

**ORIGINAL**

**ORDINANCE NO.: 2025-095**

*Amending the 1998 Code of Ordinances of the City of Columbia, South Carolina, Chapter 17, Article 9: Definitions and Rules of Measurement Sec. 17-9.3(a)(3)a*

BE IT ORDAINED by the Mayor and Council this 6<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2026, that the 1998 Code of Ordinances of the City of Columbia, South Carolina, Chapter 17, Article 9: Definitions and Rules of Measurement, Sec. 17-9.3(a)(3)a is amended to read as follows:

**Sec. 17-9.3 Use Classification and Interpretation (a) Principal Use Classification System (3) Residential Uses Classification**

**a. Household Living Uses**

The Household Living Uses category includes use types providing for the residential occupancy of a dwelling unit by a single family. Tenancy is generally arranged on a month-to-month or longer basis. Use types include: live-work dwelling, mixed-use dwelling, multifamily dwelling, single-family detached dwelling, townhouse dwelling, two-family dwelling, and mobile home park. This use category does not include residential use types that generally involve some level of managed personal care for a larger number of residents (e.g., continuing care retirement community or residential care facility), which are categorized as Group Living Uses category. Accessory uses common to Household Living Uses include recreational activities, raising of domestic pets, hobbies, swimming pools, and parking of the occupants' vehicles. Some accessory uses (e.g., home occupations and accessory dwelling units) are subject to additional regulations (see Sec. 17-4.3, Accessory Uses and Structures).

**1. Dwelling, live-work**

A building or portion of a building combining a dwelling unit with an integrated work space principally used by one or more of the dwelling unit residents.

**2. Dwelling, mixed-use**

A building containing at least one dwelling unit and having its street-level frontage used exclusively for non-residential purposes, such as retail, office, or service related establishments.

**3. Dwelling, multifamily**

Three or more dwelling units located on one lot, in either one building or a group of buildings. For the purposes of this Ordinance, "multifamily dwelling" includes apartments, condominiums, cooperatives, single-family attached units not located on individual lots, and similar types of structures, but not townhouse dwellings.

**4. Dwelling, single-family detached**

A building containing exactly one dwelling unit, not physically attached to any other principal structure, and specifically excluding mobile homes.

**5. Dwelling, townhouse**

Three or more single-family attached dwelling units, each unit located on an individual lot and each with its own outside entrance, which share a common exterior wall and are joined together by fire resistive party walls extending at least from the lowest floor level to the roof.

**6. Dwelling, two-family**

A building, located on an individual lot, commonly known as a “duplex,” that contains exactly two dwelling units and is not physically attached to any other principal structure.

**7. Mobile home park**

A lot used, designed or intended to be used for the purpose of supplying parking space for two or more occupied mobile homes, and which includes buildings, structures, vehicles or enclosures used or intended to be used as part of that mobile home park. Sales or storage lots for unoccupied mobile homes are not considered to be mobile home parks.

**b. Group Living Uses**

The Group Living Uses category includes use types providing for the residential occupancy of a group of living units by persons who typically do not constitute a single family (but not always) and may receive some level of personal care. Individual living units often consist of a single room or group of rooms without

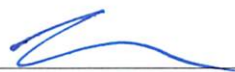
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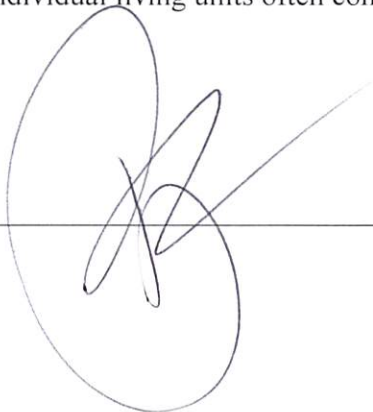
Assistant City Manager Palen \_\_\_\_\_

Approved by:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
City Manager

Approved as to form:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
City Attorney

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor

ATTEST:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
City Clerk

Introduced: 12/16/2025

Final Reading: 01/06/2026



## **CITY COUNCIL**

November 18, 2025 at 4:00 P.M.

City Hall, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Council Chambers, 1737 Main Street, Columbia, S.C., 29201

### **AMENDMENT TO THE UNIFIED DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE Amend standards for duplexes and setbacks in RD-MV District**

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Proposal: Amend the Unified Development Ordinance, Chapter 17 – Article 9: Definitions and Rules of Measurement Sec. 17-9.3(a)(3)a. Household Living Uses, to clarify definitions of Townhome, Multifamily, and Two-family Dwellings.

Applicant: Andrew Livengood, Zoning Administrator

Staff Recommendation: Staff Sponsored

PC Recommendation: 10/09/2025; Approval (7-0)

#### **DETAILS**

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The purpose of this amendment is to clarify several residential “Household Living Uses” definitions within the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) – specifically, the definitions of dwelling, townhouse; dwelling, two-family; and dwelling, multifamily.

