

## City of Auburn City Council Information Sheet

**Council Workshop or Meeting Date:** June 21, 2021

**Author:** Megan Norwood, City Planner

**Subject:** Proposed Amendment to the Low-Density Country Residential and Rural Residential Strips abutting the Agriculture/Resource Protection Zone to expand from a Width of 450 Feet to a width of 750 feet from the center line of roadways.

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**Information:** At the May 17, 2021 meeting, the City Council voted as a consent item to request a recommendation from the Planning Board to increase the width of the residential strips abutting the Ag-Zone from 450-feet to 750-feet.

The Planning Board discussed and tabled this item with a vote of 6-1 pending answers to the following questions by the City Council:

- Why was a fixed width utilized instead of following the boundaries of lots that are not as deep as 750-feet and how was the depth of 750-feet identified?
- How does this zoning amendment fit with the stated vision in the Comprehensive Plan and in the Comprehensive Plan update to develop from the core out and in a village pattern?
- Why are we discussing this now given that we are going to be receiving a Comprehensive Plan review and corresponding zooming amendments that will address these items?

After the Planning Board meeting, Staff began researching the answers to some of these questions and found a recommendation in the 1995-2005 Comprehensive Plan that states the following:

“Low Density Residential “Bands” along Rural Roads.” Some of the “bands” or “strips” of low-density residential development along rural roads have been retained, while others are eliminated or extended. The intent is to reduce the depth of these bands from 1,500 feet to 800 feet to prevent “bubble” subdivisions throughout the rural area.

Amend the Zoning Ordinance by changing the depth of low-density residential district bands along rural roads from 1,500 feet to 800 feet (400 feet each side of the road), except as otherwise noted in specific areas of the Future Land Use Map.”

The 1995-2005 plan further goes on to describe specific neighborhoods within the City and how the “bands” should or should not be adjusted, for example:

“Danville Corner/Pownal Road/Harmons Corner Low Density Residential (South Auburn, Danville)

(Continue Low Density Residential designation with 400 feet of road; retail Agriculture/RP adjacent to Turnpike and in Woodbury Road/Woodbury Hill area; change land more than 400 feet from roads to AG/RP). There has

already been low density residential development in this area, including Joatmon Estates and Winchester Heights. It provides opportunities for rural living close to the City, although most future development is expected to be strip development. Water and sewer services are not available or anticipated for the foreseeable future. Development should not be encouraged in interior areas.”

This information (together with comments from the City Council) should help provide context to the Planning Board on why this change is recommended and how certain figures were determined.

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**City Budgetary Impacts:** Potential Increased Taxable Value from Additional Dwellings.

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**Staff Recommended Action:** Please provide a response to the questions asked by the Planning Board so they can make a decision at their July 13, 2021 meeting.

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**Previous Meetings and History:** May 17, 2021 – City Council meeting, June 8, 2021 – Planning Board Meeting

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**City Manager Comments:**



I concur with the recommendation. Signature:

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**Attachments:** June 8, 2021 Planning Board Staff Report



## City of Auburn, Maine

Office of Planning & Permitting

Eric Cousens, Director

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To: Auburn Planning Board  
From: Megan Norwood, City Planner  
Re: Proposed Amendment to the Low Density Country Residential and Rural Residential Strips abutting the Agriculture/Resource Protection Zone to expand from a Width of 450 feet to a Width of 750 feet from the centerline of the roadways.  
Date: June 08, 2021

**I. PROPOSAL:** At the May 17, 2021 City Council meeting, the Council voted to request a recommendation from the Planning Board to expand the residential strips abutting the Ag-Zone from a width of 450 feet to a width of 750 feet from the centerline of the roadways.

The City has a number of residential strips, primarily in northern and southern areas that split parcels of land between two zoning districts – Agriculture/Resource Protection and either Rural Residential or Low Density Country Residential. This allows property owners to have a residence in the front of the property, zoned residential, and reserves the back portion of the property as Ag-land. Below is an example in the Trapp Road/Pownal Road area of a Rural Residential strip on either side of the roadways.



By increasing the width of these strips an additional 300 feet, it will provide more buildable area for residential uses in these neighborhoods.

One of the reasons the strips were set to 450 feet was to prevent subdivisions such as the one below on Partridge Lane which essentially cuts off access to the back agriculturally zoned land.



If the Planning Board would like more information from the City Council as to why this change has been recommended, we recommend using this opportunity to come up with specific questions about the proposed changes to bring back to the City Council.

