



City of Bristol
Zoning Commission

SPECIAL MEETING - THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2025
VIRTUAL - ONLINE VIA ZOOM
5:00 P.M.

INFORMATION FOR THE PUBLIC TO ACCESS THIS MEETING

Zoom Meeting link:

<https://bristolct-gov.zoom.us/j/83526242256?pwd=EXSfPgtac8EjAGRdoQw0bEs6pyRLIT.>

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Meeting ID:

835 2624 2256

Meeting Passcode:

123456

Join by phone

1-929-205-6099

AGENDA

1. Call to Order
2. New Business
 - a. Review of zoning update schedule
 - b. Brief discussion on recommended commercial zone amendments
 - c. Review of residential zones and residential zoning regulations
 - d. Brief discussion on future amendments
 - e. Next Steps
3. Public Participation
4. Adjournment

REMINDER: The next Regular Meeting of the Zoning Commission is Monday, February 10, 2025



City of Bristol Comprehensive Zoning Update

Date: 12/17/2024

Recommendation 19: Allow a Wider Range of Uses in Commercial and Industrial Zones

Purpose: Provide more flexibility in the uses permitted to better respond to changing market conditions and encourage the redevelopment of properties.

Description: This recommendation would allow a greater range of currently permitted uses in commercial and industrial zones. The recommendation also seeks to remove high-intensity uses from the BT zone, which overlays the R-15 (a residential zone) due to the incompatibility of those uses with residential areas.

Geographic Extents: Citywide, commercial, industrial, and mixed-use zoning districts

Potential Impacts: No adverse impacts.

Context: Changes in the retail market due to online commerce have resulted in a shrinking demand for retail space. More flexibility is needed in the zoning regulations to avoid vacant retail space and to allow for complementary uses that may not be currently permitted.

Recommended Zoning Amendments:

1. Amend the Section 4.2 Commercial, Industrial, and Mixed-Use Districts Principal Use Summary Table to allow for a wider range of uses in the zones (see next page).
2. Remove Brewpubs and Microbreweries as permitted uses in the BT zone, which overlays the R-15, a residential zone.



Principal Use (Only principal uses that are recommended for amendment are shown)	Commercial, Industrial, and Mixed-Use Districts								
	BN	BG	BD	BT	BHC	I	IP-1	IP-3	IP-25
Adaptive Reuse of Non-Residential Buildings	SP	SP	SP	—	SP	SP	—	—	—
Animal Day Care Facility	—	—	—	—	—	SP	SP	SP	SP
Brewpub	—	SP	ZP	SP	SP	SP	—	—	—
Climate Controlled Self-Storage Facility	—	—	SP	—	ZP+S	ZP+S	—	—	—
Contractor Yard	—	—	—	—	—	ZP+S	SP	SP	SP
Conversion to Three-Family	ZP+S	ZP+S	—	ZP+S	—	—	—	—	—
Conversion to Two-Family	ZP+S	ZP+S	—	ZP+S	—	—	—	—	—
Environmental Service Facility	—	—	—	—	—	SP	SP	SP	SP
Fitness Club	ZP+S	ZP+S	ZP/	—	ZP+S	SP	SP	SP	SP
For Profit School or Studio	ZP+S	ZP+S	ZP	—	ZP+S	ZP+S	SP	SP	SP
Fuel Oil and Heating Fuel Storage Facility	—	—	—	—	—	SP	SP	SP	SP
Indoor Entertainment Facility	—	SP	ZP	—	SP	SP	—	—	—
Medical Laboratory	—	ZP+S	—	—	ZP+S	SP	SP	SP	SP
Medical Office	ZP+S	ZP+S	ZP	SP	ZP+S	ZP+S	SP	SP	SP
Membership Organization	SP	ZP+S	ZP	—	ZP+S	—	—	—	—
Microbrewery	—	ZP+S	ZP	SP	ZP+S	ZP+S	ZP+S	ZP+S	ZP+S
Nursery	—	ZP+S	—	—	SP	SP	—	—	—
Restaurant, Take Out	SP	ZP+S	ZP	—	ZP+S	SP	SP	SP	SP
Social Services Agency or Charitable Institution	SP	ZP+S	ZP	SP	SP	—	—	—	—
Specialty Food or Beverage Manufacturer	—	ZP+S	—	—	—	ZP+S	ZP+S	ZP+S	ZP+S
Specialty Retail	ZP+S	ZP+S	ZP	SP	ZP+S	—	—	—	—
Specialty Trade Contractor	—	—	—	—	SP	ZP+S	ZP+S	ZP+S	ZP+S
Taxicab Service	—	—	ZP	—	—	ZP+S	—	—	—
Tennis or Racquet Clubs	—	—	SP	—	—	SP	—	—	—
Wholesale Business	—	ZP+S	—	—	—	ZP+S	ZP+S	ZP+S	ZP+S
Key Items highlighted in blue are not currently permitted in the zone and are recommended uses. Items highlighted in red are recommended for prohibition in the zone.									



