



Bridgewater Town Council

Introduced By: Johnny Loreti, Councilor
Date Introduced: 3/17/2026
First Reading: 3/17/2026
Second Reading:
Amendments Adopted:
Third Reading:
Date Adopted:
Date Effective:

Zoning Ordinance D-FY26-014: Amendments to Central Business District Regulations

Be it ordained by the Town Council of the Town of Bridgewater, pursuant to the authority granted by Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 40A and the Bridgewater Town Charter, that the Zoning Ordinance of the Town of Bridgewater is hereby amended as attached.

Explanation:

The purpose of this Ordinance is to amend the Town of Bridgewater Zoning Ordinance as it relates to the Central Business District (CBD) in order to clarify applicable use regulations, dimensional requirements, parking requirements, development review procedures, and the respective roles of the Planning Board and administrative staff in the review of development proposals within the Central Business District.

Committee Referrals and Dispositions:

Referral(s)	Disposition(s)
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•	•

Attachments: 1. Bridgewater CBD Zoning Final

NOT FOR ACTION - FIRST READING
VOICE VOTE TO REFER TO PLANNING BOARD and CED

TOWN OF BRIDGEWATER
ZONING ORDINANCE AMENDMENT
CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT REGULATIONS

SECTION 1. PURPOSE AND INTENT

The purpose of this Ordinance is to amend the Town of Bridgewater Zoning Ordinance as it relates to the Central Business District (CBD) in order to clarify applicable use regulations, dimensional requirements, parking requirements, development review procedures, and the respective roles of the Planning Board and administrative staff in the review of development proposals within the Central Business District.

SECTION 2. AMENDMENT TO SECTION 3.2 – TABLE OF USE REGULATIONS

Section 3.2, Table of Use Regulations, is hereby amended as follows:

1. In the row entitled “**4. Multi-family dwellings**”, the entry in the **CBD column** shall be changed from “**N**” to “******”.
2. The Table of Use Regulations shall further be amended by adding the following footnote beneath the Residential Uses table:

"* See Sections 9.6 and 9.8."

3. For avoidance of doubt, the current entry for “**4.a Mixed Use Buildings**” in the CBD column shall remain “**Y**” unless separately amended by vote of the Town Council.
4. **Row 15**, currently reading:

“Conversion of existing structure into a mixed use with a maximum of one commercial use on the first floor and two residential units. The conversion shall maintain the appearance of the existing structure.”

shall be **stricken in its entirety**.

SECTION 3. AMENDMENT TO SECTION 4.2 – TABLE OF DIMENSIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Section 4.2, Table of Dimensional Requirements, is hereby amended in the row for the **Central Business District** as follows:

Minimum Depth (Front / Rear / Side)

Shall read:

“No setback front or side requirements for existing nonconforming lots. Existing conforming and new lots require a minimum **5-foot front setback** and **5-foot side setback**. All lots require a **15-foot rear setback**.”

Maximum Building Height (Stories / Feet)

Shall read:

3.5 stories / 45 feet in **CBD-S** and **CBD-R**.

SECTION 4. AMENDMENT TO SECTION 9.6 – CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT, STANDARD (CBD-S)

Section **9.6.6(6)** currently reads:

“For all new construction, ground floors must be designed to accommodate commercial use to a depth of at least 20 feet from the front façade, by maintaining a floor to ceiling height of at least 15 feet within this depth. (Note that any use allowed in the CBD per Section 3.2 Table of Use Regulations is permitted so long as the ground floor is designed to accommodate commercial uses.)”

This provision shall be amended to read as follows:

“For all new construction, ground floors must be designed to accommodate commercial use to a depth of at least **20 feet from the front façade**, by maintaining a **floor-to-ceiling height of at least 15 feet within this depth**.

Commercial uses must occupy **at least 80 percent (80%) of the gross floor area of the ground floor**.

(Note that any use allowed in the CBD per Section 3.2 Table of Use Regulations is permitted so long as the ground floor is designed to accommodate commercial uses.)”

SECTION 5. AMENDMENT TO SECTION 9.8 – CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT, REDEVELOPMENT (CBD-R)

The following amendments shall apply to the provisions of Section 9.8:

5.1 Section 9.6.8 Design Standards

In Paragraph 10, the following language shall be **stricken**:

“The requirement for commercial development may be accommodated on an adjacent parcel or parcels, providing the commercial development is constructed in conjunction and coordination with the residential development and reflects the character of a village or town center. An approved site plan of the entire development project must outline project phasing and scheduling as well as conditions of approval.”

