



Town Center Rezoning Public Forums

Planning and Economic Development Department
Stakeholder Meeting with Shrewsbury Town Center Association
February 13, 2020

Timeline for 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
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Quintessential New England Town Centers



Woodstock, VT



Newburyport, MA



Bar Harbor, ME

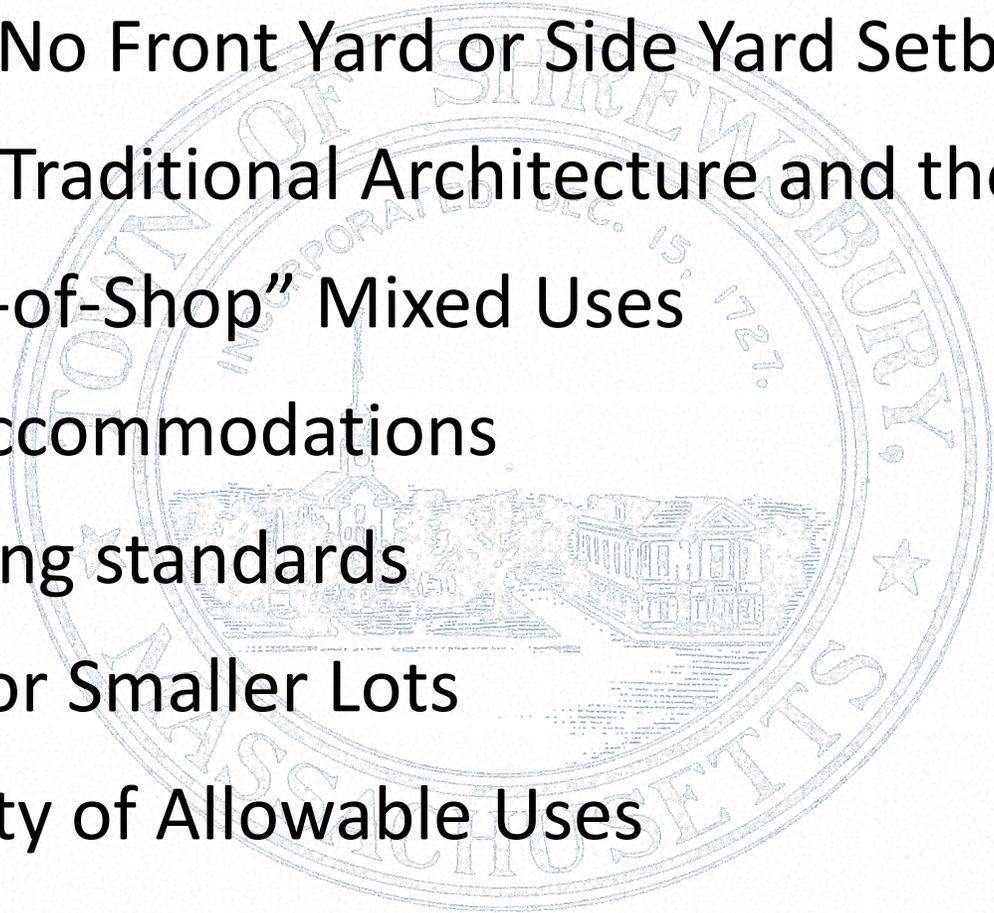


Durham, NH

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 Town Center Goals:

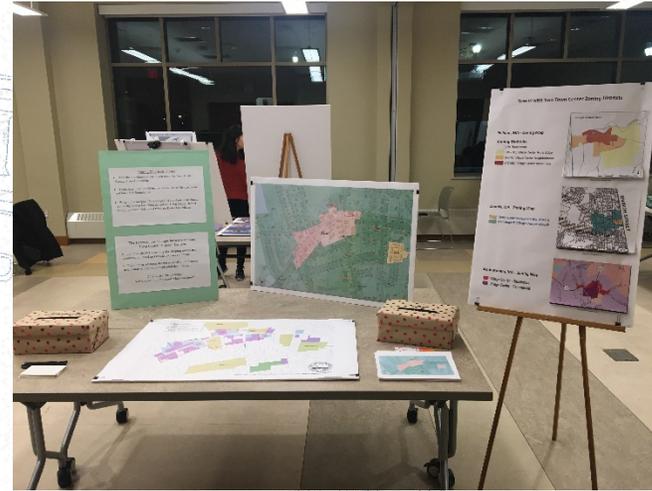
- Establish Shrewsbury's Center as a vibrant, pedestrian oriented environment with day and night vitality
- Create zoning that reflects the uniqueness of the Town Center and reduces barriers to infill development and redevelopment
- Create a more robust cultural and economic center in Shrewsbury
- Promote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

