

Revised Littleton Village-Littleton Common Area Technical Memo

TO: Littleton Planning Board, Littleton Board of Selectmen, Keith Bergman, Maren Toohill
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DA: 2 December 2009

Revised Approach

We propose to modify the Littleton zoning bylaw to create a second business zone, specifically for the Common Area. Mixed Use Projects would be allowed by Special Permit granted by the Planning Board only within the new business zone. Enhanced design guidelines for the new zone would be included in the Site Plan Requirements. We feel this is the best way to accomplish many of the Town's goals for the Common Area.

Discussion

Many of the desired changes in the Common Area will be achieved by a more unified design scheme. Currently, all "substantial alterations" of a non-residential structure require Site Plan Review by the Planning Board. It is proposed that enhanced design criteria for the Common Area (Business A zone) be included in the Site Plan Requirements.

Mixed Use is the only new use recommended for the Business A zone, allowed by Special Permit from the Planning Board. To ensure good design and to further the community's vision, additional criteria for the Planning Board to consider in reviewing applications for Mixed Use Projects in the Business A zone are included in Site Plan Requirements.

All other use and dimensional requirements mirror the Business B zone to be applied to other Business areas in Littleton (currently zoned Business).

We have included additional draft zoning bylaw provisions to implement the revised approach.

In addition, the zoning map will need to be amended to reflect the new zoning designation.

NEW Draft Bylaw Provisions

Establish a second Business Zone specifically for the Common Area:

Article V: Use Regulations

Section 173-22 Establishment of districts

A. District enumerated

(1) For the purpose of this chapter, the Town of Littleton is hereby divided into the following types of zoning districts

Business Districts

Business A [For the Littleton Common area, currently zoned B]

Business B [For all other areas currently zoned B]

Section 173-26 Use Regulations Schedule

A. Principal uses

Revise the Schedule to list, as headings under “Districts” **BA and BB**

B. Accessory uses

Revise the Schedule to list, as headings under “Districts” **BA and BB**

Keep all Uses the same, except add “Mixed Use” as a new Residential Use, designated “P” in BA, and N in all other Districts

<u>RESIDENTIAL USES</u>	<u>R</u>	<u>BA</u>	<u>BB</u>	<u>IA</u>	<u>IB</u>
Mixed Use	N	P	N	N	N

[Requires Special Permit granted by Planning Board]

Intensity of Use Schedule (Last Pages of bylaw)

Add BA and BB to the “District” listing in the first column

REVISED Draft Provisions from the Technical Memo dated Nov. 24, 2009

Changes are ***bold, italic, highlighted.***

1. Add to Article II Definitions

Artist Housing

A residence and work space of one or more persons actively engaged professionally or as an avocation, in commercial graphic arts; fine arts (painting, printmaking, sculpting, ceramics, etc.) art and document restoration; the performing and visual arts (dance, choreography, photography, filmmaking, etc.) or the composition of music. This definition does not include any Adult Entertainment Uses as defined in the current Littleton zoning bylaw (Articles II and XXII).

Mixed Use Development: A combination of residential and commercial uses, arranged vertically (in multiple stories of buildings), or horizontally (adjacent to one another in one or more buildings) within a lot. No more than ten percent (10%) of the total number of dwelling units in the development may consist of 3 or more bedrooms.

2. Add to Article IV Site Plan Requirements

Section 173-20 Special Design Provisions **for the Business A zone**

The Planning Board shall consider the following design criteria in conducting Site Plan Review for projects in the ***Business A zoning district (Littleton Common Area).***

Design Goals

Buildings and renovations shall be of a design similar to or compatible with traditional architecture in the Town of Littleton in terms of scale, massing, roof shape, spacing and exterior materials. The design standards are intended to promote quality development consistent with the Town's sense of history, human scale and pedestrian-oriented village character.

Building Scale

The size and detailing of buildings shall reflect the community preference for moderate-scale structures that resemble houses or barns, and do not resemble "big box shopping centers". New buildings and/or substantial alterations shall incorporate features to add visual interest while reducing the appearance of bulk or mass. Such features include varied facades, rooflines, roof heights, materials, and details such as brick chimneys or shutters.

