

## **20. GREAT ROAD DISTRICT**

### **20.1. Purposes**

The purposes of the Great Road District are to:

- 20.1.1. Encourage a mix of commercial, residential, institutional, and civic uses in a physical arrangement that is safe for pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular traffic;
- 20.1.2. Promote the economic vitality of Great Road's business areas;
- 20.1.3. Create, maintain, and enhance areas appropriate for small- and moderate-scale, single- and multi-use buildings that support a variety of retail and service uses, the arts and creative economy and supporting creative enterprises and commercial activities;
- 20.1.4. Continue to have varied development patterns and building forms along Great Road so as to avoid excessive uniformity in appearance;
- 20.1.5. Provide for housing above and next to commercial space; and
- 20.1.6. Promote shared access and appropriate links to adjoining properties.

### **20.2. District and Subdistricts**

The Great Road District shall consist of the four subdistricts listed below, all as shown on the Bedford Zoning Map. The purposes of the subdistricts shall be as follows.

- 20.2.1. Shopping Center Subdistrict (GR/SC). The GR/SC subdistrict is intended to be a moderate activity zone and a gateway to the town center. It accommodates traditional suburban shopping center design and businesses while encouraging infill development and visual and physical connectivity with the GR/M subdistrict. The GR/SC subdistrict should accommodate a variety of retail and non-retail uses, including business uses requiring a larger footprint than would be appropriate in settings such as the Center or North Road Subdistrict.
- 20.2.2. Marketplace Subdistrict (GR/M). The GR/M subdistrict is intended to be a high-activity business node. The regulations for this subdistrict should accommodate a mix of building types and sizes and encourage uses that meet the consumer and service needs of Bedford residents.
- 20.2.3. Center Subdistrict (GR/C). The GR/C subdistrict is intended to be a high-activity business node with small shops and services that draw many customers and an approach to site design that invites walking and bicycle access. Design standards in this location should meet the needs of the business community while also respecting the purposes and goals of the center historic district.
- 20.2.4. North Road Subdistrict (GR/NR). The GR/NR subdistrict is intended to serve as a gateway into the town center and flexible development node for small-scale mixed uses.

Regulations should encourage a ground floor mix of limited retail, non-retail uses, and mixed residential uses such as live/work units. Development regulations need to be conscious of wetlands and other site constraints that affect buildout on lots in this subdistrict.

### 20.3. Context, Form, and Shape

Each Great Road District subdistrict has a distinctive character and has evolved to meet different economic, civic, and social needs. The principal goals of the district as a whole are to develop and retain a vibrant, attractive business center that provides goods, services, and jobs in a manner that comports with Bedford's historic development pattern and promotes pedestrian and bicycle access to reduce vehicular congestion. For the Great Road, these goals are best achieved through customized requirements at the subdistrict level. The purpose of this section is to describe the district's dimensional, form, and space regulations and objectives in order to guide the design of development plans for the Great Road corridor. By meeting these standards, future development along Great Road will help to create the form, cohesion, order, and supporting infrastructure that make commercial areas attractive and desirable for residents and successful for businesses.

#### 20.3.1. Basic Lot Regulations

Standard	GR/SC	GR/M	GR/C	GR/NR
Minimum Lot Area (sq. ft)	40,000	40,000	N/A	20,000
Minimum Lot Frontage (ft)	100	100	50	80
Minimum Lot Width (ft)	100	80	50	70
Maximum Width-Depth Ratio	1:3	1:4	N/A	1:3

#### 20.3.2. Building Setbacks

		Requirements Applicable at Subdistrict Level			
Standard	GR	GR/SC	GR/M	GR/C	GR/NR
Minimum Front (ft)	20	----	----	----	----
Maximum Front (ft) <sup>1</sup>		50	35	25	35
Minimum Side (ft)		10	10	0	10
Minimum Rear (ft) <sup>2</sup>	10	----	----	----	----

#### 20.3.3. Intensity Regulations

Standard	GR/SC	GR/M	GR/C	GR/NR
Minimum OS/Landscaped Area (% lot)	20	20	10	10

<sup>1</sup> A deeper setback may be allowed by special permit large buildings located toward the rear of a lot in a courtyard-type configuration, i.e., multiple buildings on one lot, as long as the forwardmost buildings on the lot comply with the minimum-maximum front setbacks listed here. A single building with a large flagship tenant, such as a cinema, may also have a deeper setback if the entrance to the large tenant is wrapped with liner shops that comply with the subdistrict's front setback requirement.

