



Town Center Rezoning Public Forum

Planning and Economic Development Department
November 19, 2019

Quintessential New England Town Centers



Woodstock, VT



Newburyport, MA



Bar Harbor, ME

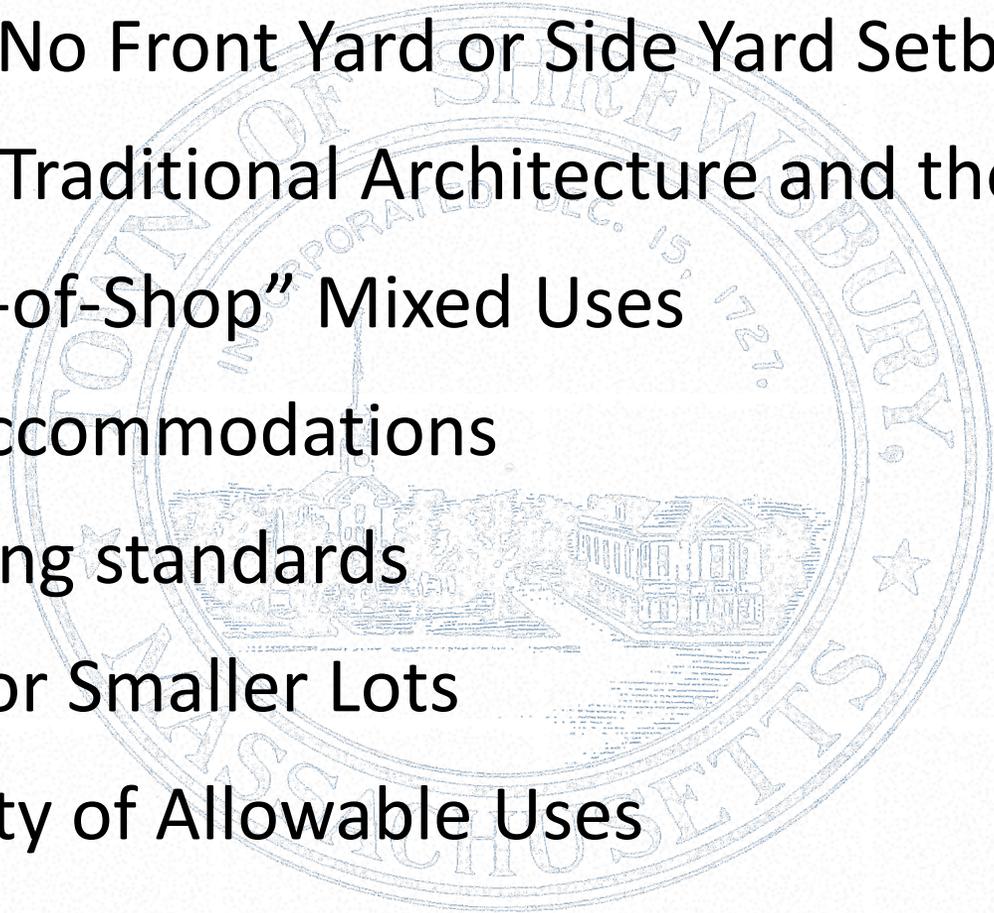


Durham, NH

Town of Shrewsbury, Massachusetts

Characteristics Shared by Traditional New England Town Centers

- Minimum or No Front Yard or Side Yard Setbacks
- Emphasis on Traditional Architecture and the “Human-scale”
- Vertical “Top-of-Shop” Mixed Uses
- Pedestrian Accommodations
- Flexible Parking standards
- Allowances for Smaller Lots
- A Wide Variety of Allowable Uses



Shrewsbury Town Center already has a few elements of a Traditional New England Village...

