



Village of Plainfield

# Unified Development Ordinance Recommendations Report

February 5, 2026



**SIGHTLINE**  
PLANNING AND ZONING

**Ancel  
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## Steering Committee

### Plan Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals

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## Introduction

In recent years, Plainfield has prioritized comprehensive land use and transportation planning, taking decisive steps to shape the community's future growth. In 2024, the Village adopted its Comprehensive Plan with a vision to build an inclusive, high-quality community for all residents, cultivate a diverse and thriving local economy, and enhance connectivity through expanded transportation networks and recreational amenities. In 2023, the Village adopted the Transportation and Mobility Plan to help address growing traffic congestion and aging infrastructure by identifying priority improvements for roadways, bikeways, transit, and pedestrian facilities.

In September 2025, the Village partnered with Teska Associates Inc, Sightline Planning and Zoning, and Ancel Glink to create a Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) to help implement the vision of these plans and other Village objectives. A UDO is a single, comprehensive document that combines the community's various regulations for land use and development in one place. The consultant team has been working with the Village to assess the existing Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances and develop recommendations to guide the creation of the UDO. The last major update of Plainfield's Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances was in the mid-2000s. Although the code has been updated and expanded over the years, the regulations no longer fully reflect current development trends or support the Village's goals for sustainable growth. A modern UDO, built on the foundation of the existing ordinances, will help implement the recently adopted Comprehensive Plan while streamlining regulations, removing barriers to smart growth, and providing a clear framework for guiding Plainfield's future development.

## Purpose

The purpose of this Recommendations Report is to provide the Village with initial recommendations for the UDO as a point of discussion before the drafting process begins. The Recommendations Report provides a general assessment of the Village's existing development regulations, highlights significant issues, and suggests preliminary recommendations for the UDO. The goal of this phase of the project is to reach a broad consensus with the Village on key issues facing the community prior to drafting the standards that will make up the Ordinance.

The Recommendations Report also helps the consultant team identify issues that may require further research, analysis, and discussion prior to the drafting phase of the project. In addition, the Recommendation Report is a public facing document that allows residents, property owners, and community stakeholders to understand the major themes of the project and provide feedback. The text and illustrations for the UDO will be drafted during the next phase of the project.

This section of the Recommendations Report introduces the project and discusses the consultant team's planning process. The next section of the Recommendations Report, "Overall Recommendations," provides general suggestions that can be applied throughout the Ordinance. If your time is limited, these sections will give you a thorough overview of the project. The final section of the Report, "Key Recommendations by Article," provides a section-by-section analysis of the Ordinance, identifying specific strategies to create regulations that are effective and user-friendly. If you have more time, this section describes the objectives of the UDO in greater detail.

## Planning Process

In September 2025, the consultant team met with key Village staff to kick-off the project and to learn more about the strengths and weaknesses of Plainfield's Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances. In October and November, the consultant team conducted interviews with community stakeholders to gain insight into the major zoning and development issues facing the community. In December, the consultant team conducted a joint meeting of the Village Board and the Plan Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals to discuss the scope of the project and to understand the issues facing the Village. Moving forward, the consultant team will periodically meet with the Plan Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals who will serve as the Steering Committee for this project.

In the months to come, the consultant team is eager to engage with the wider Plainfield community to ensure that everyone who lives and works in the Village can express their voices as part of the UDO process. The consultant team will work with Village staff to find ways to introduce the community to the project and get their feedback on the Village's development regulations. The consultant team will engage the community through the project webpage (<https://plainfieldudo.org/>), online surveys, major events, and targeted activities with smaller groups.

The consultant team performed a thorough review of existing conditions during the initial phase of this project. The team analyzed the Village's existing Zoning and Subdivision Ordinance and recent land use plans to become familiar with the goals and objectives of current plans and policies. The consultant team reviewed past and current planning work with an emphasis on the following plans:

- Comprehensive Plan (2025)
- Downtown Parking Study (2024)
- Transportation and Mobility Plan (2023)
- Riverfront Master Plan (2021)
- Complete Streets Policy (2015)
- Route 30 Corridor Enhancement Guidelines (2008)
- Residential Guidelines for PUDs and Annexations (2005)
- PUD Design Guidelines (2002)
- Downtown Plan (2000)
- Single-Family Design Standards (Undated)
- Natural Landscaping Design Guidelines (Undated)

The consultant team will utilize extensive geographic information systems (GIS) mapping to analyze data on the built environment, such as lot area, lot width, and lot coverage. The input received through this process combined with the analysis completed by the consultant team will be instrumental in formulating the recommendations presented in this document.

## Overall Recommendations

This section of the Recommendations Report presents overall recommendations that will be applied throughout the UDO.

### Reorganize for greater ease of use

The existing Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances will be reorganized in a logical and streamlined format to make the UDO easy to use for both new and experienced users. Figure 1 Proposed UDO Structure, shows each of the sections that will make up the UDO. Figure 2 Recommended Reorganization of Existing Ordinances, shows where the sections of Plainfield’s existing Zoning and Subdivision Ordinance would generally fit within the UDO. The proposed structure would reduce the number of sections in the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances and consolidate similar types of information.

Articles 1.00 through 5.00 of the UDO would serve as the administrative foundation of the Ordinance, and would include title and applicability, administrative bodies and notice, zoning applications, planned unit developments, and nonconformities. Article 6.00 would focus on subdivision regulations. Articles 7.00 and 8.00 would make up the core of the Ordinance with standards pertaining to bulk and setback for the Village’s various zoning districts and standards for principal and accessory uses and structures. Articles 9.00, 10.00, and 11.00 would include off-street parking and loading regulations, landscape standards, and sign regulations. Article 12.00 would serve as the final section of the Ordinance and include all relevant definitions.

The UDO will consolidate similar regulations by subject matter, making the code significantly easier to navigate. In the existing Zoning Ordinance, regulations for administration, districts, and uses are interspersed throughout the document, making it difficult to locate all standards related to a specific topic, which is a common problem in older ordinances. The UDO process provides the Village with an opportunity to comprehensively reorganize these development standards so that users can find what they need quickly and efficiently.

**Figure 1 Proposed UDO Structure**

Proposed UDO
Article 1.00 Title and Applicability
Article 2.00 Administrative Bodies and Notice
Article 3.00 Development Application Procedures
Article 4.00 Planned Unit Developments
Article 5.00 Nonconformities
Article 6.00 Subdivisions
Article 7.00 Zoning Districts
Article 8.00 Uses
Article 9.00 Off-Street Parking and Loading
Article 10.00 Landscaping
Article 11.00 Signs
Article 12.00 Definitions

**Figure 2 Recommended Reorganization of Existing Ordinances**

Articles of the Existing Zoning Ordinance	Location Within the UDO
I Introductory Provisions	1.00 Title and Applicability
II General Provisions	7.00 Zoning Districts; 8.00 Uses
III Administration and Enforcement	3.00 Development Applications
IV Planned Developments	4.00 Planned Unit Developments
V Residential Districts	7.00 Zoning Districts; 8.00 Uses
VI Business Districts	7.00 Zoning Districts; 8.00 Uses
VII Industrial Districts	7.00 Zoning Districts; 8.00 Uses
VIII Agricultural Districts	7.00 Zoning Districts; 8.00 Uses
IX Off-Street Parking and Loading	9.00 Off-Street Parking and Loading
X Fences	8.00 Uses
XI Signs	11.00 Signs
XII Nonconformities	5.00 Nonconformities
XIII Site Plan Review	3.00 Development Applications
XIV Landscaping	10.00 Landscaping
XV Historic Preservation	3.00 Development Applications
XVI Definitions	12.00 Definitions
Appx A Approved Plants for Developments	10.00 Landscaping

Articles of the Existing Subdivision Ordinance	Location Within the UDO
1 Generally	1.00 Title and Applicability; 12.00 Definitions
2 Approvals, Interpretations, Exceptions	6.00 Subdivisions
3 Procedures	3.00 Development Applications
4 Standards and Showings of Preliminary Plats	6.00 Subdivisions
5 Standards and Showings of Preliminary Plats	6.00 Subdivisions
6 Guarantee of Performance	6.00 Subdivisions
7 Improvement Procedures	3.00 Development Applications
8 Other Ordinances	6.00 Subdivisions
9 Design Standards	6.00 Subdivisions
10 Parks, Schools, and Public Areas	6.00 Subdivisions
11 Acceptance of Required Land Improvements	6.00 Subdivisions
12 Digital Format Submittals	6.00 Subdivisions

