

# Ambridge Borough Zoning Update

Full Extent

August 2016

## Current characteristics:

All three proposed districts are within the Commercial category of the current zoning ordinance, which also applies to other areas. The broad nature of the category has allowed changing market conditions to erode the character of the borough's business district. Vacancy and waning demand have given rise to uses that undermine the viability and appeal of the district as a walkable marketplace, such as storage occupying storefronts and the replacement of historic structures with auto-centric design.

## Desired future characteristics:

The proposed update would create three new base districts in the borough to ensure that future investments and land uses advance downtown revitalization by: compressing the traditional business district into the Community Business District; defining a complementary character for the Midtown District; and using the Gateway South District to clarify and foster a unique sense of place. Three new development archetypes would reinforce three distinct neighborhoods.

## Proposed District Boundaries:



Midtown District
  Community Business District
  Gateway South District

## Current permitted uses (all by right)

R: Single-family detached	Sale and storage of retail and wholesale goods
R: Single-family attached	Business and professional offices, banks
R: Multi-family, apartments	Utility stations
R: Conversion apartments	Hotels, restaurants, night clubs
Educational, religious, philanthropic facilities	Theaters, places of amusement
Hospital, sanitarium	Bakery
Fraternities, lodges, clubs, tourist homes	Laundry, dry cleaning
Essential services	Gas/service stations (except on Merchant)
Nurseries, greenhouses, farm stands	Carpentry
Community garage	Newspaper, printing
Accessory uses	Creamery
Signs	Uses of "same general character"

## Current design requirements for Merchant from Third to 12th:

- Height limit: Three stories or 35 feet
- Buildings shall not exceed 70% of lot area (for buildings with a business-only first floor, the area is "figured on the level of" second-story windowsills)
- Buildings shall not exceed a gross ground floor area of 6,000 square feet
- Sites abutting alleys must provide yard space extending at least 20' from alley centerline
- Setback: Buildings shall be sited with the front of the structure at the inside boundary of the sidewalk at the ROW line
- Side yards: Buildings on corner lots shall extend to the inside boundary of the sidewalk at the ROW line, and buildings on non-corner lots shall extend to the inside boundary of the side yard property line.
- Off-street parking shall not be permitted on the front or side of structures or on vacant lots
- No curb cuts fronting Merchant Street, save exceptions related to ADA compliance
- Submission for approval must demonstrate compatibility with the character of the business district, with National Main Street program criteria and with ongoing local improvements

# Ambridge Borough Zoning Update

## Community Business District

### Current characteristics:

Between 5th Street and 8th Street, Merchant Street is lined with two- and three-story structures forming a generally continuous built edge and human-scaled street wall. Most structures have a storefront or were originally built with one, though some have been updated to the detriment of historic character. Ground-floor uses appear to be primarily commercial services, retail and vacant. Rear alleys provide service access.

