

# Burlington Planning Commission

Tuesday, January 13, 2026, 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

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## 2. Public Forum

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## 3. Chair's Report

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## 4. Director's Report

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## 5. Downtown Transportation Fund Grant Application

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Subject	<b>5.1. Approve the resolution provided by staff to authorize the City's application to the Downtown Transportation Fund.</b>
Meeting	January 13, 2026 - Planning Commission Agenda - Tuesday, January 13, 2026, 6:30 PM, Burlington Planning Commission
Category	5. Downtown Transportation Fund Grant Application
Department	Planning
Type	
Recommended Action	

## 6. Public Hearing for Proposed CDO Amendment ZA-26-02 - Downtown Fences

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Subject	<b>6.1. Public Hearing for ZA-26-02</b>
Meeting	January 13, 2026 - Planning Commission Agenda - Tuesday, January 13, 2026, 6:30 PM, Burlington Planning Commission
Category	6. Public Hearing for Proposed CDO Amendment ZA-26-02 - Downtown Fences
Department	Planning
Type	

## 7. Update on planBTV 2050

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## 8. 2026 Meeting Schedule

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Subject	<b>8.1. Staff requests that the Commission review the proposed 2026 meeting dates and advise whether alternative meeting dates should be proposed. Additionally, staff requests that the Planning Commission approve the proposal to move the regular 1/27 PC meeting to Wednesday, 1/28.</b>
Meeting	January 13, 2026 - Planning Commission Agenda - Tuesday, January 13, 2026, 6:30 PM, Burlington Planning Commission
Category	8. 2026 Meeting Schedule
Department	Planning
Type	
Recommended Action	

## 9. Commissioner Items

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## 10. Adopt Minutes & Accept Communications

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Subject	<b>10.1. Accept Minutes &amp; Communications</b>
Meeting	January 13, 2026 - Planning Commission Agenda - Tuesday, January 13, 2026, 6:30 PM, Burlington Planning Commission
Category	10. Adopt Minutes & Accept Communications
Department	Planning
Type	

## 11. Adjournment

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January 8, 2026

To: Planning Commission

From: Nicole Losch, Grants Director  
Samantha McGinnis, Church Street Marketplace Director

Re: Request to Apply to the State of Vermont 2026 Downtown Transportation Fund

The Church Street Marketplace intends to apply for the FY2026 Downtown Transportation Fund grant program to purchase and install replacement bollards at five intersections of the Marketplace and adjacent streets. These are critical to maintaining vehicle separation from the pedestrian-only Marketplace, but more than half have reached the end of their useful life or have been stolen. The grant program requires approval of the Planning Commission Chair and City Council to submit an application for this project. We respectfully request your approval, which will be documented in a City Council Resolution (draft attached).

Questions can be directed to:

Nicole Losch, [nlosch@burlingtonvt.gov](mailto:nlosch@burlingtonvt.gov), 802-391-6809  
Samantha McGinnis, [smcginnis@burlingtonvt.gov](mailto:smcginnis@burlingtonvt.gov), 802-735-5572

**Resolution Relating to**

2026 Downtown Transportation Fund Grant Application

**RESOLUTION**\_\_\_\_\_

Sponsor(s): \_\_\_\_\_  
Introduced: \_\_\_\_\_  
Referred to: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Action: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Signed by Mayor: \_\_\_\_\_

**CITY OF BURLINGTON**

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

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 State of Vermont
- 2 FY2026 Budget Act 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 total project cost associated with an award will not exceed \$150,000; and
- 6 WHEREAS, the Planning Commission recommends applying for the FY26 Downtown Transportation
- 7 Fund as documented in the public meeting minutes of its meeting on January 13<sup>th</sup>.
- 8 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council agrees to the requirements and
- 9 obligations of this grant program, including a commitment to match funds of 20% of the total project cost; and
- 10 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Church Street Marketplace Director is hereby designated to
- 11 authorize conforming budget amendments, subject to approval from the Chief Administrative Officer or their
- 12 Designee, and to take such other actions and execute such other instruments approved as to form by the City
- 13 Attorney, as may be necessary or convenient to effectuate the transactions contemplated herein.

