



# Memo

<b>To:</b>	Plainfield Charter Township Planning Commission
<b>From:</b>	Progressive Companies
<b>Date:</b>	May 12, 2026
<b>Re:</b>	Plainfield Township Zoning Amendments

After more than a year of collaboration and dialogue with Plainfield Township Community Development Staff, a revised Zoning Ordinance is nearing completion. This memo reviews the objectives for amending the Zoning Ordinance and summarizes the changes proposed at a high level. A draft Zoning Ordinance will be ready for review at a future work session of the Planning Commission.

## OBJECTIVES FOR AMENDING ZONING ORDINANCE

There are three main objectives for updating the Plainfield Township Zoning Ordinance:

**1. To implement the vision of the new Master Plan, with a focus on housing.**

Plainfield Township adopted a new Master Plan in 2024. The Master Plan is the policy document that guides land use in the community over the next 20 years. The Plan was organized around four categories of goals: Natural features and Recreation; Infrastructure; Housing and Neighborhoods; and Development.

In early 2024, the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) launched the Housing Readiness Grant Incentive Program which provides a total of \$5 million in grant funding to support Michigan's cities, villages, and townships in adopting or eliminating rules and regulations to encourage building more housing and increasing affordability. Plainfield Township secured a grant from this program to update its zoning ordinance to enable more housing production in the township.

The Master Plan identified numerous goals, but the following housing and development related goals have been prioritized in this zoning update:

- Establish land use and zoning policies that reflect residential densities and commercial and industrial intensities that take into account existing and planned extensions of utility systems.
- Include a mix of allowable housing types and sizes to accommodate people in all stages of life, varied housing preferences, and a range of incomes.
- Amend residential zone districts to reduce complexity and add flexibility for housing types.
- Revise zoning regulations that affect housing supply and choice, such as lot width and lot area requirements, and minimum house size.
- Encourage increased residential density where public infrastructure exists.
- Encourage inclusion of traditional neighborhood elements with a focus on a consistent local street network, sidewalks, street trees, and compact design.
- Promote walkable neighborhoods by emphasizing front porches and de-emphasizing garages and car parking.

**2. To improve user-friendliness through reorganization and clarity.**

A zoning ordinance that is clear, consistent, and predictable is essential to good development and transparency. Several amendments have been made to the Zoning Ordinance to make it easier to administer and understand for staff and residents alike. These include eliminating redundancies, reducing length, and adding clarity wherever possible. Additionally, several housekeeping amendments have been included in this package of amendments to correct contradictions between ordinance requirements.

**3. To position the Township for Redevelopment Ready Communities certification.**

The Redevelopment Ready Communities (RRC) program is an initiative of the Michigan Economic Development Corporation that helps Michigan communities adopt best-practice planning, zoning, and development review systems so they can become more competitive for new business and redevelopment. Communities work to achieve certification through implementing strategies related to six best practices. Plainfield Township is currently working toward RRC certification and the zoning amendments proposed are in alignment with RRC requirements.

## HIGH LEVEL OVERVIEW OF ZONING AMENDMENTS

The proposed zoning amendments can be organized into six main categories. Additional details are provided below.

- |                                       |                                  |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Fewer Zoning Districts             | 4. More Mixed-Use Areas          |
| 2. Expanded Housing Types             | 5. New Planned Development Tools |
| 3. New Dimensional & Design Standards | 6. Simplification                |

### **1. Fewer Zoning Districts**

Consolidation of zoning districts is a change to the ordinance called for by the Master Plan. The current Zoning Ordinance has many districts that are very similar in nature. Combining these districts makes administration of the code much simpler, and easier to understand for residents and developers. A summary of major changes is listed below.

- Consolidation of zoning districts:
  - R-1B and R-1C = Suburban Residential
  - R-1A, R-2, R-3 = Neighborhood Residential
  - C-5 eliminated and rezoned to Commuter Commercial
  - C-1 eliminated and rezoned to either Village Commercial or Commuter Commercial
- All residential zoning district standards are now located in Chapter 6
- All commercial district standards are now located in Chapter 7
- Elimination of 10 Mile Overlay District and Northeast Beltline Overlay District
  - Unique standards for setbacks, landscaping, and signage remain but are located elsewhere in the Zoning Ordinance

### **2. Expanded Housing Types**

Expanded housing types permitted in residential districts is also a change called for by the Master Plan. Increasing housing options in Plainfield's neighborhoods allows for more efficient use of land, creates more options for affordable housing, allows existing residents to financially benefit from providing more housing on their own property, and makes neighborhoods more resilient to changes in consumer preference and the overall housing market.

The foundation for expanding housing types in the township is providing clarified definitions for each housing type. The following table summarizes use regulations and permitted zoning districts for each type of home.

