



TECHNICAL REVIEW & APPROACHES



June, 2025

INTRODUCTION

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 | What is Blueprint Bangor?

Blueprint Bangor is the effort that the City of Bangor is undertaking to update the Land Development Code (referred to in this document as the “Code,” or “LDC”). The Land Development Code is a crucial document that governs the use of land in the City, as well as the placement, size, and design of structures that are built in Bangor. In addition to these fundamental elements, the LDC also regulates various other important aspects of development including parking requirements, landscaping standards, and accessory structures. The Blueprint Bangor process will ensure that these regulations are thoughtfully tailored to reflect the unique character of Bangor. Furthermore, it will ensure that the regulations in the LDC align with the City’s broader goals around topics like housing, transportation, and sustainability as outlined in the City’s Comprehensive Plan.

1.2 | What’s the purpose of this report?

This report presents the findings of a technical review of the City of Bangor Land Development Code. The purpose of this report is three-fold. First, the review provides a synopsis and assessment of the City’s current approach to development regulations within the Land Development Code. Second, it discusses a series of issues identified during meetings and interviews with City staff and stakeholders, as well as a number of additional issues identified during review of the Code. Last, it introduces regulatory approaches and concepts that serve to establish a direction for significant revisions to be incorporated into the City’s updated Land Development Code.

Effective development regulations for Bangor will combine straightforward, rational substantive controls with equitable procedures to promote a development pattern that maintains and enhances the City’s existing character where appropriate, and facilitates change where desired. Regulations should be well organized, user-friendly, and contain standards and procedures that are clear, simple, and fair. Further, they should lead to predictable outcomes for both the City and applicants in alignment with the goals and objectives of the City’s Comprehensive Plan and other adopted land use policies.

This report cannot and does not encompass every change that will be needed; numerous detailed revisions will need to be worked out during the process of drafting a new Land Development Code for the City of Bangor. Rather, the primary intent here is to highlight major substantive issues and propose conceptual approaches that will address specific challenges with the current regulations and fulfill key policy goals of the City. The recommendations and approaches presented here will evolve through an iterative drafting process, with adjustments based upon staff review, public feedback, and guidance from City officials, boards, and commissions.

1.3 | What is included in the scope of work for Blueprint Bangor?

Blueprint Bangor is focused on updates to Chapter 165 of the City Code, Land Development. As such, the work will involve a comprehensive revision of the City’s zoning and subdivision regulations, but will not address additional sets of regulations contained elsewhere in the City Code such as the building code (Chapter 81), historic preservation (Chapter 148), floodplain management (Chapter 120), marijuana (Chapter 177), short-term rental licenses (Chapter 254), signs (Chapter 260), or stormwater (Chapter 268).



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2.0 ORGANIZATION & FORMAT OF THE LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE

2.1 | The Land Development Code should follow a simplified, logical system of organization.

The Land Development Code should follow a consistent, structured, legible system of organization from beginning to end. Within this system, information should be broadly grouped by regulatory category and purpose to help reduce the need for users to navigate to multiple sections of the Code, in turn improving its ease of use for both administrators and applicants.

A proposed structure for the updated Land Development Code is included below. Within the table, the first column describes the proposed new articles and the second column cites the current articles and sections that would be grouped therein. As this is a broad reorganization, some specific items may not be included in the table; this should not be interpreted to indicate that such sections would be omitted during the update process. Rather, the table provides a general overview of how the Land Development Code is proposed to be organized within the context of the current regulations; potential revisions or updates identified during drafting may impact the final structure and organization.

Proposed Structure	Current Sections
Article 1: Title, Purpose, & Intent	§165-1 through 165-5
Article 2: Definitions & Measurement Methodologies	Article 2, § 165-135, Article 8, Items from Article 9 as applicable
Article 3: Zoning Districts & Zoning Map	§ 165-8
Article 4: Residential Zoning Districts	§ 165-88 through 165-89, § 165-99 through 165-100, § 165-105, Dimensional Tables
Article 5: Mixed-Use & Commercial Zoning Districts	§ 165-90 through 165-94, § 165-101 through 165-102, Dimensional Tables
Article 6: Industrial Zoning Districts	§ 165-96, § 165-103, Dimensional Tables
Article 7: Special Purpose Zoning Districts	§ 165-94.1, § 165-95, § 165-97, § 165-106 through 165-108.1, Article 7, Dimensional Tables
	Sec. 3.5; Article 7
Article 8: Uses & Use Standards	Article 4, Article 5, § 165-80.1 and 165-80.2, Article 17, Article 20
Article 9: General Development Standards	§ 165-33, Article 6A, § 165-79 through 165.80, § 165.80.3 through 165.86, Items from Article 9 as applicable, Article 21
Article 10: Off-Street Parking & Loading	Article 10, Article 11
Article 11: Landscape	Items from Article 9 as applicable, Items from Article 19 as applicable, Buffer Standards
Article 12: Code Administrators	New
Article 13: Application Procedures	New
Article 14: Land Development Approvals & Permits	§ 165-6 through 165-7, § 165-9, § 165-11, Article 16
Article 15: Subdivision of Land	Article 18
Article 16: Quarries, Mining, and Excavation	§ 165-32
Article 17: Nonconformities	Article 3
Article 18: Enforcement	§ 165-10, § 165-133, Article 12A as applicable



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2.2 | All terms used within the Code should be clearly defined and consolidated to the extent practicable.

The current Code contains multiple sets of definitions, including a set of general definitions in Article 2, definitions specific to Shoreland Zoning in Article 7, and definitions related to affordable housing density bonuses found in Article 21. Maintaining multiple sets of definitions within the Code can lead to inefficiencies for users who are unsure where to look for a particular term, and may lead to potential inconsistencies or conflicts over time, as specific terms may be updated in one set of definitions and overlooked in another. In an updated Code, all definitions should be consolidated into a single section to the extent practicable to improve ease of access and consistency in terminology across the Code.

Further, all definitions included in the current Code should be audited during the update process to ensure that they are clear, concise, and reflective of modern best practices. Any specific terms used within the Code that are currently undefined should be defined, and any unnecessary definitions – such as those defining terms not used within the Code – should be eliminated. Select definitions should also be supplemented with illustrations to provide further clarity if needed.

2.3 | Measurement methodologies should be refined where needed, and consolidated into a discrete section of the Code to ensure clarity and consistency in their application.

Terms that function both as definitions and as measurement methods – such as “building height,” “lot width,” and similar – should be identified as measurement methodologies and moved into a dedicated section of the Code, following the general definitions.

For example, the current definition of “lot depth” is: “the mean horizontal distance between the front and rear lot lines, measured within the lot boundaries.” While this may seem straightforward, it leaves room for confusion. Although “lot line” is defined, the Code doesn’t clarify which is considered the front or the rear lot line, which may lead to inconsistencies in interpretation. Further, referencing the “mean” distance suggests that multiple measurements must be taken and averaged—an approach that may not be intuitive and could be difficult to apply consistently.

A clearly organized section of measurement methodologies would help to resolve these issues – and others – by identifying front, rear, interior side, and corner side lot lines, and by establishing standard measurement methodologies – supplemented with diagrams where appropriate. This can ensure that both applicants and reviewers are working from the same assumptions and arriving at consistent results.

2.4 | Legacy catch-all or standalone Articles should be disassembled and reorganized into an updated Code structure.

The current Code contains several Articles that seem somewhat out of place, or contain groups of loosely related provisions that are better suited to incorporation into other Articles or sections of the Code. This type of disorganization can occur over time as new standards are added to the Code without a clear place to go. In the absence of an obvious fit, they often end up in a kind of regulatory “junk drawer” – tucked into an Article where they don’t intuitively fit, or isolated in their own standalone Article. Examples of this in the current Code include:

- **Article 9: Supplemental Lot and Yard Limitations.** Though established as relating to lot and yard limitations, Article 9 contains standards related to corner clearances/sight triangles, setbacks from future streets, transitions or buffers between zoning districts, buffering for outdoor storage areas, and planned group developments, among other provisions. Each of the sections within Article 9 should be evaluated and moved into a more logical, intuitive place within the updated Code structure.

- **Article 4: Home Occupation or Profession.** Use standards for home occupations are included in this standalone Article. Instead, home occupations can be much more simply addressed in the proposed updated structure as accessory uses, contained within the Article that addresses uses and use standards.
- **Article 8: Height Regulations.** This article contains a series of standards that address height in specific contexts, whether it be allowances for appurtenances to exceed maximum height limitations, restrictions for airport glide zones, or provisions specific to large-scale buildings in the current Industry and Service District. These specific conditions are better addressed within the measurement methodologies related to height in the updated Code structure.
- **Article 12: Utility Service.** Article 12 currently contains loosely related standards relating to utilities and public facilities, but also includes the Solar Array Overlay District in its entirety, as well as all the Code's current lighting standards, and standards related to surface water and storm drainage. The items addressed within this current Article may best be incorporated into various places in the updated Code, including the proposed Special Purpose Districts and General Development Standards Articles.

2.5 | Zoning districts should be enhanced, and should emerge as a fundamental organizational element in the updated Land Development Code.

The current Land Development Code establishes zoning districts in Part 3, which includes Articles 13, 14, and 15. Within the current structure, districts are grouped by geography rather than by purpose—some are designated as “urban developed area” districts, others as “developing area” districts, and a third group as “resource, open space, and rural area” districts. While this structure may at first appear logical, it runs counter to how most users interact with a zoning code. A more intuitive and widely accepted approach is to group districts by their intended function – such as residential, commercial and mixed-use, or industrial. This makes it easier for users to find and understand the regulations relevant to a particular district.

This updated structure can continue to reflect geographic distinctions. For example, residential, commercial and mixed-use, and industrial districts could be organized to distinguish between areas within the City's urban developed area and those in developing or rural contexts—consistent with the Comprehensive Plan's emphasis on tailoring regulations based on location, particularly relative to the growth boundary.

In addition, the current district sections include only a purpose statement and a list of permitted and conditional uses, along with use standards where applicable. This limited structure provides little insight into how each district is intended to guide development. To understand the full set of regulations for a given district, a user must consult multiple parts of the Code: the district itself for the purpose statement and any relevant use permissions, Article 9 for supplemental use regulations, Article 19 for site development standards, and then the correct attachment for dimensional requirements.

To improve usability moving forward into an updated Code, uses and use standards should be consolidated into a separate article. This would allow the district sections to take on a more comprehensive role—serving as the central location for all requirements that shape the form and function of development within each district. Each district should include its purpose, dimensional standards (including any contextual or transitional standards), design standards, and cross-references to other applicable sections of the Code—such as parking, landscaping, and lighting.

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2.6 | The Code should incorporate illustrations of key concepts and make greater use of tables and matrices where appropriate.

The Land Use Code should include illustrations, to add clarity to definitions and regulations where needed. Illustrations can be especially useful for clarifying complex or technical concepts included within the regulations. Definitions, measurement rules, and various development standards can often benefit from inclusion of accompanying visuals to support greater understanding. Items that should be illustrated within an updated Code might include, but are not limited to:

- Measurement methodologies such as building height, setbacks, and yards
- Definitions such as lot types and lot lines
- Design standards
- Parking and landscape requirements
- Regulations relating to accessory structures including fences, detached garages, and similar structures

In addition to the above, it is expected that new terms, design concepts, and regulations introduced during the Code update process will also require accompanying illustrations.

Further, the Code should make greater use of matrices and tables to present information more clearly and concisely. While the current Code includes matrices such as the dimensional standards attachments, many other provisions could benefit from similar treatment. Well-structured matrices improve usability by allowing users to scan and compare requirements more efficiently, quickly retrieving the information they need.

2.7 | The Code should use consistent terminology and a unified voice.

The current Code uses overlapping terminology in a number of places, often combining terms that mean different things such as yards and setbacks. A good example of this is found in §165-64, "side yard width," which states that "wherever a side yard is adjacent to a street, the regulations for front yard setback shall apply to the side yard." This language is unclear and may unintentionally suggest multiple or conflicting requirements, complicating interpretation and enforcement of the standard. Clarifying and standardizing terms like these not just in how they are defined, but in how they are operationalized throughout the Code is a necessary step toward a clearer, more user-friendly and consistently applied set of regulations.

In addition, the current Code reflects the accumulated voices of numerous authors over decades of amendments. As a result, there are inconsistencies in terms of how regulations are structured and how terms are used. These differences – often a reflection of the varying backgrounds, specialties, and writing styles of their authors – can create confusion or lead to uneven application of standards. A comprehensive rewrite offers the opportunity to bring consistency, clarity, and a unified voice to the entirety of the Code.



3.0 USE REGULATIONS & STANDARDS

3.1 | Uses and use standards should be consolidated into a new Article within the Code.

The current Code regulates allowed uses through lengthy lists included within each zoning district. This approach results in repeated references to the same or similar uses across multiple districts, which can create inconsistencies and lead to overlapping or conflicting terminology over time.

For example, the current Code includes both a “personal services establishment” and a “retail or service business,” each defined to include personal services. “Retail or service business” is also defined to include “eating and drinking establishments,” which overlaps with the defined use of “restaurant.” This becomes problematic in districts like the Neighborhood Service District, where “retail or service businesses” and “takeout restaurants” are allowed—but “takeout restaurant” is not defined at all, and the overlap between these terms is unclear.

Some districts, such as the General Commercial and Service District, also follow a pyramidal structure—allowing all uses permitted in “less intense” districts, in addition to their own. While this may appear efficient, it creates risk: as uses are added to or removed from one district, the ripple effects on other districts are easy to overlook, which can lead to unintended consequences over time.

A clearer and more modern approach is to remove these long use lists from the district sections and consolidate them into a dedicated Article. Each use would be listed and defined once, and permissions would be clearly shown in a global use matrix. In this matrix, uses are listed in rows and zoning districts in columns, with each cell indicating where and how a use is permitted. This format improves clarity, simplifies interpretation, and makes it easier to identify and resolve overlap or conflict.

All applicable use standards would be located within the same Article and cross-referenced in the matrix, providing a one-stop resource for users to understand where a use is permitted and under what conditions. As part of this effort, all uses will be audited, definitions reviewed and refined, and any inconsistencies or duplication addressed.

3.2 | A streamlined use structure should be built around clearly defined generic use categories.

A generic use approach groups land uses based upon their general characteristics. Under this model, individual uses like barber shops, beauty salons, or tailors are not regulated separately, but are instead combined into a broader category such as “personal services establishment.” This broader category can then accommodate similar or emerging uses (e.g., dry cleaners or small appliance repair shops) without requiring frequent code amendments.

While the current Code incorporates some generic use categories, such as the aforementioned “personal services establishment,” it also continues to list specific uses in many districts and often relies on qualifiers or additional language to modify them. In some cases, existing generic categories are too vague or overly broad. For example, “community service organization” is defined to include everything from social clubs to chemical dependency treatment facilities – grouped together under the condition that they be “similar in nature, intensity, and impact” to other permitted uses in the district. This definition spans a wide range of potential impacts, which can create confusion and enforcement challenges, and requires additional limiting language to manage what is allowed in particular districts.

Adopting a more consistent and comprehensive generic use structure offers two primary benefits:

- **It reduces redundancy.** The Code would no longer need to maintain long, detailed lists of specific uses or uses modified with additional language or caveats. New uses would only need to be added when their impacts fall outside the scope of an existing category and warrant separate regulation.
- **It increases flexibility.** The City can more easily accommodate new or unlisted uses that are aligned with existing categories, allowing the Code to better respond to evolving land use patterns.

