
ARTICLE 16 FORM-BASED ZONING

SECTION 16.0 FORM-BASED DISTRICTS (FBD)

16.00 Purpose

The purpose of Form-Based Districts (FBD) is to carry out the Goals & Policies of the Town of Amherst Master Plan, as amended, including the provisions of Section 2 Goals & Policies, C. Key Directions for the Community which included the goal of maintaining Amherst’s community character and encouraging vitality in the village centers as a focus for the community’s economic life, cultural vigor, and social activity. Form-based regulations are called for in the Amherst Master Plan to promote sustainable mixed-use development in Amherst’s village centers and other appropriate districts, in order that future development will be compatible with the historic, architectural, and landscape character of those areas. Rather than focusing on the separation of land uses, form-based regulations are intended to guide the creation of healthy mixed-use districts where building form, public space, and streetscape design are integrated and based on the specific context of a given district.

Form-Based Districts (FBD) regulations are intended to:

- 16.000 Facilitate the development of an appropriate mix of commercial, residential, entertainment, civic, and recreational uses within a traditional pedestrian oriented development pattern and supported by attractive street designs, open spaces and building forms;
- 16.001 Create a safe, accessible, convenient, attractive and highly functional village center environment that meets the needs of village residents and visitors as a place to live, work, obtain necessary goods and services, recreate, and socialize;
- 16.002 Coordinate the safe circulation of private vehicles, public transit, bicycles, and pedestrians through an intermodal transportation network of streets and paths connecting neighborhoods, employment centers, open spaces, and areas of activity within the FBD and surrounding areas;
- 16.003 Protect and expand opportunities for small locally-owned businesses and other entrepreneurial activity that primarily but not exclusively serves the center and its surrounding neighborhoods;
- 16.004 Encourage flexibility and variety in future development while ensuring preservation of and compatibility with historic fabric, the use of high quality materials and sustainable design for new buildings and landscapes; and
- 16.005 Ensure future development that is in accordance with the key directions of the Amherst Master Plan, in order to:
 - 1. Maintain Amherst’s existing community character,
 - 2. Encourage vitality in the downtown and village centers,
 - 3. Balance land preservation in outlying areas with more intensive development in centers and other appropriate areas,
 - 4. Provide housing that meets the needs of all residents while minimizing environmental impacts,
 - 5. Provide community services to meet the needs of all residents,
 - 6. Diversify and expand the economic base,
 - 7. Enhance town/gown relations and cooperation, and
 - 8. Promote an ethic of sustainable environmental and energy practices in all Town activities.

In Form-Based Districts (FBD) there may be approaches that are acceptable and desirable but which do not explicitly comply with the standards established in this Article 16. It is understood that these standards cannot comprehensively anticipate all possible solutions nor are they intended to stifle creativity or prevent innovation. Alternative approaches to meet the intentions of these standards may be proposed, reviewed, and approved under the provisions of Section 16.9 – Administration, under the alternative compliance method provided thereunder.

SECTION 16.1 BASE ZONING DISTRICTS AND OVERLAY DISTRICTS

16.10 The Form-Based Zoning regulations in Article 16 Form-Based Zoning shall be applied to the following Form-Based Districts (FBD):

16.100 NAVC North Amherst Village Center

16.101 AC Atkins Corners

16.102 R-VF Village Form Residence Overlay District

16.103 ED-F Education Form Overlay District