
MEMORANDUM: TOWN OF BEDFORD DRAFT ZONING ORDINANCE REVISIONS

October 5, 2023 Planning Commission Meeting

This memo accompanies draft zoning text revisions dated 09.25.2023.

PROCESS

Drafted revisions to the text of the Town of Bedford Zoning Ordinance represent Phase 2 of an overall ordinance analysis and revision process. Phase 1 of this planning process produced a final Zoning Ordinance Review document dated 12.03.2020. The review document established overall goals for the revision of the Zoning Ordinance and set a framework for individual revisions organized around six major themes:

1. *Streamline the Zoning Ordinance document for clarity and usability*
2. *Protect existing single-family neighborhoods*
3. *Activate Centertown*
4. *Stimulate residential and employment growth*
5. *Increase development flexibility*
6. *Put less focus on individual uses and more focus on scale and character*

The draft zoning text amendments implement the strategies found in the review document, along with other necessary updates to bring existing regulations in line with state law, industry best practices, the input of the Town's staff and Planning Commission, and the vision of Bedford's 2017 Comprehensive Plan.

Secondary to the text amendments, map revisions are proposed for several reasons. The most important reasons are simplifying redundant districts and including the newly incorporated parcels into the Town zoning provisions.

SPECIFIC REVISIONS – TEXT AND MAP

Based on the defined Key Themes, and in consideration of industry best practices, legal requirements, and specific analysis, the consultant team has drafted the following changes to the Zoning Ordinance text with the Planning Commission:

1. Streamline the Zoning Ordinance Document for Clarity and Usability

- A. Listed all district information within each district, including intent, uses, lot size, height, and yards.
- B. Listed all permitted and conditional uses within each district, eliminating nesting such as R-2 allowing a set of uses as well as all uses allowed in R-1.
- C. Created a master table listing all permitted and conditional uses. Note that this table is not a codified part of the Zoning Ordinance but a secondary reference. Also note that the table does not contain site-specific zones HE and PMPD.
- D. Combined all definitions into a single definitions section.

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- E. Provided definitions for all permitted, conditional, and prohibited uses.

2. Protect existing single-family neighborhoods

- A. Combined districts R-1, R-1A, and R-1E into a single R-1 district to simplify the regulations and protect single-family residential neighborhoods.
- B. Updated definitions to comply with state code requirements for family day care homes and group homes.
- C. Clarifies the definition of private utilities to exclude regulation of roof-mounted solar panels.
- D. Clarifies short-term rentals for regulation.

3. Activate Centertown / Downtown

- A. Allowed multi-family residential as a fully permitted use in the B-1 district to bring more people living downtown.
- B. Added modern uses to B-1, including brewery, winery, distillery, custom manufacturing, parking structures, etc.

4. Stimulate residential and employment growth

- A. Added modern uses, including winery, brewery, distillery, hydroponic agriculture, and custom manufacturing.
- B. Removed the Planned Residential Development district, reverting all PRD parcels without approved PRD plans to R-1. Added a new Planned-Mixed Use Development for residential and commercial mixed development.
- C. Removed outdated or obsolete uses, including boarding house, nonprofit organization, electrical motor shop, and tea room.
- D. Eliminated provisions for minimum lot sizes that vary according to the provision of public water and/or sewer service.

5. Increase Development Flexibility

- A. Broadened allowable uses in the B-2 district by permitting light manufacturing and data processing as conditional uses.
- B. Eliminated the Traditional Neighborhood Overlay (TNO) district.
- C. Introduced a new PMD (Planned Mixed-Use Development) district as an optional rezoning for master planned mixed-use developments.
- D. Introduced homestay (short-term residential rentals) as a conditional use in residential zones and permitted use in transitional and commercial zones.
- E. Revised the LP district to allow new construction of transition area uses instead of commercial use only of existing structures.

6. Put less focus on individual uses and more focus on scale and character

- A. Introduced generalized Commercial Retail and Commercial Service land uses in place of listings for specific retail/service types (i.e. bookstore, jewelry store, clothing store, etc.).

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- B. Drafted simplified sign allowances based on district and building frontage.
 - C. Relocated existing special conditions, including parking and loading and landscaping, from the Non-conforming Uses article to the Special Provisions article.
 - D. Introduced new Special Provisions regulations, including accessory dwelling units, drive throughs, outdoor display areas, and homestays.
 - E. Separated uses containing vs. not containing drive throughs, including financial institutions and eating establishments.
 - F. Provided zoning regulations for Minimum Lot Area, Minimum Lot Width, Maximum Lot Coverage, and Setbacks in zones LP, B-1, B-2, CLI, M-1, and CNW where no limits were previously given.

*** Revisions to the Zoning Map**

- A. Remapped PRD parcels to R-1 (PRD maintained on select parcels that have approved PRD development plans – Governor’s Hill, Oakwood Villas)
- B. Removed TNO designations (TNO maintained on select parcels with approved TNO uses)
- C. Mapped select parcels to the LP district to serve as a transition between B-1 and adjacent residential areas.
- D. Revised parcels in the area of Maxwell Circle from M-1 to CLI to better accommodate nearby residential.
- E. Revised parcels in the area of Ruff Dr., Earnhardt Dr., and Macon St. from M-1/B-2 to R-1 to reflect existing uses.
- F. Town Code requires newly incorporated parcels to be zoned R-1. For the July 1, 2023 reversion parcels, the draft map shows the required R-1 district and reflects other categories best accommodating existing uses that aren’t residential. The Route 221 / Forest Road corridor is shown as low-intensity, non-residential districts CLI and LP to allow residential and commercial uses to minimize non-conforming uses.