

City of Bristol Zoning Regulations Update

Public Meeting
7/25/24



Purpose of Update

Provide zoning regulations that:

- Support land use and development that is beneficial to the community.
- Protect the City's neighborhoods and environmental resources.
- Support the revitalization of Downtown.
- Are effective and efficient for staff and the Commission to administer and for applicants to use.
- Employ best practices, are fully compliant with Statute, and are legally resilient.

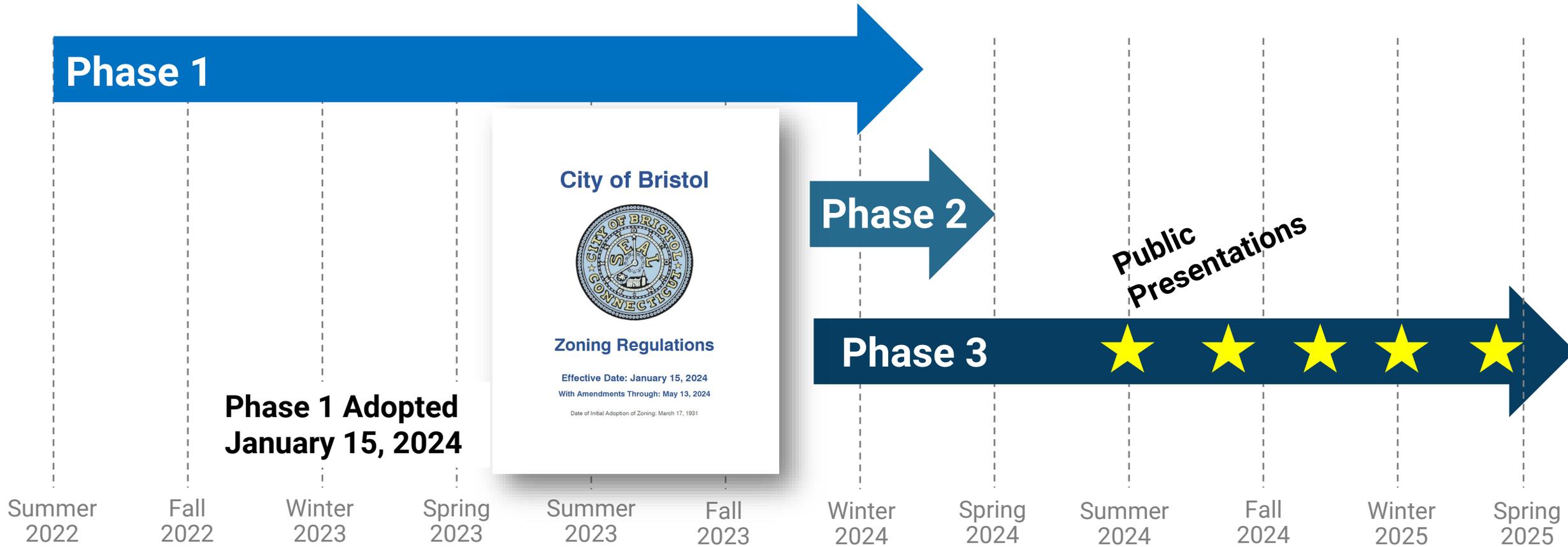
Zoning Update Process

- The update is being managed by the City Planner.
- The Zoning Commission is the steering committee for the project.
- Both regular and special meetings of the Commission have been used to discuss, review, and agree upon revisions to the regulations.