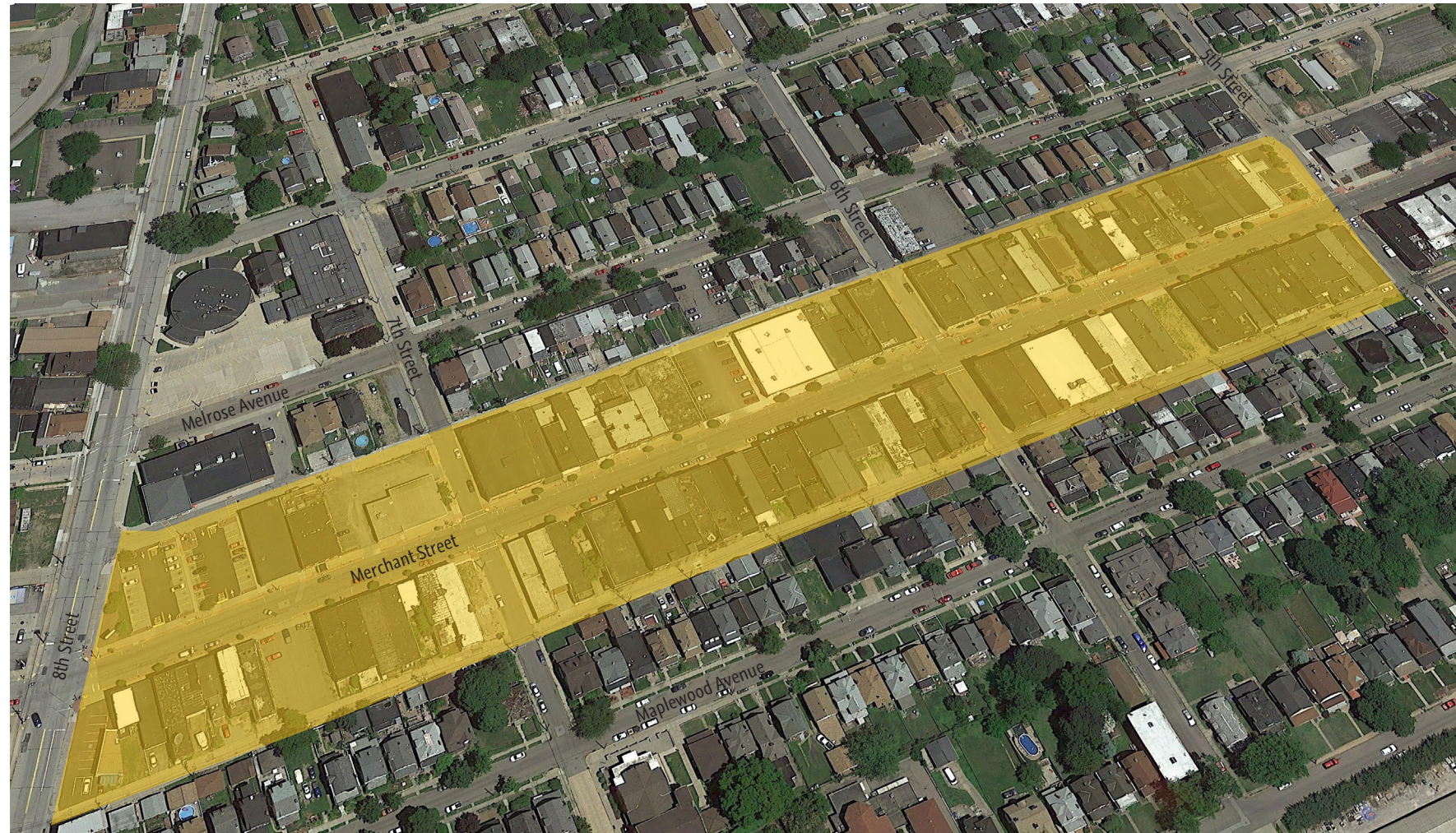
### Desired future characteristics:

Non-retail use rate < 10%. Economically resilient commercial corridor. Investment is channeled into compact development patterns with a safe, inviting streetscape that encourages pedestrian activity. These blocks form the bustling downtown core, emphasizing a mix of modern amenities within the context of the borough's historic charm.

### Specific design considerations:

No use at street level shall exceed 4,500 square feet in gross square area (2x average historic lot size). Blank walls discouraged; windows and other visual articulations ordinarily required. At least 40% of ground-floor front facade shall be windows, glass doors or other transparent building surfaces, with display windows encouraged on at least 75%. Any facade portion exceeding 25' in length shall incorporate windows or architectural design elements to add visual diversity. Awnings encouraged. Branded/franchise building design prohibited. Encourage compatibility with historic context.

### Boundaries:



### Proposed uses:

Retail: Neighborhood Goods and Services		Commercial	
P	Bakery	P	Artisan/maker space
P	Bank	P	Business or professional offices
P	Business service establishment	P	Clinical office (2nd story and above only)
P	Butcher shop	Residential	
P	Convenience store (without fuel pumps)	P	Apartments (2nd story and above only)
P	Dry cleaner	--	Single-family attached or detached dwellings
P	Farmer's market or fruit/vegetable stand	Other	
P	Florist	P	Essential services
P	Grocery store	A	No-impact home-based business
P	Indoor recreational facilities	A	Uses and buildings customarily incidental and appurtenant to principal permitted uses
P	Laundromat		
P	Personal service establishment		
P	Pet grooming	--	Storage and warehousing (as principal use)
P	Pharmacy		
P	Tailor or shoe repair		
Retail: Food and Beverage			
P	Brewpub		
P	Cafe or coffee shop		
P	Delicatessen		
P	Ice cream shop		
P	Micro-alcohol production		
P	Restaurant (sit-down)		
P	Restaurant (take-out) (no drive-through)		
Retail: General Merchandise and Apparel			
P	Art, craft or antique gallery or shop		
--	Automobile sales		
P	Clothing and/or jewelry store		
P	Electronics store		
P	Furniture and/or home decor store		
P	General merchandise retail	P	Permitted by right
P	Hardware and/or home improvement store	C	Conditionally permitted
P	Pet supply store	A	Accessory use
P	Sporting goods store	--	Not permitted

