



South Bend Zoning Ordinance

South Bend, Indiana

Ordinance Amendments

Amendment No.	Ordinance No.	Topic	Effective Date
Amendment 1	10711-20	Updates to various sections	June 2020
Amendment 2	10758-21	Updates to various sections	January 2021
Amendment 3	10759-21	NNZO revisions	January 2021
Amendment 4	10760-21	Elimination of minimum off-street parking requirements	January 2021
Amendment 5	10757-21	Updates to various sections	September 2021
Amendment 6	10810-21	Maximum building height increase in U3, UF, NC, and C districts	September 2021
Amendment 7	11253-25	Updates to various sections	January 2026
Amendment 8	11275-26	Updates and clarifications to various sections	May 2026

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Winner of the 2021 Richard H. Driehaus Form-Based Code Award from the Form-Based Codes Institute at Smart Growth America

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How to Use this Code

Section 21-01

1. Find your Property on the Zoning Map

Identify which zoning district applies to your lot or best matches the character, use, and intent of your project. The Zoning Map may be found on the City of South Bend website.

Sections 21-02 to 21-10

2. Review and Comply with the Development Standards

Understand the character and intent of the zoning district and comply with all the regulations specific to your district.

21-02: Definitions and Measurements

Review this section for definitions of terms found throughout the Ordinance and for explanations of dimensional regulations or measurements that are found in each zoning district.

21-03: Standard Districts or 21-04: Special Districts

Apply all development standards for the applicable zoning district.

21-05: Overlay Districts

If your development is within a Historic Preservation district or the Northeast Neighborhood, comply with the provisions of this section in addition to the standards of the zoning district.

Review the following sections for further information on the development standards:

21-06: Uses

Review this section for all principal and accessory uses that are permitted in your zoning district and identify any additional standards that may apply to the applicable use or uses.

21-07: Access & Parking

Review this section for additional regulations related to pedestrian access, bicycle parking and access, vehicle parking and access, off-street loading, and private streets and alleys.

21-08: Building Standards

Review and apply this section for additional building design regulations. If your building is within a Standard District, you must select which building type applies.

21-09: Site Development

Review this section for additional regulations related to landscape, fences and walls, stormwater, outdoor lighting, and performance standards.

21-10: Signs

Review this section for additional regulations related to signs, including exempt signs, prohibited signs, temporary signs, on-premise signs, off-premise signs, and special use signs.

How to Use this Code, cont.

Sections 21-11 to 21-14

3. Seek Additional Approvals as Necessary

Follow the applicable approval process to prepare all required application materials.

Are you subdividing a lot?

If you want to subdivide your lot, comply with the requirements and follow additional procedures in [Section 21-11.02](#) and [Section 21-12.06](#).

Does your project reconfigure an existing or create a new block or street?

If your development reconfigures the dimension of a block, creates a new block, or includes the addition of a new public or private street, comply with the provisions of [Section 21-11.03](#).

Is your project greater than 3 acres?

If your project results in modification of any lot(s) by a single property owner with an aggregate area of 3 acres or more within any 5-year period, comply with the provisions of [Section 21-11.03](#).

Does your project require a change in Zoning District?

If your project requires a change to the official zone map, file a petition per the requirements of [Section 21-12.07\(f\)\(2\)](#).

Does your project require a Special Exception?

If your project requires a special exception, file a petition per the requirements of [Section 21-12.07\(f\)\(3\)](#).

Does your project require a Variance?

If your project requires a deviation from the development standards, file a petition per the requirements of [Section 21-12.07\(f\)\(5\)](#).

Does your project fall within a floodplain or wetlands?

If your lot is located within a FEMA designated floodplain, comply with the provisions of [Section 21-14](#).

Building Department

4. Improvement Location Permit

Once your project meets all the requirements of this Zoning Ordinance and has received any additional review or approvals, submit your permit application to the Building Department.

Understanding the Development Standards

Zoning District Development Standards

The development standards for zoning districts contained in this Ordinance govern the physical development and form of real estate. The regulations for each zoning district are presented across six pages with the same general format for each district, including the following:

- Intent

The first page for each zoning district provides a general description and an image illustrating the variety of development that is encouraged in a particular zoning district. This image is intended for illustrative purposes only and does not fully exemplify all of the requirements or possibilities within each zoning district.