Bldg. Type	# Bldgs. Per Lot	Applicable Use Regulations	Allowed Districts
Single Family	1	12.02 – Single-Family Dwellings	RP, RE, SR, NR VC (existing), MXU (existing)
Two Family	1	12.04 – Two-Family Dwellings	SR (corner lot), NR
	2	12.05 – Three-Four Unit Dwellings	NR (corner lot)
	3+	12.06 – Five+ Unit Dwellings	NR (on 30,000 sf + lots) VC, MXU
Multiple-Family, 3-4 units	1	12.05 – Three-Four Unit Dwellings	NR (corner lot) VC, MXU
	2+	12.06 – Five+ Unit Dwellings	NR (on 30,000 sf + lots) VC, MXU
Multiple-Family, 5+ units	1+	12.06 – Five+ Unit Dwellings	NR (on 30,000 sf + lots) VC, MXU
Mixed-Use	1+	12.07 – Mixed-Use Residential Building	VC, MXU
Accessory Dwelling Unit	1	12.03 – Accessory Dwelling Units	RP, RE, SR, NR

Key changes to the current Zoning Ordinance shown in the table above include:

- Accessory dwelling units (ADUs) are permitted in all residential zoning districts
- Two-family homes are permitted on corner lots in Suburban Residential, and anywhere in Neighborhood Residential – subject to design and dimensional standards
- Multi-family structures with 3-4 units are permitted on corner lots in Neighborhood Residential - subject to design and dimensional standards
- Multi-family structures with 5 or more units are permitted in Neighborhood Residential on lots at least 30,000 sf in total area, with 4,400 sf of lot area per dwelling unit

### 3. New Dimensional & Design Standards

Standards for lot area and width, lot coverage, setbacks, and building height have been revised to align with the changes in zoning districts and housing types. Additional design standards have also been established for each housing type. The table below summarizes revised dimensional requirements for residential districts, with red text indicating a new or revised standard. The design standard page included at this end of this memorandum provides an example of design standards.

District	Minimum Lot Dimensions		Maximum Lot Coverage (%)	Minimum Yard Requirements			Building Height (ft / stories)	See Also
	Area (sf)	Width (ft)		Front/Corner Front (ft)	Side (ft)	Rear (ft)		
<b>Single-Family</b>								
RP	120,000	200	25	<del>70 / 50</del> 40 / 40	25	<del>400</del> 60	35 / 2.5	6.03.C.2. 12.02.
RE	<del>43,560</del> 40,000	150	25	40 / 40	15	60	35 / 2.5	12.02.
SR (R-1B base)	11,700	90	25	30 / 25	10	40	35 / 2.5	12.02.
NR (R-1A base)	<del>8,000</del> 5,000	<del>80</del> 50	<del>25</del> 40	25 / 20	5 – one side 15 – total	<del>40</del> 25	35 / 2.5	12.02.

District	Minimum Lot Dimensions		Maximum Lot Coverage (%)	Minimum Yard Requirements			Building Height (ft / stories)	See Also
	Area (sf)	Width (ft)		Front/Corner Front (ft)	Side (ft)	Rear (ft)		
<b>Two-Family</b>								
SR	11,700	100	30	30 / 25	15	40	35 / 2.5	12.04.
NR (R-3 base)	11,700 5,000	90 50	35 50	30 / 30 25 / 20	10 5 – one side 15 – total	40 25	35 / 2.5	12.04.
<b>Multi-Family (3-4 units)</b>								
NR (R-3 base)	30,000 8,000	150 60	40 50	45 / 45 25 / 20	10	40 25	40 45 / 3	12.05.
<b>Multi-Family (5+ units)</b>								
NR (R-3 base)	30,000 total 4,400 / unit	150 100	50	45 / 45 25 / 20	10	40 25	40 45 / 3	12.06.

New dimensional and building design standards for Village Commercial, Commuter Commercial, Office, Light Industrial, and Industrial districts have also been established per the table below. Again, **red text** indicates a new or revised standard.

District	Min. Lot Dimensions		Min. Yard Requirements			Density	Max. Building Height (ft / stories)	See Also
	Area (sf)	Width (ft)	Front/Corner Front or RBL (ft)	Side (ft)	Rear (ft)			
VC	N/A	N/A	0 to 10 (RBL)	0	15 30 if adj res	N/A	<del>30</del> 35 / 2 3 stories	7.04
MXU	3,000	30	5-30 (RBL)	0 or 5	25	1,250 sf lot area per DU  750 sf lot area per DU w/ bonuses	20 / 2 (min) 60 (max) 80 (bonus) 100 (SLU)	7.05.
CC	N/A	N/A	30 / 30	10 25 if adj res	25 50 if adj res	N/A	50	7.06
O	45,000 N/A	100 N/A	35 20 / 35	15 25 if adj res	25	N/A	35	7.07
LI	N/A	100 N/A	75 (state/county) 50 (other) 35 (corner) 35 / 35	25 35 if adj res	25 50 35 if adj res	N/A	35 / 3 stories	7.08
I	N/A	N/A	75 35 / 35	25 35 if adj res	35 25 50 if adj res	N/A	45 / 3 stories	7.08

