



# AMENDMENT 1: DEFINITIONS

Amendment 1 is concerned with the definitions for terms used in the Zoning Ordinance. This amendment adds or amends some terms and definitions to encourage internal consistency within the Zoning Ordinance. The proposed changes are:

- Add a definition for **“Dwelling, Single-Family Attached”** to read “A dwelling unit that occupies a structure from ground to roof and is physically connected to another dwelling unit by at least one common wall extending from the foundation through the roof, and each dwelling unit has an independent, private entrance front and rear entrance.”

Effect: Single-family attached dwellings (i.e., townhouses) are not currently distinguished from multifamily dwellings in the zoning ordinance. Making this distinction would allow the Town to identify areas where townhouses would be appropriate while limiting the development of other multifamily building types in those same areas.

- Change the definition of **Open Space Residential Development (OSRD)** to read “A form of residential subdivision provided for in Article IX of the Plymouth Subdivision Regulations, authorizing dwelling units to be located on sites or lots within a single tract with dimensions, frontages, and setbacks reduced from conventional sizes, provided the density of the tract as a whole shall not be greater than the density allowed by the zone under existing regulations and the remaining open land is devoted to common open space except in exchange for certain “density bonus” options approved by the Planning Board.”

Effect: In conjunction with Amendment 6, this would move the provisions for Open Space Residential Development from the zoning ordinance to the Town’s subdivision regulations.

- Change the term **“Dwelling, Multiple Unit”** to **“Dwelling, Multifamily,”** while retaining the **current definition** (“A residential building designed for or occupied by three to six families, with the number of families in residence not exceeding the number of dwelling units provided”).

Effect: The Zoning Ordinance currently refers to both multiple unit dwellings and multifamily dwellings when they are in effect the same. This would streamline these redundant terms for consistency.



## AMENDMENT 2: USE TABLE

Amendment 2 is concerned with making changes to the Use Table of the Zoning Ordinance. The Use Table is a chart that indicates the types of activities allowed in each Zoning District, either as a Permitted Use, by Special Exception, or by Conditional Use. For clarity:

- A "Permitted Use" is allowed in a district if all other requirements of the Zoning Ordinance are met.
- A "Special Exception" requires an application and public hearing before the Zoning Board of Adjustment.
- A "Conditional Use" requires an application and public hearing before the Planning Board.

The proposed changes allow more housing types in some districts, and replace the names of some terms so that they are clearer and align with what is used in other parts of the Ordinance. The proposed changes are:

- Replace the following terms in the Use Table with updated versions for internal consistency within the Zoning Ordinance:
  - Replace "**Cluster Residential Development**" to "**Open-Space Residential Development**," (see Amendment 1) and add a footnote to cite the Open Space Residential Development requirements found in the Site Plan Review Regulations (see Amendment 6)
  - Change "**Multiple Unit Dwelling of 3 to 6 Units**" to "**Multifamily Dwelling, not exceeding 6 units per building**" (See Amendment 1)
  - Change "**Single-Family Dwelling**" to "**Single-Family Dwelling, Detached**"

Effect: This would ensure that the Use Table and definitions are consistent with each other.

- Change multifamily dwelling from a **Special Exception use** to a **Permitted Use** in the Multi-Family Residential District.

Effect: This would remove the Special Exception requirement for multifamily dwellings in the current Multi-Family Residential District (MFR) only.

- Add "**Single-Family Dwellings, Attached**" to the Use Table (also see Amendment 1) and define districts in which they would be allowed either by right or by Special Exception.

Effect: Single-family dwellings, attached (i.e., townhouses) would become a Permitted Use in the Multi-Family Residential, Agricultural, Civic/Institutional, and Village Commercial Districts, and a Special Exception use in the Highway Commercial, and Industrial and Commercial Development Districts. This use would not be allowed in the Single-Family Residential District. As described in Amendment 1, single-family attached dwellings are single-family homes that share at least one common wall with another home and have a private entrance at grade.

