



Voter Guide

Proposed Zoning Amendments



Background

Since 2023, the Town of Meredith has been studying the existing housing supply and future housing needs of the community with funding provided through two Housing Opportunity Planning Grants. This work included the completion of a Housing Needs Assessment, Policy and Regulatory Audit, and public outreach which included hosting a public Housing Forum and survey. The documentation for all of these aspects of the project can be found at <https://www.meredithnh.gov/365/Community-Plan> or viewed by scanning the QR code above.

What we learned

The Imagine Meredith 2035 Community Plan (2025) and the Meredith Housing Needs Assessment (2024) describe Meredith's housing supply as both constrained and misaligned with current and future community needs. Nearly half of Meredith's housing stock is seasonal or recreational, leaving a very limited supply of year-round units and resulting in extremely low vacancy rates, well below what is considered healthy. The housing stock is dominated by single-family homes on larger lots, while rental options and smaller units remain scarce. This is a concern as the population ages, household sizes shrink, and demand grows for housing for older adults, workers, and smaller households.

Rising home prices and rents—driven by strong second-home and short-term rental markets, limited new construction, and land use and infrastructure constraints—have made it increasingly difficult for modest-income households and the local workforce to remain in town. Both documents emphasize the need to expand housing diversity through changes to existing regulations and the adoption of new regulatory tools. This informed the work on the proposed zoning amendments going before voters on March 10, 2026.

Seven zoning changes are being presented to voters in March of 2026. They include:

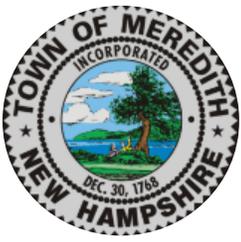
- #1: Changes to the Meredith **Conservation Subdivision Ordinance**
- #2: A New **Cottage Court Housing Ordinance**
- #3: A New **Workforce Housing Ordinance**
- #4: Changes to the **Accessory Apartment Ordinance**
- #5: Changes to minimum setbacks in the **Central Business and Residential Districts**
- #6: A Revised Definition for **Accessory Apartment***
- #7: A **New Overlay District** for Pre-Existing Non-Conforming Neighborhoods

A short explanation of each proposed change is provided on the following pages.

* Other proposed definition amendments can be found at [MeredithNH.gov](https://www.meredithnh.gov).

If Adopted...

These regulatory changes will help Meredith continue to allow for housing solutions that can best be integrated into the development pattern and character of the community. This is in line with the recently adopted Community Plan that calls for “encouraging a range of housing options” and these efforts have the full support of the Planning Board.



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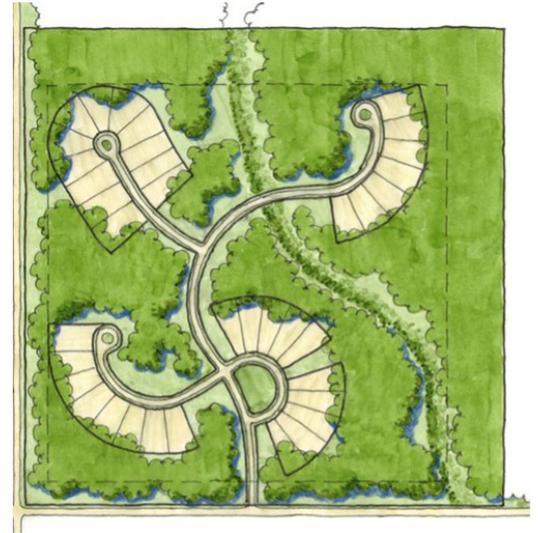
Proposed Zoning Amendments

Amendment #1

Changes to the Conservation Subdivision Design Review Ordinance

What is Being Proposed?

Amending **Article XXI – Conservation Subdivision Design Review Ordinance** to provide more flexibility of lot sizes, increase the density if workforce housing is created, and streamline the regulatory process. These changes aim to balance the need for homes with the desire to protect sensitive natural resources and retain community character.