14 CNL/Resolutions 2026/2026DowntownTransportationFund  
15 01072026

## Burlington Planning Commission

149 Church Street  
Burlington, VT 05401  
www.burlingtonvt.gov/pz  
Phone: (802) 865-7144

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

### **BURLINGTON PLANNING COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE**

#### ***Burlington Comprehensive Development Ordinance Amendment ZA-26-02 Downtown Form Code***

Pursuant to 24 V.S.A. §4441 and §4444, notice is hereby given of a public hearing by the Burlington Planning Commission to hear comments on the following proposed amendments to the City of Burlington's *Comprehensive Development Ordinance* (CDO). The public hearing will take place during the Planning Commission meeting on **Tuesday, January 13, 2026, with the hearing starting at Time Certain 6:45pm**. You may access the hearing/meeting as follows:

**The meeting will be held in the Sharon Bushor Conference Room at City Hall (149 Church Street) and online via Zoom**

**To join virtually from a Computer, please click this URL to join, and enter the Webinar ID if prompted:**

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

**Passcode:** 658929

**Webinar ID:** 979 4188 3790

**Passcode (if needed):** 658929

**To join virtually by phone, dial this number and enter the Webinar ID when prompted:**

**Number:** +1 312 626 6799      **Webinar ID:** 979 4188 3790

**Pursuant to the requirements of 24 V.S.A. §4444(b):**

#### **Statement of purpose:**

The purpose of the proposed amendment aims to address challenges related to fence height in the Downtown Form Code districts by:

- Increasing the allowable fence height from four feet to six feet only when the fence is used to enclose an alleyway or a loading dock located within an alleyway.
- Allowing chain-link and welded wire fences along the frontage line when located within alleyways or used to enclose loading docks within alleyways.

#### **Geographic areas affected:**

This amendment applies to properties located within Burlington's Downtown Form Districts.

#### **List of section headings affected:**

The proposed amendments modify the following sections of the *Burlington Comprehensive Development Ordinance*:

- **ZA-26-02:** Modifies Article 14, Sec. 14.6.8 Site and Landscape Standards

**The full text** of the *Burlington Comprehensive Development Ordinance* is available online at [www.burlingtonvt.gov/DPI/CDO](http://www.burlingtonvt.gov/DPI/CDO). The proposed amendment can be reviewed in hard copy posted on the first floor of City Hall, 149 Church Street, Burlington or online at <https://www.burlingtonvt.gov/DPI/CDO/Amendments>

CITY OF BURLINGTON

ORDINANCE \_\_\_\_\_

Sponsor: Office of City Planning,  
Planning Commission

Public Hearing Dates: \_\_\_\_\_

In the Year Two Thousand Twenty-Five

First reading: \_\_\_\_\_

Referred to: \_\_\_\_\_

Rules suspended and placed in all  
stages of passage: \_\_\_\_\_

Second reading: \_\_\_\_\_

Action: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed by Mayor: \_\_\_\_\_

Published: \_\_\_\_\_

Effective: \_\_\_\_\_

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:

1 That Appendix A-Burlington Comprehensive Development Ordinance of the Code of Ordinances of the City of  
2 Burlington be and hereby amends Article 14, Sec. 14.6.8 to increase the height of see-through fences permitted in the  
3 First Lot Layer if enclosing an alleyway or a loading dock within an alleyway, as well as allow for chain-link or  
4 welded wire fence to be used if enclosing alleyways or a loading dock within an alleyway.

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 and shall only be used to enclose an alleyway, loading dock located within an alleyway, and recessed entries. Linear feet of recessed entries shall not exceed 5 feet. 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.

B. Materials used for Fences and Free-standing Walls shall be limited to Brick and tile masonry; Native or sintered stone; Wood – panels, clapboard or shingles; Cementitious siding, metal, and woven or braided cable wire. Chain-link and welded-wire fencing shall not be used along any Frontage Line with the exception of alleyways, or loading docks located within an alleyway, the temporary enclosure of a construction site, or where required by the Building Official to protect public safety. Barbed or razor wire shall not be used in any application. Alternate materials may be approved by the Administrative Officer after seeking input from the Design Advisory Board. Alternate materials must be considered equivalent or better than the materials listed above, and must demonstrate successful, high quality local installations. Regionally-available materials are preferred.