- Building Types

If applicable, a list of building types regulates the general types of structures that are allowed within a zoning district. These building types are represented in the illustrative image and described in full detail in [Section 21-08.02](#). The names of the building types are not intended to limit or expand uses allowed within the building.

- Use Table

The second page in each zoning district includes a list of the permitted uses within a district, including those uses allowed by special exception or with additional standards. The full use table, which includes all principal and accessory uses, is located in [Section 21-06](#).

- Diagrams & Dimensional Tables

Each zoning district provides eight tables, each with an associated diagram, that describe all dimensional standards for development in that district. Any additional regulations that may apply in other sections of the Ordinance are referenced within the tables.

The regulations provided in each zoning district section are a summary of the requirements. See full sections for the complete set of regulations.

STANDARD DISTRICTS
U1 Urban Neighborhood 1 **21-03.03**



Illustrative Image: Shows the intended character of a zoning district across a neighborhood block.

Section 21-03.03: U1 Urban Neighborhood 1

(a) Intent
The U1 District is established to provide for, promote, and maintain urban neighborhoods located in both the core and outlying areas of the City.
The following are typical characteristics of the U1 District:

- Primarily single and two unit residential development in the form of detached houses, allowing the addition of ancillary dwelling units to give additional value
- Buildings with modest setbacks and inviting building frontages, primarily of stoops and porches, that create a consistent block face along smaller city blocks
- Detached garages located at the rear of the lot, often accessed from an alley
- Pedestrian-oriented scale with sidewalks and regularly spaced street trees

(b) Building Types
The following building types are permitted in the U1 District:

- Carriage House
- Detached House
- Duplex

The names of the building types are not intended to limit or expand uses allowed within the building. See [Section 21-08.02](#) for building type descriptions and regulations.

Limited public and institutional uses shall be incorporated at a scale and character compatible with the surrounding neighborhood.

SOUTH BEND ZONING ORDINANCE 3-15

Intent. Provides a general description and characteristics of a zoning district.

Building Types. Regulates which types of buildings are allowed within a zoning district.

Understanding the Development Standards

21-03.03

STANDARD DISTRICTS
U1 Urban Neighborhood 1

Uses

(c) Principal Uses	Use Definition & Standards
Agricultural	
Community Garden	■ * 21-06.01(e)(2)
Civic & Institutional	
Assembly, Neighborhood	■ * 21-06.01(f)(1)
Cemetery	■ 21-06.01(f)(3)
College/University	■ 21-06.01(f)(4)
Library/Museum/Cultural Facility	■ * 21-06.01(f)(7)
Parks & Open Space	■ 21-06.01(f)(8)
Police/Fire Facilities	■ 21-06.01(f)(9)
Religious Institutions	■ 21-06.01(f)(10)
School, Pre-K/Primary/Secondary	■ 21-06.01(f)(11)
Lodging	
Bed & Breakfast	■ * 21-06.01(h)(1)
Residential	
Dwelling, Ancillary	■ * 21-06.01(j)(1)
Dwelling, 1 Unit	■ 21-06.01(j)(2)
Dwelling, 2 Units	■ 21-06.01(j)(3)
Group Residence, State Regulated	■ 21-06.01(j)(7)
Residential Care Facility	■ 21-06.01(j)(8)
Retail & Service	
Day Care Center	■ 21-06.01(k)(6)
Entertainment/Recreation Facility, Outdoor	■ 21-06.01(k)(9)
Funeral Services	■ 21-06.01(k)(10)
Transportation	
Parking Lot	■ * 21-06.01(l)(4)
Utilities	
Solar Farm	■ 21-06.01(m)(1)
Utilities, Major	■ * 21-06.01(m)(2)
Utilities, Minor	■ * 21-06.01(m)(3)
Wireless Communications	■ * 21-06.01(m)(4)

See Section 21-06.02 for accessory use standards.

Key ■ Allowed ■ Allowed subject to Conditions ■ Special Exception * Use Specific Standards

Uses. Regulates what principal uses are allowed within the zoning district with a reference to the location of use definitions and any additional standards that may apply. Uses may be permitted by right, permitted by right provided they comply with a set of conditions, or permitted only if approved for a special exception.

