Zoning for Great Neighborhoods

Agenda

Stakeholder Meeting
9:00 – 10:30 AM

Welcome
Helen Hossley, Chief Executive Officer, Vermont Association of Realtors (VAR)
Mike Schirling, Secretary, Agency of Commerce and Community Development
Josh Hanford, Acting Commissioner, Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)

Why Address Zoning Now?
Jen Hollar, Director of Policy and Special Projects, Vermont Housing and Conservation Board (VHCB)
Kelly Stoddard-Poor, Associate State Director, AARP-VT

Barriers to Housing in Vermont – Discussion of Survey Results
Faith Ingulsrud, DHCD Planning Coordinator

Project Overview – Zoning for Great Neighborhoods
Mallory Baches, CNU Program Manager

Questions/Comments/Suggestions
Community Planning + Revitalization

Providing tools, training, grants, and incentives for local leaders to plan and implement projects that support thriving, walkable communities.
The Five Designations

Core Designations

Village Centers  (Est. 2003)
Downtowns  (Est. 1998)
New Town Centers  (Est. 2003)

Add-On Designations (must have a core designation to qualify):

Neighborhood Development Areas  (Est. 2013)
Growth Centers  (Est. 2006)
Neighborhood Development Area (NDA) Designation

Burlington, Essex Junction, Manchester, South Burlington, Westford, Winooski
Neighborhood Development Area (NDA) Designation

By the Numbers [2014-2018]

5 designated NDAs
586 housing units qualified for NDA benefits
7 months average time saved in state permitting
$50,000 average saved in state permit fees

Burlington - Designation Lowers Housing Costs

Bright Street Co-op (proposed)  Bright Street Co-op (2017)
Neighborhood Development Area (NDA) Designation

Locations where NDA Designation is Possible
Neighborhood Development Area (NDA) Designation

Application Guidelines

Residential Lot Patterns
The type, design, and layout of structures within a neighborhood define its character. Lot sizes, building and lot dimensions, architectural details, and the form and type of buildings themselves can give dimensional form to a walkable neighborhood.

To be a walkable neighborhood, buildings should be reasonably close together, enclosing the street and making it comfortable to walk along. Large gaps between buildings can make streets less appealing to pedestrians. Lot frontages should be minimal, allowing for a narrow, visually rich and interesting neighborhood. At the same time, there should be diversity within the neighborhood. Duplexes, townhouses, accessory dwellings and apartments add variety and offer greater choice for those seeking to live in a walkable neighborhood. Designed on a similar scale, and using the same architectural features as surrounding structures, they can fit easily and comfortably into the mix of housing offered.

Building Patterns
In walkable neighborhoods the pattern of buildings and orientation is set primarily by the historic grid of streets as well relationship of residential units within the existing neighborhood. The orientation and placement of buildings along the street help to reinforce the public realm by enhancing the pedestrian environment through creating a sense of enclosure. New or redeveloped and renovated homes should reflect the scale and character of a neighborhood and follow a consistent setback and pattern. In addition, the mass and scale of new buildings should maintain the scale of the surrounding homes, while providing an architectural diversity that makes our neighborhoods unique and interesting.

The following checklist will help you review existing bylaws and policies to see if the requirements for the design and layout of residential lot and building patterns are appropriate for walkable neighborhoods:

Checklist for Bylaws
Do the bylaws in the NDA:

- Allow for a mix of housing opportunities (multi-family, duplex, and single-family, etc.) throughout the NDA?
- Allow for small minimum lot sizes, similar to existing small lot sizes in the area?
- Have dimensional requirements or form-based code standards, that make it possible to convert existing single family dwellings into multi-family dwellings?
- Minimize dimensional requirements (whether traditional lot size, frontage, lot coverage, etc. or form based: building form standards, frontage type standards, etc.) allowing for infill development?
- Allow for building heights that are sufficiently high enough to allow for diverse housing options (at least 3 story building)?
- Reduce front setbacks to conform to existing building lines or add a maximum requirement to prevent new development from being set back "too far" from the street?
- Include provisions that ensure garage doors are not the dominant element of a front façade? An example of this would be prohibiting the garage door from facing the street or requiring it to be setback from the front wall of the building?
- Require that new developments be designed to accommodate safe and convenient pedestrian circulation?
- Include provisions that encourage primary building façades to be oriented to the street (such as requiring front doors to face the street)?
- Have provisions that minimize curb cuts and reduce their frequency, or other access management provisions?

Checklist for Bylaws

Complete Streets
Complete streets is a philosophy and approach to planning, design, construction, and maintenance of roadway networks to consider all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders. Context and current or potential travel patterns need to be considered in determining the appropriate way to meet the needs of all modes of transportation. Complete Streets projects can provide diverse and widespread benefits, including the following:

- Streets that accommodate all users are safer for everyone, including automobile drivers and passengers.
- Complete streets can provide greater mobility and accessibility to those without a car. This can be particularly important to the quality of life for seniors and young people, allowing for greater opportunities to participate in constructive social and educational activities.
- Complete streets can offer a choice for less costly modes of transportation, which has economic benefits to individuals or families.
- Active travel (walking and bicycling) can improve health and provide needed daily exercise.


