

June 2021

Update of the Economic Development Committee

A quick update on what the Economic Development Committee (EDC) has been up to this past month + an informational presentation on the Downtown District V9 proposed bylaw.

ZONING:

- Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) grant funding ended on June 30th 2021.
- Planning Board held a joint meeting on June 7th with Board of Selectmen and consultant Adam Costa to discuss outstanding issues of the proposed bylaw.
- At their meeting on June 22nd, the BOS voted on a final Draft Downtown District Version 9, with approved changes. The following issues were discussed and agreed upon:
 - *Maintaining a Special Permit threshold of 3,000 SF per establishment.*
 - *Replacing the 80% Max. Lot Coverage with a permitted Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 0.35 and up to 0.5 by Special Permit.*
 - *Removing the height increase to 4 stories by Special Permit.*
 - *All of the edits made by consultant Adam Costa after his discussion with M. Luttrell and M. Hoolahan from the Planning Board on June 11th.*
- The Downtown District will follow the current boundary of the Downtown portion of the Business Village District. The Planning Board can take-on the task of altering the district boundary if warranted.
- Draft Design Guidelines are reviewed by consultant Judi Barrett.
- The Board of Selectmen voted to transmit a copy of the [Downtown District V9 bylaw](#), [Draft Design Guidelines](#) and existing map of the [Downtown Business Village District](#) to the Planning Board. The Planning Board is now required to open Public Hearings where further comments and input will be sought on the latest DD bylaw.

WASTEWATER:

- Weston & Sampson has submitted their Feasibility Assessment which has been reviewed by Paul Pisinski.
- The assessment is a comprehensive study of potential sites, facilities and planning level costs for wastewater collection systems.

COMMUNITY ONE STOP FOR GROWTH:

The Community One Stop for Growth program was launched in January 2021. Ten funding programs will now be administered through one single portal with one application and a single timeline. The agencies offering funding through Community One Stop for Growth include; the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development, the Department of Housing and Community Development, and MassDevelopment.

- EDC Coordinator submitted the application for a proposed *Route 9 Business Corridor* before the due date of June 4th 2021.
- The project aims to address issues that limit the business competitiveness of Route 9 and requests assistance with the following:
 - Conduct a review of the current zoning code of Southborough's Business Highway and Industrial zoned areas along Route 9.
 - Provide recommendations for recodification for these areas.
 - Provide recommendations for implementing specific Economic Development tools.
 - Provide recommendations to improve traffic patterns that will facilitate access to businesses along Route 9.

AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT:

The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) of 2021 creates new State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds. Southborough is expected to receive about \$3.1 million in federal funding through the end of 2024 (FY2025). The Act specifies that this funding can be used for the following:

- *Replace revenue lost or reduced as a result of the pandemic*
- *Restoration of municipal services*
- *Fund COVID 19-related costs*
- *Provide support to aid households and businesses impacted by the crisis*
- *Invest in economic recovery and renewal*
- *Fund investments in water, sewer and broadband infrastructure*

The Treasury Department will provide specific guidance on allowable uses of the funds and will determine final allocations based on the most recent census data and the final language in the law.

- The EDC is discussing the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 and how funds could possibly be used for business assistance and support, economic development and strategic investments that will result in economic recovery and renewal for Southborough.

MICRO ENTERPRISE GRANT:

The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), made available by the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), is a federally funded program, created to assist micro-enterprises with emergency needs during the COVID-19 crisis. Southborough participated in a regional application with 23 communities in cooperation with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC).

- Round 7 is still open. Eligible enterprises can receive grants of up to \$25,000. Eligibility rules and application form can be found [here](https://massgcc.submittable.com/submit) (<https://massgcc.submittable.com/submit>)

OTHER:

- Governor Baker ended the State of Emergency on June 15th, 2021. However, extensions have been granted to some pandemic related policies:
- Restaurants are allowed to continue to-go beer, wine and cocktail sales through May 1, 2022. It includes language requiring that takeout and delivery drinks be sold at the same prices as those consumed on-site.
- Special permits for expanded outdoor dining, which would otherwise expire in 60 days, are valid until April 1, 2022

Reach out to the EDC or attend any of our upcoming meetings to get involved. Contact the EDC Coordinator at mmunsiff@southboroughma.com or 508-485 0710 ext. 3011 with questions, ideas or for more information. Visit us at www.southboroughedc.com. Follow us on Facebook: **Southborough EDC**

Thank you for Reading!