- Remove **confusing references** to parking requirements above or below 125 percent of the minimum required spaces from the Use Table.

Effect: Parking requirements are addressed in Section 411 of the Zoning Ordinance; this amendment would remove specifics in the current Use Table that are unnecessary, confusing, and conflict with one another.

- Make **Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) a Permitted Use** in all districts except the Single-Family Residential District (SFR); allow ADUs by Special Exception in the SFR.

Effect: This amendment would make it easier for property owners to build an Accessory Dwelling Unit in most districts, removing the current requirement for a Conditional Use permit from the Planning Board. In the SFR district, ADUs would be allowed by Special Exception.

## AMENDMENT 3: DIMENSIONAL REQUIREMENTS



Amendment 3 is concerned with the dimensional requirements for structures, which control the size of buildings, where they can be on a lot, and the size of lots. This amendment would create a consistent unit of measure in the Zoning Ordinance, reduce the minimum lot sizes in the Single-Family Residential and Multi-Family Residential zones depending on wastewater and water infrastructure, and add additional clarification on parking setbacks. All in all, this amendment attempts to make development easier with fewer restrictions while maintaining and protecting the current built character of our different neighborhoods and districts.

Terms used include:

- Minimum lot size – smallest lot area on which a property owner is allowed to build
- Minimum frontage – the minimum length a lot must have along on a street
- Minimum setback – the minimum distance a building must be from lot lines

The proposed changes are:

- Reduce **lot sizes** in the Single-Family Residential District (SFR) for lots connected to off-site sewer *and* public water from 21,780 sq. ft. (1/2 an acre) to **10,000 sq. ft.**
- Reduce **lot sizes** in the SFR for lots with off-site sewer *or* public water from from 21,780 sq. ft. to **20,000 sq. ft.** (Lot sizes for residences with on-site septic remains one acre.)
- Reduce **lot sizes** in the Multi-Family Residential District (MFR) for lots with off-site sewer *and* public water from 21,780 sq. ft. to **7,500 sq. ft.**
- In the SFR, MFR, A, and CI districts, reduce **minimum frontage** for lots with off-site sewer from 100 to **75 ft.**, and the minimum frontage for lots with on-site septic from 150 ft. to **100 ft.**
- Reduce the **minimum setbacks** in the SFR and MFR to **10 ft. in the side and rear.**
- Reduce the **minimum front setback** to **15 ft.**, or the average of the front setbacks of lots within 300 ft., but no less than 5 ft. from the street in the SFR, and 10 ft. in the MFR.
- Change the minimum lot size from a **set minimum lot size for each number of units**, to a **formula** where each additional unit on a lot requires an additional square footage ranging from 2,500 to 7,500 sq. ft. depending on the zone and whether water/sewer are available.

Effect: One of our goals in this amendment is bring much of our historic residential neighborhoods near downtown back into conformity and to encourage these historical patterns of development that helped shape some of our most cherished residential neighborhoods. To be absolutely clear, under our current zoning ordinance many of these neighborhoods could not be built or individual lots potentially rebuilt, and in many cases it's not even close to the current historic built environment.

- Change all of the **minimum lot sizes** to **square feet** when acres are currently used. Where the current minimum lot size is 1 acre (43,560 sq. ft.) reduce the minimum to 40,000 sq. ft. unless there is on-site septic (in which case it will remain a full acre), and where the current minimum is ½ acre (21,780 sq. ft.) reduce the minimum to 20,000 sq. ft.

Effect: This moves away from the confusing practice of mixing square footage with acres in favor of a single unit of measurement to avoid some confusion.

- Add a row in the Dimensional Requirements Table for **uncovered parking spaces**. In the SFR and MFR districts, uncovered parking spaces must be at least 10 ft. away from the property line in the side or rear, with a possible reduction to 5 ft. of the property line by Special Exception. (A "Special Exception" requires an application and public hearing before the Zoning Board of Adjustment.)

