



AGENDA ITEM COVERSHEET

PREPARED BY: Gloria Abbotts, Sr Planner

DEPARTMENT: Community Development

MEETING: Planning & Zoning – October 9, 2026

SUBJECT: **Consider a Text Amendment** to allow for additional accessory structures.
Applicant: Town of Carolina Beach

BACKGROUND:

At the August Regular Town Council Meeting Council directed staff to review options for flexibility on the number of accessory structures allowed on a lot. Staff is seeking direction from the Planning and Zoning Commission on whether the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) should be amended to allow additional accessory structures.

The proposed text amendment allows for the cumulative size of accessory structures for nonresidential and residential to not exceed the size of the primary structure, meet State Building Code requirements, and no accessory structure shall be located closer than 5 feet to another accessory structure on site. The addition of accessory structures is still limited by the maximum lot coverage and maximum impervious coverage allowances per lot.

The current ordinance states there can be only one accessory building per lot, with limited exceptions. Based on the current ordinance, the size of the accessory structure is limited to 25% of the size of the primary structure.

The current Town Ordinance permits:

- only one accessory structure per lot and,
- requires the accessory structure be no more than 25% the size of the primary structure,

HISTORIC CONTEXT

Number of Accessory Structures

At least since 2000, the number of accessory structures has been limited to one structure per lot.

Accessory Structure Size

With the adoption of the 2000 ordinance, accessory structures were allowed to be up to 25% of the allowable lot coverage. At the time, lot coverage in residential districts was capped at 40% the size of the lot. At some point between 2000 and 2004, a table footer was added that stated:

*In any case, accessory structures may not constitute a proportionate size greater than 25% of the actual developed area, regardless of lot size.

In 2009, a text amendment was proposed by staff to require an accessory structure be no larger than 25% the size of the primary structure size. This change was made because the ordinance did not define developed area, but it did define principal structure.

(b) **Table 3.9.2 Lot Coverage Standards for Accessory Structures in Residential Districts**
(1) *Within Residential (R) Districts and the MX-1 Mixed Use District.*
Accessory structures shall conform to the following standards in the designated zone districts:

Zoning District	Lot Size	Maximum Allowable Lot Coverage of Structures	40% Maximum Allowable Lot Coverage	75% of Max. Allowable Lot coverage allocated to Single-Family Dwelling	25% of Maximum Allowable Lot Coverage allocated to Accessory Building*
R-1	5,000 sq.ft.	40%	2,000 sq.ft.	1,500 sq.ft.	500 sq.ft.
R-1B	5,000 sq. ft.	40%	2,000 sq.ft.	1,500 sq.ft.	500 sq.ft.
R-2	7,000 sq. ft.	40%	2,800 sq. ft.	2,100 sq. ft.	700 sq. ft.
R-3	12,000 sq.ft.	40%	4,800 sq.ft.	3,600 sq.ft.	1,200 sq.ft.
C	80,000 sq.ft.	6%	4,800 sq.ft.	3,600 sq.ft.	1,200 sq.ft.
MH	5,000 sq.ft.	40%	2,000 sq.ft.	1,500 sq.ft.	500 sq.ft.
MF	5,000 sq.ft.	40%	2,000 sq.ft.	1,500 sq.ft.	500 sq.ft.
MX	5,000 sq.ft.	40%	2,000 sq.ft.	1,500 sq.ft.	500 sq.ft.

*In any case, accessory structures may not constitute a proportionate size greater than 25% of the actual developed area, regardless of lot size.

A text amendment was proposed last year on August 12, 2025, for increasing the number of accessory structures per lot, increasing the allowable height of accessory structures, increasing the size. That text amendment was denied based on concerns that added height would lead to illegal accessory dwelling units that could be used as short term rentals.

LAND USE PLAN:

The text amendment is in general conformity with the CAMA Land Use Plan. The plan does not specifically touch on specifics related to accessory structures and their size or number. Goal 4 of the Land Use Plan does state a desire to reduce overall nonconformities in the town but also respect existing uses and entitlements and the rebuilding of structures. There are parcels in the town that have more than one accessory structure which have potentially existed since before the accessory structures were limited to one per lot. There could be instances where the proposed text amendment may reduce nonconformities.

STAFF COMMENTS:

Staff are in general support of the proposed text amendment. The goal was to simplify accessory structure regulations and provide flexibility to the property owner.

ACTION REQUESTED:

Consider recommending approval or denial of the text amendment.

MOTION:

Approval – to amend Article 3, Sec. Sec. 3.6 Accessory Use Standards

Denial – to amend Article 3, Sec. 3.6 Accessory Use Standards

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1 – Proposed Text Amendment Language