#### **4. More Mixed-Use Areas**

Providing for more mixed-use areas in the Township creates opportunities for new development that combines residential and commercial development in the same location, thereby reducing the need for vehicle trips and creating new opportunities for developments that reflect the township's priorities. Key changes to provide for more mixed use areas include:

- Expansion of the Village Commercial District into other areas of the Township such as Belmont Village
- Addition of housing as a permitted use in the Village Commercial district, which was previously only possible in the Mixed Use Commercial District.

#### **5. New Planned Development Tools**

Plainfield Township has a history of providing for a wide range of development through the Planned Unit Development process—which can be lengthy and complex, and then leave development projects that are not completed in a strange limbo between legacy PUD standards and evolving zoning requirements. Amendments to the Planned Unit Development section sought to address some of the legacy PUD challenges the Township is facing, as well as create new types of *Planned Developments* that provide some of the same flexibility desired by traditional PUD development, without the regulatory burden. Key changes include:

- The addition of two new types of planned developments that do not require a rezoning, but have very clear standards and requirements that mirror some of the existing PUD standards. Importantly, these planned developments do *not* allow modification of the permitted uses in the zoning district in which they are located:
  - Open Space Preservation Development: Developments in the RE and RP districts that preserve open space, but do not increase the overall development density of a property.
  - Residential Cluster Development: Developments in the RE, SR, or NR districts that preserve open space, and may increase overall development density by up to 25 percent.
- The existing standards for traditional PUDs were modified to simplify the process and requirements for approval of a PUD. A PUD approval still functions as a rezoning and allows for flexibility in the uses permitted.

#### **6. Simplification**

Many adjustments have been made to simplify and streamline ordinance provisions. Key changes include:

- Elimination of “Uses Subject to Special Conditions” – these uses are currently listed as “R” (Permitted) but have applicable use regulations.
  - This allows a use to be permitted in one district and a special land use in another.
  - Also allows condensing of use regulations that would otherwise have been split into two chapters, for example, in the current ordinance, outdoor dining before 10pm is located in the Uses Subject to Special Conditions chapter and outdoor dining after 10pm is located in the Special Land Use chapter.
- Removal of lists of allowable uses from each district, with reference to a summary table for residential and commercial uses instead.
  - This creates many fewer places to update when future amendments are made, and limits the possibility for inconsistency in standards.
- Given other changes, total number of chapters has gone from 38 to 21.

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Ch	Current	Ch	Proposed
1	Short Title, Purpose & Scope	1	Short Title, Purpose & Scope
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3	General Provisions	3	General Provisions
4	Nonconforming Uses & Structures	4	Nonconformities
5	Mapped Districts	5	Mapped Districts
6	RP Rural Preservation	6	Residential Districts
7	RE Rural Estate Residential	7	Commercial and Other Districts
8	R-1A Residential	8	Natural Rivers Overlay District
9	R-1B Residential	9	Floodplain Overlay District
10	R-1C Residential	10	Wellhead Protection Overlay District
11	R-2 Residential	11	Planned Development Options
12	R-3 Residential	12	Residential Use Regulations
13	R-4 Residential	13	Non-Residential Use Regulations
14	C-1 Commercial	14	Signs
15	VC Commercial	15	Parking and Mobility
16	Mixed-Use Commercial (MXU)	16	Lighting
17	RESERVED	17	Landscaping and Buffering
18	Commuter Commercial	18	Development Review Procedures
19	C-5 Commercial	19	Administration and Enforcement
20	O Office	20	Zoning Board of Appeals
21	LI Light Industrial	21	Miscellaneous
22	I Industrial		
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## ZONING MAP