## **II. DEPARTMENT REVIEW:**

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

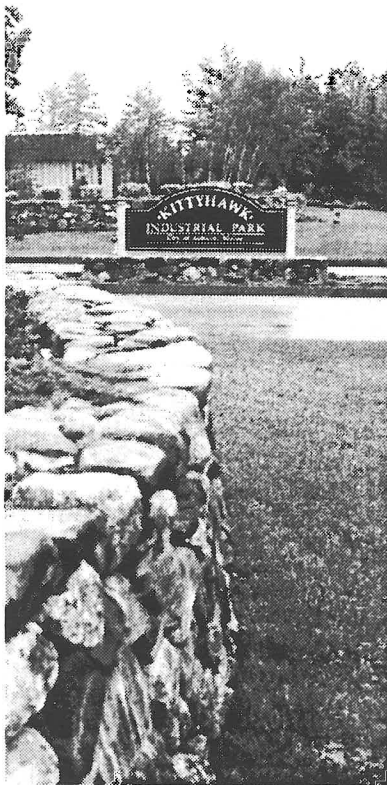
**II. PLANNING BOARD ACTION/STAFF SUGGESTIONS:** Staff suggests the Planning Board make a favorable recommendation to City Council to expand the Rural Residential and Low Density Country Residential strips an additional 300 feet to provide more flexibility for residential uses in these areas. If the Planning Board is not comfortable with making a recommendation until additional information is provided, Staff recommends using this opportunity to formulate a list of questions for the City Council.

POLICIES	STRATEGIES	RESPONSIBILITY/DATE
	<p>4. <u>Unique Commercial Corridors</u>. A number of distinct and unique commercial corridors are established. In some cases, these are located in areas designated "cluster development" on the current zoning map. The purpose of these areas is to recognize the development that has occurred, and allow for limited types of development consistent with the uniqueness of each area. (These are now designated in more detail under paragraph B, below).</p> <p>Amend the Zoning Ordinance to create distinct, separate commercial corridor districts, with a range of uses and limitations appropriate to each area (for example, allow a wide range of commercial activities on Center Street; prohibit automobile dealerships altogether on Minot Avenue, limit commercial growth on Washington Street to low impact, low density uses until public water and sewer are extended into the area). Address access, parking and screening from abutting uses.</p>	Planning Board/City Council/1996
	<p>5. <u>Low Density Residential "Bands" along Rural Roads</u>. Some of the "bands" or "strips" of low density residential development along rural roads have been retained, while others are eliminated or extended. The intent is to reduce the depth of these bands from 1500 feet to 800 feet to prevent "bubble" subdivisions throughout the rural area.</p> <p>Amend the Zoning Ordinance by changing the depth of low density residential district bands along rural roads from 1500 feet to 800 feet (400 feet each side of the road), except as otherwise noted in specific areas of the Future Land Use Map.</p>	Planning Board/City Council/1996
	<p>6. <u>Industrial Zones</u>. A number of industrial zones have been created or expanded to meet the City's short and long-range needs for high quality, accessible industrial property and to recognize that through the City's efforts, Auburn is becoming one of the most important and successful industrial centers in Maine. The intent is that those areas which are fully served be developed more intensively than areas which are not or will not be similarly served.</p> <p>Amend the Zoning Ordinance to create additional Industrial Districts to reflect the range of industrial opportunities, and the limitations of some industrial property shown on the Future Land Use Map.</p> <p>Amend the Zoning Ordinance to reduce setbacks along active rail lines for all uses.</p> <p>If a Turnpike exit and/or a connector road is developed, consider other areas for industrial/commercial development, which areas are currently beyond the planning horizon envisioned by the Future Land Use Map. These areas include the area south of the Turnpike and west of Riverside Drive where utilities can be expected to be extended.</p>	<p>Planning Board/City Council/1996</p> <p>Planning Board/City Council/1996</p> <p>Planning Board/City Council/As Needed</p>

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## FUTURE LAND USE MAP

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**7. Morin Brick Industrial Area (Danville)**

(No change - retain existing Industrial). The Morin Brick plant is located in this area.

**8. Danville Village Area (Danville)**

(Change from Agricultural/RP and Rural Residential to Village). This area currently contains a wide range of uses and would be suitable for a village designation that would allow a continuation of those uses. Since the area is remote from other commercial centers and many residents travel to a convenience store in New Gloucester, it would be desirable to allow small convenience stores and similar commercial activities.

