



ZONING STAFF REPORT

UDC TEXT CHANGE:
Housekeeping Amendment # 12

MICHAEL B. COOPER
PARISH PRESIDENT

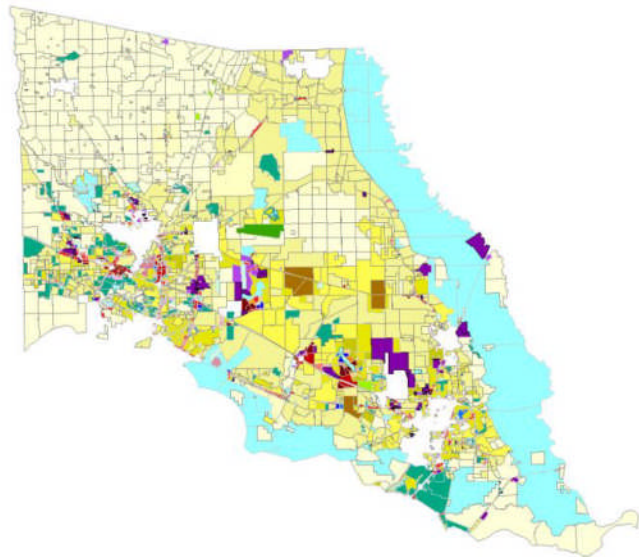
PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

Ross Liner
Director

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Location: Parish Wide – Unified Development Code Text Change **Ordinance Calendar No:** TBD

Commission Hearing: May 13, 2025 **Determination:** Approved



Housekeeping Text Amendment # 12:

An Ordinance to amend the St. Tammany Parish Unified Development Code Sections 400-3 Commercial Zoning District Regulations and Sec. 400-8 Use Standards to add “Dwelling, Multiple Family” as a permitted use within the HC-2 Highway Commercial District.

OVERVIEW/HISTORY

1. Prior to 2007, the St. Tammany Parish Land Use Regulation Zoning Ordinance No. 523 was the governing ordinance for the Parish and listed ‘Hotels and Motels of 150 or less rooms” and “Apartment-Hotels” as conditional uses under the C-2 Highway Commercial District.
2. From 2007 to December of 2023, St. Tammany Parish Government administered the Land Development Code (Ord. No. 07-1548) which listed apartments as a permitted use under the HC-2 and the HC-3 Highway Commercial Districts. The use was shown as “**Lodging, greater than 100 rooms (including apartments, hotels, motels)**”. The HC-2A Highway Commercial District was added to the Unified Development Code in 2012 and listed apartments as a permitted use inclusive of the lodging use allowing 200 rooms or less (Ord. No. 12-2783).
3. In December of 2023, the St. Tammany Parish Council introduced Ordinance Calendar No. 7324AA, which was a proposal to remove the term “apartments” from lodging as a permitted use in all Highway Commercial zoning districts within the Land Development Code. This ordinance was ultimately removed from the Council agenda with no action in February of 2024.
4. The currently administered Unified Development Code, originally adopted in December of 2023 (Ord. No. 23-5339) became effective in August of 2024 (Ord. No. 24-5484) and listed “Dwelling, Multi-Family” as a permitted use in all multi-family zoning districts with various density allowances, the Planned Business Campus District, the HC-3 Highway Commercial District, and the HC-4 Highway Commercial District.
5. Housekeeping Text Amendment No. 6 (Ord. No. 25-5700) added “Dwelling, Multiple Family” as a conditional use within the HC-2 Highway Commercial District, omitted the HC-2A Highway Commercial District, and added use standards which included those limited to multi-family dwellings constructed within specific zoning districts and those applicable to all multi-family uses regardless of district.
6. To summarize, the currently administered Unified Development Code allows “Dwelling, Multiple Family” as a permitted use in the following districts:
 - a. M-L Low Multiple-Family Residential District (Max Net Density of 1 unit per 4,000 sq. ft.)
 - b. M-M Medium Multi-Family Residential District (Max Net Density of 1 unit per 2,500 sq. ft.)