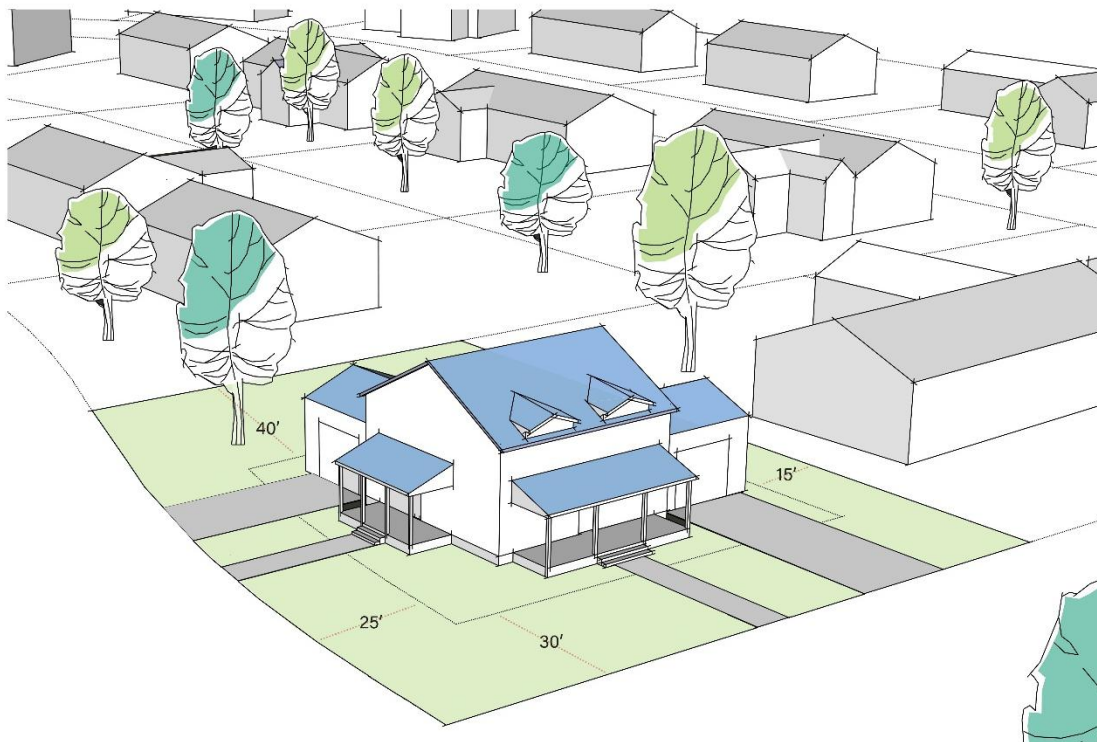
The key changes to the Zoning Map largely come from the consolidation of zoning districts as described above. R-1B and R-1C have become the Suburban Residential zoning district. R-1A, R-2, and R-3 have become the Neighborhood Residential zoning district. R-4 has become the Mobile Home Park zoning district. C-1 and C-5 have been eliminated. C-5 is now Commuter Commercial and C-1 is either Village Commercial or Commuter Commercial, depending on the context.

Other rezonings are proposed that follow the recommendations of the Future Land Use Map. These include:

- Mixed-use zoning at Post & Pine Island
- Added housing choice at 7 Mile & Pine Island to utilize expanded water and sewer infrastructure
- Mixed-use zoning and expanded housing choice at Belmont Village
- Mixed-use zoning in North Comstock Park
- Added housing choice between Coit and Plainfield Avenue

**EXAMPLE DESIGN GUIDELINES**

**DUPLEX**



**Districts Permitted:** Suburban Residential (SR), Neighborhood Residential (NR)

**Dimensional Requirements:**

District	Min. Lot Dimensions		Min. Lot Coverage (%)	Min. Setbacks (ft)			Min. Dwelling Size (sf)
	Area (sf)	Width (ft)		Front/Corner	Side	Rear	
SR	11,700	100	30%	30/25	15	40	450
NR	5,000	50	50%	25/20	5 - one side 15 - total	25	450

**Design Guidelines for Suburban Residential:**

**Location.** Two-family dwellings are permitted in the Suburban Residential District on corner lots.

**Entrances.** Two-family dwellings shall have one primary entrance per street.

# STACKED-DUPLEX



**Districts Permitted:** Neighborhood Residential (NR)

**Dimensional Requirements:**

District	Min. Lot Dimensions		Min. Lot Coverage (%)	Min. Setbacks (ft)			Min. Dwelling Size (sf)
	Area (sf)	Width (ft)		Front/Corner	Side	Rear	
SR	11,700	90	30%	30/25	15	40	450
NR	5,000	50	50%	25/20	5 - one side 15 - total	25	450

**Design Guidelines for Neighborhood Residential:**

**Location.** Two-family dwellings are permitted in the Neighborhood Residential District on any lot meeting the minimum required dimensions.

**Number.** More than one two-family dwelling building is permitted on a Neighborhood Residential lot.

**Separation.** A minimum distance of 20 feet shall be maintained between any sides of any two buildings.

**Parking.** There shall be a minimum distance of 15 feet between any parking space or carport and any wall of a principal building.

JT, JB  
[https://progressiveae.sharepoint.com/sites/Placemakers/Shared Documents/General/\(03\) WIP/Plainfield Zoning Ordinance/2026 05 19 PC Meeting/2026 05 12 Memo on Plainfield Zoning Amendments.docx](https://progressiveae.sharepoint.com/sites/Placemakers/Shared Documents/General/(03) WIP/Plainfield Zoning Ordinance/2026 05 19 PC Meeting/2026 05 12 Memo on Plainfield Zoning Amendments.docx)