Commented [SM1]: Language originally warned by the Planning Commission referred to “vestibules”. Upon further review, staff determined that the correct term was “recessed entries”, but will clarify during the Public Hearing.

27 C. All fences and free-standing walls shall be installed so that a finished side faces outward towards the  
28 adjacent property or public Frontage.

29 \_\_\_\_\_

30 \* Material stricken out deleted.

31 \*\* Material underlined added.

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:

1 That Appendix A-Burlington Comprehensive Development Ordinance of the Code of Ordinances of the City of  
2 Burlington be and hereby amends Article 14, Sec. 14.6.8 to increase the height of see-through fences permitted in the  
3 First Lot Layer if enclosing an alleyway or a loading dock within an alleyway, as well as allow for chain-link or  
4 welded wire fence to be used if enclosing alleyways or a loading dock within an alleyway.

Article 14 PlanBTV Downtown Code

Section 6: Applicable in All Form Districts

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a) Purpose and Applicability – As Written

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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 and shall only be used to enclose an alleyway or loading dock located within an alleyway. 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.

B. Materials used for Fences and Free-standing Walls shall be limited to Brick and tile masonry; Native or sintered stone; Wood – panels, clapboard or shingles; Cementitious siding, metal, and woven or braided cable wire. Chain-link and welded-wire fencing shall not be used along any Frontage Line with the exception of alleyways or loading docks located within an alleyway, the temporary enclosure of a construction site, or where required by the Building Official to protect public safety. Barbed or razor wire shall not be used in any application. Alternate materials may be approved by the Administrative Officer after seeking input from the Design Advisory Board. Alternate materials must be considered equivalent or better than the materials listed above, and must demonstrate successful, high quality local installations. Regionally-available materials are preferred.

C. All fences and free-standing walls shall be installed so that a finished side faces outward towards the adjacent property or public Frontage.

28

29 \* Material stricken out deleted.

30 \*\* Material underlined added.

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City of Burlington, VT  
149 Church Street, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Burlington, VT 05401  
Phone: (802) 865-7194  
[www.burlingtonvt.gov/plan](http://www.burlingtonvt.gov/plan)

**TO:** Burlington Planning Commission  
**FROM:** Sarah Morgan, AICP, Principal Planner  
Charles Dillard, AICP, Director of City Planning  
**DATE:** January 9, 2026  
**RE:** Proposed ZA-26-02 planBTV Downtown Code Fence Height

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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.

Currently, Article 14 of the Comprehensive Development Ordinance does not allow for Fences and Free-standing Walls to exceed 4 feet in height when placed in the First Lot Layer. The proposed amendment to Article 14 would create an administrative approval pathway for fences up to 6 feet in height, provided they are transparent.

During this amendment process, the Planning Commission has expanded the scope of their recommendation to address allowable materials for fences in the first lot layer.

## **2. Planning Commission and Committee Discussions**

This section summarizes the discussions that have taken place following staff presentations to the Planning Commission and Planning Commission Ordinance Committee.

### ***Summary of 1/7 Planning Commission Ordinance Committee Discussion***

The Planning Commission Ordinance Committee (PCOC) met on January 7th, as directed by the Planning Commission, to review the amendment as warned and make recommendations regarding fencing around recessed entries.

During this meeting, the Ordinance Committee expressed opposition to enclosures or gates in front of recessed entries, citing concerns related to building design and the pedestrian experience. The PCOC recommends removing all language related to recessed entries from the amendment and emphasized that it does not wish to pursue a future amendment addressing fencing for entryways downtown. However, the Committee expressed interest in exploring alternative approaches, such as public art and placemaking efforts, to better activate these spaces.

One point of clarification discussed during the meeting was that the height of rolling gates would be measured by the height of the fence itself, not by ground clearance.

### ***Summary of 12/9 Planning Commission Discussion***

The Planning Commission met on December 9 to review the revised amendment as referred by the Planning Commission Ordinance Committee. As requested by the PCOC, the Commission continued its discussion regarding the extent to which Article 14 should increase allowable fence height and expand permitted fence materials within the First Lot Layer.

