



CENTER TOWN DISTRICT STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday, February 19, 2025, 6:00-8:00 PM EST
Pleasant View Senior Center, Auditorium
328 North Main St., East Longmeadow, MA 01028
Remote via Zoom webinar

Use the link below to join the Zoom Webinar:

<https://eastlongmeadowma.zoom.us/j/87080268581?pwd=71ffKTnHUQCJm5hgZ1PfYmr5u5686.1>

Passcode: 024098

AMMENDED AGENDA

1. CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER

CHAIR called the meeting to order at 6:08 PM

2. CALL THE ROLL

Carolyn Ferros- Chair
Jason Gumpert- Vice-chair
Dawn Starks- Clerk
Nicole Polite

Steven Graham
Ralph Page (ex-officio, Town Council)
Robert Tirrell (ex-officio, Planning Board)

3. OLD BUSINESS

A. Receipt of PVPC draft model bylaw

Motion made to take up item 3A made by STEVEN GRAHAM, seconded by DAWN STARKS. Under discussion, Kyle Finnell and Aodhan Hemeon-McMahon of Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) present overview of Draft Center Town District Bylaw and ways that citizen feedback helped to shape the bylaw contents (see attached presentation).

Kyle noted that the draft presently reflects many of the features of the existing Mixed-Use Village (MUV) Bylaw that the Town adopted in the past, but never successfully applied to any land parcel. The draft also contains many of the features that were discussed at the January Steering Committee meeting. The Town will need to further refine several points in the draft bylaw, including: 1) the residential to commercial business ratio, 2) proportion of affordable units, 3) dimensional and density requirements, and 4) minimum parking standards before taking the draft to the Planning Board and Town Council for adoption.

PVPC stressed that public participation over the past 10+ months was an important and integral piece of the planning process that resulted in the draft bylaw. PVPC highlighted the participation milestones in the planning process including two community engagement events with high resident turnout to both (75-90 people at each event). Noted that the map-making exercise that engaged residents directly in the formation of the district boundaries was a particularly novel and thoughtful approach to responding to resident preferences.

PVPC also noted the success of the online resident survey that was fielded over the summer months to gain community feedback and preferences on Green Amenities, Transit Enhancements, Density, Center Field, Local Business, Community Gatherings, and Vibrant Town Center. A total of 550 responses were submitted, representing 3.4% of the resident population which outpaced the participation in the 2021 Resilient Master Plan process.

The summer talks that the Center Town District Steering Committee organized on Mixed-use Development, Planning and Zoning, and 40R Smart Growth were also noted by PVPC as evidence of a highly engaged resident Steering Committee charged with overseeing the process. The Committee, in their view, played an invaluable role in sustaining the community's attention and developing an understanding of highly complex planning topics covered in the process. PVPC thanked the Committee for their time and participation over the past year.

B. Concluding remarks

Town Manager, Thomas Christensen, spoke about the process being “very successful” and thanked Deputy Town Manager, Rebecca Lisi, for her work on the project. He attributed the number of public events and level of engagement to her work on the project through his office. He went on to thank the Steering Committee for their patience and work in explaining “planning” topics to the public. He noted how much time they dedicated to the process and the value it had for the process and the Town for years to come. The Town Manager thanked PVPC for their professionalism and help along the way. He also noted that he wished to do “exit interviews” with the Committee members to gain their insights about the process and preferences as we work to refine the draft bylaw “in-house” with Planning.

Committee Chair, Carolyn Ferros, thanked Tom and Rebecca for bringing her into the process. She noted that as a real estate photographer, she was interested in real estate and property, but didn't know a lot of the details of zoning. She thanked the Town for the opportunity to learn more and commended the teamwork on the Committee and their willingness to jump in and learn new things.

Co-chair, Jason Gumpert, gave his thanks to Rebecca, Tom, and fellow Committee members. He remarked that he found the [abrupt] end of the process “disappointing,” but was ultimately proud of the fact that the Committee was able to learn more about the variable needs of different constituencies in town. He highlighted that through the process, they learned that there are a lot of diverse housing needs for different groups in town. He offered that he is happy to offer more thoughts if the Town manager reaches out in the future.

