

Burlington Planning Commission

Tuesday, October 14, 2025, 6:30 PM

Remote & Virtual Meeting via Zoom

In person option available:

Bushor Conference Room (Room 102), 1st Floor of City Hall, 149 Church St.

To Join the Meeting on a Computer

Link:<https://zoom.us/j/97941883790?pwd=bGZBNzNyV1liL3p5NkhIL2dqUFIzdz09>

Passcode: 658929

To Join the Meeting on a Phone

Number:+1 646 931 3860 US Meeting ID: 979 4188 3790

1. Agenda

2. Public Forum

3. Chair's Report

4. Director's Report

5. VT ACCD Municipal Planning Grant

Subject	5.1. Approve the resolution provided by staff to authorize the Department's application to the Agency of Commerce & Community Development's Municipal Planning Grant.
Meeting	October 14, 2025 - Planning Commission Agenda - Tuesday, October 14, 2025, 6:30 PM, Burlington Planning Commission
Category	5. VT ACCD Municipal Planning Grant
Department	Planning
Type	
Recommended Action	

6. Proposed CDO Amendment ZA-26-02 Downtown Fences

Subject	6.1. Discussion related to proposed CDO Amendment ZA-26-02: Downtown Fences
Meeting	October 14, 2025 - Planning Commission Agenda - Tuesday, October 14, 2025, 6:30 PM, Burlington Planning Commission
Category	6. Proposed CDO Amendment ZA-26-02 Downtown Fences

Department Planning

Type

Recommended Action

7. Commissioner Items

8. Accept Minutes & Communications

Subject	8.1. Accept Minutes & Communications
Meeting	October 14, 2025 - Planning Commission Agenda - Tuesday, October 14, 2025, 6:30 PM, Burlington Planning Commission
Category	8. Accept Minutes & Communications
Department	Planning
Type	

9. Adjournment



To: Planning Commission

From: Sarah Morgan & Charles Dillard, Office of Planning (OCP)
Johanna Schneider & Will Clavelle, Community & Economic Development (CEDO)
Nicole Losch & Sarah Bermingham, Department of Finance & Administration (DFA)

Re: FY2026 Municipal Planning Grant Support

Date: October 10, 2025

BACKGROUND

The Vermont Department of Housing and Community Development's Municipal Planning Grant program applications are due November 3, 2025. The OCP, CEDO, and DFA have collaboratively discussed candidates. The projects under consideration include:

- A Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy as part of the *planBTV 2050: Unified Comprehensive Plan*
- Engagement & Deliverables related to the *planBTV 2050: Unified Comprehensive Plan*

The city will request the full \$30,000 and will commit a 10% match. As of this memo's submission, projects are still being vetted based on their overall budgets and ability to provide a local match.

We acknowledge that, following approval from the Planning Commission and City Council, the Office of City Planning applied for and received \$30,000 from the FY2025 Municipal Planning Grant. This funding, along with the \$6,000 match, will also be used as part of the *planBTV 2050: Unified Comprehensive Plan* effort, but has already been dedicated to funding the Scenario Planning component.

REQUEST

We respectfully request the Planning Commission vote to recommend the city apply for the FY2026 Municipal Planning Grant program.

Resolution Relating to

FY2026 MUNICIPAL PLANNING GRANT

RESOLUTION_____

Sponsor(s):
Introduced: Planning Commission
Referred to: _____
Action: _____
Date: _____
Signed by Mayor: _____

CITY OF BURLINGTON

In the year Two Thousand Twenty-Five.....

Resolved by the City Council of the City of Burlington, as follows:

1 That WHEREAS, the City of Burlington is applying for funding as provided for in the FY26 Budget Act
2 and may receive an award of funds under said provisions; and
3 WHEREAS, the Department of Housing and Community Development may offer a Grant Agreement
4 to the City for said funding; and
5 WHEREAS, the City is maintaining its efforts to provide local funds for municipal planning purposes;
6 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the City Council agrees to the requirements and
7 obligations of the Municipal Planning Grant program, including the commitment to match funds; and
8 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Planning Commission recommends applying for the FY2026
9 Municipal Planning Grant, documented in public meeting minutes of October 14, 2025; and
10 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Planning Director, currently Charles Dillard, is hereby
11 authorized to serve as the Municipal/Authorizing Official for the Grant Electronic Application and Reporting
12 System, and to execute the Grant Agreement and other such documents as may be necessary to secure these
13 funds, subject to City Attorney approval; and
14 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Principal Planner, currently Sarah Morgan, is hereby
15 designated as the Grant Administrator, responsible for the overall Administrative program activities related to
16 the Municipal Planning Grant program and any subsequent Grant Agreement Provisions; and
17 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Grants Director, currently Nicole Losch, is hereby authorized
18 to serve as the alternate Municipal/Authorizing Official for the Grant Electronic Application and Reporting
19 System; and
20 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Planning Director is hereby designated to authorize
21 conforming budget amendments, subject to approval from the Chief Administrative Officer or their designee,
22 and to take such other actions, and to execute such other instruments approved as to form by the City
23 Attorney, as may be necessary or convenient to effectuate the transactions contemplated hereby.

TO: Burlington Planning Commission
FROM: Sarah Morgan, AICP, Principal Planner
Charles Dillard, AICP, Director of City Planning
DATE: October 10, 2025
RE: Proposed ZA-26-02 planBTV Downtown Code Fence Height

This memo is intended to provide an overview about the proposed changes included in ZA-26-02.

1. Overview & Background

Downtown business owners, their employees, and service providers are facing ongoing challenges related to substance use, hygiene, and safety, particularly in alleys, entryways, and service areas. Due to the rigidity of the planBTV Downtown Code, the Development Review Board has requested a zoning amendment that provides more allowance for taller fences in Burlington's downtown districts.

The proposed amendment to Article 14 would create an administrative approval pathway for fences up to 6 feet in height, provided they are transparent.

4. Proposed Amendment: ZA-26-02

a) Amendment Type

Text Amendment	Map Amendment	Text & Map Amendment
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b) Purpose Statement

The proposed change in ZA-26-02 aims to address challenges related to fence height in Downtown districts.

c) Proposed Amendment

1. Amendments to Article 14: PlanBTV Downtown Code Fences

- Amends Sec. 14.6.8 (b) v. A. Fences and Free-Standing Walls to create an administrative approval pathway allowing for fences to be up to 6 feet in height, as long as they are transparent.

d) Relationship to planBTV

This following discussion of conformance with the goals and policies of planBTV is prepared in accordance with the provisions of 24 V.S.A. §4441(c).

Theme:	Dynamic	Distinctive	Inclusive	Connected
Land Use:	Conserve	Sustain		Grow

Compatibility with Proposed Future Land Use & Density

The proposed amendment aligns with the land use and density policies outlined in planBTV. Its purpose is to support both existing and future businesses in downtown as the city adapts to challenges related to public health and safety. This change reflects the intent of the "Dynamic" theme, which prioritizes purposeful and economically viable solutions that enable the city to meet current needs and address future challenges.

Impact on Safe & Affordable Housing

This amendment has no direct impact on safe and affordable housing.

Planned Community Facilities

This amendment has no direct impact on planned community facilities.

h) Process Overview

The following chart summarizes the current stage in the zoning amendment process, and identifies any recommended actions:

Planning Commission Process					
Draft Amendment prepared by Staff 9/18/25	Presentation to & discussion by Commission: 10/14/25	Approve for Public Hearing	Public Hearing	Approved & forwarded to Council	
City Council Process					
First Read & Referral to Ordinance Committee	Ordinance Committee discussion	Ordinance Committee recommend	Second Read	Public Hearing	Council Approval & Adoption

CITY OF BURLINGTON

ORDINANCE _____

Sponsor: Office of City Planning,
Planning Commission

Public Hearing Dates: _____

First reading: _____

Referred to: _____

Rules suspended and placed in all
stages of passage: _____

Second reading: _____

Action: _____

Date: _____

Signed by Mayor: _____

Published: _____

Effective: _____

In the Year Two Thousand Twenty-Five

An Ordinance in Relation to

ZA-26-02 planBTV Downtown Code Fences

It is hereby Ordained by the City Council of the City of Burlington as follows:

That Appendix A-Burlington Comprehensive Development Ordinance of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Burlington be and hereby amends Article 14, Sec. 14.6.8 to increase the height of see-through fences permitted in the First Lot Layer.

