



# Town of Reading

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## COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

### MEMORANDUM

**To:** Town of Reading Boards, Committees and Commissions  
**CC:** Town Manager, Assistant Town Manager, Town Engineer, DPW Director, Tree Warden, RMLD Engineer, Fire Chief, Police Chief, Building Inspector, Conservation Administrator, Health Agent, Town Ombudsman  
**From:** Jeff Hansen, Chair, Community Planning & Development Commission  
**Date:** ~~January 21, 2016~~ February 10, 2016  
**Re:** Potential Zoning Bylaw Amendments for 2016

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I am writing on behalf of the CPDC to update you on the status of the Comprehensive Update of the Reading Zoning Bylaw (ZBL), which was initiated in 2014 in an effort to reorganize the entire bylaw and revise certain sections. Over the past year and a half we have made progress on the remaining sections, as Town Meeting has adopted several zoning amendments.

The attached document – “Next Phase of the Zoning Update Project as of October, 27, 2015” – outlines progress made on zoning updates since November 2013, and indicates a few key changes that are pending for the future. We are asking for your input and feedback on prioritizing zoning amendments for Subsequent Town Meeting in November of 2016.

Based on the attached document, and on recent staff feedback, the CPDC is considering the following list of amendments:

#### Major Initiatives:

- Sign Bylaw (Section 8) – Town Counsel believes this is critical for 2016
  - Issue: difficult to navigate, potentially illegal to enforce
  - Impetus: needs to be revised to comply with recent Supreme Court case
  - Next Steps: Town Counsel will give presentation at March 7<sup>th</sup> CPDC meeting
- Expanding DSGD – Extending the Downtown Smart Growth District boundaries
  - Recommended in the Economic Development Action Plan (December, 2015)
  - In light of pending redevelopments this may facilitate broader scope
  - Noted in our Housing Production Plan (HPP) – January, 2013
- Site Plan Review (Section 4.6)
  - Issue: fine tuning when Site Plan Review applies (including staff approvals under Minor Site Plan Review)
  - Impetus: revise language to capture projects with planning implications or that impact the public health, safety or welfare

- Next Steps: review proposed Site Plan Review revisions
- Planned Residential Development (Section 11.2)
  - Issue: process is onerous for applicants & commingles different levels of jurisdiction
  - Impetus: need to streamline and simplify zoning to allow for alternatives to traditional subdivisions and preserve open space.
  - Next Steps: Planning staff will continue working on proposed revision
- Planned Unit Development (Section 11.1)
  - Issue: process is onerous & commingles different levels of jurisdiction
  - Impetus: need to streamline and simplify zoning
  - Next Steps: continue to discuss goals of current PUD bylaw & determine how best to modify it

Necessary (relatively minor) Amendments:

- Cleaning up the Unintended Consequences of Prior Amendments
  - Lot Shape (Section 6.2.1) – calculation unnecessarily complex
  - Accessory structures (Section 5.5) and definition, Floor Area, Net
    - i. Sheds – too many regulations, hard to enforce
    - ii. Height – need maximum
    - iii. Accessory apartment versus in-law apartment
    - iv. Gross SF versus net SF
  - Pet Grooming & Pet Daycare (Section 5) – add uses, match Animal Control Bylaw
  - Associate Members (Section 4.3) – fix numbering issue
- Animal Kennel – not allowed in Business B (approved by SP under “substantially similar to,” may want to consider amending the Table of Uses to allow at least by SP.
- Contractor’s Yard – currently not allowed in any zoning district
- Relocate all definitions to Section 2

Requests, comments or input for 2016 Zoning Bylaw Amendments should be submitted to Julie Mercier, Community Development Director, no later than Monday, February 8<sup>th</sup> for review by the CPDC at their scheduled Zoning Workshop that evening. If you are unable to attend the workshop, please submit your comments in writing by Thursday, February 11<sup>th</sup>.

**The CPDC’s Zoning Workshop is scheduled for Monday, February 22<sup>nd</sup> at 7:30 pm in the Great Room at the Pleasant Street Center, 49 Pleasant Street, Reading, MA.**