Rear of building parking

Vertical mix of uses



Traditional New England Design and Architecture



Wider sidewalk, zero setback

...but not everywhere



2016 Master Plan Town Center Goals

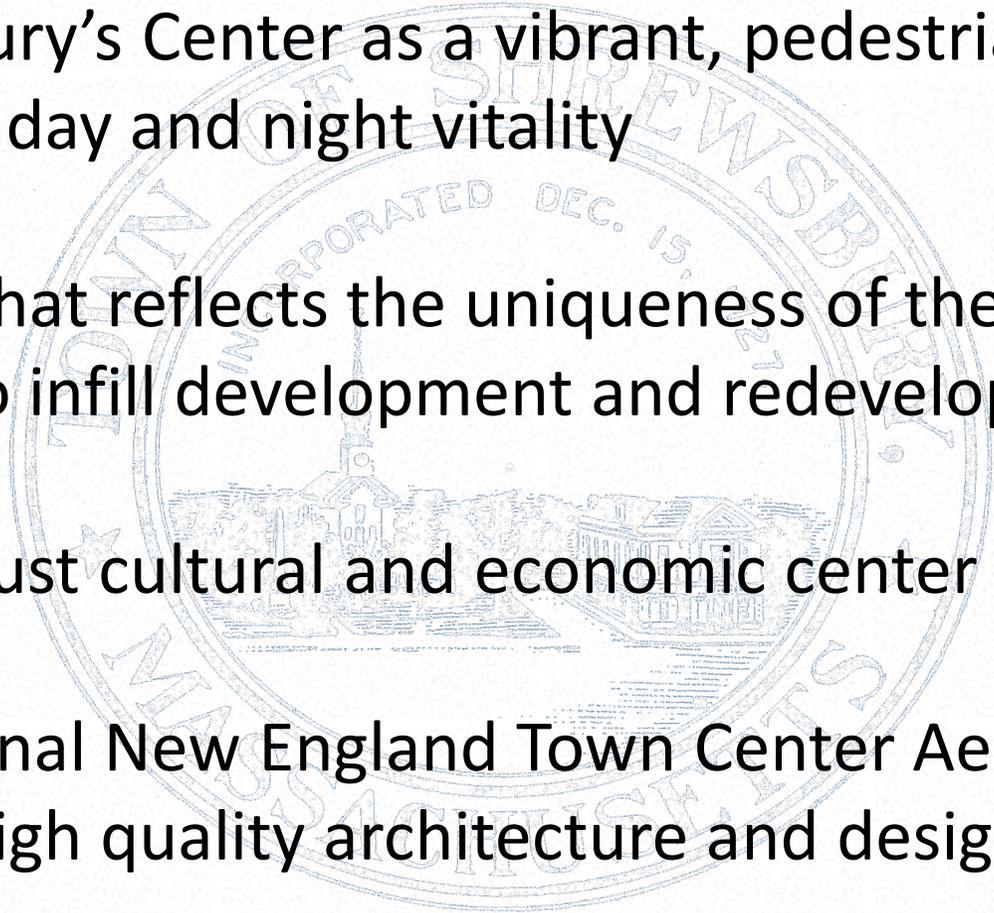
Section LU4.1.a **...future infill is complementary to the compact style of the area.**

Section LU4.2: Promote the Town Center as a **pedestrian-friendly shopping and service area and a neighborhood gathering place.**

LU4.2.a **...determine the limits of the town center and its sphere of influence [and] consider making recommendations for managing parking, building design guidelines... [and] streetscape improvements.**

