Zoning & Regulatory Framework Analysis

Town of Bridgeville, Delaware

October 1, 2026

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Table of Contents

01 Where we are

02 Regulatory Scan

03 Findings

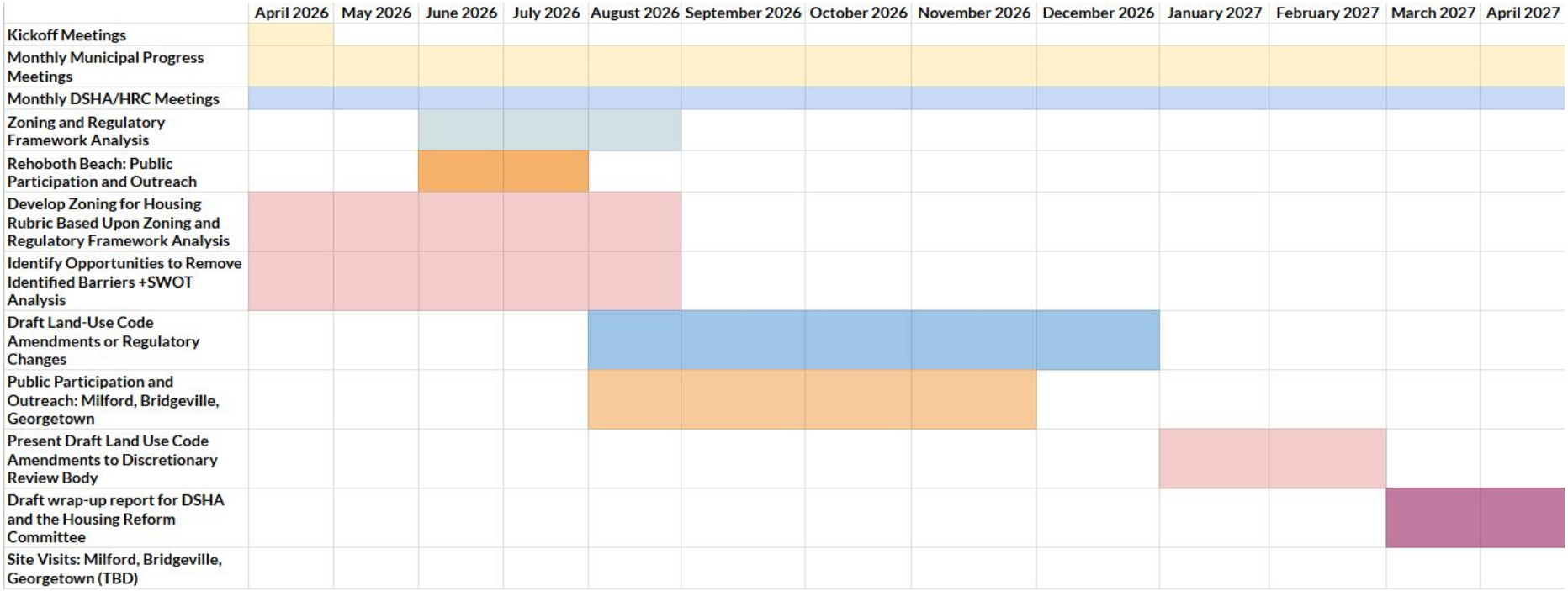
04 Discussion & Next Steps

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Where we are

Where we are now



Where we are now

Months 1–3 → Discovery + Analysis

We are here!

Months 4–6 → Barriers + Drafting

Months 7–12 → Adoption + Engagement

1. **Discovery & Coordination (Task A)**
   - Kickoffs, interviews
   - High-level review
2. **Analysis (Task B)**
   - Deep dive zoning and regulatory review
3. **Barriers & Strategy (Task C)**
   - Barrier + Opportunity Memo
4. **Drafting (Task D)**
   - Code amendments + model language
5. **Adoption Support (Tasks E - G)**
   - Presentations
   - Community engagement
   - Meetings + revisions

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Zoning reforms selected via application process

1. **Allow ADUs and/or Missing Middle Housing types** as by right in residential zones
2. Create **pre-reviewed plans** for Missing Middle Housing types
3. **Increase allowable density** by reducing minimum lot sizes and bulk standards
4. **Increase building heights** for multifamily housing/mixed-use
5. **Establish an inclusionary zoning program**
6. **Allow higher density mixed-use** with residential in commercial zones
7. **Reduce parking requirements** in residential and mixed-use areas