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- c. M-H High Multi-Family Residential District (Max Net Density of 1 unit per 1,500 sq. ft.)
 - d. Planned Business Campus District
 - e. HC-2 Highway Commercial District - Conditional Use Required (Max Net Density of 1 unit per 1,250 sq. ft.)
 - f. HC-3 Highway Commercial District
 - g. HC-4 Highway Commercial District
7. In addition, the following use standards apply to “Dwelling, Multiple Family”:
- a. All multi-family uses in the HC Highway Commercial Districts including HC-2 and HC-3 must be serviced by central utility systems including sewer and water.
 - b. Multi-family uses in the HC-2 Highway Commercial District shall have a maximum allowable density of 1 unit per 1,250 sq. ft.
 - c. Public amenities shall be required for the residents of all multi-family developments which exceed 100 units or more including but not limited to neighborhood parks with playgrounds, dog parks, nature trails, community gardens, and/or indoor and outdoor gyms.
 - d. All entrance and exit ways as required within Sec. 900-3.2 General Planning and Layout Requirements for Streets must be adhered to.
 - e. Where a multi-family residential use adjoins a residential district, higher setbacks shall be provided in accordance with the following regulations:
 - i. Where a building is taller than 25 feet in height, 1 additional foot of setback shall be required. Each facade is measured separately, and the additional depth is required perpendicular to that facade.
8. As a result of several zoning ordinance amendments, public concern and scrutiny, and moratoriums to allow policy discussions which emphasized design standards, traffic mitigation, buffering, and compatibility with surrounding uses, it was determined there were several existing apartment complexes which were either zoned incorrectly or were now legal nonconforming uses. As seen in Table 1, in an effort to provide a level of protection for existing apartments while encouraging future development to align with the Parish's updated zoning and land use objectives, the Parish Council rezoned several existing multi-family developments.

Table 1: Multi-Family Dwellings Rezoned					
Apartment Complex	Address	Date Constructed	Zoning Classification When Constructed	Current Zoning	Ord No.
Woodland Grove Apartments	61325 Airport Road, Slidell	Prior to 1985	A-6 Multiple Family Residential & C-2 Commercial District	M-M Medium Multiple Family Residential District	24-5601
Kings Square Apartments	400 Voters Road, Slidell	Prior to 1999	C-2 Commercial District	HC-3 Highway Commercial District	24-5602
Lot 152-A, Eden Isles Subdivision	4764 Pontchartrain Drive, Slidell	Prior to 2004	C-2 Commercial District	M-L Low Multi-Family Residential District	24-5603



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Lot 154, Eden Isles Subdivision	4768 Pontchartrain Drive, Slidell	Prior to 2004	C-2 Commercial District	M-L Low Multi-Family Residential District	24-5604
Lot 100 and Lot 101, Unit 1, Eden Isles Subdivision, Slidell	4660 Pontchartrain Drive, Slidell	Prior to 1998	C-2 Commercial District	M-H High Multi-Family Residential District	24-5606
Acadian Village Apartments	71153 Highway 21, Covington	Prior to 1997	C-2 Commercial District	HC-3 Highway Commercial District	24-5613

DEMOGRAPHICS

- As of July 1, 2023, St. Tammany Parish had an estimated population of over 275,000 residents, causing St. Tammany to be the fourth most populous Parish in the state (US Census Bureau, 2023). Of these four most populous Parishes, St. Tammany is the only Parish projected to increase in population in 2025, up 5.76% from 2020 (World Population Review, 2025).
- Additionally, as of July 1, 2023, St. Tammany Parish had an estimated 115,701 housing units, encompassing both owner-occupied and rental residences. Between 2019 and 2023, approximately 78.8% of these units were owner-occupied, indicating that around 21.2% were renter occupied (US Census Bureau, 2023). This distribution reflects the Parish’s predominantly suburban character, with a significant portion of residents owning their homes and assumes the Parish has around 24,500 rental properties; or just enough rental locations for under 9% of the population.
- Finally, as the Parish is expected to continue to grow, demographic trends indicate that the age distribution within the Parish is slightly higher than both the state and national median. In addition, the Parish has a fast-growing aging population, suggesting an increased need for a mix of housing types, including affordable housing and apartments (US Census Bureau, 2023).
- Research has shown that the top most populated Parishes within Louisiana allow apartments as a permitted use within various types of commercial districts including “light commercial”, “neighborhood commercial”, “residential mixed”, “business core districts”, and “heavy commercial” districts (see Table 2).

Table 2: Top 10 Most Populous Parishes in Louisiana and Apartments as Allowable Uses			
Parish		Population (100,000)	Zoning Classifications Which Allow Multi-Family Uses
1.	East Baton Rouge Parish	445,000	Light Commercial One (LC1) Light Commercial Two (LC2) Light Commercial Three (LC3) Heavy Commercial One (HC1) Heavy Commercial Two (HC2) Business (C5)
2.	Jefferson Parish	413,000	Neighborhood Commercial District (C-1) General Commercial District (C-2) General Offices (GO-1) General Offices (GO-2) Core District Residential (CD-R) Business Core District (BC-1) Business Core District (BC-2) Mixed Use Corridor (MUC) Office Warehouse District (OW-1)