Audience member, Greg Thompson (426 Porter Rd) agreed with Jason that there is a high need for housing in town and that there is a path here to address those issues. He said we should still consider a mixed-use overlay, housing density at 12 units/acre, and the development on existing buildings. Felt the conversation moving forward should focus on affordable housing, density and parking at the center of town, but keep the message simple.

Ralph Page agreed with Greg that we should keep it simple moving forward. He was expecting to do more work like that which began at the previous meeting about heights and parking. He was interested in hearing more from the Steering Committee about design standards and what the residents wanted the center to look like, i.e: flat roofs/peaked roofs, etc.

Steve Graham joked that he enjoyed the “most” of the experience. He recognized the technical complexity of planning and zoning as well as the efforts of the Steering Committee to try to listen and acknowledge the communities preferences. He believes that they helped the process move along to a point where the Town's professional staff and boards can complete the work required.

Dawn Starks offered that the Steering Committee's role in the planning process was new to her (despite being involved in other Town committees over time) but she enjoyed it and was especially pleased with the community involvement and the number of different voices that were engaged through the process. She noted that the work that is being called for in center town is somewhat of a “sea change” and that this process that focused on community engagement is particularly well-suited for any topic that would undertake a change of similar magnitude. It was enjoyable to get to know one another more as a community and it set the stage for working together more as a community.

Nicole Polite thanked Tom, Rebecca, PVPC, and her fellow Steering Committee members for their work and time in the process. She noted that as a newer resident, she found the process overwhelming because there was so much learning taking place at once [key landmarks, commercial real estate, zoning, etc.]. Overall, she felt that there was a lot of hope in town and that slow and steady will win at the end of the day. We will have to give people in town some time to digest and understand what is being proposed—especially related to increased opportunities for housing.

Rob Tirrell briefly thanked everyone involved for their time on the project and that he is looking forward to picking out the process when it eventually arrives before the Planning Board.

Carolyn Ferros gave a final thanks to PVPC for their help and guidance.

4. OTHER BUSINESS

A. [Approval of previous meeting minutes \(Jan 29, 2025\)](#)

This item was tabled by the Committee for the next meeting.

5. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to Adjourn made by JASON GUMPERT, seconded by DAWN STARKS. Meeting adjourned at 6:31 PM

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), if any accommodations are needed, please contact the Planning Department at 413-525-5400 x 1700 or MassRelay 711. Requests should be made as soon as possible but at least 48 hours prior to the scheduled meeting.

The matters listed are those reasonably anticipated by the Chair to be discussed at the meeting. Not all items listed may, in fact, be discussed. Other items not listed may be brought up for discussion to the extent permitted by law. Massachusetts General Laws, chapter 30A, Section 20(e) requires any person making a video or audio recording of the meeting to notify the Chair at the start of the meeting.



Center Town District Planning

Steering Committee Meeting
Town of East Longmeadow, MA
January 29, 2025



Welcome and Meeting Agenda

WELCOME and THANK YOU for joining us!

Tonight's Agenda:

Old Business: Process Review & CTD Profile (PVPC)

