



Brandon Land Use Ordinance (aka the BLUO) 2024 Update

November 20, 2024

Overview



- What is the purpose of the BLUO?
 - The purpose of amending the town's zoning bylaws is to increase housing opportunities, reduce nonconformities, align bylaws with changes in state law, and minimize impacts to local resources in a manner that is consistent with the Brandon Town Plan
- Why is the BLUO being updated now?
 - The updated Town Plan was formally adopted in February, 2024
 - Zoning bylaws are based on the direction provided by the Town Plan
 - The changes are required to adhere to recently-enacted state legislation: HOME Act (2023) and Act 181 (2024)

What was the process?



- The PC finished the Town Plan in January, 2024
 - Select Board approved in February
- The PC began work on the BLUO in March
- Brandon received a state grant to “modernize” the bylaws
 - The Rutland Regional PC was engaged to assist the town
 - Revisions to the BLUO were completed by volunteers at no cost to residents
- Documents in paper form are available at the Town Offices
- Digital versions of the documents are available at brandonvermont.gov

Who worked on the bylaws?



- The BLUO update had many contributors
 - The Planning Commission (PC)
 - Jack Schneider, Chair Natalie Steen, Vice Chair
 - Neil Silins Sara Stevens
 - Lisa Peluso Bob Foley (term ended June 30th)
 - Rutland Regional Planning Commission (RRPC)
 - Logan Solomon, Planner
 - Brandon Zoning Administrator (ZA)
 - Jeff Biasuzzi (term ended June 30th)
 - Larry Stevens (term started July 1st)
 - 11 open-to-the-public working sessions
 - Input received during a June “walking tour” of downtown
 - Chamber of Commerce businesses provided feedback on signage
 - Other contributors included Development Review Board and town managers

What is NOT changing?



- EXISTING structures, lots and signage are “grandfathered”
 - The proposed changes apply for instances in which a new construction permit is requested
- EXISTING non-conforming permanent signs are also grandfathered
- The recently updated “Flood Hazard Area and River Corridor Overlay Districts” section did not require revision

What IS changing?



Zoning District Regulations

- Central Business
 - Incorporates the previously standalone “Sidewalk Sign and Merchandise Display Ordinance”
 - For new construction, the maximum front setback is 20 feet to ensure a vibrant, walkable downtown feeling
 - Parking and open spaces are to be located in the rear of the building
 - Residential units are welcomed above and behind retail storefront
- Mixed Use
 - Previously known as High Density/Multiuse district
 - Minimum lot size reduced to allow for increased density of 5 dwelling units per acre
 - If water and municipal sewer are not available the minimum is 2 acres per dwelling
- Aquifer Overlay
 - Former district is now an “overlay” as is the norm statewide
 - No change to protection of town’s water source

What else IS changing?

- Village
 - A new residential district, “Village”, encompasses the older, pre-zoning areas of town
 - For new construction, minimum lot size set at 1/8 acre per dwelling unit
 - Front setback option of the average of adjoining homes encourages a uniform look to the neighborhood
 - Commercial I uses permitted (less than 15,000 square feet) without conditional use review by Development review Board
 - Permanently parked mobile homes are prohibited
- Neighborhood
 - Primarily residential areas outside the new Village pre-zoning areas
 - Development of new natural resource extraction now prohibited
- Rural
 - The only change expands the district boundary to include the previous aquifer district area not serviced by water district and municipal sewer

Signage



- Applies to applications for NEW signage
 - Permanent non-conforming signs are “grandfathered” until moved, altered or replaced
 - At that time a new permit is required and the sign must conform to the updated zoning regulations
- Businesses are allowed a maximum of 4 signs excluding exempt signs
 - Exempt signs include:
 - Non-commercial flags, business “open” sign, real estate, special events, election signs, etc.
 - Window signage occupying a maximum of 30% of total window area is exempt
 - On-premise directional and informational signs
 - These signs may be illuminated and may carry branding

Final Steps by:



- Planning Commission
 - Holds Public Hearing (11/20)
 - Feedback from public session incorporated into draft
 - PC votes to send draft to Select Board
- Select Board
 - Reviews draft and requests changes, if any
 - Holds Public Hearing (date TBD)
 - Provides feedback from public session to the PC
 - Select Board votes on final version of draft BLUO
 - If approved, Select Board submits BLUO to VT Dept. of Housing & Community Development



Questions?