Re-prioritized reforms with Town staff in June - September 2026

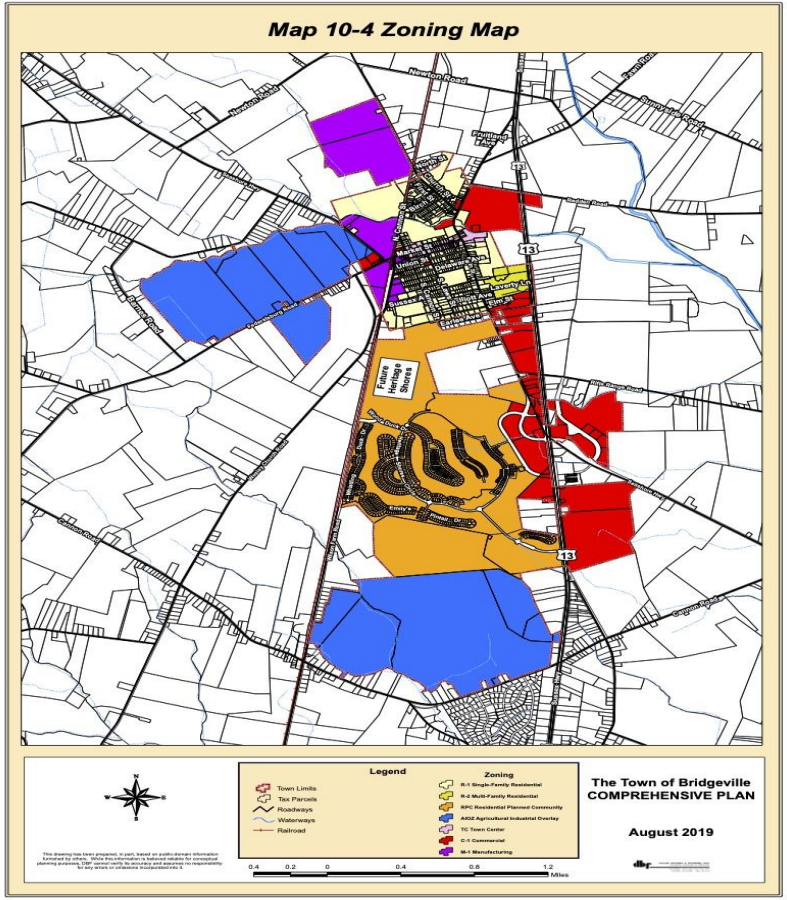
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3. **Allow higher density mixed-use** with residential in commercial zones

Original reform menu: current alignment

Reform	Status
ADUs / Missing Middle by-right in residential zones	**ADUs not permitted.** No ADU provision exists; MMH types not allowed in R-1, permitted with development plan review in R-2 and TC, permitted by right in RPC.
Pre-reviewed design plans	**None connected to the zoning code.**
Reduced lot sizes / bulk standards	**Restrictive**. 40,000 tract minimum. Lot size fixed based on Zoning District, requires waiver to modify.
Increased heights for multi-family / mixed-use	Maximum 35 ft in R-1, 42 ft / in all other residential and 45 ft in C1. Current development standards are optimized to absorb housing types at different scales.
Inclusionary zoning	**No program exists.**
Mixed-use with residential in commercial zones	**Restrictive.** Mixed Use allowances within TC, no definition of mixed-use in code.
Reduced parking requirements	**Restrictive**. Flat requirement townwide of 2 spaces/dwelling unit for SF; 3 spaces/dwelling unit for MF.

02

Regulatory Scan



The Comprehensive Plan goals already set the direction!

One Bridgeville Comprehensive Plan (2018):

"a community where people of all ages, incomes and backgrounds feel like they can participate in the life, activities, and improvement of their town."

— 2018 One Bridgeville Plan

2018 One Bridgeville Plan:

Goal 1 Make Bridgeville a more age-friendly and unified community.

Goal 2 Encourage the development of housing that attracts working families.

Goal 3 Be realistic but opportunistic about growth along US 13 and the northern end of Bridgeville.

22 Delaware Code § 702 — Comprehensive development plan

(c) “The comprehensive plan shall be the basis for the development of zoning regulations . . .”

(d) “ . . . the comprehensive plan shall have the force of law and no development shall be permitted except as consistent with the plan.”

SJR8 is here to assist with this!