Effect: The reduced setback requirements for uncovered parking spaces encourage parking alongside new homes rather than out in front.



## AMENDMENT 4: OFF-STREET PARKING

Amendment 4 is concerned with parking requirements in the Zoning Ordinance. Parking requirements control how many off-street parking spaces must be provided, and where parking spaces can be placed on a lot. This amendment will amend Section 411 of the Zoning Ordinance to streamline the Parking Requirements Table, reduce the number of parking spots required for Accessory Dwelling Units, make the parking requirement for multifamily dwellings easier to calculate, and clarify requirements for parking that either does not meet or exceeds the minimum spaces required. The proposed changes include:

- Align the terms used in the **Table of Off-Street Parking Requirements** with the terms used elsewhere in the Zoning Ordinance.

Effect: This removes internal conflict within the Zoning Ordinance so that the use terms in the Table of Off-Street Parking Requirements match terms used elsewhere.

- Reduce the minimum number of parking spaces required for an **Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU)** to **1 space**.

Effect: This change allows homeowners adding an ADU to their property to plan for one additional parking spot rather than two, which can make adding an ADU more feasible for property owners.

- Amend the parking requirement for multifamily dwellings to **1 parking space for every 1-bedroom unit, and 2 parking spaces for every unit with two or more bedrooms**.

Effect: This simplifies the calculation of parking spaces for multifamily development (currently 1.5 spaces per dwelling for the first unit and 0.5 spaces for each additional bedroom) and potentially allows for a reduction in parking requirements for developments. Currently, a three-bedroom unit in a multifamily dwelling would require 2.5 parking spaces, with no clarity as to how to round fractional spaces. Reducing parking requirements generally makes multifamily development more feasible and can help preserve green space.

- Require that in the Single-Family Residential, Multi-Family Residential and Civic/Institutional Districts, parking spaces in the side or rear of a lot must have a **landscaped buffer area that is at least five feet wide** separating the parking space(s) from the property line.

Effect: This ensures that residents are protected from having their neighbor's vehicles parked right up against the property line when the spaces are to the side or rear of the home.

- Authorize the ZBA to **grant a Special Exception** for:
  - Proposed off-street parking facilities with **less than 100 percent** of the minimum number of parking spaces required for the use in any district except the Single-Family Residential Zone
  - Proposed off-street parking facilities with **more than 125 percent** of the minimum number of parking spaces required for the use in the CI, VC, HC, or ICD zone

Effect: This, along with Amendment 2, clarifies confusing language about approval requirements for parking that either exceeds or is below 125 percent of the required minimum of spaces.



## AMENDMENT 5: MULTIPLE BUILDINGS ON A LOT

Amendment 5 is concerned with how many buildings may be allowed on a single lot. This amendment will consolidate the current commercial co-location and multiple buildings on a single lot sections of the Zoning Ordinance into one section for easier use. This amendment will allow multiple buildings on a single lot — with the Planning Board’s approval — and given that the life and safety minimums set by the Fire Department are met. The proposed changes are:

- **More than one principal structure may be allowed on a lot**, subject to site plan review, and that the life and safety minimums determined by the Plymouth Fire Department are met.
- The Planning Board may allow **more than one single-family dwelling or two-family dwelling on a single lot** as a **Conditional Use**, as long as all other dimensional requirements are met, there is a landscaped buffer around the entire lot line, the site has adequate sewer and water capacity, and the design meets the life and safety minimums determined by the Plymouth Fire Department. The Conditional Use means that a use is only allowed if the property owner receives the special permission of the Planning Board.

Effect: This proposed amendment would expand the rights of property owners to build more than one principal structure on a lot by extending what is currently commercial co-location into a more broadly worded ordinance that would also allow residential co-location – more than one principal structure on a lot – provided that all setbacks, dimensional requirements, safety standards, and other regulations are met. While not necessarily appealing to all landowners or developers, this provision would provide more options for those wishing to pursue residential projects on appropriately sized parcels of land.