**9. Exit 12 Danville Industrial Area (Danville)**

(Change from General Business to Industrial and continue as Industrial). This area currently contains a number of industries including Allied Container, Gates Formed Fiber and the Kittyhawk Industrial Park. It is bounded on the south by the St. Lawrence and Atlantic Railroad, and is bisected by the Maine Central Railroad. The area has excellent transportation access including the Turnpike Interchange, Washington Street, and the Kittyhawk spur. It is near the Airport, and water and sewer services are available at the Kittyhawk boundary.

**10. Airport Industrial (Christian Hill, Airport, Marston's Corner)**

(Continue Industrial, change small CD area near Turnpike and AG area between Hardscrabble and Little Androscoggin to Industrial). This area already contains a fully developed industrial park, the Airport, the Intermodal Transfer Facility, VPS and P-Con. The topography is flat, there is a full range of transportation services, and sewer and water are available.

**11. Exit 12 Commercial (Danville, South Auburn, Rowe's Corner, Marston's Corner)**

(Continue Commercial designation; change CD to Commercial). This area already has a number of businesses including a TV station (Channel 8), the Auburn Inn, Mid State Business College, the Auburn Business Park (a 7-lot commercial park), Oxford Insurance and Harriman Associates. The area is near Exit 12 and would thus be ideal for transportation-related developments. It has a full range of utility services.

**12. Danville Corner/Pownal Road/Harmons Corner Low Density Residential (South Auburn, Danville)**

(Continue Low Density Residential designation within 400 feet of road; retain Agriculture/RP adjacent to Turnpike and in Woodbury Road/Woodbury Hill area; change land more than 400 feet from roads to AG/RP). There has already been low density residential development in this area, including Joatmon Estates and Winchester Heights. It provides opportunities for rural living close to the City, although most future development is expected to be strip development. Water and sewer services are not available or anticipated in the foreseeable future. Development should not be encouraged in interior areas.

**13. South Auburn Agriculture/RP (South Auburn, Danville)**

(Continue Agriculture/RP; reduce low density residential areas along Riverside Drive, Pownal Road and outer Trapp Road. This area is largely rural and undeveloped. The roads are in poor condition. Extensive lineal strip development along roadways would result in demands for costly road improvements and other City services. Future growth can easily be accommodated in other parts of the community. If a new Turnpike exit is established, the area adjacent to the Turnpike might be suitable for industrial use.

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## FUTURE LAND USE MAP

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**22. South Main Street Corridor High Density Single Family Residential (New Auburn, Rowe's Corner)**

(No Change). This is a predominantly single family, fully serviced, stable neighborhood that is almost completely developed. There are a few businesses in this area that are located in a neighborhood business district, as well as Sherwood Heights School and the reservoir.

**23. Broad Street/Vickory Road Low Density Residential (New Auburn, Rowe's Corner)**

(No Change). This area is largely undeveloped, and consists of fairly rough topography (the area on the other side of Vickory Road was shown on the 1986 land use map as Agricultural). A portion of this area is adjacent to the golf course. Providing road access and services to this area would be costly and difficult. The best use of the area may include clustered pods of residential development. If a new Turnpike access is built, access to the area would be improved, and it would be suitable for higher density development.

**24. Prospect Hill Golf Course Agriculture/RP (Rowe's Corner)**

(Change from Low Density Residential to Agriculture/RP). Changing this area to Agriculture/RP is logical because golf courses are allowed in that zone and it would be adjacent to other agricultural areas.

**25. Hackett Road/Witham Road Industrial (Rowe's Corner)**

(Retain existing Industrial on one half, change the other half from Low Density Residential to Industrial.) Although there are a few homes in this area, as well as Agway and a metal fabricating plant, it is largely undeveloped and would be suitable for a second tier of industrial development after the land to the south has been developed. The Hackett Road area is generally quite flat, and the Witham Road area is gently rolling. Proposed water and sewer expansions would go down through the middle of this area. The Maine Central Railroad is accessible.

**26. Beach Hill Road/Hardscrabble Road Medium to Low Density Residential (Beech Hill, Marston's Corner)**

(No Change). This area, which is served by utilities, offers many opportunities for infill development. Most of the newer development in this area has been medium density development. The topography provides scenic vistas. This area is within a secondary Airport flight path.