As it relates to fence height and materials, the Planning Commission modified the proposed amendment to:

- Increase the allowable fence height from four feet to six feet only when the fence is used to enclose an alleyway or a loading dock located within an alleyway (*Sec. 14.6.8 (b) v. A*).
- Allow chain-link and welded wire fences along the frontage line when located within alleyways or used to enclose loading docks within alleyways (*Sec. 14.6.8 (b) v. B*).

Commissioners also discussed how this amendment relates to gates in front of vestibules\* in the form code districts. While some commissioners were apprehensive about allowing six-foot chain-link or welded wire fences or gates in front of recessed business entryways, others acknowledged that such allowances may help address ongoing public health and safety challenges in these areas.

The Planning Commission warned the amendment for a public hearing at its January 13 meeting, with the understanding that the PCOC will meet prior to the hearing and provide recommended language addressing how the amendment should account for fencing associated with vestibules\* in the downtown form-based code district.

#### ***Summary of 11/24 Planning Commission Ordinance Committee Discussion***

The PCOC met on November 24<sup>th</sup> to discuss this amendment and were in agreement that it should take a balanced approach. Committee members share the goal of supporting downtown businesses and also want to prevent this amendment from negatively impacting the City's broader goal of maintaining a welcoming downtown.

During Public Forum, members of the downtown business community spoke in support of the amendment and also requested that the amendment be expanded to allow chain-link fences in certain cases. Committee members acknowledged the benefits of allowing chain-link fencing but expressed concerns about impacting the downtown experience if allowed within or along the First Lot Layer. Ultimately, the Committee agreed that chain-link fences should be permitted only when used to enclose alleyways or loading docks, and that those fences may be up to 6 feet in height.

Committee members did not reach consensus on whether 6-foot fences should be allowed elsewhere in the First Lot Layer, or whether the 4-foot limit should remain in place except in the case of enclosing alleyways or loading docks.

The Committee voted to refer the revised amendment back to the Planning Commission, with the condition that the staff memo reflect that there was and should be additional discussion among the Commission on whether the height increase from 4 to 6 feet should apply more broadly within the First Lot Layer or remain limited to alleyways and loading docks.

#### ***Summary of 10/14 Planning Commission Discussion***

Staff presented ZA-26-02: Downtown Fences to the Planning Commission during its meeting on October 14<sup>th</sup>. The Commissioners discussed the complexities surrounding this amendment, including the desire to make sure that Burlington's downtown remain welcoming while also providing more flexibility in the height and materials of fences. As originally presented to the Planning Commission, this amendment made no changes to requirements related to the material of fences, and while it would allow for taller fences, chain-link fences were still not permitted along the frontage line of a property. Ultimately, Commissioners referred to the Planning Commission Ordinance Committee (PCOC) for further discussion.

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\* Upon review of the language warned for a public hearing by the Planning Commission, staff determined that references to "vestibules" were intended to mean "recessed entries" and will advise the PCOC to correct this terminology in future recommended language.

**3. 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.
- Amends Sec. 14.6.8 (b) v. B. to allow for chain-link and welded-wire fencing to be used in alleyways or loading docks.

**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).

<b>Theme:</b>	<b>Dynamic</b>	<b>Distinctive</b>	<b>Inclusive</b>	<b>Connected</b>
<b>Land Use:</b>	<b>Conserve</b>	<b>Sustain</b>	<b>Grow</b>	

**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, 11/24/25*, 12/9/25, 1/7/26*	Approve for Public Hearing 12/9/25	Public Hearing 1/13/26	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

\*Discussed by the Planning Commission Ordinance Committee



City of Burlington, VT  
149 Church Street, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
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Phone: (802) 865-7194  
www.burlingtonvt.gov/plan

**TO:** Burlington Planning Commission  
**FROM:** Sarah Morgan, AICP, Principal Planner  
Charles Dillard, AICP, Director of City Planning  
Stella Jordan, Senior Planner  
**DATE:** January 13, 2026  
**RE:** Proposed 2026 Commission Meeting Schedule

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The Planning Commission typically meets on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month at 6:30 p.m. in the Bushor Conference Room.