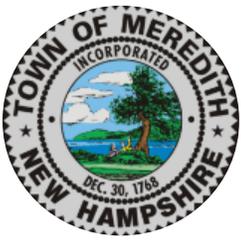


Above: Clustered lots in a conservation subdivision creates more open space around the development.

So, What ARE Conservation Subdivisions?

Conservation subdivisions are a type of development pattern designed to protect natural resources while allowing residential growth. Instead of dividing land into conventional house lots spread evenly across a property, conservation subdivisions cluster homes on smaller lots, leaving significant portions of the land permanently protected as open space.

A conservation subdivision ordinance is used to safeguard critical resources such as forests, farmland, wetlands, and wildlife habitat, while maintaining the town’s rural character and providing housing opportunities. The protected open space can also provide recreational opportunities and reduce infrastructure costs by shortening roads and utility extensions. Meredith has had a conservation subdivision ordinance for many years, although no developer has used it. The proposed changes remove barriers for developers and incentivize the use of this regulatory strategy.



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Amendment #2

A New Cottage Court Housing Ordinance

What is Being Proposed?

Adopting a new **Article XXII – Cottage Court Ordinance** to allow for the development of small, detached cottages clustered together around a common courtyard. The maximum unit size is 1,500 square feet to encourage affordability, and these units cannot be used as Short Term Rentals. This new development type provides a housing alternative that strengthens existing neighborhoods, maintains Meredith's character, and reflects an efficient use of land. This new residential use is proposed for the Central Business District, Commercial: Meredith Center District, Commercial: Route 3 South District, and Residential Zoning District.

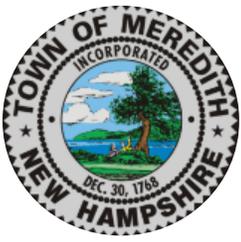


Above: Example cottage court designs

So, What ARE Cottage Courts Anyway?

Cottage Courts are compact neighborhoods of small homes arranged around a shared court or common space. This arrangement fosters a strong sense of community while offering housing that fits a variety of needs and settings, and provides a flexible tool that can expand housing options while preserving neighborhood character. They:

- Consist of **small, detached single-family homes** (1–1.5 stories) clustered around a central gathering space.
- Have a **shared court or common** which often serves as both the entryway to homes and a focal point for community interaction.
- Appeal to **seniors, young professionals, smaller households**, and those seeking **workforce housing options**.
- Can be **long-term rentals or homeowner units**, but not short-term rentals.



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Amendment #3

A New Workforce Housing Ordinance

What is Being Proposed?

The adoption of a new **Article XXIII – Workforce Housing Ordinance** to comply with the requirements mandated by the State of New Hampshire found in NH RSA 674:58-61. This would allow a higher density of development for multifamily housing on lots that access to municipal utilities, and a density bonus for subdivisions that allocate a portion of their housing units for workforce housing. These cannot be used as Short Term Rentals, and are required to meet purchase or rental thresholds for affordability for 30 years.

Meredith currently does not have a Workforce Housing Ordinance. The adoption of this ordinance would bring the Town into compliance with the State Workforce Housing Law RSA 674:59, reduce the threat of lawsuits, and create new opportunities for housing that is affordable to working residents.

So, What IS a Workforce Housing Ordinance Anyway?

New Hampshire’s Workforce Housing Law (RSA 674:58-61), has been in effect since 2010. It requires all municipalities to provide “reasonable and realistic opportunities” for the development of housing affordable to households earning the area median income. **It also mandates that workforce housing be allowed in a majority of areas where residential development is permitted**, targeting rental units for those earning 60% of the area median income and ownership units for those earning 100% of the area median income.

