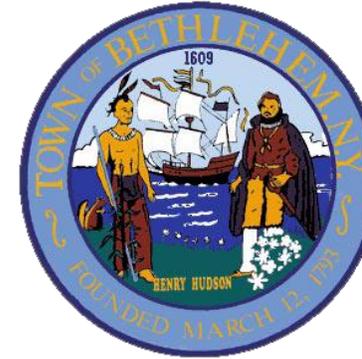


Town of Bethlehem

Zoning & Subdivision Update

Public Open House – November 18, 2025



This effort directed by the 2022 Comprehensive Plan Update regulatory recommendations.

Project partially funded through the NYS DOS Smart Growth Planning & Zoning Grant Program.



Department
of State

Overview

- **GOALS:**
 - Align regulations with the goals and recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan.
 - Implement Smart Growth strategies for development.
- **PUBLIC PROCESS:**
 - Led by the Planning Board over 24 meetings (recordings and materials on Town Website).
 - Public Kick-Off Meeting
 - Community Preference Survey
 - Tonight!



[Project Website:](http://www.townofbethlehem.org/940/Zoning-Update)
www.townofbethlehem.org/940/Zoning-Update

Timeline for Adoption

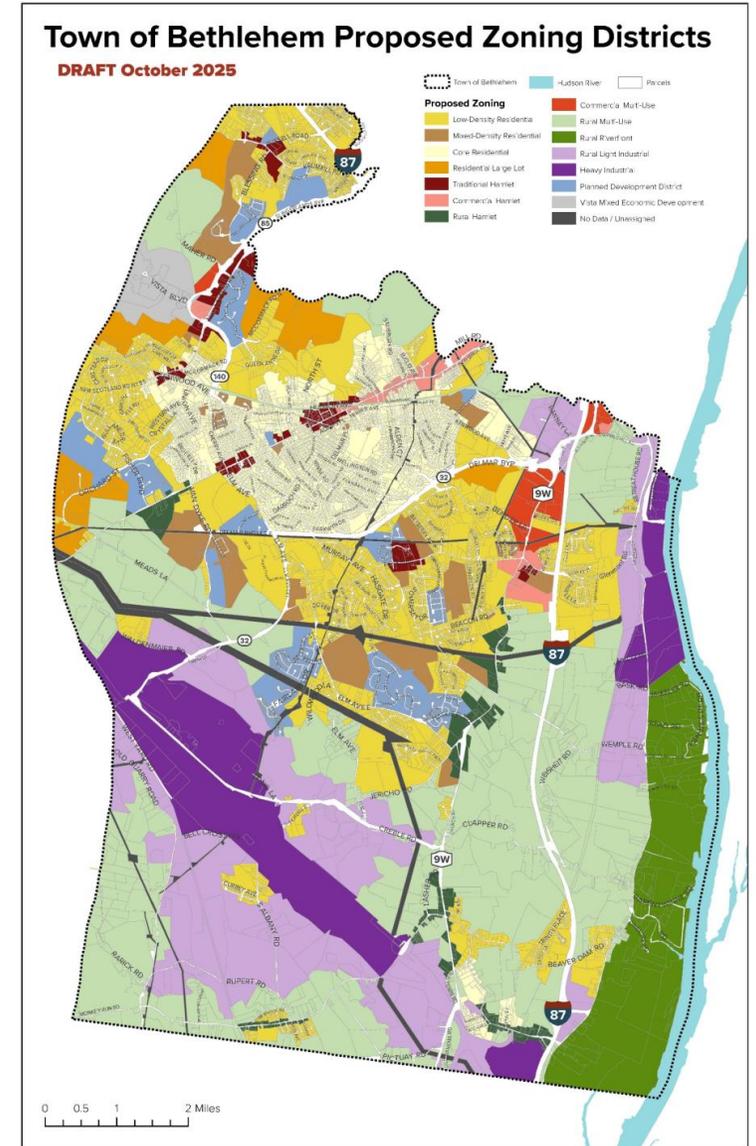
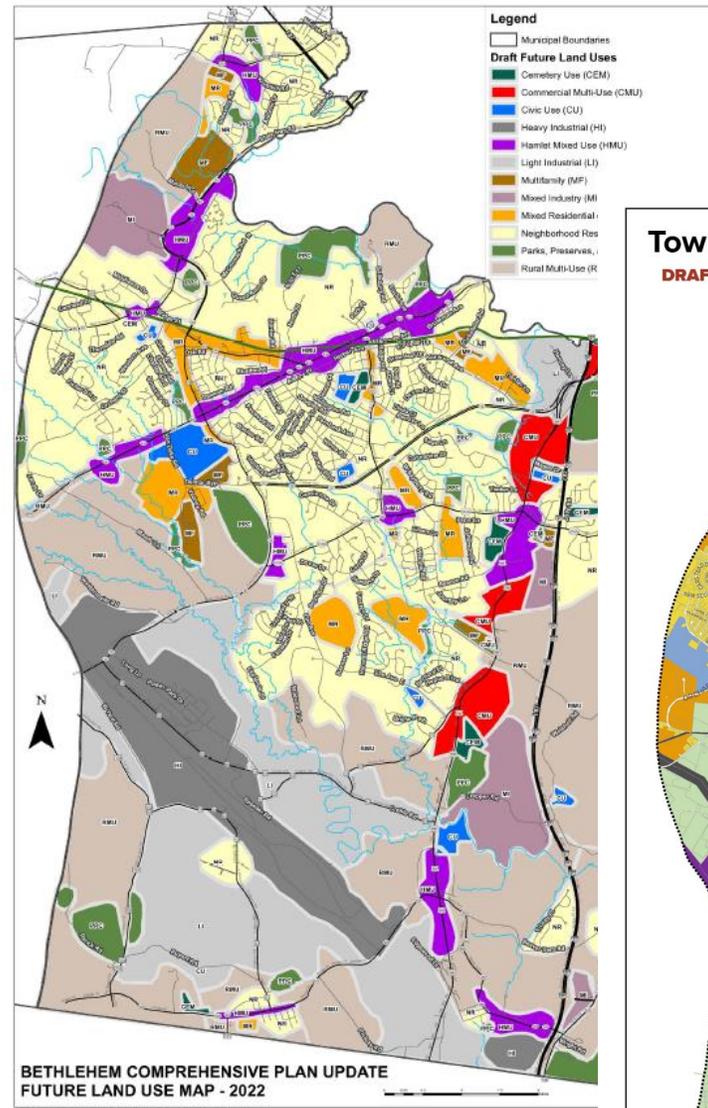