## Incorporate new and updated tables and illustrations

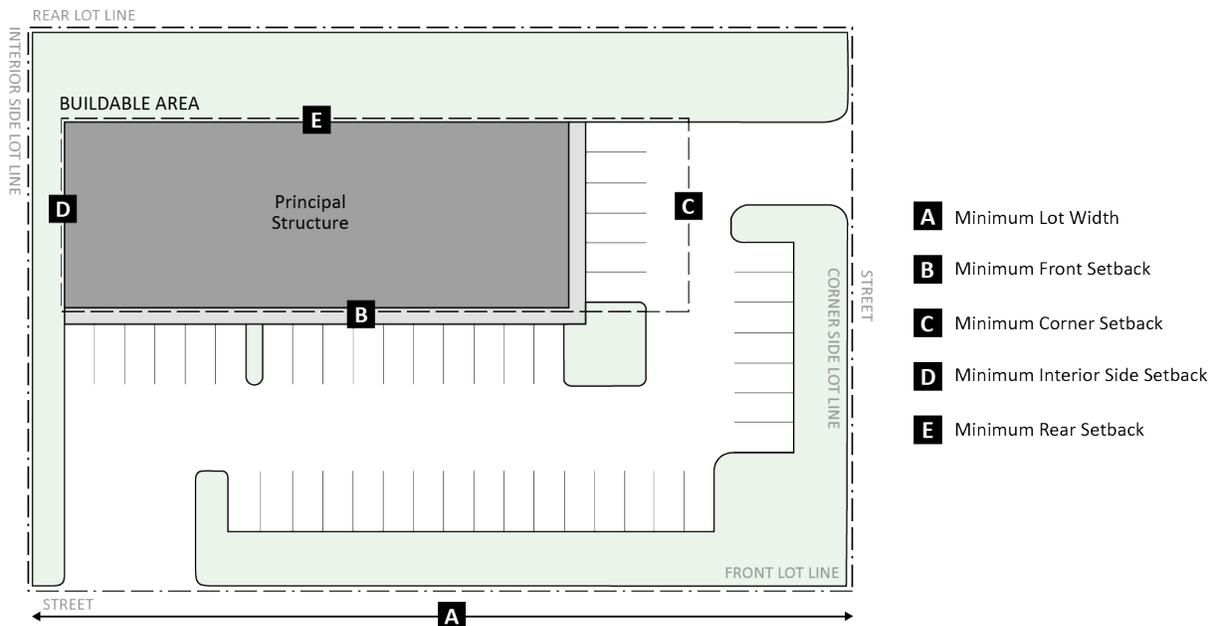
The UDO will use new and updated tables and illustrations to communicate information more effectively to users. Written standards can be summarized in tables and illustrations that complement the narrative text so that it is easier for users to absorb. While the existing ordinances includes several useful tables, flowcharts, and illustrations, the UDO will include fully updated tables, flowcharts, and illustrations that more effectively communicate information. New flowcharts will be clear and easy to read. New illustrations will be redesigned with better use of color, proportion, line weight, and scale so they are easy to understand at a glance. For example, a combination of tables and graphics could be used to communicate the regulations of each of the zoning districts in the UDO. Figure 3 Example Bulk and Yard

Regulations and Figure 4 Example Plan View Illustration show the standards of a sample zoning district utilizing a bulk and yard table and a plan-view graphic. Figure 5 Example Application Process demonstrates the types of flowcharts that could be used for zoning applications within the UDO.

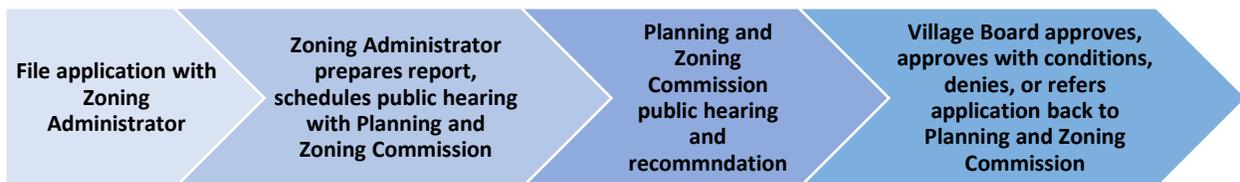
**Figure 3 Example Bulk and Yard Regulations**

Bulk Requirements		
	Minimum Lot Area	25,000 sf
<b>A</b>	Minimum Lot Width	100 ft
	Maximum Principal Building Height	50 ft
	Maximum Total Impervious Coverage	85%
Setback Requirements		
<b>B</b>	Minimum Front Setback	75 ft
<b>C</b>	Minimum Corner Side Setback	25 ft
<b>D</b>	Minimum Interior Side Setback	10 ft
<b>E</b>	Minimum Rear Setback	30 ft

**Figure 4 Example Plan View Illustration**



**Figure 5 Example Application Process**



## Key Recommendations by Article

The following recommendations are organized by the structure of the UDO, which is outlined in Figure 1: Proposed UDO Structure, rather than by the organization of the existing Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances. The analysis of each section begins by stating the intent of the article and includes a table that shows how the updated organization relates to the corresponding articles of the existing ordinances. This table is followed by major recommendations related to the content of each section. The major recommendations for some sections are more detailed than other sections due to the nature of subject matter.



## Article 1.00 Title and Applicability

*This Article introduces the UDO’s overall purpose and applicability.*

Proposed Organization	Corresponding Sections from Existing Ordinances
1.01 Title	9-1 Short Title; 7-31 Purpose
1.02 Authority and Purpose	9-2 Authority; 9-4 Purpose/Intent; 7-33 Authority
1.03 Applicability	9-3 Applicability; 9-6.1 Interpretation; 9-7 References to Other Regulations.; 9-8 Guidelines; 7-32 Interpretation; 7-34 Application
1.04 Transition Rules	9-9.2-3 Effective Date and Transition; 7-43 Status of Subdivision in Process
1.05 Interpretation	9-6.2-4 Interpretation
1.06 Enforcement	9-40 Enforcement and Penalties; 7-39 Enforcement; 7-42 Penalty
1.07 Safe Harbor Authorization	New Section of the UDO
1.08 Severability	9-5 Separability; 7-41 Separability
1.09 Effective Date	9-9.1 Effective Date and Transition

### *Consolidate language from the existing ordinance regarding title and applicability*

Article 1.00 (Title and Applicability) of the UDO will consolidate standards currently spread across several sections of the existing zoning and subdivision regulations into one dedicated article. This update will reduce confusion and improve usability. The new section will consolidate key standards regarding authority and purpose, applicability, enforcement, and severability.

### *Add new provisions to explain the transition to the new ordinance*

Section 1.04 Transition Rules of the UDO will provide greater detail on how the Village will transition from the existing Zoning Ordinance to the UDO. Transition rules allow users to understand how existing uses, buildings, and structures will be affected by the adoption of the UDO. This Section will address existing uses, nonconforming uses, and unlawful uses. In the existing Ordinance, transition rules apply to applications and permits submitted or issued before the effective date of the Ordinance. In the UDO, transition rules will discuss permitted uses that become special uses in the UDO, special uses and variations that were approved prior to UDO, and applications that were submitted to the Village prior to the UDO. This information will be complemented by more detailed standards in Article 5.00 (Nonconformities) and Article 8.00 (Uses).

## Article 2.00 Administrative Bodies and Notice

*This Article will specify the responsibilities for the Village’s boards, commissions, staff, and applicants regarding development applications.*

Proposed Organization	Corresponding Sections from Existing Ordinances
2.01 Purpose	New Section of the UDO
2.02 Village Board	9-27 Village Board
2.03 Planning and Zoning Commission	9-31 ZBA; 9-32 Plan Commission
2.04 Historic Preservation Commission	9-144 Powers and Duties of HPC
2.05 Zoning Administrator	9-29 Director of Community Development; 9-30 Village Planner
2.06 Application Procedures	9-39 Fees and Charges
2.07 Notice	9-38 Public Hearings
2.08 Public Hearing	9-38 Public Hearings

### *Outline the roles and responsibilities of the Village’s decision-making bodies*

The existing Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances discuss the roles and responsibilities of the Village’s Boards and officials in Article III Administration and Enforcement and Article XV Historic Preservation. We recommend updating these roles and responsibilities to reflect the revised organization of the UDO. The UDO will focus on the function and authority of the Village Board, Plan Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals, Historic Preservation Commission, and Zoning Administrator. It will focus less on the creation, meetings, and officers of each entity. We recommend consolidating this type of information in the Municipal Code’s Chapter 2 (Administration) Article III (Boards and Commissions).

### *Combine and rename the Plan Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals*

The UDO process provides an opportunity for the Village to rethink the administrative bodies that help govern Plainfield. Currently, Plainfield has a Village Board that makes decisions on zoning applications, a Plan Commission that makes recommendations on zoning applications, and a Zoning Board of Appeals that makes recommendations on variances and decisions on appeals of determinations by the Zoning Administrator. The Plan Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals are made up of the same individuals, so in a functional capacity they act as a single entity. We recommend formally consolidating all planning and zoning matters under the jurisdiction of a single commission that could be known as the Planning and Zoning Commission, which would be an advisory body. Numerous municipalities in the region have combined these entities in recent years to manage local development more effectively.

### *Clearly outline the role of the Zoning Administrator*

The Zoning Administrator serves as the coordinator for all development applications, ensuring they are appropriately routed to boards, commissions, and staff throughout the process. The existing Zoning Ordinance creates confusion by referring to the Zoning Administrator, the Director of Community Development, and the Village Planner. By clearly designating the role of the Zoning Administrator in the UDO, applicants have a single point of contact who can guide them through procedures, answer questions, and keep applications moving. Explicitly defining the Zoning Administrator's authority and

responsibilities establishes accountability, reduces confusion, and streamlines the development review process for both applicants and staff.

#### *Consolidate zoning application information to create a consistent procedure*

The existing Ordinance includes separate sections detailing procedures for variations, special uses, amendments, and a number of other zoning applications. While the UDO will continue to include separate steps and approval standards for each application, it will also consolidate procedural information that applies to all applications. For example, this section will provide information regarding procedures for filing zoning applications, including what parties are authorized to file applications, and references to required application fees. In addition, this section will indicate how applicants may withdraw existing applications, or make successive applications if the initial application is denied. This consolidation will reduce repetitive content and ensure that common procedures are presented consistently across all application types.

#### *Provide general information on procedures for public hearings*

We recommend including general information regarding the conduct and procedure of public hearings for the Village Board, Planning and Zoning Commission, and Historic Preservation Commission. This Section of the UDO would include a basic overview of the procedures involved in a public hearing, including the presentation of testimony, voting, meetings, and records. The purpose of this section of the UDO is to make it easier for new users of the code to understand the public hearing process.

