



2026 Comprehensive Plan Update

Town of Berlin, MD

8/30/2026

Project Schedule



Maryland Comprehensive Plan Requirements

A Review



Maryland Comp Plan Requirements

Navigating the State process

- 1 **UPDATE** Every 10 years under Maryland law
 - 2 **OVERSIGHT** Planning Commission leads
 - 3 **ADOPTION** Town Council adopts the plan
 - 4 **SUBMISSION** Plan + annual report go to MDP
 - 5 **STATE INPUT** MDP comments—not an approval authority
- **AFTER ADOPTION** Amend the plan as needed

Maryland Required Plan Elements

- Goals/Objectives
- 1 Land Use
- 2 Transportation
- 3 Housing
- 4 Municipal Growth
- 5 Areas of Critical State Concern
- 6 Sensitive Areas
- 7 Water Resources
- 8 Community Facilities
- Implementation

Previous Planning & New Information



- Must integrate all planning since the 2010 Comp Plan, if still applicable
- Consider the public's desires for the vision of what Berlin should be

Public Engagement

What We've Heard



Survey Results

Survey responses point to a balanced approach: accommodate change while preserving Berlin's character, historic fabric, and environmental assets.

01 TRANSPORTATION

96% Selected more and better sidewalks

Roadway safety and traffic/parking relief received equal support: 39% each.

Public transit and roadway expansion formed a secondary tier: 26% each.

02 HOUSING

82% Prioritized renovation and reuse

Mixed-use housing followed at 50%; affordability drew 41%.

Housing variety, downtown housing, and additional housing types were evenly supported: 36% each.

03 LAND USE + GROWTH

74% Want neighborhood character preserved

Historic preservation followed at 52%.

Infill and context-sensitive new development were evenly supported: 43% each.

04 SENSITIVE AREAS

83% Prioritized aging infrastructure

Open-space preservation was selected by 65%.

Tree canopy and better water-pollution controls received equal support: 48% each.

Multiple selections were allowed, so percentages do not total 100%. Survey opened on 2/19/2026 and remains open.

Outreach Events

Mead & Hunt supported a Community Workshop at the Berlin Library and oversaw a Pop-Up event at National Night Out

**“More swings that
don't squeak.”**

**“More trees and cool
buildings.”**

**“Address the flooding
after storms.”**

**“I just want to be able to walk and bike
safely around town”**

**“housing is too
expensive”**

**“we need to address the
cost of living”**

**“Downtown is awesome, but we don't know
how people afford to live there”**

**“I would love to only need
one car.”**

**“Can we build
downtown bigger?”**

Draft Comprehensive Plan

Goals & Objectives



Introduction

Full DRAFT Comprehensive Plan will be posted on the Town website after this meeting.

Commissioners and the public are fully welcome, and encouraged, to submit comments on the Comprehensive Plan Draft.

Goals & Objectives

- **Goal:** A broad, long-term vision or **big-picture outcome** the community wants to achieve.
 - *Example: "Protect Berlin's small-town character while guiding future growth."*
- **Objective:** A **specific, measurable step** toward achieving a goal.
 - *Example: "Encourage new housing **in and around downtown** to preserve rural lands and historic character."*
- **How they work together:** Goals set the vision for the **next 10-20 years**, and objectives break that vision into **concrete targets** the plan can work toward.
- Today we are focusing on the Goals – the Objectives can be viewed in the DRAFT Plan

Goals & Objectives

Everything we heard came down to three categories;

- **Grow thoughtfully.**
- **Connect safely.**
- **Protect what matters.**





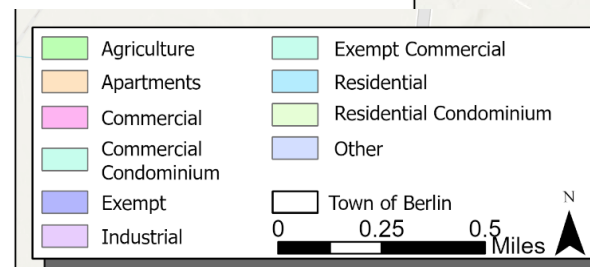
Grow Thoughtfully

Land Use, Growth Area,
Housing, Development
Regulations & Community
Facilities

Land Use

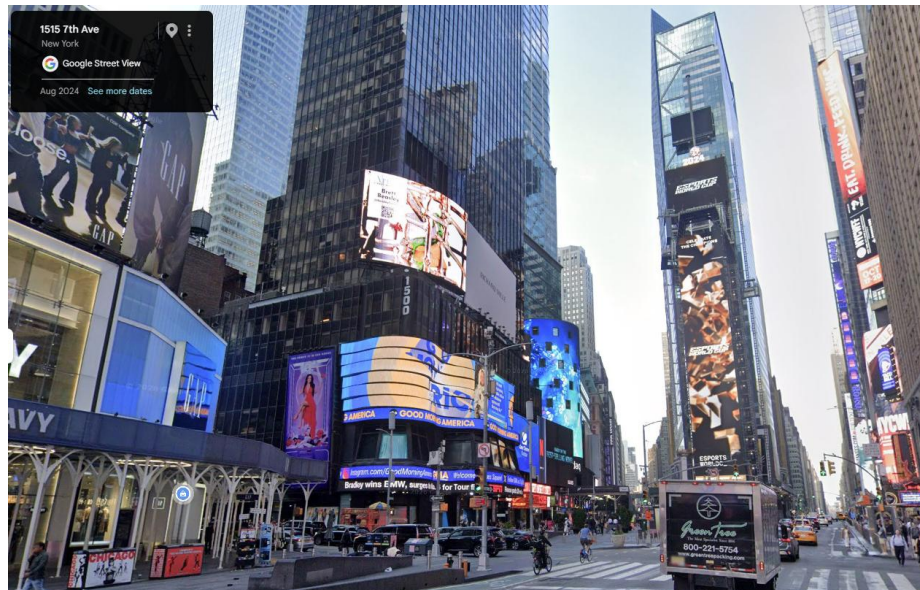
- Goal
 - Plan growth to protect Berlin's small-town feel and historic character.
 - Support new investment that fits the surrounding area.
 - Create walkable areas with homes, shops, and services close together—and offer more housing choices.
 - Provide quality public spaces and amenities that help neighborhoods work well and thrive over time.