2019 Town Center Study refined the goals for the Town Center...

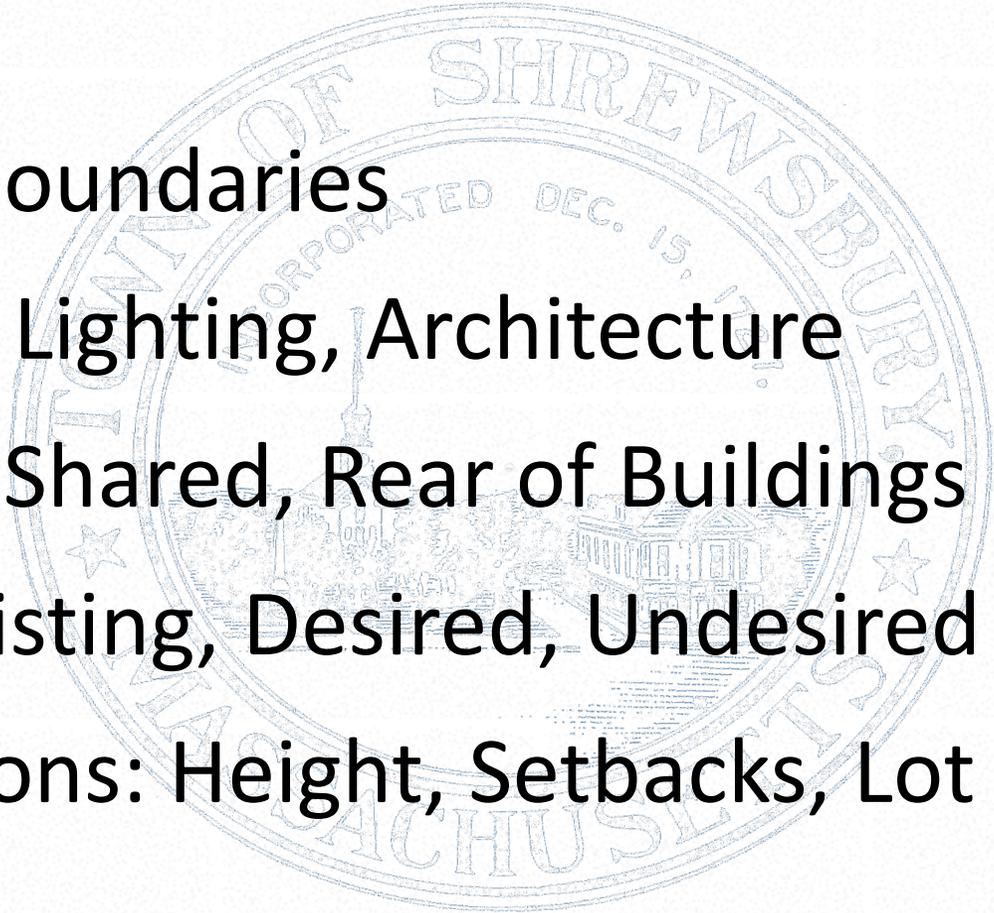
- Establish Shrewsbury's Center as a vibrant, pedestrian oriented environment with day and night vitality
- Introduce zoning that reflects the uniqueness of the Town Center and reduces barriers to infill development and redevelopment
- Create a more robust cultural and economic center in Shrewsbury
- Promote a traditional New England Town Center Aesthetic and Character that encourages high quality architecture and design



... and made recommendations to turn the goals into a reality

1. **Comprehensive zoning** in a new Town Center District
2. Design **standards and guidelines** for buildings and the space between a building's façade and the edge of pavement
3. **Flexible parking requirements** for greater flexibility, public lots, shared agreements and rear-of-building parking
4. Minimum design standards for **lighting & signage**
5. A **more predictable permitting** processes to create certainty and predictability for developers
6. A variety of allowable **“human-scale” uses** such as “top of the shop” mixed uses including as dwelling units