## Article 3.00 Development Application Procedures

*This Article discusses the procedures and standards for each of the Village’s development applications.*

Proposed Organization	Corresponding Sections from Existing Ordinances
3.01 Purpose	New Section of the UDO
3.02 Annexation	New Section of the UDO
3.03 Subdivision	7-81 Optional Concept Plan; 7-82 Preliminary Plat Approval; 7-83 Final Plat Approval; 7-163 Review by Village Engineer; 7-164 Approval by Plan Commission
3.04 Site Plan Review	9-107 to 9-121 Site Plan Review
3.05 Special Use Permit	9-37 Special Uses
3.06 Variation	9-33 Variances; 7-38 Variations and Exceptions
3.07 Administrative Adjustment	9-34 Administrative Adjustments; 9-82 Administrative Adjustments for Parking Standards
3.08 Text or Zoning Map Amendment	9-36 Amendments
3.09 Appeal	9-35 Appeals
3.10 Ordinance Interpretation	New Section of the UDO
3.11 Temporary Use Permit	New Section of the UDO
3.12 Sign Permit	9-92 Sign Permit Applications
3.13 Historic Landmark or District	9-147 Historic Landmark Nomination and Designation Procedures; 9-148 Historic District Nomination And Designation Procedures
3.14 Certificate of Appropriateness	9-149 Certificate of Appropriateness
3.15 Certificate of Economic Hardship	9-150 Certificate of Economic Hardship

### *Clearly indicate review, recommendation, and decision roles for zoning applications*

For each development approval, the UDO will clearly delineate which local officials are responsible for each stage of the review, recommendation, and decision-making process. This ensures that applicants understand how the Zoning Administrator, Historic Preservation Commission, Planning and Zoning Commission, and Village Board work together. Figure 6 Summary of Development Applications shows which decision-making bodies will be responsible for each development application in the UDO.

Figure 6 Summary of Development Applications

Application Type	Zoning Administrator	Historic Preservation Commission	Planning and Zoning Commission	Village Board
Annexation	Review and Report	None	Public Hearing, Review, and Recommendation	Public Meeting, Decision
Subdivision	Review and Report	None	Public Hearing, Review, and Recommendation	Public Meeting, Decision
Site Plan Review > <i>With other zoning applications</i>	Review and Report	None	Public Hearing, Review, and Recommendation	Public Meeting, Decision
Special Use Permit	Review and Report	None	Public Hearing, Review, and Recommendation	Public Meeting, Decision
Variation	Review and Report	None	Public Hearing, Review, and Recommendation	Public Meeting, Decision
Administrative Adjustment	Decision	None	Authority for Appeal	Authority for Appeal
Zoning Text or Map Amendment	Review and Report	None	Public Hearing, Review, and Recommendation	Public Meeting, Decision
Appeals	Review and Report	None	Public Hearing, Review, and Recommendation	Public Meeting, Decision
Ordinance Interpretation > <i>New</i>	Decision	None	Authority for Appeal	Authority for Appeal
Temporary Use Permit > <i>New</i>	Decision	None	Authority for Appeal	Authority for Appeal
Sign Permit	Decision	None	Authority for Appeal	Authority for Appeal
Historic Landmark or District	Review and Report	Public Hearing, Review, and Recommendation	None	Public Meeting, Decision
Certificate of Appropriateness > <i>Major Work</i>	Review and Report	Public Hearing, Review, and Recommendation	None	Public Meeting, Decision
Certificate of Economic Hardship	Review and Report	Public Hearing, Review, and Recommendation	None	Public Meeting, Decision
Planned Unit Development	Review and Report	None	Public Hearing, Review, and Recommendation	Public Meeting, Decision

### *Remove submittal requirements for zoning applications from the UDO*

The existing Zoning Ordinance is weighed down by submittal requirements for various development applications as in Sections 9-48 (Planned Developments), 9-113 (Site Plan Review), and 7-276 to 7-277 (Subdivisions). This is a common practice in many older development codes, but it adds unnecessary information and requires a formal amendment to the code when administrative processes change. We recommend moving these submittal requirements since it is unnecessary to include them in UDO. Instead, these application requirements should be located in separate documents outside of the UDO that are available online and from staff. This will give Plainfield staff the opportunity to update the applications now, and in the future, and make it easier for applicants to access them.

### *Holistically update findings of fact for development applications*

The UDO will include clear and up to date findings of fact requirements for each of the development applications discussed in Article 3. Findings of fact guide decision-makers through required approval standards, which promotes consistent and transparent application of zoning criteria across all cases. These findings provide the legal foundation for zoning decisions ensuring that approvals, such as variations and special use permits, are legally defensible. In the existing Zoning Ordinance, some findings of fact may need additional detail, such as Section 9-37.5 (Standards for Special Uses). Updated findings of fact will help the Village articulate how each application meets the specific standards in the UDO by showing that decisions were made considering all relevant factors.

### *Revise the site plan review process to ensure balanced development and streamlined procedures*

We recommend that the Village revise its site plan review application as part of the UDO process. A site plan shows how an applicant intends to develop a site and how it fits in with surrounding properties. In the existing Zoning Ordinance, all site plan review is evaluated by the Zoning Administrator, the Plan Commission, and the Village Board. This is a lengthy process for a typical administrative review. In the UDO, we suggest a two-tiered process for site plan review. Typical development applications would be reviewed and approved by staff to expedite the approval process. However, projects requiring discretionary approvals, such as special uses, variations, and planned unit developments, would also be reviewed by the Plan Commission and Village Board. This framework would clearly distinguish administrative site plan review from Board approvals. In addition, the UDO will clarify that site plan review is not applicable to single-family and two-family homes unless the uses are part of larger subdivision applications. These changes would align Plainfield with modern best practices and reduce risk, delay, and development costs for potential applicants.

### *Clarify and consolidate standards for administrative adjustments*

We recommend that the Village update its process for administrative adjustments to better manage minor variation requests and streamline the development process. The existing administrative adjustment application allows the Zoning Administrator to approve a narrow set of requests, such as building height, setbacks, and fence encroachments. Many minor variation requests still need to be recommended by the Plan Commission and approved by the Village Board. These approvals add unnecessary delays to the development process for routine requests that could be handled more

efficiently by staff. The UDO will update the list of possible administrative adjustments to give the Zoning Administrator a slightly wider purview to approve minor variation requests. For example, administrative adjustments in the UDO could include off-street parking and landscaping requirements. As in the existing Zoning Ordinance, administrative adjustments will be based on a maximum percentage in relation to the existing requirement, such as five to ten percent. Applications that exceed these limitations would utilize the typical variation procedure, as in the existing Zoning Ordinance.

#### *Create a zoning interpretation application*

Since it is difficult for even the most comprehensive UDO to adequately address every possible regulatory issue, many modern ordinances include a process for zoning interpretations. This allows property owners to file a written application with staff to clarify the text of the UDO. Staff's interpretation then serves as a precedent if similar cases arise in the future. The Village may already have an ad hoc process for zoning interpretations, but this process should be codified in the updated administrative provisions as a foundation for future Plainfield staff and officials.

#### *Streamline and clarify the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) review process*

The UDO should clarify when HPC review is required for zoning applications to ensure that property owners understand the process before beginning property improvements. The HPC should provide specific, actionable feedback to minimize the need for multiple meetings and reduce applicant time and cost. The UDO should also clearly define the relationship between the HPC and the Village Board, specifying which body provides recommendations versus final decisions. The UDO should highlight whether applicants must address HPC feedback before proceeding to the Board. Clearly communicating these requirements and procedures will benefit both applicants and the review bodies.

## Article 4.00 Planned Unit Developments

*This Article outlines the standards and procedures for planned unit development (PUD) applications.*

Proposed Organization	Corresponding Sections from Existing Ordinances
4.01 Purpose	9-42 Purpose
4.02 Applicability	9-43 Applicability; 9-45 Permitted Variations
4.03 Procedure	9-47 Approval Procedures
4.04 Standards for Planned Unit Developments	9-44 Development Standards; 9-46 Guidelines for Planned Developments; 9-49 Findings of Fact
4.05 Provision of Community Amenities	New Section of the UDO
4.06 Amendments to Approved Planned Unit Developments	9-50 Compliance, Amendments, Revocation
4.07 Expiration of Approved Planned Unit Developments	9-50 Compliance, Amendments, Revocation

### *Update the PUD process by removing mandatory triggers by project type or size*

The purpose of a PUD is to allow creative development that would not be possible under the strict application of zoning regulations. PUDs are reviewed by Village staff, the Plan Commission, and the Village Board against a defined set of approval standards to ensure that the project adheres to the Village’s overall land use goals. The Village’s current PUD process requires developers to use a mandatory PUD for projects that include more than one type of land use, 50 or more dwelling units, or 20 or more acres of land. These PUD triggers capture much of the new development in Plainfield over the last several years. We recommend removing these mandatory triggers in the UDO to allow for greater flexibility in development – as long as it is context specific and provides amenities for the community. Moving forward, the goal is to modernize the Village’s zoning standards so that land use goals are clear, and more development is done through the UDO’s basic zoning regulations. The PUD would be an optional process for large, complex development proposals that need many variations from the basic zoning regulations.