Article 14 PlanBTV Downtown Code

Section 6: Applicable in All Form Districts

Section 14.6.8 – Site and Landscape Standards

a) Purpose and Applicability – *As Written*

b) Site Standards

i – iv. *As Written*

v. Fences and Free-standing Walls:

A. Fences and Free-standing Walls placed within the First Lot Layer shall not exceed 4-feet in height, except for see-through fences which shall not exceed 6 feet in height. Fences and Free-standing Walls placed within the Second or Third Lot Layer shall not exceed 8-feet in height unless a different height limit is specified under the applicable Form District or Frontage Type.

* Material stricken out deleted.

** Material underlined added.

Ordinances 2026/ZA-26-02 Technical Corrections and Minor Revisions
DRAFT v1.0 10/9/26

From: [Mira Geffner](#)
To: [Andrew Montroll](#)
Cc: [Charles Dillard](#)
Subject: Community Sailing Center petition
Date: Thursday, October 2, 2025 9:44:12 AM

[WARNING]: This email was sent from someone outside of the City of Burlington.

Dear Mr. Montroll,

I'm writing regarding the Class II/III Wetlands Determination Petition by Owen Milne for the Lake Champlain Community Sailing Center (CSC) in Burlington. Thank you for your careful consideration.

The CSC is a wonderful nonprofit resource in Burlington that helps to make the lake accessible for the larger community and brings recreational traffic, shoppers and restaurant-goers to Burlington from all over Chittenden county and beyond.

I am a Shelburne resident, formerly from Charlotte, and since moving to the area I have visited the CSC 2-3 times/week May-September, often eating near the Sailing Center after paddling or shopping at the Burlington Farmers' Market and visiting art studios in the South End.

I hope the Planning Commission will decide to let the CSC move forward with its plan to use the wetlands.

With gratitude for Burlington's built and natural spaces,
Mira

Burlington Planning Commission

149 Church Street
Burlington, VT 05401

www.burlingtonvt.gov/cityplanning

Andy Montroll, Chair
Alex Friend, Vice Chair
Erhard Mahnke
Ryan Nick
Michael Gaughan
Erin Malone
Julia Randall

Burlington Planning Commission

Tuesday September 23, 2025, 6:30 P.M.

Hybrid Meeting via Zoom and in City Hall's Bushor Conference Room

Draft Minutes

Commissioners Present:

- ☐ Andy Montroll
- ☒ Michael Gaughan
- ☒ Erhard Mahnke
- ☒ Erin Malone
- ☒ Ryan Nick
- ☒ Julia Randall
- ☒ Alexander Friend

City Staff Present:

- ☒ Charles Dillard, Director
- ☒ Sarah Morgan, Principal Planner
- ☒ Scott Gustin, Principal Planner

Public Attendance: Sharon Bushor, Barbara Hedrick, Fawnya Willson, Livia Demarchis

1. Agenda

Call to Order: 6:30pm

Vice Chair Alex Friend facilitated the meeting in Andy Montroll's absence.

Changes to Agenda:

- ZA-26-01 no longer included standards related to alternative compliance or residential occupancy limits. These changes will be addressed in future amendments.

2. Public Forum

<u>Name(s)</u>	<u>Comment</u>
Sharon Bushor	Emphasized the importance of expanding the Conservation Fund, advocating for nature-based development, and protecting the city's tree canopy, which she noted is shrinking due to development and a lack of strong regulations. Sharon also expressed concerns about the South End Innovation District minor revision under ZA-26-01, noting that she felt that they violate the original commitment to preserve the arts section's balance by potentially increasing housing at the expense of commercial and arts spaces.
Livia Demarchis	Raised concerns about the removal of major impact review triggers for institutional zones near low-density residential areas, specifically regarding a proposed UVM medical center development*.
Barbara Hedrick	Echoed comments made by Livia Demarchis and raised concerns about buffer zones between university projects and residential neighborhoods, and requesting specific listings of residential corridors*.