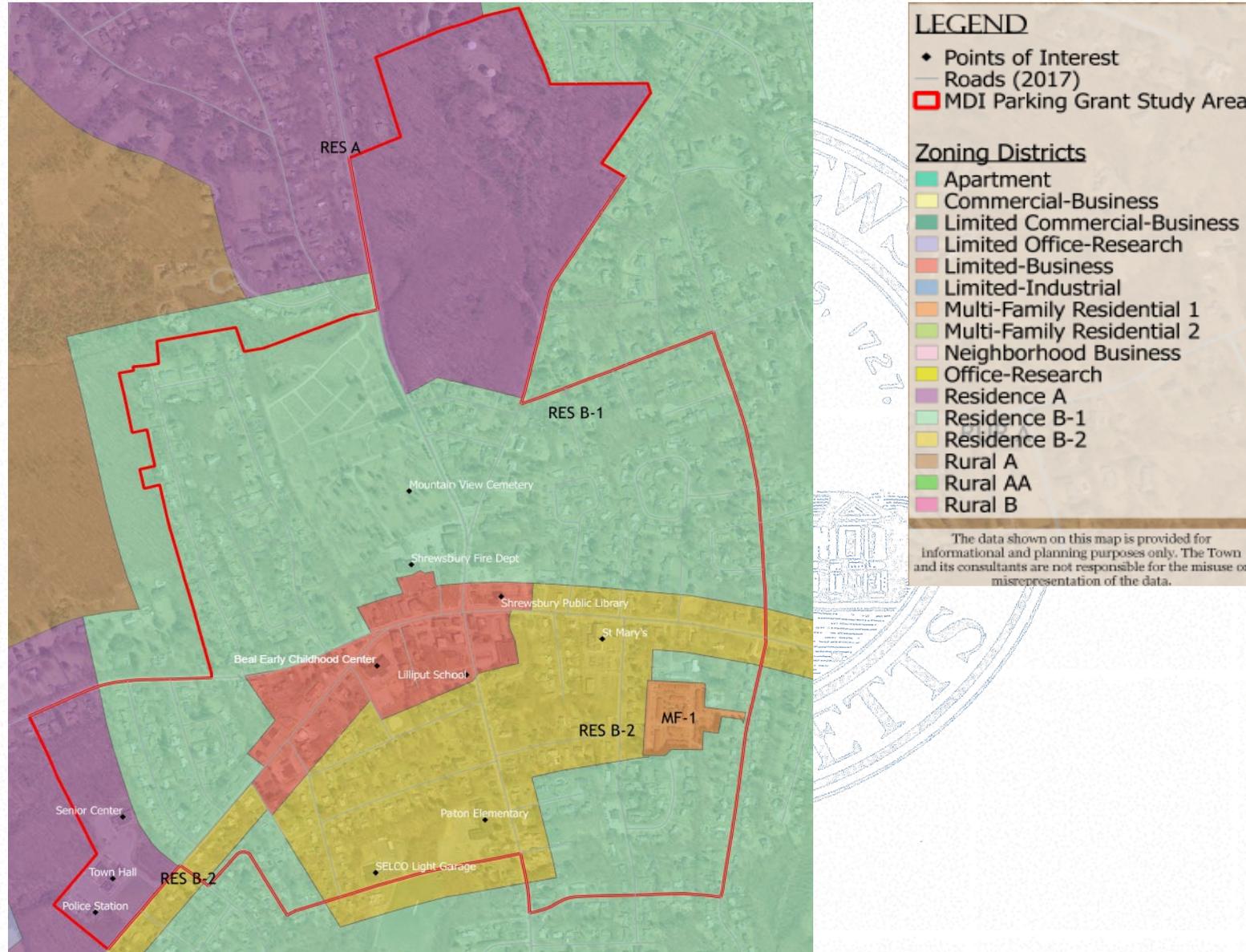
Public Forum Stations demonstrate the major elements of the proposed changes based on these recommendations

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- The seal of the Town of Shrewsbury, Massachusetts, is a circular emblem. It features a central illustration of a town with a prominent steeple, surrounded by a border containing the text "TOWN OF SHREWSBURY" and "INCORPORATED DEC. 15, 1786".
1. Zoning Boundaries
 2. Signage, Lighting, Architecture
 3. Parking: Shared, Rear of Buildings
 4. Uses: Existing, Desired, Undesired
 5. Dimensions: Height, Setbacks, Lot Sizes

Zoning Boundaries: Aerial View of Shrewsbury Town Center



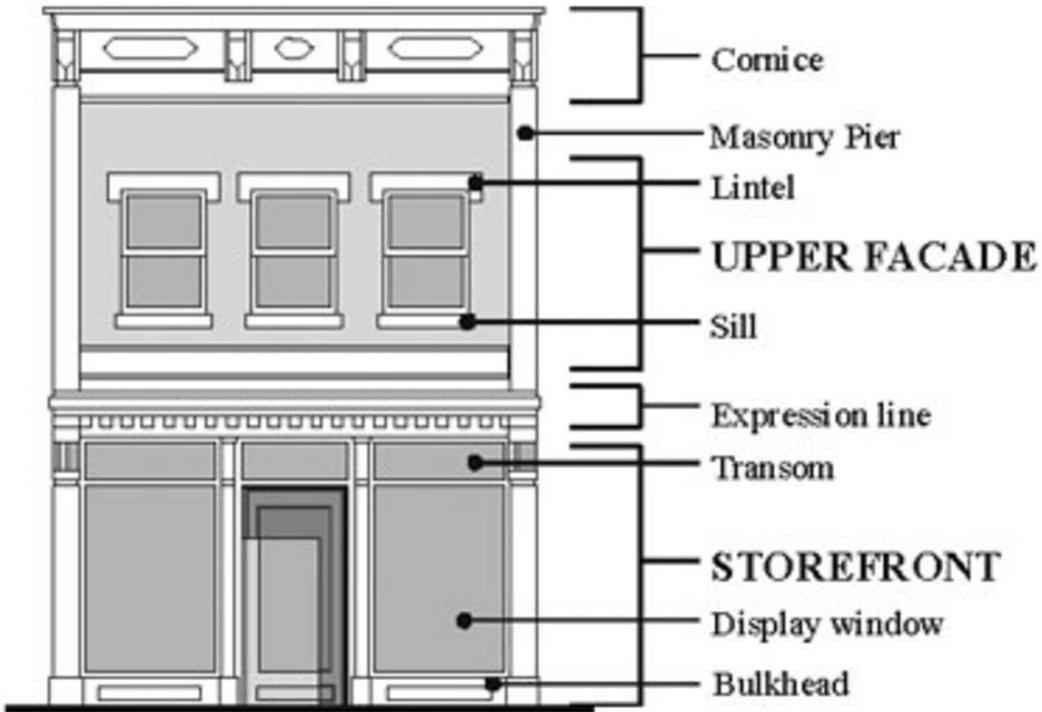
Zoning Boundaries: Existing Zoning Districts in the Town Center