Several meeting dates are highlighted where staff anticipates potential quorum challenges. **Staff requests that the Commission review the proposed 2026 meeting dates and advise whether alternative meeting dates should be proposed.** If so, staff will return to the Commission with a revised meeting calendar for consideration and approval at the second meeting in January.

While full attendance at every meeting is not required, staff aims to ensure strong participation and minimize the need for last-minute schedule changes.

#### January

- Tuesday, January 13<sup>th</sup>
- **Tuesday, January 27<sup>th</sup> – Conflict w/ meeting space availability. Staff proposes this meeting be rescheduled for Wednesday, January 28<sup>th</sup>.**

#### February

- Tuesday, Feb 3<sup>rd</sup> – *\*Tentative Joint Meeting of the DRB, DAB, and PC\**
- Tuesday, February 10<sup>th</sup>
- **Tuesday, February 24<sup>th</sup> – \*BSD Mid-Winter Break\***

#### March

- Tuesday, March 10<sup>th</sup>
- Tuesday, March 24<sup>th</sup>

#### April

- Tuesday, April 14<sup>th</sup>
- Tuesday, April 28<sup>th</sup>

#### May

- Tuesday, May 12<sup>th</sup>
- Tuesday, May 26<sup>th</sup>

#### June

- Tuesday, June 9<sup>th</sup>
- Tuesday, June 23<sup>rd</sup>

#### July

- Tuesday, July 14<sup>th</sup> - *\*PC Organization Day\**
- Tuesday, July 28<sup>th</sup>

#### August

- Tuesday, August 11<sup>th</sup>
- Tuesday, August 25<sup>th</sup>

#### September

- **Tuesday, September 8<sup>th</sup> - \*Day after Labor Day\***
- Tuesday, September 22<sup>nd</sup>

#### October

- **Tuesday, October 13<sup>th</sup> - \*Day after Indigenous Peoples Day\***
- Tuesday, October 27<sup>th</sup>

#### November

- **Tuesday, November 10<sup>th</sup> - \*Day before Veteran's Day\***
- **Tuesday, November 24<sup>th</sup> - \*Week of Thanksgiving\***

#### December

- Tuesday, December 8<sup>th</sup>
- **Tuesday, December 22<sup>nd</sup> - \*Week of Christmas\***

## Burlington Planning Commission

Tuesday, December 9, 2025, 6:30 P.M.

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

### Draft Minutes

**Commissioners Present:**

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

**City Staff Present:**

- Charles Dillard, Director
- Sarah Morgan, Principal Planner
- Scott Gustin, Principal Planner
- Stella Jordan, Senior Planner

**Public Attendance:** Nolan Rogers, Lily McArthur, Jesse Fitzgerald, Sharon Bushor, Owen, Andrea Poulos

**1. Agenda**

**Call to Order:** 6:30pm

**Changes to Agenda:** Addition to item four, regarding Commissioner stipends.

**2. Public Forum**

<u>Name(s)</u>	<u>Comment</u>
Nolan Rogers	Spoke about the Burlington Country Club's zoning and land value. N. Rogers suggested that the property be rezoned from RCO - Recreation/Greenspace to commercial, mixed use or another designation that would better capture the value of the land and yield more tax revenue for the City and enable additional development.
Sharon Bushor	Expressed support for allowing six foot fences in the downtown first lot layer to address safety concerns expressed by the business community and others, and chain link fences in certain circumstances, as previously discussed by the Ordinance Committee. S. Bushor also noted challenges reviewing the Commission's proposed changes to the Open Space Plan, and expressed support for E. Mahnke's proposed language edits regarding existing conditions in the City's open spaces.

**3. Chair's Report**

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

**4. Director's Report**

C. Dillard provided an update on the Mayor's Modern Government (MODGOV) process to improve efficiency in the City's government. A focus of this initiative this year has been restructuring and improving the City's planning processes. Internal coordination over the past several months has resulted in the proposed merger of the Office of City Planning into the Community and Economic Development Office (CEDO), which will be discussed by the City Council on December 15. C. Dillard expressed excitement on behalf of planning staff, and discussed several benefits and opportunities related to this move, including increasing efficiency in planning, providing more

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access to administrative support, and enabling closer coordination between planning staff and CEDO's Housing team on housing policy issues that will remain a focus of both departments in the coming years. He noted that further reorganization of the City's planning processes, including interdepartmental and interdisciplinary collaboration, is ongoing.

