIES

CHAPTER 6 STANDARDS

- § 6.1 CHAPTER INTRODUCTION
- § 6.2 ACCESS & CIRCULATION
- § 6.3 ARCHITECTURAL STANDARDS & GUIDELINES
- § 6.4 EXTERIOR LIGHTING
- § 6.5 FENCES & WALLS
- § 6.6 INFRASTRUCTURE
- § 6.7 LANDSCAPING & SCREENING
- § 6.8 MAINTENANCE OF PROPERTY
- § 6.9 OPEN SPACE SET-ASIDE AND PARKLAND DEDICATION
- § 6.10 OWNERS' ASSOCIATIONS
- § 6.11 PARKING AND LOADING
- § 6.12 REFUSE AND RECYCLING COLLECTION
- § 6.13 RESOURCE PROTECTION
- § 6.14 SIDEWALKS AND GREENWAYS
- § 6.15 SIGNAGE
- § 6.16 STORMWATER AND SEDIMENTATION
- § 6.17 SUBDIVISION DESIGN
- § 6.18 TREE PROTECTION

QUESTIONS FOR COUNCIL...

1. Should we regulate farms and agriculture or just exempt these?
2. Is there support to apply design controls from the corridor overlay to nonresidential development townwide? Proximate to highways? Based on Building Size?
3. Should we consider including incentives that grant density bonuses (above 4 units per acre)?

NEXT STEPS

• About 4 months behind due to SB382

• We will make up time in Tasks 4 & 5

• The document needs to be adopted by July 1, 2026

7. Office Hours (Block 3)

Office hours are an opportunity for anyone in Mills River to come and meet with members of the consulting team about the project during the team's visits. On Trip 3, the consulting team held a block of time for office hours on Friday, September 26th between 9AM and 12PM. Interested parties need to contact Town staff to schedule an office hours meeting. No one scheduled an office hours visit with the consulting team during Trip 3 but we did have three members of the public drop in for discussion during the office hours time slot.

Items addresses during office hours included ensuring agricultural greenhouses on the east side of Town are zoned correctly, understanding what the UDO update is about and why it is happening now, asking general questions, and providing insight to an agricultural business in Town.

END OF DOCUMENT