Signage, Lighting and Architecture

Design standards = Required architectural styles and design elements

Design guidelines = Preferred but optional architectural styles and design elements



Pedestrian-Oriented Signage

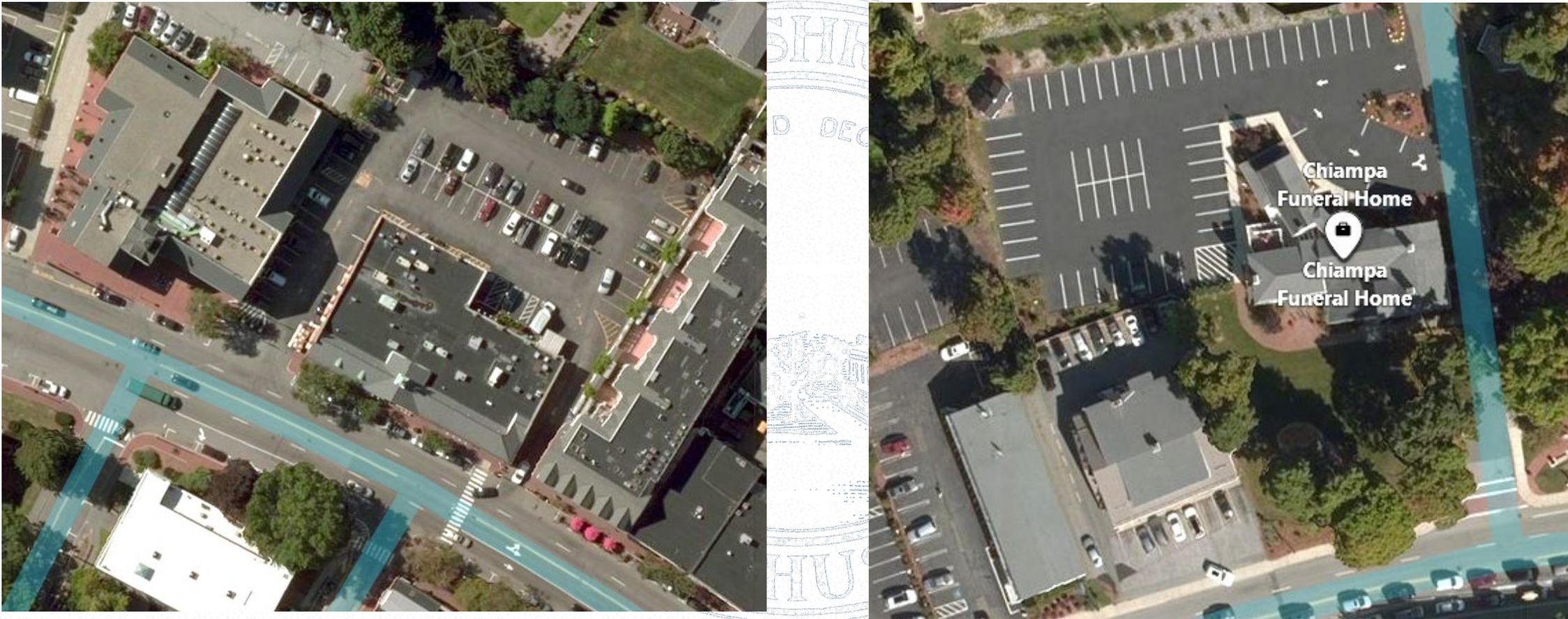


Exterior Lighting

Transoms

Wide Display Windows

Parking Standards and Requirements



Parking Behind Buildings, Shared Parking Arrangements, Changes in Minimum Requirements

Uses: Reconsidering what uses do we want, what uses should have Town oversight, and what uses we don't we want? And...



