

Summary of the Onslow County Zoning Ordinance

What is the zoning ordinance? It consists of the ordinance text and map of zoning districts. The ordinance text outlines land uses allowed for each zone and standards for the development to include setbacks from property lines, parking, signage and buffers.

What uses are allowed in the zoning districts? A central part of the zoning ordinance is the Table of Uses, which shows what type of development or use of land is permitted in each zoning district. The Table of Uses distinguishes between two use types shown below:

Permitted (P) – These uses require a Zoning Permit which is generally issued along with the building permit; these are referred to as “by right” uses.

Special Uses (S) – These uses require a Special Use Permit to be issued by the Onslow County Zoning Board of Adjustment after a public hearing. Owners of properties within 300 feet of the site will be notified of the proposed use and the public hearing date.

The Table of Uses also includes a column entitled “ARS” which stands for “Additional Required Standards” which includes a reference number where those additional standards can be found in the document.

Zoning District Summary

Residential Zoning Districts – The density allowed in the residential zoning districts can be determined by the number following the “R” as that number signifies the minimum lot size requirement for each lot/unit. The “M” behind the number indicates that manufactured homes are permitted in this district; manufactured homes are also permitted in the RA Zoning District.

R-20 and R-15 – These single-family residential districts permit detached single-family dwellings.

R-10, R-8M and R-5 – These residential districts permit both single-family and multi-family housing types. The **R-8M** district allows manufactured home parks by special use.

Rural Agricultural District

RA (Rural Agricultural) – This district is a mixed-use district which permits all residential use types including manufactured homes as well as some service-type commercial uses. The lot size minimum in the RA district is 20,000 square feet.

Home owners in planned subdivisions are encouraged to determine if there are restrictive covenants that may place limitations on their property; however, Onslow County has no authority to enforce any such covenants.

Commercial and Industrial Zoning Districts

HB (Highway Business), **CB** (Community Business) and **O-I** (Office and Institutional) These districts provide for service and retail businesses. The **HB** district allows for larger-scale businesses that tend to rely on highway traffic while the **CB** district limits the size of business. The **O-I** district permits some retail uses, office uses and some less intense industrial uses. Residential uses are permitted in both the HB and CB districts but not in the O-I district.

H-IN (Heavy Industrial) and **L-IN** (Light Industrial) – These are the two industrial districts designed to encourage development of industrial uses.

Other Zoning Districts

CON (Conservation) – This district is designed to preserve valuable natural resource areas.

FPOD (Flight Path Overlay District) – This overlay district is intended to protect the military flight paths from any encroachment that could prove hazardous to both aircraft using the flight paths and civilians within the flight path.

Conditional Zoning Districts –Conditional zoning districts are created when a conditional zoning ordinance is adopted by the Board of Commissioners for a particular area. A conditional zoning ordinance takes one of the general zoning districts listed above and imposes additional regulations and conditions that are agreed upon by the property owner(s) and the Board of Commissioners. The reclassification of a property into a conditional zoning district provides a way for a specific development proposal to move forward subject to specific regulations and conditions to ensure its compatibility with the use and enjoyment of surrounding properties and with officially adopted county plans.

RESIDENTIAL ZONING DISTRICT INFORMATION

DIMENSIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR PRINCIPAL STRUCTURES

Zones	R-20	R-15	R-10	R-8M	R-5
Lot Size (square feet)	20,000	15,000	10,000	8,000	5,000
Lot Width	60'	60'	50'	50'	50'
Front setback	25'	20'	20'	20'	20'
Side street setback	20'	20'	20'	20'	20'
Side setback	8'	8'	8'	5'	5'
Rear setback	15'	15'	15'	15'	15'

RESIDENTIAL ACCESSORY STRUCTURES (storage sheds, workshops, pools) all require a zoning permit that meets the following requirements:

- In all Residential Zoning Districts, the area (square footage) of all enclosed accessory structures may not exceed 50% of the heated square footage of the home without the issuance of a Special Use Permit.
- In Residential Zoning Districts, accessory structures may only be located in side and rear yards; structures less than 400 square feet must be setback 5 feet from rear and side property lines and structures 400 square feet or greater must be setback 8 feet from rear and side property lines.
- Carports may be located forward of the home; they must meet the side and rear setbacks based on size and the front setback required for the home.
- Lots zoned Rural Agriculture (RA) and lots greater than 2 acres are permitted to have accessory structures forward of the home; structures must meet the side and rear setbacks as provided above and must meet the front setback as required for the home.
- Structures must be 5 feet from septic systems and repair areas except that pools must be 15 feet from these areas.
- Structures shall not be located within any rights-of-way or easements.
- Storage sheds with any dimension greater than 12 feet require a building permit.

Fences – The Zoning Ordinance does not specify the location of fences. Property owners may decide to locate a fence on the property line. We do, however, recommend that property owners communicate with their neighbor regarding the proposed location of a fence so that there are no misunderstandings regarding the location of the property line. The County cannot be involved in any disputes that arise regarding fence placement; these matters are civil in nature.

Outdoor pools, hot tubs and spas (in-ground, above-ground or on-ground) that are intended for swimming or bathing that are 24 inches deep are required to be completely surround by a fence or solid wall not less than four feet in height. A zoning permit is required for these structures and a building permit may also be required. Please contact our office for additional information.

For specific information regarding permitted uses and development standards in the commercial and industrial zones, please consult the Onslow County Zoning Ordinance. County Land Use staff are also available to assist with questions.

You may download the Zoning Ordinance from the Onslow County website at www.onslowcountync.gov/planning. If you have questions, please contact the Planning & Development Office at 910-455-3661 and choose option #3.

Updated 7/1/2021