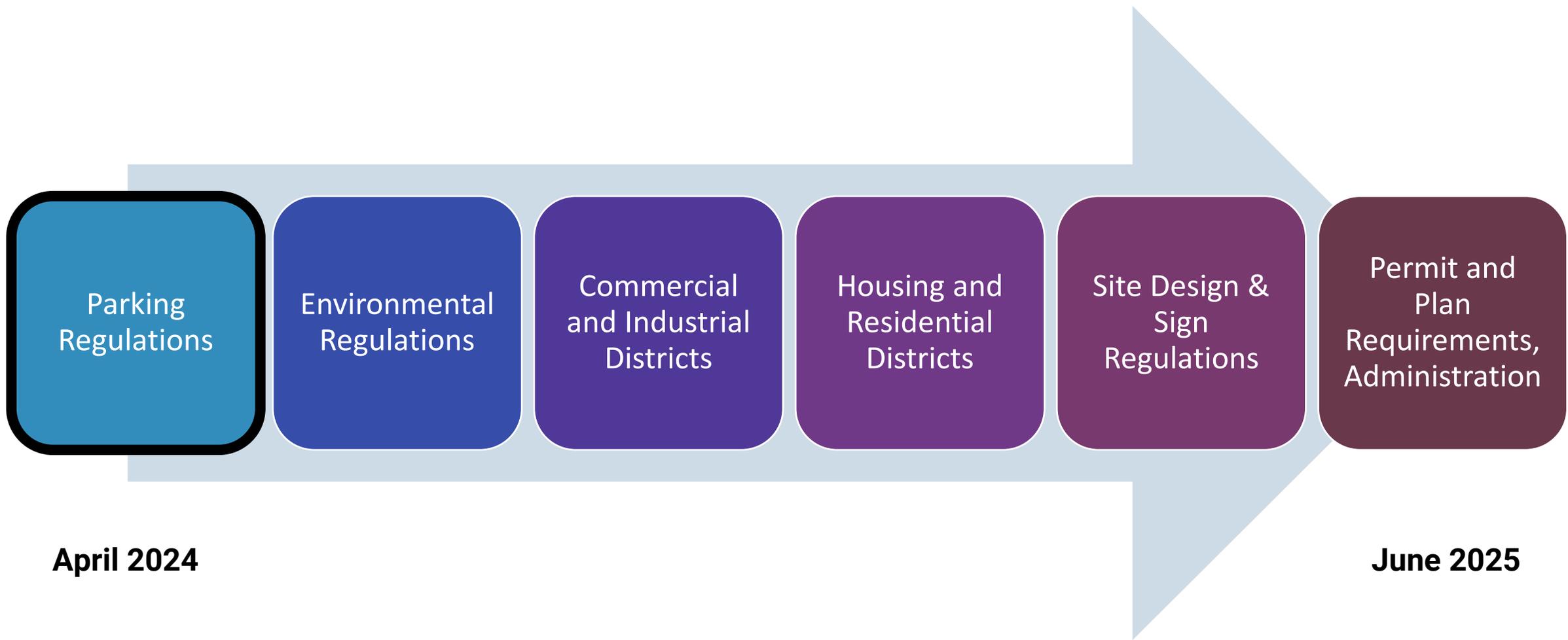
Zoning Update Phases

- Phase 1: Repair and Reformat Zoning Regulations
 - Update the zoning regulations with a focus on the format of the document, correcting errors and omissions, ensuring compliance with recent statutes, and providing more visual guidance.
- Phase 2: Link Regulations to GIS and Assessor Databases
 - This brief phase will ensure that the zoning regulations are easily accessible from GIS and Assessor online database via hyperlinks.
- **Phase 3: Substantive Revisions**
 - This phase will explore the potential for substantial changes to districts and district boundaries; uses allowed in districts; bulk, height, and area standards; parking and sign regulations; and design guidelines.