Outdoor Dining?



Micro-Brewery?



Small-scale "Boutique" Hotel?



...how will those uses be allowed?



Vertical "Top-of-Shop" Mixed Uses



Town Center Zoning

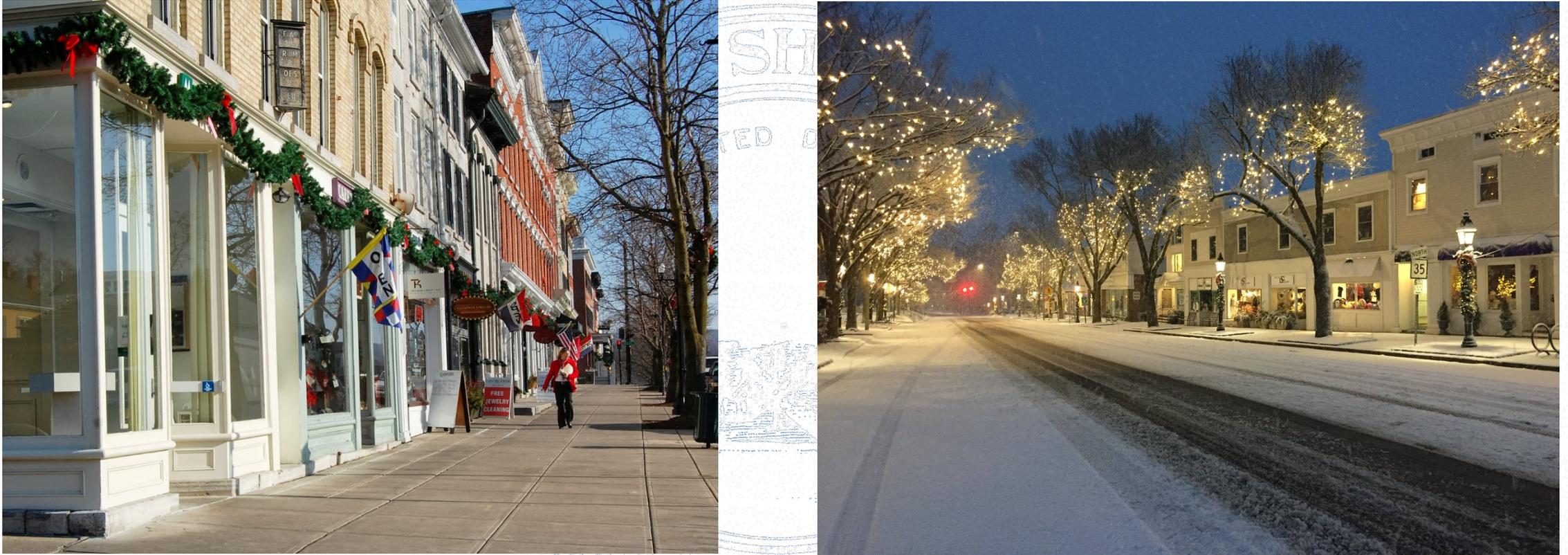
Single Use →
Horizontal



Mixed Use →
Vertical



Dimensions: Minimum Lot Sizes and Reduced Setbacks



Lot Size Variation = Varying building widths = More interesting streetscape
Reduced Setback = Buildings “meet” the (wide) sidewalk

An experience not just a corridor

Dimensions: Pedestrian Infrastructure



Contrasting materials and colors across curb cuts and driveways help to visually differentiate between driving areas and walking areas

A Note Regarding Planning and Zoning

Zoning sets parameters for how land can be used, but it does not ***make*** development happen.

Development in the Town Center would still require landowner support, savvy developers, financiers, skilled architects and builders.