The median sales price of a *single-family property* in Meredith is **\$675,000** and the median sales price of *condos* is **\$440,000.**

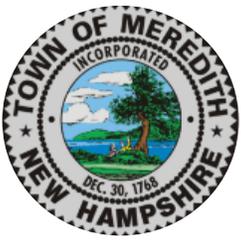


Based on the Workforce Housing Law parameters, the maximum *owner occupied workforce housing price* in Meredith is **\$381,500**

This means much of Meredith’s housing stock is not affordable for teachers, firefighters, and other members of Meredith’s workforce.

Based on the Workforce Housing Law, the maximum *workforce monthly rental price* in Meredith is **\$1,620/month**





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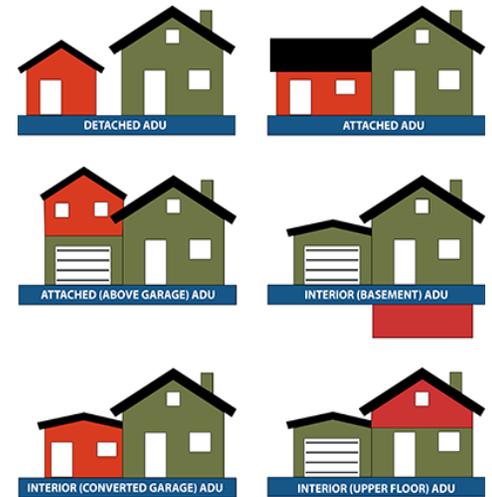
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Amendment #4

Changes to the Accessory Apartment Ordinance

What is Being Proposed?

In July of 2025, the state law regulating accessory apartments changed, and the town of Meredith is seeking to be in compliance. Amending the existing **Article III – General Provisions, Section N. Accessory Apartments** to permit standalone (detached) accessory apartments (accessory dwelling units) would make Meredith consistent with the state mandate found in RSA 674:71-73. The other proposed change is to eliminate the requirement for an accessory apartment or primary dwelling to be owner occupied. Accessory apartments are not permitted to be used as short term rentals.



Above and Below: Example accessory apartment configurations

So, What ARE Accessory Apartments Anyway?

Often referred to as **accessory dwelling units (ADUs)**, or in-law apartments, these are smaller, secondary living spaces constructed on a single-family home's property. Sometimes configured as basement apartments, garage lofts, or in separate structures they offer independent living with kitchen, bath, and sleeping areas. Accessory apartments are permitted by state law and are already permitted in Meredith. They are intended to increase the housing supply by using existing parcels and available infrastructure. In the past they were often called "in-law apartments".





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Amendment #5

Changes to Minimum Setbacks in the Central Business and Residential Districts

What is Being Proposed?

Amendments to **Article V – Table of the Dimensional Regulations** and **Article V D-3 Residential District and D-7 Central Business District** to reduce the minimum setback requirements for lots in both districts that have access to municipal water and sewer. The other dimensional regulation changes proposed in this Article include removing the minimum lot size requirement and increasing the lot coverage permitted in each district.

WHY is this being Proposed?

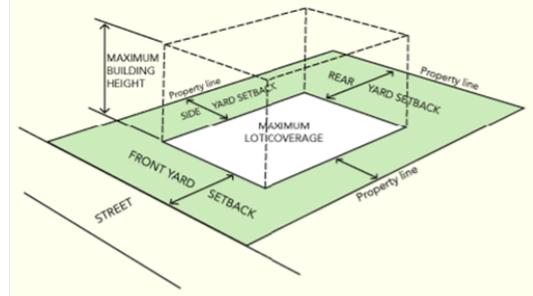
In Meredith, many existing lots do not meet current dimensional requirements. This has resulted in a high number of variance requests to the Zoning Board of Adjustment (ZBA) because the majority of parcels and structures are non-conforming – meaning they do not meet current dimensional standards. This means that the pattern of development that is noted and appreciated in these districts is not currently supported by the zoning ordinance. Revisiting and updating these standards will help reduce unnecessary cases before the ZBA, create clearer expectations for property owners, and make it easier to responsibly use nonconforming lots while still protecting neighborhood character.