Existing Land Uses



Promoting Thoughtful Density

- Density does not necessarily mean....



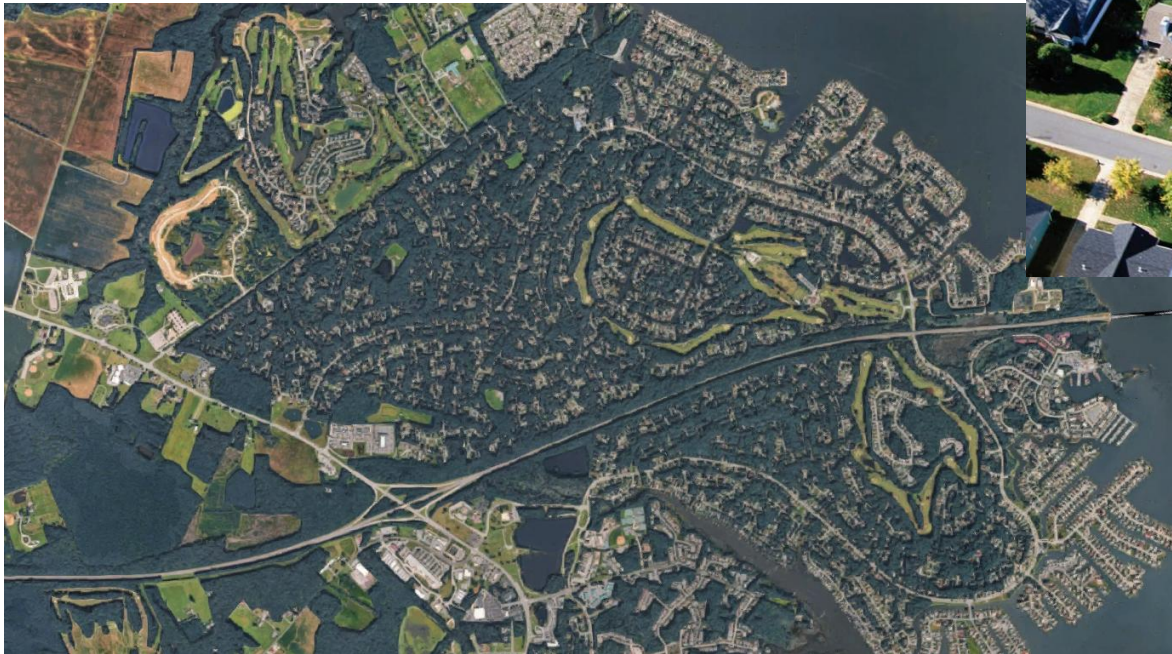
Promoting Thoughtful Density

- It can just mean...



Promoting Thoughtful Density

- What it is not



“

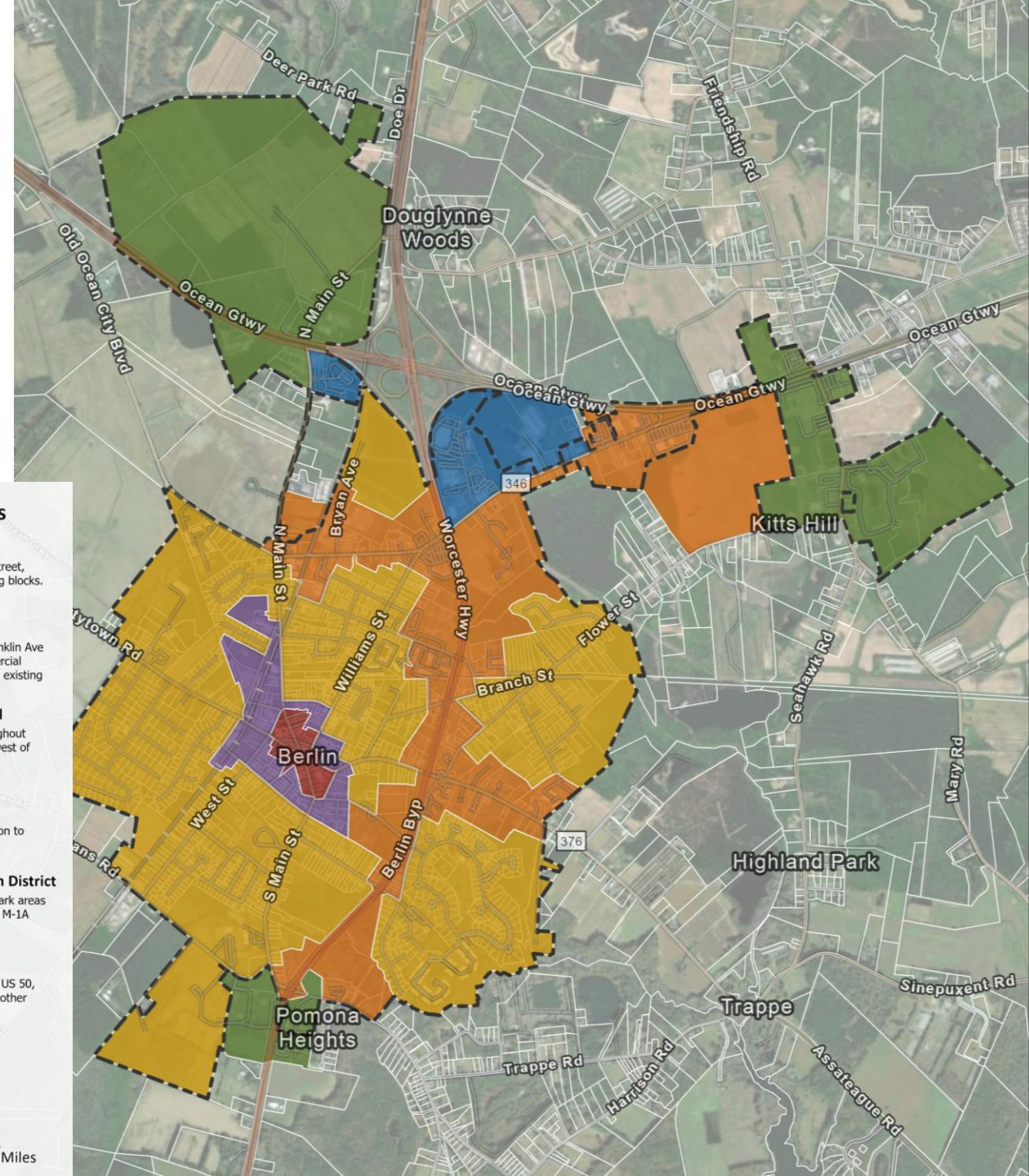
Density without amenity is crowding. Density with amenity is community.

