

**BOROUGH OF WEST READING  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
FEBRUARY 7, 2023**

The West Reading Planning Commission met for their regular meeting on Wednesday, February 7, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. at Borough Hall with the following persons present: Vice Chairman Christopher Lincoln; Members Daniel Horman, Cody Rhoads, Kacie Rodriguez, Zanna Leiendecker and Jennifer Bressler; Zoning Officer and Code Department Manager Chad Moyer; Borough Manager Dean Murray; and Borough Secretary Cynthia Madeira. Chairman Philip Wert was unable to attend.

**Visitors**

None

Vice Chairman Christopher Lincoln called the meeting to order at 5:59 p.m.

**Public Comment**

There were no public comments.

**Approval of Minutes**

Motion to approve the January 3, 2024 minutes. **Moved** by Mrs. Bressler and seconded by Ms. Rodriguez. **Motion carried.**

**New Business**

- a. **Downtown Zoning District Permitted Use Discussion** – Mr. Lincoln noted a large table provided by Derck & Edson, LLC last month of existing and proposed uses by the zoning district and plans to review and comment on the permitted uses prior to the March meeting with representatives of Derck & Edson, LLC. Ms. Leiendecker inquired as to the difference between Conditional Use and Special Exception. Mr. Lincoln indicated that both permitted uses would have additional requirements. Conditional Use is a use permitted by right with the ability of Borough Council to establish additional reasonable conditions. A Special Exception Use would be reviewed by the Zoning Hearing Board.

Mr. Lincoln noted the addition of a Retail Frontage Overlay and Office Frontage Overlay as well as a Gateway District located within the Buttonwood Street corridor. The following zoning district uses were reviewed:

