



Mixed Use Zoning Opportunities Town of Bedford

**Public Meeting
January 24, 2006**

A Presentation of the Metropolitan Area Planning Council with Funding
from the Massachusetts Priority Development Fund and the Minuteman
Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination



Background

- Bedford & Stow, both in MAGIC subregion, jointly awarded PDF grant to implement mixed use zoning
- Mixed use zoning was recommended by Bedford Master Plan for Depot Park and North Rd. areas
- Bedford hired MAPC to draft bylaws & help educate decision-makers & the public



Why Mixed Use?

- Spur revitalization
- Improve design by providing greater flexibility
- Promote a village-style mix of retail, restaurants, offices, & multi-family housing
- Provide additional housing opportunities
- Enhance the Depot area's unique identity & development potential as a focal point for bicycle- & pedestrian-related uses
- Enhance North Rd. area's gateway potential
- Reduce auto dependency, roadway congestion, and air pollution by co-locating multiple destinations
- Promote sense of community



Process to Date

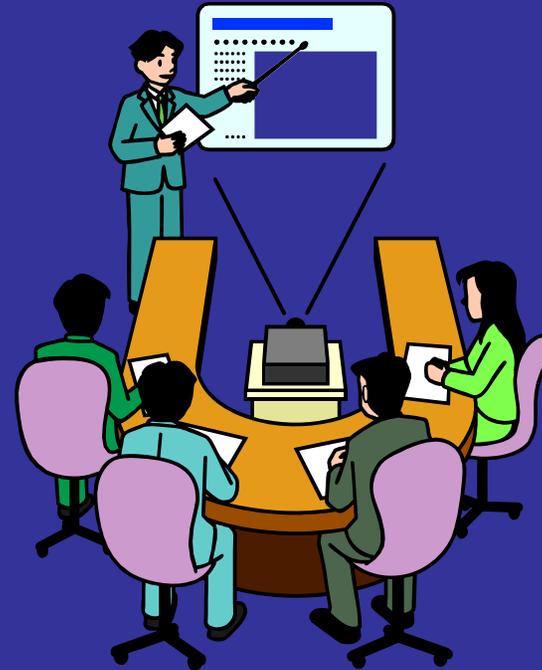
2 visual preference polls



2 issues discussions



2 draft by-laws



2 Locations

- Depot Park Area



- North Road Area



Aerial view: Depot Park Area



Aerial view – North Road



Issues: Purpose

- Bedford's primary purpose: Spur revitalization
- To be effective, bylaws structured to provide
 - Desirable alternatives to traditional development
 - Incentives for developers
 - Maximum Town control with minimal obstacles
- Developers can
 - Build multi-family housing as part of a mixed use development where not otherwise allowed
 - Use flexible design
 - Reduce open space & parking where flexibility produces better design



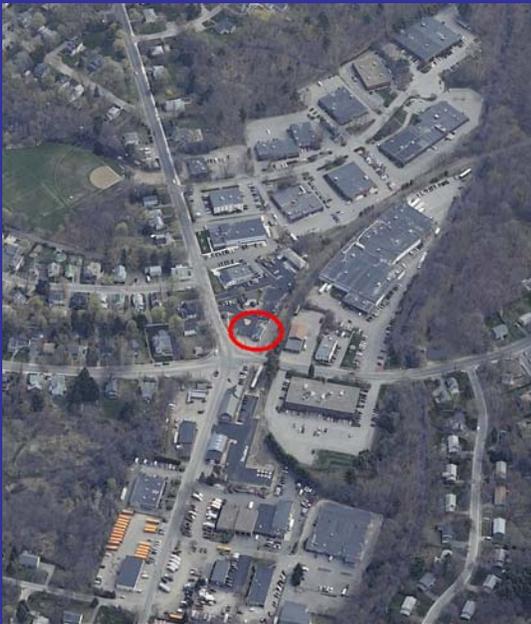
Issues: Overlay via Special Permit

- **Why Overlay District vs. Change to Underlying Zoning?**
 - Overlay encourages coordinated, cohesive development among lots or through lot consolidation
- **Why special permit vs. by right?**
 - Special permit ensures high quality design, town control