Old Business: Town Manager Remarks

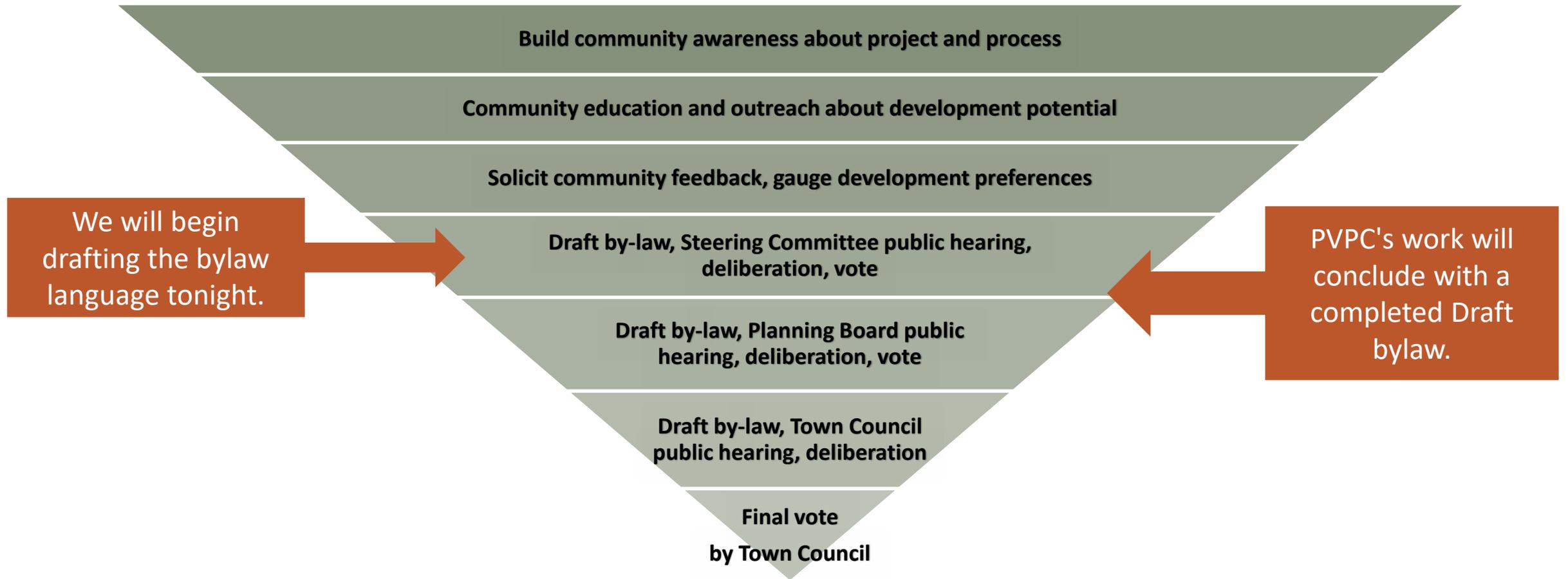
New Business: Review and Deliberation of Model 40R Bylaw