Implementing a generic use model, however, requires careful attention to use definitions. Every use included in the Code must be clearly defined, with examples provided where appropriate. Definitions should clarify not only what is included within a given use, but also what is not. While generic categories provide flexibility, some uses still require a higher level of scrutiny due to their potential impacts or sensitivity within certain contexts. In these cases, the use should be removed from the broader category and regulated independently. Once separated and specifically defined, a use cannot be considered part of the broader generic category.

In addition, some ancillary uses—those that are clearly secondary or incidental to the primary use—can be addressed directly within the principal use definition. For example, a definition for “light industrial use” may include the ancillary use of a showroom, making it easier to permit these customary pairings while ensuring they are controlled and do not create conflicts with other uses in the district.

3.3 | Uses should be aligned with the intended form and function of the zoning districts within the Code.

The uses permitted within each of the City’s zoning districts should be carefully reviewed as part of the Code update process. Each use allowed within a district should be consistent with that district’s stated purpose, physical form, and intended function. Aligning use permissions in this way can help to reinforce a legible, predictable development pattern and support the creation of a coherent sense of place tied to each district.

In some cases, this may mean expanding allowed uses to encourage a greater mix of compatible activities – particularly in walkable or mixed-use areas. In other cases, it may mean removing uses that no longer align with the district’s intent, or which may create unwanted impacts. For example, drive-through or auto-oriented uses may not be appropriate in districts intended to support a pedestrian-scale, walkable commercial environment.

As part of the update to the Land Development Code, permitted and conditional uses should be carefully considered on a district-by-district basis. This can help to better support the City’s planning goals, eliminate outdated or incompatible use permissions, and improve clarity and consistency across districts.

This process should be coordinated with the development of a global use matrix as mentioned above, and updated use definitions to ensure that permitted uses across all districts are applied consistently and reflect the desired character of each area.

3.4 | Use standards should be applied consistently and organized to improve clarity.

Currently, use standards are embedded within the lists of permitted and conditional uses in each zoning district. While it’s appropriate for certain uses to carry additional standards in specific contexts, the ad-hoc approach of repeating standards across districts can lead to inconsistency and, at times, inequitable treatment of uses in similar districts. It also increases the risk of missing broadly applicable impacts that should be addressed across all districts, rather than in a piecemeal way.

As part of the Land Development Code update, every use allowed within the City should be reviewed and evaluated against best practices and the City’s priorities. Where appropriate, specific use standards should be developed to

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address design, dimensional, or operational considerations. In some cases, these may be carried over from the current Code in revised form; in others, new standards may be needed to better align with community goals or respond to known impacts.

Rather than embedding these standards within district-specific use lists, they should be consolidated into a single, dedicated section of the uses Article (proposed Article 8 within an updated Code structure). Each use subject to standards would contain a cross-reference within the global use matrix, alerting users that standards apply and directing them to the appropriate location within the Article where standards are found.

3.5 | New and refined uses should be identified and incorporated into the updated Code.

Zoning must continually adapt to reflect both emerging forms of development and land uses that are of particular concern or interest to their communities. While the proposed restructuring of the way the Code handles uses – centered on generic categories organized into a global use matrix – will provide flexibility to interpret and accommodate new or unlisted uses, certain uses would need to be addressed specifically within the regulations due to their unique characteristics, anticipated impacts, or community importance.

The following list includes uses that are either recommended for refinement from their current iterations, or introduction as new uses in the City's updated Code. This is not intended to be a comprehensive list; additional uses may be identified and addressed during drafting.

Neighborhood commercial establishments

Some of Bangor's older residential neighborhoods may have historically included small-scale commercial uses – colloquially referred to as “corner stores” – integrated into the surrounding residential fabric. Where these uses still exist, or where structures remain that once supported them, they reflect a walkable, mixed-use development pattern that aligns with the City's goals around livable neighborhoods and local access to goods and services. Under the current Code, however, such uses may not be clearly permitted and may be considered nonconforming.

To encourage reinvestment and expand neighborhood-serving retail and service options in the City, the Code should include a new use called a “neighborhood commercial establishment.” This use would allow for small-scale businesses to operate within existing buildings located in residential districts, where appropriate. The use would be subject to a series of design standards and operational controls to ensure compatibility with adjacent residential uses and preserve the character of established neighborhoods, and a tailored list of allowed uses within these structures that focuses on low-impact, pedestrian-oriented activity. More intense uses, or those of particular concern, such as sales of alcohol, could be prohibited within a neighborhood commercial establishment.

In addition to supporting the reuse of existing structures, the Code could also allow for the development of new neighborhood commercial establishments. These could be allowed broadly or only within specific contexts, such as on corner lots. They would be subject to the same standards around scale, design, and operational considerations as existing structures, ensuring that both new and existing structures can be used to support walkability and local access to goods and services, while reinforcing and prioritizing neighborhood character.

Creative-economy and small-scale production uses

Live/work dwellings. Live/work dwellings combine a residential unit with space for a resident-operated business, often supporting small-scale entrepreneurial activity or arts-based work. These units may include activities such as painting, photography, sculpture, music, or film—so long as they are operated by one or more residents of the dwelling. A key regulatory consideration is ensuring that the commercial component remains an active part of the use; typically, live/work standards specify that the commercial portion cannot be converted to residential living

space unless reviewed and approved. The Code should include standards that preserve this mixed-use function while ensuring compatibility with surrounding uses.

Industrial design. Industrial design refers to establishments engaged in the research, design, marketing, and brand development of products, often incorporating artistic, business, scientific, or engineering disciplines. These facilities may create prototypes or small product runs but do not engage in mass manufacturing from the premises.

Artisan industrial. Artisan industrial uses support small-scale craft and production activities that may not fit neatly within traditional commercial or industrial use categories. Examples include furniture making, glassblowing, small-scale metalwork, or similar fabrication activities. These uses often involve custom production equipment and limited on-site retail or showroom functions. Because of their hybrid nature, artisan industrial uses benefit from being “pulled out” of the industrial use category, allowing them to locate in a broader range of zoning districts, where more traditional industrial activity may not be compatible.

Micro-production of alcohol. Micro-production of alcohol includes small-scale facilities engaged in the production and packaging of alcoholic beverages such as beer, wine, cider, mead, and spirits. These uses are designed to accommodate locally focused businesses like microbreweries and craft distilleries that combine production with hospitality and retail functions. Facilities typically include a tasting room, bar, or restaurant component, along with on-site sales of the beverages produced and related merchandise. Like some other hybrid uses, micro-production of alcohol does not fit neatly within traditional industrial or commercial categories and benefits from its own distinct classification in a Code. Standards can address maximum production capacity and compatibility with surrounding uses, allowing these establishments to contribute to local economic development and neighborhood vitality while controlling potential impacts.

Specialty food service. This use includes food-related businesses that specialize in the preparation, processing, packaging, or small-batch production of food and beverage products (not including alcohol). Examples include candy makers, caterers, or coffee roasters. These facilities may include areas for ancillary retail or restaurant operations where goods produced on-site are sold or served. All activity should occur within completely enclosed structures to ensure that the use does not create external impacts.

Food truck parks. A food truck park accommodates one or more mobile food vendors offering food and/or beverages for sale to the public. These sites may also include seating, restrooms, shade structures, and other customer-serving amenities. Unlike mobile vending in the public right-of-way, food truck parks function as fixed locations and are treated as principal uses of land.

Commercial kitchens. A commercial kitchen is a shared-use facility where individuals or businesses can prepare food products for retail sale, catering, or delivery. Use of these facilities is typically leased by the hour, day, or month and may be shared by a wide variety of small businesses. During the COVID-19 pandemic, this model became increasingly common, often operating under names like “ghost kitchen” or “ghost restaurant.” These uses tend to generate significant delivery traffic, especially during peak hours. As such, standards may be included to manage specific operational impacts.

Social service uses

The updated LDC should expand upon and clarify the range of social service and congregate care uses allowed within the City. These services are essential to the community and the region and should be clearly defined, with placement in zoning districts tied to operational impacts and compatibility. Where applicable, references to State licensing requirements should be made to ensure compliance. The following uses may be newly introduced or refined during the update. Again, this is not an exhaustive list, as additional uses or needed refinement of existing uses may be identified during drafting.

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Alternative correctional facilities. Residential facilities for adults or minors referred by the courts as alternatives to incarceration, commonly known as community correctional centers.

Children’s homes. Institutional residences providing housing and care for children who are wards of the state or otherwise require out-of-home placement.

Domestic violence shelters. Facilities that provide temporary housing, safety, and support services for individuals fleeing domestic violence or human trafficking. These shelters may also house minor children of those seeking shelter, and offer counseling, legal assistance, and case management.

Drug treatment clinics. State-licensed facilities authorized to provide medication-assisted treatment for individuals with substance use disorders. Services may include detoxification or ongoing maintenance therapies using methadone, suboxone, naltrexone, or similar medications.

Food banks. Nonprofit facilities that collect, store, and distribute food to other relief organizations. These uses typically operate out of warehouse-scale facilities located in commercial or industrial areas. Food is not distributed directly to individuals directly from a food bank.

Food pantries. Nonprofit facilities that provide food directly to individuals in need. Pantries may also prepare meals for no-cost distribution and are often co-located within religious institutions, shelters, or social service centers.

Halfway houses. Transitional residential facilities for individuals released from correctional institutions, offering structured support to facilitate re-entry into society.

Homeless shelters. Facilities that provide short-term overnight accommodations for individuals experiencing homelessness, typically including support services.

Residential addiction treatment facilities. Licensed, 24-hour facilities providing medical and non-medical therapeutic care for individuals seeking rehabilitation from drug or alcohol addiction. These facilities may include detox services and supportive therapies.

Residential care facilities. Licensed, 24-hour facilities that offer ongoing medical or non-medical care, supervision, and support for individuals needing assistance with daily living. A residential care facility may include nursing care, hospice care, assisted living facilities, and continuum-of-care facilities.

Social service centers. Non-residential facilities that offer support services such as case management, peer support, housing navigation, or counseling. These centers do not include overnight accommodations, inpatient medical treatment, or clinical procedures. They serve clients experiencing homelessness, recovery, or re-entry, as well as those with physical or mental health challenges.

3.6 | The Code should clearly address a variety of common accessory uses.

Accessory uses play an important role in shaping how properties function and contribute to the character of the City. The current Code addresses certain accessory uses in Article 5; these should be reviewed to confirm their continued relevance, and the list should be refined and expanded as needed to more fully reflect a modern range of accessory uses. The updated Code should provide clear permissions and standards for a range of common accessory uses, including but not limited to:

- Accessory dwelling units (ADUs)

- Drive-through facilities
- Home occupations
- Outdoor sales and display
- Outdoor storage
- Outdoor seating and activity areas

The accessory uses allowed within each district should reflect the broader character and purpose of the district, ensuring a balanced approach that supports both property-level flexibility and broader community goals. Accessory uses should also be added to the global use matrix, making it clear where each is allowed and if subject to standards.

Accessory Dwelling Units

The City's current Code includes provisions for accessory dwelling units, first adopted in 2019 and amended in 2023 and 2024 to comply with the State's housing legislation known as LD 2003. Under current regulations, one ADU is allowed on any lot that contains a single-family detached dwelling or a detached manufactured housing unit.

While these regulations meet the requirements of State law, there may be opportunities to revise and expand how ADUs are addressed in the Code to better align with local housing goals. For example, some Maine communities have chosen to allow ADUs on lots developed with either single-family or two-family dwellings, or to permit two ADUs—one detached and another located within or attached to the principal structure.

Additionally, the Code's dimensional standards for ADUs could be reviewed to ensure they are clearly presented and do not create unintended barriers to their development. Currently, ADUs are generally subject to the same setbacks as a single-family dwelling, unless otherwise modified in the dimensional tables. Moving forward, the Code could establish a dedicated set of dimensional standards specific to ADUs, applicable across all districts, to provide greater clarity and predictability.

Finally, the Code should explicitly state that ADUs are permitted on any residential lot developed with a single-family dwelling, regardless of whether the lot is conforming or nonconforming. This clarification would ensure consistent administration and remove potential ambiguities in the permitting process.

3.7 | The Code should address a full range of temporary uses.

Temporary uses are currently addressed in Article 5 of the Land Development Code, alongside accessory uses and structures. These include uses such as temporary storage, temporary promotional activities, and temporary sales of food or merchandise. While these categories provide a basic framework, the range of temporary uses recognized in the Code should be broadened to reflect current practices and ensure that all temporary activities can be appropriately accommodated and regulated.

- The updated Code should specifically address a more complete set of temporary uses, including:
 - Mobile food sales (food trucks)
 - Mobile retail sales
 - Real estate sales offices or model units
 - Temporary contractor's offices or contractor's yards
 - Temporary outdoor events (sales and/or entertainment)
 - Temporary outdoor storage

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To support clearer regulation and enforcement, the Code should refine the existing process for approving temporary uses through issuance of temporary certificates of occupancy. While the current approach allows for approval of temporary uses, the procedures are somewhat unclear, and applicable standards should be clarified to ensure consistency and transparency. Establishing a clear, consistent process and standards would provide a mechanism for the City to evaluate and manage potential impacts associated with temporary uses, particularly those that might generate noise, traffic, or security concerns, such as outdoor entertainment events. Updated standards should clearly allow the City to require mitigation measures, establish clear operational expectations, and set defined durations for each use as part of the approval—an important factor in helping to distinguish between truly temporary activities and those that attempt to operate as de facto permanent uses.

Each category of temporary use should include a set of standards to address typical concerns and potential impacts. Once defined, temporary uses should be integrated into the global use matrix, allowing the City to specify which types of temporary uses are permitted in each zoning district.

3.8 | Article 12A, which deals with specifically prohibited uses, should be eliminated from the Code.

Article 12A, prohibited uses, is an uncommon feature in modern zoning codes and offers limited regulatory value. Many of the items listed are not actual land uses, but rather references to activities that are already illegal and therefore not permitted regardless of zoning. The one exception—Section 165-86.1.D—should be relocated to Chapter 177 of the City Code, where it can be addressed more appropriately.



DISTRICTS

4.0 ZONING DISTRICTS

4.1 DISTRICTS IN GENERAL

4.1.1 | The current palette of districts should be refined to ensure a logical, effective framework for regulating development aligned with the City's Comprehensive Plan.

Bangor's Land Development Code currently establishes 20 base zoning districts, organized into three primary geographic categories:

- **Urban Developed Area.** Ten base districts are established in Article 13 to govern the use and development of those areas of the City "within the presently built-up urban service area." They are intended to support the established character and traditional development patterns of Bangor's urban neighborhoods, while also allowing for modern needs and redevelopment opportunities. Current standards aim to support reuse of land, prevent overcrowding, ensure access to services, and prioritize compatibility between adjacent land uses.
- **Developing Area.** Six base districts are established in Article 14, intended for those areas of the City that are "being converted from rural to urban uses." The districts in this category are intended to encourage development that preserves natural features, while allowing for a broad mix of uses and development forms – from single-family homes to townhouses and apartments, as well as commercial centers and modern industrial parks. As these areas are located outside of Bangor's historic urban core, they are cited as providing opportunities for coordinated, large-scale development.
- **Resource, Open Space, and Rural Areas.** The four base districts established in this section focus on protecting the City's variety of natural and resource-rich areas where development may not be appropriate due to environmental sensitivity, challenging physical conditions, or limited access to infrastructure. As such, they are intended to promote low-intensity uses of land like recreation and low-density residential development, intended to strike a balance between preservation and utilization of these areas.

