

# Planning Commission Reporting Form

## For Municipal Bylaw Amendments

This report is in accordance with 24 V.S.A. §4441(c) which states:

*“When considering an amendment to a bylaw, the planning commission shall prepare and approve a written report on the proposal.”*

The above referenced proposed bylaws are summarized as follows:

### **1. Brief explanation of the proposed bylaw, amendment or repeal; and a statement of purpose as s required for notice under §4444 of this title:**

A number of changes at are being proposed by the Planning Commission to clarify a few existing zoning provisions and to make changes needed in order for the zoning to be in conformance with the *2017 Springfield Town Plan*. The proposed zoning changes are summarized below:

- The Zoning Districts Map was updated to make the Central Business District better align with the Downtown Design Review Overlay District and to further economic development goals of the Town Plan. This affects a few parcels generally described as:
  - North of Valley Street and generally located between Elm Terrace and Elm Hill Road.
  - Roughly located between by Park Street, Mt. Vernon Street and Mineral Street.
- There are a number of proposed changes to the allowed land uses within the zoning districts within Article 2. Many of these changes are based upon goals, policies and other language contained in the 2017 Town Plan
- Section 2.2, Interpretation of Zoning District Boundaries, was updated to remove guidance on railroad lines, due to absence of railroad lines.
- The proposal includes removing Medical marijuana dispensary or dispensaries as permitted use and defined by 18 VSA' Chapter 86 and regulated by the Vermont Department of Public Safety as a Prohibited Use.
- The proposal includes the following changes and additions to Article 3 Specific Use Standards:
  - Section 3.1 was expanded to ensure accessory dwellings provide adequate potable water and wastewater disposal systems in accordance with state regulations.
  - Section 3.2 was expanded to add a section governing accessory use on farm businesses and the associated review process.
  - Modifications to standards governing the following uses: campgrounds, fuel storage and distribution facilities, gasoline stations, of group homes/ residential care homes, home businesses, home occupations, outdoor markets, and seasonal roadside produce stands.

- New subsections are proposed defining and establishing standards for the following uses: bed and breakfasts, business incubators, day cares, inns, makerspaces, recreational vehicles, small repair services, rooming houses, and short term rentals.
- Additional language insuring compliance of earth and mineral resources extraction with VT Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) best management practices and regulations.
- Clarifications of exemptions for farm structures.
- Additional language indicating that forestry activities are subject to the requirements of 10 V.S.A. Chapter 83 § 2625.
- Modifications to seasonal roadside produce stand standards.
- The proposal includes the following changes and additions to Article 4, General Regulations:
  - Modifications to access and frontage requirements.
  - New sections are proposed establishing standards for: damaged or destroyed structures, and incomplete development.
  - Modifications to standards governing the following: fences, streams and surface waters, and temporary structures and temporary uses.
  - Additional provision forbidding the filling of land within FEMA-delineated special flood hazard areas.
  - Clarification to parking space requirements.
  - Expansion of allowed light sources for signs to include LED and other energy efficient sources.
  - New section is proposed to establish standards for Electronic Message Display (EMD) signage.
- The proposal includes the following changes and additions to Article 5, Development Review:
  - Clarification of the applicability of site plan review to conditional uses.
  - Removal of exemption from downtown design review for changes in use that do not alter the exterior façade of a building.
  - Modification of standards the Development Review Board may impose concerning safety and efficiency of traffic access, landscaping and screening, storm water and drainage, lighting, outdoor storage, outdoor display.
  - Overhaul and clarification of the Downtown Design Control District Standards and Procedures.
- Addition of statement of proposed construction or alteration to required application materials.
- Addition of approval criteria for height, setback, proportion, pattern, materials, architectural features, continuity, direction of front facade, and roof shape.

- Existing minor application procedures for projects within the Downtown Design Control Overlay District are modified and moved from Article 6 to Article 5.
  - Demolition: Added waiting period of up to 45 days for buildings determined to have a valid reason for preservation.
  - Additional requirements for lighting and signs.
- The proposal includes the following changes and additions to Article 6, Administration and Enforcement:
    - Clarification of requirements for Certificates of Occupancy.
    - Modifications to Certificate of Occupancy standards and procedures.
    - Removal of the requirement for applicant to bear the cost of public warning and cost and responsibility of notifying adjoining landowners.
    - Modifications to recipients of decisions.
  - A few definitions were added and others removed as related to the terminology used in the proposed amendments.

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

1. *Conforms with or furthers the goals and policies contained in the municipal plan, including the effect of the proposal on the availability of safe and affordable housing:*

Many of the zoning changes that are being proposed are based on goals, policies and other language contained in the 2017 Town Plan, specifically within the Health, Economic Development and Land Use Chapters. Considerable effort was made to prepare changes that are intended to enable downtown revitalization with the desired intensity, scale and character of the area in mind. Proposed changes include modest updates to group home and the equal treatment of housing provisions.

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

Allowed land uses and the associated review procedures within each zoning district were evaluated and modified in order to be compatible with the 2017 Town Plan, especially with respect to the Economic Development and Land Use Chapters. A particular focus for this effort was to enable/better encourage revitalization in downtown Springfield/Central Business District.

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

Not applicable. These proposed changes are primarily based upon planning efforts to encourage in-fill development and redevelopment in the parts of town that are already served by infrastructure (e.g. Downtown, Clinton Street, North Springfield Industrial Park).