Other Business: Approval of previous meeting minutes

Other Business: Deputy Town Manager Report



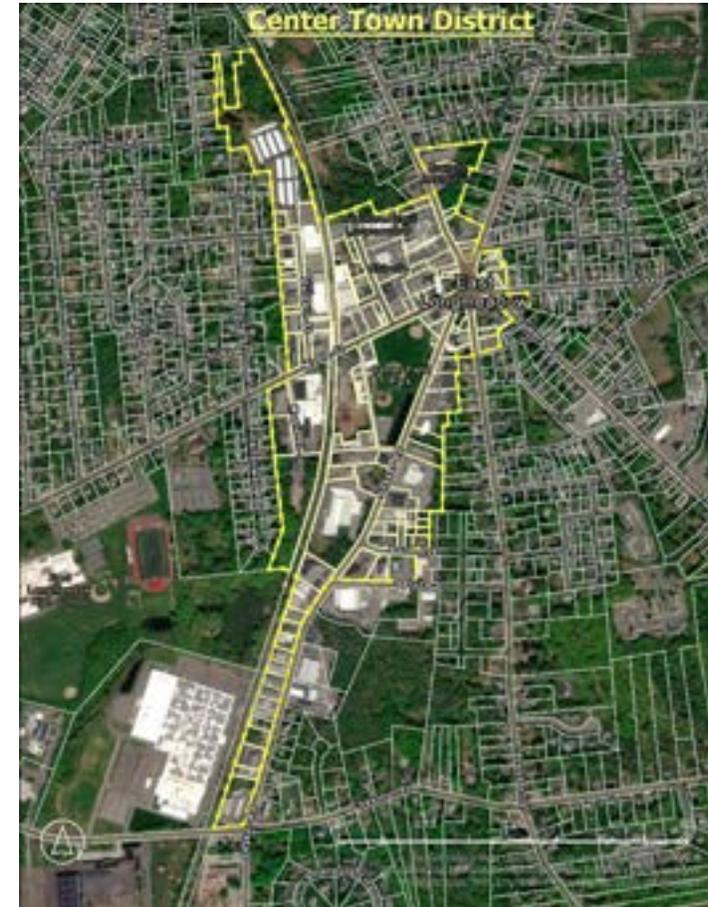
Project Process





Center Town District

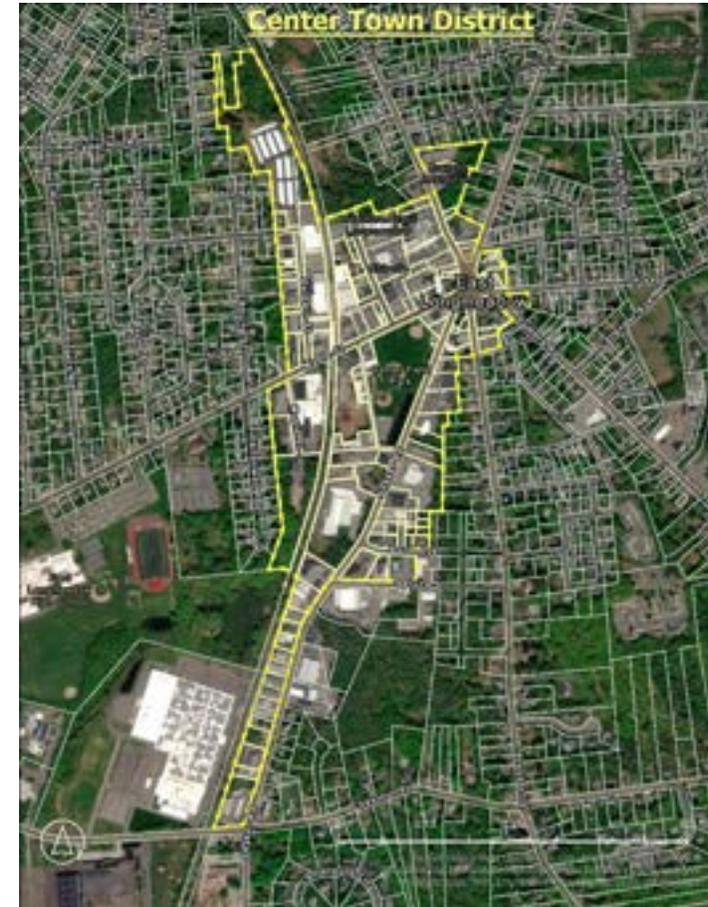
The Steering Committee's amended Center Town District map outlines a CTD that is approximately **96.5 acres** in size, approximately **1.2% of the town's total area**, and includes **122 existing tax parcels**.





Center Town District

Zoning	Number of Parcels	Median Size	Total Acres	Percent of CTD Area
Bus	57	1.42	32.15	33.3%
Com	7	0.3	3.57	3.7%
Ind	50	0.365	44.78	46.4%
Multi-zoned	4	3.59	15.29	15.8%
Res A	1	0.08	0.08	0.1%
Rec C	3	0.23	0.61	0.6%