The Code also contains three overlay districts. These include:

- **Penjawoc March Overlay Zone.** This overlay recognizes the Penjawoc Marsh as a significant wildlife area and seeks to balance important natural resource protections with the rights of property owners in the area to maintain the historic use and development potential of their properties.
- **Shoreland Zoning.** As required by the Maine DEP Shoreland Zoning Act, shoreland zoning applies to land within 250 feet of the normal high-water mark of the Kenduskeag Stream and the Penobscot River or within 75 feet, horizontal distance, of the high-water line of a stream or outlet stream or 75 feet, horizontal distance, of the upland edge of a freshwater wetland. Within these areas, special provisions apply to new construction, expansion, and relocation of structures, as well as resource-based activities and other site development activities.
- **Solar Array Overlay.** The solar array overlay is established to allow for solar utility installations in those areas of the City where site-specific criteria are met. Though established as an overlay zone, this section of the Code contains a series of standards that allow for solar arrays in all districts within the City, with the exception

of the Resource Protection, Stream Protection, and Parks and Open Space districts. As such, this set of standards may best be reorganized into use standards that apply to solar arrays city-wide.

While the basic structure of the current zoning districts allows for a broad range of uses and acknowledges the importance of the City's varied geography and development conditions, the current palette includes districts with overlapping purposes and numerous districts that are minimally differentiated from one another, making the logic of their application somewhat difficult to navigate. Further, the current districts do not clearly align with the City's policy goals as articulated in the Comprehensive Plan.

Aligning zoning district structure with the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan

The City's 2022 Comprehensive Plan identifies ten future land use categories, each intended to guide the long-term development pattern based upon location, intensity, and character. These categories include:

- **Urban neighborhood, neighborhood residential, and neighborhood institutional.** Together, these categories reflect a range of residential densities and characteristics, as well as neighborhood-scale commercial and mixed-use activity. They are primarily differentiated by use and density characteristics: urban neighborhoods are established as medium- to high-density residential development and complementary nonresidential uses; neighborhood residential as medium-density residential development with complementary nonresidential uses, and neighborhood institutional as medium-density residential development interspersed with institutional uses like schools, hospitals, and medical centers.
- **Commercial, Downtown, and Waterfront.** These three categories work to support commercial and mixed-use activity at a variety of scales and intensities within the City. Downtown accommodates the City's high-intensity mixed-use core, waterfront accommodates a mixture of uses in the unique context of the City's frontage on the Penobscot River, and the commercial category encompasses a variety of commercial and mixed-use conditions outside of the central business district, including corridor-scale and regional-scale commercial activity.
- **Industrial and Airport Commercial.** These two categories are intended to support a mixture of industrial and commercial activity in key areas with proximity to major infrastructure within the City, whether the I-95 interchange or the Bangor Airport.
- **Rural Residential and Open Space.** Categories that emphasize the preservation of open space and rural character continue to be important within the context of the City of Bangor. These two categories prioritize low-density development and protection of open space both outside the growth boundary and in key areas within the growth boundary.

While the current zoning districts and future land use categories each have a clear internal logic, the relationship between them is often unclear or inconsistent. As a result, it is difficult to discern how the current palette of zoning districts should be employed to implement the vision established within the Comprehensive Plan's vision.

Bridging the gap and modernizing the district structure

The apparent disconnect between the zoning districts in the Land Development Code and the City's future land use categories underscores the need for a clearer, more aligned, and more flexible zoning framework. A comparison of the current districts with the Comprehensive Plan's future land use vision points to several broad recommendations for improvement:

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- Consolidate and modernize zoning districts, to reduce redundancies, eliminate overlap, and clarify intent.

Detailed evaluation of existing districts, and recommendations for consolidation and modernization are included in the sections below specific to each category of zoning districts including residential, commercial and mixed-use, and industrial districts.

- Establish new residential and mixed-use zoning districts, particularly as needed to implement the “urban neighborhood,” “neighborhood residential,” and “neighborhood institutional,” land use categories in the Comprehensive Plan.
- Expand mixed-use opportunities across the palette of districts, and prioritize the use of contextual standards, which can help to allow for new uses and development forms while maintaining the importance of transitions and ensuring impacts on established neighborhoods are mitigated.
- Strengthen alignment with the growth boundary, reinforcing lower-intensity zoning outside the boundary, while supporting compact growth and infill within the boundary. Transitions at the growth boundary should also be considered during the update process, to ensure that the Code addresses the unique condition at the interface of “urban” and “rural” zoning districts.
- Update district standards to reflect the City’s policy goals, particularly related to housing affordability, sustainability, and economic development.

Through the creation of an updated Land Development Code, Bangor has an opportunity to establish a zoning district structure that is both reflective of the City’s unique existing character and aligned with the policies and vision articulated in the Comprehensive Plan. A modernized district structure can clarify the role and intent of each district, reduce reliance on special approvals, and create a more predictable housing- and business-friendly development environment.

As part of this effort, dimensional standards like lot area, frontage/width, setbacks, building height, and lot coverage/impervious surface ratio will be carefully reviewed and tested against existing conditions in Bangor’s neighborhoods and business districts. This review will help to ensure that as new standards are drafted, they accommodate new development in alignment with the City’s vision while remaining realistic and reflective of Bangor’s built fabric.

Housing Needs and the Land Development Code

Bangor’s recently completed Housing Study details some of the challenges that Bangor is facing related to housing availability and affordability in the City. While housing is not simply a zoning issue and is impacted by many factors within a community, many of these challenges detailed within the report intersect with the structure and application of the City’s zoning regulations. While Bangor has made meaningful strides in recent years through efforts to reduce lot sizes and setbacks, reduce parking requirements, and encourage more uses like accessory dwelling units and other affordable forms of housing, there remain significant gaps between what exists and what residents need.

Some key findings from the 2025 Housing Report, which can be accessed here, include:

- **Bangor’s housing supply has remained largely stagnant**, increasing by just 0.2% from 2012 to 2022, while statewide housing supply grew by 3%.
- **The majority of homes in Bangor are single-family, with a shortage of smaller units:** over 40% of Bangor households are single-person, yet only about 25% of the housing stock offers 0–1 bedrooms.
- **Since 2012, Bangor has lost over 2,000 households earning \$75,000 or less**, while adding nearly 1,800 households with higher incomes, indicating that low- to moderate-income households are likely experiencing difficulty finding affordable housing in the City.
- **Older adults and first-time homebuyers lack suitable housing options**, including opportunities to downsize or enter the housing market with more affordable, modest homes such as townhouses or small multi-unit dwellings.

Housing needs in Bangor are diverse, and the City’s zoning framework should reflect and support that diversity. A strong housing ecosystem offers a variety of options for residents – ranging in type, scale, and affordability – to meet their needs across different incomes, stages of life, and general preferences. The updated Code should build upon Bangor’s previous efforts by expanding opportunities for both small- and larger-scale residential development in mixed-use and neighborhood contexts, encouraging creative and flexible housing forms, and removing barriers to housing choice while maintaining what makes the City’s neighborhoods special.

4.1.2 | Dimensional standards should be audited, clarified, and moved into each of the zoning districts to ensure they function as clear, concise frameworks for physical development.

Dimensional standards are essential to shaping the physical form and development character within each zoning district. Currently, however, these standards are not located within the zoning district sections themselves. Instead, users must navigate across multiple Articles and Sections of the Land Development Code to piece together a complete set of applicable standards.

This structure is not aligned with best practices and makes it difficult for users to understand how development is intended to take shape within a given district. It also increases the risk of missing a key requirement – such as height limitations at minimum setbacks (currently in Article 19) – that may significantly affect project feasibility. In particular, these types of unclear or “hidden” dimensional standards can act as an unintended barrier to small-scale, incremental development and housing diversity on constrained lots, as users who are unfamiliar with the Code may not realize such constraints exist.

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To improve usability and better align with modern zoning practices, dimensional standards that control the placement, scale, and form of buildings should be relocated and consolidated within each zoning district. This would allow each district to present a clear purpose statement alongside a legible, district-specific set of form and design controls that work together to guide development.

In addition, many existing dimensional standards should be reviewed and clarified. Some may be outdated, inconsistently applied, or ambiguous in their current form. A targeted audit of these standards can identify opportunities for simplification, alignment with current development patterns, and removal of unnecessary regulatory hurdles.

4.1.3 | Terminology used to control the physical aspects of development should be clarified and employed consistently across districts.

Terms that work to control the physical form of development must be both well-defined and correctly applied throughout the Code. When terminology is used inconsistently or inaccurately, it can create confusion for applicants and staff, complicate enforcement, and lead to unintended or undesirable development outcomes.

An instructive example of this issue appears in the use of the terms “setback” and “yard,” as referenced in section 2.7 above. Although each term is correctly defined in Article 2, they are often used interchangeably or incorrectly throughout the Code. For instance, phrases like “yard setback” appear in several sections, despite referring only to a required dimension – more accurately just a “setback.” This blending of terms creates significant room for ambiguity and misinterpretation.

Additionally, the Code’s dimensional tables use inconsistent and/or unclear terminology to communicate standards applicable to the zoning districts. Schedule A references “minimum yard depth,” which appears to mean “minimum setback,” while schedule B simply lists “minimum yard,” which may be easily misinterpreted given the current definition of yard within the Code. These inconsistencies can make it difficult for users to understand important district requirements, and may lead to challenges with interpretation and enforcement of certain provisions.

Another issue arises in the use of terms that are undefined or only partially explained. For example, schedule A includes a requirement for a “minimum water setback,” which is not defined anywhere in the Code and does not appear in schedules B or C. Without a clear definition, “water setback” could be interpreted in multiple ways, which may conflict with existing state shoreland zoning regulations or other provisions of the Code.

As part of the update process, all key terms used should be audited and corrected to ensure it is clearly defined in a single, authoritative location, used consistently throughout the Code text, tables, and graphics, and free of redundancies or legacy terms that no longer serve a distinct purpose.

4.1.4 | Dimensional tables should be simplified and integrated into the zoning districts.

Bulk and area regulations – those that control the placement, height, and disposition of structures on a lot – are currently maintained as attachments to the Code, operationalized only through editor’s notes at the beginning of Articles 13, 14, and 15 as well as a few scattered references elsewhere in the Code. These regulations are integral to the Code and should be maintained within the context of the zoning districts, where they can be clearly linked to the purpose and intent of each district. This is consistent with how the standards are applied in practice and would represent a significant boost to the user-friendliness of the Code. In the process of relocating the tables, simplifications can be made to improve how the standards are presented and interpreted.

First, the bulk and area tables currently include multiple rows for different uses within a single zoning district, even when those uses share nearly identical dimensional requirements. This level of detail adds unnecessary complexity

to the tables. Instead, dimensional standards should be simplified and broadened in their application – structured to apply to all uses in a district unless a clear and meaningful differentiation is warranted.

Where such differentiation is needed – such as to apply a per-unit standard for certain forms of multi-family development – these can be presented within a single row, or clearly noted within the table rather than generating entirely separate rows for each type of use allowed in the district. Other standards that may control only one physical aspect of a particular use (to address its form and potential impacts), are better suited to be addressed as use standards and referenced within the uses table rather than the dimensional tables.

Second, the current tables lack a consistent organizational framework, with each applying slightly different column arrangements, terminology, and formatting. This makes the process of comparing standards across districts in multiple geographies challenging. Some examples of these structural issues include:

- **Disorganization.** Within schedule B, the two primary lot controls – lot area and lot width – are placed on opposite ends of the table, separated by ten columns of other standards. These two metrics represent the most fundamental elements governing lot layout, and their separation makes the table unnecessarily difficult to navigate. To improve clarity and usability, lot area and lot width should be presented side by side, ensuring that users can easily reference the basic requirements for lot configuration without having to scan across the entire table.
- **Lack of parallel structure.** Schedules A, B, and C include inconsistent column headings, omit certain standards from some tables, and introduce terms like “minimum water setback” or “maximum dwelling units per building” in only one schedule. Given the general disorganization and lack of consistent structure, it’s unclear whether such standards are intended to apply selectively, or if they were unintentionally omitted from the other tables. Moving forward, a parallel table structure should be applied to all districts, using a consistent set of dimensional controls across the board.
- **Excessive footnotes.** Each of the tables contains a significant number of footnotes, which complicate interpretation of the standards in the tables, and are easy to miss in many cases. Where possible, these should be integrated into the main table content, moved into use standards or general development standards, or otherwise simplified.

4.1.5 | Standards from legacy catch-all Articles should be brought into the zoning districts as applicable.

There are currently a number of articles and sections throughout the Code that augment the dimensional standards applicable to each of the zoning districts. Wherever applicable, these standards should be brought into the zoning districts to ensure that they are applied consistently and that both users and administrators are aware of their potential applicability. Some examples of these include but are not limited to:

- Height regulations contained in Article 8 augment allowed heights for large-scale buildings in the ISD district, address building appurtenances that may exceed maximum district heights, and reference height limitations that may apply in airport glide zones.
- Article 9 addresses specific conditions like setbacks from railroad parcels, side setbacks adjacent to streets (see recommendation for corner side setback, below), and a series of minor variations and flexibilities that should be considered for incorporation into the districts.
- Article 19 contains standards related to maximum building envelope (maximum heights at minimum setback dimensions), as well as “building standards” that control ingress/egress design and orientation within zoning districts.

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4.1.6 | Modern dimensional standards should be added to the Code; other existing standards should be eliminated

An updated Land Development Code for Bangor should include a series of modern dimensional controls that can more effectively control the form of new development within the City's various zoning districts. Some of these include:

- **Front setback averaging.** The current Code allows for averaging of front setbacks per the minor yard and area variations enumerated in §165-70, however a more modern approach is simply to allow for averaging to establish the standard in all cases. Allowing for averaging of setbacks can promote context-sensitive development in residential districts, allowing for adjacent lots on either side of a subject lot to be used to calculate a required front setback. Once this average is determined, typical controls allow for modification of up to 10% from the average to accommodate specific site conditions as needed. A series of standards can be developed allowing for determination of the average in a variety of configurations, with a standard in place for those lots that may lack context for establishment of an average.
- **Corner side setback standards.** A corner side setback requirement should also be included. Corner side setbacks can create flexibilities for new development or redevelopment that may be precluded by treating both street-facing sides of a corner lot as the "front," as is the current requirement in the LDC. Applying multiple front setbacks may unintentionally create situations where buildable widths of corner lots, particularly in denser areas of the City, are reduced to the point that construction becomes difficult or infeasible. Including a corner side setback standard can ensure that setbacks along a block face remain relatively consistent, while allowing flexibility for corner lots to maintain buildable widths.
- **"Build-to zones."** Certain areas of the City, such as downtown, which does not currently require a minimum setback, should be reoriented to control the relationship between buildings and the street more intentionally through a build-to zone requirement. Such a requirement would regulate a range within which a building must be placed, as opposed to setting a minimum dimension from a corresponding lot line. For instance, while a minimum setback may be established at zero feet to encourage an urban orientation as is the case in the current Downtown Development District, there is no control that would prevent a new or redeveloped building from being inappropriately set back from the street and disrupting the walkable, pedestrian-oriented development pattern of downtown. A build-to zone would establish a range, both a minimum and maximum dimension, within which the front façade of a building must be placed. This type of form-based control can help to acknowledge the urban character of key parts of the City, and ensure that any new development or redevelopment reinforces that character.