David Dixon, FAIA

”

Land Use

- Use *more understandable zoning rules* to guide moderate, well-planned growth.
- Move toward a Form-Based Code, rules based on how buildings fit their surroundings, so new homes can fill gaps without changing neighborhood character.
- This is the Town's strongest single step toward making it easier to walk places.



Land Use

- What is a Form-Based Code:
 - It focuses on **how buildings, streets, sidewalks, and public spaces look and work together.**
 - Its goal is to create predictable, walkable places that reflect the community's vision, by allowing compatible uses more flexibility in being located together.
- How is it different from traditional zoning?
 - Traditional zoning mainly separates uses—such as homes, stores, and offices.
 - Form-based codes focus first on **building design and relationship to the street.**
 - Use can still be regulated, but it's not the primary organizing principle

Land Use



- Historic Downtown Core



- Neighborhood Residential



- Mixed Use Corridor



- Neighborhood Transition



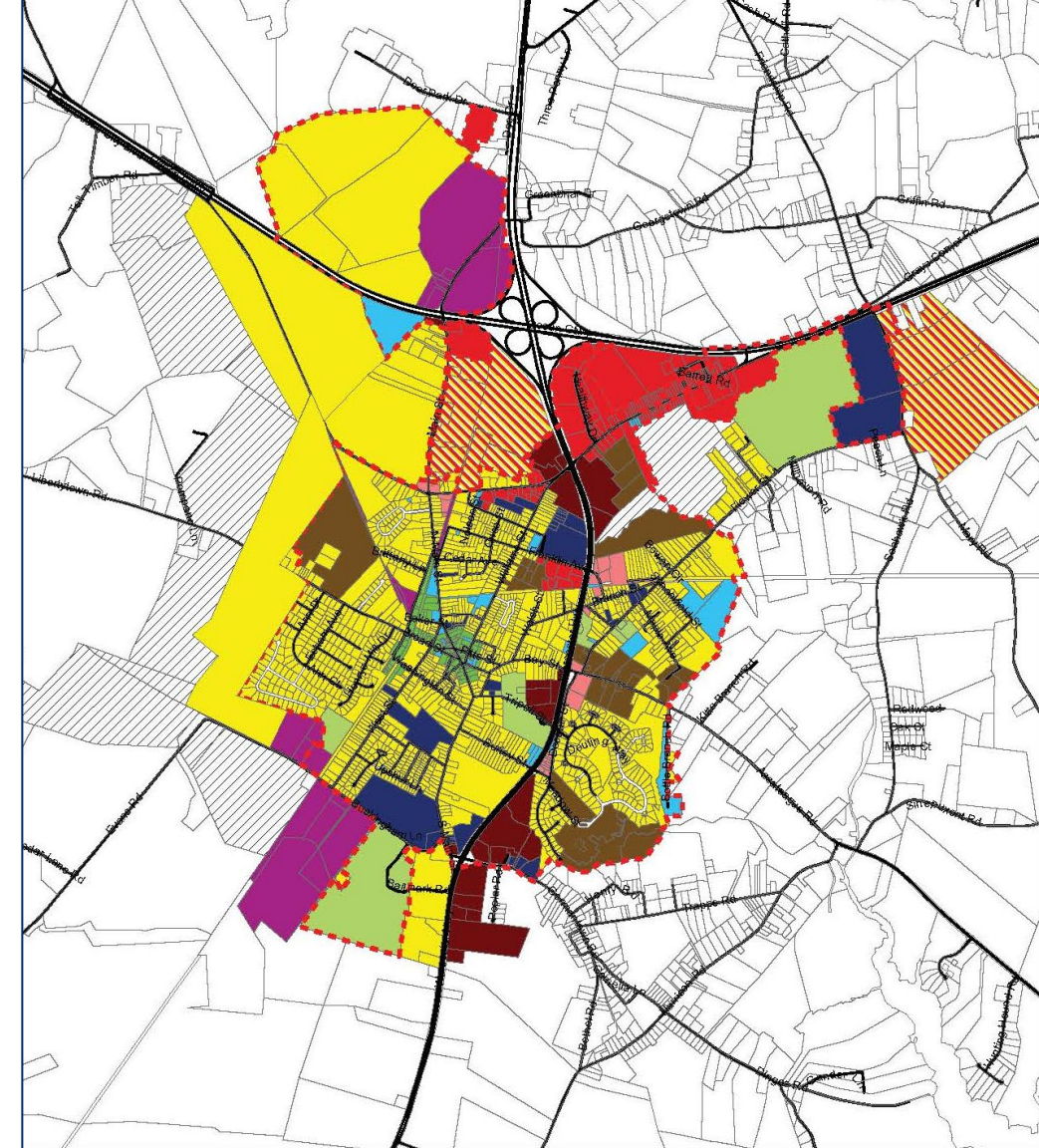
- Employment & Innovation



- Gateway Commercial

Municipal Growth

- Goal
 - Focus most future growth within Berlin by filling vacant sites, redeveloping properties, and reusing existing buildings.
 - Allow carefully planned expansion when appropriate.
 - Protect nearby farmland and natural areas.
 - Coordinate infrastructure and annexation so growth is fair and affordable for the Town over time.