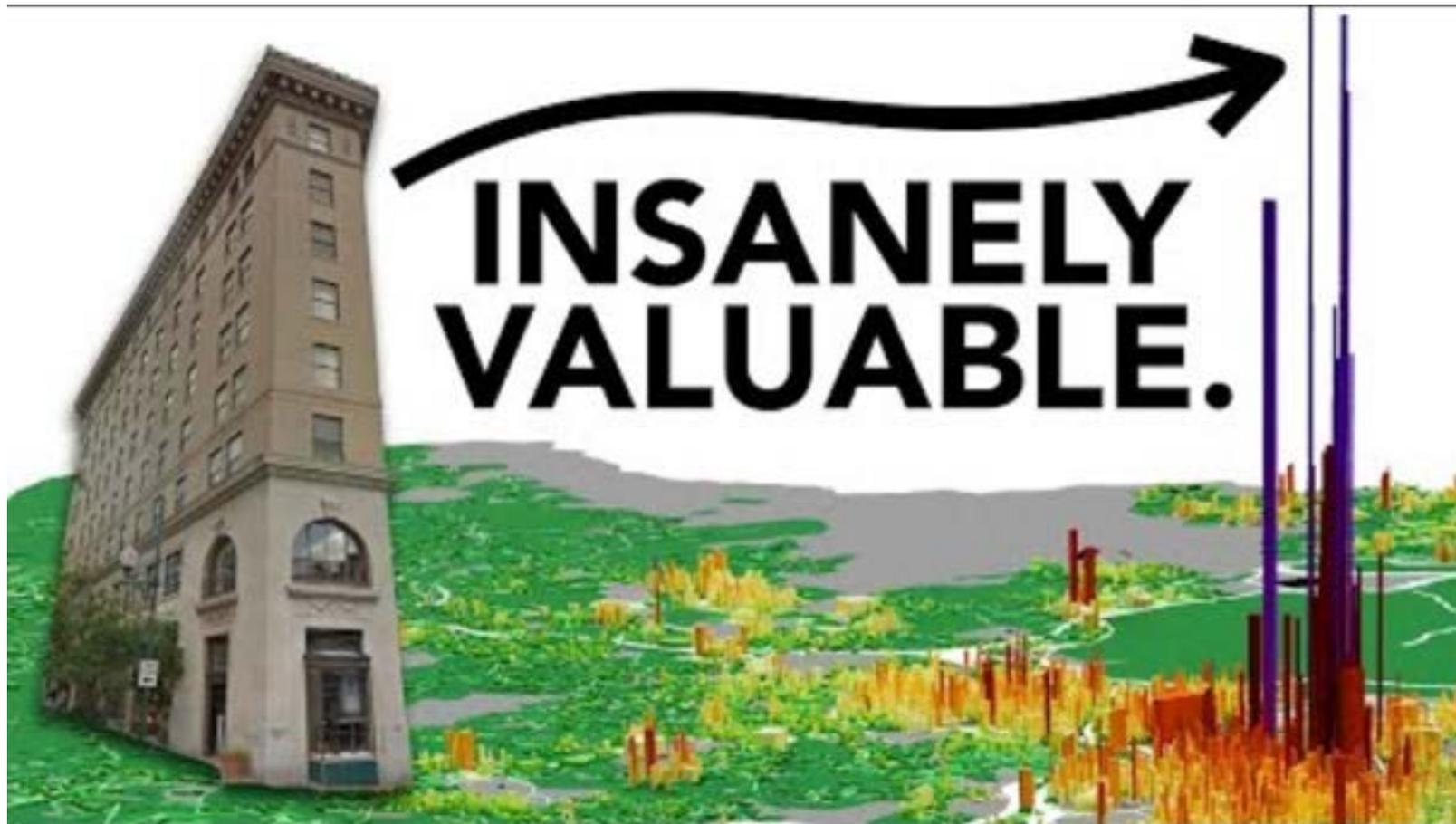




Remarks on Project Process



[The Inherent Value of Density \(...And The Cost of Sprawl\)](#)





Tonight, we will begin the dialogue on shaping the 40R Center Town District bylaw

Discussion Focus:

- 1 – Permitted Uses (Section 4)**
- 2 – Dimensional and Density Requirements (Section 6)**
- 3 – Parking Requirements (Section 7)**



Permitted Uses: Residential Types

Typical housing types in a Center Town District include...



Single-Family Attached



Duplexes and Triplexes



Neighborhood Scale
Multifamily



Mixed-Use



Permitted Uses: Mixed-Use and Non-Residential Development

What non-residential uses should be allowed?

- Retail?
- Office space?
- Restaurants?
- Cultural/institutional (e.g., community centers, museums)?

Any others?

- Should the allowed uses be different for mixed-use vs. standalone non-residential?





Bylaw Deliberation

Discussion on Section 4 "Permitted Uses" of the Model 40R Bylaw.

- Section 4.1 - Residential Projects (p.2)
- Section 4.2 - Mixed-use Development Projects (p.3)
- Section 4.3 - Other Uses (p. 4)



Dimensional Regulations

*Without limitation, the Smart Growth Zoning shall set out the dimensional, use, parking, and other standards applicable to Projects within a District (including within any Substantially Developed sub-district) **including but not limited to height limits, setbacks, lot areas, lot dimensions, unit to lot ratios, floor area ratios, lot coverage ratios, and open space ratios.***





Dimensional Regulations

What are the right dimensions for Residential? Mixed-use? Commercial and business?