Missing-middle types are on the books, but tract minimums and plan review gate them — and the commercial corridor excludes multifamily			
District	**Locations**	**Housing permitted by right**	**Key constraint**
R-1 Single-Family Residential	In-town residential neighborhoods	Detached single-family only, including modular (conversions to two-family or multifamily and manufactured homes by conditional use)	9,000 SF per unit (4.8 du/acre); 60 ft. frontage; 30% lot coverage; 2½ stories / 35 ft.
R-2 Multifamily Residential	In-town residential areas	Detached single-family by right; two-family, twins, townhouses, garden apartments, and multifamily only with development plan approval	40,000 SF min. tract for townhouses and apartments; townhouses max. 6 per row; apartments 14.5 du/acre, 24-unit building cap, 50 ft. between buildings; duplexes need a 9,000 SF lot
TC Town Center	Historic downtown	Detached single-family by right; apartments, two-family, townhouses, and multifamily with development plan review	Housing held to R-2 standards (including 40,000 SF tract for townhouses and apartments); other standards set case by case by Town Commissioners
C-1 Commercial	Route 13 (Sussex Highway) corridor	Detached single-family only (dwelling conversions by conditional use)	Most generous envelope in town (2,500 SF lot, 25 ft. width, 45 ft. height, 70% coverage) — unavailable for multifamily
RPC Residential Planned Community (Special District)	Master-planned sites, notably Heritage Shores	Single-family, two-family, townhouses, garden apartments, multifamily	10-acre min. (40 acres if rezoned from R-1); min. 4 du/acre, max. set in review; ⅓ of residential area as open space; three-stage plan approval by ordinance

Findings 03

Finding 1 & 2

Finding 1: The current Land Use and Development Code is outdated.

- The current base code has not been updated since 2005 and is being run against a 2018 comprehensive plan (currently undergoing a 5-year update)
- Code standards predates the recent wave of Delaware housing legislation.
- Amendments since 2018 cover recreational equipment, parks, R-2 apartments; however lot sizes, parking, mixed-use or missing middle housing types are absent.

Recommendation: Update the future land use map and align with the comp plan including an affordable housing element (SB23).

Finding 2: ADUs and MMH are not permitted or allowed by right

- ADUs/MMH are not permitted or allowed by right and require conditional use permit.
- Allowing ADUs by right or via a pre-approved permit process could advance comp plan goals and SB23 requirements.
- Existing Land Use and Development Code are already optimized to accommodate MMH and ADUs.

Recommendation: Allow ADUs, duplexes and triplexes by right in R-1 and R-2.

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Findings 3 & 4

Finding 3: Nearly every housing type except SF requires discretionary approval.

- R-2 and TC allow only detached SF while two-family homes, townhouses and apartments require development plan approval.
- TC standards are set project by project.
- Variances are a lengthy cumbersome process and includes a hardship test.

Recommendation: Create objective development standards for each housing type. Allow planning commission and staff to approve projects that meet them, as SB 23 requires (§9223), and limit Planning & Zoning review to checking compliance.

Finding 4: Lot sizes / bulk standards are restrictive to lot size, coverage, lot width, and setbacks

- 40,000 SF tract minimum is the main barrier. It's close to an acre and blocks townhouse and apartment infill on typical in-town lots.
- Requiring 50 ft. between buildings, 20 ft. side setbacks and 30 ft. front and rear setbacks favors garden-apartment complexes over small buildings.
- A duplex needs the same 9,000 SF lot as a single house. Most of the extra density comes from the second unit on that lot, not from a smaller lot.
- Single-family, duplex and twin lots are capped at 30%, which limits additions and small multi-unit buildings.

Recommendation: For projects of 12 units or fewer, reduce the tract minimum and use a lot-area-per-unit rule instead. Give duplexes a modest lot reduction, and raise coverage to about 40–50%.

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Finding 5: Mixed use is narrow, and the Route 13 corridor excludes housing.

- Apartments are allowed only on the second and third floors of Town Center commercial buildings
- C-1 has the largest building envelope in town (45 ft., 70% coverage) but allows no housing beyond single-family homes.
- The code has no definition of "mixed use."
- Housing is limited to upper floors and a "limited number" of units, with no clear cap. Ground-floor residential and all-residential buildings in Town Center aren't clearly allowed.
- Possible drafting error - "Apartment in combination with residential use" (§234-32B(2)). Should read "nonresidential use."



Recommendation: Correct wording, and make upper-floor apartments in TC by right. Allow residential and mixed-use buildings in C-1.