Downtown District: Purpose

It is the purpose of the Downtown District to make mixed-use development options more readily available in the downtown area, and to encourage thoughtful and distinctive development or redevelopment opportunities that prioritize a diversity of uses, use and design compatibility, accessibility, innovative parking solutions and overall compliance with the performance and design standards to follow.

More specific objectives of the Downtown District include to:

- 1) Promote revitalization of Southborough's downtown area by encouraging and facilitating a mixed-use environment.
- 2) Foster a diverse mix of retail, office, residential, and recreational uses for residents, businesses, students, and visitors.
- 3) Update the range of non-residential uses allowed, thereby promoting the creation of local jobs.
- 4) Provide more diverse local housing opportunities (within mixed-use development).
- 5) Encourage village-style streetscapes and uses, in part through modification of existing dimensional requirements.
- 6) Increase the town's tax base by creating a thriving small business environment, helping existing businesses and attracting new enterprises.
- 7) Permit uses that promote conversion of existing buildings in a manner that maintains the visual character and architectural scale of existing development within the Downtown District.
- 8) Foster a vibrant environment to live, work, and play, encouraging connectivity, pedestrian and bicycle-friendly options, and community gathering space.

Downtown District: What is Being Proposed

What changes when the Downtown District zoning bylaw is adopted?

- 1) **An update of permitted uses** to reflect the current day-and-age (*see slide 4 for comparison of existing and proposed bylaw*)
- 2) **By-right or 'pre-approved' uses** to allow for a more expedited permitting process and encourage desirable uses in the Downtown District (*see slide 5*).
- 3) **Allow for mixed-use:** retail/commercial and residential uses are permitted on the same lot and in one building (*see slide 6 on mixed-use*)
- 4) **Encourage a village-style streetscape**, through carefully crafted development standards (setback, height, dimensional and frontage requirements)
- 5) **Adoption of Design Guidelines** to encourage that new construction and conversion of existing buildings fit within the visual character and architectural scale of existing development in the Downtown District.

Downtown District: Permitted Uses Comparison

§ 174-8.4 BV Business Village District

A. Permitted uses are as follows:

- (1) All uses permitted in the residential districts (RA and RB).
- (2) A mobile home or travel trailer used as a dwelling or business quarters for 30 days or fewer in a year.

B. Permitted uses up to 2,000 square feet are as follows:

- (1) Retail sales and services which do not involve manufacturing on the premises.
- (2) Newspaper, job printing and publishing.
- (3) Office, bank, office building.
- (4) Hotel or motel, restaurant (excluding drive-through food service establishments).
- (5) Clinic or medical testing laboratory.
- (6) Dwelling on the premises for a night watchman or janitor.
- (7) Cafeteria on the premises for use by employees and not the general public.

§ 174-8.12 Downtown District

(A) Permitted uses are as follows:

1. All uses permitted in the residential districts (RA and RB).
2. Mixed-use development, provided that each nonresidential use in the development is a permitted use under this Section 174-8.12(A) or Section 174-8.12(B) and provided that the number of dwelling units does not exceed eight (8).
3. Professional or business office, or bank, but not including a medical or dental office.
4. Custom manufacturing of custom goods sold primarily on the premises, such as a woodworking shop, shop for artisan or craftsman, or bakery.
5. Bed and breakfast.
6. Child care center.
7. Co-work center.

(B) Permitted uses, up to a maximum of 3,000 square feet per establishment.