<sup>2</sup> But 25 feet on a lot abutting a residential district.

## 20.3.4. Building Regulations

Standard	GR	Requirements Applicable at Subdistrict Level			
		GR/SC	GR/M	GR/C	GR/NR
Building Height					
Minimum Height (stories)		1	1.5	2	1.5
Maximum Height (stories)		3/4	3/4	3	3
Maximum Building Height (ft) <sup>3</sup>		37/48	37/48	25/37	37
Minimum Gr. Fl. Height (ft)		14	14	14	12
Minimum Upper-St. Height (ft)	10	----	----	----	----
Setback Ratio <sup>4</sup>		1.25	1:25	1:1	1:1
Minimum Façade Buildout (% Lot Width) <sup>5</sup>		60%	65%	70%	65%
Fenestration					
Ground, Minimum Front <sup>6</sup>		65%	75%	70%	70%
Ground, Minimum Side <sup>7</sup>		25%	25%	20%	20%
Upper-Story, Maximum Front		50%	50%	40%	40%
Upper-Story, Maximum Side	20%	----	----	----	----
Ground Fl. Entrance Spacing (ft)		35	35	25	30
Minimum Depth, Comm. Spaces		30	30	25	25
Maximum Length Blank Wall (ft) (maximum length of building front in the same vertical plane)	50	----	----	----	----

## 20.4. Development Standards

The following building and site components shall be provided in the Great Road District in any development requiring site plan approval under Section 7.5 or a special permit from the Planning Board.

## 20.4.1. Setbacks

- (a) No use other than landscaping, outdoor dining, public art, sidewalks, multiuse paths and permitted signs shall be permitted in the front yard of any lot.

<sup>3</sup> Height increase above three stories allowed by special permit for mixed-use buildings with housing on at least the top two floors or for multifamily dwellings located behind commercial or mixed-use buildings facing Great Road, subject to façade stepback and building height/setback ratio.

<sup>4</sup> Needs discussion.

<sup>5</sup> Within the maximum front setback.

<sup>6</sup> Between 2 feet and 10 feet above the sidewalk.

<sup>7</sup> Except that on a corner lot, the ground floor minimum for the front façade shall apply.

- (b) The maximum front setback may be increased for purposes of amenities such as a plaza, square, courtyard, recessed entrance, sidewalk, multi-use path, raised terrace, façade offsets, or outdoor dining, but not for automobile use.

#### 20.4.2. Sidewalks.

- (a) Except as provided below, any development of N sq. ft. or more shall provide a sidewalk at least 10 feet wide along the full length of the front lot line. Sidewalks may be located wholly or partially within the street layout. If on the lot, sidewalks shall be considered part of the minimum required landscaped open space.
- (b) Sidewalks shall be separated, where feasible, from the road with a landscaped buffer to provide safety to pedestrians and to create a pleasing environment. The landscaped buffer shall consist of shade trees placed at appropriate intervals and other landscaping and street design elements such as benches and shrubs. Landscaping shall be organized in clusters of plantings rather than in a rigid linear arrangement along the front lot line.
- (c) A development of less than N sq. ft. may provide a sidewalk meeting the minimum specifications of this section or provide a payment in lieu of sidewalk construction to the Bedford Sidewalk Fund.<sup>8</sup>
- (d) In its discretion, the Planning Board may authorize a payment in lieu by special permit for a development of N sq. ft. or more where construction of a sidewalk is infeasible for physical or economic reasons. In such cases, the burden of proof shall be on the applicant.

#### 20.4.3. Walkways.

- (a) All developments shall provide walkways connecting building entrances to building entrances, buildings to streets, and buildings to sidewalks with minimal interruption by driveways. Parking lot aisles and access and interior driveways shall not count as walkways. Walkways should be designed with wider gathering points that may include special features such as water elements or public art. The Planning Board may require benches and other places for people to wait, bicycle racks, stroller bays, and other pedestrian amenities near building entrances.
- (b) Wherever possible, walkways should have some degree of enclosure achieved through the use of building fronts, trees, low hedges, arcades, trellised walks, or other means in order to define the pedestrian space.

