

TOWN OF LONDONDERRY

100 Old School Street, South Londonderry, Vermont 05155

PLANNING COMMISSION REPORT ON PROPOSED BYLAW AMENDMENTS

In accordance with 24 V.S.A. §4441, the Town of Londonderry Planning Commission (PC) has prepared and approved this written report on 7/27/26, prior to submitting these revised Town of Londonderry Unified Development Regulations (UDRs) to the Londonderry Selectboard.

Brief Explanation of the Proposed Amendments

The Town of Londonderry's Zoning Bylaw was initially adopted in 1975, and it has not had any major amendments since 2009. In 2024 the Planning Commission submitted a set of proposed bylaws that attempted to address inconsistencies resulting from the many changes that have been made to state statutes since the bylaws were last updated, and to fix shortcomings of the existing bylaws that had resulted in confusion or difficulties for applicants, the Administrative Officer, and the Development Review Board over the years.

After the selectboard declined to adopt that proposed set of bylaws, a new Planning Commission took over the work of updating the bylaws, and they removed many of the items that people objected to in the 2024 draft, and they also worked to clarify other issues from that draft, such as the difference between home businesses which are allowed in residential districts, and stand-alone businesses which are more tightly controlled and are only allowed in commercial districts. This new draft includes subdivision regulations, as well as the latest state model flood bylaws so they will be considered "Unified Development Regulations" by the state.

Compliance with the Town Plan

The proposed UDRs contain several policies which promote affordable housing, including allowing ADUs, two-unit homes, manufactured homes, multi-family homes, mobile home/tiny home parks, PUDs, and hotels converted to multi-family dwellings. The proposed UDRs are compatible with the future land uses and densities outlined in the 2025 Londonderry Town Plan. They designate the existing village, business, and recreation areas for the highest density of development and seek to protect important natural resources in the more remote areas of town.

While the draft UDRs appear very different from the Zoning Bylaw in their structure and organization, the overall planning policies the UDRs are implementing remain largely the same. Changes that have been made are described in more detail below:

1. The list of exemptions (structures and activities that do not need a permit) has been expanded and clarified.
3. The process for allowing for multiple uses or buildings on a lot has been clarified.
4. A requirement to designate building envelopes that specify where buildings will be placed on a parcel has been added to the R3 and COD districts, to guide development away from significant agricultural and natural resources.

6. The town's policy for highway access has been clarified, and further residential development accessed from private and Class 4 roads will not be allowed without bringing the road up to town specifications.
7. References to state regulations for wastewater treatment (Section 3026), wetlands (Section 3027), erosion prevention, sediment control (Section 3011), and stormwater treatment have been updated.
9. Steep slope provisions (Section 3021) have been strengthened with a definition and additional criteria for reviewing development on steep slopes.
10. Chapter 3100 adds more detailed site design and performance standards for landscaping, parking, outdoor lighting, outdoor use areas, and other aspects of proposed multi-unit or non-residential development.
11. The adoption of subdivision regulations in accordance with the statute will change Londonderry's status from a 1-acre town under Act 250 to a 10-acre town.
12. Density bonuses have been added for Planned Units Developments that are for affordable housing.
13. The Conservation Commission will be consulted when land is developed or subdivided in the R3 and COD districts. Building envelopes on all new lots larger than 2 acres will specify what land within a larger parcel can be developed. Building envelopes will have to be sited to minimize resource impacts and fragmentation.
14. The authority of the Administrative Officer (AO) to review signs, minor projects, boundary adjustments, sketch plans, and small modifications to approved development has been expanded. The intent is to streamline the permitting process for small projects and avoid unnecessary delays and expense.
15. The zoning districts have been changed so that there are fewer nonconforming one acre lots in the R3 district, and so that there will be more lots in commercial districts that are not in flood zones.

Planned Community Facilities

The proposed amendments do not directly implement any specific proposals for planned community facilities. The draft UDRs continue to implement a community vision and set of land use policies that have been in place for many years. Growth will be directed to the villages, business, and recreation districts. Residential areas will welcome new housing in the villages, existing neighborhoods, and nearby suitable lands. Outlying development will fit into the landscape, seek to preserve rural character, and protect natural resources. Further fragmentation and development of high-elevation, inaccessible, and environmentally sensitive lands will be discouraged. Given that there is no substantive change in direction, the draft UDRs are not anticipated to create new or different demand for community facilities than the current Zoning Bylaw.

Respectfully Yours,
The Londonderry Planning Commission