2019 Town Center Study

Provided recommendations for achieving those goals:

1. Design standards and guidelines for buildings and landscaping
2. Design standards for lighting & signage
3. Flexible parking standards that allow for public lots and shared parking arrangements to count toward parking requirements
4. Clearer and more predictable permitting processes to create certainty for developers and residents
5. Allowing a variety of “human-scale” uses and dimensions such as vertical mixed-use and zero front yard setbacks

Public Forums - November & December 2019



Feedback Summary from 2019 Public Forums

Parking Station

Support for:

- More on-street & off-street parking
- Public Parking behind Beal
- More signs to parking
- Clearer handicapped parking spaces
- Shared parking agreements
- Municipal parking counting
- Designated Lyft/Uber/Bus space

Uses Station

Support for:

- Condos & Apartments
- Greater mix of commercial
- Brewery/Tap House
- Sidewalk Café & Coffee shops
- “Pocket park”
- Small-scale hotel
- Prohibiting Marijuana sales in TC
- Prohibiting Cell towers

Design & Lighting Station

Support for:

- Dark Sky Lighting
- “Period” Street Lighting
- Gooseneck Lighting for Signage
- Hanging/Blade Signs for Shops
- Banning internally lit signs
- Federal, Victorian & Colonial Styles
- Building Signs not Free Standing
- Builders to choose from design list

Dimensions Station

Support for:

- Wider sidewalks
- Taller buildings (between 2 and 3 stories)
- Zero Lot lines, Buildings closer to the road
- Tree-lined sidewalks
- Pedestrian connections between Main St and Maple Ave
- Recommended towns - Lenox, Montpelier, Northampton, West Hartford, Hudson, Wellesley, Concord, Rockport

Zoning Boundaries Station

Support for:

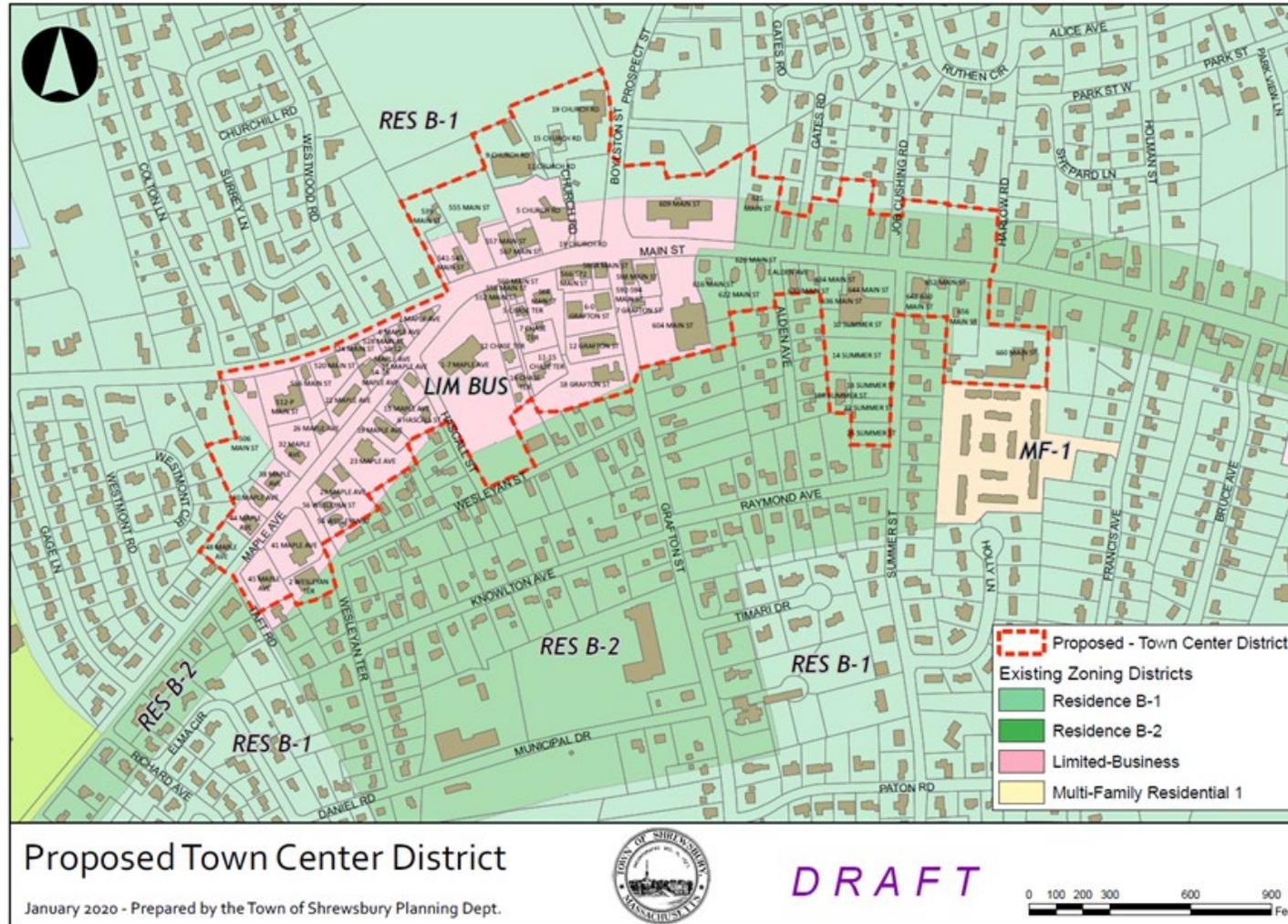
- Expanding current LB line eastward on Main Street
- OR Keeping TC line same as LB
- Some interest in two TC zones

