

Planning Commission Reporting Form For Municipal Bylaw Amendments

This report is in accordance with 24 V.S.A. 4441(c) which requires the Planning Commission to prepare and approve a written report on the proposed bylaw amendments. The report shall provide:

A brief explanation of the proposed bylaw, amendment, or repeal and include a statement of purpose as required for notice under 24 V.S.A. 4444.

The purpose of the amendments to the Strafford Zoning Ordinance adopted 6/1/2005 and the Strafford Subdivision Regulations adopted 6/15/1996, is to implement the goals of the Strafford Town Plan adopted October 13, 2021 and to further the purposes of the Vermont Planning and Development Act, Title 24 V.S.A., Chapter 117 to promote the health, safety and general welfare of the inhabitants of Strafford, Vermont.

The proposed Unified Bylaw combines and reorganizes the current Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations as recommended in the Town Plan, p.63. The combination is intended to streamline the permit process. The Unified Bylaw makes numerous edits and changes to the existing ordinances, particularly, as recommended in the Town Plan, ones which will increase the housing stock, including affordable and senior housing. Also as recommended in the Town Plan, p.70, an RRII Zoning District is created to give greater protection to the most rural and unfragmented areas of the Town.

(A)nd shall include findings regarding how the proposal:

1. *Conforms with or furthers the Town Plan and policies contained in the Town Plan, including the effect of the proposal on the availability of safe and affordable housing.*

A. Development Review Board

Section 1.10 recognizes creation of the Development Review Board(DRB) by the Selectboard. Section 1.11 lists its duties which include Conditional Use and Site Plan review. The standards for Conditional Use have been enhanced.

B. Housing

1. Accessory Dwelling Units

Section 3.11 liberalizes the provisions for accessory dwelling units. Accessory dwelling units located within single family residential structures do not require an Administrative Permit as long as the building footprint and the number of bedrooms are unchanged. The size limit for the accessory unit has been increased to 1500 square feet or 50% of the primary dwelling, whichever is larger. The owner is required to reside on the lot but not necessarily in the primary dwelling unit.

2. Mobile Home Parks

Section 3.13 establishes standards for mobile home parks. They

are limited to the RR I District and require conditional use approval. Mobile Home Parks provide an opportunity for high density development.

3. Expansion of Village Centers Zoning Districts

Section 4.5.1 expands the Strafford and South Strafford Zoning Districts. See attached Zoning District maps. Village Center Districts have one acre minimum lot size versus three acres in the rest of the town. Expanding the Village Center Districts creates more potential building lots.

4. Density bonuses for affordable and senior housing

Section 3. provides density bonuses up to 25% in affordable and senior housing developments.

5. Minor Subdivisions

Section 7.3 allows the Administrative Officer to approve a two lot subdivision of a parcel once every five years without formal subdivision review by the D.R.B. This simplified procedure should help create more building lots.

C. Natural Resource Protection

1. RR II Zoning District

3.

As recommended in the Town Plan, p. 67, the Unified Bylaw creates a Rural Residential II Zoning District. It includes the most rural and unfragmented areas of the town. See Zoning District map. The Town Plan states that the goal for RRII is very low density development with retail and commercial development limited to home based occupations. The uses in the RRII District are more limited than in the RRI. See Zoning Districts and Uses, Table1, in the Unified Bylaw, p. 35 for a comparison. The uses allowed in RRI are the same as allowed in the RR District in the current Zoning Ordinance. See Section 2.4, Table 2- Districts and Uses, p. 14. Both RRI and RRII have the same three acre minimum lot size as the RR District in the current Zoning Ordinance.

2. Buffers

Section 3.16 establishes buffer requirements for wetlands, surface waters and streams.

D. Emergency Services

Section 3.17 requires that development be designed to ensure adequate provision of facilities necessary for emergency services.

E. Town Policies on Siting Wireless Telecommunications Facilities.

Section 3.17 sets forth town policies regarding location of telecommunication facilities. This policy statement is required in order for the Town's position on siting to receive substantial deference from the Public Utility Commission in licensing proceedings.

F. Waivers

Section 6.3.1 incorporates standards for setback waivers as set forth 24 V.S.A. 4414(8)(A).

2. Is compatible with proposed future land uses and densities of the municipal plan:

The Town Plan encourages development in and near the existing village centers in order to control expenses for town services and to protect the more rural areas from intense development. Consistent with the Town Plan, the Village Center Zoning Districts have been expanded and an RR II Zoning District has been created. In addition numerous provisions, including subdivision and PUD standards, address forest fragmentation, wetlands, preservation of farmland and protection of significant wildlife habitat and connectors.

3. Carries out, as applicable, any specific proposals for any planned community facilities

Not applicable

This report was approved by the Planning Commission on November 21, 2022.