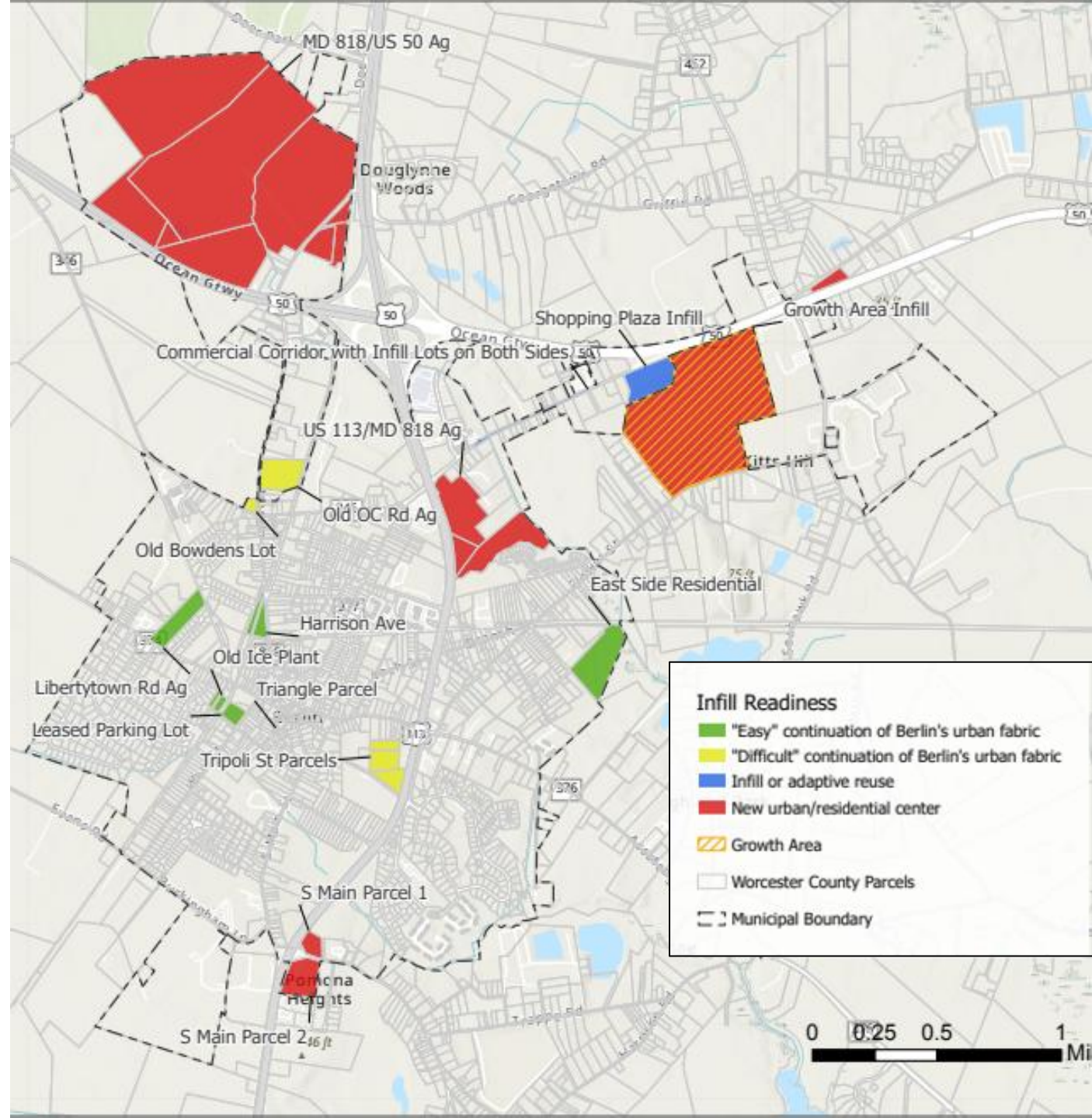
0 1,250 2,500 5,000 Feet

Berlin Town Boundary	Commercial
Town Center	Highway Commercial
Mixed Use	Neighborhood Commercial
Conservation	Institutional
Multi-Family Residential	Municipal
Single-Family Residential	Light Industrial
Recreational	

Map 4
Town of Berlin, Maryland
Future Land Use
Draft

Municipal Growth

- Targeting growth primarily in parcels already in Town limits and currently served by utilities
- The single growth area already has utilities adjacent and fills a gap in the urban fabric



