

# TOWN OF BEDFORD

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING  
AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



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BEDFORD, VIRGINIA 24523

## Notice of Public Hearings and Public Information Meeting – Proposed Zoning Code Changes

October 11, 2023

Proposed updates to the Bedford Town Code are ready for public review and comment for the zoning ordinance and map. Owners of each parcel of land within the town limits are receiving this letter to let them know where they can review the proposed changes and how to provide comments. Three public meetings will be held – one to provide information about the proposed changes, and two formal public hearings to receive comments.

There are several reasons for the proposed changes to the Town Code for zoning regulations and the zoning map. The current Code is dated and due for an update. This update will provide improvements to make the document easier to use, to add new uses, to add a new mixed-use zoning district, and to generally clean up the text. In addition, general changes are proposed to the official zoning map in order to consolidate redundant districts, to apply zoning districts that are not currently on the map, and to formally set the zoning designation of parcels recently incorporated into the Town limits, among other specific changes.

### Meeting Dates:

Public Information Meeting –

Monday, October 23, 2023 – 7:00pm – Upper level Council Chambers – 215 E. Main Street

Public Hearing #1 – Planning Commission –

Thursday, November 2, 2023 – 5:30pm – Upper level Council Chambers – 215 E. Main Street

Public Hearing #2 – Town Council –

Tuesday, December 12, 2023 – 7:00pm – Upper level Council Chambers – 215 E. Main Street

### Review the Changes:

The proposed zoning text changes and map changes can be viewed any time at:

[www.townofbedfordzoning.info](http://www.townofbedfordzoning.info). The direct link to the draft and current zoning maps can be found at:

<https://arccg.is/1naHyn1>. This map is searchable by address and RPC number.

The proposed text and map are available for public review in the office of Planning and Community Development at 215 East Main Street weekdays between 8:30am and 5:00pm. Staff in the Planning office are able to answer your questions at 540-587-6021 or 540-587-6006 during those times as well.

The next step after zoning ordinance improvements, if adopted, is to rewrite the Comprehensive Plan that guides the future of development in the town. This document was last updated in 2017. More information will be coming out in 2024 about this very important project.

## **Frequently Asked Questions:**

### Why are these changes being proposed to the zoning text and zoning map?

Town Council and the Planning Commission are responding to observations from citizens, developers, businesses, and Town staff that the zoning ordinance is out of date and cumbersome to use. Town Council began discussing the need for a possible zoning ordinance revision in 2019. An audit of the text was completed by a consultant in 2020. The ordinance audit noted many sections of the ordinance need to conform with the Code of Virginia, and other sections need to be updated and clarified to meet several goals of the Planning Commission and Council. The decision was made to substantially revise the current Land Development Regulations with a focus on the Zoning Ordinance as a second phase of the zoning review. This revision began in early 2021 and was budgeted over two fiscal years.

### What is proposed to change?

Many text changes are required to update the legal references as required by the Code of Virginia or other Federal rulings. Other proposed changes would add modern uses that weren't in existence when the Code was written, for example, brewery, custom manufacturing, homestays, among other proposed new uses. Some changes are intended to reduce confusion among similar zoning districts such as R-1, R-1A and R-1E. One proposed change would remove unused Planned Residential zoning and create a new mixed-use district that adds flexibility. Please read the full text of proposed changes to see what is requested for modification.

### How does the proposed change affect me and my property?

Every parcel in the Town (and County) of Bedford has a zoning classification that determines what uses can occur and how a division of land can be done. Zoning is a regulation that sets standards. Since these standards are proposed to change, the change may affect property differently. Changes to the zoning code will not affect existing, legal buildings or uses, but may apply to new buildings, new uses, or other future changes. The proposed changes may not affect everyone but everyone needs to be aware that there could be an effect on the development and use of land, whether owned by them or by others. Please read the full text of proposed changes to see what is requested for modification.

### How do I share my opinion or get more information?

Please refer to the beginning of the letter for places where you can access the text and map for your review. You can share your opinion by using the Contact link on the site [www.townofbedfordzoning.info](http://www.townofbedfordzoning.info), by emailing [planning@bedfordva.gov](mailto:planning@bedfordva.gov), by attending the public information meeting, and by attending either or both of the public hearings noted above.

### Are zoning changes final?

If approved and adopted by Town Council, proposed changes would be final in the Town Code. Zoning regulations, and any section of Town Code, may be changed in the future if there is a public purpose or benefit.

Sincerely,

Mary A. Zirkle  
Director of Planning and Community Development  
Representative of the Planning Commission