STANDARD DISTRICTS
U1 Urban Neighborhood 1

21-03.03

Building Placement

Buildable Area of Primary Building

--- Minimum Setback Line
- - - Maximum Setback Line

(d) Building Placement				
Lot Size				
Lot Width ¹	30' min. (A)			
Lot Depth	60' min. (B)			
Building Setbacks				
	Front ² (C)	Corner (D)	Side ³ (E)	Rear (F)
Residential (min.)	15'	10'	5'	20'
Residential (max.)	25'	25'	-	-
Non-Residential (min.)	15'	10'	20'	20'
Facade within Setback Zone				
Front (min.)	65%			
Corner (min.)	50%			
Building Coverage				
Building Coverage	50% max.			

¹ Lot width may be reduced to 20' for attached dwellings.
² Where existing buildings on a block face are not consistent with the required setbacks, any new building may apply the contextual setback per Section 21-02.03(b).
³ Side setback not required between attached dwellings.

Access & Parking

Minimum Parking Lot Setback

(e) Access & Parking	
Pedestrian Access	
A walkway shall connect the sidewalk or driveway to the main entrance.	
Bicycle Access	
See Section 21-0702 for Bicycle Parking requirements.	
Parking Access	
If access is available from an alley which is open to traffic, there shall be no access allowed from the street. If allowed, a maximum of one curb cut is permitted per street frontage. A garage facing a street shall be set back not less than 18'. A garage facing an alley shall be set back 5' from rear lot line or not less than 18'.	
Parking Lot Location (Distance from Lot Line)	
Front & Corner Setback (min.)	5' behind facade, or 12' if no building (G)
Side & Rear Setback (min.)	5' (H)
Side and rear setback shall be 0' when abutting an alley.	
Required Spaces	
Off-street parking areas are not required for any use. Any off-street parking areas provided, even though not required, shall be developed in compliance with the standards set forth in Section 21-0703. See Section 21-07 for full access and parking requirements.	

Building Placement. Regulates minimum lot dimensions and where a building is allowed to sit within a lot.

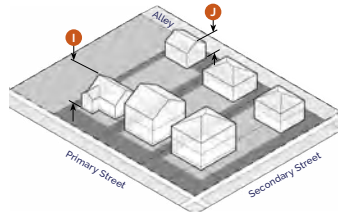
Access & Parking. Regulates how pedestrians and vehicles access a site and where parking may be located.

Understanding the Development Standards

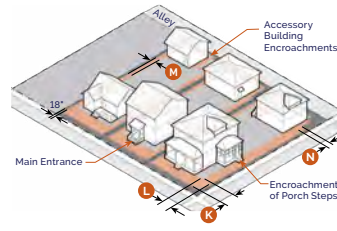
21-03.03

STANDARD DISTRICTS
U1 Urban Neighborhood 1

Building Form



Building Components



(f) Building Form

Building Height	
Primary Building (max.)	35' and 2.5 stories I
Accessory Building (max.) ¹	18' J
Accessory buildings, except for ancillary dwelling units, shall not be taller than the primary building on a lot.	
Building Orientation	
Primary facades shall be oriented to a front lot line or open space.	

¹ Ancillary dwelling units may be built to a maximum height of 26' if located at least 5' from the rear lot line of a lot with a rear alley or at least 20' from the rear lot line of a lot without a rear alley.

(g) Building Components

Allowed Building Frontage Types				
Porch	21-08.03(c)			
Stoop	21-08.03(d)			
Gallery	21-08.03(e)			
Building Entrance				
The main entrance shall be located on the front facade, on the corner facade, or on the side facade within 20' of the front facade.				
Allowed Encroachments (max.)				
	Front K	Corner L	Side M	Rear N
Architectural Features	3'	3'	3'	3'
Building Frontage Type	5'	5'	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Balcony	5'	5'	<input type="checkbox"/>	5'
Bay Window (< 10' wide)	3'	3'	3'	3'
Patio & Decks (under 30')	8'	8'	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Building components shall be at least 18' from any lot line. See Section 21-08.01(g) for building component definitions and additional requirements.

