



## City of Auburn, Maine

Office of Planning & Permitting

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To: Auburn Planning Board

From: Katherine Cook, Planning Coordinator

Re: Workshop on a zoning map amendment (**Area A**) encompassing 936 +/- acres of Urban Residential, Multi-Family Suburban and Rural Residential within the New Auburn Urban Residential areas and along Broad Street. The proposed change would apply Traditional Neighborhood Development District, T-4.2B as defined in the Comprehensive Plan to the South Main Street to Broad Street area as shown on maps below.

Date: August 9, 2022

**I. PROPOSAL #1: WORKSHOP: T-4.2 AREA A** Consider changing **Area A** encompassing 936 +/- acres of Urban Residential, Multi-Family Suburban and Rural Residential within the New Auburn Urban Residential areas and along Broad Street to the Traditional Neighborhood Development District as defined in the Comprehensive Plan.

**II. STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Hold a workshop about the application of Form-Based Code to **Area A** as described in Agenda Item 4 and use this as an opportunity to gather preliminary feedback from the public. Staff also recommends that the Planning Board consider that five (5) parcels be excluded from the T4.2B area to reflect their status as conserved land or land otherwise not to be developed. These include (1) 61.5 +/- acres known as "Huston Field" (PID 201-053-001); (2) 53.5 +/- acres at Sherwood Heights School (Aka Sherwood Forest) at 32 Sherwood Dr. (PID 200-028); (3) 27.3 +/- acres at Oak Hill Cemetery on Riverside Drive (PID 212-001); (4) 25 +/- acres off Reginald St. owned by Androscoggin Land Trust (PID 191-101-003); and (5) 27.53 +/- acres off Lafayette St owned by Androscoggin Land Trust (PID 200-010).

*Staff has (1) listed a description of the Traditional Neighborhood Development District and described T-4.2B as a new zone, (2) provided written and map descriptions of the areas to be considered, and (3) included findings and suggestions as the proposed amendment pertains to the area. An attachment of public comments received leading up to June 21<sup>st</sup> are included at the end of the package.*

### **TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT (TND)**

*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 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).

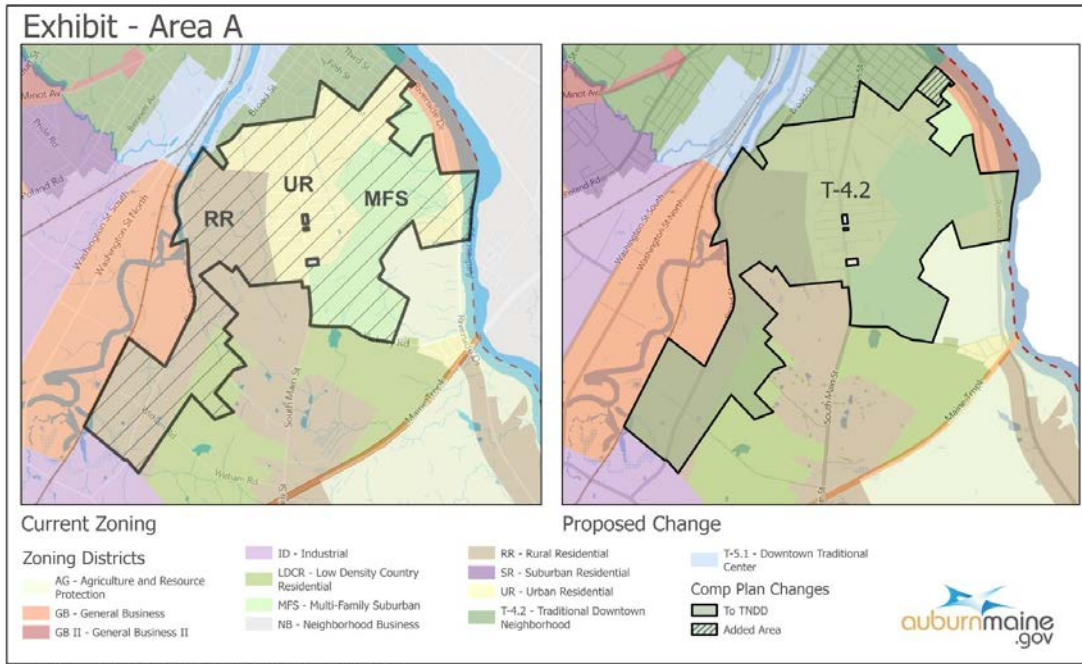
*Development Standards* – Residential uses should be allowed at a density of up to 16 units per acre with no minimum road frontage required, shared driveways are encouraged. The areas within the Traditional Neighborhood designation are served by public/community sewer and water. In T.4.2B, the front setback should be 25 feet max with the consideration that no front yard needs to be any less than the average depth of front yards on the lots next thereto on either side. 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).

**T-4.2B is a new zone distinct from T-4.1, T-4.2, T-5.1, T-5.2, and T-6.** The attached text, Division 14. Form Based Code, shows the text of the T-4.2 B. The document represents the text of proposed new zone, T-4.2 B. The underlined sections mark the differences between T-4.2 and T-4.2B.