Best Practice

NYS TOWN LAW §272-a, 11(a)

“All town land use regulations must be in accordance with a comprehensive plan adopted pursuant to this section.”

- A comprehensive plan sets the vision for the future and identifies needs of the community.
- The Town’s land use regulations can help dictate how the vision may be achieved.



SMART GROWTH

- Reflective of good planning practice.
- Promote the efficient use of land and community connectedness while preserving rural character.
- Methods of implementation tailored to the context of the Town.



Zoning Framework

PART 1. Introductory Provisions

10. Establishment & Applicability

11. Zoning Map

12. Enforcement & Penalties

13. Nonconformities

14. Terminology

PART 2. District & Use Regulations

20. Residential Districts

21. Hamlet Districts

22. Multi-Use Districts

23. Industrial Districts

24. Special Purpose Districts

25. Additional Use Regulations

26. Supplemental Regulations

27. Energy System Regulations

PART 3. Design & Development Standards

30. Building & Site Design

31. Circulation, Access,
Parking & Loading

32. Landscaping & Screening

33. Lots Bordering Streams,
Wetlands, & Stormwater
Management

34. Signs

35. Exterior Lighting

36. Parking Reservation & Fee

PART 4. Application & Review Procedures

40. General Application
Procedures

41. Permits Required

42. Site Plan Review

43. Special Use Permits

44. Subdivision

45. Planned Developments

46. Incentive Zoning

47. Variances & Appeals

48. Amendments

49. Review Bodies

Zoning Districts

- Updated to **align with Future Land Use vision** of the Comprehensive Plan update.
- Increased opportunity for **mixing of uses** in nonresidential districts.
- Provides for a **variety of housing types**: single-family, two-family, 3+ family.