Key Allowed Not Allowed

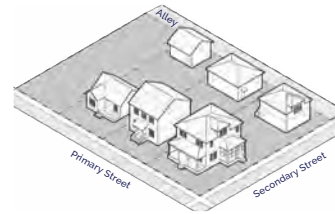
Building Form. Defines the allowed height and form of buildings on a lot.

Building Components: Regulates attached elements and allowed encroachment into any required setbacks.

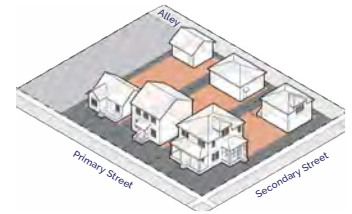
STANDARD DISTRICTS
U1 Urban Neighborhood 1

21-03.03

Building Standards



Site Development



(h) Building Standards

Facade Transparency (min.)	
Ground Floor - Front & Corner Facade	15%
Upper Floor - Front & Corner Facade	15%
Building Materials	
There are no restrictions on building materials for residential buildings within the U1 district.	
See Section 21-08.01(e) for building material restrictions that shall apply to any non-residential building.	
See Section 21-08 for full building standards.	

(i) Site Development

Accessory Structures/Uses			
Accessory Structures	21-06.02(f)(1)		
Mechanical/HVAC	21-06.02(f)(14)		
Satellite Dish Antennas	21-06.02(f)(22)		
Swimming Pool/Hot Tubs	21-06.02(f)(26)		
Allowed Location in Established Yards			
Accessory structures shall not be located in any established front or corner yard.			
Accessory structures shall comply with all required setbacks but may encroach into a required rear setback up to 5' of the lot line.			
See Section 21-06.02 for full accessory use regulations.			
Fence/Freestanding Walls			
	Front	Corner	Rear
Height (max.)	3'	3'	6'
A fence up to 4' is allowed in an established front or corner yard if fence is greater than 50% open.			
See Section 21-09 for full site development requirements.			

Building Standards. Regulates facade design, transparency, and materials.

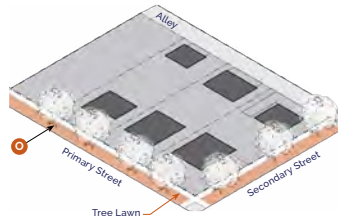
Site Development. Regulates pedestrian access to a building and additional structures located on a lot.

Understanding the Development Standards

21-03.03

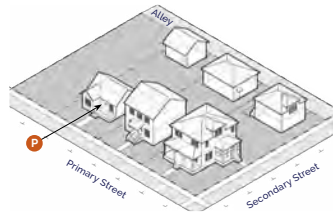
STANDARD DISTRICTS
U1 Urban Neighborhood 1

Landscape



Street Trees Allowed

Signs



(j) Landscape

Streetscape Trees Required

Shade Tree¹ 1 tree min. per each full 30' of street frontage **L**

Location² Tree Lawn

Spacing Evenly spaced to extent possible

Foundation Landscape Required³

Front & Corner Facades 1 shrub per 5' of facade min.

Location Directly adjacent to facade

Parking Lot Screening (of 4 or more spaces)

Parking that is visible from a street/open space, other than an alley, shall be screened by a Type 1 buffer.

Parking that is visible from a side/rear lot line abutting a S1, U1, or U2 district shall be screened by a Type 1 or 2 buffer.

Buffers shall comply with [Section 21-09.01\(o\)](#).

See [Section 21-09.01](#) for full landscape requirements.

¹ An existing tree of at least 1.75" caliper may fulfill this requirement.

² If a tree cannot be placed in a tree lawn, then required trees may be located in a front or corner established yard.

³ Residential buildings with 4 or fewer units are exempt from foundation landscape requirements.

(k) Signs

Total Signs Allowed

Residential

Building or Freestanding Sign 1 per street frontage; up to 2 square feet and 4 feet in height **P**

Non-Residential Use

Building Sign Up to 5% of the total area of the building facade

Freestanding Sign 1 per street frontage; up to 32 square feet and 6 feet in height

Freestanding signs may be located in a required setback, provided they are at least 5' from a lot line.

See [Section 21-10](#) for full sign requirements including changeable copy signs, temporary signs, exempt signs, off-premise, and use-specific signs.

Landscape. Regulates what type of landscape is required and where it may be located.

Signs. Regulates the type, size, and location of signs on a lot.

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