


To: Ricky Hurley, Planning Director
From: Chad Meadows, CodeWright 
Date: 9.25.25
CC: File, Karen Mallo
RE: Blueprint Woodfin
Task 1, Project Initiation Trip Notes



MESSAGE

These are the meeting notes from the Blueprint Woodfin UDO project Task 1 Project Initiation trip conducted in Woodfin on June 18 and June 19, 2025. These notes document the activities conducted during the trip and summarize the discussion. Copies of presentation slides are also included.

Blueprint Woodfin is an effort being undertaken by the Town and CodeWright Planners to update the Town's current development regulations into a new consolidated Unified Development Ordinance and associated zoning map. The new UDO is a single document that integrates the current zoning, subdivision, floodway, signs, stormwater, and related standards into a modern, easy-to-use document that implements Woodfin Together and other adopted policy guidance.

Some of the goals for the new UDO include:

- Increased procedural clarity, particularly in dealing with prior master plan development approvals;
- Better address transportation (including pedestrian access) in light of the challenging terrain;
- Coordination with the wide variety of service providers and agencies operating in the area;
- Place-making to help establish a recognizable town center or village center;
- Protecting and interfacing with environmentally sensitive resources like steep slopes and riverfront; and
- Increasing housing choices and options for residents.

The Project Initiation trip was an opportunity for the consulting team to travel to Woodfin, meet with Town staff, tour the community, and begin to understand the community context. The trip included the following four main activities:

1. Project Kickoff Meeting with staff;
2. Staff-led community tour;
3. Steering Committee Meeting 1; and
4. Stakeholder Interviews.

Details on the stakeholder interviews conducted during this trip are included in a separate report called the *UDO Stakeholder Interview Summary*. This information and other project-related information is available for inspection on the project webpage at www.blueprintwoodfin.com.





Blueprint Woodfin (new Unified Development Ordinance)

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1. Kickoff Meeting with Town Staff

At 10:15 AM on Wednesday June 18, 2025, the project kickoff meeting between the consulting team and Town staff commenced.

Attendees:

Ricky Hurley, Planning

Marie Biddix, Planning

Consultants:

Chad Meadows, Codewright

Karen Mallo, with Codewright

Meeting Notes

Map discussion:

While the scope is not 100% clear, we can assist with preparation of a new Official Zoning Map. Land of Sky currently provides the Town with GIS services.

The Town's current zoning map has no CS 2 or CS 3 (shopping center) mapped though these districts are in the ordinance text

There is no 'open use' district

While there is not very much commercial or industrial zoning, the new zoning map needs to include a neighborhood commercial district option

County-owned lands need to be designated institutional or public (not "transitional")

There is a need to better recognize steep slopes and ridgelines through some kind of base or overlay zoning district

Woodfin has conditional zoning, and it is well-used. Development that includes 20 lots or units, or that is comprised of 30,000 square feet or more must utilize a conditional zoning district designation. There is no vacant conditional zoning in Town.

The Mountainside Village district has several challenges. It is the Town's planned unit development district – it is a now a conditional zoning district (but may have been by-right in the past). The district is mixed: it allows some residential & some commercial. The district is somewhat open-ended and vague and has been abused. It was established in the past by the Town subject to a master plan, but is mapped as a conventional district. As a result, it is a conditional district, but the Town's records treat these areas as conventionally-zoned. In some cases, the master plan was never submitted, never followed, or has been lost. That makes it next to impossible for the Town to dispute landowner claims about what was permitted at some point in the past. This may have allowed for some abuse. To make matters worse, there is no guidance in the current ordinance about what a master plan actually is or what it must include.

The issue with Mountainside Village is indicative a larger problem – in the Town's past, the poor processes, documentation, or contradictions in the records has created many problems – especially for unfinished developments that have recently re-started. Town staff have spent the last three years attempting to fix these problems.





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Town staff says the new UDO needs to better explain what a master plan is, and how it differs from what is approved as part of a conventional zoning district.

Communication Protocols:

- Throughout the project, the consulting team the staff will touch base w/staff 2x per month (30 min each)
- 2nd Friday of the month at 10:00 am
- 4th Friday of the month at 11:00 am

The Basecamp site is the internal project management site where files can be exchanged. The Basecamp site supports email and also has a calendar if we choose to use it

Discussed the need to post text amendments to the current development regulations on Basecamp as they are approved

General Code-Related Topics:

Recently, the Town abolished its Floodway district, and re-did its floodplain development regulations – the new UDO should just carry forward this material

The Town's current slate of elected officials were elected on a platform of needing to update and reform the development regulations. The next election is Nov. 3rd and 1 seat is vacant, 1 elected official will re-run, and 1 appointee may or may not run. The Council is progressive, but needs good explanations of what is being proposed and why

The Town wants to go with a UDO instead of two or more different ordinances

The Town plans to self-codify the new UDO (so the file may be built for self-codification rather than for codification from an outside party)

The town has no current, pending land use litigation

There is no relevant special legislation

There does need to be a deeper discussion about mapping and zoning districts- the Town does want help creating a new zoning map.





2. Staff-Led Community Tour

After lunch, staff and the consulting team toured Woodfin. The tour included the Weaverville Road area – a commercial corridor that has floodplain. Lots of smaller 1-story commercial buildings on close proximity to one another.

Woodfin is a community of around 8,000 people located between Asheville to the South and Weaverville to the north, and split by the French Broad River.