Future Land Use Category	Existing Zoning Districts	Proposed Zoning Districts
RESIDENTIAL		
Neighborhood Residential (NR) Multi-Family (MF) Mixed Residential (MR)	Residential A (RA)	Low Density Residential (LDR)
	Residential B (RB)	
	Residential C (RC)	Mixed Density Residential (MDR)
	Multi-Family (MR)	
	Core Residential (CR)	Core Residential (CR)
	Residential Large Lot (RLL)	Residential Large Lot (RLL)
HAMLET		
Hamlet Mixed Use (HMU)	Hamlet (H)	Traditional Hamlet (TH)
Hamlet Mixed Use (HMU)	Commercial Hamlet (CH)	Commercial Hamlet (CH)
Hamlet Mixed Use (HMU)	Rural Hamlet (RH)	Rural Hamlet (RH)
MULTI-USE		
Commercial Multi-Use (CMU)	General Commercial (C)	Commercial Multi-Use (CMU)
Rural Multi-Use (RMU)	Rural (R)	Rural Multi-Use (RMU)
Rural Multi-Use (RMU) Parks, Preserves, and Conservation Lands (PPC)	Rural Riverfront (RR)	Rural Riverfront (RR)
INDUSTRIAL		
Light Industrial (LI)	Rural Light Industrial (RLI)	Rural Light Industrial (RLI)
Heavy Industry (HI)	Heavy Industrial (HI)	Heavy Industrial (HI)

Zoning District Map

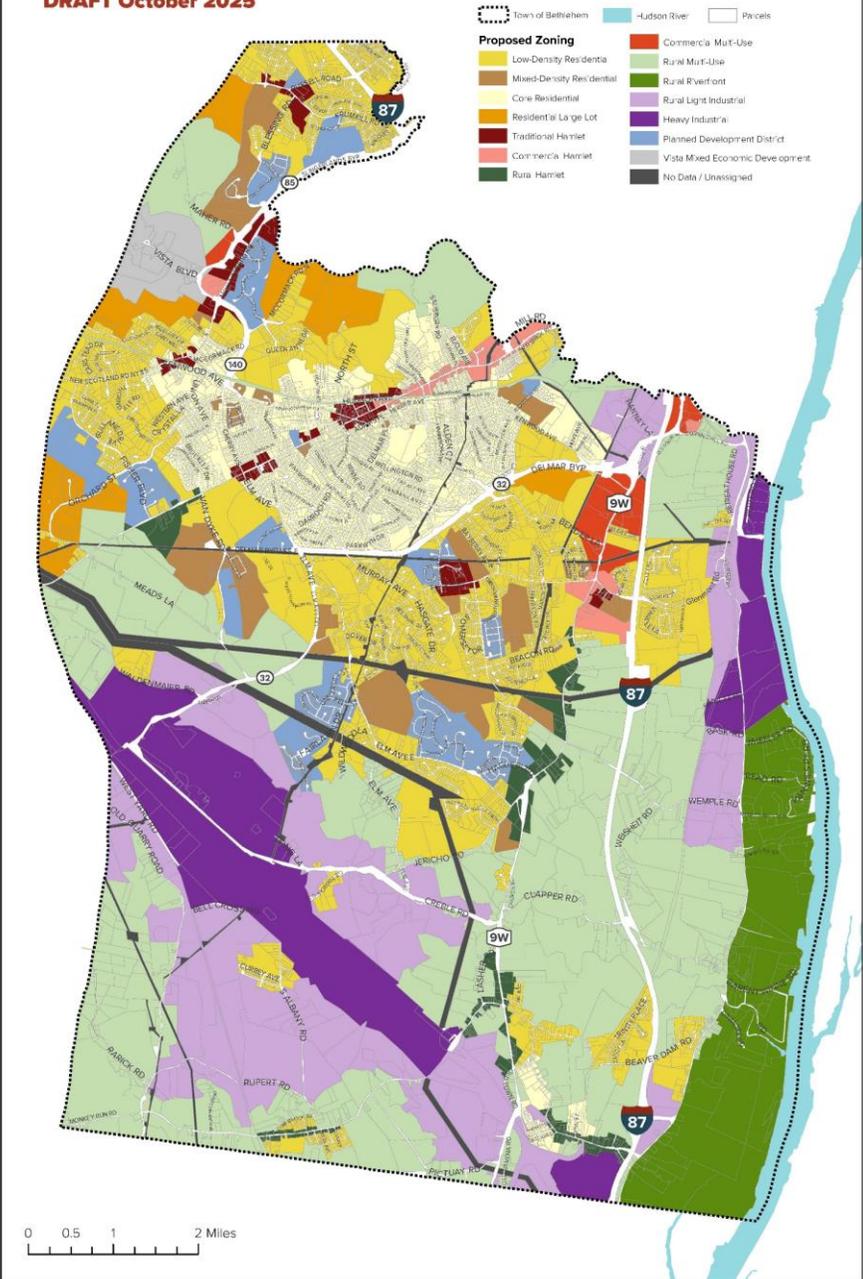
Residential, commercial, mixed use, industrial and Planned Development Districts are generally in same areas.