1. Retail sales and services.
2. Ice cream shop, sandwich shop, candy shop, other specialty food service establishment serving walk-in customers (drive-through service is prohibited).
3. Restaurant, with indoor seating and outdoor seating on an adjacent patio (drive-through service is prohibited).
4. Personal services such as barber shop, beauty salon, tailor, or shoe repair.

Downtown District: By-Right Uses

- Encourages desirable uses
- Streamlines permitting process for desirable uses
- Preserves the Town's priorities for vision of Downtown
- Helps attract investment by providing certainty

The advantage of by-right development is predictability: development can proceed “in accordance with pre-set regulation rather than with case-by-case exercise of discretion by officials.”

DOWNTOWN DISTRICT BY RIGHT USES:

A. Permitted uses are as follows:

- (1) All uses permitted in the residential districts (RA and RB).
- (2) Mixed-use development, provided that each nonresidential use in the development is a permitted use under this Section 174-8.12(A) or Section 174-8.12(B) and provided that the number of dwelling units does not exceed eight (8).
- (3) Professional or business office, or bank, but not including a medical or dental office.
- (4) Custom manufacturing of custom goods sold primarily on the premises, such as a woodworking shop, shop for artisan or craftsperson, or bakery.
- (5) Bed and breakfast.
- (6) Child care center.
- (7) Co-work center.

B. Permitted uses, up to a maximum of 3,000 square feet per establishment:

- (1) Retail sales
- (2) Ice cream shop, sandwich shop, candy shop, other specialty food service establishment serving walk-in customers (drive-through service is prohibited)
- (3) Restaurant, with indoor seating and outdoor seating on an adjacent patio (drive-through service is prohibited)
- (4) Personal services such as barber shop, beauty salon, tailor, or shoe repair

Downtown District: Mixed Use

Mixed-use development combines different uses within the same building.

Mixed-use projects may include any combination of housing, office, retail, medical, recreational or commercial components.

Provides for more public uses on the ground floor, facing the street such as retail, restaurants, commercial uses and more private uses on the upper floor(s) such as residential units, or office space.



Downtown District: Final Resolved Issues

The current proposed Downtown District zoning bylaw (DD Version 9) is the product of a collaborative effort between the Economic Development Committee, Board of Selectmen, Planning Board and other boards and committees. The Downtown District zoning bylaw as written, was produced by Zoning & Planning consultant Judi Barrett and Zoning Legal Counsel Adam Costa from Mead, Talerman & Costa. Funds used were obtained from a \$50,000 Planning Assistance Grant from the Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs.

The current proposed Downtown District zoning bylaw (Version 9) was voted on by the BOS and was sent to the Planning Board on June 23, 2021. Public Hearings will be scheduled to allow further input from residents. The following outstanding issues were deliberated and agreed upon by the BOS on June 22nd, 2021:

- *Maintaining a Special Permit threshold of 3,000 SF per establishment.*
- *Replacing the 80% Max. Lot Coverage with a permitted Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 0.35 and up to 0.5 by Special Permit.*
- *Removing the height increase to 4 stories by Special Permit.*
- *Accepting all of the edits made by consultant Adam Costa after his discussion with M. Luttrell and M. Hoolahan from the Planning Board.*