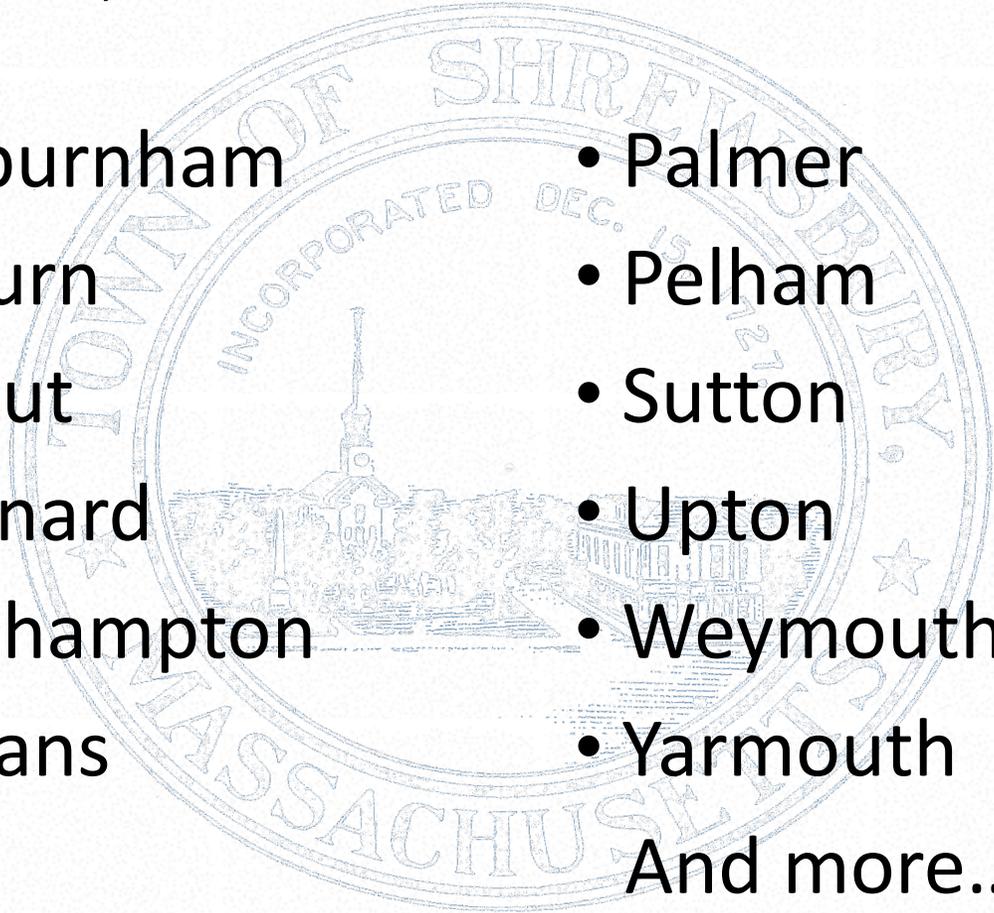
New Zoning would only impact new development in the Town Center.

New Zoning would not force owners of existing buildings to comply.

New would provide existing and future owners with new opportunities and possibilities for developing their property.

Sample of Massachusetts Towns that already have, or have recently approved, their own Town Center Village Districts

- Ashburnham
 - Auburn
 - Dracut
 - Maynard
 - Northampton
 - Orleans
 - Palmer
 - Pelham
 - Sutton
 - Upton
 - Weymouth
 - Yarmouth
- And more...



Questions for Forum Participants

- Are there new or different uses you would like or not like to see in the Town Center?
- What architectural elements do you prefer?
- Are there sign or lighting types you prefer?
- What do you see as the limits or border of the Town Center?
- Would you feel comfortable with slightly taller buildings than there are today along Maple Avenue, Main Street, or even northern Grafton Street?

Please fill in a note card or vote with a sticker!