1	Table of Uses/ Existing Uses	Existing Zoning Districts & Allowable Uses						Proposed Changes	Proposed Uses	Proposed Zoning Districts & Allowable Uses								Comments		
2	Orange cells highlight uses to be simplified and merged with others	Central Business	General Business Overlay	General Business	Commercial Light Industrial Redevelopment	Light Industrial	Institutional	Residential/ Professional		<div><div>P</div>Permitted Use</div> <div><div>C</div>Conditional Use</div> <div><div>SE</div>Special Exception Use</div> <div><div>X</div>Prohibited Use</div> <div>Use Removed</div>	Retail Frontage Overlay	Office Frontage Overlay	Central Business	General Business Overlay	General Business	Commercial Light Industrial Redevelopment Overlay	Light Industrial	Gateway	Residential/ Professional	
3	MAIN STREET COMMERCIAL USES								MAIN STREET COMMERCIAL USES											
4	Retail stores, but not adult-oriented uses or pawn shops.	P	P	P	X	P	X	X	Expand to multiple individual uses									It was noted that adult oriented uses or pawn shops would be revised to remove repetitiveness and inserted where allowed. The difference between existing and proposed uses are the frontage overlays and the new Gateway District. It was unclear as to the intended composition of the new Gateway District but thought it best to be more permissive. A discussion on minimum square footage in the light industrial district was thought to suit larger facilities. The existing bakery separation from retail was discussed as far as needing a quantifiable benchmark between on-site baking facilities and retail sale bakeries. A large-scale production facility was undesirable within the Central Business District. Derck & Edson, LLC would be requested to make provisions to allow a small retail type bakery in the main street commercial area, and to allow large scale bakeries within the Light Industrial, General Business, and Gateway Districts.		
5										Retail stores	P	P	P	P	P	X	P		X	X
6										Pawn Shops	X	X	X	X	X	X	P		X	X
7	Retail outlet sales conducted in enclosed buildings which have an internal sales area of at least 20,000 square feet, not including adult bookstores.	X	X	X	X	C	X	X	Why is this minimum SF in place?	Retail outlet sales conducted in enclosed buildings which have an internal sales area of at least 20,000 square feet	X	X	X	X	X	X	C	C	X	
8	Retail sales stores for baked goods, including those with on-site baking facilities.	P	P	P	X	X	X	X		Retail sales stores for baked goods, including those with on-site baking facilities.	P	P	P	P	P	X	X	P	X	
9	Cultural centers, indoor theaters, and museums, but not adult- oriented uses.	P	P	P	X	X	X	X	Expand to multiple individual uses									Differences between museum and theater uses were discussed, it was noted that a definition of theatre is needed and an impact on traffic would be experienced during theater showings. The recommended revisions were found to be acceptable.		
10	Cultural centers and museums, but not adult- oriented uses.	X	X	X	X	P	X	X		Cultural Centers & Museums	X	P	P	P	P	X	X		P	X
11										Theater	P	P	P	X	P	P	X		X	X
12	Banks and other financial institutions, which include automatic teller machines and drive-in services.	P	P	P	X	X	X	X	Move ATMs and drive in services as separate uses	Banks and other financial institutions	P	P	P	P	P	X	X	P	X	The allowance of ATMs in the Residential Professional District was thought to be unnecessary and recommended to be prohibited.
									Automated Teller Machine	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	
13	Artist studios.	P	P	P	X	X	X	X	Art studios seem like a use that should be expanded into other districts.	Artist studios.	P	X	P	P	P	X	P	P	P	Artist studios would include an office, studio, and gallery by definition. The recommended revisions were found to be acceptable.
14	Personal service establishments, not including massage establishments.	P	P	P	X	X	X	P	Personal services	P	P	P	P	P	X	X	X	P		
15	Personal services	X	X	X	X	P	X	X		Massage establishments	X	X	X	X	X	X	P	X	X	The terms of laundries, laundromats, and dry cleaners were recommended to be removed from the definition of Personal Service Establishment. The reference to massage establishments was recommended to be removed in its entirety since therapeutic massage is a part of the Personal Service Establishment definition. Otherwise, the recommended district revisions were found to be acceptable.
16	Membership clubs.	P	P	P	X	X	X	X		Membership clubs	X	X	P	P	P	X	X	P	X	
17	Hotels and motels.	X	P	P	X	X	X	X		Hotels and motels	P	X	P	P	P	X	X	P	X	It was recommended to remove the permitted use from the Retail Frontage Overlay, Central Business, and General Business Overlay Districts, and to allow Conditional Use in the Commercial Light Industrial Redevelopment Overlay District.
18	Eating and drinking places, not including drive-in service places or adult-oriented uses.	P	X	X	X	X	X	X	Expand to multiple individual uses	Eating and drinking places	P	P	P	X	P	X	C	P	X	
19										Side yard drive-thru facilities	X	X	X	X	C	X	C	C	X	The expansion to permitted use in the General Business and Gateway Districts, and Conditional Use in the Light Industrial District were found to be acceptable. Examples or clarification was needed for rear yard drive-thru facilities.
20										Rear yard drive-thru facilities	X	X	C	X	C	X	C	C	X	