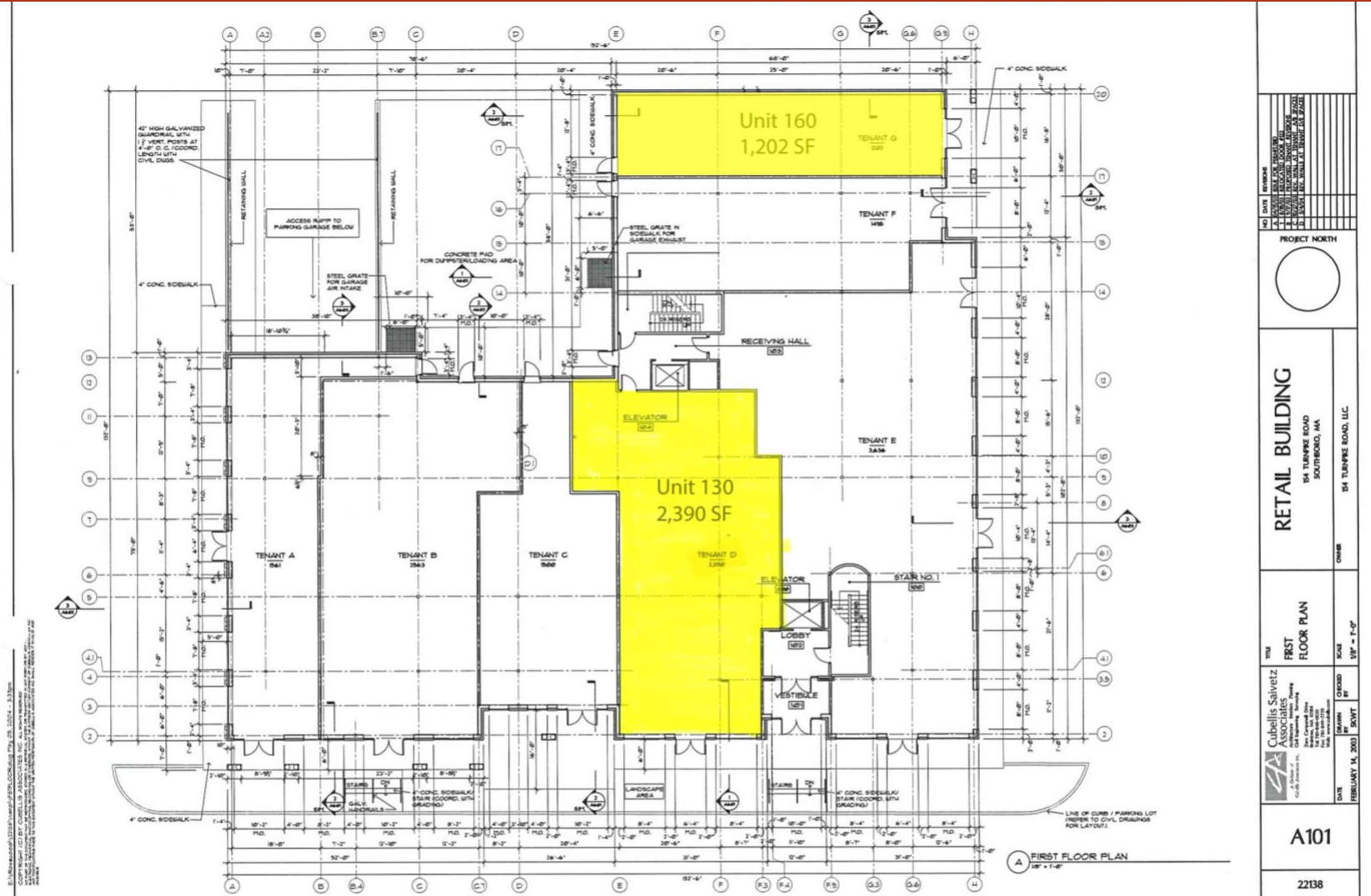
The Downtown District V9 with latest highlighted edits, can be found [here](#).

Southborough: Size of Commercial Spaces

White's Corner:

- 1,500 SF - Hola Restaurante
- 1,500 SF - Coldstone Creamery
- 1,600 SF - Starbucks
- 2,600 SF - Vin Bin
- 3,700 SF - Tomasso

