Norfolk Town Center

Town of Norfolk B-1 District Zoning Study

Working Committee Meeting #5

August 12, 2019

Photo: MAPC

Town of Norfolk B-1 District Zoning Study

Metropolitan Area Planning Council
Meeting Agenda

1. Property Owner Meeting Summary
2. Updated Draft Zoning Discussion
   • Discuss additional height
   • Discuss uses
3. Draft Design Guideline Discussion
4. Other Discussion
   • Board of Health regulation
   • Stormwater
5. Confirmed Community Meeting – 9/12/19
6. Next Working Committee Meeting – TBD
Updated Draft Zoning Discussion

Norfolk Town Center
Zoning Fact Sheet

Introduction
Zoning promotes health, safety, and general welfare and defines how a property is used, how much development can occur on a property, and how a property and building will look. The Zoning Bylaw of the Town of Norfolk governs how development can occur in the Town Center through Zoning Section 1. "B-1 District (Town Center)." The Town of Norfolk has initiated this study of the B-1 District to encourage the establishment of a vibrant mixed-use Town Center.

Background
The Town of Norfolk worked with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) to study zoning recommendations, design guidelines, and other actions to support mixed-use development in Town Center. This work builds upon the vision established for the Town Center through the Town of Norfolk Master Plan and on recommendations of a 2016 Townwide Economic Development Plan. The vision for Town Center articulated through these previous plans states, "Norfolk's citizens would like its Town Center developed into a traditional, pedestrian oriented, New England village with retail, commercial services and mixed uses, including housing, that provides for social and cultural interaction for all age groups."

Zoning Recommendations
The zoning recommendations are summarized below and divided into two types of recommendations: primary and suggested. Primary recommendations represent the minimum changes that must occur to current zoning to correct zoning issues that are reducing the likelihood of mixed-use development in Town Center. Suggested recommendations represent a more complete revision to the current zoning district to provide a mixed-use Town Center zone that is better aligned with current best practices.

District Boundary
The B-1 Zone District boundary is shown to the left (dark brown and light brown) and includes properties on Main Street, Rockwood Road, Liberty Lane, and Union Street. The brown area is the "Business Core" and the light brown is "Outside the Business Core," two subareas in the existing zone. The boundary of the zone is not changing.

Primary Recommendations

Remove L4.1.4. This current B-1 District zoning language includes building scale requirements that state no building footprint shall exceed 15,000 square feet. This requirement should be removed to allow for development flexibility and for development to be appropriately scaled to the size of the lot.

Remove L4.1.8. This current B-1 District zoning language includes residential density requirements that state residential dwelling units shall not have more than two bedrooms per unit and that residential densities shall not exceed sixteen bedrooms for any single lot.

Removing these sections is critical to encouraging mixed-use development in the Town Center. Even if the suggested recommendations are not implemented, these two changes must be made.

Norfolk Town Center
Zoning Fact Sheet

Primary Recommendations (continued)

Modify L4.1.10. This section defines the requirements for building height that currently allow up to forty-six (46) feet to the peak of the roof by special permit from the Planning Board. To allow for more flexibility in the design of the ground floor and roof form, the maximum height by-right should be increased from the current forty (40) feet to forty-six (46) feet measured to the average height between the peak and the eave of the roof. The building height as measured in stories should increase to a maximum of three and one half (3.5) stories from the current (3) stories. The top half story should be integrated with the shape of the building's roof.

Suggested Recommendations

Modify L4.4.3. This section addresses phased development and should be modified to state a phased plan shall be required showing anticipated stages of partial completion and the timeframes associated with each stage. Multiple buildings that are part of the same development proposal may be phased.

Modify L4.4.4. This section defines the dimensional requirements (setbacks, lot size, lot coverage, etc.) of the district. The current zoning defines a build-to-line of between six (6) feet and nineteen (19) feet, but no front yard setback. The front yard setback should be defined as six (6) feet to align these characteristics. The build-to-line should be clarified as applying to the primary building in a multiple building site plan. The minimum lot size of 30,000 square feet should be reduced to 15,000 square feet to allow more parcels in the district to redevelop without having to assemble or subdivide land.

Modify L6. This section defines parking requirements and refers to Section F7 Parking of the Zoning Bylaw. This section requires 1.5 spaces per dwelling unit and should be reduced for the B-1 District to 1.0 spaces per dwelling unit to encourage a vibrant, walkable, transit-oriented Town Center.

Modify L6.1. This section defines shared parking and allows a delay in construction of up to 30% of the parking area. The language should be modified to allow the elimination of up to 30% of the parking area to truly provide the benefit of complementary mixed-uses and associated positive benefits on reducing parking densities.