### *Improve the PUD process for the Village and the applicant*

Currently, the Village’s procedure for PUD applications includes a Pre-Application Meeting, Concept Plan, Preliminary Plan, and Final Plan. The existing process allows applicants to adapt and improve their plans as they work with the Village, without either party having to expend significant resources until both parties are comfortable with the other’s objectives. Building on this solid foundation, the consultant team recommends a four-step process that is slightly different than the existing procedure, but will streamline the overall PUD process.

1. **Pre-Application Meeting:** Retain the required Pre-Application Meeting to allow staff to understand the nature of the proposal and to allow the applicant to receive assistance from staff.
2. **Concept Plan:** The Concept Plan should remain an optional step based on the complexity of the project and the applicant’s familiarity with the Village. It is important for both the Planning and

Zoning Commission and the Village Board to provide feedback on the Concept Plan so that the applicant can understand both the Village's land use goals and its overall policy direction.

3. **Preliminary Plan:** The Preliminary Plan would be reviewed by the Planning and Zoning Commission and Village Board, similar to the procedure in the existing Zoning Ordinance.
4. **Final Plan:** We recommend streamlining the Final Plan approval process by removing the Plan Commission from this stage. The Zoning Administrator would conduct an initial review to ensure that modifications suggested during the Preliminary Plan phase were incorporated by the applicant. Following this conformity check, the Final Plan would proceed directly to the Village Board for approval. This change would reduce the approval timeline by eliminating the Plan Commission meeting and public hearing at the Final Plan stage.

The UDO will continue to allow the Preliminary and Final Plans to be submitted together as a single Final Plan based on the complexity of the project and the applicant's familiarity with Plainfield. Concurrent applications for the Preliminary and Final Plans allow developers to reduce the timeframe for review while still allowing the Village to review the PUD application in a comprehensive manner. As discussed previously, we recommend removing the required PUD application submittals from the UDO to make it easier for Plainfield staff to update the applications now, and in the future.

#### *Ensure that the Village receives desired public amenities as part of the PUD process*

The purpose of a PUD is to encourage flexibility in development and design that fulfills the planning objectives of the Village. Since the Village is providing additional flexibility through the PUD process, it should receive certain amenities as a result of this process. The PUD development standards in the existing Zoning Ordinance focus on land for schools, recreational amenities, and common open space (see Section 9-44). The UDO will provide a larger set of amenities that a potential applicant could provide to the Village as long as they are appropriate to the scale of the PUD. These amenities could include the establishment or enhancement of open space amenities as well as public facilities, natural features, and/or public infrastructure. While PUDs for larger residential subdivisions will likely trigger set asides for schools and parks, the UDO will make a distinction between required PUD amenities and required set asides for schools and parks for new subdivisions (see Article 6 Subdivisions).

## Article 5.00 Nonconformities

*This Article addresses nonconforming uses, structures, lots, and site elements.*

Proposed Organization	Corresponding Sections from Existing Ordinances
5.01 Purpose	New Section of the UDO
5.02 Applicability	9-102 General
5.03 Nonconforming Uses	9-104 Uses
5.04 Nonconforming Structures	9-105 Nonconforming Buildings
5.05 Nonconforming Lots of Record	9-103 Nonconforming Lots
5.06 Nonconforming Site Elements	9-106 Other Nonconforming Situations

### *Simplify and reorganize regulations*

The Village should continue to consolidate all regulations regarding nonconformities in a single section of its development regulations. The existing Zoning Ordinance provides specific sections for nonconforming lots, uses, buildings, and other nonconforming situations, all of which should remain in the UDO to allow users to understand how to manage nonconformities. The UDO will also include information on ordinary maintenance, adaptive reuse, and limited improvements to existing nonconforming structures. These provisions will allow property owners to continue to invest in their property, particularly in the older parts of the community. The nonconformity standards can also contribute to the Village’s sustainability goals by allowing property owners to install renewable energy systems, such as solar panels, on the roofs of nonconforming buildings.

### *Expand provisions for nonconforming site elements*

Nonconforming site elements are physical improvements on a zoning lot, such as parking lots, landscaping, signs, and other types of on-site development that no longer meet zoning requirements. Section 9-106 (Other Nonconforming Situations) of the existing Zoning Ordinance addresses these types of nonconformities to some degree. The updated regulations in the UDO will provide additional detail on nonconforming site elements, such as off-street parking and landscaping, and encompass nonconforming signs as well. These provisions could provide the Village with a systematic way of addressing nonconforming site elements. For example, if an applicant wanted to significantly expand the size of an off-street parking lot, the parking lot would then have to meet the UDO’s off-street parking standards as well as the requirements for landscape islands and perimeter landscaping.

## Article 6.00 Subdivisions

*This Article pertains to the subdivision of land into lots and blocks and the provision of streets, utilities, parks, and schools.*

Proposed Organization	Corresponding Sections from Existing Ordinances
6.01 General Provisions	7-31 Purpose
6.02 Subdivision Design and Layout	7-206 Blocks; 7-207 Lots
6.03 Conservation and Cluster Design	9-56 CV District Design Standards
6.04 Street Standards	7-202 Streets; 7-203 Minimum Standards for Streets; 7-204 Alleys; 7-209 Access to Public Streets; 7-251 Roadway Improvements; 7-252 Sidewalks and Bike Paths
6.05 Required Public Improvements	7-166 Construction Review; 7-167 Inspection; 7-168 Permits; 7-169 Acceptance of Improvements; 7-205 Easements; 7-246 General Requirements; 7-253 Public Utilities; 7-254 Street Lighting
6.06 Cash and Land Donations	Division 10 Parks, Schools, and Public Areas;
Engineering Design Manual	7-36 Top of Foundation Survey; 7-37 Lot Grading Survey; 7-247 Permanent Markers; 7-248 Sanitary Sewers and Sewage Disposal; 7-249 Watermain and Water Supply; 7-250 Storm Drainage; 7-255 Grading; 7-256 Guard, Fence, or Natural Landscape Buffer; Division 12 Digital Format Submittals
Municipal Code	7-181 Special Flood Hazard; 7-182 Soil Erosion and Sedimentation; 7-183 Stream and Wetland Protection; 7-184 Stormwater Drainage and Detention

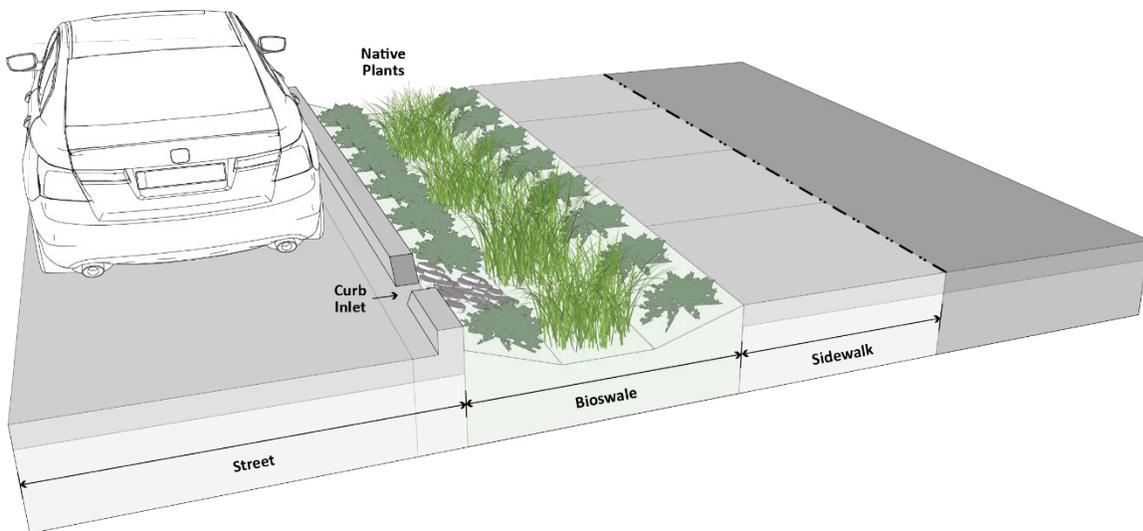
### *Emphasize connectivity and open space as part of new subdivision approvals*

Overall, the Village’s subdivision regulations are thorough and meet the needs of the community. However, the UDO process allows the Village to make targeted improvements to these regulations. Updated subdivision standards allow the Village to implement its goals of improving connections between subdivisions and providing additional open space amenities. New subdivisions can be designed to reduce the creation of new cul-de-sacs. Cul-de-sac streets act as dead ends, forcing traffic to use the same entry and exit points, which restricts direct routes between neighborhoods. In addition, the updated subdivision standards can allow and encourage mid-block crossings in appropriate locations. Mid-block crossings provide a safe path for pedestrians to cross long stretches of road between intersections on longer blocks. The Village’s Transportation and Mobility Plan and its Complete Streets Policy should serve as reference points for these updates. The subdivision standards can also facilitate connections between subdivisions and open space amenities. The UDO process allows the Village to comprehensively review its requirements and incentives for open space set asides since new parks are integral to both new and existing neighborhoods.

### *Develop street rights-of-way that manage stormwater runoff with green infrastructure*

Roadways are a significant contributor to stormwater runoff and are often one of the first parts of the built environment to be impacted by flood events. To better prepare the Village for future climate conditions, the new ordinance can ensure that new rights-of-way incorporate green infrastructure to help manage stormwater when feasible. New rights-of-way can include parkways and medians that naturally retain and filter water using bioswales and bioretention planters to create streets that are both complete and green (See Figure 7 Parkway Bioswale Design). These stormwater management features should be designed to withstand heavy rain, intermittent drought, and exposure to road salts. To ensure a cohesive look and feel, the standards for new rights-of-way can work in conjunction with the UDO's landscape standards in Article 11.00 (Landscaping). Green infrastructure could be included as an option in the UDO, rather than a requirement.