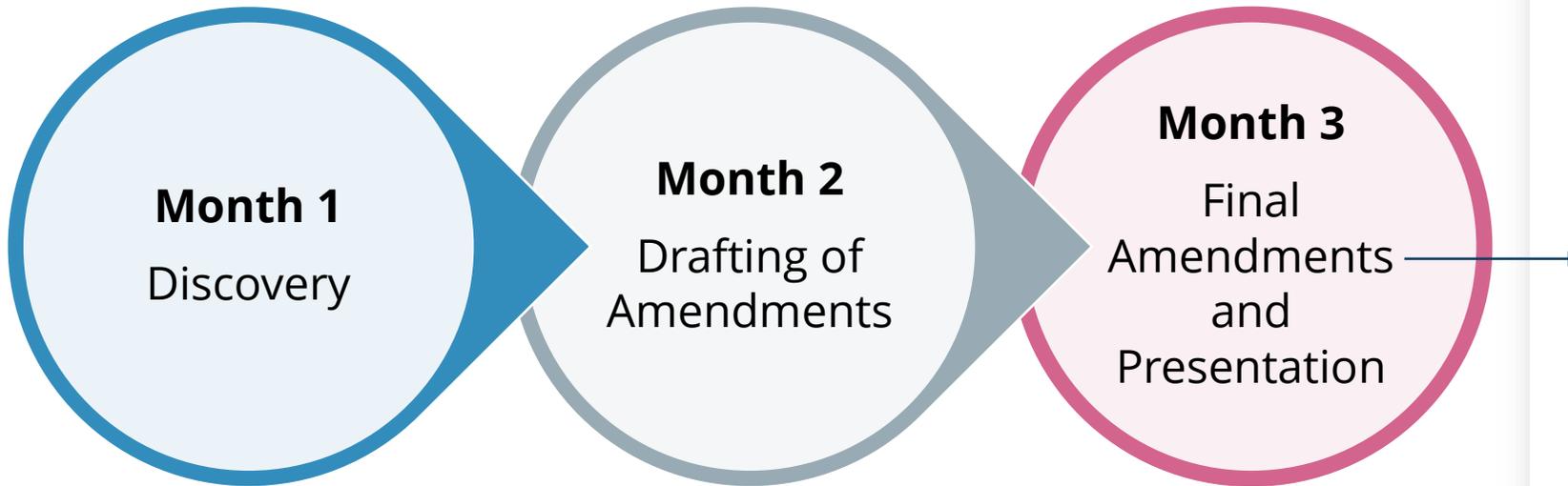
Project Schedule



Phase 3: Work Sequence



Phase 3: Work Cycles



City of Bristol Comprehensive Zoning Update

Date: 6/7/2024

Recommendation 1: Update and expand minimum parking requirements, providing minimum requirements for almost all uses.

Purpose: The current parking requirements lack parking standards for multiple uses and require that the Commission identify the appropriate number of parking spaces that should be required for those uses. This practice creates additional work for the Commission and results in uncertainties for the applicant. This practice may also result in inconsistent requirements across similar uses.

Description: The recommended amendments would provide a specified minimum parking requirement for nearly all principal uses and some accessory uses permitted by the zoning regulations. The parking requirement standardizes the required parking units of measure to the greatest extent possible and associates the minimum number of spaces required per gross square feet of floor area for most uses. Other standards of measure are also provided including number of dwelling units.

Geographic Extents: Applicable across all districts city-wide with unique standards for the BD District.

Potential Impacts: The adoption of this recommended amendment is expected to streamline the parking aspect of an application by making this aspect more predictable and reducing the burden on the Commission to establish requirements on a case-by-case basis. Because the recommended parking requirements are more precise than the existing standards, the recommended amendment may result in less off-street parking being constructed.

Context: Many cities (such as Hartford) have experimented with reducing parking requirements, particularly in their downtown areas to support redevelopment and infill development. The provision of off-street parking represents a significant share of the cost of most developments.

Recommended Zoning Amendments:

Replace the parking standards of Section 13.2.D with the following standards:

Conversion and Reuse	Existing	Recommended	
Adaptive Reuse of Non-Residential Buildings	None	Parking requirement to be determined by Commission based upon proposed uses.	
Conversion of Historic Dwellings	None		
Unified Downtown Development	None		
Sales Establishments			
Accessory Retail	4 per ksf	4.0 per ksf	
Convenience Store	None		
Drugstore	None		
Grocery Store	None		
Pawn Shop	None		
Retail Store	4 per ksf (3 in BD), 4.5 per ksf shopping center		
Specialty Retail	None		
Building Supply	2.5 per ksf indoor + 1 per ksf outdoor storage area		2.5 per ksf indoor + 1.0 per ksf outdoor sales area
Garden Supply	None		
Retail Store-Large Goods	2.0 per ksf		1 per 5 linear foot sheltered display or sales frontage
Farm Stand	1 per 5 linear foot sheltered display or sales frontage		

Parking Review Findings: Summary

1. Multiple uses require determination of required parking by Commission.
2. Multiple uses lack a specific parking requirement.
3. There is no clear guidance on the parking requirement for a change of use or expansion of use.
4. The parking requirements and incentives for the Downtown (BN zone) provide flexibility but may be difficult to administer and enforce.
5. The landscaping standards for parking lots are limited.
6. The standards for Community Residences and Group Child Care Homes need to be modified for compliance with Statute.

