

Frequently Asked Questions

Why did the County have to have a new Ordinance? There has been no significant update of the Zoning Ordinance since its adoption in 2003. Several years ago, the County began a comprehensive update with the goal of making it more efficient and user-friendly. In late 2018, the process was delayed due to the Planning staff shifting focus to respond to Hurricane Florence recovery.

In 2019, the North Carolina General Assembly passed a new General Statute NCGS160D which required all jurisdictions in the State to update their development regulations by July 1, 2021. Consequently, the Planning staff began work on updating the Subdivision Ordinance which was adopted in July 2020 and has now completed the draft Zoning Ordinance.

Please email 2021zoning@onslowcountync.gov or call 910-455-3661 and select option #3 if you have further questions.

Why did my zoning change from RA to Residential? With the minimum lot size increasing from 20,000 square feet to 40,000 square feet, most subdivisions zoned RA are proposed to be zoned to a residential district with minimum lot sizes that best fit the neighborhood. See the comparison links for each zoning district change.

What if my current use is no longer allowed in my new Zoning District? Please talk to staff about a possible zoning change. Otherwise, the use will become a nonconforming use and will be allowed to continue. There are limitations on expansion. The use may be changed to a permitted use provided.

Will my taxes increase due to the zoning change? – The Tax Office will NOT revalue properties as a result of the zoning district change.

When will these changes take place? – The Onslow County Board of Commissioners have scheduled to hold a public hearing for Monday, May 17 at 6:00 PM at the Government Center (Commissioners Chambers). Upon adoption, the proposed effective date is July 1, 2021.

Do I have to have provide a buffer around my property? If so, how much? New commercial and multi-family developments may be required to provide a buffer. The buffer requirements differ depending on the adjacent land use. Each buffer type has four options: undisturbed, plantings, or barrier. The undisturbed option is a natural area which is to remain in its natural state. The planting option requires the planning of a series of shade trees, ornamental trees, and shrubberies. The barrier buffer requires the installation of an opaque fence, brick wall, or berm with shrubs to be planted between the barrier and the adjacent property. See Table 10-1 & Table 10-2 above for additional information.

Do the new landscaping standards apply to all properties in the county? The standards are for any of the three following cases:

1. The construction of a new building(s) with the exception of a single-family dwelling, a manufactured home, a two-family (duplex) dwelling on an individual lot;
2. The expansion or enlargement of an existing commercial structure or a multi-family development by more than twenty-five percent (25%) of its pre-expansion gross floor area; or,

The expansion of an existing parking area that increases the number of parking spaces by more than twenty (20) parking spaces.