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2	Orange cells highlight uses to be simplified and merged with others	Central Business	General Business Overlay	General Business	Commercial Light Industrial Redevelopment	Light Industrial	Institutional	Residential// Professional		<table><tr><td>P</td><td>Permitted Use</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>C</td><td>Conditional Use</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>SE</td><td>Special Exception Use</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>X</td><td>Prohibited Use</td><td></td></tr><tr><td></td><td>Use Removed</td><td></td></tr></table>	P	Permitted Use		C	Conditional Use		SE	Special Exception Use		X	Prohibited Use			Use Removed		Retail Frontage Overlay	Office Frontage Overlay	Central Business	General Business Overlay	General Business	Commercial Light Industrial Redevelopment Overlay	Light Industrial	Gateway	Residential// Professional	
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21	Offices; provided, nevertheless, that no more than 25% of the first floor area and no more than 25% of the first floor elevation of any building fronting on Penn Avenue and any building located within the West Reading Shopping Center shall be developed for an office or offices. For purposes hereof, "first floor" shall mean and include the first full story above the average finished grade adjoining a street, including any half or partial story or basement located beneath said full story where any portion of such half or partial story or basement is above the finished grade. All new office uses to be permitted on the upper floors of an existing building with commercial use on the first floor, shall be subject to the provision of adequate parking in accordance with the requirements of § 455-140, Off-street parking schedule. [Amended 11-20-2018 by Ord. No. 1099]	P	X	X	X	X	X	X												The recommended revisions were found to be acceptable.															
22	Offices.	X	P	P	X	P	C	P		Offices	X	P	P	P	P	X	P	C	P																
23	Nightclubs.	X	SE	SE	X	X	X	X		Nightclubs	X	X	X	SE	SE	X	X	X	X			The recommendation was found to be acceptable.													
24	Amusement rooms for the use of electronic and/or mechanical coin-operated devices, including but not be limited to pinball machines, electronically operated shuffle boards, bowling, video games, electronically operated tennis, billiards, and other games of amusement.	X	SE	SE	X	X	X	X		Amusement rooms for the use of electronic and/or mechanical coin-operated devices, including but not be limited to pinball machines, electronically operated shuffle boards, bowling, video games, electronically operated tennis, billiards, and other games of amusement.	SE	SE	SE	SE	SE	X	X	X	X		It was recommended to prohibit the use within the Retail Frontage and Office Frontage Overlay Districts.														
25 MIXED USE DEVELOPMENTS											MIXED USE DEVELOPMENTS																								
26	Mixed-use developments.	X	P	P	X	SE	C	P		Mixed-use developments	X	X	P	P	P	C	SE	C	P		Mixed use development was thought to be referencing a new or rehabbed structure with multiple uses. Clarification will be requested from Derck & Edson, LLC.														
27	Multiple commercial uses in the basement or upper floors of an existing commercial building can be permitted subject to the provision of adequate parking in accordance with the requirements of § 455-140, Off-street parking schedule. [Added 11-20-2018 by Ord. No. 1099]	P	P	P	X	X	X	P																											
28	Apartment(s) on the upper levels of buildings, provided that the parking requirements of § 455-140, Off-street parking schedule can be met for the apartment(s). Conversion of existing commercial space on the upper floors shall be permitted as long as a commercial use is maintained on the first floor. [Amended 11-20-2018 by Ord. No. 1099]	P	P	P	X	X	C	P																											
30 RESIDENTIAL USES											RESIDENTIAL USES																								



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41	A. All uses and accessory uses permitted by special exception in the underlying General Business or Light Industrial District which comprise the site, excluding any adult-oriented uses.	X	X	X	SE	X	X	X	All uses and accessory uses permitted by special exception in the underlying General Business or Light Industrial District which comprise the site	X	X	X	X	X	SE	X	X	X	
42	B. Development containing apartments and/or townhouses above one or more nonresidential uses permitted in any of the underlying commercial or industrial districts which comprise the redevelopment site. No new residential uses shall be allowed on the first floor level of any property in this district. Residential uses under § 455-102B and this Subsection B, together, shall not occupy more than 60% of the combined area available for occupation within the redevelopment site. Where uses under §455-102B and this Subsection B are proposed to occur along with the use under §455-102C, the 80% combined area regulation under § 455-102C(3) shall apply to the sum of the areas of the three uses, but in no event shall the use under § 455-102B and the use under this Subsection B, together, exceed 60% of the total combined area for occupation within the redevelopment site. No single building may include a use under § 455-102B or this Subsection B with a use under § 455-102C. Where uses under § 455-102B or this Subsection B occur within a single redevelopment site with a use under § 455-102C, the uses must be located within separate buildings.	X	X	X	SE	X	X	X											
43	Public parks and playgrounds	X	X	X	X	X	X	P	Public parks and playgrounds	P	P	P	X	P	X	X	X	P	Clarification is needed on the recommendation to include parks and playgrounds within the Central Business District.
45	BUSINESS DISTRICT USES IDEALLY ON SECONDARY COMMERCIAL STREETS								BUSINESS DISTRICT USES IDEALLY ON SECONDARY COMMERCIAL STREETS										
46	Governmental uses.	P	P	P	X	P	P	P	Governmental uses	P	P	P	P	P	X	P	P	X	It was recommended to remove this permitted use from the Retail and Office Frontage Overlay Districts, and Central Business District.
47	Bus shelters.	P	P	P	X	P	X	X	Bus shelters	P	P	P	P	P	X	P	P	X	The recommendation was found to be acceptable.
48	Body art establishment.	P	P	P	X	X	X	X	Body art establishment	X	X	P	P	P	X	X	X	X	It was recommended to allow this use in the Retail and Office Frontage Overlay Districts.
49	Laundromats	P	X	X	X	X	X	X	Laundromats and dry cleaners	P	X	P	X	P	X	P	X	P	Laundromats and dry cleaners were recommended not to be allowed in the Retail Frontage Overlay District and Residential Professional District.
50	Funeral homes	X	P	P	X	X	X	X	Funeral homes	X	X	X	P	P	X	X	X	X	Removal of the General Business District Overlay from the 700 block of Penn Avenue would prohibit this use in the Central Business District.