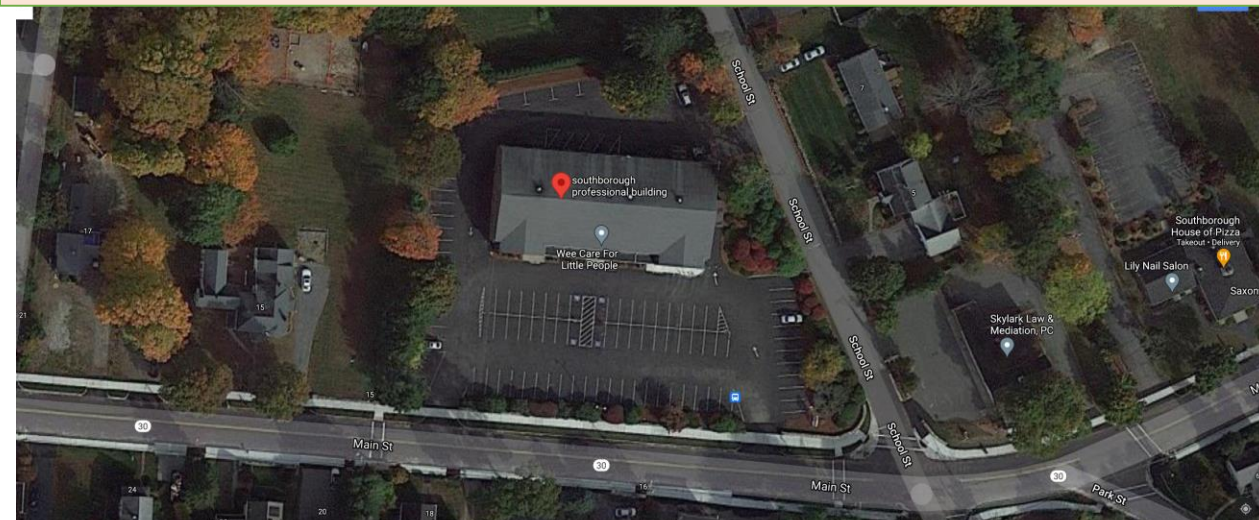
After looking at existing commercial spaces, the BOS agreed that 3,000 SF per establishment was a reasonable size for a use within a building. Anything larger will require a Special Permit from the Planning Board.



Downtown District: Maximum Lot Coverage

Lot coverage is the percent of the total lot covered by buildings and impervious surfaces.

For example, houses, garages, sheds, gazebos, swimming pools, driveways, parking lots and covered patios all count as part of lot coverage.



11 Main Street currently has a lot coverage of 86%.

The proposed Downtown District bylaw would require more green space, less lot coverage, parking at the back, a building of up to 3 stories and placement closer to road and walkway. In addition, design guidelines would ensure the architecture of the building fits within the historic nature of Downtown.

Land Area: 1.601 acres

Building footprint: 11,052 SF

Building size 22,104 SF

Paving + Canopy: 48,000 SF + 760 SF

Downtown District: Floor Area Ratio

174-8.12 Downtown District F (6): Max. Floor Area Ratio: 0.35 as of right, or a maximum of 0.5 by special permit from the Planning Board.