Outdated or ineffective approaches to controlling the physical form of development should be eliminated from the Code, in favor of clearer, more predictable and easily administered controls. Recommendations for controls to eliminate in an updated LDC for Bangor include:

- **Eliminate floor area ratio (FAR) controls.** For communities like Bangor, controls relating to maximum building heights, minimum setbacks or build-to zones, and limitations on lot coverage and impervious surface are more effective in reinforcing existing development patterns and encouraging development in alignment with the City's vision for the future than are controls on floor area ratio (FAR). Controls on these physical aspects of development – as opposed to the somewhat unpredictable mathematical calculation to determine FAR – are also much more user-friendly, enabling a broader understanding of both the intent and the content of each zoning district. Further, easily understandable regulations like maximum building heights, in combination with other controls that deal with the form and placement of structures, can allow for investors to be more informed and secure in their investment decisions as they look at doing business in Bangor.
- **Eliminate arbitrary controls on dwelling units per acre and per building.** In the City's developing area districts, density is currently regulated through a combination of maximum dwelling units per acre and

minimum lot area per dwelling unit. These overlapping controls can be redundant and – in some cases – conflicting. Minimum lot area per dwelling unit is a straightforward, transparent method for managing density that is inherently more intuitive than a control like dwelling units per acre. Further, establishing a maximum number of units per acre introduces an artificial cap that may not reflect the full potential of a site – especially when modern building types, technologies, and site configurations are taken into account.

Historically, maximum density standards have been used in many cases to ensure that infrastructure capacity, particularly for water and sewer systems, is not exceeded or outpaced by new development. While this sensitivity to infrastructural capacity remains important, modern systems and development techniques often have greater capacity, and such considerations are likely to be addressed more effectively through development review or other forms of regulation apart from a blunt maximum density standard.

The Code also contains a standard limiting the number of dwelling units per building, located within the dimensional standards table. This control is inconsistently applied across districts and uses, and lacks a clear policy rationale in most cases. Where concerns exist around building form or scale, as would seem to be addressed by a control like this, they can be more effectively addressed through updated definitions of dwelling types and through modernized use standards and design standards that respond to contextual factors and potential impacts.

- **Eliminate limitations on height at the minimum setback.** Article 19 of the current Code includes a control that limits the allowable height of a structure at the required setback line, particularly within residential zoning districts – including the urban residential districts. This provision establishes a height plane tied to the setback distance. For example, it limits building height at the minimum side setback to “two times the minimum side yard [sic] dimension,” or to a maximum of 20 feet, if the setback is less than 20 feet. In practice, this means that in the URD-2 district, which permits a maximum building height of 40 feet and requires a five-foot side setback, a structure could only be 20 feet tall at that setback. To achieve the full allowed height of 40 feet, the building would need to be set back 25 feet from the side lot line.

Given that the minimum lot width in URD-2 is 50 feet—and many existing lots are narrower—this standard effectively prevents development from reaching the permitted height on many conforming or near-conforming lots. As a result, the regulation undercuts the usefulness of the height maximum and limits redevelopment opportunities, particularly on smaller lots that are characteristic of Bangor’s historic neighborhoods.

Sliding-scale height controls like this one are much more typical in suburban contexts with larger lots and deeper side yards. Even in those cases, the height allowances are usually more permissive than what the current Code allows. Within a more urban context like Bangor’s historic neighborhoods, this approach can suppress infill housing potential and restrict the construction of reasonable building forms.

If concerns exist about height relationships between adjacent properties, they can be effectively addressed through more direct, flexible, and context-sensitive methods. Options might include contextual height step-backs or design-based approaches that ensure adequate transitions between different districts or uses, prioritizing compatibility without imposing overly rigid, form-limiting rules.

4.1.7 | Design standards should provide clear, objective requirements that guide building form and support the character and intent of the zoning districts.

Design standards can address items such as the location and design of building entries, elements of building articulation such as projections and recesses, ground floor and upper story transparency, and other key features of new development. These standards are not intended to regulate architectural style or aesthetics, but rather to establish measurable and objective requirements for basic building design.

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For example, design standards can require that elements of articulation be included at regular or maximum intervals along the length of a building façade facing a public street. These elements may be defined to include architectural projections or recesses, changes in materials, textures, or colors, or the incorporation of features such as columns or pilasters. Standards should not dictate how articulation is achieved, but should instead present a clear, measurable requirement.

In residential districts, design standards can be aligned with the City's recently adopted pre-approved architectural designs that reflect the desired scale and character of new development. When a proposed project uses one of these pre-approved designs, it would not be subject to additional design review, as the plan would already be deemed compliant with the district's design standards. This provides a streamlined path to approval while still ensuring high-quality, context-sensitive development. Standards in these districts should be written to reflect the key characteristics embedded in the pre-approved plans – providing flexibility for alternative designs while offering a streamlined path for applicants who choose a pre-approved option.

Standards should also be calibrated to reflect the intent of nonresidential and mixed-use zoning districts. For example, districts expected to support walkability and a pedestrian orientation in key areas – such as downtown – may include more robust articulation or transparency requirements, while districts that accommodate more automobile-oriented areas may allow for greater flexibility.

A clear, objective approach to design standards, working in combination with a refined set of dimensional standards, can help provide a predictable framework for new development that aligns with the purpose and intent of each district.

4.2 RESIDENTIAL DISTRICTS

4.2.1 | Extra dwelling unit allowances and affordable housing density bonuses should be simplified and centralized for clarity and ease of use.

The current implementation of LD2003's "extra dwelling unit" allowances, as well as the required affordable housing density bonus, may benefit from simplification as part of the Code update. LD2003 requires that, within designated growth areas, municipalities allow up to four residential units on vacant lots, or up to two additional units on lots with an existing dwelling. It also mandates a density bonus for eligible affordable housing projects located in growth areas where multi-family housing is allowed.

- Currently, Bangor implements these provisions through a combination of approaches:
- Use standards embedded within the list of permitted uses in applicable zoning districts
- Footnotes in the dimensional tables that modify lot area requirements
- Article 21, which contains standards specific to the affordable housing density bonus

This fragmented structure can be difficult to navigate and may create confusion where use standards, dimensional standards, footnotes, and other Code sections or Articles intersect. Moving forward, these additional unit allowances and bonus provisions could be consolidated into a single section within the general development standards, referenced from each applicable zoning district. This would eliminate redundancy and make it easier for users to understand how LD2003-related provisions apply across the Code.

For example, in a district that allows single-family, two-family, three-family, and four-family dwellings, the dimensional standards could list minimum lot size requirements for those dwelling types—say, 5,000 square feet per single-family home or per two-family dwelling, 7,500 square feet for a three-family dwelling, and 10,000 square feet for a four-family dwelling. A reference would direct users to the general development standards section, where LD2003-related provisions would be clearly outlined. If the property is located in a district where LD2003 applies and the lot is vacant, the landowner could choose from any combination of permitted dwelling types, provided all applicable dimensional standards are met. This could result in:

- *Four single-family dwellings on 20,000 square feet*
- *Two two-family dwellings on 10,000 square feet*
- *A two-family dwelling and two single-family dwellings on 15,000 square feet*
- *A three-family dwelling and a single-family dwelling on 12,500 square feet*
- *A four-family dwelling on 10,000 square feet*

Other mixes of unit types may also be possible, depending what is allowed in the district, the site layout, and preferred development scheme.

Similarly, the 2.5x affordable housing density bonus could be implemented more clearly. In a district where multi-family dwellings are permitted and subject to lot area per unit standards—e.g., 1,000 square feet per unit—the minimum lot area per unit could be reduced to 400 square feet if the development qualifies for the density bonus. In districts where no lot area per unit standard exists, the density bonus would not apply.

These streamlined approaches can be further refined during drafting to ensure they align with the City’s broader housing goals while maintaining consistency with LD2003 requirements.

4.2.2 | The Code should support a diverse range of housing options to strengthen Bangor’s housing ecosystem.

The City’s zoning framework should continue to evolve to support a broad range of housing types and development patterns. An updated Code can create additional opportunities for diverse housing options by introducing new development forms and allowing flexibility in terms of how units are arranged, scaled, and permitted across different areas of Bangor.

Identify strategic opportunities for higher-density development.

Allowing greater residential density and increased building height in strategically chosen areas can help create new housing opportunities in key areas of the City. The Code’s current residential district structure, while it accommodates a broad range of dwelling types, remains largely oriented toward lower-density development in many areas.

Moving forward, the Code should work to establish a clear framework for directing higher-density residential development, such as multi-family development, to those areas of the City that can best support it, including locations near downtown, along corridors, or adjacent to key commercial nodes. The current M&SD District comes the closest to a standalone multi-family district, allowing greater heights and densities than the HDR district. However, M&SD allows for a variety of other uses that may impact its appropriateness for certain locations within the City. As such, this report recommends splitting the M&SD District into two districts, one which would accommodate higher-density housing options in a residential context, and another that would continue to meet the district’s mixed-use intent at a lower intensity within proximity of existing neighborhoods.

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Restructuring the residential districts to better support high-density residential development can encourage the creation of new housing in appropriate locations, while maintaining the character and stability of existing lower-density neighborhoods in Bangor.

Support the development of flexible, small-scale housing forms in more places.

A smaller-scale approach can also help to expand housing choice and affordability. Within existing neighborhoods, the Code can enable a variety of creative and flexible development forms by updating some key standards and removing unnecessary barriers. Some options the City might consider include:

- Strategic updates to accessory dwelling unit permissions and standards across residential districts.
- Allowances for new, small-scale housing forms like cottage courts – small-scale developments that organize multiple homes around a common courtyard or shared open space. Cottage courts, sometimes referred to as pocket neighborhoods, can offer an attractive, contextual, and community-oriented housing option with smaller square footage than traditional homes, often increasing affordability.

Strengthen the Code’s support for middle-density housing options.

The Code should continue to encourage middle-density housing – those forms that fall between traditional detached single-family homes and larger multi-family or mixed-use buildings. This includes two-family homes, three-family homes, four-family homes, and other small-scale multi-family options that fit comfortably within traditional neighborhood patterns. While these housing types are already recognized within the Code, updates can augment the current approach to make them more viable options for future development. These might include:

- Form and design standards that ensure contextuality with surrounding neighborhood development.
- Expansion of middle-density options like three- and four-family dwellings into more residential districts, to expand housing choice across the City.

4.2.3 | Review and analysis of Bangor’s current residential zoning district structure.

An analysis of existing residential development patterns in Bangor was conducted as part of this technical review. The purpose of this analysis is to assess how well the City’s current residential zoning districts reflect the actual built development pattern on the ground in Bangor’s neighborhoods. For the purposes of this review, residential districts are discussed below in terms of their current purposes and dimensional requirements. This allows for an exploration of each district’s effectiveness from both a policy perspective and a physical development perspective. Findings are discussed below, and recommendations for a restructured palette of residential districts based upon these findings are included in Section 4.2.4.

RR&A Rural Residence and Agricultural District | Current

Purpose. The RR&A District is intended to maintain land in agricultural use in areas of the City where urban development is limited by the lack of public utilities and infrastructure capacity. As utilities and infrastructure are extended and urban demand increases, these areas – per the current purpose statement – may be considered for rezoning. Larger lot sizes are intended to preserve the district’s rural character and to “conserve property values.”

Regulatory framework. The RR&A District allows for a single-family residential dwellings, as well as a fairly wide variety of additional permitted uses including the sale of farm products, bed and breakfasts, landscaping services (large and small), tiny-home parks, and manufactured home parks – among others. Dimensional standards,

particularly minimum lot sizes, vary greatly depending upon the location of a lot – whether inside or outside of the growth boundary. Within the growth boundary, the minimum lot size is 12,000 square feet for the first dwelling unit, plus 6,000 additional square feet for every subsequent dwelling unit up to 4. Outside of the growth boundary, the district requires 1.5 acres regardless of the number of dwelling units.

In application. Currently, the RR&A district is the predominant district within the City overall, occupying over 44% of Bangor's total residential land area. The majority of RR&A-zoned land falls outside of the growth boundary, but a significant amount is also mapped inside the City's growth boundary. Moving forward into an updated Code, the City should consider revisions to the RR&A District to more closely align the district with its stated intent of maintaining land for agricultural uses and low-density residential development. Such a reorientation would bring the district into closer alignment with the City's Comprehensive Plan, which envisions areas within the growth boundary as neighborhood residential, and those areas outside the growth boundary as rural residential. Specific recommendations are included in the table in Section 4.2.4.

LDR Low Density Residential District | Current

Purpose. The LDR District, as currently implemented, is intended to provide opportunities for both “traditional and innovative family living,” on individual lots or in attached configurations, supporting a neighborhood environment in Bangor that is “stable, healthy, and desirable.”

Regulatory framework. The LDR District encourages a transitional rural-suburban residential development pattern, with allowed uses narrowly tailored to residential development and some complementary non-residential uses like in-home daycares and places of worship. The primary intent of the district appears aimed at accommodating detached single-family homes, which require a minimum of 12,000 square feet for the first dwelling unit, plus 6,000 square feet for additional units – mirroring the current RR&A requirement within the City's growth boundary. Attached residential is allowed, but requires conditional use approval, a minimum of three acres in development area, and is limited to no more than 5 units per acre.

In application. The LDR currently comprises the second largest area of residentially-zoned property in the City, at approximately 1,500 acres of land. The median lot size of LDR-zoned property is 15,687 square feet. There are a few established neighborhoods within the LDR district with a significant portion of lots below the minimum lot size requirement. An example of one area in the City that contains a cluster of nonconforming lots is Essex Woods, where many lots are closer to a 10,000 square foot average than the required 12,000 square feet. Current data indicates that, though multiple units are allowed on a lot, only 1.7% of the LDR lots in residential use contain more than one dwelling. There is also a significant diversity in lot sizes, with some LDR lots well under the required 12,000 square feet, and others that are upward of an acre. Looking toward revisions to the district structure, the City may wish to consider reorienting the LDR to accommodate low-density residential development at the urban/rural interface established by the growth boundary, and creating a new “medium density” residential option to accommodate an additional increment of density, and to acknowledge those concentrations of development in the current LDR that do not meet the established dimensional requirements.

HDR High Density Residential District | Current

Purpose. The HDR District allows for single-family homes, as well as a wide range of multi-family a group housing types, with the goal of supporting higher-density residential development in a “stable, healthy, and desirable residential environment.”

Regulatory framework. The current HDR District is mapped fairly conservatively to areas within the City's growth boundary, primarily accommodating large areas of multi-family dwellings on large lots outside of the Interstate 95

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corridor. Standards currently require a minimum of 9,000 square feet for a single-family dwelling, 12,000 square feet (plus 3,000 square feet for each unit past the first two) for buildings of 2-6 units, and a minimum two-acre site for buildings of 7-12 units, subject to additional dimensional standards (27,000 square feet for the first 7 units, then 3,000 square feet for each unit up to 12). Affordable housing density bonuses are allowed, which may add an additional increment of density into the HDR District.