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51	Bed-and-breakfast inns	X	C	C	X	X	X	X		Bed-and-breakfast inns	X	X	X	C	C	X	X	X	P	A bed and breakfast would be an owner-occupied structure. Due to divided thoughts among commission members a decision on how to proceed was delayed until Chairman Wert could weigh in.
52	Day-care centers	X	C	C	X	X	X	SE	Allow care uses in Institutional district	Day-care centers	X	X	X	C	C	X	X	C	SE	The recommendation was found to be acceptable.
53	Adult day-care facilities	X	C	C	X	X	X	X	Allow care uses in Institutional district	Adult day-care facilities	X	X	X	C	C	X	X	C	X	It was recommended to allow this use as a Special Exception in the Residential Professional District to match other care facilities.
54	Veterinary office	X	SE	SE	X	X	X	X	Allow care uses in Institutional district	Veterinary office	X	X	X	SE	SE	X	X	C	X	The recommendation was found to be acceptable.
55	Community centers	X	SE	SE	X	X	X	X	Allow care uses in Institutional district	Community centers	X	X	X	SE	SE	X	X	C	X	The recommendation was found to be acceptable.
56	Group care facility	X	X	X	X	X	X	SE	Allow care uses in Institutional district	Group care facility	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	C	SE	The recommendation was found to be acceptable.
57	Family care facility	X	X	X	X	X	X	SE	Allow care uses in Institutional district	Family care facility	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	C	SE	The recommendation was found to be acceptable.
58	Extended care facilities	X	X	X	X	X	C	X		Extended care facilities	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	C	X	The recommendation was found to be acceptable. It was noted that the Institutional District will still exist, just not in the downtown area.
59	Intermediate care facilities	X	X	X	X	X	C	X		Intermediate care facilities	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	C	X	The recommendation was found to be acceptable.
60	Long-term care facilities	X	X	X	X	X	C	X		Long-term care facilities	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	C	X	The recommendation was found to be acceptable.
61	Fire stations	X	X	X	X	X	SE	X		Fire stations	X	X	X	X	C	X	X	C	X	The recommendation was found to be acceptable.
63	AUTO ORIENTED USES									AUTO ORIENTED USES										
64	Shopping centers	P	X	X	X	X	X	X		Shopping centers	C	X	P	X	X	X	X	X	X	The recommendation was found to be acceptable.
65	Passenger terminals, including taxi stands, bus and rail passenger stations and shelters	P	P	P	X	X	X	SE		Passenger terminals, including taxi stands, bus and rail passenger stations and shelters	P	X	P	P	P	X	P	P	SE	It was recommended to remove the reference of shelters that is addressed elsewhere. It was also recommended to prohibit this use in the Retail Frontage Overlay, Central Business, and Residential Professional Districts.
66	Catering establishments	P	P	P	X	X	X	X		Catering establishments	C	X	P	P	P	X	X	P	X	It was recommended to prohibit this use in the Retail Frontage Overlay District.
67	Forestry	P	P	P	X	P	P	P		Forestry	X	X	X	X	X	X	P	X	X	The recommendation was found to be acceptable.
68	Newsstands	P	X	X	X	X	X	X		Newsstands	P	X	P	X	X	X	X	X	X	It was recommended to allow this use in the Office Frontage Overlay District.
69	Eating and drinking places, including drive-in service places, but not adult-oriented uses.	X	P	P	X	X	X	X												
70	Planned neighborhood convenience center	SE	SE	SE	X	X	X	SE		Planned neighborhood convenience center	SE	SE	SE	SE	SE	X	X	SE	SE	It was unclear as to whether this use would be necessary after reviewing the definition. Derck & Edson will be requested to provide feedback.
71	Commercial and noncommercial parking lots	SE	SE	SE	X	C	C	SE		Commercial and noncommercial parking lots	X	X	SE	SE	SE	X	C	SE	SE	The recommendation was found to be acceptable.
72	Private commercial educational facilities, including schools or special vocational training and other similar activities	C	C	C	X	X	X	X	Why are these all Conditional Uses?	Private commercial educational facilities, including schools or special vocational training and other similar activities.	C	C	C	C	C	X	X	P	X	It was recommended to prohibit the use in the Retail Frontage Overlay District.

