

MEMO

TO: Crystal, Kelly, Randy

FROM: Lee

DATE: April 6, 2025

RE: The CBZD – SEZD Checklist

It was agreed that Staff would evaluate the draft CBZD before deciding whether to rewrite or revise the remaining zoning districts. Here is a draft for everyone to review.

As you will see, the chapters for existing neighborhoods shrink dramatically from what is required for a new neighborhood. You will also see that I avoid the pointless exercise of trying to make a comprehensively complete use list by clearly establishing the purpose of the zoning district and using broad categories. Most uses will obviously fit (or not) fit these categories. If someone disagrees with the Staff determination about a use, they can file an appeal to the BOA.

There are two main things about this particular zoning district.

First, successful central business districts do not require complex zoning. We want to encourage intensive land use there. They do require a lot of other public attention and investment. Three Forks needs to put a CBD master plan on its agenda sometime soon.

Second, the Three Forks CBD is not properly mapped. It is too large. A CBD should be pedestrian-oriented, relying more or less on on-street parking. That our most recent discussion may indicate allowing a little more off-street parking, doesn't change this principle. I have created a map suggesting a boundary change. Its on the next page. That map will make even more sense when we talk about replacing the existing commercial/industrial/transitional zoning districts with a single, simpler Highway-Oriented Commercial Zoning District. I am going to proceed to draft that chapter so everyone can see what I mean.

Switching Topics: Now that it is in more or less final form, we should talk about administration of the SEZD. I am sending a checklist around which the review of applications for completeness and the review for compliance can revolve. The checklist should even be used to organize the hearings that will be required for annexation and subdivision.

Existing CBD
Comes out of CBD



DRAFT CHAPTER ? – CENTRAL BUSINESS ZONING DISTRICT

11-?-1: PURPOSE:

The Central Business Zoning District (CBZD) is established to implement Three Fork's growth policy by facilitating more intensive commercial and residential development in a pleasant, walkable city center. Specifically, development in the CBZD will:

- rely on on-street parking and pedestrian circulation on wide sidewalks;
- serve as the hub of the city's commercial and social life with shopping, services, dining, entertainment, lodging, and office space; and
- provide housing that supports the vitality of the central business district and at least has the potential of being affordable to the people who make Three Forks work;
- The CBZD is not the place for new auto-dependent uses (lodging will be an exception and existing auto-dependent uses may continue under the city's generous provisions for nonconforming uses) or most industrial uses.
- Buildings in the CBZD will ordinarily come to the building lines and be two or more stories in height.

Three Forks' next step in planning should probably be a downtown master plan based on the principles established by the National Main Street program. For a starting place, please see:

<https://commerce.mt.gov/Infrastructure-Planning/Programs-and-Services/Montana-Main-Street-Program/>

11-?-2: BOUNDARIES:

The boundaries of the CBZD are as shown on the Official Zoning Map of the City of Three Forks.

11-?-3: PERMITTED USES:

- A. Retail sales; business, personal, and professional services; dining; entertainment; places of assembly; and offices consistent with the purposes stated in 11-?-1 and in continuing compliance with the standards of this chapter.
- B. Artisanal (craft) uses that are technically industrial - making saddles or brewing beer on a small scale would be examples - may be consistent with the purposes stated in 11-?-1 and in continuing compliance with the standards of this chapter.

A CUP could be required for artisanal uses. We doubt that is necessary, but it is easy to add.

- C. Public facilities and other institutional uses consistent with the purposes stated in 11-?-1 and in continuing compliance with the standards of this chapter.
- D. Dwellings and lodging consistent with the purposes stated in 11-?-1 and in continuing compliance with the standards of this chapter.
- E. Childcare with valid state licenses and in continuing compliance with state regulations and the standards of this chapter.
- F. Infrastructure serving the central business district and the city.
- G. Customary accessory uses and structures in continuing compliance with the standards of this chapter.

Dimensional Standards

11-?-4: BUILDING HEIGHT:

The maximum building height in the CBZD is 24 feet to the eaves and 32 feet overall.

The current ordinance does not limit building height in the CBD. That is not consistent with the conversations we've had about the capabilities of the Three Forks Fire Department, but it would be desirable to permit somewhat taller buildings downtown. Let's talk about that.

11-?-5: LOT COVERAGE:

There is no lot coverage limit in the CBZD. Landscaped buffers may, however, be required by Section 11-23-8 and parking for lodging and residential uses is required by Chapter 11-?.

11-?-6: SETBACKS:

The current ordinance has somewhat confusing requirements for setbacks along side streets and residential uses. That language is reproduced below. We need to talk about what purpose it serves. Our recommendations appear below that.

no minimum yards set forth except a fifteen foot (15') front yard shall be required on all streets except Main Street (provided pedestrian walkways are preserved). Necessary rear yard setbacks may be required on lots and business uses which adjoin an alley. For all lots that are utilized primarily for residential use in this district, the yard requirements will be the same as those in the R district.

- A. New buildings and additions to buildings in the CBZD are expected to come to the front (the sidewalk) and side building lines, except as provided by B-D, below.
- B. Commercial, mixed-use, and multi-family residential buildings may incorporate entry courtyards no more than 15 feet deep across 50% of the front building line or along the entire side building line.

- C. One and two family dwellings in the CBZD must maintain the setbacks required in the RZD, including landscaped yards.
- D. Where landscaped buffers are required by Section 11-23-8, they supersede this section.

Performance Standards

The SEZD chapter contains a full slate of performance standards because it provides guidance for the development of a whole new neighborhood and because it is being adopted early. This chapter contains references to topical chapters, like landscaping, parking, etc. and standards that apply only within the CBZD.

11-?-7: GENERAL PERFORMANCE STANDARDS:

Development in the CBZD must, unless specifically exempted, comply with all standards established in Chapters 11.__-11.__.

11-?-8: OFF-STREET PARKING:

Off-street parking in the CBZD is treated differently than in any other zoning district. Please see Chapter 11-?.

The idea that there should be no additional private surface parking in the CBZD generated a lot of discussion. We'll come back to that with a new version of the parking chapter.

OFF-STREET LOADING? *This requirement in the parking chapter generated discussion. It is a routine dimensional standard in commercial and industrial zoning districts, but given the presence of alleys in Three Forks' central business district and the relatively low intensity of use, I have not included it here and am revising the version in the parking chapter to just give the City an opportunity to ask developers about potential loading issues, then set conditions if necessary.*

11-?-9 WIDER SIDEWALKS:

Development in the CBZD must extend the existing width of the sidewalks along Main Street.

Three Forks' extra wide sidewalks are an amazing asset for a healthy downtown, being wide enough to accommodate street furniture and trees, and support outdoor sales. Continuing them throughout this zoning district is the only sensible policy.

STREET TREES? *The provision of street trees is required by the landscaping chapter. But given the need for tree wells and special maintenance of street trees in a downtown environment, the maintenance of trees in the CBZD should ultimately be the responsibility of a business improvement or urban renewal district rather than of individual property owners.*