Moving Forward with the Town Center Re-Zoning Process

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- | | |
|---|----------------------------------|
| 1. Initial Draft of Town Center Zoning District Bylaw | October – November 2019 |
| 2. Project Overview Presentation to Board of Selectmen | October 22, 2019 |
| 3. Public Forums | Nov. 19 and Dec. 11, 2019 |
| 4. Meetings with Town Center Stakeholders | January 2020 |
| 5. Presentation of Findings to Board of Selectmen | February 2020 |
| 6. Second Draft of Town Center Zoning District Bylaws | February 2020 |
| 6. Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee Public Hearings | April 2020 |
| 7. Planning Board Public Hearings | April 2 and May 7, 2020 |
| 8. Final Bylaw Language and Town Meeting | May, 2020 |

Planning and Economic Development Department

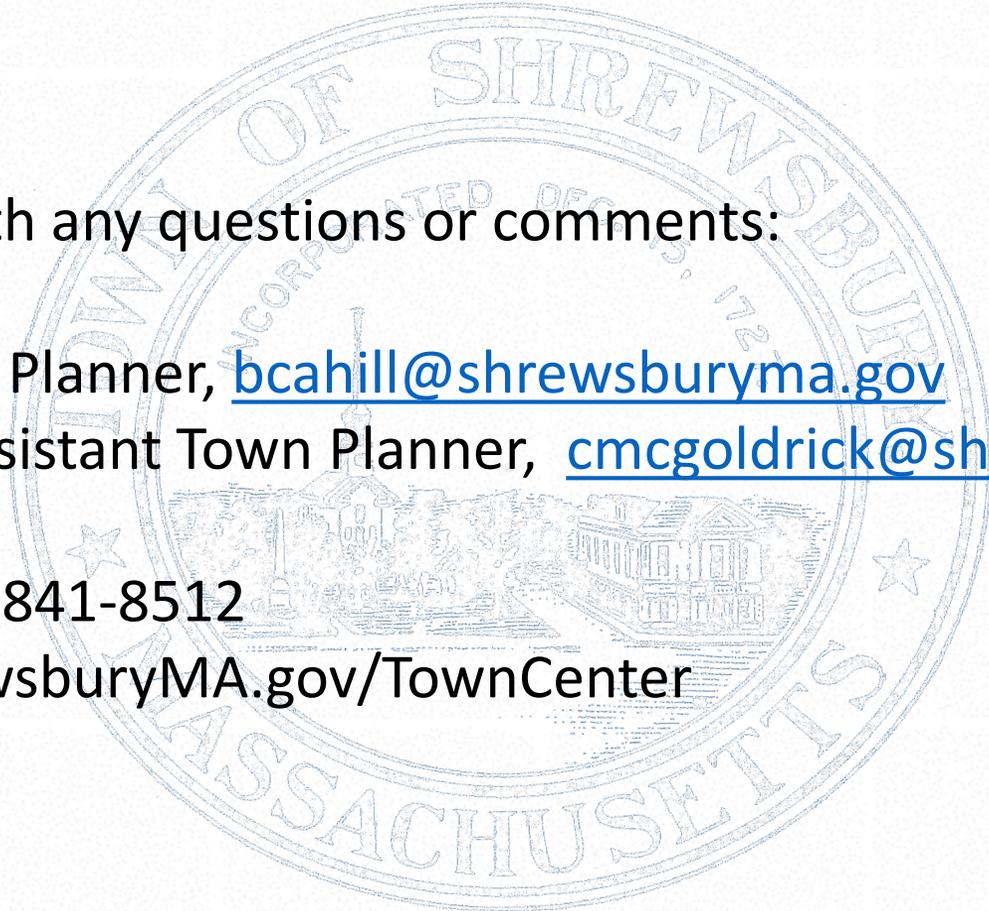
Please contact us with any questions or comments:

Bernard Cahill, Town Planner, bcahill@shrewsburyma.gov

Chris McGoldrick, Assistant Town Planner, cmcgoldrick@shrewsburyma.gov

Phone Number: 508-841-8512

Website: www.ShrewsburyMA.gov/TownCenter



Shrewsbury Town Center Rezoning

Plans and Reports Recommending Zoning Changes in the Town Center

1. Shrewsbury Master Plan, Shrewsbury Master Plan Committee, 2016.
2. Shrewsbury Town Center Parking Management Plan, Stantec Inc., 2018.
3. Shrewsbury Town Center Study, Horsley Witten Group, 2019.
4. Recommendations for the Reuse of the Beal School Property, Beal Reuse Committee, 2019.
5. Wayfinding and Branding Study, Favermann Design, On-going.
6. WPI Student Intersection Design Study, On-going.