In application. HDR zoning currently accommodates a combination of low-slung (1-2 story) multi-family apartment dwellings, and some limited single-family dwellings in those areas of Bangor outside the I-95 corridor, concentrated around Husson University and parts Northwest. As the district structure is reworked, there may be opportunities to refine dimensional and design standards within the HDR District to better align the regulations with the district's stated intent, and to encourage high-quality development that achieves greater density while maintaining sensitivity to its surrounding context outside of the I-95 corridor and approaching the City's growth boundary.

URD-1 Urban Residence 1 District | Current

Purpose. The URD-1 District is intended to protect the character of established low-density residential neighborhoods, primarily consisting of single-family detached homes, and to support a high-quality of life for families in areas of the City where this development form is desired.

Regulatory framework. URD-1 is the predominant single-family residential district within the City, allowing for single-family dwellings on lots of 5,000 square feet, as well as limited compatible non-residential uses like in-home daycares and places of worship. Dimensional standards within the district limit the height of structures to a typical 35' residential form, with modest setback requirements and limited lot coverage allowed.

In application. The URD-1 District is one of the City's most broadly mapped, applied to more than half of all residentially-zoned parcels in Bangor. It is characterized by a predominance of single-family homes on relatively modest lots, which mostly conform to the current district standards. Additional units are permitted per the City's framework for implementation of LD2003 requirements. As the LDC is updated, there may be opportunities to refine the dimensional standards included in the URD-1 district, and to allow for limited additional forms of development like two-family, three-family, and four-family dwellings in these areas – subject to standards to ensure their compatibility. Additional flexibilities related to lot sizes and setbacks can help to further increase conformance in these established neighborhoods, and to strengthen their existing character within an updated palette of residential zoning districts.

URD-2 Urban Residence 2 District | Current

Purpose. The URD-2 District is designed to maintain the character of "certain traditional residential areas," that include a mixture of one- to four-family dwellings in the more urban developed neighborhoods of Bangor. It is intended to support a high quality of life for families, and to accommodate – primarily – the "existing low- to medium-density residential use" of these areas.

Regulatory framework. URD-2 allows for higher-density residential development within the urban areas of the City, essentially halving the lot area requirement for two- to four-family dwellings from 5,000 square feet to 2,500 square feet per unit. The district allows for a modest increase in height up to 40 feet (compared to 35 feet in URD-1), as well as 40% lot coverage (compared to 35% in URD-1). Standards overall appear intended to accommodate an additional increment of development on slightly smaller lots than those required by the predominant urban residential district – the URD-1.

In application. The URD-2 District, in analysis of the data available, appears to have higher levels of nonconformity than the URD-1 and other residential districts, likely attributable to its applicability to the older, more central residential areas of the City which are likely to exhibit a pattern of homes on tighter/smaller residential lots. Moving forward into an updated LDC, the dimensional standards and uses allowed within URD-2 should be evaluated and refined as needed to ensure that it effectively accommodates denser development in these areas of the City and allows flexibilities for infill development as it occurs in Bangor’s largely built-out central neighborhoods. More specific recommendations are included in the table in Section 4.2.4, below.

M&SD Multifamily and Service District | Current

Purpose. The M&SD District is intended to support high-density residential development near the City center, including a range of housing types. It also allows for certain service-oriented uses in locations along major arterial streets, while aiming to maintain compatibility with “a suitable environment for family life.”

Regulatory framework. M&SD is also discussed below in the context of the City’s palette of mixed-use and commercial districts, as the current district effectively serves as a low-intensity mixed-use zone. The district allows for significantly more density than the other residential districts, requiring 5,000 square feet for the first two units, plus an additional 250 square feet (100 square feet, if using the affordable housing density bonus) per unit. The district also allows for greater height, with up to 45 feet, or 60 feet on major or minor arterials. Nonresidential uses currently allowed include personal services establishments limited to a single provider, large daycare centers, business and professional offices, and community service organizations—subject to additional standards, such as square footage limits (less than 3,000 square feet) and arterial street location requirements.

In application. M&SD is quite conservatively mapped, applying to just over 230 lots within the City. As mapped, the district appears to be accommodating a mixture of dwellings that have converted to commercial space, such as lots to the east of Center Street north of Garland, and older multi-family dwellings such as those found along sections of Pine Street and Essex Street. In an updated Land Development Code, the current M&SD should be evaluated and potentially split into two new districts – one of which would focus on accommodating higher-density multi-family development in and around the City center, and another that would focus on those areas that may be transitioning from residential use to more commercial/professional/service uses. Specific recommendations are included in Section 4.2.4 and 4.3.1.

4.2.4 | Revisions to the residential districts could help Bangor better address its existing residential development patterns, and accommodate future growth in alignment with the Comprehensive Plan.

A proposed updated residential district structure for Bangor is presented in the table below. The “Proposed District” column identifies the name of each proposed district. The “Origin” column notes whether the proposed district represents a revision of an existing district or the creation of a new district. The “Summary” column provides a description of the proposed district along with recommendations for how it could be drafted and incorporated into the updated residential district framework.

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Proposed District	Origin (If based on an existing district)	Summary
R-RA Rural Residential & Agricultural District	RR&A Rural Residence and Agricultural	<p>The R-RA District should refine the standards of the current RR&A, continuing to support a mixed environment of agricultural, open space, and residential uses outside of the City's growth boundary.</p> <p>In alignment with the Comprehensive Plan, areas within the growth boundary currently zoned RR&A should be evaluated and considered for rezoning to R-1 or R-2 depending on their size and development pattern. A number of RR&A lots within the growth boundary exhibit a pattern that is more akin to these more traditional development forms.</p> <p>Further, district standards for the R-RA should be updated to match those currently applicable outside of the growth boundary – to a 1.5 acre lot area minimum. This can help to ensure that those areas intended for low-density development and preservation of agricultural uses are not divided into smaller lots that do not reflect the City's desired character for these areas. Updated standards can help to implement the City's policies, preserve prime soils and farmland, and maintain flexibility for property owners.</p>
R-1 Residential District	LDR Low Density Residential	<p>The R-1 District should address those areas of low-density residential development on relatively large lots within the City's growth boundary, but outside of the I-95 corridor. Further analysis is needed to determine appropriate district standards, which will be developed during drafting. However, preliminary analysis indicates that a minimum lot area standard in line with the current 12,000 requirement feet would work to accommodate this lower-density development pattern. Current LDR-zoned lots that do not meet the minimum requirements should be evaluated and considered for rezoning to the proposed R-2 Residential District described below.</p>
R-2 Residential District	NEW	<p>The R-2 would be a new district, accommodating a tier of predominantly single-family residential development that does not meet the minimum lot area standards for the current LDR District.</p> <p>Preliminary analysis indicates that a minimum lot area of 7,500 square feet may be suitable for these areas, which would allow for development in line with the current LDR district, but on smaller lots, acting as a transition between the proposed R-3 district, those areas of greater residential intensity such as the RU Districts (below), and the lower-intensity residential development found within the proposed R-1 and R-RA Districts at or beyond the growth boundary.</p>
R-3 Residential District	HDR High Density Residential	<p>The proposed R-3 District is a reorientation of the current HDR High Density Residential District. Current standards should be evaluated and refined to ensure that they meet the City's intent for these areas, again predominantly located within the growth boundary, but outside of the I-95 corridor. A reduction in lot area from the current 9,000 square feet for a single dwelling should be considered; a 7,500 square foot requirement would acknowledge existing patterns and allow for an increment of additional density within the district.</p> <p>Form and design standards, along with updated controls for elements like lot coverage and impervious surface, can allow for continuation of relatively dense residential development within these areas of the City that maintains an appropriate relationship with its surrounding semi-urban context.</p>

<p>RU-1 Urban Residential District</p>	<p>URD-1 Urban Residence</p>	<p>The RU-1 District is proposed as a refinement of the current URD-1 Urban Residence District. As mentioned above, there may be opportunities to update this district to better align with the City’s vision in the comprehensive plan, allowing for new forms of development like two-family, three-family, and four-family dwellings.</p> <p>Dimensional standards should also be refined to ensure that they acknowledge current built patterns and allow for a continuation and strengthening of the character of these established residential areas of the City, while allowing for new forms of development that complement the existing neighborhood fabric, like cottage courts or pocket neighborhoods as mentioned above in Section 4.2.2.</p> <p>Preliminary analysis indicates that the current 5,000 square foot lot area standard fits these areas relatively well, however new flexibilities related to contextual setbacks, heights, and lot sizes should be considered during drafting.</p>
<p>RU-2 Urban Residential District</p>	<p>URD-2 Urban Residence</p>	<p>As mentioned in the analysis above, the proposed RU-2 District would be a refinement of the current URD-2. A refined district should consider allowances for new forms of development like cottage courts and pocket neighborhoods, and should contain flexible standards to accommodate these central, historically dense areas of Bangor.</p> <p>Preliminary analysis indicates that dimensional standards may need to be tweaked to allow for the continuation of the built pattern within these areas, with a recommended minimum lot area of 3,000 square feet.</p>
<p>R-MF Multifamily Residential District</p>	<p>M&SD Multifamily & Service</p>	<p>The current M&SD District is recommended to be split into two new districts as mentioned above. The multi-family component of the current district would be accommodated by the R-MF District, which would allow for multi-family development in and around the City’s central area at densities and heights largely similar to those within the current M&SD, but without the allowance for the broad range of service, business, and professional uses that are allowed in the district today. This can help to differentiate between those areas of the City center that are envisioned to transition to mixed-use areas, as opposed to those areas near the City center that accommodate higher-density, mostly older multifamily housing stock.</p>

4.2.5 | The City might consider broadening options for neighborhood-serving commercial activity in residential districts.

In addition to new uses like the neighborhood commercial establishment (Section 3.5, above), the City may wish to consider additional limited allowances for other forms of mixed-use in residential neighborhoods as a way to enhance walkability, support small businesses, and reduce car dependency. One such approach is the introduction of accessory commercial units (ACUs). Much like accessory dwelling units have expanded housing options with minimal disruption to existing neighborhoods, ACUs could offer a way to reintroduce small-scale commercial activity in a manner that complements and reinforces neighborhood character.

ACUs can accommodate small offices, service businesses, cafés, or studios, offering local conveniences while maintaining the overall residential feel of the area. Potential impacts can be managed through clear standards, such as

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limiting the size of an ACU (for example, no more than 1,000 square feet or 40% of the principal structure's floor area), curating permitted uses to ensure compatibility, setting operational limitations such as hours of activity, and applying design standards that preserve and enhance the aesthetic appeal of residential streetscapes.

Allowing accessory commercial units would help meet the needs of remote workers, provide more affordable entry points for small businesses, and restore elements of traditional urban form — the walkable shops and home-based businesses that once shaped vibrant neighborhoods across the country. With thoughtful regulation of their size, design, use, and operations, Bangor can position ACUs as a tool for building a more dynamic, pedestrian-friendly city while maintaining the high quality and livability of its residential neighborhoods.

4.3 COMMERCIAL + MIXED-USE DISTRICTS

4.3.1 | Districts should be structured to accommodate the varied character of Bangor's commercial and mixed-use areas.

A more intentional and clearly defined set of commercial and mixed-use districts would help ensure that future development reflects the quality, scale, and character that Bangor envisions in its adopted plans and policies. Creating a refined district structure that distinguishes between different development intensities, scales, and forms – from neighborhood-serving commercial areas to more urban, mixed-use centers – can help guide growth in a way that aligns with Bangor's long-term goals.

A refined palette of districts paired with clear, context-sensitive design standards can enable more by-right development that meets the City's expectations without the need for site-specific rezonings or conditional approvals. This approach can provide greater predictability for both applicants and the community, while reducing reliance on tools like contract zoning.

The following outlines a potential framework for a revised set of commercial and mixed-use zoning districts that more accurately reflects the existing conditions and desired future character of Bangor's commercial corridors, centers, and mixed-use areas. As above, the "Proposed District" column identifies the name of each proposed district. The "Origin" column notes whether the proposed district represents a revision of an existing district or the creation of a new district. The "Summary" column provides a description of the proposed district along with recommendations for how it could be drafted and incorporated into the updated commercial and mixed-use district framework.

Proposed District	Origin (If based on an existing district)	Summary
MU-T Mixed Use Transitional District	M&SD Multifamily & Service District	<p>The current Multifamily and Service District (M&SD) is framed primarily as a residential district that accommodates "certain service uses limited to locations along major arterial streets." The list of allowed uses (by-right and conditional) spans a fairly broad range, including personal services establishments limited to a single provider, large daycare centers, business and professional offices, and community service organizations—subject to additional standards, such as square footage limits (less than 3,000 square feet) and arterial street location requirements.</p> <p>With the addition of a new residential district focused primarily on multifamily development (R-MF), the existing M&SD should be reoriented into a true transitional mixed-use district. It should continue to allow a mixture of multifamily residential and low-intensity office, professional, and service uses, subject to standards similar to those currently in place. This would allow the district to better accommodate the gradual transition of existing residential properties along major arterials into appropriate small-scale commercial uses, while maintaining compatibility with surrounding neighborhoods.</p> <p>One consideration is the district’s current maximum height allowance of 45 feet (and up to 60 feet in certain locations), which may not be appropriate for the envisioned lower-intensity character. As part of the update, properties currently zoned M&SD that rely on the higher height allowances—particularly existing multifamily developments—could be rezoned to the proposed multifamily residential district, avoiding the creation of new nonconformities.</p> <p>The reimagined district could serve as a transition between lower-intensity neighborhood residential areas and more intense mixed-use or commercial corridors, supporting a gradual shift in development pattern while maintaining consistency with the City’s broader land use goals.</p>
MU-N Mixed Use Neighborhood District	NSD Neighborhood Service District	<p>The current Neighborhood Service District (NSD) is intended to accommodate a mix of low-impact commercial uses alongside residential uses, including one-family, two-family, three-family, and four-family dwellings. It is currently mapped fairly conservatively, primarily in a nodal pattern within the City’s existing urban neighborhoods, covering only 82 parcels (about 0.13% of the total land area of the City).</p> <p>Moving forward, revisions should seek to expand the applicability of this district by allowing a broader range of neighborhood-serving uses and introducing design and form standards that ensure compatibility with surrounding residential fabric. These standards should also enhance the walkability and mixed-use character of areas where the district is mapped.</p> <p>The City should also consider reorienting the district’s residential focus, moving beyond the current lower-intensity palette of housing types to encourage more multifamily development and residential uses located above ground-floor commercial spaces. This shift would help reinforce the district’s mixed-use intent and allow slightly greater development intensity at key neighborhood nodes.</p> <p>Under the updated structure, the proposed MU-N District (Mixed-Use Neighborhood District) would continue to serve as a flexible tool to support mixed-use development at neighborhood nodes and along lower-intensity commercial corridors, such as portions of Hammond Street.</p> <p>As part of the update, the existing 10,000 square foot minimum lot area requirement should be eliminated. Many of the lots currently zoned NSD do not meet this standard, creating unnecessary barriers to reinvestment. Historically used as a density control, this requirement is less relevant in the context of a mixed-use district. Moving forward, both residential and commercial development should be allowed on smaller lots, provided that building height, setbacks, lot coverage, impervious surface, and other applicable standards are met.</p>