**Figure 7 Parkway Bioswale Design**



### *Reevaluate block size standards to encourage pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods*

The block size requirements for subdivisions have a significant impact on the walkability of new residential developments. Shorter blocks help minimize the distance that people must travel between destinations, which encourages walking and biking. To promote walking and biking, maximum block length should be approximately 800 to 1,000 feet, which is more conducive to creating pedestrian-friendly communities. The existing Subdivision Ordinance has a maximum permitted block length of 1,500 feet. More walkable residential subdivisions in Plainfield have blocks that are less than 800 feet long. In contrast, less walkable subdivisions have blocks that are more than 1,700 feet long. The UDO process provides the Village with an opportunity to reevaluate the maximum block size standard as both a policy and placemaking initiative.

### *Encourage conservation and cluster design standards to promote sustainable development*

The principles of conservation and cluster design can help new developments balance community growth with the protection of natural areas. These techniques maximize open space and preservation by siting buildings in more compact clusters without reducing the size or number of homes. Conservation and cluster design requires an inventory of natural resources on a property so that developed areas are not located in environmentally sensitive locations. The natural resources on the undeveloped portions of the property would then be protected as open space and maintained for the benefit of current and future residents. New standards in the UDO can allow conservation and cluster design as optional development strategies as part of the subdivision approval process.

### *Create an engineering design manual to complement the UDO*

The Village should consider creating a separate engineering design manual that consolidates subdivision standards, specifications, and cross-sections into a single, integrated document that complements the UDO. This reorganization would provide a clearer, more accessible resource without requiring changes to existing engineering standards themselves. The engineering design manual could be developed through a staff-led process that runs parallel to the creation of the UDO. The Village should consider moving key regulatory provision to the municipal code, such as Section 7-181 Special Flood Hazard, to establish proper legal authority, while technical specifications and design details could be located in the more flexible engineering design manual. This approach balances the need for a unified reference point with the practical reality that engineering standards are regulated at a different pace than land use regulations.

## Article 7.00 Zoning Districts

*This Article establishes the zoning districts, zoning map, and development standards for principal structures. This Article includes bulk and yard regulations and design requirements.*

Proposed Organization	Corresponding Sections from Existing Ordinances
7.01 Purpose	New Section of the UDO
7.02 Applicability	New Section of the UDO
7.03 General Development Standards	New Section of the UDO
7.04 Zoning Map	9-11 Zoning Map
7.05 Annexed Land	9-12 Zoning of Annexed Land
7.06 Use of Land and Buildings	New Section of the UDO
7.07 Establishment and Purpose of Zoning Districts	9-10 Zoning Districts; 9-52 Purpose of the R Districts; 9-59 Purpose of the B Districts; 9-64 Purpose of the I Districts; 9-68 Purpose of the AG District
7.08 Residential Districts	9-54 General Standards for R Districts
7.09 Design Requirements for Residential Zoning Districts	9-116.3 Design Requirements
7.10 C-1 Downtown District	9-61.2.a Standards for the B Districts
7.11 C-2 Commercial Transition District	9-61.2.a Standards for the B Districts
7.12 C-3 Commercial Corridor District	9-61.2.a Standards for the B Districts
7.13 Design Requirements for Business Zoning Districts	9-61.8 Standards for the B Districts: BT; 9-61.9 Standards for the B Districts: B-5; 9-116.1 Design Requirements
7.14 I-1 Light Industrial and Office District	9-66 Standards for the I Districts
7.15 I-2 General Industrial District	9-66 Standards for the I Districts
7.16 Design Requirements for Industrial Zoning Districts	9-116.2 Design Requirements
7.17 OS Open Space District	9-70 Standards of the AG District

### *Update the zoning districts to facilitate Plainfield's vision for the future*

Over time, certain zoning districts in a community may become out of sync with the community's vision for future development. The consultant team suggests refining Plainfield's zoning district structure per Figure 8 Proposed Zoning Districts. These recommendations were based on the Land Use and Development recommendations from the Village's [Comprehensive Plan](#). With these planning goals as a foundation, it's clear that many of the bulk and setback regulations in the existing Ordinance should be maintained as part of the revised Ordinance. However, there are opportunities to update the zoning district regulations based on this review. Moving forward, the zoning district structure will not include zoning districts that are not mapped, which will allow the Village to manage development with a different set of zoning districts. For reference, please use [this link](#) to view an interactive version of the Village's existing zoning map.

**Figure 8 Proposed Zoning Districts**

Proposed Zoning District	Existing Zoning District
R-1 Single-Unit Dwelling District	R-1 Low Density Single-Family Residential District R-10 Low Density Single-Family Residential Overlay District
R-2 Single-Unit and Two-Unit Dwelling District	R-2 Single-Family and Two-Family Residential District
R-3 Townhouse Dwelling District	R-3 Townhouse Residential District
R-4 Multiple-Unit Dwelling District	R-4 Multiple-Family Residential District
C-1 Downtown District	B-5 Traditional Business District B-5O Traditional Business Overlay District
C-2 Commercial Transition District	B-T Business Transition District B-1 Business Convenience District
C-3 Commercial Corridor District	B-3 Highway Business District B-1 Business Convenience District
I-1 Light Industrial District	I-1 Office, Research, and Light Industrial District
I-2 General Industrial District	I-2 General Industrial District
OS Open Space District	A-1 Agricultural District
<b>Remove (unmapped or underutilized):</b> R-E Residential Estate District, CV Conservation District, TN Traditional Neighborhood District.	

*Modernize zoning standards for residential and open space areas*

**Residential:** The minimum lot size for most new development in the existing Zoning Ordinance is a minimum of 12,000 square feet of lot area and 85 feet of lot width. These standards approach new development through a strict lens of detached single-family development that does not distinguish between the various types of attached and detached housing that have built in the Village in recent years. The UDO process gives the Village an opportunity to calibrate bulk standards in the residential districts, such as lot area, lot width, and setbacks, to align with modern development trends. These updates will provide opportunities for developers to build slightly smaller homes as-of-right, consistent with recent development approvals, but without the need to use the Village’s planned unit development process. Developments of larger homes on larger lots would also be welcome in the Village under these updated standards.

**Open Space:** The UDO will include a new OS Open Space District to include existing parks, forest preserves, and open space areas. The OS District will replace the existing A-1 Agricultural District, which is primarily zoned for forest preserves, rather than farming. The OS District will better align zoning with actual land use, protect long-term open space assets, and improve the land use objectives of these areas for residents and property owners.

*Update zoning designations for Downtown, business, and industrial districts*

**Downtown:** The Plainfield Comprehensive Plan highlights the importance of Downtown Plainfield to the spirit of the Village. Zoning for this area should continue to foster a lively mix of retail and restaurant uses. Currently, Downtown zoning is regulated by the B-5 Traditional Business District and the B-5O Traditional Business Overlay District. While the B-5 designation serves the Village well to some degree, we recommend creating a single, unified Downtown zoning district that would help the center of town

continue to thrive. The new C-1 Downtown District will include the regulations of the B-50 District and consider some of the parcels in the existing B-1 District that might be appropriate as part of the updated C-1 District. The regulations of the C-1 District will ensure that bulk and setback standards build on the existing character of Downtown.

**Business:** Outside of Downtown, the Village currently has three business zoning districts, the B-1 Business Convenience District, the B-T Business Transition District, and the B-3 Highway Business District. The B-1 is a small district that was historically used for convenience shopping for adjacent residential neighborhoods. Over time, the B-1 has become muddled to include commercial areas along Route 59 near Downtown, but also commercial and institutional uses throughout the community. Most of the commercial uses in the B-1 would make more sense as part of the larger C-3, portions of the new B-2, or other zoning classifications, and could be rezoned as part of the UDO process. The B-3 encompasses a wide array of large retail, service, and restaurant uses, as exemplified by the areas along Route 59, Route 30, and The Boulevard. We recommend building on this character by calling this area the C-3 Commercial Corridor District in the UDO and bringing in appropriate portions of the existing B-1 District. The B-T District is a distinct business area that preserves historic residential buildings near Downtown while permitting a limited range of commercial uses. The B-T can be renamed the C-2 and remain a distinct business district in the UDO with efforts concentrated on adaptive reuse through revised bulk regulations, use allowances, and design standards.

**Industrial:** Plainfield's two industrial zoning classifications are major employment hubs within the Village that serve different purposes in the existing Zoning Ordinance. The I-1 is the Office, Research and Industrial District and includes large areas north of Downtown and in outlying areas as well. The I-1 accommodates office parks, warehousing, and other industrial uses that have minimal impact on surrounding areas. The I-2 is the General Industrial District and includes one large area north of Downtown and two smaller areas in outlying locations. The I-2 is geared toward more intensive industrial activities with moderate impact on surrounding areas. The UDO envisions maintaining most of the bulk and use standards from the existing UDO which have proven to be effective for the Village.

