

Date: April 9th, 2024

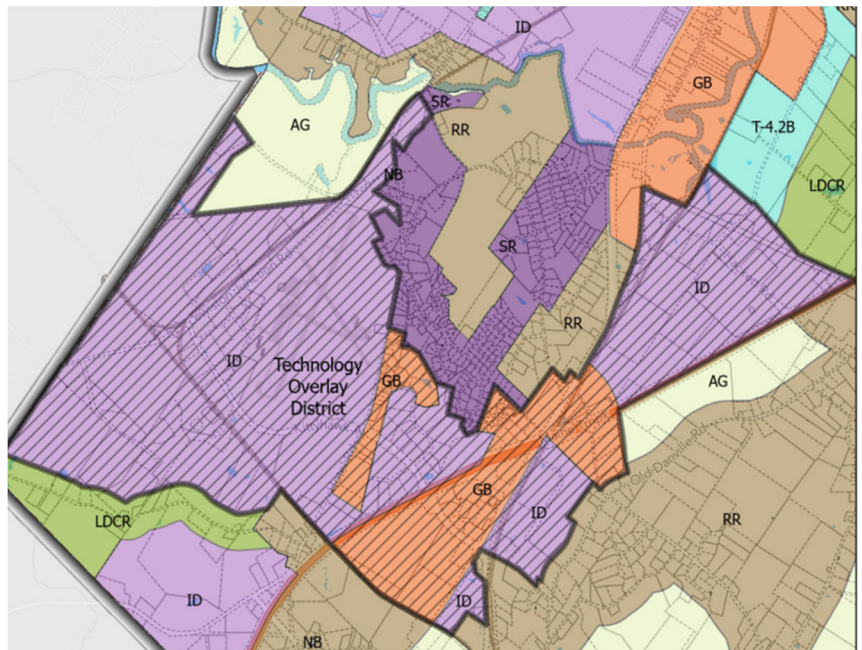
To: Auburn Planning Board

From: The City of Auburn Office of Planning & Permitting

Re: Staff Report on Maine Forest Bioproducts Advanced Manufacturing Tech Hub Overlay District Text and Map Amendments

- I. **Proposal 1 Public Hearing/ Text Amendment:** City Council initiated text amendment to Chapter 60 Article IV, Division 12 General Business District by including “manufacture, compounding and assembling of articles using Maine derived forest products, agricultural products, or other natural resource inputs” as a Special Exception use with a condition that the site must be located within the Maine Forest Bioproducts Advanced Manufacturing Tech Hub Overlay District.
- II. **Proposal 2 Public Hearing/ Map Amendment:** City Council initiated zoning map amendment to create the Maine Forest Bioproducts Advanced Manufacturing Tech Hub Overlay District. This zoning map overlay is generally located near Lewiston Junction Road, Kittyhawk Ave, and the southerly half of Washington Street.
- III. **Background:** This proposal is to implement more flexibility in the General Business Zoning District in the area near exit 75 on the Maine Turnpike that is not available in other areas of the City that are also zoned as General Business, like Center Street and the surrounding neighborhoods.

The Maine Forest Bioproducts Advanced Manufacturing Tech Hub Overlay District is represented on the sketch map as cross-hatched over the existing General Business District (represented in orange) and the existing Industrial District (represented in light purple). The extent of this zoning change is to add language allowing manufacturing of Maine-derived natural products, resembling what is already allowed in the Industrial Zoning District, in one area of the General Business District. As such, this overlay is presented as both a text amendment to the General Business Zone, and a Map amendment creating the overlay represented visually on the City’s Official Zoning Map.



The City of Auburn’s Economic Development Director, Jay Brenchick, gives the following introduction on the origins of these two proposals:

In October 2023, the Governor's Office announced that the Economic Development Administration (EDA) designated Maine's Forest Bioproducts Advanced Manufacturing Tech Hub as a Federal "Tech Hub." The designation acknowledges that Maine's forest bioproducts sector has the potential for rapid growth and opens the door for significant Federal investment. The Maine Technology Institute (MTI) and the Governor's Office partnered with a consortium that included the University of Maine, the Roux Institute, the Maine Community College System, the Maine Venture Fund, and others during the application process.

Maine's Forest Bioproducts Tech Hub will accelerate research and development of natural polymers and other plant-based and wood fiber bioproducts that sequester carbon and replace plastics and toxic chemicals while bolstering "Made in America" supply chain goals.

The City of Auburn Economic Development has been in regular communication with the University of Maine, the Roux Institute, the Maine Composites Alliance, the Manufacturers Association of Maine, the Maine Manufacturers Extension Partnership, and the Maine Department of Economic and Community Development to position Auburn for participation in the Tech Hub designation and other state and federal innovation initiatives.

The Economic Development Department, Planning, Permitting & Code Department, and Business and Community Development Department are collaborating to create an Innovation/Tech Hub Designation surrounding Exit 75 and the Auburn-Lewiston Municipal Airport. This designation aims to align the City of Auburn's zoning, business resources, marketing, and economic development partnerships with efforts made at the state and federal levels.

In short, the Technology Hub overlay will allow the City of Auburn to compete for prospects and incentives related to the new state and federal Tech Hub designation.

IV. Planning Board Recommended Action: Review the Text and Map proposals, hold a public hearing on both the proposed text amendment and the proposed map amendment. Make two separate motions to provide a favorable recommendation to City Council on the Zoning Map and Text Amendments.

V. Suggested Motion:

- a. **Proposal 1 (Text Amendment):** I make a motion to recommend that the City Council amend Chapter 60 Article IV, Division 12 General Business District by including “manufacture, compounding and assembling of articles using Maine derived forest products, agricultural products, or other natural resource inputs” as a Special Exception use with a condition that the site must be located within the Maine Forest Bioproducts Advanced Manufacturing Tech Hub Overlay District.
- b. **Proposal 2 (Map Amendment):** I make a motion to recommend that the City Council amend the Official Zoning Map of the City of Auburn to create the Maine Forest Bioproducts Advanced Manufacturing Tech Hub Overlay District. This zoning map overlay is generally located near Lewiston Junction Road, Kittyhawk Ave, and the southerly half of Washington Street.