City of Bristol Comprehensive Zoning Update

Date: 12/17/2024

Recommendation 20: Amend Principal Use Permit Requirements

Purpose: Amend permit requirements for principal uses in Commercial, Industrial, and Mixed-Use zones to facilitate economic development, reduce administrative burden, and better distribute workload between the Planning and Zoning Commissions.

Description: This recommendation would reduce the Special Permit requirement for multiple principal uses across zoning districts to a Site Plan requirement. This recommendation seeks to make the permit requirement more consistent across uses and reserves the Special Permit requirement for high-intensity or highly impactful uses.

Geographic Extents: All commercial, industrial, and mixed-use zoning districts with exception of the BD zone.

Potential Impacts: This recommendation will shift workload from the Zoning Commission, which reviews Special Permits, to the Planning Commission, which reviews Site Plans.

Context: The Special Permit requirement is widely used across Connecticut for mixed-use, commercial, industrial and other high intensity uses but this permit requirement is often applied broadly without sensitivity to specific uses. This increases the workload for staff and commissions, lengthens the review and approval process, and adds cost to development.

Recommended Zoning Amendments:

1. Reduce the Special Permit requirement for select principal uses to a Site Plan requirement in commercial, industrial, and mixed-use zones by amending the Principal Use Summary Table of Section 4.2 (see next page).



Principal Use (Only principal uses that are recommended for amendment are shown)	Commercial, Industrial, and Mixed-Use Districts								
	BN	BG	BD	BT	BHC	I	IP-1	IP-3	IP-25
Adult Day Care Center	SP ZP+S	SP ZP+S	ZP	—	SP ZP+S	—	—	—	—
Business or Professional Office	SP ZP+S	ZP+S	ZP	SP	ZP+S	SP ZP+S	ZP+S	ZP+S	ZP+S
Child Care Center	SP ZP+S	SP ZP+S	ZP	—	SP ZP+S	SP	SP	SP	SP
Fitness Club	—	ZP+S	ZP/	—	ZP+S	SP ZP+S	SP ZP+S	SP ZP+S	—
Garden Supply	—	ZP+S	—	—	SP ZP+S	—	—	—	—
Indoor Entertainment Facility	—	SP ZP+S	ZP	—	SP ZP+S	—	—	—	—
Medical Office	SP ZP+S	ZP+S	ZP	SP	ZP+S	—	SP ZP+S	SP ZP+S	SP ZP+S
Personal Service Establishment	ZP+S	ZP+S	ZP	SP ZP+S	ZP+S	—	—	—	—
Restaurant, Sit-Down	SP ZP+S	ZP+S	ZP	SP	ZP+S	SP	SP	SP	SP
Restaurant, Take Out	SP ZP+S	ZP+S	ZP	—	ZP+S	—	—	—	—
Social Services Agency or Charitable	SP	ZP+S	ZP	—	SP ZP+S	—	—	—	—
Specialty Food or Beverage Establishment	SP ZP+S	ZP+S	ZP	SP	ZP+S	—	—	—	—
Key Items highlighted in yellow are recommended for reduction from a Special Permit to a Site Plan. The current permit requirement is shown in strikethrough text.									