District	Use	Minimum Lot Area (square feet or as noted)	Minimum Frontage (feet)	Minimum Setback (feet)	Minimum Side Yard (feet)	Minimum Rear Yard (feet)	Minimum Setback Accessory (feet)	Maximum Height ¹ (feet)
BUS	Any permitted use	None	100	25	None	None	25	40
	Residential use	None	75	25	12	25	35	35

For this bylaw, we are considering East Longmeadow's existing Business District dimensional regulations as a starting point. **Is this appropriate?**

Other dimensional standards, like lot coverage, will first require a conversation about design standards.



Dimensional Regulations

Examples from the Town of Danvers' MSTND District Bylaw

MIXED USE BUILDING

1.2. LOT STANDARDS		
A.	Min. Lots Size (S.F.)	N/A
B.	Frontage (Min./Max.)	50 Min.
C.	Lot Depth (Min./Max.)	N/A
D.	Build-To-Zone (Min./Max.)	0 Ft. / 20 Ft.
E.	B-T-Z/Façade Build Out (Min.)	70%
F.	Side Setback (Min.)	0/15 Ft
G.	Rear Setback (Min.)	20 Ft
H.	% Outdoor Amenity (Min.)	20%
I.	Parking Setback (Min.)	30 Ft
1.3. DESIGN STANDARDS		
A.	Building Height (Max.)	4 Stories / 45 Ft
B.	Ground Floor Elevation (Min./Max.)	0 Ft. / 2 Ft.
C.	Ground Story Height (Min.)	12 Ft.
D.	Upper Story Height (Min.)	9 Ft.
E.	Roof Types	All
F.	Street Facing Wall Width without Offset (Max.)	60 Ft.
G.	Street Facing Wall Off-Set Depth and Length (Min.)	4 Ft / 8 Ft
H.	Street Facing Transparency - Ground Floor/Upper Floor (Min.)	60% / 20%
I.	Building Length - Street Facing Façade (Max.)	150 Ft
J.	Street Facing Entrance	Required

GENERAL COMMERCIAL BUILDING

1.2. LOT STANDARDS		
A.	Min. Lots Size (S.F.)	N/A
B.	Frontage (Min./Max.)	50 Min.
C.	Lot Depth (Min./Max.)	N/A
D.	Build-To-Zone (Min./Max.)	0 Ft./20 Ft.
E.	B-T-Z/Façade Build Out (Min.)	70%
F.	Side Setback (Min.)	0/10 Ft
G.	Rear Setback (Min.)	15 Ft
H.	% Outdoor Amenity (Min.)	10%
I.	Parking Setback (Min.)	20 Ft
1.3. DESIGN STANDARDS		
A.	Building Height (Max.)	3 Stories/40 Ft
B.	Ground Floor Elevation (Min./Max.)	0 Ft./2 Ft.
C.	Ground Story Height (Min.)	12 Ft.
D.	Upper Story Height (Min.)	9 Ft.
E.	Roof Types	All
F.	Street Facing Wall Width without Offset (Max.)	60 Ft.
G.	Street Facing Wall Off-Set Depth and Length (Min.)	4 Ft/8 Ft
H.	Street Facing Transparency - Ground Floor/Upper Floor (Min.)	60% / 20%
I.	Building Length - Street Facing Façade (Max.)	100 Ft
J.	Street Facing Entrance	Required

ROWHOUSE AND TOWNHOUSE

1.2. LOT STANDARDS		
A.	Min. Lots Size (S.F.)	1,200 SF
B.	Frontage (Min./Max.)	18 Min./24 Max.
C.	Lot Depth (Min.)	50 Ft
D.	Build-To-Zone (Min./Max.)	5 Ft./15 Ft.
E.	B-T-Z/Façade Build Out (Min.)	80%
F.	Side Setback (Min.)	0 Ft
G.	Rear Setback (Min.)	15 Ft
H.	% Outdoor Amenity (Min.)	20%
I.	Parking Setback (Min.)	Behind Building
1.3. DESIGN STANDARDS		
A.	Building Height (Max.)	2.5 Stories/35 Ft
B.	Ground Floor Elevation (Min./Max.)	2 Ft./4 Ft.
C.	Ground Story Height (Min.)	9 Ft.
D.	Upper Story Height (Min.)	9 Ft.
E.	Roof Types	All
F.	Street Facing Wall Width (Min.)	18 Ft.
G.	Street Facing Wall Off-Set (Min.)	N/A
H.	Street Facing Transparency - Ground Floor/Upper Floor (Min.)	20% / 20%
I.	Building Length - Street Facing Façade (Max.)	24 Ft
J.	Street Facing Entrance	Required

Dimensional Regulations



How much open space, if any, should each project provide? Are there specific types of open space or public amenities we want (e.g., pocket parks, plazas, play areas)?