**Discussion Notes:**

- Discussed the history of the restructuring process, including the previous split of planning and zoning staff into two separate departments, avoiding conflicts of interest between the City's development interests and its zoning and permitting oversight, and the removal of the Planning Commission's appointment authority for the Planning Director, as well as the new oversight structure. C. Dillard clarified that he remains a mayoral appointee and will be reporting to the Director of CEDO.
- M. Gaughan expressed concern about planning staff being overcommitted to other economic development work.
- C. Dillard noted that the relationship and coordination between the Office of City Planning and DPI will not be impacted by this reorganization, nor will the role of the Planning Commission. C. Dillard noted that the Mayor plans to announce more details in mid January.

**4.5 Commissioner Stipends**

S. Morgan noted that any Commissioner may receive stipends for attending Planning Commission meetings, including Committee meetings. Commissioners must notify staff that they either wish to decline stipends, or submit a W-9 to receive stipends for the current fiscal year by Thursday, December 11.

**5. Open Space Plan Review**

Staff summarized revisions made to the draft Open Space Plan following the Commission's previous discussion.

Action: Approve revised language (with revision from E. Mahnke) in advance of City Council Public Hearing on December 15

**Motion by:** E. Mahnke

**Seconded by:** R. Nick

**Vote:** Unanimous

**Discussion Notes:**

- Changes were made to language in three chapters of the Plan in response to requests from Commissioners to acknowledge existing conditions related to people experiencing homelessness sheltering in City open spaces.
- S. Morgan noted that City Council will hold the first of two Public Hearings on the Open Space Plan on Monday, December 15.
- E. Mahnke discussed a proposed language revision to more inclusively reference people experiencing homelessness and to emphasize future planning for affordable housing access.

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

R. Nick recused himself from this item. Staff reviewed the proposed changes. [See recording for full discussion](#) (Timestamp 39:48).

Action: Warn ZA-26-02 as modified by E. Mahnke and amended by M. Gaughan for a Public Hearing on January 13, 2026, and with notice of a Planning Commission Ordinance Committee meeting prior to the Public Hearing which may result in additional proposed revisions.

**Motion by:** E. Mahnke

**Seconded by:** M. Gaughan

**Vote:** 5 yes, 1 no, 1 abstention

**Discussion Notes:**

- J. Randall and A. Friend shared insights from the Planning Commission Ordinance Committee discussion on this topic. J. Randall expressed concern about the negative

impact of six-foot chain link fences on the visual and physical environment downtown, and the impact of six-foot fences in the first lot layer regardless of material.

- Several commissioners expressed concern that the proposed language in this amendment would be too permissive. Several commissioners supported allowing six-foot fences only in alleyways and loading docks. Commissioners also discussed the possibilities and impacts of allowing taller fences in vestibules and recessed entryways at the front of downtown buildings. Concerns about visual impacts on street frontage were discussed, particularly with regard to chain link fences.
- E. Mahnke proposed revising the amendment's proposed language to limit the allowance of six-foot fences to only alleyways and loading docks within alleyways. M. Gaughan proposed adding an allowance for six-foot fences in vestibules with a five linear foot maximum width. Commissioners expressed interest in another Ordinance Committee discussion on this topic, specifically focused on vestibules. These proposed revisions were incorporated into the proposed amendment language.
- Motion was made on the Action for this item after additional discussion that occurred after item 7. [See recording for full additional discussion](#) (Timestamp 1:46:47).

**7. Boat Storage in the Urban Reserve**

Staff provided an update on a forthcoming proposed CDO amendment to address barriers to a proposal from the Community Sailing Center for a renewed Community Kayak and Paddle Park initiative which would site non-motorized boat storage within the Urban Reserve.