Finding 6: Parking minimums are high and limits multifamily and mixed-use development.

- Townhouse and multifamily require 3 spaces required per dwelling unit, townwide, regardless of unit size or location (§234-86).
- The rules apply whenever a use is "established or changed," or a building is "altered, renovated, or expanded" (§234-86B). There's no exemption for existing buildings or for Town Center.
- Stalls and aisles are oversized. spaces are 10 × 20 ft., or 10 × 22 ft. for parallel spaces. Aisles are 25 ft.



Recommendation: Change parking minimums from “required” to “recommended” while simultaneously reducing minimums to 1.5-2 for townhouse/multifamily. Exempt existing buildings in TC from added parking for changes of use and upper-floor conversions. Right-size designs rules for stalls and aisles.

04

Recommendations & Discussion

Strengths

- **Most housing types are already in the code.** R-2 and TC list MMH and multifamily. RPC district allows all of them.
- **Several standards are reasonable.** R-1 lots are 9,000 SF. Twins work on 4,500 SF lots, townhouses on 2,000 SF lots, and R-2 allows 42 ft. heights.
- **Heritage Shores proves small lots work here.** Phase 5 ("Bridgeville Villas") built 212 all-ages attached homes at 7.85 du/acre. Phase 7 uses 35-ft. duplex lots of about 3,850 SF.
- **Town Center was written for mixed use.** Its purpose statement calls for retail, office, and residential together, plus apartments over shops.
- **The town is small and responsive.** At roughly 3,000 residents, a focused code update is manageable, and the Planning & Zoning Commission has already flagged the need for zoning changes.

Weaknesses

- **Only single-family is by right.** In R-2 and Town Center, every other housing type needs development plan approval.
- **Lot minimums are large for a small town.** Townhouses and apartments need a 40,000 SF tract. A duplex needs the same 9,000 SF lot as a single house. Single-family, duplex, and twin lots are capped at 30% coverage.
- **No ADUs, cottages, or triplexes.** The accessory-use rules bar lodging for anyone outside the household. Manufactured homes and house conversions need a conditional use.
- **Parking minimums are very high.** Townhouses and multifamily need 3 spaces per unit; single-family homes and "apartments" need 2.
- **Townhouse and apartment projects need at least one acre** in R-3 and R-8, which rules out infill on typical in-town lots.
- **The Route 13 corridor excludes housing.** C-1 has the largest building envelope in town (45 ft., 70% coverage) but allows only standalone single-family homes.
- **The code is dated.** The base code dates to 2005 and has been amended piecemeal since.

Opportunities

- **Comprehensive plan update** for 2028.
- **The code text fixes are low-cost.** Correcting the Town Center wording, merging duplicate uses, and clarifying the parking schedule are quick fixes.
- **The town already approves smaller standards.** Heritage Shores uses 35-ft. duplex lots, 10-ft. fronts, and 5-ft. side yards. Extending those standards in-town is an easy argument to make locally.

Threats

- **Local opposition.** A quality public engagement strategy is key.
- **Growth stays age-restricted and expensive.** Most Heritage Shores homes are 55+ and priced from the high $200,000s to the high $500,000s. The town's largest housing pipeline largely misses younger families and local workers.
- **Farmland comes in at the wrong zoning.** Annexed farms of 20+ acres automatically get the AIOZ, which has no exit procedure. Recommend a

[Preliminary] recommended amendments

1. ADUs by right

Allow ADUs by right in R-1/R-2 or develop a pre-approved permit process.

2. Duplexes, triplexes and cottage courts in R-2 and TC

Permit twin, duplex, multiplex, and MMH housing by right in R-2/TC.

3. Right-size bulk standards

Reduce the 40,000 SF tract minimum for projects of 12 units or fewer. Reduce duplex lot to about 6,000–7,500 SF. Raise coverage to 40% on lots under 9,000 SF and 50% under 6,000 SF

4. Parking

Reduce or waive residential parking minimums for ADUs or Town Center.

5. Housing on Rt 13 corridor

Permit residential and mixed-use buildings in C-1

6. Annexation and agricultural overlay

Zone annexed land to match the future land use map. Adopt an annexation policy that asks for a housing mix and affordability.

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Next Steps

1. Review and feedback
2. Amendment drafting: sequencing and priorities
3. Site visit Discussion and Planning
4. Fall Community Engagement & Survey
5. Schedule Next Meeting

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THANK YOU