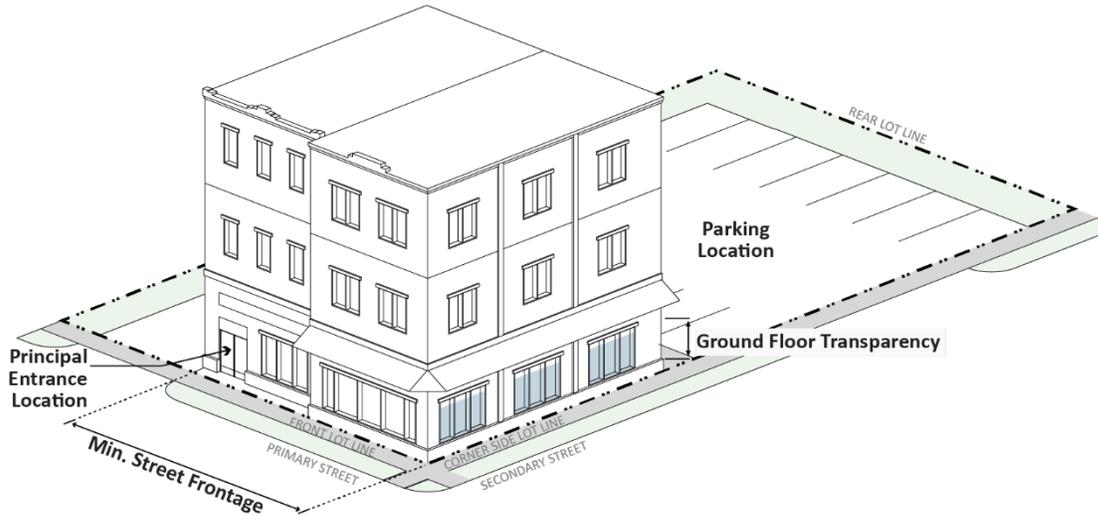
#### *Improve design requirements for residential, Downtown, business, and industrial districts*

Plainfield has defined a vision for its residential, Downtown, business, and industrial areas through its recently updated Comprehensive Plan. Discussions with local stakeholders have revealed a desire for design requirements throughout the Village – rather than mere guidelines – to improve the overall appearance of new development. The UDO will include design requirements for the Village's residential, Downtown, business, and industrial districts to enhance aesthetics and help create a sense of place. The requirements will provide a foundation for the design of individual properties while providing room for architectural creativity.

These standards should establish requirements for the form and configuration of buildings based on the desired character of each district. For example, in residential districts, these standards would ensure that homes in new subdivisions are architecturally pleasing with standards for materials, windows, and rooflines. These standards would build upon the Village's existing Residential Guidelines for Planned Unit Developments and Annexations and its complementary Single-Family Design Standards. In contrast, the standards for the Downtown district would ensure that new buildings maintain the vibrant

pedestrian character of Downtown with buildings built to the sidewalk and at appropriate heights. These standards could also address façade design, building materials, and placement of parking areas (see Figure 9 Example Design Requirements for Business District). The regulations for historic landmarks and historic districts would continue to govern the adaptive reuse of existing historic buildings.

**Figure 9 Example Design Requirements for Business District**



### *Remove outdated and ineffective bulk requirements*

We recommend eliminating unnecessary requirements from the UDO to allow buildings to keep up with modern development trends, particularly in residential districts. Some of the bulk regulations in the existing Zoning Ordinance are outdated, which can create confusion regarding the desired form of new residential development. The UDO process will allow the Village to comprehensively reevaluate bulk standards that have become outdated and ineffective.

The residential zoning districts include numerous overlapping and redundant bulk regulations, including minimum lot area per dwelling unit, minimum floor area per dwelling unit, maximum number of dwelling units per building, maximum building coverage, maximum impervious coverage, and minimum open space area. The overall impact of these types of standards is overregulating residential development in Plainfield. Essentially, they force developers to utilize the planned unit development process to circumvent the existing Zoning Ordinance. Both older and newer residential neighborhoods in the Village allow for more density than the outdated standards of the existing residential zoning districts. We recommend removing many of these outdated bulk standards to facilitate more by right development that maintains the character of existing residential neighborhoods.

Regional and national data show that home size, family size, and lot size have gotten smaller over the last several decades. The standards for floor area and density create unnecessary obstacles for residential development, particularly in an era when it has become so difficult for young people and seniors to find a new home in order to maintain or grow roots in a community. Our experience has shown that residential development can be more effectively regulated with streamlined standards for lot area, lot width, building height, and setbacks.

## Article 8.00 Uses

*This Article includes regulations pertaining to permitted and special uses, accessory uses and structures, and temporary uses and structures. Use regulations will be consolidated within this Article to ensure that all information relating to uses is found in one place.*

Proposed Organization	Corresponding Sections from Existing Ordinances
8.01 General Provisions	9-26.5 Interpretation by Village Planner
8.02 Principal Uses and Structures	9-13 Uses; 9-15 Building Height and Bulk; 9-18 Agriculture; 9-20 Bed and Breakfasts; 9-21 Group Homes; 9-22 Adult Uses; 9-24 Manufactured Homes; 9-61.2.3-5 Standards for the B Districts; 9-62 Adult-Use Cannabis; 9-66.2 Standards for the I Districts; 9-67 Additional Cannabis Standards
8.03 Accessory Uses and Structures	9-14 Permitted Obstructions; 9-16 Accessory Buildings; 9-17 Garages; 9-19 Home Occupations; 9-25 Solar Energy Systems; Article X Fences
8.04 Temporary Uses and Structures	9-23 Model Homes; 9-26 Mobile Food Units; 9-81 Cargo Containers

### *Comprehensively review use allowances and include a shorter list of use categories*

The UDO should comprehensively review the uses allowed in the Village and include broader categories for permitted and special uses. Section 9-13 of the existing Zoning Ordinance organizes all uses in one location, but the UDO process provides an opportunity to reevaluate, modernize, and consolidate the list of uses. For example, the existing Ordinance includes a number of personal services uses that could be grouped together because they have a similar impact on the character of the surrounding area. The use category “personal service establishment” in the UDO could replace barber shop, hair salon, beauty salon, nail salon, tanning salon, and several other similar businesses in the existing Zoning Ordinance. This approach helps simplify the Ordinance and avoids repetition. Use categories have the advantage of being broad enough to include a wide range of uses that are similar to one another, which reduces the need for zoning text amendments as new uses develop over time. During the UDO process, it will be important to carefully define these terms to clarify which specific uses may be included in each use category.

The UDO will continue to call out certain specific uses to better manage their location within the Village. Such uses may include adult uses, cannabis uses, places of worship, and body art establishments, which require greater oversight. These types of uses have specific impacts on community character and traffic access that can be addressed by allowing them in specific zoning districts, as a special use, or with specific use standards. For example, the UDO will explore ways to balance the location of places of worship in commercial and industrial districts while being mindful of land use standards in the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act. Similarly, the UDO may allow slightly more allowances for body art establishments, which are currently restricted to the B-3 District as a permitted use only. Residential uses will not be grouped into use categories so the Village can allow single-unit dwellings, townhomes, multiple-unit dwellings, and other housing types in certain locations within the community.

### *Create a new section for expanded use standards*

Use standards are supplementary zoning requirements for land uses that help ensure that the uses remain compatible with neighboring properties. Clear use standards provide clarity within the UDO and are an important element of use categories. For example, a car wash would have use standards for stacking spaces, landscape screening, and the need for a traffic study. The existing Zoning Ordinance lists some use standards in Article II (General Provisions), but only for a handful of uses, such as bed and breakfasts, model homes, and mobile food units. In other cases, use standards are located in different locations within the code, such as for cannabis uses. We recommend consolidating use standards for all districts into a new section of Article 8.00 (Uses) for both permitted and special uses. Use standards should also be included for accessory and temporary uses, as necessary.

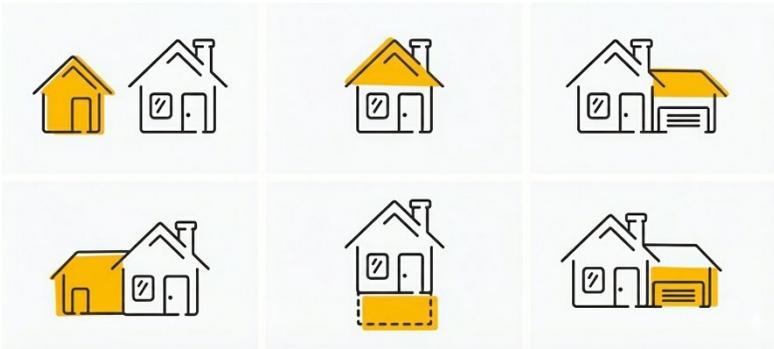
### *Expand housing choice by updating residential use types*

As discussed in the Plainfield Comprehensive Plan, the Village has an enormous interest in greater housing choice. Single-unit residential development will continue to be the predominant land use type in the community; however, the UDO will seek to facilitate the development of quality housing choice for all age groups. Plainfield already has a wide array of housing types, but more options are needed for seniors, young professionals, and growing families. Duplexes, townhomes, senior housing, apartments, and condominiums can be created as infill development in locations near existing activity centers. The UDO process will provide an opportunity to evaluate the uses allowed in residential and non-residential zoning districts to find ways to allow a greater diversity of housing types while maintaining the character of these neighborhoods.

### *Consider allowing accessory dwelling units in residential zoning districts*

Accessory dwelling units (ADUs), sometimes called granny flats or in-law apartments, can be used to provide a greater range of housing options without altering the character of a neighborhood. These units are typically constructed within a single-unit home or as an accessory structure, such as a detached garage. Regulations for size and scale ensure that they remain secondary in size to the home. ADUs expand housing choice and allow Plainfield to grow within its existing footprint, making more efficient use of existing infrastructure and services. Currently, ADUs are only allowed as accessory apartments above detached garages in the underutilized TN District. We recommend revising the Zoning Ordinance to include clear standards for where and how these units may be built. These standards may include defining maximum square footage, indicating whether they may be within a principal or accessory structure, and including parking requirements. Figure 10 Accessory Dwelling Units demonstrates the range of possible locations for ADUs, but some of these locations may not be appropriate for Plainfield. The UDO process will carefully consider appropriate locations and regulations for the community.

