



City of Auburn, Maine

Planning & Permitting Department

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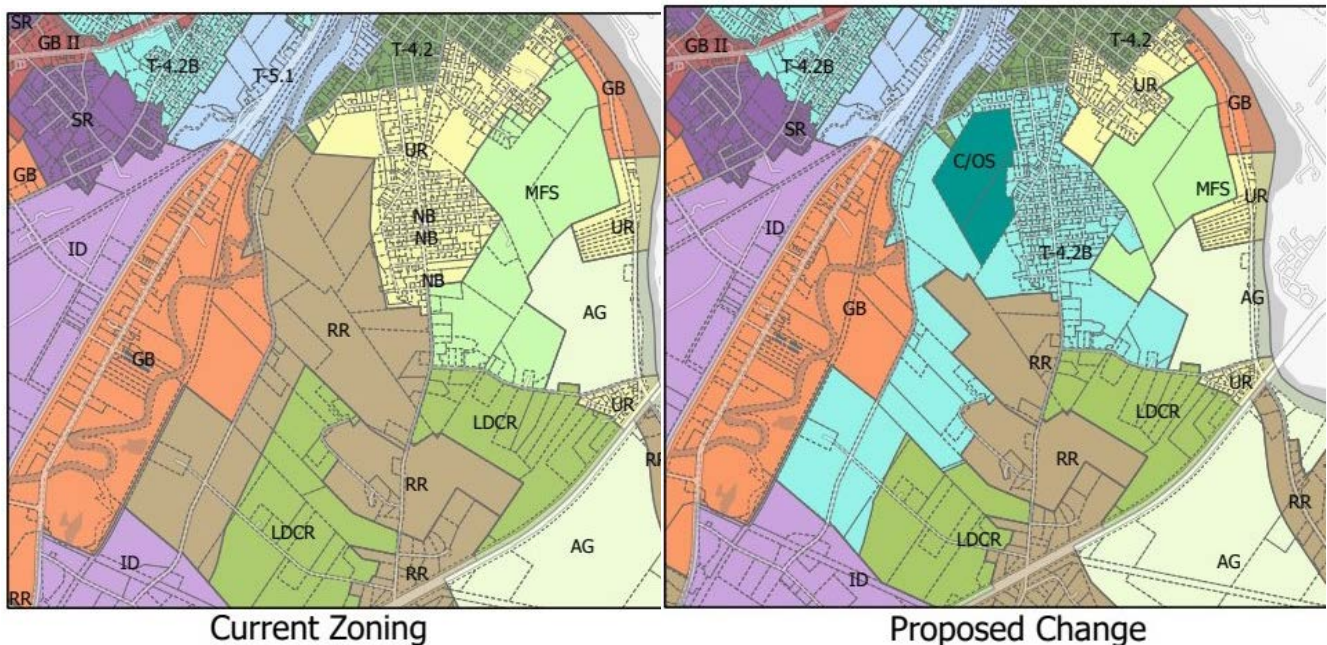
To: Auburn Planning Board

From: Katherine Cook, Planning Coordinator

Re: Staff Report on Zoning Map Amendment Considering Applying T-4.2B to Area A1

Date: August 8, 2023

- I. Public Hearing/ Zoning Map Amendment/ T-4.2B Area A1:** Amend the official zoning map of the City of Auburn entitled “City of Auburn, Zoning Map, dated May 16, 2016,” revised through its current date and revisions, as provided under Sec. 60-5 of the Zoning Ordinance, to rezone certain land area from the Urban Residence, Multifamily Suburban, Neighborhood Business zoning, Low Density Rural Residence zoning, and Low-Density Country Residence zoning districts to the Traditional Neighborhood Form Based Code T-4.2B zoning district and Conservation/Open Space district. This item is pursuant to Chapter 60, Article XVII, Division 2 of the Code of Ordinances. The official zoning map amendment is available for review and inspection at the City Clerk’s Office and the Planning & Permitting Department. The area is generally located in the New Auburn area near South Main and Broad Streets and Vickery Road.



II. Background: Last summer, 2022, the Planning Board held Workshops and Public Hearings considering applying the Traditional Neighborhood T-4.2 or T4.2B zoning district to four Areas, A-D, across the city.

The July 11, 2023 meeting was used to gather feedback on appropriate changes to finalize the proposed zoning map for a public hearing before the board makes a recommendation to Council. Staff presented a new map for public review at a Community Conversation on August 1, 2023 with the changes from the Planning Board. Some Members of the Board, 2 City Councilors and 30+ residents were present, and many participated in the Community Conversation. The proposed zoning maps include the following five changes since the July 11th meeting:

1. “Area A” as presented on July 11 has been divided into ‘Area A1” and “Area A2”. Since portions of the area are more controversial than others, this makes it possible to decide on the two portions individually as shown on the proposed zoning maps.
2. The proposed map reflects the existing colors in Auburn’s official zoning map, with T-4.2B shown as a bright teal, and the Conservation Open Space zoning district shown as a dark teal.
3. Two parcels, Sherwood Forest, and the adjacent parcel owned by Androscoggin Land Trust are proposed to be changed to a Conservation Open Space zone to reflect their public use and to make it clear that they are not available for T-4.2B development.