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<sup>8</sup> If the Town doesn't have a Sidewalks Fund, one can be created through home rule, or perhaps under G.L. c. 44, § 53E ½ (needs discussion with Town Administrator). In any case, there needs to be a mechanism for small projects to contribute to sidewalk construction on Great Road without having to absorb the cost on their own.

- (c) Walkways and related pedestrian amenities shall be considered part of the minimum required landscaped open space.

20.4.4. Landscaping.

- (a) Side yards and rear yards shall be suitably landscaped. The landscaping shall be designed to reduce the visual impact of the principal use on adjacent property by the use of trees, shrubs, walls, fences, or other landscape elements. Where the developed area adjoins a single-family residential district, suitable landscaping shall consist of a substantially sight-impervious screen of evergreen foliage at least eight feet in height or planting of shrubs and trees complemented by a sight-impervious fence of at least five feet, but not more than eight feet, in height, or such other type of landscaping as may be required by the Planning Board for site plan approval. Wherever possible, existing trees shall be retained.
- (b) Street trees and other plantings help to soften the building façade, create a protective barrier between the street and sidewalk, reduce solar glare, provide shade, and create a more appealing environment.
- (c) Wherever possible, existing mature, healthy vegetation shall be preserved and changes to the natural topography of a site shall be minimized.

20.4.5. Pedestrian Gathering Spaces. In the GR/SC, GR/M, or GR/C subdistrict, any development of 25,000 sq. ft. or more shall provide one or more pedestrian plazas or similar gathering spaces for outdoor dining, public art, or social or cultural activities. The purpose of pedestrian gathering spaces is to encourage residents, customers, and employees of Great Road businesses to linger, shop, and socialize, and to experience the commercial corridor on foot wherever possible.

- (a) The pedestrian gathering space (or combined spaces if more than one) shall measure at least 5 percent of the net floor area on the lot, but not more than a total of 2,500 square feet shall be required. At least one pedestrian gathering space shall measure 1,500 square feet or more with a minimum side dimension of 20 feet. No pedestrian gathering space shall measure more than 3,000 square feet.
- (b) The pedestrian gathering space shall be a natural gathering spot at the street level in front of a building, on the side of a building, or in between buildings, which is to be used exclusively by pedestrians and shall connect to the sidewalk and walkways. For the purpose of this Section, a pedestrian arcade located within a building footprint and open to the outdoors may be counted toward the minimum area required for a pedestrian gathering space.
- (c) The pedestrian gathering space shall be designed open on one side to an adjacent larger space, natural view, or activity area such as an outdoor cafe, coffee cart, food stand, basketball hoop, game tables, or playground. Within the pedestrian gathering space, at least one seating area or activity pocket shall

be placed along the edge of the space looking into the plaza. The pedestrian gathering space shall provide pedestrian amenities such as benches, kiosks, and other partly enclosed outdoor structures to facilitate waiting or group activities. For a gathering space with sitting walls, they shall be no higher than 16 inches and at least 12 inches wide.

- (d) Shade trees, ornamental trees, and other landscaping shall be included to provide shelter from the sun, to reduce noise, to beautify/enhance the appearance of the district and to mitigate fumes. All landscaping shall use species that are tolerant to the climatic conditions in Bedford and shall be designed to facilitate ongoing maintenance and watering.
- (e) Nothing in this Bylaw shall prohibit the serving of foods and drinks at outdoor tables in a pedestrian gathering space.
- (f) A pedestrian gathering space shall be considered part of the minimum required landscaped open space. The area required for a sidewalk shall not be included in the pedestrian gathering space.

#### 20.4.6. Access and Parking

- (a) No vehicular driveway or parking lot shall be placed between the front building line and front lot line, or in front of a building as seen from the street if the building is located on a different lot than the driveway or parking lot. A driveway and parking lot may be placed in the front of a building that is located in the rear of another building when viewed from a street. No driveway or parking lot shall be located between a pedestrian gathering space and a street except for a pedestrian gathering space located behind a building when viewed from a street. No driveway or parking lot shall intersect or be mixed with a pedestrian gathering space.
- (b) Vehicular driveways and parking lots may be located to the side and rear of buildings, to the rear of a pedestrian gathering space, or underground. Where parking is located to the rear of buildings with additional buildings behind, a quadrangle effect should be created to allow parking, landscaping, and walkways or bikeways surrounded on all sides by shops and activity centers.