Targeting Growth that Feels like Berlin



Targeting Growth that Feels like Berlin

Broad Street Parcel

- 6.99 Acres
- 42 Units
- 6 Units/Acre



Tripoli St Parcels

- 10.89 Acres
- 193 Units
- 18 Units/Acre



West St / Washington St & Adaptive Reuse

- 3.53 Acres
- 75 Units
- 21 Units/Acre



Southeast Berlin Residential

- 13.29 Acres
- 100 Units
- 12 Units/Acre

Targeting Growth that Feels like Berlin

South Gateway Commercial

- 10.44 Acres
- 137 Units
- 13 Units/Acre



Harrison Ave Town Property

- 1.34 Acres
- 21 Units
- 15 Units/Acre

US113/MD346 Agricultural Property

- 31.14 Acres
- 929 Units
- 30 Units/Acre



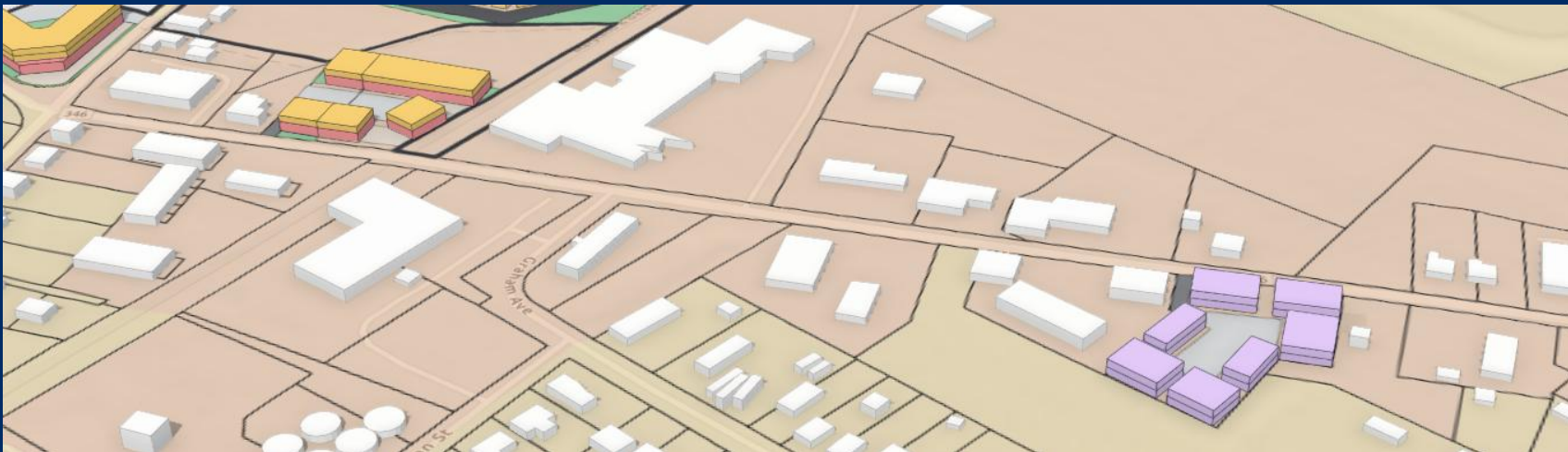
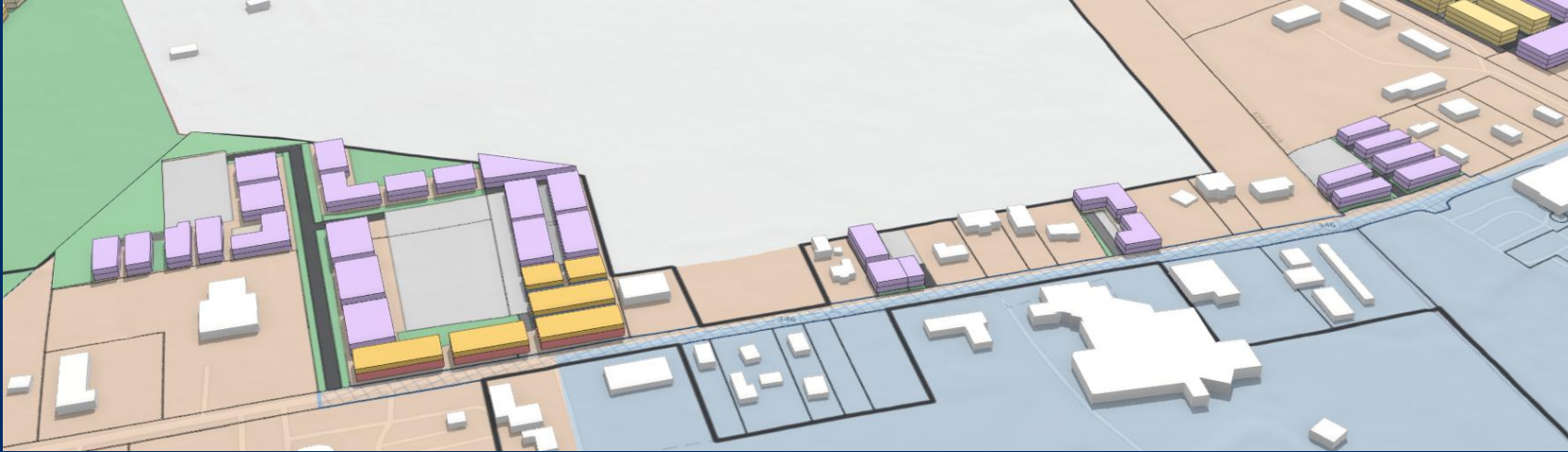
MD818/MD 818 & Old Bowden's Properties

