

Village Overlay District/Mixed Use Overlay District

ESTABLISH DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE AND GUIDELINES (NON-RESIDENTIAL)



One of the goals of the 2006 Master Plan is to establish Design Review Guidelines and a committee to review commercial projects in town. Residential homes would not be subjected to the Design Review or the Guidelines. The Committee would review the building architecture, building materials, landscape treatments, lighting design, public amenities, building mass etc... The town adopted these guidelines and established a design advisory team (DAT) at the May 2011 Town Meeting.

STRENGTHEN SITE PLAN REVIEW BYLAW



Another goal of the Master Plan was to strengthen the site plan review bylaw. This was done at the May 2011 Town Meeting. Now when the Board of Selectmen make a decision on a proposal for Site Plan Approval the Board will consider the Design Review Criteria. Also a Development Impact Study is required which looks at environmental, fiscal impacts, community impacts, traffic, parking and transportation.

REVIEW THE TABLE OF USES BYLAW

Another goal of the Master Plan is to update the Table of Uses. A more detailed Table of Uses Regulation would take the guess work out of deciding if a particular use is permitted or not and allow the town to manage future growth with ore precision. The current bylaw needs more specific use definitions; it must anticipate and address common uses that are not yet present. For example Health Clubs and Shopping Malls. The Master Plan also suggests reviewing the “as of right” uses to insure that this designation remains appropriate. Another suggestion is limiting the size of “big box” stores. The Planning Board is currently working on the use table and will bring this to the May 2012 Town Meeting.

In
Process

CREATE MIXED USE VILLAGE OVERLAY DISTRICT (VOD)

Another goal is to create a mixed use village overlay district in order to meet affordable housing goals and create compatible retail and commercial space (not “strip malls”). A VOD would permit small to moderate economic development and residential uses designed in a village setting and scale. This district would have strong connections, consistent architecture, and small scale structures. It would permit uses such as service and office, but limit the size and bulk of these uses so as to be consistent with the village character. It would allow for top of shop housing at a higher density than the current zoning. The setbacks would be reduced to allow parking to be to the rear or sides. The current setbacks would be reduced as the current parking requirements are too high. It would allow for multiple buildings as the current zoning only permits one building per lot which forces one large building. By allowing multiple buildings it would create small scale structures which would be more consistent with the village character. The Planning Board began working on this concept in 2008 with UMass and most recently with a consultant through a grant obtained from the regional planning organization. The Planning Board has an article on the May 2012 town meeting. It is currently looking at creating two different village overlay districts one at the 495 area and the Salt Box.

In
Process