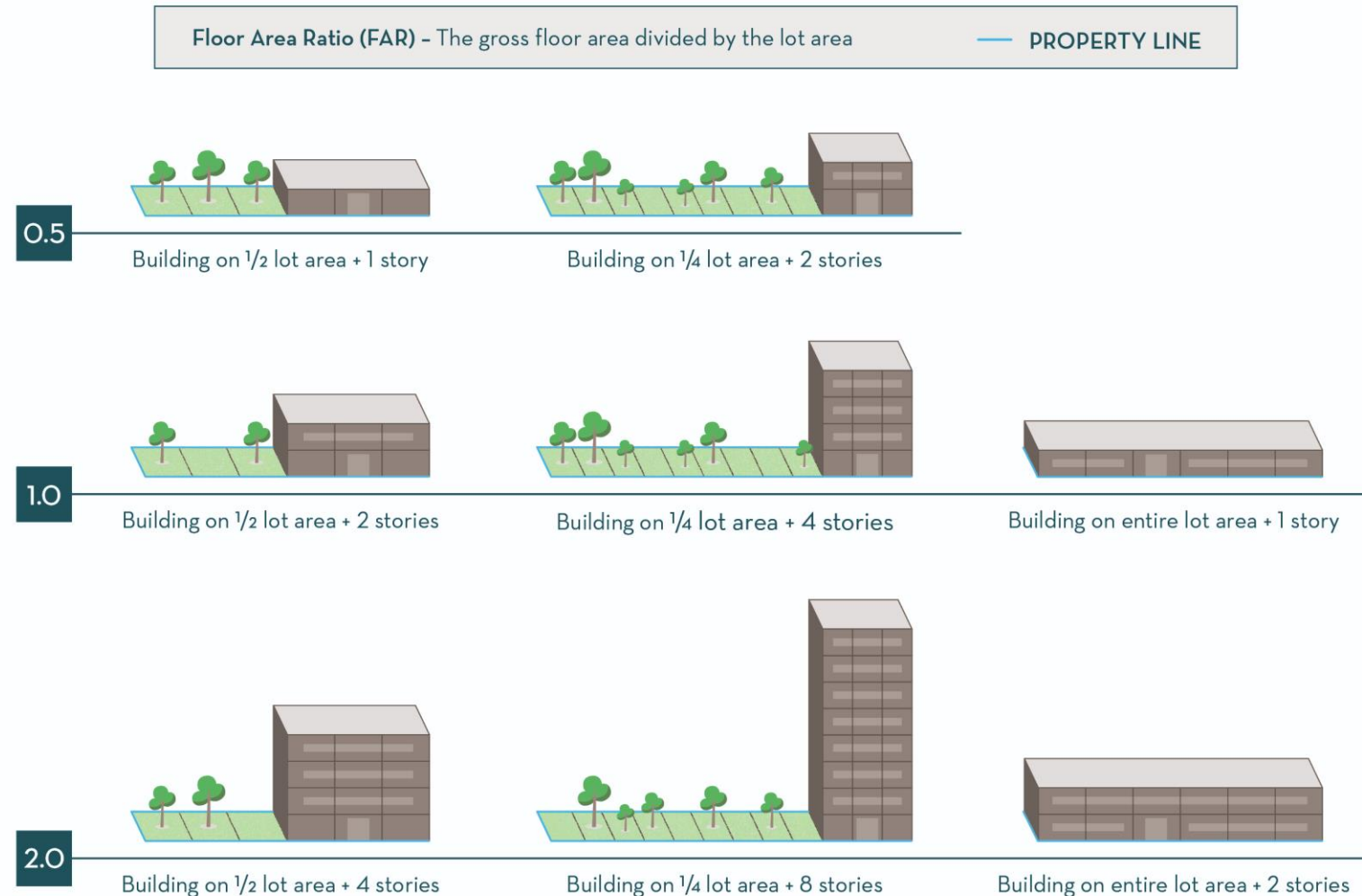
Floor Area Ratio:

- 1) This ratio is constant for a zone.
- 2) A floor area ratio of 1.0 means that floor area may equal lot area.
- 3) A FAR of 2.0 means that the floor area may be up to two times as large as the lot area.
- 4) A FAR of 0.5 means that the floor area may be no more than half the lot area.

Source: American Planning Association

A floor area ratio of 0.35 means that:

- a single story building can have a floor area of up to a third (or 35%) of the entire lot.
- A building with 2 stories can cover 17.5% of the lot
- A building with 3 stories can only cover 11.6% of the total lot area.



Downtown District: Design Guidelines

The adoption of Design Guidelines gives potential investors and developers a clear direction on the visual character and architectural scale of building designs that is *desired* by the Town in the Downtown District.

Design guidelines:

- 1) Provide structure and standards for those looking to do development work in the Downtown District, providing predictability for the developer and consistency and vision for the Town;
- 2) Separate from the performance standards included in the bylaw such as height limits, parking requirements, set-backs etc.;
- 3) Will be promulgated and enforced by the Planning Board;
- 4) May be changed by the Planning Board without Town Meeting approval, making it a document more easily changeable than the Bylaw as needed in accordance with changes in style, innovation of new materials, etc.
- 5) Planning Board could include in the Design Guidelines a public hearing process to allow for public comment and input prior to implementing changes.

Downtown District: Zoning Map

The Downtown District will follow the existing boundary of the commercially zoned Downtown Business Village District