Issues: Boundaries

- Boundaries selected to
 - Protect desirable existing uses
 - Ensure smooth transitions



Issues: Good Design through Flexibility

- Ways to achieve good design – density limits vs. design standards & flexibility
- What are the elements of good design?
 - A balanced mix of uses
 - Connectivity of uses
 - Active street frontage
 - Consistency with town character, historic/traditional context
 - Good bicycle & pedestrian access



Issues: Uses

- Allowable uses
- Prohibited uses
- Housing provisions
 - Market vs. affordable
 - Affordability levels
 - Target populations & unit sizes





How the Proposed By-Laws Resolve these Issues

2 Different By-laws

- Depot Area emphasizes bicycle & pedestrian identity & opportunity, potential village feel
- North Road area emphasizes historic context, gateway
- Most provisions similar



Provisions: Goals

Board will consider how well a proposal achieves goals:

- Is conducive to walking and bicycling
- Promotes integrated design & interaction among activities
- Is compatible with historic character
- Includes best practices for energy and environmental design & stormwater management
- Includes a balance of land uses
- Increases housing options



Provisions: Uses

- Lists Uses Allowed by Special Permit
- How these differ from underlying zoning
- Different uses may be in same structure or in separate structures on the site
- Prohibited uses
 - Drive-through establishments;
 - Storage trailers & outdoor storage.
 - Adult entertainment establishment



Performance Standards: Criteria

- Adequacy of the site
- Provision of open space
- Suitability of the site
- Impact on traffic and pedestrian flow
- Impact on the visual character
- Adequacy of utilities



Performance Standards

- Mix of uses: First-floor on main streets shall be retail, restaurant, &/or office uses except under certain circumstances
- Density flexible
- Minimum lot frontage: 50 feet
- Maximum height: 37 feet or 2 ½ stories



More Performance Standards



- Minimum lot size
 - 20,000 square feet in Depot Park
 - 39,000 square feet in North Rd. area
- Regulates setbacks & yard dimensions

Performance: Open Space



- Board may lower requirement to a minimum of 10%
- Open space must be usable & available to public
- May include landscaped gardens, plazas, sitting areas, sidewalks
- Landscaped areas in & around parking areas don't count as open space

Vehicle & Pedestrian Features



- Amenities & network of pathways to promote walking
- Minimal curb cuts & pavement
- Parking behind or beside buildings where possible
- Board may reduce parking if shared parking &/or transportation demand management
- Bicycle parking required



Affordable Housing Units

- In developments of 8+ units, 10% shall be affordable to households at or below 80% of area median income
- Board may require additional 5% affordable to households with incomes of 81-100%
- Minimum area per unit = 550 square feet
- Maximum area per unit = 1200 square feet



Design Standards



- Tradition vs. innovative: compatible with traditional architecture
 - Scale, massing, roof shape, materials
- North Rd. design to reflect Historic District context
- Moderate scale, resembling houses & barns
- Design features to add visual interest, reduce appearance of bulk & mass
- Best practices in energy efficiency, environmental protection, & stormwater management

Visual Preference Tool Comments

- **Building bulk & height:** moderate-scale structures (house-sized vs. “block-sized”), maximum 2 ½ stories. For larger scale, articulated facades & changes to roof (e.g., gable direction) to lessen impression of massing
- **Roof form:** steeply pitched roofs with eaves & articulation of the roof lines



More Visual Preference Tool Comments

- Building style: Structures that evoke historic house or barn styles vs. city-block style. Details such as brick chimneys or shutters. Note Historic District & potential design impacts



Still More Visual Preference Tool Comments

- Exterior materials: wood or brick; adequate first floor windows to enable visibility of shop spaces
- Parking: at rear of building where possible
- Pedestrian amenities: use wide sidewalks/pathways, outdoor seating, appropriate landscaping. Locate structures to maximize ease of pedestrian access.



Procedures

- Procedures consistent with Industrial Mixed Use Bylaw regarding:
 - Application
 - Planning Board Findings
 - Amendments





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