City of Bristol Comprehensive Zoning Update

Date: 12/17/2024

Recommendation 21: Amend Accessory Use Permit Requirements

Purpose: More appropriately regulate accessory uses based upon potential impacts of the uses.

Description: This recommendation would modify the permit requirement for three accessory uses across most zoning districts. These uses include: ground-mounted solar panels, parking structures, and sports courts. This recommendation seeks to make the permit requirement more consistent for uses across districts and establish permit requirements that are aligned with the intensity of the use.

Geographic Extents: All commercial, industrial, and mixed-use zoning districts with exception of the BT zone.

Potential Impacts: This recommendation will shift workload from the Zoning Commission, which reviews Special Permits, to the Planning Commission, which reviews Site Plans and will require review of uses that are currently approved administratively by the Planning Commission.

Context: Sports courts are potentially impactful uses due to noise and must be sited and a buffered appropriately based upon adjacent land uses. Parking structures (this excludes residential garages) are large multi-level structures that have access requirements and should therefore be subject to a Site Plan review. Ground-mounted solar panels are benign uses that are environmentally beneficial and can appropriately be reviewed through a Site Plan requirement.

Recommended Zoning Amendments:

1. Increase the permit requirement for select accessory uses from a Zoning Permit to a Site Plan requirement in commercial, industrial, and mixed-use zones by amending the Accessory Use Summary Table of Section 5.2 (see excerpt of table below).
2. Reduce the permit requirement for select accessory uses from a Special Permit to a Site Plan requirement in commercial, industrial, and mixed-use zones by amending the Accessory Use Summary Table of Section 5.2 (see excerpt of table below).

Accessory Use	BN	BG	BD	BT	BHC	I	IP-1	IP-3	IP-25
Ground-Mounted Solar Panels	SP ZP+S	SP ZP+S	SP ZP+S	—	SP ZP+S	SP ZP+S	SP ZP+S	SP ZP+S	SP ZP+S
Parking Structures	—	ZP ZP+S	ZP ZP+S	—	ZP ZP+S	ZP ZP+S	ZP ZP+S	ZP ZP+S	ZP ZP+S
Sports Courts	ZP ZP+S	SP ZP+S	ZP ZP+S	SP	SP ZP+S	ZP ZP+S	ZP ZP+S	ZP ZP+S	ZP ZP+S

Key

Items highlighted in **yellow** are recommended for reduction from a Special Permit to a Site Plan.

Items highlighted in **green** are recommended for an increase from a Zoning Permit to a Site Plan.

The current permit requirement is shown in ~~strikethrough~~ text.



City of Bristol Comprehensive Zoning Update

Date: 12/17/2024

Recommendation 22: Amend BN Zone

Purpose: Provide more flexibility in the BN zone to allow for a greater scale of uses in response to changing retail market conditions.

Description: Increase the maximum permitted establishment size from 2,500 square feet to 5,000 square feet and remove the restriction on maximum building size.

Geographic Extents: BN zone

Potential Impacts: May incentivize redevelopment within BN zone.

Context: Retail market conditions are changing due to online commerce and demand for retail space has weakened.

Recommended Zoning Amendments:

1. Amend Section 8.2.1 as follows:

8.2.1 General Requirements

The following general requirements shall be applicable to all developments in the BN zone:

- A. On any lot, the net floor area of each individual establishment shall not exceed ~~2,500~~ 5,000 square feet.
- ~~B. On any lot, the gross floor area of all buildings shall not exceed 12,000 square feet.~~



City of Bristol Comprehensive Zoning Update

Date: 12/17/2024

Recommendation 23: Eliminate the Unified Downtown Development Regulations

Purpose: Eliminate an unproductive section of the zoning regulations to simplify the regulations and remove redundancy and potentially conflicting standards.

Description: Eliminate the Unified Downtown Development regulations, which are unique to the BD zone.

Geographic Extents: BD zone.

Potential Impacts: None

Context: The Unified Downtown Development Regulations have never been successfully used to facilitate development in the BD zone. Downtown development has successfully occurred without use of the Unified Downtown Development regulations. The regulations are complex and provide parallel and alternative standards to the BD zone. There is nothing in the regulations that prevent the unified development of parcels in the Downtown and the unified downtown development regulations are not required to facilitate such development.