III. Traditional Neighborhood Development District: *Description-* The Traditional Downtown Neighborhood district is characterized by a small to medium sized buildings with smaller front yards and stoops in a more compact urban environment and includes and traditional neighborhood sized storefronts. The smaller minimum and maximum building setbacks form a moderately dense street-wall pattern, diverse architectural styles and pedestrian friendly streets and sidewalks (Sec. 60.549).

Objective – Allow for the development of a wide range of residential and community uses at a density of up to 16 units per acre, as specified in the Comprehensive Plan in areas that are served or can be served by public/community sewerage and public/community water (see Figures 2.3, 2.4 and 2.6). New development should be designed to minimize the number of vehicular access points to existing collector or other through roads.

Allowed Uses – The Traditional Neighborhood Development District generally follows the boundaries of the Urban Residential Zoning District, in effect at the time of the 2021 Comprehensive Plan update. The following general types of uses should be allowed within the Traditional Neighborhood Development District:

- Low and High-Density Residential Dwellings
- Home Occupations
- Plant/Crop-Based Agriculture
- Community Services and Government Uses
- Small Offices and Mixed-Use Buildings
- Small commercial operations that do not exceed the average lot size of the neighborhood (or more than two times the average size of the home).

Development Standards – Residential uses should be allowed at a density of up to 16 units per acre with no minimum road frontage required, shared driveways are encouraged. The areas within the Traditional Neighborhood designation are served by public/community sewer and water. In general, the minimum front setback should be 15 feet max. Side and rear setbacks should be 5-10 feet or 25% of the average depth of the lot to establish dimensional standards that relate to the

size and width of the lot with up to 70% lot coverage. Minimum building height 1 story with maximum of 3 stories (excluding an attic story).

IV. Suggested Findings, Reasons and Staff Recommendation: Forward a positive recommendation to City Council to rezone Area A1 to T-4.2B and Conservation Open Space as shown on the attached proposed zoning map (Area A1) with the following suggested findings:

1. The 2021 Comprehensive Plan recommends expanding the Form Based Zoning in this area as shown on the above map introducing a new Form-Based Zone T-4.2B.
2. This proposed change is consistent with and supports the Comprehensive Plan's transportation goals (see above item IV).
3. The city's transportation goals identified in the Comprehensive Plan will require infill between New Auburn and Broad Street. As the City is planning for a highway interchange, (Appendix A) creating higher density in this area will bring the City closer to this goal.
4. The Comprehensive Plan supports growth in the "city core" which includes Area A1. Developing within the city core means more efficient, cost-effective city services to support growth.
5. Form Based Code creates opportunity for small-scale business enterprises and investment into existing neighborhoods. These business uses will require a residence to be connected to the building, encouraging owner occupied small business creation.
6. Auburn has a goal of providing opportunity for new homes. Form based code zoning allows for smaller lot sizes, setbacks, and mixed-use housing, thereby decreasing the amount of land a person would need to build housing.
7. Limit the need for new city- maintained roads by encouraging infill development with shared accessways within the identified growth areas in 2020 Comprehensive Plan.
8. Form based code allows for five-foot front and side setbacks in contrast with the current twenty-five-foot setbacks from the front of the lot. Many existing homes in Area A1 are nonconforming because the traditional building pattern set homes close to the road, not in alignment with current zoning standards. The nonconforming buildings meeting this description can remain where they are if unchanged, but nonconformance drastically limits the improvements or repairs a homeowner can make. Reducing the setbacks as proposed alleviates this challenge.
9. The current zoning in Area A1 only allows single-family and two-family homes, limiting housing affordability, production and who can live in Auburn's neighborhoods. Form based code allows single-family homes, duplexes, and multifamily homes in the same neighborhoods, creating options for people who want to live in Auburn but cannot obtain a single-family home. Mortgages and rents are presently unattainable for many people. Folks who are not already settled in a home have few options to settle in Auburn due to not only the high prices, but also the low housing stock and the restrictive land use ordinances which limit new housing creation.
10. LD 2003, now adopted as law in the State of Maine, will require zoning in this area to allow four-unit multifamily homes. The State recognizes and therefore is mandating that municipalities allow diverse housing options at higher densities to address the statewide housing supply issue. Form based code is consistent with LD 2003 and allows Auburn to comply with this law while maintaining a traditional building form, consistent with the existing Auburn neighborhoods.

- V. **Suggested Motion:** I make a motion to recommend amending the official zoning map of the City of Auburn entitled “City of Auburn, Zoning Map, dated May 16, 2016,” revised through its current date and revisions, as provided under Sec. 60-5 of the Zoning Ordinance, to rezone certain land area from the Urban Residence, Multifamily Suburban, Neighborhood Business zoning, Low Density Rural Residence zoning, and Low-Density Country Residence zoning districts to the Traditional Neighborhood Form Based Code T-4.2B zoning district and Conservation/Open Space district. This item is pursuant to Chapter 60, Article XVII, Division 2 of the Code of Ordinances. The official zoning map amendment has been and is available for review and inspection at the City Clerk’s Office and the Planning & Permitting Department. The area is generally located in the New Auburn area near South Main and Broad Streets and Vickery Road as shown on the attached map (A1).