- 8.9 Acres
- 105 Units
- 12 Units/Acre

Targeting Growth that Feels like Berlin

Old Ocean City Blvd Infill – East of 113

- 12.99 Acres
- 150 Units
- 12 Units/Acre



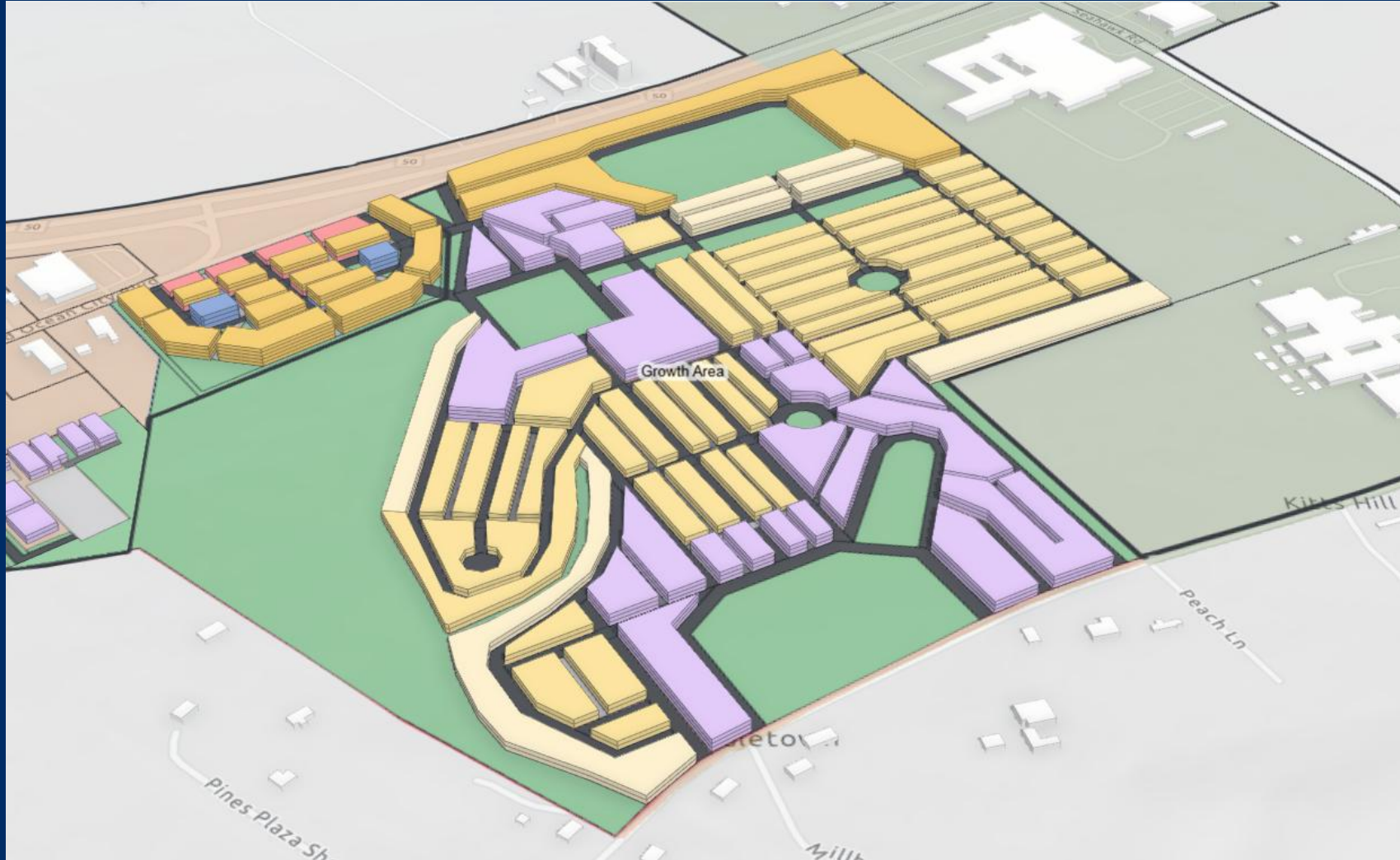
Old Ocean City Blvd Infill – West of 113

- 2.22 Acres
- 31 Units
- 14 Units/Acre

Targeting Growth that Feels like Berlin

Strip Commercial Infill

- 9.16 Acres
- 424 Units
- 46 Units/Acre



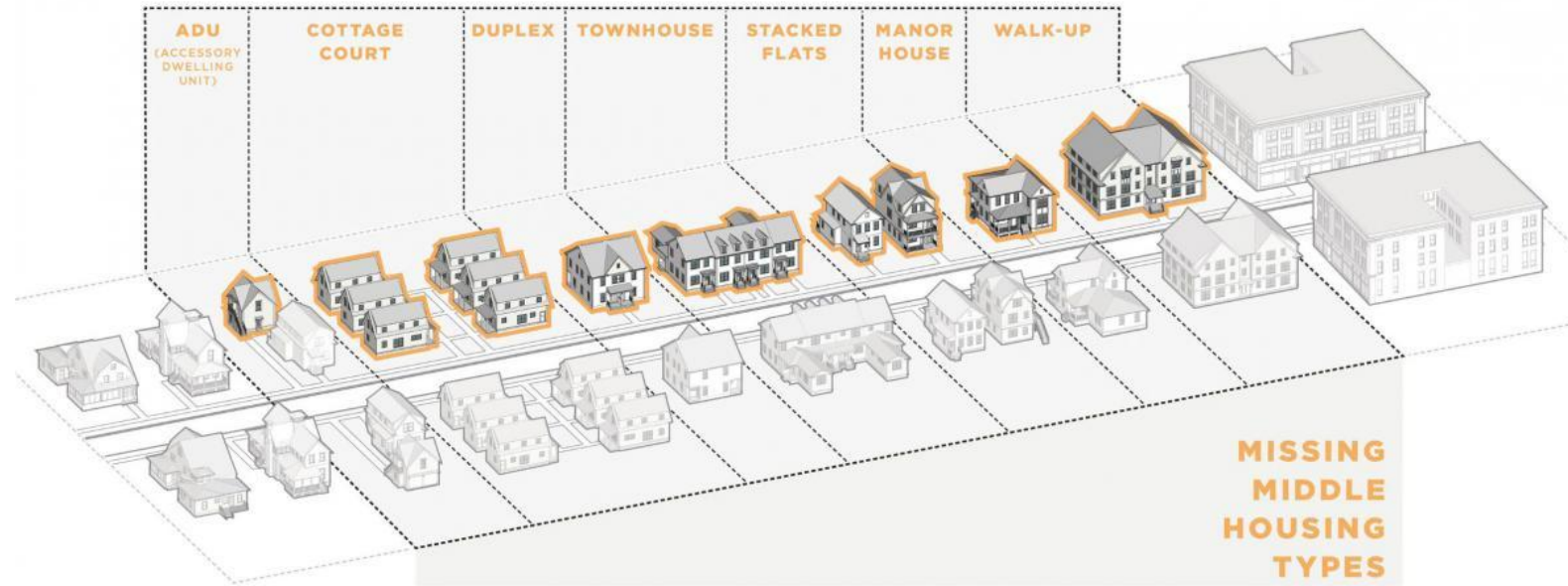
Growth Area New Neighborhood

- 98.15 Acres
- 2,075 Units
- 20 Units/Acre

Housing

- Goal

- Provide more housing choices for people at all income levels.
- Support different types and sizes of homes.
- Encourage investment in existing neighborhoods.
- Help residents stay in their homes and avoid displacement.
- Ensure new housing fits Berlin's historic, small-town character.