In its built form, this may look similar to an Open Space Residential Development subdivision, with the difference being that under the “Multiple Buildings on a Lot” provision, the **entire lot would be under common ownership**, whereas in an OSRD subdivision, each lot is separately owned.



## AMENDMENT 6: OPEN SPACE RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

Amendment 6 is concerned with the Open-Space Residential Development (OSRD) option. An Open Space Residential Development is a special form of subdivision that allows for the clustering of residential dwellings on smaller lots, in exchange for permanently preserving the additional land for conservation and open space. This amendment will move the OSRD regulations from the Zoning Ordinance to the Subdivision Regulations. The proposed changes are:

- Change the definition of **“Open-Space Residential Development”** to “A form of residential subdivision provided for in Article V of this Ordinance and in the Plymouth Subdivision Regulations, authorizing dwelling units to be located on sites or lots within a single tract with dimensions, frontages, and setbacks reduced from conventional sizes, provided the density of the tract as a whole shall not be greater than the density allowed by the zone under existing regulations and the remaining open land is devoted to common open space except in exchange for certain **“density bonus”** options approved by the Planning Board.” (Also see Amendment 1)
- Amend the Use Table and the Dimensional Requirements Table to include the term **“Open-Space Residential Development”** (rather than **“Cluster Residential Development”**), and add footnote referring to the Plymouth Subdivision Regulations for new regulations related to OSRD.
- Remove the **OSRD regulations** from the Zoning Ordinance and **amend Section 501** to read “501. Applicability: Open Space Residential Development shall be subject to review and approval by the Planning Board under the Open Space Residential Development section of the Plymouth Subdivision Regulations.”

Effect: This amendment will move the OSRD regulations from the Zoning Ordinance to Subdivision Regulations (which will be accordingly revised) to streamline the Zoning Ordinance and remove overlap between the two sets of rules.



## AMENDMENT 7: ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS

Amendment 7 is concerned with Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs). As defined in the Zoning Ordinance, an “accessory dwelling unit” (or “ADU”) is a residential living unit that is within, attached to, or detached from a single-family dwelling on the same parcel of land as the principal dwelling unit it accompanies. An ADU must provide independent living facilities for one or more persons including provisions for sleeping, eating, cooking and sanitation.

For clarity:

- A “Permitted Use” is allowed in a district if all other requirements of the Zoning Ordinance are met.
- A “Special Exception” requires an application and public hearing before the Zoning Board of Adjustment.
- A “Conditional Use” requires an application and public hearing before the Planning Board.

This amendment makes ADUs permitted uses in most Districts, reduces the parking requirement for an ADU (in conjunction with Amendment 4), cleans up the statement of Purpose and Intent, and removes inaccurate information regarding Workforce Housing from the Zoning Ordinance. The proposed changes are:

- Remove the **requirement for a Conditional Use Permit**, and instead reference the Use Table in the Zoning Ordinance. ADUs will be a **Special Exception in the Single-Family Residential District**, and a **Permitted Use in all other Districts**.

Effect: This amendment would make it easier for property owners to build an Accessory Dwelling Unit in most districts, removing the current requirement for a Conditional Use permit from the Planning Board. In the SFR district, ADUs would be allowed by Special Exception.

- Reduce the parking requirement for an ADU from **2 parking spaces** to **1 parking space**, in addition to the two parking spaces required for the main dwelling.

Effect: This change allows homeowners adding an ADU to their property to plan for one additional parking spot rather than two, which can make adding an ADU more feasible for property owners.

- Amend the **Purpose and Intent statement** to: **remove language that ADUs count towards Plymouth’s Work Force Housing**, as this is not accurate to New Hampshire State law; and remove some lines of text for brevity.

Effect: This change removes the inaccurate statement that ADUs by default would count toward Plymouth’s share of “workforce housing” as defined under RSA 674:59.