Parking Review Findings: Commission Determination

- Multiple uses require the Commission to determine the amount of required parking.
 - Public or semi-public buildings
 - Seasonal camps
 - Climate controlled self-storage facility
 - Outdoor entertainment facility
- The guidance on how the Commission is to make a determination lacks direction as to who is responsible for collecting the required information.

C. Where the minimum number of parking spaces required for a particular use is to be determined by the Commission, the Commission shall be guided by the nature, intensity and/or mix of the proposed use, including projected attendance, the number of employees, visitors and/or customers, and the experience of similar facilities elsewhere.

Parking Review Findings: Lack of Parking Requirement

Multiple Residential District uses lack a parking requirement

- Adult Day Care Center
- Cemetery
- Farm
- Government or Non-Profit Housing
- Manufactured Home Park
- Park or Open Space
- Social Services Agency or Charitable Institution
- Stable

Parking Review Findings: Lack of Parking Requirement

Multiple Commercial/Industrial/Mixed Use District uses lack a parking requirement

- Adult Day Care Center
- Animal Day Care Facility
- Animal Hospital
- Bar or Club
- Brewpub
- Building Services
- Catering Service
- Cemetery
- Commercial Kennel
- Composting Facility
- Convenience Store
- Drug Store
- Emergency Housing Shelter
- Environmental Service Facility
- Equipment Rental or Leasing
- Fitness Club
- Fuel Oil Dealer
- Fuel Oil and Heating Fuel Storage Facility
- Garden Supply
- Grocery Store

Parking Review Findings: Lack of Parking Requirement

Multiple Commercial/Industrial/Mixed Use District uses lack a parking requirement

- Helicopter Landing Facility
- High Technology Business
- Industrial Laundry or Dry Cleaning
- Junkyard
- Kitchen Incubator
- Laundromat
- Live-Work Units
- Medical Laboratory
- Microbrewery
- Microbrewery
- Motor Vehicle Detailing Facility
- Motor Vehicle Junk Yard
- Motor Vehicle Rental and Leasing
- Pawn Shop
- Printing Shop
- Radio or Television Broadcast
- Recycling Facility
- Removal of Earth Materials

Parking Review Findings: Lack of Parking Requirement

Multiple Commercial/Industrial/Mixed Use District uses lack a parking requirement

- Renewable Energy Generation Facility
- Retail Dry Cleaner or Laundry
- Sanitary Services Yard
- Social Services Agency or Charitable Institution
- Specialty Food or Beverage Establishment
- Specialty Food or Beverage Manufacturer
- Specialty Retail
- Specialty Service Establishment
- Specialty Trade Contractor
- Taxicab Service
- Tennis or Racquet Clubs
- Unified Downtown Development

Parking Review Findings: Change of Use

There is no clear guidance on the parking requirement for a change of use or expansion of use in districts other than the BN.

- By example, does a commercial space that was formerly a retail establishment and is converted to a restaurant require additional parking?
- If a use is expanded in floor area, range of uses, hours of operation, is there a trigger for the requirement of more parking?

Parking Review Findings: Downtown

The parking requirements and incentives for the Downtown (BN zone) provide flexibility but may be difficult to administer and enforce.

- Reductions of up to 35%-45% of the parking requirement are permitted depending on type of use.
- A fee-based parking reduction is permitted.

Parking Review Findings: Landscaping and LID

- The landscaping requirements for parking areas do not provide a reference to or requirements or incentives for Low Impact Design (LID) techniques to reduce stormwater runoff.
- Tree planting in or around parking lots is recommended but not required.