Modify L7.4. This section defines the uses permitted and regulated in the B-1 District. This section should add an overall provision that a Town Center project shall be mixed-use comprised of any of the Allowed Uses with the majority (51%) of land floor street frontage be devoted to active allowed uses as measured by percentage of ground floor building street frontage that is devoted to active allowed uses that will contribute to a vibrant Town Center. Specific uses should be refined to better align with the vision for a vibrant Town Center. "Limited use motor vehicle sales" should be changed from allowed to prohibited, "Gasoline and diesel fuel filling stations" should be changed from special permit to prohibited, and Modify "Residential Dwelling Units" allowed use language to remove the requirements that residential uses consist of 95% or less of the total combined square footage and that the ground floor be limited to commercial uses.

Additional Information

Additional background and context for the project, including many of the Town’s recent planning documents, can be found on the Town’s website at http://www.norfolkma.us/departments/land-use/

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MAPC Principal Planner Josh Fiala can be reached at josh.fiala@mapc.org
Updated Draft Zoning Discussion - Height

Min. 12
5 7 10

53’ 3.5 stories (top floor sloped roof) 46’
39’
(to midpoint by right)
Updated Draft Zoning Discussion - Uses

Development in the B-1 District shall be mixed use comprised of any of the Allowed uses or Special Permit Uses with the majority (51%) of the ground floor street frontage devoted to active uses that will contribute to a vibrant Town Center.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Allowed Uses</th>
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<th>Prohibited Uses</th>
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<td>“Gasoline and diesel fuel filling stations”</td>
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Draft Design Guideline Discussion

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51% Min. active ground floor

40’ Max. façade bay
Draft Design Guideline Discussion

Norfolk Town Center Design Guidelines: Building design

1. Modest and Well-proportioned Building Height - Building height should respect the historic context of Town Center, be sensitive to surrounding structures, and use the building design to reduce the overall impression of building height. The ground floor should be taller than the upper floors of the building. New buildings which are taller than surrounding buildings should respect neighboring properties by stepping down a portion of the building near property lines or providing a setback at the upper level to reduce the visual impact.

2. Modest Building Scale - Building scale and building form should respect the historic context of Town Center. Typically, the width of historic buildings was no more than about 40 feet. This should be reflected in new building massing to be sensitive to the modest scale of the district. While a building may be larger, the plan and shape of the building should be designed to reduce larger lengths into building bays no wider than 40 feet. These bays should be oriented to face the street frontage.

3. Slanted Roof Pitch - Slanted roof pitches should be designed to reinforce the New England village aesthetic with simple yet interesting sloped rooflines. Most of the historic buildings of the district reflect a relatively consistent application of slanted roofs that should be a part of the characteristic of the district. Slanted roofs should be used to reduce the overall perceived height of taller buildings by integrating the uppermost floor within the slope of the roof. Any portion of flat roof should be concealed with a slanted roof oriented to the site frontage. Roof features, dormers, and gable ends should be used to add interest to the roof.

4. Building Orientation - The building orientation and location of buildings on a property should be designed to strengthen district continuity and sense of vitality. All aspects of the building should reinforce an orientation to the primary street(s) on which it is located. The primary facade, building entries, placement of the building on the property, location of signage, and location of storefront windows should all reinforce an orientation to the primary street(s).

5. Incremental Improvements - Incremental improvements and strategic additions should be used to better align existing buildings with the Norfolk Town Center vision and design guidelines. Modifications to existing structures should be used to better align the quality and character of the structure through new roof features, dormers, window bays, cupolas, storefronts, awnings, porches, or other strategic modifications and additions that will respect the existing structure and the context of the district.

6. Preserve Flexibility of Uses - Preserve flexibility for the use of ground floor space through the design of the ground floor of the building to strengthen the vitality of Town Center with a variety of uses and destinations. Space should be provided on the ground floor for a mix of uses that compliment the Town Center. All ground level space should be designed to be flexible to accommodate a variety of uses in the future, regardless of the original intended use.
Other Discussion

• Board of Health regulations/wastewater

• Stormwater

• Other utilities

• Walkability and bikability
Confirmed Community Meeting – 9/12/19

Please join us for a Community Meeting to discuss zoning, design guidelines, and investment in Norfolk Town Center.

Date: Thursday, September 12th
Time: 7:00 to 8:30PM
Location: Freeman-Kennedy Elementary School Cafeteria
70 Boardman Street

The Town of Norfolk has been working with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) to study the zoning and infrastructure of the Town Center to enhance opportunities for mixed-use investment and development. The study has resulted in recommended changes to zoning in the B-1 (Town Center) District and recommended design guidelines for the district.

Please join us on September 12th at 7:00 pm at the Freeman-Kennedy Elementary School Cafeteria to learn more about these recommendations with a presentation by MAPC. Additional background and context for the project, including many of the Town’s recent planning documents, can be found on the Town’s website.

If you need special assistance or translation services, please contact MAPC at (617) 933-2160 or info@mapc.org

Town of Norfolk B-1 District Zoning Study
Next Working Committee Meeting
Norfolk Town Center

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Working Committee Meeting #5

August 12, 2019

Photo: MAPC