A Few Changes

- Mixed Economic Development District removed (areas changed to RMU or RLI)
- Residential zones and denser development directed to areas with public water/sewer infrastructure
- Expanded Hamlet zone along Blessing/Krumkill Road; Feura Bush Road; New Scotland Road
- Rural Multi-Use expanded along Route 9W, Meads Lane, Clapper Road, River Road, Route 32
- Commercial Multi-Use District now allows multi-family development and variety of uses

Town of Bethlehem Proposed Zoning Districts

DRAFT October 2025



Relevant Smart Growth Principles



Develop plans and land use regulations that allow for and encourage **mixed-use neighborhoods**.



Enable a **diverse mix of housing types** that provide for opportunity and choice for all.



Prioritize **infill and redevelopment of existing buildings** to revitalize neighborhoods, and downtowns including areas around public transit.

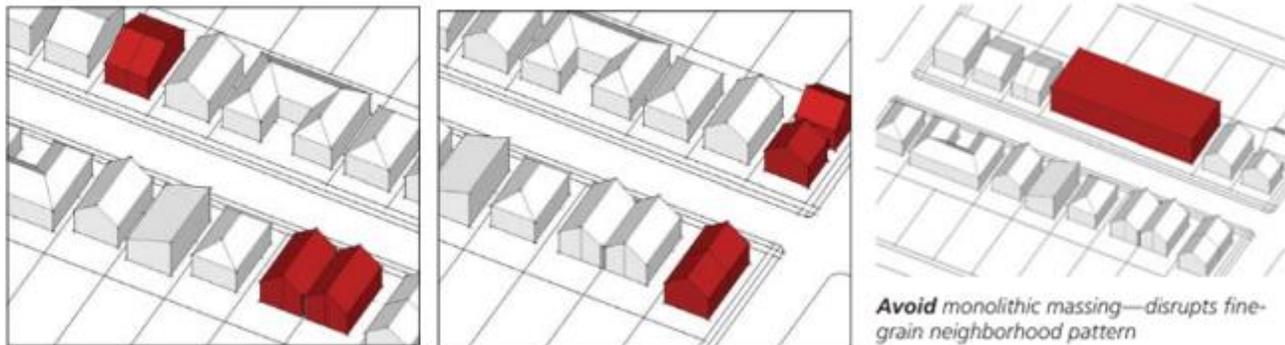


Encourage **compact neighborhood design** and concentrated development around existing infrastructure.

Housing

- Adjusted districts to **reflect existing variations in densities**.
- Allowed for a **context sensitive** increase in density to support diverse housing options.
- Created **residential design standards** for new multi-family, mixed residential, and infill residential development.
- **Maintained site plan review** for all new two- and multi-family dwellings, including modifications thereto.

FIGURE 30.16 Building Placement, Massing, & Design (Infill Design Toolkit – Portland, OR)



From the Comprehensive Plan:

Value Statement L2

We value a variety of housing options which meet the needs of different lifestyles, and a range of income levels, allowing residents to age in place.