Parking Review Findings: Community Residences and Group Child Care Homes

- Community Residences and Group Child Care Homes can't have a parking requirement that differs from a single-family or multi-family residence.
- Connecticut Public Act 23-142, effective 10/1/23 prohibits any aspect of a zoning regulation from treating a family or group child care home differently from a single-family or multi-family dwelling.

Section 13 Off-Street Parking Requirements

We recommended the following amendments to this Section:

- R1: Update and expand minimum parking requirements, providing minimum requirements for almost all uses.
- R2: Provide more instruction for requirements determined by the Commission.
- R3: Expand the allowance of shared parking from 500 feet to 1,000 feet in the BD.
- R4: Provide specific references to handicap parking requirements.
- R5: Consolidate parking lot landscaping regulations into Section 13.
- R6: Provide a porous/permeable/pervious pavement incentive.
- R7: Provide a bicycle parking requirement.

The full text of these recommendation is available on the City's website:
www.ct-bristol2.civicplus.com/1060/Zoning-Regulations-Rewrite

R1: Recommended Parking Requirements

- Identify a parking requirement for all uses with exception of unified developments, conversions, and large scale uses that require analysis to determine parking requirement
- Shift towards a floor area-based requirement instead of seat- or head count-based requirement.
- Standardize units of measure to # of spaces required per 1,000 sf of gross floor area.
- Group similar uses and provide same parking requirement.

Example

Use Group	Existing	Recommended
Conversion and Reuse		
Adaptive Reuse of Non-Residential Buildings	None	Parking requirement to be determined by Commission based upon proposed uses.
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Accessory Retail	4 per ksf	4.0 per ksf
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Farm Stand	1 per 5 linear foot sheltered display or sales frontage	1 per 5 linear foot sheltered display or sales frontage

R2: Commission Determination of Required Parking

Revised the following section to require the applicant to provide a recommendation:

Section 13.2 Amount of Off-Street Parking Required

- C. Where the minimum number of parking spaces required for a particular use is to be determined by the Commission, the applicant shall provide a recommendation for the number of parking spaces required for the use in question. Such recommendation shall be provided by a traffic engineer or parking expert. In making its determination, the Commission shall be guided by the recommendations of the applicant and by the nature, intensity and/or mix of the proposed use, including projected attendance, the number of employees, visitors and/or customers, and the experience of similar facilities elsewhere.

R3: Shared Parking

Revised the following section to allow shared parking to be located further away in the BD:

13.4 Shared Parking

- B. Upon provision of a parking study conducted by a traffic engineer or parking expert and the provision of a site plan, the Commission may allow up to 50% of the required parking spaces for a use which operates primarily during the evening or on weekends to be counted toward the parking requirements of a use which operates primarily during the daytime or on weekdays, and vice versa. All shared parking spaces shall be located within 500 feet of the main building entrance of the recipient use **except that in the BD zone, such parking shall be located within 1,000 feet of the main building entrance of the recipient use. In approving such a reduction, the applicant shall demonstrate to the Commission** that there shall not be a substantial overlap of peak parking periods for the uses and that arrangements satisfactory to the Commission have been made to guarantee long-term access to and use of the shared parking spaces by the recipient use.

New or revised language

R3: Off-Site Parking

Revised the following section to allow off-site parking to be located further away in the BD:

13.6 Location of Parking

- B. By Special Permit, the Commission may allow all or a portion of the required parking spaces to be located either on a separate lot under the same ownership as the use being served or on a separate lot under a different ownership than the use being served, provided that arrangements satisfactory to the Commission have been made to guarantee long-term access to and use of such spaces. All spaces approved under this provision shall be located within 500 feet of the main building entrance of the use being served **except that in the BD zone, such parking shall be located within 1,000 feet of the main building entrance of the use being served.**

R4: Accessibility

Updated to specify appropriate CGS and Building Code references:

13.7.3 Accessibility Requirements

- C. The number, size, designation, location, and markings of parking spaces for the handicapped shall be as per the Connecticut General Statutes, Sec. 14-253a(h) and Section 1106 of the Connecticut State Building Code – 2021 IBC Portion, as amended.

