

IMAGINE Mills River - Rezoning Highway Adjacent Property

Frequently Asked Questions

2026

This document reviews some of the most common questions and concerns the Town of Mills River has received regarding the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) and town-wide zoning update as it relates to properties near and adjacent to highways NC 280 (Boylston Highway) and NC 191.

Is my property going to be rezoned for commercial use since it is along a highway?

The project consultants and Town planning staff are using an objective rezoning methodology to assign the new zoning districts in the UDO to properties throughout Mills River. A property with highway frontage does not automatically get assigned commercial zoning. The UDO project is implementing the main land use goal identified by the community – to preserve and protect the rural, small-town character of Mills River. Part of this effort includes assigning low-density, low-intensity zoning districts to large residential and vacant tracts of land, including those along highways. These parcels can always be rezoned to a different district in the future by the landowner or for the purposes of development. The goal of the UDO project is not to dole out zoning districts randomly in free form that benefits every property owner to give them the highest and best use of their property.

How can I request a different zoning district than what is assigned to my property?

If property owners feel their land should have different zoning, the first step is to discuss the matter with the project consultants and/or Town planning staff. Community members can come to a drop-in public office hours with Town staff from **3PM – 8PM on April 21st** at Mills River Town Hall. Appointments with Town staff can be made at any time. Property owner zoning change requests will be taken into consideration and may or may not be reflected in the next revised draft of the Town's proposed zoning map.

If property owners want a different zoning designation for their land after the UDO is adopted in late June 2026, the Town will have a free zoning correction period lasting one year. Property owners will need to submit a rezoning request to Town staff, free of charge. These requests will go through the normal rezoning process with a review and recommendation from the Planning Board, and a formal decision from Town Council in a public hearing. If property owners wish to request the upzoning of their land, to increase development potential or density beyond what is allowed currently, this zoning correction process is the avenue to accommodate those requests.

Staff and the project consultants SHOULD NOT be making zoning decisions that upzone land, which is traditionally a decision reserved for elected officials in a public hearing.

How will zoning district changes affect the value of my land?

While zoning district designations can influence how a property may be used, a change in zoning does not automatically increase or decrease a property's assessed value. The Henderson County Tax Assessor's Office uses recent property sales data to determine and establish property valuations, which are then reflected through property tax bills. Local government elected officials establish a tax rate, which is then applied to properties based on their assessed valuation. North Carolina law requires that real property be valued at its true market value based on market sales data. Henderson County uses the mass appraisal approach, where groups of uniform and similar properties are compared to ensure fair and equitable property values. Various characteristics of the property are considered during the appraisal process such as location, type of construction, age, replacement cost, zoning designation, etc. Zoning is just one of many factors that are considered in property valuation.