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<p>MU-C Mixed Use Center District</p>	<p>USD Urban Service District</p>	<p>The MU-C Mixed-Use Center District is proposed as a revision to the current Urban Service District (USD), which is predominantly mapped at strategic locations along key corridors such as Harlow Street, Main Street, State Street, and Broadway as they approach downtown Bangor.</p> <p>The proposed MU-C District would refine and potentially expand the palette of uses currently permitted in these areas, while establishing form and design standards that encourage a more urban orientation. As redevelopment occurs, these standards would support a more legible transition into downtown Bangor and promote walkable, pedestrian-focused development patterns along these key corridors.</p> <p>Given that the district is largely mapped along arterial streets leading into and out of downtown, it is recommended that a maximum building height of 60 feet be made the standard throughout the district, replacing the current 45-foot limit (which only increases to 60 feet when located directly on a major arterial).</p> <p>Finally, consistent with recommendations for other mixed-use districts, it is recommended that the existing 10,000 square foot minimum lot area requirement be eliminated. Retaining this standard could unnecessarily limit redevelopment opportunities and undermine efforts to reinforce the more urban, compact character envisioned for these areas.</p>
<p>DT Downtown District</p>	<p>DDD Downtown Development District</p>	<p>The current Downtown Development District (DDD) generally appears to be meeting its intended purpose of supporting downtown Bangor as a regionally significant center of commerce, culture, and activity.</p> <p>Moving forward, the proposed Downtown (DT) District should build on this foundation by continuing to encourage a vibrant, mixed-use environment. Allowed uses should be reviewed and refined – and potentially expanded – to support economic vitality and increased housing opportunities. In addition, form-based and design standards should be considered to reinforce the physical development character of downtown, ensuring that new construction and redevelopment contribute positively to the walkable, pedestrian-oriented environment that defines the area.</p> <p>As part of this update, the City should also consider new approaches to regulating mixed-use development, particularly regarding ground-floor residential uses. Many communities have moved away from blanket prohibitions on residential uses on the ground floor, recognizing that retail market conditions have shifted significantly in the post-COVID era. Rather than prohibiting residential outright, cities are increasingly relying on form and design standards such as minimum transparency requirements, entrance spacing, or other elements of articulation and activation to ensure that buildings continue to support a lively street environment even when residential uses are located at street level.</p> <p>This more flexible, form-driven approach would allow downtown Bangor to continue evolving in response to market conditions while preserving the character and vibrancy that make it a regional destination.</p>

<p>GC General Commercial District</p>	<p>S&PS Shopping and Personal Service District</p>	<p>Currently, the Shopping and Personal Service (S&PS) District is mapped over a combination of regionally significant, large-scale commercial development – such as the Bangor Mall and nearby properties along Stillwater Avenue and Hogan Road – as well as smaller, corridor-focused commercial development along stretches of Broadway and Union Street. Except for the areas mapped along Broadway, most S&PS properties are located adjacent to, or even blended into, properties zoned General Commercial and Service (GC&S). This overlapping pattern makes it difficult to clearly distinguish the purpose and applicability of each district, as both districts appear to cover substantially similar areas, uses, and development forms.</p> <p>Moving forward, the S&PS District should be reoriented to focus on community-serving commercial development – reflecting the character of areas like Broadway, Union Street, and certain portions of Stillwater Avenue. Standards should reflect a lower tier of intensity than the GC&S District, which currently allows a broader range of uses and permits substantially similar building heights and lot standards.</p> <p>As drafting progresses, additional analysis will help inform an updated set of uses and dimensional standards that more clearly differentiate these lower-intensity commercial corridors from the larger, regional-scale commercial areas intended for the refined GC&S (RC, below) District. In line with other mixed-use and commercial districts, the proposed GC General Commercial District should also include basic form and design standards to guide new development and support the City’s vision for these areas.</p> <p>It should be noted that this reorientation, along with recalibration of allowed uses and dimensional standards, will likely require the rezoning of certain properties currently mapped S&PS into the updated RC Regional Commercial District, discussed below.</p>
<p>RC Regional Commercial District</p>	<p>GC&S General Commercial and Service District</p>	<p>As discussed above, the current General Commercial and Service (GC&S) District closely mirrors the S&PS District, with only minor modifications to dimensional standards and a limited expansion of allowed uses. As the Code update moves forward and these districts are better differentiated, it is recommended that the proposed RC Regional Commercial District become the City’s primary zoning tool for managing large-scale, regional-serving commercial and mixed-use development.</p> <p>The RC District should be applied along Bangor’s major commercial corridors, including Stillwater Avenue and Hogan Road, where larger footprint retail, service, and entertainment uses are already established or anticipated. This district would accommodate development intended to serve a regional customer base, rather than primarily local or neighborhood needs.</p> <p>Form and design considerations should be incorporated to ensure that new development in these areas meets a high standard of quality. However, the standards should be calibrated to provide flexibility—recognizing the scale and intensity of the commercial activity expected within the RC District—while still supporting site organization, building placement, pedestrian connections, and visual quality consistent with the City’s goals.</p>

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4.4 INDUSTRIAL DISTRICTS

4.4.1 | The City's palette of industrial districts should be evaluated and refined to ensure that it logically accommodates the range of industrial activities that occur in Bangor.

Currently, the Land Development Code addresses industrial areas in Bangor with two zoning districts: the UID Urban Industry District, and the I&S Industry and Service District. These districts have distinct purpose statements, but appear to be mapped in similar areas and over similar development forms.

UID Urban Industrial. Older industrial areas closer to the City center are classified as "urban industrial," which is intended to accommodate a mixture of commercial and industrial uses on smaller sites, or within those areas of the City that offer affordable industrial or warehousing space. The district allows for a range of uses that include warehousing, wholesaling, and industrial uses, clinics, chemical dependency treatment facilities, day-care centers, and marijuana cultivation operations. Certain higher-impact uses are allowed conditionally, including junkyards, petroleum product storage, and similar uses. Dimensionally, the district is quite permissive, allowing unlimited height and requiring no minimum lot area.

I&S Industry and Service. The I&S District accommodates manufacturing, research, information processing and communications uses that require "uncongested, spacious and attractive surroundings," as well as more traditional manufacturing operations, warehousing and distribution, and other commercial uses that require ample space to conduct business and control outside impacts. The district allows for a broad range of uses that includes a spectrum of manufacturing and industrial uses and research and testing facilities, along with truck terminals, distribution centers, and retail and service businesses incidental to a principal industrial or research facility use. Additional uses allowed include day-care centers, chemical dependency treatment facilities, fitness centers, and marijuana cultivation operations. Auto repair shops are allowed as conditional uses within the district, subject to additional standards. From a dimensional standpoint, requirements are fairly standard for a district of this orientation, requiring approximately a half-acre minimum area, and allowing for up to 50 feet in height.

In an updated Code, it is recommended that the palette of industrial districts should be augmented to address a full, modern range of industrial activity. Recommendations are included within the table below. The "Proposed District" column identifies the name of each proposed district. The "Origin" column notes whether the proposed district represents a revision of an existing district or the creation of a new district. The "Summary" column provides a description of the proposed district along with recommendations for how it could be drafted and incorporated into the updated framework addressing industrial districts.

Proposed District	Origin (If based on an existing district)	Summary
I-G General Industrial District	I&S Industry and Service District UID Urban Industry District	<p>The current I&S District accommodates a range of industrial activity that includes both “heavier” industrial activity, such as manufacturing, compounding, assembling, packing, and treatment of goods and products, as well as some traditionally “lighter” industrial uses like warehousing and wholesaling, distribution centers, and research and testing facilities. Similarly, the UID District allows for a mixture of uses with varying potential for outside impacts, including some of the “heaviest” industrial uses identified in the Code, like petroleum storage, junkyards, and quarries and gravel pits.</p> <p>Within an updated structure, the City may wish to look at these existing districts and separate out those uses that may have greater outside impacts into a “general industrial” category as proposed here.</p> <p>Uses allowed within the district would be refined to capture the range of more intensive industrial activity, and standards evaluated to ensure that impacts on adjacent or nearby areas are addressed and minimized. Such an approach can serve to “reserve” land within the City for these types of more impactful industrial uses, while mitigating their impacts and reducing the potential for conflicts with adjacent uses and zoning districts.</p> <p>Within an updated I-G District, dimensional standards should also be refined. Current minimum area standards generally align with the needs of these types of districts, however allowed heights may need to be re-evaluated to allow for more modern industrial configurations that require greater clear height within structures, allowing them to maximize storage within the same footprint.</p>
I-L Light Industrial District	I&S Industry and Service District	<p>Similar to the I-G District described above, the I-L Light Industrial District would be a split-off from the current I&S Industry and Service District.</p> <p>Within this lighter variant, activities currently allowed alongside those traditionally “heavier” industrial operations in the current I&S could be allowed, addressing those areas of the City that may be closer to residential districts or commercial and mixed-use districts that would be impacted by heavier industrial uses. Such uses could include light manufacturing and assembly (entirely conducted indoors), alongside the current information processing/communications facilities and research-type uses.</p> <p>Typically, light industrial uses contain no outdoor operations or storage; these are features associated with more general or heavy industrial use, and would continue to be accommodated within the I-G District described above.</p>
IMU Industrial Mixed-Use District	UID Urban Industry District	<p>The current UID District is mapped broadly across the City, including adjacent to the Bangor Airport, over industrial development on the southwest side of the City, and selectively to the northeast and even far north Bangor, outside of the growth boundary. This scattered mapping and seeming lack of consistency may be a reflection of the district doing double-duty, attempting to accommodate those uses that are typically higher-impact, like quarries and petroleum storage operations, alongside those “older industrial areas” of the City that may no longer be fit-for-purpose when it comes to modern demands, and are experiencing transition to a broader mix of uses, with existing industrial space being converted to other uses.</p> <p>In an updated structure, those uses with potentially greater impacts should be accommodated within the proposed I-G District, and those areas of industrial development that are more typical modern industrial parks with fewer outside impacts should be accommodated within the I-L Light Industrial District. The IMU District, then, could be refocused and reoriented toward addressing those older industrial areas that are mixed with other types of uses, or are experiencing a transition from their original uses.</p> <p>A good example of this may be the “Heritage Industrial Park” and areas that abut Hammond Street on the West side of the City. Currently, this area appears to be addressed through a patchwork of GC&S, I&S, and UID zoning that seek to grab individual parcels or uses and classify them in a logical manner. Moving forward, areas such as this could be more simply accommodated within the IMU District, which would allow a mixture of lighter industrial, service, retail, and perhaps even limited residential uses in these areas, facilitating their continued productivity and transition as the City evolves.</p>

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4.5 SPECIAL PURPOSE & OVERLAY DISTRICTS

4.5.1 | Special purpose districts – those that accommodate particular areas of the City, or particular uses – should be consolidated and refined to ensure they continue to work effectively in an updated Code.

The current Code contains a number of special purpose and overlay districts, designed to accommodate particular uses or forms of development found in the City. Moving forward, these should be consolidated into a new special purpose category, similar to the “residential,” “commercial and mixed-use,” and “industrial,” categories. The following table outlines how the existing special purpose districts can be addressed as the Code is updated.

District	Summary
ADD Airport Development District	<p>The ADD District accommodates the Bangor Airport, as well as those areas nearby that require special consideration due to their proximity to the airport. As the zone is tailored to the needs of the Bangor Airport, no major modifications are proposed.</p> <p>As the use structure within the Code is updated, there will need to be changes made to the ADD to ensure alignment with the updated approaches, and allowed uses should be refined and reconsidered as needed during drafting and based upon staff and stakeholder feedback.</p>
BPD Bass Park District	<p>The Bass Park District contains a tailored series of uses dimensional standards that have been developed specifically to address the “overall development plan for the Bass Park complex.” Standards allow for a mixture of open space, civic use, hotel and entertainment uses that accommodate the Bangor Raceway, Cross Insurance Center, and other uses on the site. As the use structure within the Code is updated, uses allowed in the BPD will be updated to ensure alignment and continued flexibility for implementation of the City’s vision for this area.</p>
G&ISD Government and Institutional Service District	<p>The G&ISD District is currently established to “preserve and protect those areas of the City occupied by public and nonprofit institutional buildings or uses.” As such, it is currently mapped in a piecemeal fashion that catches individual properties with such uses, regardless of their size or impacts. Moving forward, the G&ISD District may best be reoriented to address larger institutional uses, or those that operate in a campus-style environment. This new, reoriented district could become the INST Institutional District, to clarify a shift in regulatory approach.</p> <p>Other uses that are currently addressed by the G&ISD, such as churches, schools, and nonprofit offices and facilities would be allowed in a variety of other residential, commercial, and mixed-use zoning districts, and could simply be included within those districts moving forward. One potential consideration in leaving specific uses in the INST District would be building height – the current G&ISD allows heights of up to 80 feet, and requires no minimum lot area. Further analysis may be needed during drafting and creation of an updated zoning map to determine the extent to which current uses or properties mapped in the District take advantage of these flexibilities.</p>
P&O Park and Open Space District	<p>The Park and Open Space District accommodates Bangor’s significant public parks – requiring a minimum of one acre in lot area. No significant revisions to this district are anticipated. Rather, the District will be evaluated during drafting to ensure alignment with other updates in the Code, and the continued efficacy and application of the District.</p>
Penjajawoc Marsh Overlay Zone	<p>The Penjajawoc Marsh Overlay Zone modifies development standards within underlying zoning districts, and establishes the role of the Penjajawoc Marsh/Bangor Mall Management Commission to ensure natural resource protections are balanced with the rights of property owners in this sensitive area of the City. Similar to numerous other special purpose districts, the Penjajawoc Marsh Overlay zone will be updated to ensure it aligns with the overall Code update approach while maintaining its current focus on acknowledging the importance of this area and requiring additional sensitivity as new development occurs.</p>

RP Resource Protection District	<p>The RP Resource Protection District is established to preserve and protect features such as natural drainageways, floodplains, rivers, streams, and wetlands. Moving forward through the update process, the RP District may no longer be needed as a standalone district, as updates to Shoreland Zoning in accordance with the State’s Chapter 1000 Model Ordinance are anticipated to address these sensitive areas within the context of shoreland regulations. Continued utility and applicability of the district will be further evaluated during the drafting process.</p>
Shoreland Zoning	<p>The City’s current Article 7, addressing State-mandated shoreland zoning requirements, should be updated in accordance with MDEP’s Chapter 1000 model ordinance, to ensure that Bangor continues to comply with current standards related to development in the shoreland zone.</p>
Solar Array Overlay District	<p>The Solar Array Overlay is currently established in §165-80.2, within Article 12 – Utility Service. The mechanism by which this overlay is applied is somewhat unclear within the context of the current Code; it does not appear on the map but rather seems to allow solar arrays to be installed in all districts except the RP, SPD, and P&O Districts, subject to standards established within the section.</p> <p>As such, an overlay district is unnecessary to continue this approach. Rather, specific use standards should be included for solar arrays, and they can be allowed within various districts subject to those standards, in alignment with the current approach. This will result in a much simpler, clarified application of the standards, and make it easier to understand where solar installations are allowed within the City, and what standards apply. Where arrays are currently allowed without review – such as roof-mounted or building-integrated systems, they should be addressed as accessory structures.</p>
SPD Stream Protection District	<p>Similar to the RP District, it is anticipated that updates to the City’s Shoreland Zoning regulations will address these areas, and a standalone stream protection district will no longer be needed.</p>
Technology & Service District	<p>The Technology and Service District is currently mapped to one area within Bangor, around the Maine Enterprise Business Park. This area contains a mix of uses, primarily consisting of medical office, with a significant presence of Northern Light medical facilities.</p> <p>Standalone “office-park” style zoning districts have fallen out of favor in recent years, as there has been a move away from these types of developments in many communities. As drafting moves forward, it is recommended that the Technology and Service District be further evaluated to determine its continued applicability. There may be opportunities to eliminate this specific district and to address the form of development in these areas through a combination of commercial and mixed-use zoning, as well as application of an updated INST District where needed to address the “campus-like” development or clustering of medical office uses.</p>
WDD Waterfront Development District	<p>The WDD District establishes a set of standards designed to provide for the “dynamic reuse of river and stream frontage areas of the City in keeping with current market conditions and community objectives.” The district currently allows for a broad palette of uses, including marine-related uses, a variety of retail, service, and office uses, as well as residential uses subject to standards when located within 250 feet of the mean high-water line of the Penobscot River. Larger-scale uses like hotels and convention centers are also allowed.</p> <p>The WDD should be evaluated and refined during drafting to ensure that standards reflect the form of development that the City wants to see in these key areas. Further, a portion of the district is currently subject to standards contained in Chapter 71 of the City Code (Bangor Center Revitalization Area) that address new construction and renovation in the WDD. These standards address the placement, design, and articulation of new development in the WDD. As new design standards and approaches are developed during drafting and integrated directly into the districts, the approaches currently referenced within Chapter 71 may become redundant or otherwise unnecessary, and could be eliminated.</p>

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5.0 SITE DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

5.1 | All development standards of general applicability should be consolidated into a single section of the Code.