#### 20.4.7. Buildings.

- (a) On any lot abutting Great Road, the main entrance shall be on the front façade.
- (b) The building façade facing streets or pedestrian gathering spaces (also referred to as the building front or building front façade) shall have setbacks only for the purpose of accommodating sidewalks or pedestrian gathering spaces or amenities, or landscaping, and shall have a vertical orientation. This means the building shall actually have greater height than width or that the building's façade and roof lines are designed to reduce the massing and bulk so that it appears as a group of smaller masses with a clearly vertical orientation.

- (c) Exterior uncovered stairways, covered and uncovered (but not enclosed, glazed, or screened} entrance porticoes, stoops, vestibules, bulkheads, first floor open-air porches, and cantilevered balconies are permitted as long as they project no more than four feet into any setback.
- (d) The building front facades shall be articulated to achieve a human scale and interest. The use of different textures, shadow lines, uneven angles, detailing, and contrasting shapes is required as a condition of site plan approval.
- (e) Upper-story exteriors shall be accentuated with balconies, terraces, or porches to enliven the building façade.
- (f) The ground floor of the front of buildings facing Great Road shall be designed for occupancy by businesses with that are essential for a high-level activity zone such as retail, restaurants, and personal services. Large buildings that face Great Road but are set back via a courtyard may have a wider variety of ground floor nonresidential uses, such as commercial entertainment, health care, or business services.
- (g) The main business entrance to each ground floor business, identified by larger doors, signs, canopy, or similar means of accentuation, shall be from the building front.
- (h) Arcades and canopies are encouraged. They should be used to connect buildings to one another in order to provide shelter for people walking from place to place. Arcades and canopies shall not be considered part of the building and may be located within the front yard setback with approval by the Planning Board.
- (i) On the ground level portion of the front façade, windows shall comprise at least 20 percent but not more than 80 percent of the wall area. Ground floor display windows shall be framed on all sides by the surrounding wall and shall be highlighted with frames, lintels, and sills or equivalent trim features, or may instead be recessed into the wall or projected from the wall.
- (j) The main features of the architectural treatment of the building front facades, including the materials used, shall be continued around all sides of the building that are visible from a street or a pedestrian gathering space. The Planning board may approve alternate treatment of side and rear building walls if it determines that the propose alternative will serve the purposes of this Section 20 and preserves the architectural integrity of the building as a whole.
- (k) Accessory structures, air conditioning equipment, electric utility boxes, satellite dishes, trash receptacles, and other ground level utilities shall be unobtrusive when viewed from the street and adjacent lots.
- (l) Rooftop mechanical equipment shall be screened from public view by the use of architecturally compatible materials.

- (m) Applicants are encouraged to incorporate sustainable design principles in LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design), the Massachusetts Stretch Code, Energy Star, and other programs.
- (n) Where first-floor residential uses are allowed, access to the units shall be via a stoop or porch unless such access conflicts with architectural access requirements in the State Building Code. An elevated entrance shall not be required for live/work units.

## 20.5. Use Regulations

The following use regulations shall apply in the Great Road District.<sup>910</sup>

Table Legend

Y=Permitted

SP=Planning Board Special Permit

Use	GR	Requirements Applicable at Subdistrict Level			
		GR/SC	GR/M	GR/C	GR/NR
Retail goods	Y				
Maximum floor area per retail establishment except grocery stores, unless waived by the Planning Board		-----	15,000	3,000	3,000
Restaurant, with or without accessory outdoor seating; maximum of 5,000 sq. ft.	Y				
Specialty foods	Y				
Repair shop	Y				
Craft brewery		Y	Y		
Food trucks		SP	SP	SP	
Farmer's market		Y	Y	SP	Y
Custom fabrication or artisan industrial			Y		Y
Art gallery			Y	Y	
Walk-in take-out food service <sup>11</sup>		Y	Y	Y	SP
Hotel		Y	Y		
Bed & breakfast, inn	Y				
Bank	Y				
Professional or business office	Y				
Medical or dental office		Y	Y		SP

<sup>9</sup> We will provide definitions for uses not already defined in Bedford's bylaw (or we will update existing definitions if necessary), but we need initial input on this draft before we take it to the next level.

<sup>10</sup> Use table does not specifically list uses that are exempt from zoning under G.L. c. 40A, § 3.

