

Orange County Adopts Administrative Pathway for Affordable Housing on Religiously Owned Land

Article

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On Tuesday March 10, 2026, Orange County passed Resolution 26-0293, adopting Standard Operating Procedures that create an administrative pathway for developing affordable housing on property owned by religious institutions that contain a house of public worship.

The program supports the County's Housing for All 10-Year Action Plan and recently enacted State law (Ch. 2025-172). To qualify, properties must be within the Urban Service Area and no larger than 10 acres. The resolution excludes sites in the Rural Service Area, airport-impacted zones, and areas within one-quarter mile of specified military installations. All residential uses are permitted; however, compatible housing should be prioritized.

County staff will review applications, eliminating the need for a public hearing. All affordable rental units must remain affordable for at least 30 years, and a religious institution must own the property at the time of the application. After initial review of the application, the property may be sold to another developer if the religious institution retains a financial interest, the project aligns with neighborhood values, and affordability is preserved.

Allowable density will follow the property's Future Land Use (FLU) designation. For Commercial, Office and Institutional FLU designations, the resolution sets a maximum density of 35 dwelling units per acre. Incentives available to certified affordable housing include impact fee discounts, expedited permitting, and utility savings.

The resolution takes effect immediately upon adoption and terminates when the state authority expires.

We will continue to monitor Orange County's Live Local policies, and other real property rights, land use, and zoning matters. If you have questions in the meantime, please contact **Becky Wilson** at Rebecca.Wilson@Lowndes-law.com.

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