Some examples include:

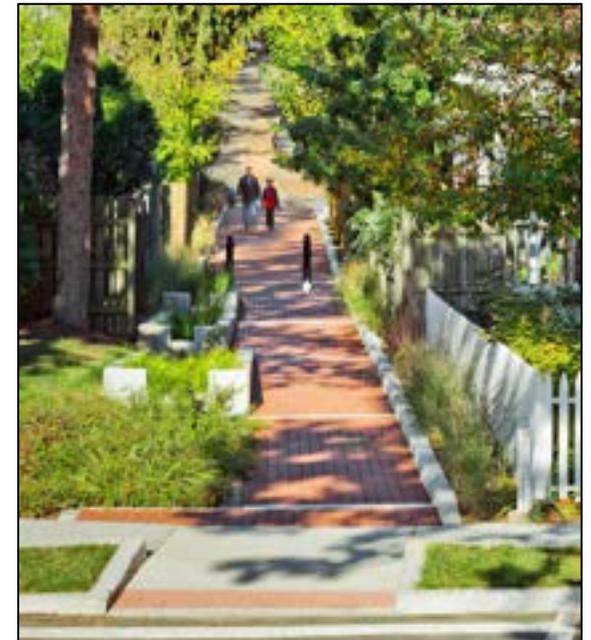
- Pocket parks
- Tree-lined streets
- Greenways and trails
- Community gardens



Pocket park



Tree-lined street



Green alley



Bylaw Deliberation

Discussion on Section 6 "Dimensional and Density Requirements" of the Model 40R Bylaw.

- Section 6.1 - Table of Requirements (p.5)
- Section 6.2 - Dimensional Waivers in Substantially Developed Sub-district (p.7)

Parking Requirements



What's the appropriate balance between having enough parking and avoiding excessive paved areas?

For reference, some existing parking requirements for off-street parking are:

Use	Required Spaces
Each single-family dwelling	1 parking space or garage
Retail outlets and other similar uses	6 parking spaces for each 1,000 square feet of floor area. For upper floor or basement area used for office or sales purposes, additional parking shall be provided, amounting to 5 spaces per 1,000 square feet of such space.
Restaurants, clubs or similar facilities serving food or beverages (even when in conjunction with retail stores and the like)	1 parking space for each 3 seats
Theaters	1 parking space for each 3 seats
Professional and commercial offices	5 parking spaces for each 1,000 square feet of gross floor area on all floors, but in no case fewer than 10 spaces
Churches	1 parking space for each 6 seats



Parking Requirements

Shared Parking

Which uses (commercial, residential, etc.) can overlap to reduce overall parking demand?

Where minimum requirements are deemed necessary, EOHLC encourages allowing the reduction of minimum parking requirements if parking is shared by different uses, within Mixed-use Development Projects or otherwise.



Bylaw Deliberation

Discussion on Section 7 "Parking Requirements" of the Model 40R Bylaw.

- Section 7.1 - Number of parking spaces (p.8)
- Section 7.2 - Shared Parking (p.9)
- Section 7.3 - Reduction in parking requirements (p. 10)
- Section 7.4 - Location of Parking (p. 11)



Next Steps

Review and deliberation on the remaining sections of the 40R Model Bylaw will continue at February's meeting(s).

Remaining Sections to discuss include:

Sections 1 & 2 – Purpose and Definitions

Section 3 – Applicability (Scope and Authority)

Section 5 – Affordability

Section 9-12 – Plan Approval Process

Section 13 – Design Standards

Section 14 - Severability

Sections will require more in-depth discussion and deliberation.



Other Business

Approval of previous meeting minutes – Dec. 12, 2024

Deputy Town Manager Report

- Notes from meeting with Bill Reyelt, EOHLC – Jan. 14, 2025
- Set date for next Steering Committee meeting(s)