We drove through or around:

- Walnut Springs- a townhome community with a mix of old and new and some alley-loaded homes
- Greenwood Fields- town staff is interested in more housing like this – on-street parking, shallow front yards
- The “Goodman” tract – 300+ units, some SFD, some duplex, 10% affordable
- The Mill – beside the river, redevelopment opportunity old mill site – eclectic
- The wave is a new whitewater park being developed beside (and in) the French Broad River – also includes constructed wetlands on the shoreline
- Silverline park – (closed due to Helene damage) includes boat ramps, and a private playground
- Reynolds Village site- started as a TND, but did not come to fruition based on 08-2010 recession. One portion is Reynolds Mountain neighborhood homes from \$700,000 and up. There is also an assisted living development short term rentals, and apartments over retail in the “town center” area. Single-family portion of Reynolds Mountain is nearing buildout
- Highway interchange area
 - Secondary commercial
 - Reynolds Mountain Blvd
 - Christian school
 - Holiday Inn Express
 - Nursing facility
 - Senior living
 - 128 affordable units to be built
 - Existing affordable housing apartments already built
- Hillcrest Road – old area of town single wide mobile homes
- Sunny Ridge 1990s neighborhood, exclusive homes for the period
- Ventana/Versant neighborhood (gated) large houses, mountainside R-21 & R-43; spa; “ecostead” conservation ‘farm’
- Serenity gated community- development here responsible for recent updates to the steep slope ordinance – development removed trees/land from the mountaintop





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- Newbridge – new apartment complex – biggest taxpayer in town
- Development moving toward French Broad banks, mix of residential with business park and spotty commercial
- The Mill at Riverside - makerspace
- Many county service uses in Woodfin area, prison, electrical plant, water treatment, etc.
- West side of Town (other side of French Broad) served by a small 2" waterline, state roadways, small commercial area, R-10 + single and doublewide homes; Lots of units on well & septic
- Olivette – northwest corner of Woodfin
 - Sustainable development
 - Borders French Broad
 - Master Plan (with MV zoning)
 - Not steep slope
- Crest Mountain - Another failed development in the MV district
- Historic Buildings – the Town has no historic district
- Silverline – pipe manufacturing place beside French Broad- Town's biggest employer; has industrial zoning





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3. Steering Committee Meeting 1 – Project Introduction

At 3:00 PM on Wednesday, staff and the consulting team conducted the first Steering Committee meeting (the project introduction). The Steering Committee is a group of Town staff and development professionals convened to provide general project oversight and initial reactions to draft work products. The Committee does not vote on the draft UDO, they just provide thoughts and work to ensure the community is aware of the project.

The following people were in attendance:

- Marie Biddix – Town Planner
- Ricky Hurley- Planning Director
- Jerry – Planning and Zoning Board, previous mayor
- Jessica Augie-commercial estate broker, Black Locust construction, Woodfin Business Assoc.
- Gerald Green - Brevard. Jackson County Planning Director; Knox County, Knoxville Planning; Woodfin property owner, retired planner
- Jason Gilliland - Site Design Studio. NY. CT, Boulder, NC in 2006. In 2009, started own business w/wife.Dev./High End Residential, Greenway Design
- Eric Hepson - 3 Notch Group (CDG), Civil Engineer 2016
- Michael Hayes – Electrical, Planning & Zoning Bd. – Retired, Live & Work here, Chairperson Planning & Zoning Board
- Chad Meadows – CodeWright
- Karen Mallo - CodeWright

Background details:

Work Program: 16-month

1. initiation
2. Code Diagnosis
3. Annotated outline
4. UDO Preparation
5. Revised Draft
6. Testing -development community
7. Adoption-map and document
- 8 Delivery

Public Engagement:

- Protect Website
- Public Forum
- Social Media
- Webinars
- Office Hours

Focus Group/Building Community

Work on testing

Steering committee Role:

- You are technical reviewers
- Give guidance





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Keep constituents informed
Misinformation

General comments from the group:

The standards in the Udo are obsolete, especially the ones related to commercial development

There is a need for more pedestrian friendly development throughout the community

Rising costs of development generally means that new development must be more dense than what has been built in the past

- Lots of remaining sites have serious slope issues
- Street drainage

Lots of different agencies working in the area make development application review very difficult

The new standards and this process need to help clarify what Woodfin does

Over the past years the Town has made a series of reactive changes to the development ordinance, and those changes have also made development in Woodfin more difficult

Emergency access has become more important and more difficult to establish

Topographic conditions make access difficult – NCDOT has standards for mountainous terrain, but in many cases, local rules are more strict

The development review process takes a long time, and that is held up by many as one of the main problems

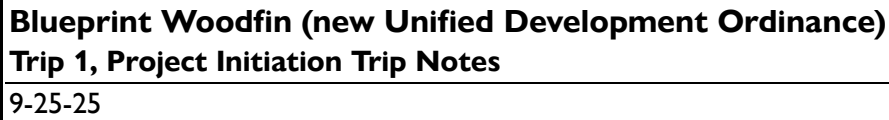
Members of the Steering Committee pointed to Asheville's River Arts District standards as an example of success

Traffic is the number 1 problem in Woodfin and the source of much public opposition to new development applications

In thinking about the current conditional zoning process, some feel that the current thresholds may be artificially low

Copies of the Steering Committee presentations slides are included on the following page:





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4. Stakeholder Interviews

On Thursday, June 19 the consulting team conducted a series of seven stakeholder interviews with stakeholders identified by Town staff. Details of that information is included in a separate report named: *UDO Stakeholder Interview Summary*.

END OF NOTES