Value Statement L3

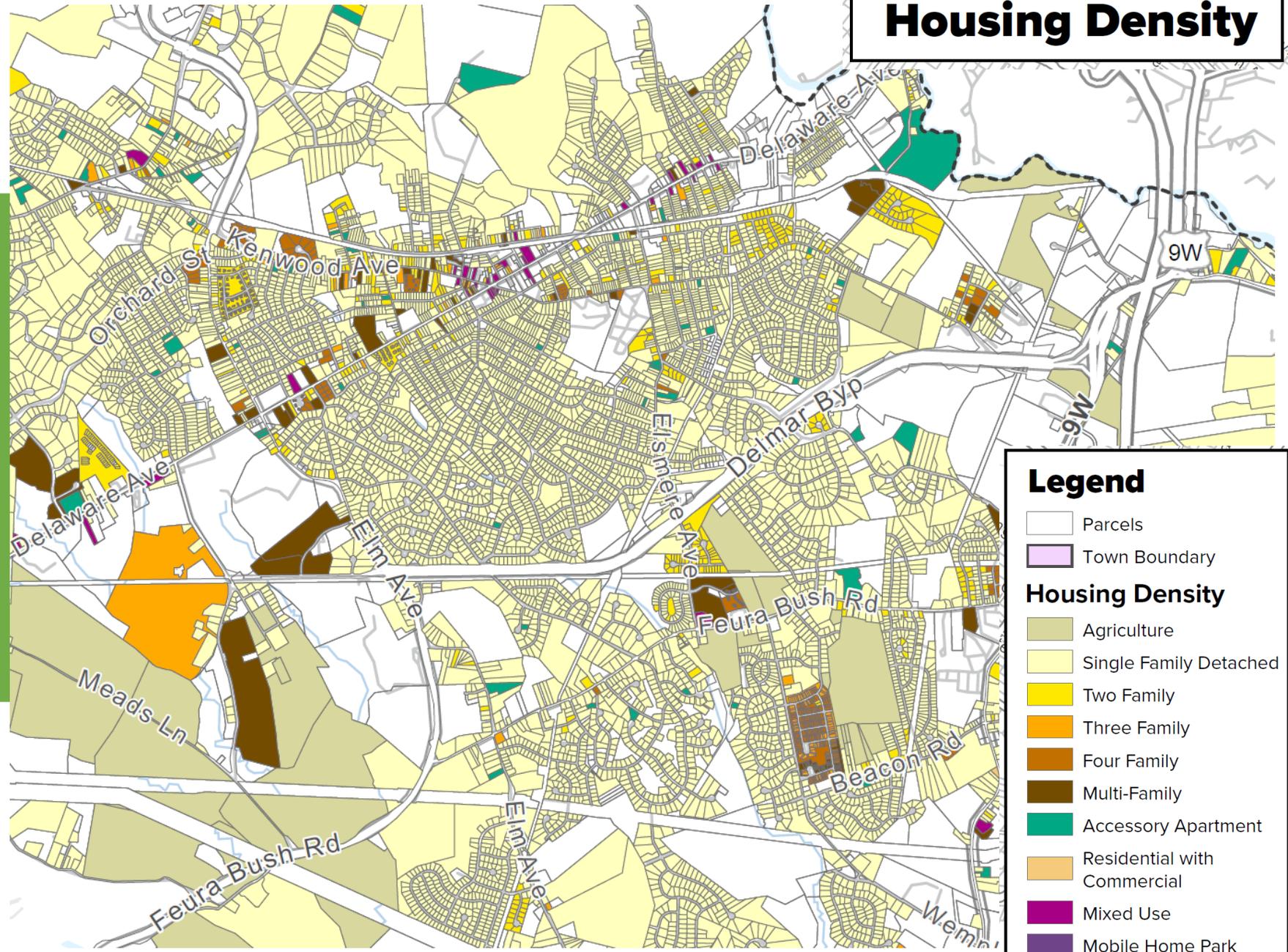
We value affordable rental and ownership housing for those representing elderly, low to moderate income, and disabled families and individuals.

Recommendation LBE 4c

Consider the development of a Form-Based Code or Design Guidelines for Mixed-Use and Residential Infill development.