<sup>11</sup> Excluding drive-through, which is prohibited.



Use	GR	Requirements Applicable at Subdistrict Level			
		GR/SC	GR/M	GR/C	GR/NR
Commercial recreation		SP	SP		
Commercial entertainment	SP				
Membership club or lodge	SP				
Funeral home	SP				
Auto service station		SP			
Co-work center		Y	SP		Y
Single-family residential	Y				
Home occupation	Y				
Mixed-use, vertical	Y				
Mixed-use, horizontal		SP	SP		
Live/work units		Y			Y
Independent living or assisted living residence		SP	SP		
Municipal facility	Y				

## 20.6. Vehicular and Bicycle Parking Requirements

The following parking requirements shall apply in the Great Road District.

### 20.6.1. General.

- (a) Required off-street parking areas shall be provided on the same lot they serve, except that the Planning Board may grant a special permit for off-street parking areas to be provided on another lot, and any such parking lot shall not be otherwise used or diminished in size unless the Planning Board finds that the lot is no longer required by the principal use it serves.
- (b) The surfaced area of off-street parking areas shall be set back a minimum of 10 feet from all buildings and lot lines. Such setback areas, except for entrance and exit drives, shall be properly landscaped with grass, trees, shrubs, flowers, or other landscaping materials of adequate height and density so as to visually obscure parked vehicles from view. In addition, at least 10 percent of the interior of any parking area with 20 or more parking spaces shall be landscaped and continuously maintained. The landscaping shall be distributed in islands and shall include one or more shade trees of a species as approved by the Bedford Tree Warden with a 3-inch caliper or greater per island. The location of trees within parking areas shall maximize shade on vehicles and pavement to reduce the heat island effect. In addition, landscaping shall use non-invasive species and should consider drought-tolerant and native plantings where appropriate. Where feasible, landscaped islands shall be built below the grade of the impermeable parking surfaces so that runoff from the site is directed into them.

### 20.6.2. Parking Space Requirements by Class of Use

Use	Number of spaces	Notes
Retail goods	1 per 300 sq. ft.	No parking required for retail <=800 sq. ft.; limited to one such tenant per building
Restaurant	1 per 4 seats	
Specialty foods	1 per 300 sq. ft.	
Craft brewery with service area	1 per 300 sq. ft.	
Food trucks, farmer's market	Determined by Planning Board	
Custom fabrication or artisan industrial	1 per 300 sq. ft.	
Art gallery	1 per 300 sq. ft.	
Walk-in take-out food service <sup>12</sup>	1 per 250 sq. ft.	
Hotel	1 per guest room + 1 per 300 sq. ft. administrative space	
Bed & breakfast, inn	1 per guest room	
Bank	1 per 300 sq. ft.	
Professional or business office	1 per 350 sq. ft.	Reduced to 1 per 500 sq. ft. for offices above the ground floor
Medical or dental office	1 per 150 sq. ft.	
Commercial recreation, commercial entertainment	1 per 250 sq. ft.	
Membership club or lodge	1 per 250 sq. t. f	
Funeral home	1 per 250 sq. ft.	
Auto service station		
Co-work center	1 per 400 sq. ft.	
Single-family residential	2 per unit	
Home occupation	-----	
Mixed-use, vertical	Sum of spaces required per use x 90%	For upper-story housing units, average of 1.5 spaces per unit
Mixed-use, horizontal	Sum of spaces required per use x 80%	For upper-story or free-standing housing units, average of 1.5 spaces per unit
Live/work units	1 per unit	
Independent living or assisted living residence	0.75 spaces per unit	
Municipal facility	1 space per 300 sq. ft.	

### 20.6.3. Bicycle Parking.

- (a) Mixed-use developments comprised of nonresidential uses shall provide one bicycle parking space for every 15 automobile parking spaces. Residential mixed-use developments shall provide one bicycle parking space for every five automobile parking spaces.

<sup>12</sup> Excluding drive-through, which is prohibited.

- (b) Each bicycle parking space shall be sufficient to accommodate a bicycle seven feet in length and two feet in width. Inverted U or Ring and Post style frame racks that support the bicycle at two or more points above and on either side of the bicycle's center of gravity are required. An alternative style of rack that, in the opinion of the Planning Director, provides a comparable level of security and convenience may be provided. Racks must be secured to the ground.