

# RANDALL + WEST

To: Ulysses Town Board

Re: Zoning Updates: updates to Design Standards and the creation of the Office, Technology & Mixed Use (OTMU) District

Date: May 18, 2018

As the Zoning Update Steering Committee (ZUSC) has recommended that the Town Board begin review of the draft zoning, we thought it helpful to provide a brief overview of the highlights of the two drafts to accompany your review of the proposed zoning.

## What is zoning?

Zoning is a tool for communities to manage growth through the placement and mix of different uses and intensities of physical development. Zoning should be the DNA of a community – the rules by which the community can grow and change – guiding the replication of the best parts of the community while preventing undesirable development. Zoning regulates specific districts or zones within a municipality; in New York State, zoning may differ greatly from town to town. The Ulysses zoning code regulates the types of land uses allowed, the density of development, the size and placement of lots, the size and placement of buildings within lots, and the process for reviewing and approving projects.

## What are Design Standards?

Design Standards are text and graphics that articulate the level of design quality expected of improvements (or of specific uses) in the Town. The existing Town of Ulysses Chapter 212, Article XX: Design Standards can be accessed at <https://www.ecode360.com/28861305>. Some of the standards pertain to the finer details of development, such as parking, signs, and outdoor lighting; some standards are use-specific, such as for campgrounds, self-storage facilities, sawmills, etc.

ZUSC has proposed the following amendments to the Design Standards section of zoning as follows:

### § 212-121: Standards for parking

- Renamed to 'Standards for access, parking, and circulation' to address a variety of modes of transportation, where appropriate, including pedestrians, bicycles, automobiles, and current or potential future transit service; and
- Removed minimum parking requirements to allow the Planning Board more flexibility in Site Plan Review, and to reduce the need to dedicate areas of individual, adjacent sites to underutilized or redundant vehicle parking;

- Added dimensional requirements for parking spaces, travel aisles, and loading areas; and
- Added requirement that all developments subject to Site Plan Review submit a landscape plan; single-family dwellings, two-family dwellings, and multi-unit dwellings of 6 units or less are exempt from this requirement.

**§ 212-121: Standards for signs**

- Added Dark-Sky lighting requirement, which requires sign lighting fixtures to be pointed downward and to be minimally lit above ambient conditions;
- Prohibit sign lighting that contains neon or other exposed bulbs without shielding;
- Prohibit Electronic Message Centers, which typically are made up of large LED screens that display computer-generated variable messages;
- Added illustrations to assist applicants, staff, and Boards with understanding how signs are measured;
- Added public safety standards which prohibit sign light sources from interfering with travel; blinking, flashing, fluttering, strobe-light effects, and streaming video are prohibited; and
- Added materials and maintenance requirements to require signs to be installed safely and to be removed or repaired if they are deteriorated.

**§ 212-121: Standards for outdoor lighting**

- Removed minimum outdoor lighting requirements; and
- Added Dark-Sky lighting requirement, which requires fixtures to focus lighting downward without excessive illumination of the upper residential stories of buildings or of the night sky.

**§ 212-124: Standards for vegetated buffers**

- Added 100 foot stream setback adjacent to Trumansburg and Taughannock Creeks; and
- Added standards and criteria for variances from the required stream setbacks, which allows the Board of Zoning Appeals to consider alternative designs and water quality impacts of the proposed variance.

**§ 212-128: Standards for accessory dwelling units**

- Renamed from 'elder cottage housing' to allow more opportunities for market-rate affordable housing for resident families; and
- Added a floor area maximum of 1000 square feet or 80% of the floor area of the principal dwelling unit, whichever is less; and
- Limited accessory dwelling units to one per lot.

**§ 212-140: Animal Waste Storage Facility (new section)**

- Added criteria for how close Animal Waste Storage Facilities (such as manure lagoons or tanks) can be to right-of-ways, property lines, wells, watercourses, and waterbodies.

**§ 212-141: Confined or Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO) (new section)**

- Added requirement for CAFO operator to file State Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (SPDES) documentation, including Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan, with the Town Clerk within 3 business days of submission to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.

**§ 212-142: Commercial, Light Industrial, and Research and Development Outside of the Hamlet Center Zone (new section)**

- Added standards intended to raise the level of quality for all non-residential and mixed-use development, but within a regulatory structure offering options and flexibility; and
- Added requirement for new large buildings (over 5,000 square feet) and small buildings (under 5,000 square feet) to be subject to a set of minimum site and building design standards.

**§ 212-140: Standards for drive-through facility (new section)**

- Added criteria to reduce noise from idling cars and voice amplification equipment, lighting, and queued traffic interfering with on-site and off-site traffic and pedestrian flow to assist Planning Board in reviewing an application containing this use.

**What is the new Office, Technology and Mixed Use (OTMU) District?**

A new zone, the OTMU District, was created based on the Comprehensive Plan recommendation to combine opportunities for new jobs and industries with the rural character of the Town. The allowed uses overlap with the existing B-1 Business District and OTMU will replace the IL-Light Industrial District.

- Provides for a greater range of agricultural uses, including agricultural events and farm operations by right, as well as farm breweries, farm cideries, and farm distilleries by Site Plan Review; and
- Placed limitations on the size of warehouses in this new zone (20,000 gross square feet).

The Town of Ulysses Zoning Steering Committee (ZUSC) serves as a sounding board for the broader community for the duration of the zoning update project. They have played a key role in advising the Town Board and the Consultant team on zoning drafting direction, providing feedback and guidance throughout the planning process on objectives, documents, and milestones.

If you have any questions or concerns during your review, please contact C.J. Randall at 607-252-6710 or [cjr@randall-west.com](mailto:cjr@randall-west.com).

Thank you for your consideration!