A number of development standards within the Code apply broadly to all development in Bangor, regardless of zoning district or use. Currently, many of these generally applicable standards are located in Article 9, but others may be scattered throughout different parts of the Code, including within Article 19, for example. As part of the update, standards should be reviewed and evaluated to identify those that apply universally, allowing for their consolidation into a single, clearly organized section.

Creating a single section for general development standards would make the Code more user-friendly by allowing property owners, developers, and designers to quickly understand the basic requirements that apply to any development proposal—without needing to navigate multiple sections of the Code.

Examples of current and/or new general development standards that could be consolidated into this section include:

- Controls regulating the maximum number of principal structures allowed on a lot.
- Requirements related to corner clearances or “sight triangles” at intersections.
- Special development requirements, such as standards applicable to development using private water or septic systems.
- Environmental performance standards addressing issues such as sedimentation and erosion control, steep slope development, and other site-specific considerations.

Bringing these standards together can help streamline the Code’s structure, reduce the potential for redundancies and conflicts, and improve ease of understanding for all users.

5.2 | Controls related to accessory structures within the current Code should be enhanced to ensure that they comprehensively address a full range of modern structures.

Currently, accessory structures are regulated within Article 5, which groups accessory structures and uses together. Moving forward, as discussed above in Section 3.6, accessory uses should be addressed within the context of a new, unified uses Article. Certain accessory structures are identified within the current Article 5, including swimming pools, accessory support structures, bus shelters, and private wind turbines – however, a comprehensive set of controls for common accessory structures is not included within the current Code.

Accessory structures should be consolidated into their own section of the Code, within the proposed Article 9. A set of general standards for all structures – addressing heights, setbacks, etc. – would be created and contained within this section. Further, specific accessory structures may require their own standards to address potential impacts. These can include regulations for each structure that deal with their size, height, placement on a lot, design, screening requirements, and other elements as needed. Common accessory structures that are addressed in modern codes include the following – we anticipate that Bangor would benefit from regulating some or all of these:

- Private or amateur radio (HAM) equipment
- Detached garages and carports

- Decks, pergolas, and patios
- Fences and walls
- Gazebos, coldframe structures, and sheds
- Mechanical equipment such as HVAC, backflow preventers, etc.
- Personal recreational game courts
- Refuse and recycling containers and enclosures
- Private solar panels and wind turbines

5.3 | Lighting standards should be updated to better reflect considerations of context, impacts, and enforcement.

Article 7 currently contains a set of lighting standards (§165-81) intended to “ensure appropriate outdoor lighting by addressing the issues of safety, efficiency, the environment and aesthetics.” These basic performance standards address impacts of exterior lighting, and apply to all development in the City requiring land development permit approval. This current set of standards can be evaluated and enhanced during drafting to ensure that they address all impacts of exterior lighting, and can be tailored to the needs and characteristics of specific districts if desired. Standards may vary by district, for instance being more flexible in higher-intensity commercial and mixed-use districts while maintaining a more stringent approach in districts that accommodate Bangor’s residential neighborhoods. Additionally, standards can be drafted to address the lighting needs of specific uses like recreational fields or tracks, where taller heights may be needed – and associated impacts mitigated.

Lighting standards should work to minimize the impact of light pollution throughout the City, and address spillage of light onto adjacent properties where needed. They should maintain simplicity, and respond to the City’s ability to administer these types of controls, ensuring that the Code does not contain technical language or require expertise beyond the capacity of enforcement staff.

5.4 | The Code should include a comprehensive approach to permitted architectural encroachments.

The current Code does not clearly address permitted encroachments, those structures or architectural features that are allowed to locate within – or encroach into – required setbacks. As a result, it can be difficult for applicants and staff to determine whether common structures and features – like decks, porches, stoops, bay windows, and eaves – are allowed within required setbacks.

To improve clarity and consistency, and to encourage the use of these types of features, which add visual interest to new structures, a comprehensive permitted encroachments table should be included. This table would identify which structures and features are allowed to project into required setbacks, and specify the extent to which each may encroach. Standards can vary by setback type (e.g., front, interior side, rear) and may be tailored to reflect the character of different zoning districts where appropriate.

Providing a clear framework to allow these types of encroachments can help applicants better understand their options, make review of projects that include these types of features a more streamlined process, and ensure consistency in how these types of features are addressed. An example of what this table might look like is included below. Please note that this example is illustrative in nature, and does not represent specific recommendations for Bangor.

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Table XX: Permitted Encroachments Into Required Setbacks				
Y= Permitted // N= Prohibited				
Max. = Maximum // Min. = Minimum				
	Front	Corner Side	Interior Side	Rear
Accessibility Ramp and Other Accessibility-Related Structures	Y	Y	Y	Y
Arbor	Y	Y	Y	Y
Balcony Max. of 6' into front, interior side, or corner side setback Max. of 8' into rear setback Min. of 4' from any lot line Min. vertical clearance of 8'	Y	Y	Y	Y
Bay Window Max. of 5' into any setback Min. of 24" above ground	Y	Y	Y	Y
Chimney Max. of 18" into setback	Y	Y	Y	Y
Deck Max. of 5' into front, corner side, or interior side setback Max. of 10' into rear setback Prohibited in front yard	Y	Y	Y	Y
Eaves Max. of 2' into setback	Y	Y	Y	Y

5.5 | Off-street vehicle parking and loading standards should be updated.

Parking standards for Bangor should address the range of demand for all types of parking and loading, and should consider the realities of how Bangor residents get around town as they conduct their daily lives. Updated parking requirements should address a broad range of elements related to off-street parking and loading facilities, including the following:

- The design of parking lots (dimensions, surfacing, curbing, marking, location, etc.).
- The design of parking structures or decks (design standards addressing relationship to the public realm, standards related to points of ingress/egress, etc.).
- Electric vehicle charging equipment (location, requirements for new development, etc.).
- The location of parking for both residential and nonresidential uses.
- Design of driveways, pick-up and drop-off areas, and delivery holding spaces.
- Exemptions, flexibilities, and reductions in required parking where applicable.

- Storage of commercial and recreational vehicles.

The proposed Article 10 (Off-street parking and loading) should also include a series of general standards that clarify how parking spaces may be used (for example, spaces may not be used for storage of vehicles undergoing repair unless specifically allowed, etc.), and how existing facilities are impacted as standards are adjusted. Some additional, more detailed recommendations are included in the sections below.

Parking ratios (the number of parking spaces required for each use) should be evaluated and revised.

Looking through the current requirements in §165-72, the City's parking ratios have been updated and amended over a series of years, with some requirements (for instance, drive-in business serving food) having been updated within recent years, and others (such as the required ratio for office buildings) having remained as-is for a decade or longer.

A comprehensive update provides an opportunity for the City to evaluate parking requirements holistically, in the context of aligning Bangor's regulations with the community's vision for the future. As such, current requirements should be evaluated to ensure that they adequately reflect the desires of the community and the needs of businesses. The full set of parking requirements should be updated to correspond 1:1 with the updated use structure, making it clear exactly what the requirement is for each use addressed within the code.

Additionally, special development types, like retail centers that contain multiple businesses, may be better served by including standards that address required parking based on the area of the development as a whole, rather than as a collection of individual uses with potentially wildly different requirements. As uses within these types of developments are also subject to turnover, parking requirements based upon a set of uses can throw a development into nonconforming status as tenants change over time. A single calculation based upon the area of the retail center as a whole can better allow for management of parking.

Additional parking flexibilities should be added to the Code, to unlock options for new development or reuse of structures on constrained parcels.

The current Code provides a limited set of parking flexibilities and exemptions, including:

- **District-based exemptions**, applicable to the Downtown Development District and the Bass Park District, as well as a reduction of five spaces for uses within the Neighborhood Service District.
- **Conditional exemptions within the Waterfront Development District**, which apply to developments requiring 25 or fewer spaces if there is an existing lot or garage of at least 25 spaces within 1,000 feet, or if the City Council has authorized funding to construct parking within that same distance.
- **Use-specific exemptions**, for a limited set of uses including small day-care facilities, outdoor seating areas, and accessory dwelling units.

As part of the Code update – should minimum parking requirements be retained, it is recommended that the range of exemptions and flexibilities be expanded. Preliminary recommendations include:

- **District-based reductions or exemptions tied to the updated zoning structure.** New or restructured districts, particularly those reflecting walkable, mixed-use patterns, may warrant full or partial exemptions from parking requirements.
- **Exemptions for existing buildings that currently lack on-site parking and do not have adequate space to provide it.** This would eliminate the need for variances or other relief and support the adaptive reuse of older structures, particularly in established neighborhoods.
- **Size-based exemptions for smaller-scale businesses.** For example, the Code could exempt buildings under

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3,000 square feet entirely, or exempt the first 3,000 square feet of larger buildings from parking calculations. This would reverse the structure of the current standard, which requires more parking for the first 2,000 square feet of retail or service uses (at 1 space per 300 square feet), then halves the requirement for the remainder of the building.

Expanding these types of allowances would help reduce barriers to reinvestment, promote walkability, and align the City's parking standards with its broader goals around housing, economic development, and sustainability.

Parking maximums should be considered for certain districts.

While the current Code focuses on minimum parking requirements, it does not place an upper limit on the amount of parking that may be provided. In some contexts – particularly in walkable, pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use areas – oversupply of parking can work against the City's broader goals by consuming valuable land, discouraging alternative transportation modes, and undermining desired urban character.

As part of the Code update, the City should consider introducing parking maximums in select districts. These might include the Downtown Development District, the Waterfront Development District, or other mixed-use districts where a more urban orientation is desired. Maximums can be calibrated to allow reasonable accommodation of parking demand while discouraging the overbuilding of parking in these areas.

Flexibility should also be built in, for example by allowing structured or shared parking to exceed the maximum through an administrative process, ensuring that maximums do not act as a barrier to feasible development.

The Code should require bicycle parking.

Currently, Bangor's Code does not include any requirements for bicycle parking. To support the City's efforts to create a more cohesive and accessible multi-modal network and encourage bicycle use as a viable alternative to driving, the Code should include bicycle parking requirements.

Requirements should be calibrated to ensure that they are not overly burdensome, taking into account the character of different parts of the City and the practical limitations of bicycle use in certain areas. Standards can be incorporated alongside vehicular parking requirements, and typically include provisions for both short-term and long-term spaces, as well as standards related to siting and design.

The City may want to consider expanding EV charging standards within the Code.

As the use of electric vehicles grows, the City should ensure that the Code includes clear provisions for how this infrastructure is addressed. Currently, EV charging equipment is acknowledged within the Code, and exempted from setback requirements that apply to parking areas, as well as buffering standards. This is a sensible approach, as many communities are simply allowing EV charging equipment to be installed as a component of any parking space, and adjusting standards to ensure they do not prohibit its installation.

While market demand is driving some adoption of EV-related amenities, the City may want to consider further supporting this transition by establishing minimum requirements or incentives for EV spaces in certain contexts. Standards can address different levels of readiness – such as EV-capable (conduit installation), EV-ready (wiring and infrastructure included), or fully equipped charging stations. Requirements or incentives could be targeted and scaled based upon proposed uses, the size of lots or structures, or other factors.

Design standards should be established for parking structure façades facing public streets.

While the current Code includes design standards related to parking lot layout, such as the size and orientation of spaces, drive aisle widths, and the placement of landscape islands, it does not currently address the design of parking structures, particularly how they present to the public realm.

As structured parking becomes a more common solution in higher-intensity areas, the Code should include design standards for façades that face public streets. These standards may address requirements for façade articulation, the screening of ground-floor or rooftop parking spaces, and the incorporation of architectural elements or active uses to reduce the visual impact of parking structures. Standards should also ensure the maintenance of vehicular clear-sight zones at entrances and exits to reduce conflicts with pedestrians, cyclists, and other vehicles.

Loading requirements should be evaluated and updated during drafting.

The number of loading spaces required can have a significant impact on the feasibility and functionality of new development. Loading standards should be updated to align with the use structure of the updated Code, and should continue to address dimensional considerations while expanding to cover the design of off-street loading, including locational standards, minimum distances from intersections, surfacing requirements, and required screening.

The thresholds that trigger loading space requirements should also be reviewed and refined to ensure they are not overly burdensome, particularly for smaller-scale development or uses with limited operational need for loading space. The current requirements set a threshold of 3,000 square feet for office buildings or hotels, and 1,000 square feet for retail, service, wholesale, industrial, and institutional uses. These are low thresholds, which may present challenges for smaller businesses or development sites. Further, as with minimum parking requirements, older existing structures that cannot reasonably accommodate loading areas on site should be exempted from loading requirements in order to support their reuse and remove barriers to reinvestment.

Parking location and screening standards should be relocated, clarified, and streamlined.

The current Code includes standards related to the location and screening of required parking in §165-73, as well as parking lot design and landscaping in §165-74. In the updated Code, all landscaping and buffering requirements related to parking lots should be consolidated within the proposed Article 11, alongside other landscape and buffering standards, to improve clarity and organization.

Further, the City should consider eliminating the current parking setback requirements in §165-73. These setbacks may unintentionally discourage desirable arrangements like shared parking or cross-access between lots, and may instead incentivize multiple curb cuts and fragmented site design. The minimum distance requirements also do not clearly align with the dimensions of required landscape buffers that apply in certain contexts, which may make their application somewhat confusing. Additionally, standards addressing the location of outdoor display and outdoor storage areas should also be removed from the off-street parking section and instead integrated into the regulations for those specific uses – whether principal or accessory – where tailored standards can more appropriately manage potential impacts.