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3.	Orleans Parish	352,000	All Suburban Neighborhoods Non-Residential Districts and All Commercial Center Districts
4.	St. Tammany Parish	275,500	M-L Low Multiple-Family Residential District M-M Medium Multi-Family Residential District M-H Highway Multi-Family Residential District PBC Planned Business Campus HC-2 Highway Commercial District HC-3 Highway Commercial District HC-4 Highway Commercial District
5.	Lafayette Parish	253,000	Residential Mixed (RM1) Residential Mixed (RM2) Mixed-Use Residential (MN) Downtown (D) Commercial Mixed (CM) Commercial-Heavy (CH)
6.	Caddo Parish	221,000	General Commercial Zoning District (C3) Urban Corridor Commercial Zoning District (C-UC) Urban Village Commercial Zoning District (C-UV) D-1 Downtown Zoning District
7.	Calcasieu Parish	206,000	Light Commercial District (C-1) General Commercial District (C-2) Central Business Commercial District (C-3) - (Conditional Use Permit Required)

5. Increased population expectations, limited rental options which increase commuting and add strain on infrastructure, and rising demands from single-person households and retirees seeking smaller, maintenance-free living suggest allowing multi-family dwellings as a permitted use in more zoning classifications with greater oversight in their development.

Staff Analysis

1. Multiple Family Dwellings, or apartments, are a permitted use by-right in all multiple-family residential zoning districts, the Planned Business Campus District, and the HC-3 and HC-4 Highway Commercial Districts. Together, these districts make up a total of 5,083 acres within the Parish; or, just under 1% of the total acreage of the Parish.
2. There is a total of 5,946 acres of HC-2 Highway Commercial District zoning within the Parish. **This acreage includes 2,500 parcels with a mean size of .33 acres and a median size of .09 acres.** Adding multiple family dwellings as a permitted use by-right rather than by a conditional use permit within the HC-2 Highway Commercial District would double the area of the Parish where apartments are permitted to 1.7%, but on relatively small parcel sizes (see Table 3). Within all commercial districts, the maximum lot coverage of all buildings associated with any one development site cannot exceed more than 50% of the total property. In addition, all parking, drainage, and landscaping requirements must be met so maximum lot coverage may often be less.

Table 3: Zoning Classifications Which Currently Allow Multi-Family Residential/Apartments

Zoning Classification	Acres in STP	Permitted Uses
M-L Low Multiple-Family Residential District	811 acres	Multiple-Family dwellings (1 unit per 4,000 sq. ft.)
M-M Medium Multi-Family Residential District	161 acres	Multiple-Family dwellings (1 unit per 2,500 sq. ft.)
M-H Highway Multi-Family Residential District	284 acres	Multiple-Family dwellings (1 unit per 1,500 sq. ft.)
PBC Planned Business Campus	1,493 acres	Multiple-Family dwellings
HC-3 Highway Commercial District	2,309 acres	Multiple-Family dwellings
HC-4 Highway Commercial District	25 acres	Multiple-Family dwellings
Total		5,083 acres
HC-2 Highway Commercial District	5,946 acres	Multiple-Family dwellings: (1 unit per 1,250 sq. ft.)
Total		11,029 acres



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- 3. On average, Parishes with higher populations in Louisiana find apartments are more desirable near major corridors such as along US 190 and LA 21, within areas that have existing infrastructure, and which are developed with high quality site design, including increased landscaping and pedestrian access.
- 4. The purpose of the HC-2 Highway Commercial District is to provide for the location of moderately scaled, more intense retail, office and service uses, generally located along major collectors and arterials designed to provide services to a portion of the Parish. The district permits a variety of uses with moderate to high intensity, balancing accessibility with compatibility to surrounding uses.
- 5. As such, a text change would allow multi-family dwellings as a permitted use within the HC-2 Highway Commercial District with enhanced use criteria to require higher design standards (see Attachment A).

Consistency with New Directions 2040

The proposed text change is ~~inconsistent~~¹ consistent with the following goals, policies, and strategies of the Comprehensive Plan:

- i. Goal 1.8: A variety of safe, affordable, and attractive housing types will meet the needs of our diverse community.
- ii. Strategy 1.8.1: Maintain zoning classifications for mixed use development at various scales and intensities.
- iii. Strategy 1.8.3: Continue efforts to ensure that renters and homeowners have access to healthy housing without the presence of housing quality problems. Educate landlords above required standards of quality in their rental properties and warn them about potential violations of fair housing rules.
- iv. Strategy 1.9.2: Encourage infill development on vacant lots in existing neighborhoods.
- v. Strategy 4.5.3: Ensure that new development and redevelopment does not price out and displace long-term residents, elderly and poorer residents.