R5: Parking Lot Landscaping and Screening

Relocate the following sections in Section 11 Landscaping and Site Features to Section 13.7.5 Landscaping, Curbs, and Islands

- 11.1.3 Parking Lot Landscaping
- 11.1.4.A Screening



R6: Pervious/Porous/Permeable Pavement

Consider adding a pervious/porous/permeable pavement incentive for parking lots as follows:

Porous asphalt, pervious concrete, or permeable pavers may be used to offset lot coverage of paved surfaces at a rate of 50% of the porous, pervious, or permeable pavement area. By example, a 1,000-sf porous asphalt parking area would reduce the lot coverage area by 500 sf. To qualify for such a reduction a pervious pavement area shall:

- A. Be located outside of an Aquifer Protection Overlay District.
- B. Be designed and constructed in accordance with the Chapter 13 of the 2023 Connecticut Stormwater Quality Manual.
- C. Cover a contiguous area of a minimum of 1,000 sf.
- D. Be maintained for the life of the surface.
- E. Be subject to periodic inspection by the Zoning Enforcement Officer to ensure adequate maintenance.

R7: Bicycle Parking

Provide a bicycle parking requirement:

13.15 Bicycle Parking

Bicycle parking facilities shall be provided as part of new multi-family developments of 4 units or more, and new commercial, industrial, or institutional developments.

- A. Bicycle parking shall be provided at all new construction, changes of use, or substantial improvement and shall be provided at a rate of 1 bicycle parking space per 10 automobile spaces or at a rate of 1 space per 2,000 square feet of gross floor area, whichever is less. No more than 20 bicycle parking spaces shall be required.
- B. Bicycle parking spaces shall:
 - 1. Provide a convenient place to lock a bicycle and shall be at least 6 feet long, 2 feet wide, and shall provide at least 7 feet of vertical clearance, unless a bicycle locker is provided.
 - 2. Be capable of locking the bicycle and supporting the bicycle in an upright position.
 - 3. Be securely anchored to a supporting surface.
- C. Bicycle parking shall not interfere with pedestrian circulation and shall be separated from automobile parking.
- D. For any use where bicycle parking is required, if the vehicular parking is covered or partly covered the bicycle parking will be covered at the same ratio.
- E. Bicycle racks shall be located in proximity of a main building entrance and placed in an area that is highly visible.

Section 8.4 BD Zone Parking Regulations

We recommend the following amendments to this Section:

- R8: Universally reduce parking requirements for the BD zone by 25%.
- R8: Provide more flexibility to exceed the baseline parking requirement.
- R9: Remove parking reduction regulation (Section 8.4.5) as this is sufficient addressed in Section 13.4.
- Remove excessive regulation on parking increases (Section 8.4.6) in favor of a simplified approach (Section 8.4.4).
- R10: Provide a graphic that demonstrates how parking in front of a building as permitted by Section 8.4.7 would be oriented.

The full text of these recommendation is available on the City's website:
www.ct-bristol2.civicplus.com/1060/Zoning-Regulations-Rewrite

R8: Reduce Required Parking in BD

Reduce the parking requirement for all uses in the BD zone by 25%, thereby requiring that only 75% of the parking minimum be provided in the BD.

- The Downtown is served by municipal parking facilities, on-street parking supply, private parking facilities, transit, and is home to a mixture of uses, which allows for walking between locations and a reduced dependency on automobile travel.
- Many downtown zoning districts have no parking requirement for development.

R8: Increase the maximum amount of parking allowed in the BD

8.4.4 Baseline Off-Street Parking Requirement

- A. The “baseline” number of off-street parking spaces shall be the sum of the required parking for each separate use in the proposed development, in accordance with Section 13.2. Except as approved by the Commission in accordance with the provisions of this section or Section 13.2, no fewer off-street parking spaces than this “baseline” number shall be provided for a proposed development.
- B. The maximum number of off-street parking spaces shall be no more than 5 10% above the baseline requirement. This amount may be increased by Special Permit, which shall require that proof of parking demand exceeding the baseline requirement is provided by a traffic engineer or parking expert to the satisfaction of the Commission. In no case shall the off-street parking supply exceed the baseline parking requirement by more than 25%.