Elements of the Proposed Town Center Zoning District

1. Town Center District Zoning Boundaries
2. Variety of Uses
3. Lighting and Signage Standards
4. Architectural Design Standards
5. Frontage and Landscaping Requirements
6. Parking Standards and Requirements



Existing and Proposed Town Center District



Overview of Proposed Allowable Uses



Vertical Mix of Uses
By Special Permit

Mixed-Use Development - Vertical Mix:

An integration of commercial and multi-family residential uses in a single structure in which the residential uses are located above the ground floor.



Micro and Nano Breweries
By Special Permit

Microbrewery:

A facility... for the production and packaging of malt, wine, or hard cider beverages for distribution retail or wholesale, on or off the premise, with a capacity of not more than fifteen thousand (15,000) barrels.

Nanobrewery: ...six thousand (6,000) barrels



Small-scale "Boutique" Hotels
By Special Permit

Boutique or Small-scale Hotel:

A small hotel not less than ten (10) and not more than 50 rooms, typically designed to blend into the community and reflect the neighborhoods and cultures around it.

Lighting and Signage Standards

Lighting:

Lighting for streets, parking areas, and civic/gathering spaces shall be decorative in shape, scale, and finish, with detailed, articulated treatments for the base, post, fixture, and crown.

Light poles:

Light poles and fixtures shall not exceed 20 feet in height.

Dark-Sky:

All exterior lights on private property shall be dark-sky compliant.

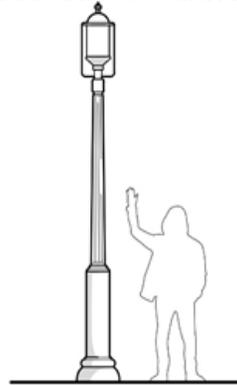


Figure 5
This illustration shows the proper scale and attention to aesthetic detail.

Permitted Signage:

- Externally Illuminated or Front-lit Signs shall have downward-directed, wall mounted lights with white, steady, stationary light only, with fully-shielded decorative lamps that do not obscure the sign's graphics.
- Wall Mounted Signs and Projected Signs (Blade or Hanging Signs): One sign of each type shall be allowed per tenant on each elevation of a building with a customer entrance. The sign should be located no lower than 7'6" above the ground floor, but not higher than the top of the first floor.
- Temporary banners provided they are only used for a period of thirty (30) days prior to and following the opening of a business or other establishment.

Prohibited Signage:

- Free-standing signs with clearance above the ground that is more than two feet above grade.
- Internally illuminated signs of any kind and signs made of plastic or vinyl.
- Illuminated signs with exposed neon tubing or exposed LEDs.
- Box style cabinet signs or "can signs" with illuminated, translucent background and silhouette, translucent or acrylic letters.