Recommended Zoning Amendments:

1. Eliminate Section 8.4.8 Unified Downtown Development Projects regulations and remove references to the Unified Downtown Development in the Section 4.2 Principal Use Summary Table and from the Section 19 Use Definitions.



City of Bristol Comprehensive Zoning Update

Date: 12/17/2024

Recommendation 24: Amend the IP-25 Zone Standards

Purpose: The IP-25 zone has a high minimum lot size requirement (25 acres) that presents a barrier to the use of land in the zone for developments on lots smaller than 25 acres unless subdivided. Amending the lot standards will enable smaller scale developments in this zone.

Description: The recommended amendment adopts the subdivision standards of the IP-25 zone as the standards for the zone thereby reducing the minimum lot size to 5 acres and reducing lot width, yard requirements, and building height while increase building and impervious coverage. A name change from IP-25 to IP-5 is recommended to align the district name with the new lot size minimum.

Geographic Extents: IP-25 zone

Potential Impacts: May incentivize new development in the IP-25 zone.

Context: There is only one IP-25 zone in Bristol, located in the northwest corner of the City, and bounded by the Plymouth town line, Minor Street, Hill Street, and Marsh Road. The zone is 234 acres in total and there are 8 parcels in the zone with three City-owned parcels comprising 28.7 acres. Seven of the eight properties in the zone are undeveloped. The developed property is the 139-acre industrial property occupied by ClarkDietrich/Holcim.

Recommended Zoning Amendments:

1. Rename the IP-25 to the IP-5. Update throughout the regulations and on Zoning Map as required.
2. Amend the standards in Section 8.1 as follows:

Standard	IP-25 IP-5
A) Minimum Lot Area (sf or acres if noted)	25 ac 5 ac
B) Minimum Lot Frontage (ft)	N/A
C) Minimum Lot Width (ft)	500 250
D) Minimum Front Yard on a State highway (ft)	125 75
E) Minimum Front Yard on a City street (ft)	100 60
F) Maximum Front Yard (ft)	N/A
G) Minimum Front Yard on a City street opposite a residential zone (ft)	150 90
H) Minimum Side Yard (ft)	50 25
I) Minimum Side Yard abutting a residential zone (ft)	150 75
J) Minimum Rear Yard (ft)	50 25
K) Minimum Rear Yard abutting a residential zone (ft)	150 75
L) Maximum Building Height (ft)	60 50
M) Maximum Building Coverage (%)	20 30
N) Maximum Impervious Coverage (%)	60 70



City of Bristol Comprehensive Zoning Update

Date: 1/29/2025

Recommendation 25: Amend BD Zone Regulations

Purpose: Simplify the BD zone regulations to provide more consistent standards.

Description: This recommended amendment would simplify the BD zone regulations by eliminating the BD-1 and BD-2 subareas and treating the entire BD under a common set of standards. This would require an amendment to Sections 4.3.15, 8.4.2, and 8.4.8. This also requires amending the official zoning map to relabel existing BD-1 and BD-2 areas as BD.

Geographic Extents: BD zone

Potential Impacts: None

Context: The BD zone is divided into the BD-1 and BD-2. The standards vary minimally.

Recommended Zoning Amendments:

1. Eliminate Section 4.3.15 and provide those standards directly in an amended Section 8.4.2.
2. Amend Section 8.4.2.B as follows (new text in red, removed text in ~~strikethrough~~):

Building Element	Standard	Explanatory Notes
	BD-1 BD Zone BD-2 Zone	
Floor-area ratio	Minimum of 0.6.	The gross floor area of all buildings on the lot and the lot area of all contiguous lots expressly devoted to the development (e.g., for off-street parking) shall be included in this calculation.
Build-to line	Maximum of 10 feet.	At least the first two building stories shall comply with this standard. In developments containing two or more principal buildings, each such building shall comply with this standard independently of any other building on the lot. The Commission may allow a build-to line as far back as 25 feet for up to 50% of the projected length of the building's street-facing walls if an outdoor dining area, an outdoor merchandise display area, or a public plaza or similar public space is created between the front lot line and the greater build-to line.
Building height	Minimum of 18 feet.	Building height shall be measured from the first-floor elevation of the building or the average elevation of the adjoining public sidewalk, whichever is greater. The building's basement or cellar (if any) shall not be included in this calculation. In developments containing two or more principal buildings, each such building shall comply with this standard independently of any other building on the lot.