### **III. AREAS INCLUDED IN ZONE CHANGE**

#### **Area A: New Auburn and Broad Street Traditional Neighborhood District Form Based Code Expansion**

Consideration of the Comprehensive Plan recommendation to expand the T.4.2 Traditional Downtown Neighborhood or some variation of that district to the New Auburn area as outlined on the adjacent Map. The area includes 936 +/- acres of Urban Residential, Multi-Family Suburban and Rural Residential within the New Auburn Urban Residential areas and along Broad Street within the Comprehensive Plan designated growth area.



**Examples from South Main Street and Adjacent Streets**



*The 2021 Comprehensive Plan defined goals and priorities for the city to develop and improve its transportation network. Transportation objectives identified in the comprehensive plan should be considered as applied to Area A.*

**IV. TRANSPORTATION**

***“Goal G.1: Auburn supports real-estate growth patterns that fully utilize the utility of all road networks in the city, making necessary additional connections between road networks to advance this goal...”***

1. The full utility of the Maine Turnpike and Washington Street have not been integrated into residential growth patterns in Auburn. Previous efforts to integrate the Turnpike

focused on industrial/commercial growth, which is no longer recommended in the Comprehensive Plan.

2. The New Auburn area is dominated by streets running north to south with limited east to west connections. The Little Androscoggin and Androscoggin Rivers have driven that development history and the Comprehensive Plan specifies recommendations to establish broader east-west connectivity. Developing a grid network as projects are proposed under site plan review will allow for priority streets to serve both local uses and regional mobility and keep through traffic out of neighborhoods.
3. If developing a connected grid of streets is not part of site plan review, peak hour traffic will be forced to use existing connections to regional highways, creating congestion and safety issues in key areas of New Auburn village and Danville. The solution to congestion in those areas will be continued widening of intersections and village streets, contrary to the redevelopment plans for those walkable areas.

***“Goal G.2: Auburn has a well-designed—and functioning road network that safely and equitably moves all manner of users (cars, buses, bikes, and pedestrians) into and through the community while expanding traditional residential neighborhood growth patterns in Danville and New Auburn. Expansions in neighborhood growth are in keeping with traditional transportation network patterns, such as interconnected streets that provide multiple travel patterns, avoiding a rigid hierarchy of streets.”***

1. Additional residential growth at the densities already in place in the core neighborhood will have an impact on the existing road network in New Auburn. Implementing this comprehensive plan goal is done through increased density allowed in zoning and the establishment of an interconnected street grid, over time, resembling the existing built area.
2. Expansions in transportation capacity, such as connector roads or highway interchanges, are difficult to permit if the goal is “sprawl repair” due to haphazard road layout and inefficient use of land for community growth.
3. New capacity, linked to providing for regional mobility and a protection of neighborhood and village street grids, does provide a strong foundation for pursuing state/federal permitting.

## **V. FINDINGS AND SUMMARY**

1. The 2021 Comprehensive Plan recommends expanding the Formed 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, designating this area first as Traditional Neighborhood District is consistent with the Plan.
4. The 2021 Comprehensive Plan recommends expanding the Formed Base zoning. The character of this area warrants a new district, T-4.2B that is different than the existing T-4.2 district. T-4.2B will meet the Comprehensive Plan objective of allowing higher density in single and multifamily construction types that conform to and expand existing historic development patterns.
5. The distinctions between allowed uses, density, and development patterns in the existing T-4.2 areas in place for years and the Court Street/City Core area are significant enough to warrant a new zoning district that can be called T-4.2-B. This will prevent limitation

in the urban core where density and mixed use has been allowed by leaving T.4.2 zoning in place in some areas.

6. The area is considered the core of the city and the 2010 and more recent 2021 Comprehensive Plan support higher density with available infrastructure in place or available nearby for extension (sewer, water, power, high speed internet, gas & roads).
7. Creation of new zone T-4.2B assures that the City's zoning and land use regulations allow for private investments to improve property in these neighborhoods.
8. Applying T-4.2B to the City core would help maintain and increase the City's population.
9. The proposal limits the need for new roads by encouraging infill development within the identified growth areas in 2020 Comprehensive Plan.
10. FBC allows for 5-foot front and side setbacks in contrast with the current 25 feet. Most buildings in these districts are currently non-conforming because of this standard.
11. In many of the older, developed areas of the City, the current configuration of space within residential buildings is functionally obsolete. Reconfiguration of the available space is often difficult under the density and lot size requirements of the current zoning ordinance. This change will allow desired infill and investment in creating new housing options.
12. Staff suggests that five (5) parcels be removed from the designated growth area to reflect their status as conserved land or land otherwise not to be developed. These include (1) 61.5 +/- acres at Parcel I.D. 201-053-001 known as "Huston Field"; (2) 53.5 +/- acres at Sherwood Heights School (Aka Sherwood Forest) at 32 Sherwood Dr. (PID 200-028); (3) 27.3 +/- acres at Oak Hill Cemetery on Riverside Drive (PID 212-001); (4) 25 +/- acres off Reginald St. Owned by Androscoggin Land Trust Parcel (PID 191-101-003); and (5) 27.53 +/- acres off Lafayette St owned by Androscoggin Land Trust (PID 200-010). Staff suggests these parcels receive zoning designations appropriate for their uses.