Buildings shall relate to the pedestrian scale by:

- Including appropriate architectural details to add visual interest along the ground floor of all facades that face streets, squares, pedestrian pathways, parking lots, or other significant pedestrian spaces.
- Articulate the base, middle, and top of the facade separated by cornices, string cornices, step-backs or other similar features.
- Continuous lengths of flat, blank walls adjacent to streets, pedestrian pathways, or open spaces shall not be permitted.

Roof Form

New construction, including new development above existing buildings and/or substantial alterations, shall incorporate gables or other traditional pitched roof forms which will be consistent with the historic architecture of the Town of Littleton.

Mechanical equipment located on roofs shall be screened, organized and designed as a component of the roof design, and not appear to be a leftover or add-on element.

Entrances

All primary commercial and residential building entrances shall be visible from the right-of-way and the sidewalk, and shall have an entrance directly accessible from the sidewalk.

Doors shall not extend beyond the exterior facade into pedestrian pathways.

External Materials and Appearance

Predominant wall materials shall have the appearance of wood, brick or stone painted or coated in a non-metallic finish. Cladding materials should be consistent on all facades with the exception of special design elements such as gables or dormers.

Awnings and canopies shall be compatible with the architectural style of the building. Colors and patterns used for awnings and canopies shall be subdued and compatible with existing awnings on adjacent buildings.

Except for minor trim, the building shall avoid the appearance of reflective materials such as porcelain enamel or sheet metal. Window panes shall be non-reflective.

Ground floor commercial building facades facing streets, squares, or other significant pedestrian spaces shall contain transparent windows encompassing a minimum of 40 percent of the facade surface.

Any alteration of or addition to an existing historic structure shall employ materials, colors and textures as well as massing, size, scale and architectural features that are compatible with the original structure. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic property shall be preserved.

Landscaping

To the maximum extent possible projects in the Common Area shall provide pedestrian-friendly amenities, such as wide sidewalks/pathways, outdoor seating, patios or courtyards. Site landscaping shall be maximized.

Links/sidewalks designed to connect parking areas with adjacent developments are encouraged to further the goal of providing safe pedestrian access to businesses within the Littleton Common.

Service Areas, Utilities and Equipment

Service and loading areas and mechanical equipment and utilities shall be unobtrusive or sufficiently screened so that they are not visible from streets or primary public open spaces and shall incorporate effective techniques for noise buffering from adjacent uses. Waste disposal areas shall follow all relevant requirements of the current Littleton zoning by-law.

Sustainable Building Design

New buildings constructed in the Littleton Common Area shall comply with the current Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) criteria, as promulgated by the U.S. Green Building Council to the maximum extent feasible.

3. Add to Article IV Site Plan Requirements

Section 173- 21 Special Provisions for Mixed Use Developments

The Planning Board shall consider the following criteria in evaluating Special Permit applications and Site Plans for Mixed Use Developments in the **Business A zoning district:**

General Criteria

- Suitability of the site for mixed use development, including adequacy of the site in terms of the density of proposed uses
- Impact on the visual character of the business district and surrounding neighborhood
- Adequacy of pedestrian access to buildings, public spaces, and between adjacent uses
- Degree to which the proposed project complies with the goals of the Littleton Master Plan

Mix of Uses

The mix of uses shall be balanced and compatible and shall contribute to a vibrant village atmosphere, including ground floor street-front uses comprised of retail, restaurant, and office uses.

Ground Floor Uses

Ground floors of buildings fronting streets or public access ways shall be reserved for commercial uses except as specified below.

Dwelling units shall be allowed on ground floors of buildings as follows:

- The building is set behind another building that has commercial uses on the ground floor, or
- The residential portion of the ground floor of a building is set behind street-front retail/office/restaurant uses within the same building, or
- The Planning Board determines that street-front residential uses will not have an adverse impact on the continuity of the commercial street front uses, and where such street-front residential uses will not be adversely affected by proximity to street and adjacent commercial uses.

Parking

Entrances to dwelling units shall be visible and accessible from any parking areas located in the rear of a mixed-use building. All entrances are to have sufficient illumination at night time.

The Planning Board, consistent with Section 173-32 Parking Requirements, will consider the following parking requirements for Mixed Use Projects:

- 1.5 space per dwelling unit
- 1 space per 250 sq ft of retail