Housing Infill

Same density but totally different:



- 30 per acre
- 175 x 165
- 3 stories
- 60 units



- 29 per acre
- 50 x 65
- 2 stories
- 5 units



Housing

- Single Family



- Multi-plex Apartments/
Condos



- Upper Floor
Apartments/
Mixed-Use



- Duplex



Housing

- Townhomes



Development Regulations

- Goal
 - Update development rules to protect what makes Berlin unique.
 - Make the rules clear and predictable for property owners, small builders, and residents.
 - Support investment in the Town.
 - Preserve Berlin's scale, walkability, and historic character.
 - Allow more housing choices.
 - Encourage investment downtown and along main roads.

5.20 STANDARDS SPECIFIC TO FRONTAGES

5.20.130 PORCH TYPE STANDARDS

A. Description and Intent

1. Description. The porch frontage consists of a building set back from the frontage line with a porch attached to it within the setback area. The porch is a non-enclosed area that provides sufficient room for exterior types of furniture and pedestrian access to the building. Porches may occur in rear yards per the standards of this section.

Porches provide the necessary physical separation for the private lot from the public sidewalk, while maintaining visual connection between buildings and the public space of the street. This frontage may include balconies which extend into the front yard and side street yard as well as a low fence or wall at or near the frontage line(s).

Signage may be located on the wall, within a storefront or porch, projecting from the building, and within the front setback as allowed by the zone.

2. Examples of Intended Physical Character. The following examples are illustrative of the range of physical character for the porch type in the zones allowed by this Code.



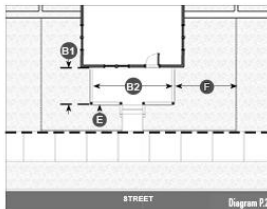



5-19 | Administrative Draft | 31 December 2013 | Tehachapi Zoning Code

STANDARDS SPECIFIC TO FRONTAGES 5.20

PORCH TYPE STANDARDS 5.20.130

B. Design Standards

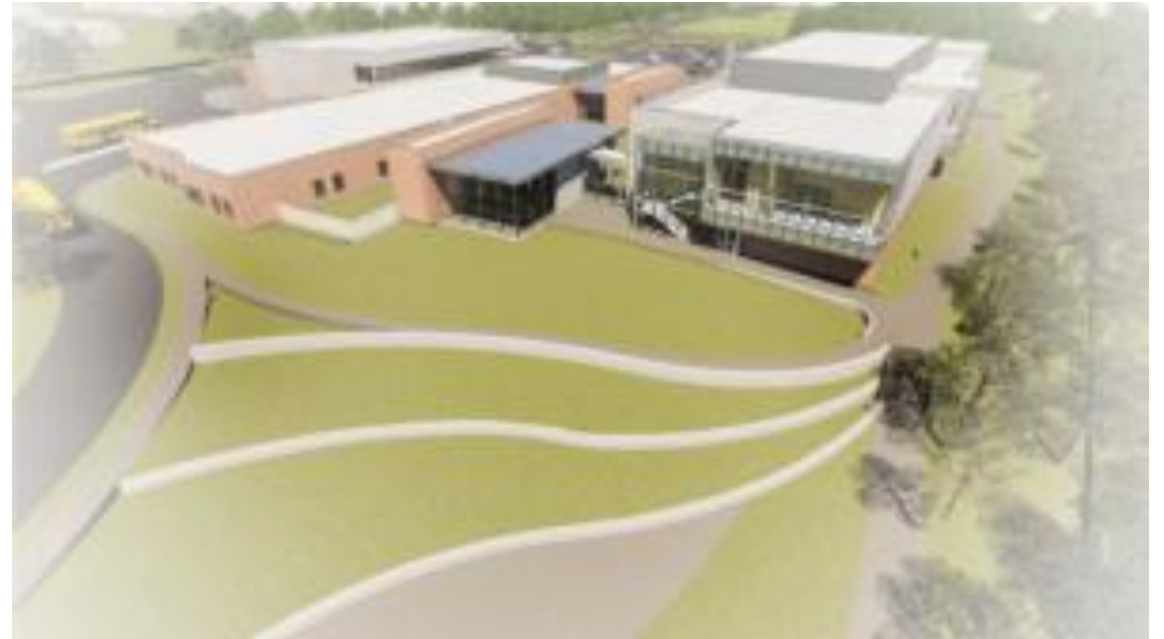




Porch frontages are subject to the following as applicable.					
	12, 11, 1	11	14	14.5	
A	Height of finished floor of porch within 15 ft of sw	no request	1.5-3	1.5-3	1.5-3
	Height of finished floor of porch beyond 15 ft of sw	min 1.5	1.5-4	1.5-4	1.5-4
B1	Depth of porch (face of building to inside face of porch columns)	min 10	min 8	min 8	min 10
B2	Width of porch (face of building to inside face of porch columns)	no request	min 10	min 10	min 12
C	Porch height from porch surface and top of porch columns	min 8	min 8	8-12	8-14
D	Height of wall or fence	no min	max 3.5	max 3.5	max 3.5
	Wall or fence along edge of sw	n.a.	1 to 3	1 to 3	1 to 4
	Width of gate along edge of sw	min 2	min 3	3 to 6	4 to 8
E	Location of Porch (front)	per C.2.3 of zone standards			
	Location of Porch (side street and side yard)	per C.2.3 of zone standards			
	Location of Porch (rear yard)	per C.2.3 of zone standards			
The porch surface may be enclosed by a low wall or fence per all applicable requirements and if the materials and design are compatible with the architectural style of the building.					
Porch openings shall only be enclosed by insect screens that do not reduce visibility from the sidewalk, as determined by the City. The insect screens shall be mounted to be recessed at least 2 inches from the outer face of the porch columns.					
Signage is allowed on the porch or in the front yard per the signage requirements for the zone in Chapter 5.30.					
The porch, stairs, ramps and all porch materials shall be designed to be compatible with the architectural style, materials, finishes and colors of the building.					