# Ambridge Borough Zoning Update

## Midtown District

### Current characteristics:

Structures along blocks of Merchant Street between 8th Street and 12th Street are more varied in street orientation, bulk and architectural design than those in the CBD, mixing historic storefronts with other types of commercial use. Surface parking lots and three gas stations are in this area. The park, post office and nearby municipal building attract foot traffic.

### Desired future characteristics:

This district focuses on a transition of intensity and uses between the CBD and the historic district, accommodating offices as well as larger-scale and more auto-oriented uses.

### Boundaries:



### Proposed uses:

Retail: Food and Beverage		Commercial		Other	
P	Restaurant (sit-down) (limited scale)	P	Business or professional office	P	Essential services
P	Restaurant (take-out) (no drive-through)	P	Clinical office	A	No-impact home-based business
Retail: General Merchandise and Apparel		P	Hotel	A	Home occupation
--	Automobile sales	Residential		A	Uses and buildings customarily incidental and appurtenant to principal permitted uses
P	Clothing and/or jewelry store	P	Apartments (2nd story and above only)		
P	Electronics store	P	Live/work units		
P	Furniture and/or home decor store	Gathering Places		--	Storage and warehousing (as principal use)
P	General merchandise retail	P	Civic/public facility		
P	Hardware and/or home improvement store	P	Fraternal lodge or club		
P	Pet supply store	P	Place of worship	P	Permitted by right
P	Sporting goods store			C	Conditionally permitted
Retail: Neighborhood Goods and Services				A	Accessory use
P	Bank			--	Not permitted
P	Business service establishment				
P	Child day care				
P	Indoor recreational facility				

### Specific design considerations:

District will feature more flexibility than CBD in build-to line, requirements for fenestration, conformance with historic context, etc., but will still promote sound downtown design principles, walkability. Less emphasis on creating uninterrupted ground-floor retail will allow for additional uses that also bring people downtown.

# Ambridge Borough Zoning Update

## Gateway South District

### Current characteristics:

Blight clearance will continue to create expanses of open space that represent the potential to drastically change the character of the gateway into the borough from Route 65. The 400 block of Merchant is perceived as unsafe, marked with vacancies, storefront storage and a perception of crime. Demolition has made rear alleys visible from 4th.

### Desired future characteristics:

The entrance to the borough along 4th Street is well demarcated and attractive; the 400 block of Merchant is stable and provides an environment supportive of and complementary to the CBD, such as development of a *non-retail* innovation/professional or cultural zone or open space.

### Proposed uses:

Commercial		Residential	
P	Artisan/maker space	P	Apartments
P	Business or professional office	P	Live/work units
P	Clinical office	Other	
P	Hotel	P	Educational and training facilities
P	Indoor recreational facilities	P	Essential services
Retail: Food and Beverage		P	Mixed-use structures
P	Restaurant (sit-down) (larger-scale only)	A	No-impact home-based business
P	Restaurant (take-out) (no drive-through)	A	Uses and buildings customarily incidental and appurtenant to principal permitted uses
P	Micro-alcohol production		
Retail: Neighborhood Goods and Services			
P	Child day care	--	Storage and warehousing (as principal use)
P	Farmer's market or fruit/vegetable stand		
Gathering Places			
P	Civic/public facility		
P	Fraternal lodge or club		
P	Place of worship	P	Permitted by right
		C	Conditionally permitted
		A	Accessory use
		--	Not permitted

### Specific design considerations:

Avoid retail competition with CBD. Minimize impact of nearby industrial uses, screen views of service areas. Avoid development of cleared parcels as strip-mall-style or branded/franchise structures. Specify infill design requirements that complement historic context.

### Boundaries:

