



City of Auburn, Maine

Office of Planning and Permitting
60 Court Street | Auburn, Maine 04210
207.333.6601 | www.auburnmaine.gov

To: Auburn Planning Board
From: Megan Norwood, City Planner II
Re: Form-Based Code – Transition Zone
Date: December 8, 2020

PROPOSAL:

Consider proposed amendments to the form-based code to add a provision in the ordinance that would allow the Planning Board to move parcels on a zoning district line into the adjacent form-based code zone upon application of an applicant and provided it fits the character of the neighborhood.

Staff discussed this item with the Planning Board at the November 10, 2020 meeting. The Planning Board had a number of questions in regards to State Statute requirements for moving zoning lines/allowing adjacent parcels to take advantage of space and bulk standards, even though they are located in separate zoning districts.

One solution Staff came up with is to create a 100-foot “transition zone” between the various form-based code districts where either FBC standard could apply. Staff recommends the Planning Board schedule a public hearing, if interested, for the parcels that would be included in the 100-foot transition area. They most likely were already notified as part of the 500-foot abutter notices but not with this specific language.

DEPARTMENT REVIEW:

- Police - No Concerns
- Auburn Water and Sewer – No concerns
- Fire Department/Code Enforcement – No concerns
- Engineering – No Concerns
- Public Services - No Concerns
- Airport – No Concerns
- 911 - No concerns

PLANNING BOARD ACTION:

1. To schedule a public hearing for the creation of a transition zone between the form-based code districts.

STAFF RECOMENDATIONS:

Findings: The following sections of the Comprehensive Plan Support the proposed zoning amendments:

- Objective F.1.1: Maintain and increase the City's population.
- Strategy G.2.10.c: Limit the need for new roads by encouraging infill development within the identified growth areas. (See Chapter 2. Future Land Use Plan)
- Strategy H.2.2.a: Assure that the City's zoning and land use regulations allow private owners to improve properties in these neighborhoods.
 - i. Review and revise the zoning requirements, as needed, to allow existing homes to be improved and expanded as long as they maintain the character of the neighborhood in terms of setbacks, building height, lot coverage and similar factors.
 - ii. Review and revise the zoning requirements, as needed, to allow for redevelopment and infill development on vacant lots that is in character with the neighborhood in terms of lot sizes and density, frontage, setbacks, and similar dimensional requirements (see Chapter 2. Future Land Use Plan).
- Strategy H.2.4.a: Assure that the City's zoning and land use regulations allow for private investments to improve property in these neighborhoods.
 - i. Review and revise the zoning requirements, as needed, to allow existing buildings to be improved and expanded as long as they maintain the character of the neighborhood in terms of setbacks, building height, lot coverage and similar factors.
 - ii. Review and revise the zoning requirements, as needed, to allow for redevelopment and infill development on vacant lots that is in character with the neighborhood in terms of lot sizes and density, frontage, setbacks, and similar dimension
- Other Land Use Policy 5. USE OF EXISTING RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS 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. To address this issue, the Future Land Use Plan proposes that reuse/reconfiguration of the existing space within buildings for residential purposes be allowed without consideration of the density or lot size limitations in a number of land use districts. The objective of this proposal is to encourage property owners to modernize and reinvest in these properties. At the same time, the Future Land Use Plan recognizes that the reconfiguration of these buildings needs to be done in a way that is a benefit to the neighborhood and City, and does not create other problems. Therefore the proposed development standards in these land use districts call for the City to apply reasonable requirements to these situations to assure that there is adequate parking, that the character of the building and site is appropriate and protects neighboring



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properties, and that the properties are desirable living environments with green space. To assure that these objectives are met, the City should establish a mini-site plan review process for projects that want to make use of these provisions; it should include the opportunity for abutter involvement in the review and approval process.