**8. Commissioner Items**

R. Nick:	Thanked staff for clarification on a spam email.
E. Malone:	Noted that the Planning Commission has discussed several recent time-sensitive topics for which deliberation has spanned multiple meetings, and suggested the Commission consider potentially holding more meetings and staff set clear expectations about amendment timelines,

**9. Adopt Minutes and Accept Communications**

Action: Review and approve the October 14, 2025 Planning Commission meeting minutes and review and accept the communications for this meeting

Motion by: A. Friend                      **Seconded by:** M. Gaughan                      **Vote:** Unanimous

**Notes or Corrections:** N/A

**10. Adjournment**

Action: Motion to Adjourn    Time of Adjournment: 8:54 pm

Motion by: R. Nick                      **Seconded by:** J. Randall                      **Vote:** Unanimous

**Burlington Planning Commission**

149 Church Street  
Burlington, VT 05401

[www.burlingtonvt.gov/cityplanning](http://www.burlingtonvt.gov/cityplanning)

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

**Burlington Planning Commission**

Thursday, November 13, 2025, 6:30 P.M.

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

**Draft Minutes**

**Commissioners Present:**

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

**City Staff Present:**

- Charles Dillard, Director
- Sarah Morgan, Principal Planner
- Scott Gustin, Principal Planner
- Stella Jordan, Senior Planner
- Sophie Sauv , Parks Planning Division Director

**Public Attendance:** Sharon Bushor, Jill Dixon, Zoe Richards

**1. Agenda**

Call to Order: 6:30pm  
Changes to Agenda: N/A

**2. Public Forum**

<u>Name(s)</u>	<u>Comment</u>
Sharon Bushor	Discussed affordability and inclusionary zoning (IZ) topics shared in a written communication. S. Bushor expressed frustration about a lack of consultation with community members as the City advances affordable housing policy including via the hiring of new housing staff. Encouraged the Planning Commission to continue discussing these topics regularly through Long-Range Planning and Ordinance Committee discussions.

**3. Chair's Report**

A. Montroll welcomed new Senior Planner Stella Jordan.

**4. Director's Report**

- C. Dillard shared several updates:
- Office of City Planning staff attended the annual conference of the Northern New England chapter of the American Planning Association (NNECAPA) in Portland, Maine. C. Dillard stated that the conference was a valuable opportunity for the team, with many relevant housing topics discussed. S. Morgan presented on Burlington's Neighborhood Code and C. Dillard presented on the South End Innovation District and South End Coordinated Redevelopment (SECORD) development project.
  - The Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC) released their draft regional long-range plan, the Environment, Community, Opportunity, Sustainability (ECOS) Plan to the Land Use Review Board (LURB) for review, and has requested letters

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of support from municipalities. The LURB will accept comments through at least December 1. Staff and the Planning Commission may collaborate on a memo to comment on the ECOS Plan if desired.

**Discussion Notes:**

- C. Dillard also responded to comments from S. Bushor, stating that IZ remains a key priority for the administration, and that the Community and Economic Development Office (CEDO) has hired a new Housing Program Manager focused on affordable housing following an extensive hiring process. He noted that the Planning Commission can expect to be reengaged about an IZ amendment in the coming months. S. Morgan added that the Housing Program Manager position is distinct from a previously-announced housing assistant position in the Mayor’s office.
- E. Mahnke expressed support for S. Bushor’s comments and suggested the City form a stakeholder group to bring additional perspectives to IZ planning. C. Dillard noted that the City had previously consulted developers to inform recommended IZ revisions, and is also interviewing these and other stakeholders such as renters for a broader housing research project that will help inform affordability policy, and will consider forming a stakeholder advisory or working group for IZ. E. Mahnke and M. Gaughan both expressed interest in participating.

**5. Public Hearing for Proposed CDO Amendment ZA-26-01: Technical Amendments and Minor Revisions**

S. Morgan provided an overview of the technical amendments and minor revisions included in this proposed amendment. She noted that no changes have been made since the warning of the Public Hearing, but proposed the addition of a technical correction to a typo in a table in Section 11.1.5 in reference to residential district planned unit developments. She also described the revisions to existing standards related to the South End Innovation District. S. Gustin proposed an additional correction to revisions in Section 3.5.3(c). [See recording for full overview](#) (Timestamp 20:38).