Building Element	Standard	Explanatory Notes
	BD-1 BD Zone BD-2 Zone	
Number of building stories	Minimum of 2 full stories. Minimum of 2 full stories, for buildings designed to accommodate one occupant. Minimum of 1 story, for buildings designed to accommodate two or more occupants.	For buildings with two or more stories, The gross floor area of the second story shall be equal to at least 75% of the gross floor area of the first story in order for it to be counted as a full story. The building's basement or cellar (if any) shall not be included in this calculation. In developments containing two or more principal buildings, each such building shall comply with this standard independently of any other building on the lot.
Area of street-level, street-facing walls consisting of windows and public entrance/exit doors ("building fenestration")	Minimum of 65% 60% of such wall area devoted to non-residential uses. Minimum of 50% of such wall area devoted to non-residential uses.	The wall area shall be measured between 2 and 10 feet above the top of the building foundation. Windows and public entrance/exit doors shall contain clear or tinted glass capable of providing an unobstructed view from the outside into the building. In developments containing two or more buildings, each building shall comply with this standard independently of any other building on the lot.
Projected length of all street-level, street-facing building walls as a percentage of total lot frontage ("building frontage-lot frontage ratio")	Minimum of 65%.	The frontage of all contiguous lots expressly devoted to the development (e.g., for off-street parking) shall be included in this calculation.
Orientation of building entrances	Each street-level business shall have at least one entrance on a public street. No more than two businesses in the same building shall share the same building entrance unless the entrance also provides an entry to uses above or below the street level.	

Continued on next page



3. Amend Section 8.4.2.C as follows (new text in red, removed text in ~~strikethrough~~):

C. Corner Lot Standards

1. Buildings shall comply with the standards for building height, number of building stories, and build-to line on each street on which the lot has frontage.
 2. Buildings shall comply with the standard for building fenestration on all street level, street-facing building walls.
 3. Buildings/developments shall comply with the standard for building frontage-lot frontage ratio **along the total of the frontage. as follows:**
 - a. ~~If the lot has frontage on two streets in the BD-1 zone, the standard shall be met along each street.~~
 - b. ~~If the lot has frontage on a street in the BD-1 zone and a street in the BD-2 zone, the standard shall be met along both the street in the BD-1 zone and along the total lot frontage.~~
 - c. ~~If the lot has frontage on two streets in the BD-2 zone, the standard shall be met along the total lot frontage.~~
 4. Building entrances shall be oriented to the street corner, or to the street having the higher functional classification (per CT DOT Functional Classification Map) along which the lot has frontage.
4. Amend Section 8.4.8 as follows:
- a. If Recommendation 23 to remove the Unified Downtown Development Projects from the regulations is adopted, then no action is necessary.
 - b. If Recommendation 23 is not adopted, then all references to the "BD-1" in Section 8.4.8 should be replaced with "BD".
5. Amend the official zoning map to replace "BD-1" and "BD-2" labels and color scheme with a "BD" label and singular color.



City of Bristol Comprehensive Zoning Update

Date: 1/29/2025

Recommendation 26: Amend BD Zone Boundary

Purpose: Include a commercial/industrial property adjacent to the BD zone that is currently zoned R15/BT to improve conformity of the property and expand potential for reuse/redevelopment of the site.

Description: This recommended amendment would modify the boundaries of the BD zone to include a commercial/industrial property located at 135-153 Center Street.

Geographic Extents: BD zone, R15/BT zone

Potential Impacts: May incentivize improvement of or reuse of site.

Context: There are few commercial sites in residential zones that directly abut the BD.

Recommended Zoning Amendments:

1. Amend the zoning map as shown below to include 135-153 Center Street (Map Block Lot 26-169) within the BD.



Recommended BD Zone Boundary