**Figure 10 Accessory Dwelling Units**



*The image at the top left shows a detached accessory dwelling unit as a detached accessory structure.*

*The other five images show attached accessory dwelling units that are part of a principal structure.*

### *Develop standards for principal and accessory uses that promote sustainability*

The UDO should include clear standards for principal and accessory uses that will help the community achieve its sustainability goals. This may include new standards for electric vehicle charging stations, renewable energy regulations, rainwater collection systems, and green roofs. Use standards will be developed for these uses to make it easier for residents and businesses to pursue sustainability initiatives and to ensure that they do not negatively affect surrounding neighborhoods.

### *Update regulations for accessory structures*

The UDO process provides the Village with an opportunity to review and update its regulations for accessory structures, which includes secondary structures on a property, such as garages, sheds, and fences. The Village currently limits each property to only two accessory structures per lot. Modern ordinances generally regulate accessory structures through maximum impervious coverage standards, which could be a helpful technique in the UDO. Similarly, the existing Zoning Ordinance also requires that 20 percent of homes in a new subdivision have side-loaded garages. While it is important to ensure that the appearance of garage doors do not dominate the front façade of new homes, the Village may want to consider revising this standard. In addition, the Village may want to reevaluate its fence regulations. In residential districts, fence regulations may limit the ways that property owners use their yards. Specifically, fences in corner side yards must not encroach more than 10 feet or 50 percent of the distance between the home and the lot line – two separate standards which can create confusion for property owners. The UDO could include updated fence standards for maximum height, solid/open design, and location in proximity to the lot line to clarify these regulations for property owners.

## Article 9.00 Off-Street Parking and Loading

*This Article pertains to off-street parking design, parking spaces, bicycle parking, and loading.*

Proposed Organization	Corresponding Sections from Existing Ordinances
9.01 General Provisions	9-71 Purpose; 9-72 Applicability
9.02 Parking Design Standards	9-73.5-6 General Standards
9.03 Off-Street Parking Spaces	9-73.1-4 General Standards; 9-74 Shared Parking; 9-75 Collective Parking; 9-77 Downtown Parking Zone; 9-78 Schedule of Parking Requirements
9.04 Bicycle Parking	9-83 Bicycle Parking
9.05 Parking Lot Walkways	New Section of the UDO
9.06 Driveways	9-54.4 Driveways; 7-210 Driveways
9.07 Vehicle Stacking Requirements	Table IX-1 Off-Street Parking Schedule
9.08 Recreational Vehicle Parking and Storage	9-73.4.1 Trucks, Trailers, Boats, and RVs
9.09 Off-Street Loading Facility Requirements	9-79 Off-Street Loading; 9-80 Schedule of Loading Requirements

### *Reduce minimum parking requirements and consider adding maximum parking requirements*

The Village should comprehensively reassess its parking requirements as part of the UDO. Minimum parking requirements state how many parking spaces a property owner must provide based on the use of the building. Over time, the Village's minimum parking standards have become inflated, which can create excess parking, reduce the amount of developable area for buildings, increase project costs for property owners, and contribute to stormwater runoff. This is most often seen in the Village's corridor commercial zoning districts, such as along Route 59. The Ordinance update process will examine standards for all uses in the community to make sure that the Village does not require too much parking.

In addition, the Village should explore new maximum parking requirements as part of the UDO. Maximum parking requirements limit the number of parking spaces a property owner can provide based on the use of the building. These requirements allow developers to align parking lots with market needs and modern travel behavior, rather than outdated parking demand models. We recommend tailoring the revised off-street parking requirements to the use categories in Article 7.00 (Uses). The use categories in the proposed Ordinance will make the list of parking requirements shorter and more user-friendly.

### *Consider removing minimum off-street parking requirements for Downtown Plainfield*

Vibrant Downtown Plainfield attracts numerous visitors to shops, restaurants, and local events. Due to its popularity, there is a perception that parking is in short supply, particularly for visitors seeking parking directly in front of their destination. A parking study in 2024 revealed that Downtown parking capacity can easily meet current demand. Despite this adequate capacity, the existing Zoning Ordinance requires minimum parking for larger developments. Small buildings less than 5,000 square feet are exempt from minimum parking requirements if they are located in the Downtown Parking Zone, but larger buildings must provide off-street parking. Downtown was built before cars existed, and modern

off-street parking competes with land that could be used for shops and restaurants that add to the character of the community. In the UDO, we recommend removing off-street parking minimums for non-residential uses Downtown to foster development that respects the historic character of the area and facilitates a pedestrian-friendly environment. Future development could still provide off-street parking for customers and employees on site where appropriate, but developers and business owners would no longer be required to provide minimum parking. This standard could apply to the B-5 District east of the DuPage River while the B-5 west of the river would still have minimum parking requirements.

### *Add standards to make parking lots more pedestrian-friendly*

In order to ensure that parking lots are as safe for pedestrians as they are for cars, the UDO should include new standards that specifically require large off-street parking lots to include walkways (see Figure 11 Parking Lot Walkways). These standards would require the creation of walkways within parking lots and connections to adjacent sidewalks along the right-of-way. These regulations would apply to off-street parking facilities for commercial, industrial, multiple-unit, and institutional uses that have parking spaces that exceed a certain threshold, such as 50 spaces.

**Figure 11 Parking Lot Walkways**



### *Encourage sustainable and future-ready parking design*

As communities recognize the environmental impacts of large paved surfaces, the Village should embrace sustainable parking lot practices that address stormwater management, reduce heat island effects, and support the transition to electric vehicles (EVs). The Comprehensive Plan and Transportation and Mobility Plan both emphasize the importance of facilitating EV charging infrastructure across the Village. In addition, the UDO should align with new statewide standards for EV charging requirements. Sustainable parking lot design elements such as pervious paving, stormwater-fed landscaping and planters, and EV charging stations can be integrated into standards for new development and retrofits of existing lots. New standards in the UDO can encourage these practices to help Plainfield reduce its environmental footprint while positioning the community to meet resident expectations for sustainable development.

### *Update and simplify off-street loading requirements*

Much like minimum parking requirements, excessive loading requirements can adversely affect developable area and overall project costs. More and more communities are removing their minimum off-street loading requirements, and we recommend that Plainfield consider removing its minimum loading requirements as well. Another option is to evaluate loading facilities through the site plan review process. These modifications allow smaller businesses to dedicate less on-site space to loading areas they don't need, while larger operations such as warehousing, storage, or distribution facilities would still be able to provide as many loading spaces as necessary to meet their operational needs.

## Article 10.00 Landscaping

*This Article provides requirements for landscaping, buffering, screening, and outdoor lighting.*

Proposed Organization	Corresponding Sections from Existing Ordinances
10.01 General Provisions	9-122 Purpose; 9-123 Applicability; 9-125 Existing Vegetation; 9-126 Component of Landscape Plan
10.02 Tree Preservation	9-130 Tree Replacement
10.03 Design, Installation, and Maintenance	9-124 Standards and Criteria; 9-127 Substitutions and Deviations; 9-128 Maintenance
10.04 Right-of-Way Landscaping	9-129 Parkways and Parkway Trees; 9-131 Boulevards
10.05 On Lot Residential Landscaping	9-132 Single-Family Residential; 9-133.1 Multi-Family Residential, Commercial, Office, Institutional and Industrial
10.06 Parking Lot Landscaping	9-133.2-4 Multi-Family Residential, Commercial, Office, Institutional and Industrial; 9-134.3 Additional Requirements For Commercial, Office, Industrial and Multi-Family Uses
10.07 Foundation Landscaping	9-133.5 Multi-Family Residential, Commercial, Office, Institutional and Industrial
10.08 Buffer Yards	9-132 Single-Family Residential; 9-133.3 Multi-Family Residential, Commercial, Office, Institutional and Industrial; 9-134.1 Additional Requirements For Commercial, Office, Industrial and Multi-Family Uses
10.09 Screening Requirements	9-134.2 Additional Requirements For Commercial, Office, Industrial and Multi-Family Uses
10.10 Outdoor Lighting	9-121 Lighting

### *Leverage the many benefits of better landscape requirements*

Robust landscape standards play a critical role in the appearance of development sites and the community as a whole. In addition to their aesthetic and screening functions, well-designed landscape features provide valuable stormwater management and buffer surrounding properties from new development. Despite their importance, the Village's current landscape regulations are scattered throughout the existing Zoning Ordinance and would benefit from consolidation and modernization. The landscape regulations in the UDO will pertain to both right-of-way landscaping, such as street trees and parkway plantings, and on-site landscaping, with particular emphasis on parking areas.

We recommend modernizing and tailoring parking lot landscape requirements to balance aesthetics, functionality, and commercial visibility. The existing Zoning Ordinance requires overstory shade trees and berming in parking lot perimeter yards, which can inadvertently reduce visibility of commercial storefronts from the street. Updated standards should maintain attractive screening while preserving appropriate sight lines for businesses and traffic safety. To enhance sustainability, the Village should require parking lot landscape islands to incorporate stormwater inlets designed for retention and absorption. These bioretention islands can capture and filter stormwater runoff generated by the

parking lot, reducing strain on stormwater infrastructure while creating healthier plantings through natural irrigation.

