

January 31, 2023

CURRENT RESIDENT
ADDRESS LINE 1
ADDRESS LINE 2

RE: Town of Bedford's Phase II Boundary Adjustment

Dear Neighbor:

On behalf of the Council for the Town of Bedford, we are writing to let you know about a proposal to adjust the Town's boundaries by bringing in certain areas lying generally to the north, northeast, northwest, west, southwest, and south of the existing Town. These areas of proposed expansion are shown on the enclosed map.

You are receiving this letter because our records indicate that your residence is located within the area of proposed boundary adjustment and will become part of the Town of Bedford effective July 1, 2023. From that date forward, as a citizen of the Town, you will receive all services available to existing Town citizens. To help cover the cost of these services, you will also begin paying applicable taxes and fees to the Town. The Council expects to consider and act on an ordinance for the proposed boundary adjustment late in the spring of 2023. That date will be publicly announced after it has been determined.

Before the Council considers and acts on the ordinance, several public meetings will be held regarding the proposed boundary adjustment. Information sessions are tentatively scheduled for **Thursday, March 23, at 7:00 p.m. and Saturday, March 25, at 1:00 p.m.**, in the upstairs Council Chambers of the Municipal Building at 215 East Main Street, Bedford, Virginia 24523. These information sessions will include the presentation of relevant information by Town representatives as well as the opportunity for members of the public in attendance to ask questions and share their input. Any other public meetings on the proposed boundary adjustment will be announced to the public in advance.

In advance of these meetings, the Council wishes to provide you a summary of the background for the proposed boundary adjustment, its rationale, and its impact. You will find this summary below. In addition, the Town has an online resource that will provide as much relevant information as possible. This webpage can be accessed through www.bedfordva.gov and will be continuously updated. Of course, please also feel free to contact Town staff directly with any questions or concerns at (540) 587-6001, during Town business hours, or townmanager@bedfordva.gov, at any time.

Background of the Boundary Adjustment Proposal

The areas for proposed boundary adjustment are within the “Phase II Boundary Adjustment Areas,” referenced in the voluntary settlement agreement between the Town and Bedford County. That agreement underwent considerable review, received substantial input, and was the subject of multiple public hearings. It was approved by resolutions and ordinances of the then-City Council and County Board of Supervisors, recommended by the Commission on Local Government, and ultimately found to be in the best interests of the localities and of the Commonwealth and affirmed and validated by order of a three-judge, special court on December 18, 2012.

The agreement provided for the then-City of Bedford’s transition from an independent city to a town within and constituting part of Bedford County and for phased adjustments to the Town’s boundaries. Under the agreement, expansion of the Town’s boundaries into certain “Phase I Boundary Adjustment Areas,” totaling 1,200 acres, became effective at the same time as the transition to town status at midnight on June 30, 2013. The localities agreed that additional Phase II areas, totaling over 2,500 acres, where urban development had already occurred or was expected, should be brought within the Town boundaries within ten years after the effective date of town status. The localities also recognized that Phase III areas, totaling over 2,000 acres, could develop into urban land uses in the future and that the Town should have the option of incorporating those areas under certain conditions. The agreement included other provisions intended to concentrate development in central Bedford County in the Phase II and III areas.

Under the agreement, the Town may expand into as-yet-unincorporated Phase II areas within ten years after the effective date of town status, and the proposed boundary adjustment would follow this procedure. The Council would implement that boundary adjustment by adoption of an ordinance.

The Town anticipates expansion into most of the Phase II areas, excluding certain parcels to avoid splitting certain lots (in which one portion of an individual property would be within the Town limits but the other portion would not) and to avoid practical difficulties associated with providing governmental services to several lots along Highway 122 in the vicinity of Liberty High School.

Reasons for the Boundary Adjustment

The proposed boundary adjustment will increase the size, population, service areas, and revenue of the Town, making it more attractive for growth, new and existing businesses, and the community as a whole. That is, of course, of interest to the Town, its residents, and the larger community, consistent with the voluntary settlement agreement’s provisions for the Phase II boundary adjustment areas.

In general, the purpose of a boundary adjustment is to make the area more attractive to residents, businesses, and others through growth of the town and the offering of town services to a greater area. When the agreement was being considered, the then-City of Bedford was facing challenges in attracting new growth within its limits because of a lack of sufficient available land. To address those challenges, the agreement provided for phased boundary adjustments to expand the limits of the Town and encourage growth within those agreed areas of expansion. The agreement included further provisions to ensure that new development in these areas would be compatible with the existing Town.

The agreement reflects the cooperative planning of the Town and the County with the Town's phased incorporation of areas where urban development had already occurred or was expected. It was also considered to be more beneficial for the community to cooperatively plan for the Town's growth, rather than leaving these matters for resolution through possible adversarial litigation, which would be more costly and time-consuming with a less-certain outcome.

Effect of the Boundary Adjustment on Residents and Business

In the event that the boundary adjustment proposal is adopted, the Town will extend its existing governmental services into the areas of expansion along with applicable tax and fee obligations, and the Town may also make capital improvements in these areas as appropriate. Based on the Town's current operational model, new Town citizens will gain access to governmental services that they did not receive as residents exclusively of the County. Examples of governmental service areas where new Town citizens may expect enhanced levels of services include, for example, community development, electrical utilities, Town finances, Town police, public works, and representation on the Council. As referenced above, the growth of the Town and the expansion of its services should make the Town more attractive to residents, businesses, and others who are either already in the area or who may wish to relocate here.

In conclusion, we believe that an adjustment to the Town's boundaries will help ensure the long-term viability of our community and will be beneficial to the residents of the areas proposed to be incorporated as well as those already residing in the Town. We are interested in receiving any questions or input that you may have, and we hope that this plan will receive your support.

Sincerely,



Timothy W. Black
Mayor



Barrett F. (Bart) Warner
Town Manager

cc: Members of the Town Council