**27. Martindale Golf Course Agriculture/RP (Beech Hill)**

(Continue Agriculture/RP, Change Low Density Residential to Agriculture/RP). This area consists of a flood plain and is thus not suited for more intensive development. A golf course is a permitted use in an Agriculture/RP zone.

**28. Outer Minot Avenue Low Density Residential (Mt. Apatite)**

(No Change but reduce depth of zone to 400 feet on either side of road). This area is a stable, low density residential area that has no services. It is bordered by the flood plain of the Little Androscoggin River and does not offer much opportunity for more intensive development.



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## FUTURE LAND USE MAP

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**43. Central Business District Commercial (Downtown, Uptown)**

(No Change). This is a stable commercial area which is the heart of Auburn's downtown. There are several vacant parcels which could be used for additional growth, or an urban park for such activities as the balloon festival.

**44. Hatch Road/Garfield Road Agriculture/RP (Mt. Apatite, Taylor Pond, Perkins Ridge)**

(Change Jackson Hill Road from Low Density Residential to Agriculture/RP; reduce Low Density Residential District along Garfield Road to 400 feet each side of road). Mt. Apatite and the National Guard are located in this area. This is an environmentally sensitive area due to topography, shallow depth to ledge, extensive wetland areas, and the potential that any development would increase phosphorus concentrations in Taylor Pond and Lake Auburn. This area is also far from City services, and is thus not desirable as a growth area.

**45. Perkins Ridge Agriculture/RP (Perkins Ridge, West Auburn)**

(Retain AG/RP; reduce bands of Low Density Residential to 400 feet each side of road except for the westerly side of the ridge occupied by the apple orchards). There are a number of orchards in this area that rely on potential residential opportunities to assure financial stability. Areas currently allowed for this potential under apple orchards should be retained. It is poorly suited to development due to the lack of sewer and water services, the poor condition of roads, the use of chemicals in spraying orchards, and the potential that any development would increase phosphorus concentrations in Taylor Pond and Lake Auburn. This area is also far from City services, and there is very little room for additional residential growth. The proposed designation will help Auburn retain its rural character, as well as important view corridors.

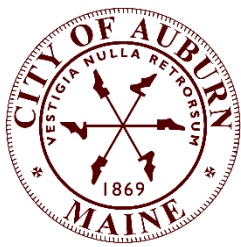
**46. West Auburn Road Low Density Residential (West Auburn)**

(No Change but reduce depth of Low Density Residential District to 400 feet each side of road.) This area already contains low density residential development. It is unlikely that this area will undergo much additional development, as many of the residences are located on large parcels (10 or more acres).

**47. North Auburn/Lake Auburn Watershed Agriculture/RP (North Auburn, West Auburn)**

(No Change, but reduce Low Density Residential District along North Auburn Road, and Skillings Corner Road to 400 feet each side of road. This area is within the Lake Auburn watershed. Rather than allow linear roadside development, which would channel runoff directly to the lake, it makes more sense to allow a small village area at the head of the lake (see #48). The Skillings Corner Road is unsuitable for development; land on both sides of the North Auburn Road is part of an active farming operation. Development of this area would be detrimental to water quality, as fields slope to the lake and there are no City services. This area is served by dirt roads which are not conducive to development. Maintaining an agriculture designation will also help preserve The Basin.





**City of Auburn  
City Council Information Sheet**

**Council Workshop or Meeting Date:** June 21<sup>st</sup>, 2021

**Author:** Zakk Maher

**Subject:** CDBG/HOME Action Plan for Program Year 2021

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**Information:**

The CDBG/HOME Action Plan concluded its 30 day public comment period on June 15<sup>th</sup>. Public hearing notices and solicitation for input to be delivered via email were run in the Sun Journal, posted on the city website and posted numerous times on the city Facebook page. As of June 16 there was no public input provided for the Community Development staff to respond to.

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**City Budgetary Impacts:**

\$2,855,098 in Federal Funding and anticipated Program Income.

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**Staff Recommended Action:**

After the City Council holds the final public hearing staff recommends the City Manager approve the Action Plan for Program year 2021.

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**Previous Meetings and History:**

The release and first Public Hearing of the Action Plan was on May 17<sup>th</sup>. An additional Public Hearing was held by the City Council on June 7<sup>th</sup>. The final Public Hearing will be held on June 21<sup>st</sup>, after this workshop.

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**City Manager Comments:**

I concur with the recommendation. Signature:



**Attachments:**

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