Tehachapi Zoning Code | Administrative Draft | 31 December 2013 | 5-20

Community Facilities

- Goal
 - Maintain and improve roads, utilities, and other public infrastructure.
 - Ensure public services meet current and future needs.
 - Expand access to parks, public amenities, and community gathering spaces.
 - Improve emergency preparedness and community resilience.
 - Make Town operations sustainable, accessible, and efficient.



Proposed New Buckingham Elementary School, *image courtesy of WCBOE*

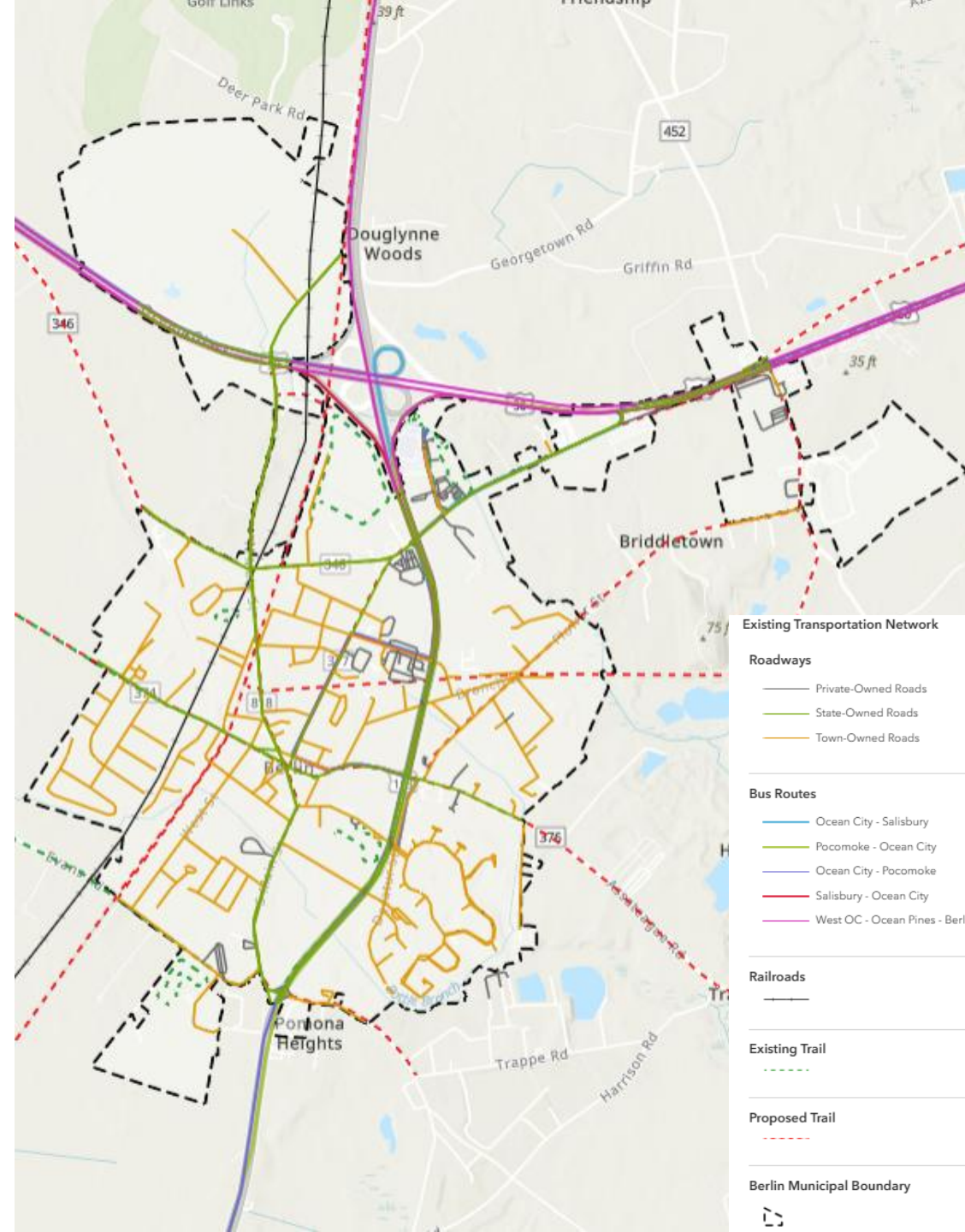
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Connect Safely.

Transportation

Transportation

- Goal
 - Create a safe, connected transportation system for walking, biking, driving, and public transit.
 - Improve sidewalks and bike routes.
 - Make streets safer for pedestrians.
 - Improve traffic flow and roadway efficiency.
 - Provide accessible travel options for people of all ages and abilities.
 - Connect neighborhoods, parks, schools, and businesses.
 - Plan transportation improvements alongside future growth and redevelopment.



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Protect What Matters.

Water Resources & Areas of
Critical State Concern

Water Resources

- Goal
 - Maintain a safe, dependable drinking-water system with enough capacity for future needs and emergencies.
 - Upgrade and expand water and sewer infrastructure, including fire protection and backup power.
 - Reduce sewer leaks, flooding, pollution, and stormwater runoff.
 - Protect drinking-water sources, forests, waterways, and natural drainage areas.
 - Encourage water conservation and environmentally friendly development.
 - Prepare infrastructure for heavier storms, flooding, and sea-level rise.



Areas of Critical State Concern

- Goal
 - Protect natural resources and the environment.
 - Reduce pollution and other environmental impacts.
 - Support trees, rain gardens, and other green infrastructure.
 - Use sustainable practices in new development and public spaces.
 - Build a healthy, resilient community for future generations.



Allysha Lorber, PLA, AICP

allysha.lorber@meadhunt.com

Hailey Vaughn, AICP

hailey.vaughn@meadhunt.com

Will White, AICP

will.white@meadhunt.com