Housing Density

Existing Residential Context



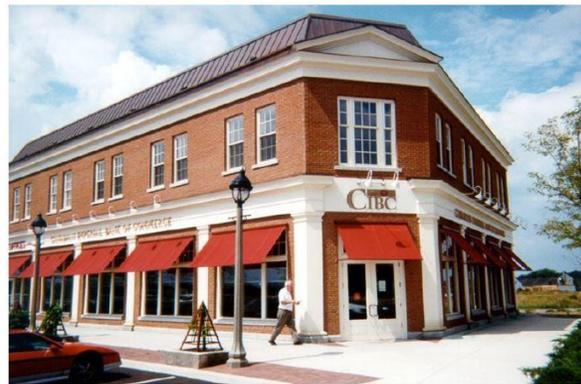
Design Standards

- Clarified existing expectations and **refined language for increased predictability**.
- Implemented **nonresidential building design standards** and guidelines.
- Formalized **landscaping and screening** requirements.
- **Adjusted parking requirements** to reduce over-provision of pavement.
- Incorporated **multi-modal** (bicycle and pedestrian) connection requirements.

FIGURE 30.8 Façade Element Proportions



DISPROPORTIONATE



PROPORTIONATE

From the Comprehensive Plan:

Value Statement T1

We value the transportation infrastructure which safely accommodates all modes of travel (pedestrian, bicycles, transit and vehicle).

Recommendation LBE 4c

Consider the development of a Form-Based Code or Design Guidelines for Mixed-Use and Residential Infill development.

Recommendation LBE 10e

Evaluate parking regulations in an effort to right size parking requirements in the code for all zoning districts.

Relevant Smart Growth Principles



Provide **well-planned, equitable, and accessible public spaces.**



Prioritize transportation options such as **walking, cycling, and public transportation.**



Build on unique traits to create an attractive and welcoming community with a **strong sense of place.**

Natural Resources & Sustainability

- Included **guidance for green infrastructure and green building design** (e.g. Green roofs, bioswales).
- Incorporated reference to **new NYS Department of Environmental Conservation wetland regulations** as the standard.
- Promoted use of **native plants and trees and preservation of existing vegetation**.
- Added consideration of **orientation for solar** within subdivision layouts.

FIGURE 32.5 Parking Lot Green Infrastructure – Curb Inlets and Vegetated Bioswales



From the
Comprehensive
Plan:

Value Statement E1

We value our vast natural resource systems and open spaces that provide benefits including wildlife habitat, ecosystem services that provide clean air and water, and inherent natural beauty and scenic value within our community.

Value Statement E4

We value a resilient natural, built, and economic environment that can endure, adapt, and rebound from catastrophic natural and other events.

Recommendation HWN 1g

Continue to support the position and responsibilities of the Storm Water Management Coordinator to help ensure water quality protection of Town's watershed areas. Encourage use of green infrastructure practices in both municipal construction and private development projects.

Relevant Smart Growth Principles



Provide **well-planned, equitable, and accessible public spaces.**



Preserve **open space**, agricultural resources, and natural resources.



Promote **climate resiliency and adaptation**, preferably through nature-based solutions, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Rural Flexibility

- **Expanded permitted use** lists to align with agricultural operations provided for by NYS Ag & Markets Law.
- **Maintained existing site plan review exemptions** for agricultural uses.
- Created **permissions for agricultural home occupations**, which allow for secondary, supporting businesses/operations to allow for more flexibility and viability in the use of land.
- Residential lot size of 1 acre consistent with Health Department separation guidance.

From the Comprehensive Plan:

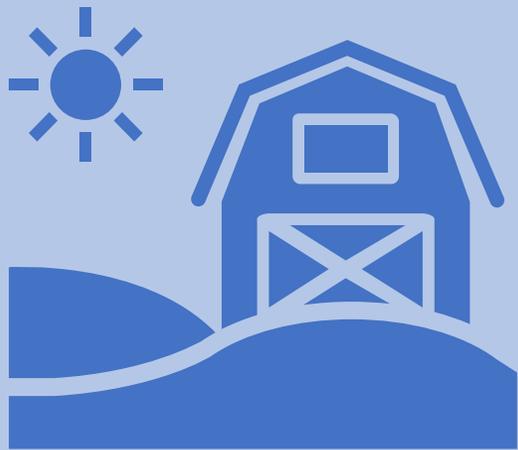
Value Statement C3

We value the qualities of rural land, supporting landowner's ability to access its economic value in a manner compatible with sustaining a rural-agricultural livelihood.

Recommendation HWN 2c

Consider amending the code to expand the permitted agricultural uses and agricultural support uses.