¹ Amended on April 29, 2025

Proposed Changes Key:**Blue, Bold, and Underlined Text** – Added Text~~Red and strikethrough text~~ - Deleted Text**Proposed amendments to St. Tammany Parish’s Code of Ordinances, Part II– Unified Development Code, include the following:**

1. Amend Chapter 400 – Zoning including Sec. 400-3 Commercial Zoning District Regulations and Exhibit 400-3 Permitted Uses: Commercial Districts to add “Dwelling, Multiple-Family” as a permitted use within the HC-2 Highway Commercial District and Sec. 400-8 Use Standards to include use criteria with higher standards for “Dwelling, Multiple Family” and renumber as necessary, to read as follows:

SEC. 400-3 Commercial Zoning District Regulations

* * *

Exhibit 400-3 Permitted Uses: Commercial Districts.

	Commercial Zoning Districts									
Use Category Specific Use	NC-1	NC-2	GC-1	GC-2	PBC	HC-1	HC-2	HC-3	HC-4	Use Standards
Residential										
Dwelling, Single-Family	P	P	P	P	P	P	P			
Dwelling, Two-Family	P	P	P	P	P	P	P			
Dwelling, Multiple-Family					P		C *P	P		Section 400-8.N

* * *

Sec. 400-3.5 Highway Commercial Districts.

* * *

B. HC-2 Highway Commercial District

* * *

2. Permitted uses.

* * *

q. Day care home

r. Dwelling, Multi-Family – Maximum allowable density of 1 unit per 1,250 sq. ft. of property.

s. Dwelling, Single-Family

t. Dwelling, Two-Family

* * *

3. Conditional uses. The following uses are deemed conditional uses in the HC-2

Highway Commercial District and may be approved as a conditional use subject to approval of the Planning and Zoning Commission in accordance with Chapter 200, Section 200-3:

~~a. Dwelling, Multiple Family~~

~~b. a.~~ Outdoor Storage Yard

* * *

SEC. 400-8 Use Standards

* * *

N. Dwelling, Multiple-Family

1. All multi-family uses in the HC Highway Commercial Districts including HC-2, ~~and~~ HC-3, and HC-4 must:

a. Be serviced by central utility systems including sewer and water.

b. Provide public amenities ~~shall be required~~ for the residents of all multi-family developments ~~which exceed 100 units or more~~ including but not limited to neighborhood parks with playgrounds, dog parks, nature trails, community gardens, and/or indoor and outdoor gyms. **A minimum of 20% of the total site area shall be designated as usable open space, exclusive of required natural area buffers.**

c. Screen mechanical and HVAC equipment from public view with architectural elements or landscaping.

d. Utilize Low Impact Development (LID) practices, such as bioswales, permeable pavement, and rain gardens where appropriate. LID standards may be required as determined by the Planning Director based on site conditions.

e. Incorporate architectural design standards including:

i. Façade Articulation and Orientation:

- (A) All building facades visible from public streets or adjacent residential districts must include a combination of projecting or recessed wall planes, balconies, porches, bay windows, or architectural features to break up flat surfaces. No uninterrupted façade shall exceed 30 feet in length without a significant change in plane.
- (B) Large buildings which exceed 100 feet in length must be broken into visually distinct modules that appear as a series of smaller buildings.
- (C) Buildings shall be oriented to frame and define streets, green spaces, or pedestrian corridors rather than large surface parking areas.
- (D) No more than 50% of required parking may be located between the building and the primary street frontage.
- (E) Shared access drives or cross-access easements shall be encouraged to reduce curb cuts and improve traffic flow.
- ii. Material Standards:
 - (A) Primary exterior materials must include durable and high-quality finishes such as brick, stone, fiber cement siding, or stucco. Vinyl siding and/or unfinished concrete block (CMU) shall be prohibited on façades facing public streets.
- iii. Variation in Rooflines – Use of varied rooflines, materials, and building planes is required to avoid monotonous building massing and reduce the perception of bulk.
- f. Multi-family uses in the HC-2 Highway Commercial District shall have a maximum allowable density of 1 unit per 1,250 sq. ft.
- 2. All multi-family uses, regardless of zoning must include:
 - a. ~~Alt~~ Entrance and exit ways as required within Sec. 900-3.2 General Planning and Layout Requirements for Streets ~~must be adhered to.~~
 - b. Where a multi-family residential use adjoins a residential district, higher setbacks shall be provided in accordance with the following regulations:
 - i. Where a building is taller than 25 feet in height, 1 additional foot of setback shall be required. Each façade is measured separately, and the additional depth is required perpendicular to that façade.
 - c. Internal pedestrian circulation systems must connect all buildings with sidewalks, amenities, parking areas, and public walkways. Sidewalks within the site shall be a minimum of 5 feet in width and shall be separated from vehicular traffic by a landscaped strip where feasible.
 - d. Pedestrian-scale lighting (12–14 feet in height) shall be required along all internal pedestrian paths.
 - e. Turn around and stacking areas where gated communities are proposed.