An updated set of locational standards, reasonable requirements for screening and buffering at the perimeter of parking lots, and an updated set of buffer standards that address typical adjacencies (e.g. where a residential district abut a commercial or industrial district) can more simply address the concerns currently managed through these parking setback standards moving forward.

5.6 | Landscape standards should be consolidated into a new Article that comprehensively addresses all screening and buffering requirements.

In addition to their aesthetic impact, landscape requirements can help to provide value to the City at multiple levels, enhancing quality of life, promoting public health, and supporting resiliency goals. Landscape requirements in the updated Code should address all aspects of site development, helping to beautify properties, screen unsightly

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elements, and provide adequate buffering between different districts and uses.

Currently, landscaping is addressed in a few different parts of the Code, including the schedule of buffer yard standards, requirements for transitional yards or buffers in §165-66, and within the off-street parking standards in Article 10. To improve clarity and support consistency in their application, it is recommended that the proposed Article 11 be created to consolidate all landscape related requirements into a single, clearly organized structure. This new Article should be organized around categories of requirements, which might include:

- **Parking lot perimeter landscaping.** Where parking lots abut a public street, landscape standards should help to ensure effective screening of parked vehicles from the right-of-way. This might be achieved through a combination of fencing and shrubs, a low pedestrian-scale wall, or natural plantings designed to achieve screening to a minimum standard, like three feet in height.
- **Parking lot interior landscaping.** Standards should be drafted to ensure that they enhance the visual quality of parking lots, and work to reduce heat-island while providing opportunities for interception and infiltration of rainwater. Requirements should include a minimum number of landscape islands (as well as their dimensions), planting requirements, and standards relating to their placement and orientation within lots. Flexibilities can also be included to address options such as parking lot solar or solar shades in lieu of landscaping.
- **Buffer yards.** Buffer yards are essential for screening and mitigating impacts between incompatible adjacent land uses. While buffer requirements are included in the current Code, they should be refined to ensure they adequately address the range of adjacencies, and calibrated to respond to the intensity and character of different districts. Standards should be scaled to the form and function of the uses involved, with more robust buffers required where higher-intensity uses abut residential or other low-intensity uses.

5.7 | Basic landscape installation, selection, and maintenance standards should be included in the updated Code

To ensure high-quality outcomes and promote the health and longevity of installed landscape elements, the Code should include clear standards for both installation and maintenance. These standards should address minimum plant sizes at installation, the required or encouraged use of native species, and species diversity.

Establishing minimum sizes for trees, shrubs, and other plant materials helps ensure that landscaping provides a visible and functional impact from the outset—an impact that will improve over time as the plantings mature. Undersized or poorly selected plantings may fail to meet screening or beautification objectives and are less likely to survive the first few growing seasons.

In addition, the Code should promote sustainable landscape practices by:

- Continuing to encourage, or requiring the use of native, drought-tolerant, and salt-tolerant species where appropriate. Such standards may be complimented by additional resources like approved species lists.
- Prohibiting the use of invasive species.
- Establishing species diversity requirements to improve long-term landscape health and resilience.

For example, new standards could limit the percentage of plantings that may consist of a single species. This would help ensure that installed landscape remains functional and attractive even in the event of disease, drought, or other stressors that may disproportionately affect individual species.



6.0 CODE ADMINISTRATION

6.1 | Articles dealing with administration of the Code should be reorganized for greater clarity and consistency in their application.

To make the processes for various applications and approvals simpler and easier to understand for both applicants and Code administrators, the Articles dealing with administration should be reorganized as follows:

Article 12: Code Administrators

The proposed Article 12 would enumerate the powers and duties of all officials and boards involved in the administration of the LDC. This organization can help users to better understand the parties responsible for receiving, reviewing, recommending, and approving applications under the Land Development Code.

It is anticipated that the following officials and boards would be included:

- City Council
- Planning Board
- Board of Appeals
- Code Enforcement Officer
- Planning Officer

Article 13: Application Procedures

This Article would contain the rules for how applications are to be submitted and reviewed. Procedures should be carefully reviewed to ensure they are consistent with Maine law, and should be organized into two main sections:

- Application steps (pre-application, submittal, completeness review, fees, withdrawal, etc.)
- Required notice (mailed, published, posted, etc.)

Article 14: Land Development Approvals & Permits

Approval processes for the various land development approvals and permits would be contained within the proposed Article 14. This Article would group a number of approvals currently contained in Article 1, along with the Land Development Permit currently addressed in Article 16. To the extent possible, each application process would be structured in a parallel fashion to enhance clarity. This structure would include:

- Purpose (the intent of the application)
- Initiation (who may initiate the application)
- Authority (who is responsible for acting on the application)
- Procedure (filing requirements and action steps leading to a decision on the application)

- Approval standards (standards that must be considered in reviewing and approving applications)

The approvals and permits addressed within this Article are anticipated to include the following, some of which are proposals and noted as “new:”

- Zoning amendments (text and map)
- Conditional use
- Contract zoning
- Variance (hardship/practical difficulty/disability)
- Reasonable accommodation
- Appeals (including administrative appeals)
- Zoning interpretation (New)
- Land development permit
- Temporary use permit (New)
- Building permit
- Certificate of occupancy

Article 15: Subdivision of Land

The proposed Article 15 would contain all requirements and standards for review and approval of subdivisions, continuing to reference the land development permit review process as current.

6.2 | Land development permit requirements should be evaluated for opportunities to clarify thresholds and streamline the review process.

Article 16 of the current Code establishes the standards and procedures for obtaining a land development permit, which functions as Bangor’s site plan review process. It applies to both subdivisions (major and minor) and site developments (major and minor). While major and minor site developments are defined separately and subject to different submittal requirements, both are currently reviewed and approved by the Planning Board.

As part of the Code update, the City should consider establishing an alternative administrative review path for minor site developments. Under this approach, minor site developments that meet all applicable Code requirements could be reviewed and approved by City staff, without needing to proceed to the Planning Board. This is a common practice in many communities and would allow the Planning Board to focus on more complex projects, while still ensuring appropriate oversight for minor developments.

- The administrative review process can be further refined during drafting to ensure:
- Clear criteria exist for determining eligibility for administrative approval.
- A mechanism is in place to elevate any application to the Planning Board, if warranted.
- A process is available for applicants or aggrieved parties to appeal an administrative decision to the Planning Board.

In support of this change, existing thresholds and triggers for site development review should be evaluated and clarified to ensure that they are both functional and easy to interpret. Currently, §165-111 outlines activities that require a land development permit, including conditional uses, solar arrays (with exceptions), parking lots with 20 or more

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spaces, parking structures, and any expansion of a lot or structure (with no specified threshold). It also includes a vague provision applying the permit requirement to “any use, including permitted uses” in a range of zoning districts. This structure may lead to unnecessary delays, or require site plan review in cases where no physical development is proposed—for example, when an applicant wishes to establish a permitted use within an existing structure.

A more typical and user-friendly approach would be to structure triggers around development activity, such as:

- “Any new construction of nonresidential or multi-family development...”
- “Any change of use from one of the following categories to any other: residential, commercial, industrial, etc.”

Then classify projects by scale (e.g., under or over 1,000 square feet) to determine whether administrative or Planning Board review is required. These updates would help streamline the review process, reduce unnecessary delays, and ensure that review efforts are focused on projects with the greatest potential impact.

6.3 | The City should remove submittal requirements from the Code, and include them in supplemental materials or the application packets themselves.

A more modern and flexible approach to managing submittal requirements is to locate them outside the Code either as a supplement to the LDC or as part of the application materials themselves. Codifying detailed submittal requirements within the LDC creates rigidity, as any change – no matter how minor – would require a formal text amendment process. This can make the requirements less responsive to evolving best practices, advances in technology, or internal process improvements over time.

For example, if the City wished to modify or eliminate the requirement for five paper copies of printed plan sets, doing so would currently require a Code amendment. By contrast, maintaining submittal checklists outside of the Code allows for quicker adjustments and easier alignment with shifting technological advances and staff or applicant needs.

6.4 | Zoning text interpretations should be clarified and formalized in the Code.

Every city must interpret the text of its Code from time to time, and a well-functioning Code should include a clear and consistent process for doing so. While no code can anticipate every possible scenario or question of applicability, a formal interpretation procedure allows the City to respond to ambiguity in a way that promotes fairness, transparency, and long-term consistency.

Establishing a formal administrative interpretation process ensures that determinations are documented, justified, and accessible. This can create a valuable internal record of past interpretations that staff can reference as similar issues arise or as the City considers future amendments to clarify or improve the Code. Over time, a structured interpretation process helps preserve the integrity of the Code while allowing it to remain adaptable and responsive to real-world conditions.

6.5 | Subdivision regulations should be updated to align with the revised zoning framework, and to improve clarity and flexibility.

As the City updates its zoning regulations within the LDC, the subdivision standards also need to be reviewed and revised to ensure both sets of regulations work together to facilitate the continuation of desirable development patterns. For example, as minimum lot sizes are revised to reflect the intent of each zoning district – whether to preserve existing patterns or facilitate future infill development – subdivision requirements should work to reinforce those standards.

Clarification is also needed regarding the applicability of subdivision standards under §165-129, developmental subdivision approval. 30-A M.R.S. §4401 broadly defines subdivision to include the division of land into three or more lots within a five-year period, the division of a new structure (or an existing structure previously used for commercial or industrial use) into three or more dwelling units within a five-year period, or the construction or placement of three or more dwelling units on a single parcel of land within a five-year period. 30-A M.R.S. §4402(6), however, exempts division of a new or existing structure into three or more dwelling units in municipalities where such projects are subject to municipal site plan review. The City's subdivision regulations should be updated to reflect this exemption and clarify that these types of projects are subject to land development permit review only, avoiding redundant or conflicting processes.

Additionally, the City should evaluate which technical standards currently found in the subdivision regulations may be better suited for relocation to another chapter of the City Code, or to a separate technical appendix. Section 165-131 includes detailed specifications for streets, utilities, monuments, and other improvements – some of which refer to other chapters, such as Chapter 271 (Streets), while others specify construction methods directly in the zoning text (e.g. subgrade depths, surface treatments, and similar standards). As with submittal requirements (§6.3, above), placing technical specifications in a separate, administratively maintained document would allow for greater flexibility and responsiveness as engineering standards evolve or local needs change over time.

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7.0 Nonconformities

7.1 | Nonconformities should be addressed clearly and comprehensively in the updated Code.

One of the goals of any code update is to reduce the number of nonconforming properties and uses. Many nonconformities will be eliminated through updated district standards and remapping efforts that better reflect existing development patterns. However, some properties, structures, and uses will remain nonconforming even after the update. As such, the nonconformities section of the Code should be reorganized and rewritten for clarity, with distinct provisions for each major type of nonconformity. While the current Code addresses some of these categories, there may be significant opportunities to simplify and clarify how they are handled moving forward.

Nonconforming Use. A nonconforming use is a legal use of land or a structure that was established prior to the adoption of the current Code or any subsequent amendment that is no longer permitted in the zoning district. The updated Code should include standards for discontinuation or abandonment, including a 24-month discontinuation period after which the use may not be reestablished, consistent with the City's current approach. The current allowance for a nonconforming use to be changed to another nonconforming use is uncommon and should be considered for elimination, as the intent of most provisions is to phase out such nonconforming uses over time, rather than to allow establishment of new nonconformities.

Nonconforming Structure. A nonconforming structure is a legal structure that does not comply with one or more dimensional or design standards of the zoning district in which it is located. The current Code allows for significant flexibility in expansion of nonconforming structures, so long as the expansion does not create any new nonconformities and otherwise complies with the requirements of the district in which it is located. Further, the Code allows for the in-kind reconstruction of structures destroyed by fire or natural catastrophe within two years, or within seven years for residential structures, which is a generous allowance.

Nonconforming Site Characteristic (New). A nonconforming site characteristic refers to a legal condition of the site – such as landscaping, fencing, lighting, or parking – that does not meet current Code standards. This category is not explicitly addressed in the current Code (with the exception of parking in §165-19) and should be added. New provisions should clarify when updates to the site trigger compliance, and under what circumstances existing conditions may remain.

Nonconforming Lot. A nonconforming lot is a legally created lot of record that does not meet current minimum lot size or lot width standards. The current nonconforming lot provisions address issues of nonconforming FAR, impervious surface, densities, and other factors, which are recommended to be eliminated or addressed through the new nonconforming site characteristic provisions above. The updated Code should allow development on nonconforming lots, provided all other applicable standards of the district can be met. This ensures that buildable lots are not rendered unusable due to minor dimensional deficiencies.

Establishing more clearly defined categories and consistent rules for each type of nonconformity will improve usability and predictability for applicants, staff, and decision-makers. It will also help ensure that the Code supports reinvestment while preserving the intent of updated district standards.

7.2 | The Code should allow extensions of nonconforming side or rear walls for residential dwellings.

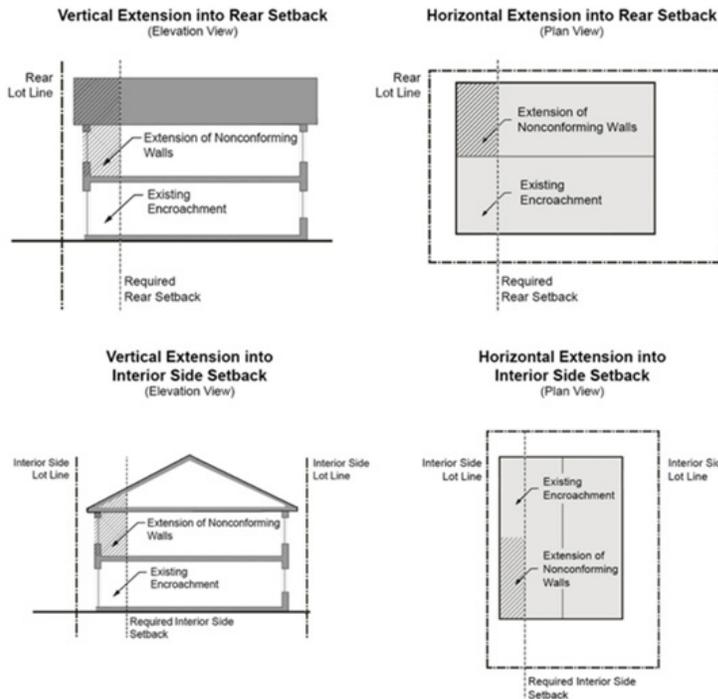
To support reinvestment in Bangor's existing neighborhoods and help preserve the City's housing stock, the updated

Code should include a provision allowing certain types of dwellings – most typically single-family and two-family dwellings – with legally nonconforming side or rear setbacks to extend those nonconforming walls. This type of allowance is particularly valuable in older neighborhoods, where lot and building configurations may not align with current setback requirements.

Where a dwelling is deemed nonconforming solely because a side or rear wall encroaches into a required setback, the structure should be permitted to extend horizontally or vertically along the same nonconforming plane – defined by the existing perimeter wall – provided the extension does not create new nonconformities or violate other applicable district standards. This approach encourages ongoing investment in existing homes, provides flexibility for homeowners to modernize or expand their properties, and ensures that neighborhood character is maintained while allowing for sensible improvements to nonconforming homes over time.

Sample image explaining this concept.

More illustrations can be added as the document is finalized and formatted



Technical Review and Approaches