Relevant Smart Growth Principles



Preserve open space, agricultural resources, and natural resources.

Land Use/Development Review Procedures



Clarified pre-application procedure with Town Staff.



Clarified procedures for sketch plan review and role of Development Planning Committee.



Simplified the review process and submittal requirements for small, minor impact applications.



Increased time extensions of approved projects to four 90-day periods. Complete project in 4 yrs.



No local wetland regulations due to new State regulations protecting wetlands.

Land Use / Development Review Procedures

- Now **triggered by “Action”**
- Separated into **two levels of review**
 - Administrative (staff level) for small actions
 - Planning Board for all others
- Public Hearing **notice requirement expanded**
 - Mailed notices (within 200ft – 500ft of project)
 - Posted notice on properties

ACTION	EXEMPT	ADMIN REVIEW	PLANNING BOARD REVIEW
CONSTRUCTION / EXPANSION			
Residential Use			
Single-Family Dwelling on an Approved Lot			
Two-Family Dwelling, on an Approved Lot			
Multi-Family Dwelling			
Nonresidential or Mixed Use			
Expansion Up to 4,000 sf or 25% of Existing Gross Floor Area ^{2,6}			
New Construction including expansion over 4,000 sf or 25% of Existing Gross Floor Area ²			
Accessory Use or Structure ¹			
Residential			
Nonresidential ⁷			
Accessory Dwelling Unit			
Nonresidential Outdoor Seating, Sales, Display, or Storage Area			
Landscaping, Exterior Lighting, Mechanical Equipment, or Stormwater/Green Infrastructure			
Residential Use, up to 4 units			
Multi-Family Use, 5 + units			
Nonresidential or Mixed Use			
Off-Street Parking / Loading Area			
10 Spaces or Less			
Over 10 Spaces			
Driveway			
Residential Use, up to 4 units			
Multi-Family Use, 5 + units			
Nonresidential Use, Requiring New or Altered Curbcut, Apron, or Opening			
Telecommunications Equipment			
OTHER ACTIONS			
Uses Requiring a Special Use Permit, including Accessory Uses			
Activities Associated with an Approved Use Variance			
Nonagricultural and Nonresidential Uses in the TH, CH, CMU, RMU, RLI, or HI Districts, where located within 100 ft of an LDR, CR, MDR, or RR District			
Change of Use ^{3, 4, 8}			
Expansion, Enlargement, or Addition(s) to Use Otherwise Not Exempt			
Ordinary Repair, Maintenance, or Replacement In-Kind			
Interior Building Alteration			
Alterations to a Building Facade			
Improvement in Accordance with a Previously Approved Plan			
Modification or Amendment to Approved Site plan			
Planned Development (PD) District			
Seasonal Planting of Crops within an Agricultural District			
Agricultural Structure ⁵			

Subdivision & Incentive Zoning

Conservation Subdivision

- Now required for major subdivisions over 10 acres or by request of applicant.
- Adjusted buildable area formula to include state wetland buffer areas in constrained lands.
- Removed open space formula – Now a general standard at 50% of buildable area.
- Clarified open space location based on Town's Open Space Plan Conservation Criteria Implementation.
- Adjusted dwelling unit mix requirement – Now 1/3 Single-family & two-family
- Required to follow new residential design standards.

Incentive Zoning

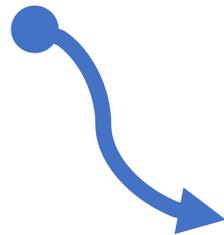
- Review criteria and findings added to strengthen alignment with NYS Law.
- Affordability findings updated to align with State Division of Housing and Community Renewal.
- Benefits and incentives more clear, prescriptive, and in alignment with the Comprehensive Plan Update recommendations.
- Expanded potential incentives and community benefits lists

Incentive Zoning allows developers to exceed certain zoning limits in exchange for community benefits.

THANKS FOR COMING!

Please share your thoughts with us:

- Hardcopy Comment Sheets
- bethlehemforward@townofbethlehem.org
- Online Feedback Form



YOUR TOWN
BETHLEHEM
FORWARD
YOUR VOICE

Draft Zoning & Subdivision Regulations

ONLINE FEEDBACK FORM
(open until November 24th)
Thank you for your input!

November 2025