R8: Eliminate Parking Increase in BD

Section 8.4.6 Parking Increase

A. By Special Permit, the Commission may allow the number of off-street parking spaces provided for a development to be increased from the “baseline” number provided that one of the following conditions is met:

1. Increase of up to 35% provided that:
 - a. The developer shall incorporate a public amenity such as a public plaza, “vest pocket” park, or sculpture into the development; and/or
 - b. The developer shall provide, construct, and contribute to the maintenance of one or more internal vehicular and pedestrian connections between the development and developments on adjoining properties.
2. Increase of up to 40% if all or a portion of such spaces are located between the front of a building and the street in accordance with Section 8.4.7C.
3. Increase of up to 45% if the development includes dwelling units.

We will eliminate this section as it is overly complex and can be adequately addressed by Section 8.4.4.

R9: Eliminate Parking Reduction in BD

8.4.5 Parking Reduction

1. Reduction of up to 35%: provided that the development contains at least two uses that, because of significantly different peak parking characteristics which vary by time of day, day of week, and/or season of the year, are able to utilize some or all the same spaces throughout the day.
2. Reduction of up to 45%: provided that one of the uses in the development is residential.

Section 13.4 allows for a shared use reduction of up to 50% without a Special Permit. We will remove these items in favor of referencing that section, which would allow a reduction of up to 50% and would remove the Special Permit requirement.

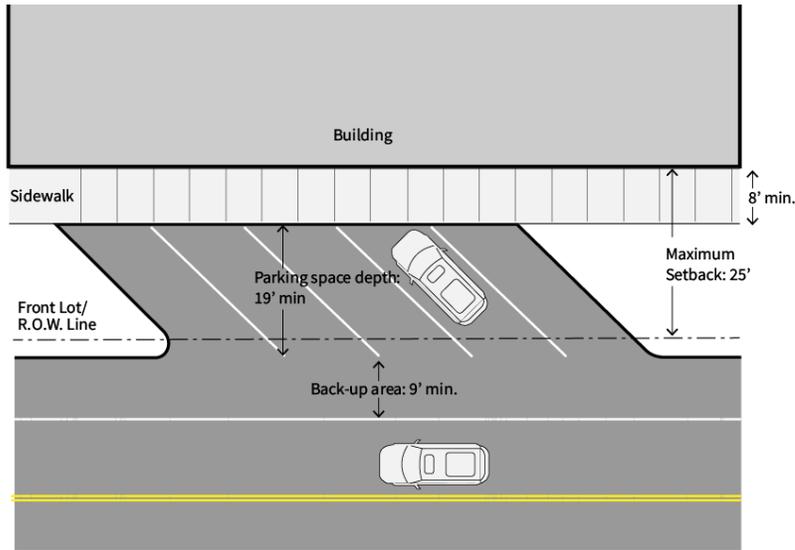
R10: Better regulate parking in front of buildings in BD

8.4.7 Location of Parking Spaces

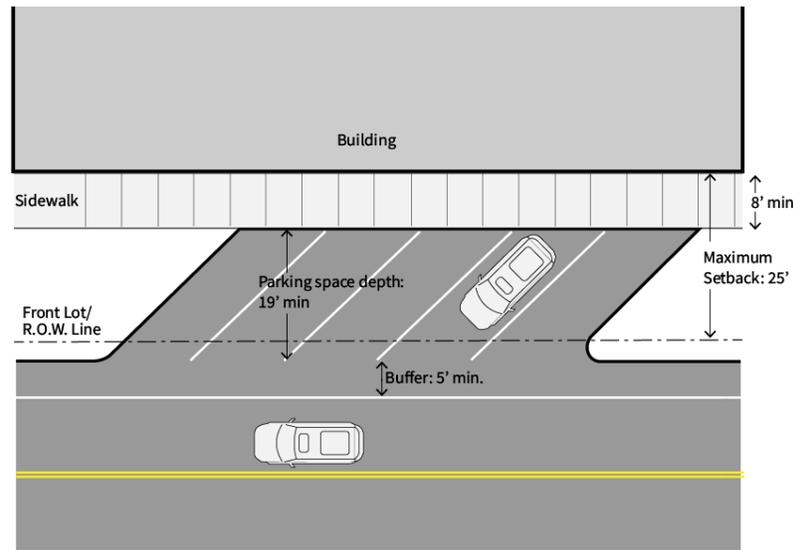
C. **Subject to approval via a Special Permit**, parking spaces may be located between the front of a building and the street, subject to the following provisions:

