

The Middlesex Planning Commission is working with our Regional Planning Commission and developing an update to the town’s current zoning regulations.

- *Why update zoning?* Our [current zoning](#) is mostly from 2007 with some smaller updates around 2013 & 2017. Parts are difficult to administer, state standards have changed, and the zoning needs to implement our recently adopted town plan, which lays out the vision our residents have for Middlesex. Zoning provides the nuts and bolts to accomplish this.
- We will break the work down into 4 broad categories and complete one category before moving on to the next. We expect to spend 3-4 months on each category.
- The categories are:
 - Village District, Mixed Use District & Industrial District west of the Village
 - Flood prone areas (mostly in Industrial District east of the Village)
 - Natural Resources & Rural Areas
 - Administrative & Process Descriptions
- We are starting with updates to the Village District, Mixed Used District (area on Center Rd north of the Interstate) & Industrial District west of the Village. [District map is here](#). Below is a summary of some changes we are considering.
- Streamlining the approval process contemplates allowing more uses to be approved either by the zoning administrator alone or with only site plan review. This allows for quicker review before only one panel, while still providing neighbors with notice of changes.



[Excerpt Middlesex Zoning Map](#)

The Town Plan says:	<i>Zoning changes we’re considering to accomplish this:</i>
Encourage small-scale commercial development in the Village District and maintain the historic village as a commercial, cultural and civic center of the community.	<i>Increase allowable uses to include accessory buildings, galleries, studios, and museums. Streamline permitting for more uses.</i>
Allow for growth in area west of the Village and north of the Interstate that complements (but does not detract from) the Village and avoids strip development.	<i>Streamline permitting for light industry, professional offices, garden centers, and recreational facilities. Maintain restriction on drive through businesses and limit retail and restaurants in Industrial West District.</i>
Target the Mixed Use and Village Zoning District for new housing, including a diversity of housing types.	<i>Allow for smaller lot sizes and reduce setback restrictions. Streamline the approval process for small scale multi-family dwellings.</i>
Make the permitting process for home-based businesses clear, easy and affordable.	<i>Streamline the approval process for home occupations and home industries.</i>
Ensure that childcare centers are permissible where appropriate and make the permitting process clear, easy and affordable.	<i>Streamline the approval process for home childcare and daycare centers.</i>
Support agricultural enterprises.	<i>Clarify that the state exempts agricultural and forestry operations from municipal regulation.</i>

The Planning Commission invites you to join our next discussion about potential zoning changes in these districts. Our [Zoom meeting](#) is November 18 at 6pm. [Join Here](#).

Questions: Call or email Sandy Levine, Planning Commission Chair 223-1192 or swampbear@gmail.com