The following checklist will help you review existing bylaws and policies to see if the requirements for the design of streets and bike/pedestrian facilities are appropriate for walkable neighborhoods:

Checklist for Bylaws

Do the bylaws in the NDA:

- Require that provisions be made for the extension of the street and pedestrian network into existing streets and adjacent, undeveloped land?
- Have existing on or planned pedestrian facilities (such as sidewalks/pathways) servicing the proposed NDA?
- Require sidewalks or pedestrian facilities for new development?
- Have plans or regulations in place that include bike facilities (such as bike lanes) where appropriate?
- Require streets, lighting and appropriate landscaping for new developments?
- Require new streets to be as narrow as possible (such as having specifications for travel lanes that are eleven feet wide or narrower)?
- Require utilities to be placed underground in new development?
- Prohibit cut de sacs/dead end streets and oversize block lengths? If not, is the length of cul-de-sacs regulated and minimized?
- Allow for on-street parking?
- Minimize any required off-street parking? (Requiring two or more off street parking spaces per residential unit is excessive.)
Why it Matters
Why it Matters

Goal: Increase neighborhood connections

- 1-person households: 30%
- Homes with 0-1 bedrooms: 15%

People per square mile:
- Vermont: 67.9
- United States: 87.4

2010 Decennial Census

Affordable homes for a sustainable Vermont.
Why it Matters

EXISTING:
3 Double Lots
3 Existing Duplexes
1 ADU

ZONING:
Existing lots = 5,500 s.f.
Minimum lot size = 6,000 s.f.
Survey Results

2122 Responses
87 Optional Comments
Who Responded

Survey Results

- Developer/Builder
- Land Use Planner
- Real Estate Agent
- Homeowner/renter
- Government Official
- Landlord
- Other (please specify)
Who Responded

Survey Results

- State of Vermont (statewide): 24%
- Northwestern VT (Chittenden, Franklin,...): 24%
- Northeastern VT (Orleans, Essex,...): 2%
- Central VT (Addison, Washington & Orange,...): 23%
- Southern VT (Rutland, Bennington, Windsor,...): 16%
- Other (please specify): 12%
Survey Results

Most Needed Housing Types
Survey Results

Difficulties (Top 4 out of 8)

1. Lack or High Cost of Real Estate
2. High Construction Costs
3. Resistance to Neighborhood Change
4. Municipal Zoning/Land Use Regulations
Survey Results

Difficulties Developers

1. Lack or High Cost of Real Estate
2. High Construction Costs
3. Municipal Zoning/Land Use Regulations
4. Act 250 Processes and Requirements
Survey Results

Difficulties Planners

1. Lack or High Cost of Real Estate
2. High Construction Costs
3. People Resisting Change in Neighborhoods
4. Lack of Affordable Financing
Survey Results

Difficulties Northwestern Vermont

1. Lack or High Cost of Real Estate
2. High Construction Costs
3. People Resisting Change in Neighborhoods
4. Lack of Affordable Financing
Survey Results

Local Regulatory Barriers (Top 4 out of 14)

1. Density Limits
2. Cost and Delay from Appeals
3. Complexity of Permitting
4. Parking Minimums
Survey Results

Need to Change Attitudes
*Municipalities need to LEAD on this, not just reduce barriers*

Why Homeowners Don’t Create Units
*Even with a large home in ideal location, we lack the money and experience to create small units for rent*
Water/Wastewater Stormwater:

Costs of development are prohibitive, especially to meet various state regulations for stormwater, contaminated soils, etc.

Rural Vermont

In areas not growing, changing zoning may do nothing. Much of Vermont isn’t growing. Other incentives are needed too.
Survey Results

When Regulations Help:

In some cases, LACK of design standards is part of the problem, as neighbors have concerns that new housing added to a historic downtown will wreck the feel of the existing settlement.

Broadening Idea of Centers

Ski resorts and college campuses should also be considered walkable places. We should look at how to transform the resorts and closed college campuses into new neighborhoods.
Zoning for Great Neighborhoods

The New York Times

Cities Start to Question an American Ideal: A House With a Yard on Every Lot

By EMILY BADGER and QUOC TRUNG BUI  JUNE 18, 2019

Townhomes, duplexes and apartments are effectively banned in many neighborhoods. Now some communities regret it.

NBC NEWS

U.S. NEWS

Housing crisis has Seattle weighing end of single-family zoning

Can the city solve its housing crisis by doing away with single-family zoning?
Zoning for Great Neighborhoods

Manchester Land Use & Development Ordinance

Land Use & Development Regulations

First Adopted: November 1972
Last Adopted: May 10, 2018
Zoning for Great Neighborhoods

Bristol Village Co-Housing
Discussion
Zoning for Great Neighborhoods