- **Added Special Permit Requirement**
 - **Added qualifying language**
 - **Expanded to allow for parallel parking.**
1. **Such parking spaces shall be located and oriented so as to reinforce a consistent street frontage and shall not be disruptive to pedestrian travel.**
 2. Such parking spaces shall be directly accessible via the street right-of-way.
 3. Such parking spaces shall be separated from the building by a sidewalk having a minimum width of 8 feet, arranged in a single row located adjacent to the sidewalk, and arranged in one of the following configurations:
 - a. Angled diagonally toward the general direction of the adjoining travel lane of the street. Such spaces shall have a minimum depth of 19 feet and a minimum back-up area of 9 feet between such parking spaces and the adjoining travel lane.
 - b. Angled diagonally away from the general direction of the adjoining travel lane of the street. Such spaces shall have a minimum depth of 19 feet and a minimum buffer area of 5 feet between such parking spaces and the adjoining travel lane.
 - c. **Parallel to the adjoining travel lane of the street. Such spaces shall have a minimum depth of 9 feet and a minimum width of 23 feet. The adjoining travel lane shall be a minimum of 11 feet wide.**
 4. Depending upon the width of the street right-of-way, such parking spaces may be located entirely within the right-of-way, partly within the right-of-way and partly on the lot, or entirely on the lot. Notwithstanding any other provisions of this section, the Commission may allow all or a portion of the building to have a build-to line as far back as 25 feet in order to accommodate such parking spaces.
 5. Such parking spaces shall be available for use by the public at all times.
 6. The property owner shall grant to the city such easements as are necessary to allow such parking to be utilized for public purposes in return for the city's maintenance of the parking spaces.

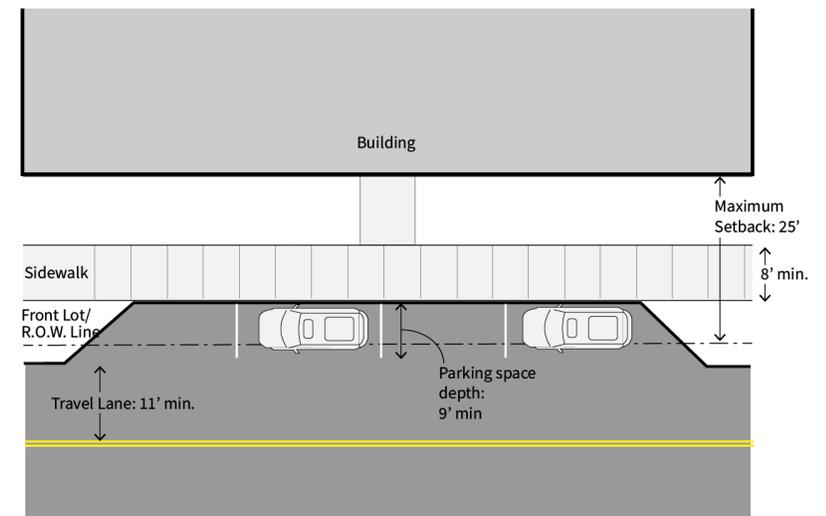
R10: Better regulate parking in front of buildings in BD



Pull-In Angled



Back-In Angled



Parallel

Next Steps

- The Commission will consider feedback received from this meeting and letters and comments provided to the City Planner and will consider adjustments to the recommended amendments.
- The recommended amendments will be brought forward to a public hearing for adoption at a later date.
- The Commission has initiated a review of the zoning regulations for potential amendments that may be needed for better protection of environmental resources and support of sustainable practices. A presentation of recommendations coming out of that process will be conducted in the Fall of this year.

Thank you!

Questions or Comments?