#### *Ensure new landscaping incorporates native species, sustainable design, and tree protection*

Native and naturalized plant species are essential for Plainfield's landscapes because they are adapted to local climate conditions, require less maintenance, promote water conservation, and support pollinators. It is critical to avoid invasive species that can spread aggressively into natural areas and outcompete native vegetation. The Village currently maintains a list of approved trees and shrubs in Appendix A of the existing Zoning Ordinance, which applies to plantings in parkways, buffer yards, and detention basins. To provide an updated standard that reflects ecological best practices, we suggest comparing the Village's tree list with the Morton Arboretum's [Northern Illinois Tree Species List](#), which is prepared by regional arborists and ecologists. This resource would help ensure that the Village prioritizes native species and recognizes emerging threats from pests and diseases affecting the region. The UDO can also include standards for tree protection and replacement to preserve the community's valuable tree canopy, which supports wildlife, enhances property values, and maintains community character. These standards would build off of the Village's existing Heritage Tree program and allow the community to leverage benefits that would take decades to replicate with new plantings.

#### *Update standards for buffer yards*

Buffer yards are used to separate more intensive zoning uses, like commercial and industrial businesses, from less intensive zoning uses, like housing. The standards in the existing Zoning Ordinance should be strengthened to ensure that these objectives are met. Updated standards in the UDO will specify the length, depth, and height of the buffer yard as well as the various landscape elements, such as hedges, trees, and fences. The standards will also balance the need for effective screening with maintaining an attractive street presence, particularly for industrial uses, ensuring that buffers contribute positively to the community's streetscape.

#### *Include tree species diversity requirements to improve overall tree health*

Tree species diversity requirements ensure that communities plant multiple types of trees that grow well in their climate and are less susceptible to disease and pests, such as the emerald ash borer. We recommend adding tree species diversity requirements to the UDO with a list of the maximum percentage of trees on a lot that may come from a specific species, genus, or family. These standards should be based on the size of the parcel, rather than the total number of trees, and should exclude very small parcels. Finally, we suggest including standards for drought- and salt-tolerance, to ensure resilience to changing weather patterns.

#### *Update exterior lighting standards to reduce energy consumption and light pollution*

The Village can modernize its exterior lighting standards to protect wildlife and the environment while reducing energy consumption and light pollution. The Village should expand requirements beyond basic shielding and height limits by incorporating standards for photometric plans, automatic lighting controls,

and specific illumination levels for different uses. The UDO can regulate prohibited lighting types, façade illumination standards, and energy-efficient technology, like LED, to prevent glare and enhance public safety. Updated standards can ensure consistent lighting across all land uses, protects adjacent properties, and provide measurable and enforceable criteria for review. These targeted updates will help the Village align development with the goals of the International Dark Sky Association while finding a balance between sustainability and economic feasibility.

## Article 11.00 Signs

*This Article includes revised sign requirements that enhance the appearance of the community, promote economic development, and allow property owners to communicate with the public.*

Proposed Organization	Corresponding Sections from Existing Ordinances
11.01 Purpose	9-91 Purpose and Intent
11.02 Construction and Design Standards	9-93 General Sign Standards; 9-96 Removal / Enforcement
11.04 Master Sign Plan	New Section of the UDO
11.05 Permanent Signs	9-94 Exempt Signs; 9-97 Permanent Signs; 9-98 Residential Use Signs; 9-99 Non-Residential Use Signs; 9-100 Special Signs, Districts, and Uses
11.06 Temporary Signs	9-94 Exempt Signs; 9-101 Temporary Sign Standards
11.07 Prohibited Signs	9-95 Prohibited Signs

### *Reorganize sign regulations for clarity and greater ease of use*

The existing Zoning Ordinance generally organizes sign regulations by use type (residential versus non-residential), special signs, and sign districts. This organization assumes users are already familiar with sign regulations, which can cause confusion for those who are not already familiar with the Ordinance. We recommend organizing signs by use type *and* by zoning district in the UDO so that users understand what sign types are allowed in which locations. For example, ground signs can be a residential sign, at the entrance to residential subdivisions, or a non-residential sign, in front of businesses. To avoid confusion, the UDO will ensure that the regulations for ground signs are in a single location, with separate standards for the size and location of the sign based on the zoning district. The UDO process will also provide an opportunity to reorganize standards for special signs, such as electronic message centers and manually changeable copy signs. In addition, the UDO will ensure that sign regulations are tied to zoning districts so that the Village does not have to utilize sign overlays, such as the Central Sign District, to maintain the aesthetics of the community.

### *Update regulations to ensure consistency with recent court rulings on sign content*

The Village should revise its sign regulations to comply with *Reed v. Town of Gilbert* (2015), which requires that sign regulations be content neutral. Under this Supreme Court precedent, communities may regulate signs to achieve aesthetic and other legitimate goals, but cannot base those regulations on what a sign says or the message it conveys.

Several sign categories in Section 9-94 (Exempt Signs) may violate this standard because they require reading the sign’s message to determine if it complies. For example, construction identification signs are defined by their content, identifying a builder, rather than by the structural characteristics of the sign. This message-based approach is the kind of content that is prohibited by *Reed*.

The revised UDO should regulate signs based on structural criteria such as sign type (awning, ground, projecting, or wall-mounted), size and height, location and setback, and lighting and materials. This approach, which is already used in the existing Zoning Ordinance to some degree, allows the Village to

maintain aesthetic standards while eliminating content-based distinctions. Many communities in the region and across the country have successfully updated their codes using this framework.

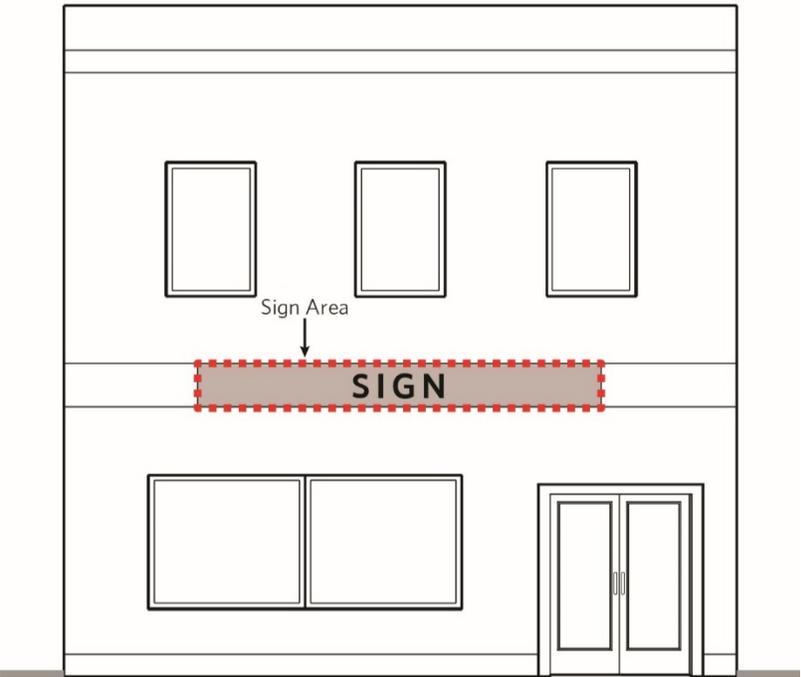
*Establish a master sign plan process*

We recommend that the Village adopt a master sign plan process to help provide greater consistency in regulating and managing signs in multi-tenant and multi-building developments. Master sign plans are often utilized for business and industrial developments to regulate the type, number, location, materials, and dimensions of all signs in the development. Master sign plans can be approved by the Zoning Administrator, much like a typical sign permit.

*Enhance graphics and integrate them within key locations*

The Village’s existing Zoning Ordinance contains a mixture of sign related graphics and photos in Article XI (Signs) and Article XIII (Definitions). The UDO will feature illustrations for each major sign type using a consistent illustration style. For example, Figure 12 Wall Sign provides a simple way to demonstrate the location of a wall sign and how to measure the area of the sign.

**Figure 12 Wall Sign**



## Article 12.00 Definitions

*This Article defines key terms related to each section of the UDO.*

Proposed Organization	Corresponding Sections from Existing Ordinances
12.01 Purpose	Article XVI Definitions (ZO); 7-35 Definitions (SO)
12.02 Definition of Terms	Article XVI Definitions (ZO); 7-35 Definitions (SO)

### *Add new definitions and remove outdated terms*

The goal of this Article is to define the key terms located in the UDO. In drafting this Article, existing terms will be evaluated, new definitions will be added, and outdated terms will be revised to reflect modern development standards and practices. It is likely that some terms will be removed if they are obsolete or no longer used in the Ordinance. Additionally, this section of the Ordinance will define all of the use categories in Article 8.00 (Uses). To increase the accessibility and readability of the document, supporting definitions currently found in various sections of the existing ordinance, such as Section 9.26 Mobile Food Units and Section 9-81 Cargo Containers, will be consolidated as part of the UDO process. Key terms such as “building,” “structure,” “grade,” and “family” will be reviewed to ensure clarity, relevance, and enforceability.

### *Remove regulating language and terms that are no longer necessary*

The revision of Article 12.00 (Definitions) will clarify the Village’s zoning standards so that regulating language will not be located in the definitions section, but will only be located in the pertinent regulating sections of the UDO. Use standards for the uses in the UDO will be consolidated in Article 8.00 (Uses). Additionally, terms that are not going to be used in the UDO should be removed. For example, terms like “soda fountain,” “net developed area,” and “amusement arcade” – which are outdated or rarely used in the existing Ordinance – should not be included in the UDO.