5.2 Section 9.8.4.2 – Development Plan Review Procedures

Paragraph 2(b)

Currently reads:

DCED Staff shall review all applications for completeness within ten (10) days...

Shall be amended to read:

b. DCED Staff shall review all applications and checklists for completeness within ten (10) days of receiving the application. If deemed incomplete, based on the contents of the Development Plan Review Application and Checklist, DCED shall send a letter to the applicant via certified mail detailing the missing items and the applicant shall be invited to resubmit.

Once the DCED Director deems an application complete, staff shall schedule a **public hearing with the Planning Board**.

Paragraph 2(c)

Shall be amended to read:

Within **thirty (30) days**, or such other time as may be agreed upon by the parties, from the **opening of the public hearing**, the **Planning Board shall render its decision and file such decision with the Town Clerk**.

5.3 Section 9.8.4.3 – Submission Requirements

Paragraph 2 shall be amended to read:

All plans and drawings submitted to the **Staff and the Planning Board** shall be prepared by a professional licensed in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in the applicable discipline (including architecture, landscape architecture, and engineering) and shall include all information required as part of the Development Plan Review Application and Checklist.

5.4 Section 9.8.6.3 – Mixed Use Frontage

Paragraph 1

Shall be amended to read:

Illustrations and Intent. The photos and statements below are provided as illustrations of intent and are advisory only. They do not have the power of law. Refer to the standards on the following pages for the specific prescriptions and restrictions of the **Mixed-Use Frontage Building Envelope Standard**. Where these photos or statements may be inconsistent with the regulations, the regulations shall prevail.

Paragraph 3 – Table Amendment

The table shall be amended to include:

Commercial Ground Floor Activation – Minimum 70%

Paragraph 4 – Building Height

Shall be amended to read:

Maximum Building Height: 3.5 stories

The following language shall be **stricken**:

“* If located behind Frontage buildings, 16,000 sf is permitted.”

6.5 Section 9.8.6.4 – Transitional Frontage

Paragraph 1 shall be amended to read:

Illustrations and Intent. These photos and statements are provided as illustrations of intent and are advisory only. They do not have the power of law. Refer to the standards on the

following pages for the specific prescriptions and restrictions of the Transitional Frontage Building Envelope Standard. Where these photos or statements may be inconsistent with the regulations, the regulations shall prevail.

The purpose of this frontage is to develop neighborhood-scale mixed-use buildings close to the sidewalk that support pedestrian activity. This frontage shall be designed to accommodate **active commercial uses along the ground floor street frontage.**

Paragraph 3

Add:

Commercial Ground Floor Activation – Minimum 70%

Paragraph 4

Amend to read:

- **Maximum Building Width:** 100 feet
- **Maximum Building Height:** 3.5 stories

Strike the following:

“* Up to 5 stories is permitted for lots over 160,000 square feet...

** If located behind FRONTAGE buildings, 25,000 sf is permitted.”

Paragraph 5

Strike subsection:

“e. For residential units on the ground story, the finished floor elevation shall be no less than 3 feet above the average elevation of the fronting sidewalk...”

6.6 Section 9.8.6.5 – Additional Frontage Standards

Paragraph 3 shall be amended to add:

- **Commercial Ground Story Space Depth – Minimum 30 feet**
- **Commercial Ground Floor Activation – Minimum 70%**

Paragraph 4 shall be amended to read:

Maximum Building Height: 3.5 stories

Strike the following:

“* Up to 5 stories is permitted for lots over 160,000 square feet...

** If located behind FRONTAGE buildings, 8,000 sf is permitted.”

SECTION 7. AMENDMENT TO SECTION 10.6 – SITE PLAN APPROVAL

Section **10.6.1(1)** is hereby amended by **striking** the following language:

“* CBD-R is exempt from this and should follow the Development Plan Review Process.”

SECTION 8. CONFORMING AND CLERICAL CORRECTIONS

The Town Clerk, Town Counsel, and the publisher of the Zoning Ordinance are hereby authorized to make non-substantive formatting, numbering, punctuation, and cross-reference corrections necessary to effectuate this Ordinance, including correction of internal references, appendix references, and scrivener’s errors, provided that no such correction shall alter the substantive meaning of any provision adopted by the Town Council.

SECTION 9. SEVERABILITY

If any provision of this Ordinance, or the application thereof to any person or circumstance, is held invalid, such invalidity shall not affect the remaining provisions or applications of this Ordinance, which shall continue in full force and effect.

SECTION 10. EFFECTIVE DATE

This Ordinance shall take effect as provided by law.