One goal and outcome of adopting the UDO was to expand the land available for residential development, and all three of these residential use types play an important part in supporting the availability of housing for our growing City. However, the current definitions, based on building type only, have led to some unintended outcomes - and projects intended as multifamily developments have been subject to requirements otherwise designed for individually owned one- and two-family developments.

For example:

- A multifamily development is required to provide 1.75 parking spaces per unit, but one comprised of townhome or duplex buildings is required to provide 2 parking spaces per unit.
- In some districts, a multifamily development is allowed, but townhomes or duplexes are not.
- In some districts, there is an established residential density, but townhomes and duplexes – intended to be built lots meeting a minimum size instead – are exempt.
- Because the existing land development requirements in the UDO anticipate that townhomes and duplexes would be built on individual lots, they are exempt from certain landscaping and land development requirements.

Amending these definitions will provide clarity to the development process while preserving the availability of housing types.

**a. Use Classifications**

Use Classifications are very broad and general (e.g., Residential Uses, Commercial Uses, and Industrial Uses).

**b. Use Categories**

1. Use Categories represent major subgroups of the use classifications that have common functional, product, or physical characteristics, such as the type and amount of activity, type of occupants or users/customers, or operational characteristics. For example, the Commercial Uses classification is divided into multiple use categories, including Retail Sales Uses and Eating and Drinking Establishment Uses.
2. Each use category is described in terms of the common characteristics of included uses (including common or typical accessory uses), examples of common use types included in the category, and, for a number of use categories, exceptions—i.e., those uses that might appear to fall within the use category, but are included in another use category.

**c. Use Types**

Use Types identify specific principal land uses whose characteristics are considered to fall within the various use categories. For example, arboretum or botanical garden, cemetery, and park or greenway are use types within the Parks and Open Space Use Category. Each use type is defined in this Section. While the Residential and Public, Civic, and Institutional use classifications tend to include relatively specific and well-defined use types, the Commercial and Industrial use classifications tend to include broader uses types, reflecting the wider range and ever-growing variety of commercial and industrial uses existing in the community.

**(3) Residential Uses Classification**

**a. Household Living Uses**

The Household Living Uses category includes use types providing for the residential occupancy of a dwelling unit by a single family. Tenancy is generally arranged on a month-to-month or longer basis. Use types include: live-work dwelling, mixed-use dwelling, multifamily dwelling, single-family detached dwelling, townhouse dwelling, two-family dwelling, and mobile home park. This use category does not include residential use types that generally involve some level of managed personal care for a larger number of residents (e.g., continuing care retirement community or residential care facility), which are categorized as Group Living Uses category. Accessory uses common to Household Living Uses include recreational activities, raising of domestic pets, hobbies, swimming pools, and parking of the occupants' vehicles. Some accessory uses (e.g., home occupations and accessory dwelling units) are subject to additional regulations (see Sec. 17-4.3, Accessory Uses and Structures).

**Article 9: Definitions and Rules of Measurement**

Sec. 17-9.3. Use Classification and Interpretation

(a) Principal Use Classification System

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**1. Dwelling, live-work**

A building or portion of a building combining a dwelling unit with an integrated work space principally used by one or more of the dwelling unit residents.

**2. Dwelling, mixed-use**

A building containing at least one dwelling unit and having its street-level frontage used exclusively for non-residential purposes, such as retail, office, or service related establishments.

**3. Dwelling, multifamily**

~~A building containing t~~Three or more dwelling units located on one lot, in either one building or a group of buildings, with each unit sharing common vertical walls and/or horizontal floors and ceilings with another dwelling unit. For the purposes of this Ordinance, "multifamily dwelling" includes apartments, ~~tenements,~~ condominiums, cooperatives, single-family attached units not located on individual lots, and similar types of structures, but not townhouse dwellings.

**4. Dwelling, single-family detached**

A building containing exactly one dwelling unit, not physically attached to any other principal structure, and specifically excluding mobile homes.

**5. Dwelling, townhouse**

Three or more single-family attached dwelling units, each unit located on an individual lot and each with its own outside entrance, which share a common exterior wall and are joined together by fire resistive party walls extending at least from the lowest floor level to the roof. ~~Triplexes and quadraplexes are included in this definition.~~

**6. Dwelling, two-family**

A building, located on an individual lot, commonly known as a "duplex," that contains exactly two dwelling units and is not physically attached to any other principal structure.

**7. Mobile home park**

A lot used, designed or intended to be used for the purpose of supplying parking space for two or more occupied mobile homes, and which includes buildings, structures, vehicles or enclosures used or intended to be used as part of that mobile home park. Sales or storage lots for unoccupied mobile homes are not considered to be mobile home parks.

**b. Group Living Uses**

The Group Living Uses category includes use types providing for the residential occupancy of a group of living units by persons who typically do not constitute a single family (but not always) and may receive some level of personal care. Individual living units often consist of a single room or group of rooms without cooking and eating facilities (even though some do have