**Public Forum**

- S. Bushor suggested there may be technical issues in the proposed amendment, stating that exceptions referenced by line g6 in footnotes are not properly explained, and that a table referencing additional density and development allowances corresponding to line 210 lacks an identifier. S. Bushor also spoke about a written communication regarding the South End Innovation District (SEID), expressing concern about fewer ground floor entries and a lack of commercial space in the district. S. Bushor also expressed concern about residential corridors, and specifically the intensity proposed on Colchester Avenue and its impact on parking availability, as well as the challenges associated with the steep slope of the street.

**Action: Forward ZA-26-01 to City Council for approval including staff amendments and Planning Commission recommendations**

**Motion by:** A. Friend

**Seconded by:** E. Malone

**Vote:**  
Unanimous

**Discussion Notes:**

- [See recording for full discussion](#) (Timestamp 39:35).
- Commissioners discussed the two additional amendments proposed by staff.
- E. Mahnke expressed support for S. Bushor’s comment regarding Colchester Avenue.
- Commissioners discussed the modification to add a number and title to the table on line 210 in Section 9.1.12 as suggested by S. Bushor. This modification will be made in a future technical amendments and minor revisions amendment or passed along to City Council via the Commission’s recommendations for further discussion.

## 6. Public Hearing for Proposed Open Space Plan

S. Gustin and Jill Dixon from Agency, the City's consultant for the Open Space Plan, provided an overview of the proposed Open Space Plan and reviewed changes that had been made since the last Planning Commission discussion. [See recording for full overview and presentation](#) (Timestamp 51:35).

### Public Forum

- S. Bushor expressed support for the proposed Open Space Plan and commended Agency for their work. S. Bushor suggested the Planning Commission support an increase in the Conservation Legacy Fund and additional land acquisition for conservation. S. Bushor also suggested the Planning Commission review natural area buffer and tree regulation ordinances and consider residential property tree preservation policies, as well as requirements for community gardens to be included in larger developments.
- Zoe Richards, a Conservation Board member who worked on the proposed Open Space Plan, discussed the possibility of exploring metrics and values related to ecosystem services via future work such as the Comprehensive Plan.

**Action: Refer the Proposed Open Space Plan to City Council with recommended approval subject to changes as proposed by Planning Commission**

**Motion by:** A. Friend

**Seconded by:** E. Malone

**Vote:**  
Unanimous

### Discussion Notes:

- [See recording for full discussion](#) (Timestamp 1:12:16).
- S. Gustin discussed responses to previous comments made by E. Mahnke related to buffer zones and conservation overlays, new developments, tree protection, and watersheds.
- E. Malone discussed the inclusion of language related to unhoused people sheltering in City open spaces. She suggested expanding this language to acknowledge the important existing conditions in open spaces that impact the City's ability to advance the goals in the Open Space Plan. E. Mahnke expressed concern about political challenges related to homelessness. Commissioners discussed revisions and additions to language related to individuals experiencing homelessness in the Open Space Plan, ongoing work to address these challenges in the Comprehensive Plan, and recommendations on this topic to be shared via a memo with City Council as part of the Planning Commission's referral.

## 7. Commissioner Items

- |              |   |
|--------------|---|
| A. Montroll: | Discussed scheduling the next Planning Commission meeting.  |
| E. Malone:   | Inquired about ZA-26-02, Downtown Fences. S. Morgan provided a process update.  |
| E. Malone:   | Inquired about approval for conversion of commercial to residential property. E. Malone also requested a regular update on Neighborhood Code implementation and new permitted projects. Other Commissioners expressed support for this request. |
| E. Mahnke:   | Discussed challenges related to visualizing Floor Area Ratio (FAR) in the CDO and requested assistance and future staff clarification on the connection between FAR and numbers of units.   |

## 8. Adopt Minutes

**Commissioners will review minutes at the next meeting.**

## 9. Communications

**Action:** Review and accept the communications

**Motion by:** A. Friend

**Seconded by:** E. Mahnke

**Vote:** Unanimous

**Notes or Corrections:** N/A

**10. Adjournment**

**Action:** Motion to Adjourn

**Time of Adjournment:** 8:59 pm

**Motion by:** A. Friend

**Seconded by:** E. Mahnke

**Vote:** Unanimous