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73	Commercial laundries	X	C	C	X	X	X	X		Commercial laundries	X	X	X	C	C	X	X	X	X	It was recommended to add this use as a Conditional Use in the Light Industrial District.
74	Motor vehicle repair facility	X	SE	SE	X	X	X	X		Motor vehicle repair facility	X	X	X	SE	SE	X	SE	X	X	It was recommended to allow this use as a Conditional Use in the Light Industrial District.
75	Motor vehicle sales establishment	X	SE	SE	X	X	X	X	Seems a good fit for LI. Merge/Consolidate these uses.	Motor vehicle sales establishment	X	X	X	SE	SE	X	SE	SE	X	It was recommended to only allow this use as a Special Exception in the Light Industrial District.
76	Motor vehicle washing facility	X	SE	SE	X	X	X	X		Motor vehicle washing facility	X	X	X	X	X	X	SE	SE	X	It was recommended to only allow this use as a Special Exception in the Light Industrial District.
77	Gasoline service station	X	SE	SE	X	X	X	X		Gasoline service station	X	X	X	X	X	X	SE	SE	X	It was recommended to only allow this use as a Special Exception in the Light Industrial District.
79	ACCESSORY USES									ACCESSORY USES										
80	Accessory buildings, structures, and uses on the same lot and customarily incidental to the permitted uses.	P	P	P	X	X	P	P		Accessory buildings, structures, and uses on the same lot and customarily incidental to the permitted uses	X	X	P	P	P	X	X	P	P	
81	Certain wireless communications facilities (WCFs) subject to § 455-148B. [Added 1-24-2017 by Ord. No. 1067]	P	P	P	X	P	P	P		Certain wireless communications facilities (WCFs) subject to § 455-148B. [Added 1-24- 2017 by Ord. No. 1067]	X	X	P	P	P	X	P	P	P	
82	No-impact home-based businesses.	P	P	P	X	X	X	P		No-impact home-based businesses	X	X	P	P	P	X	X	P	P	
83	Certain wireless communications facilities (WCFs) subject to § 455-148C.	C	C	C	X	C	C	X		Certain wireless communications facilities (WCFs) subject to § 455-148C.	X	X	C	C	C	X	C	C	X	
84	Public utility installations except garages, warehouses and storage yards.	C	C	C	X	X	C	X		Public utility installations except garages, warehouses and storage yards.	X	X	C	C	C	X	X	C	X	
85	Dispensaries for medical marijuana subject to the provisions of § 455-122.1B. [Amended 11-20-2018 by Ord. No. 1099]	X	C	C	X	X	X	X		Dispensaries for medical marijuana subject to the provisions of § 455-122.1B. [Amended 11-20-2018 by Ord. No. 1099]	X	X	X	C	C	X	X	X	X	
86	Adult Oriented Businesses	X	X	X	X	SE	X	X		Adult Oriented Businesses	X	X	X	X	X	X	SE	X	X	
87	Land and buildings in the Commercial and Light Industrial Redevelopment Overlay District may be used for any one or combination of the following purposes and no others, unless a special exception as	X	X	X	P	X	X	X												
88	A. All uses and accessory uses permitted by right in any of the underlying commercial or industrial districts which comprise the site, except as follows:																			
89	(1) Single-family detached dwelling, single-family semidetached dwelling, and two-family detached dwelling uses shall be permitted in the General Business District portion of any redevelopment site, but not within any portion of the redevelopment site, but not within any portion of the redevelopment site located in any other underlying district. [Amended 3-	X	X	X	P	X	X	X												

Review of permitted uses will continue from Accessory Uses at a later date.

**Adjournment**

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 8:25 p.m. by Ms. Rodriguez and seconded by Mr. Rhoads. **Motion carried.**

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia Madeira  
Borough Secretary