**Staff clarified Public Forum comments that the proposed changes related to Major Impact in ZA-26-01 are primarily technical, focusing on replacing the term "density" with "intensity" and including the new residential corridor zoning district, and assured that the square footage thresholds for major impact review remain unchanged.*

3. Chair's Report

A. Friend did not give a Chair's Report.

The City of Burlington will not tolerate unlawful harassment or discrimination on the basis of political or religious affiliation, race, color, national origin, place of birth, ancestry, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, veteran status, disability, HIV positive status, crime victim status or genetic information. The City is also committed to providing proper access to services, facilities, and employment opportunities. For accessibility information or alternative formats, please contact Human Resources Department at (802) 540-2505.

4. **Director's Report**

C. Dillard shared his experience from a recent trip to Germany, discussing a partnership initiative focused on bio-based materials and regenerative urbanism. Intends to do a Lunch & Learn in the future.

5. **Open Space Plan Draft Review**

S. Gustin clarified that the draft is still under review and comments are welcome before the public hearing scheduled for October 14.

Summary of discussion:

- E. Mahnke highlighted the need for better protection of Centennial Woods' buffer zone. S. Gustin noted that such zones are already included in the natural resources overlay. E. Mahnke also addressed tree canopy loss and watershed protection, and raised concerns about Centennial Brook's inadequate runoff management during rain events. Scott agreed to follow up on riverfront access at Bayberry Commons and mentioned action items related to urban tree canopy protection and green design standards.

Commission Action: Motion made by E. Mahnke to warn the Open Space Plan for a public hearing for October 14**. Motion was seconded by R. Nick. Vote was Unanimous.

***Public Hearing date was moved by staff from 10/14 to 10/28 following the Commission meeting.*

6. **planBTV 2050: Burlington's Unified Comprehensive Plan**

C. Dillard introduced the composition and role of the new Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee, which will include representatives from various city committees and commissions.

Commission Action: Commissioners selected E. Malone as the Planning Commission representative, with E. Mahnke as the alternate.

7. **Proposed CDO Amendment ZA-26-01 Technical Corrections & Minor Revisions**

S. Morgan presented on ZA-26-01, a set of technical corrections and minor revisions to the CDO. Minor revisions focused on the ground floor entry requirements for primary and secondary frontages in the South End Innovation District and the planBTV Downtown Code's regulations related to fence height.

Summary of discussion:

- Commissioners discussed concerns brought up during Public Forum related to the requirement of ground floor storefronts and supported staff recommendations.
- While the proposed revisions to Article 14 received support for increasing height limits, commissioners expressed concern about the interpretation of "public safety" and its potential to allow widespread chain-link fencing. The commission agreed to remove the portion of the amendment related to downtown fences, as it needed more work. They discussed potential alternatives including tying the allowance to specific code standards or implementing temporary permits that would require regular review.
- Commissioners requested clarity related to Residential - Special Uses in Table 11.1.5-2
- S. Morgan noted that she has reached out to City Attorney Kim Sturtevant for a formal legal opinion about the previously proposed changes to Residential Occupancy Limits. Staff is also exploring other opportunities for alternative compliance in the CDO.

Commission Action: Motion made by E. Mahnke to warn the amendment for a public hearing, excluding the proposed changes to Section 14.6.8 regarding site and landscape standards. Motion was seconded by R. Nick. Vote was Unanimous.

Public Hearing to take place on October 28.

8. **planBTV: New North End Transportation Scenarios**

Planning Commission discussed transportation improvements recommended as part of planBTV: New North End. [These scenarios are available online for review and comment.](#)

9. Commissioner Items

E. Malone: Raised a general thought and frustration at the disconnect and tension between the city's ideal healthy community plan and current public space usage, particularly regarding unhoused individuals camping in these areas. The commission agreed to consider forming a short-range planning subcommittee to address these issues, with a focus on developing actionable ideas to move projects forward more efficiently.

10. Commission Accepted Minutes and Communications

11. Adjournment

Commission Action: Motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:34pm made by R. Nick, seconded by E. Mahnke. Vote was unanimous.