In the Central Business District this means:

- Deleting the minimum lot size requirement
- Reducing the front setback from 30' to 0', or to match the setback on abutting parcels.
- Reducing the side setback from 10' to 5'
- Reducing the rear setback from 20' to 10'
- Increasing the allowable lot coverage to 75%

So, What Are Dimensional Regulations Anyway?

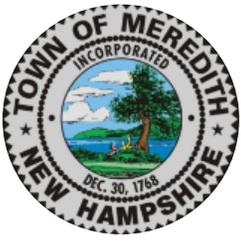
Zoning regulates dimensional standards by setting rules for the size and placement of buildings on a lot. This includes requirements like minimum lot size, road frontage, lot coverage, and setbacks from property lines. Together, these standards shape the scale and layout of development to ensure it fits the community's goals.



Above: Typical dimensional standards that zoning regulates for development on a private lot.

In the Residential District (areas served by water and sewer infrastructure), this means:

- Reducing the front setback from 20' to 10', Or match abutting parcels
- Reducing the side setback from 10' to 5'
- Reducing the rear setback from 40' to 10'
- Increasing lot coverage for Multi-family units to 60%



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Amendment #6

A Revised Definition for Accessory Apartment

What is Being Proposed?

Amending **Article VIII - Definitions** to revise the definition of Accessory Apartment to be consistent with NH RSA 674:71. The Proposed definition is:

*“A residential living unit that provides independent living facilities with provisions for sleeping, eating, cooking, and sanitation, located on the same property as a principal single-family dwelling and can be within, attached to, or detached from the main house.” **

**Note: Other proposed definition amendments can be found at MeredithNH.gov.*

Amendment #7

A New Overlay District for Pre-Existing Non-Conforming Neighborhoods

What is Being Proposed?

Amending **Article V – Establishment of District and District Regulations** to establish a new overlay district. This new overlay district, titled **D-II Preexisting Nonconforming Subdivisions** will allow reduced setbacks on these preexisting nonconforming lots in the residential subdivisions commonly known as Patrician Shores, Sands of Brookhurst, Colony Club, and Circle Drive. These four neighborhoods currently fall within zoning districts with dimensional standards they cannot meet. This is because these neighborhoods pre-date zoning and were developed on smaller lots and at higher densities. This overlay would reduce the required setbacks on these lots to:

- Front setback of 15’,
- Side setback of 10’, and
- Rear setback of 15’.

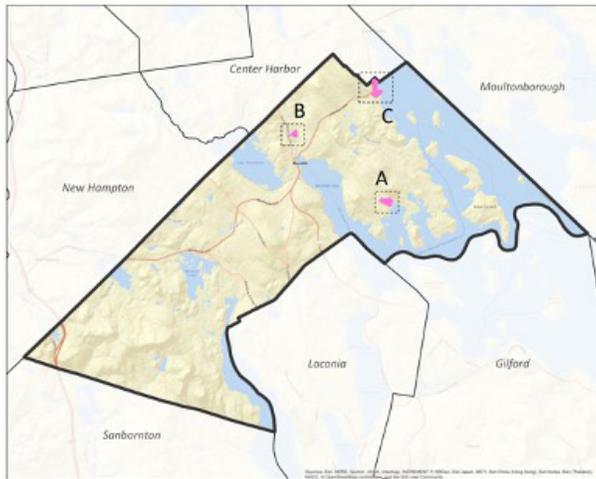


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Amendment #7

Proposed Zoning Overlay District



Meredith, NH

Proposed Overlay

- Meredith boundary
- Overlay (proposed)
- Parcel boundary
- Major road
- Other road
- Private road



Coordinate system: NAD_2011_StatePlane_NH Date sources: Town of Meredith, GRANIT, SPAD Prepared by: Oak Brook Inc. Resilience Planning & Design October 2024