Design Standards



Building Articulation:

Multi-story buildings shall clearly articulate the base, middle (where applicable), and top of the building using cornices, borders of distinct material, or other articulating features on every visible surface of the building.

Building Materials:

For finished siding and foundations, natural materials such as brick, stone, wood/concrete clapboards and shingles, and slate are allowed. Asphalt shingles or similar materials for roofing are allowed. High-quality cement-fiber siding designed to preserve the traditional aesthetic character of the district is also allowed. Vinyl siding shall be prohibited.

Building Form:

Buildings with façades longer than forty (40) feet shall articulate the façade with features common to traditional New England architecture that create visual interest. Features shall include a combination of two or more of the following: varied rooflines, distinct signage for multiple tenants, awnings, arcades, pilasters, columns, recessed spaces and/or entrances, and any other features that serve to add texture

Design Standards

Example of Undesired Development

No variation in building materials to articulate stories, tenants and reduce building mass. All vinyl siding.

Lack of decorative borders to articulate between floors to break up mass of building

Exposed utilities



Windows are not well-proportioned for a town center setting

Entranceways are not pronounced or set apart from rest of façade through features such as awnings, arches or signs or being recessed.

Less than 50% of street level façade is transparent doors or windows

Design Standards



Roofline Form:

The roof design for new buildings shall provide a variety of building heights and varied roofline articulation reflecting traditional New England architecture. These roof shapes include gables, gambrels, flat roofs, mansards and any jointed configuration of these styles.

Dormers:

On pitched rooflines, dormers shall be used to break up roof surfaces

Building Massing:

A complex of smaller scale buildings is preferable to a single large structure because the varied massing provides visual interest and human scale

Property Frontage and Landscaping

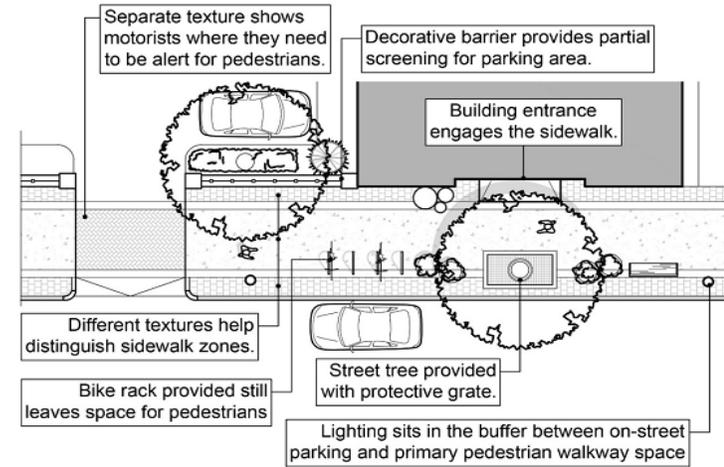


Figure 1

Sidewalk Width:

Sidewalks shall have a minimum width of eight (8) feet. Where the distance between the edge of pavement in the street and the building façade allows, sidewalks shall be greater than eight (8) feet wide.

Sidewalk Material:

Sidewalks should be reinforced concrete, however, the Planning Board may approve varied finishes for the concrete or a mix of materials consistent with the purposes of the Town Center District

Setbacks:

Front Yard – Minimum 0' / Maximum 10'
Side Yard – Minimum 0' / Maximum 10'
(Setbacks >10' Require a Special Permit)

Landscape Buffer:

An adequate buffer shall be provided between the edge of the street and the primary pedestrian walkway in order to supply enough space for benches, lighting, landscaping, street trees, trash receptacles or other amenities.

Landscaping:

Applicants shall provide a landscape plan and maintenance agreement that includes, but is not limited to, a combination of fixed and/or moveable planters, street trees, decorative plantings. Landscaped areas should be designed to remain functional and attractive during all seasons through a thoughtful selection of deciduous, evergreen, berrying, and flowering plant varieties

Proposed Parking Standards and Requirements

Parking Report:

Site Plan Approval applications in the Town Center District shall be accompanied by a Parking Report that demonstrates reasonable access to parking spaces on-site and/or off-site

Parking Reduction:

The permit granting authority may permit a reduction in the number of required parking spaces if the applicant provides a Parking Management Plan demonstrating that a reduction is warranted

Remote or Off-Site Parking:

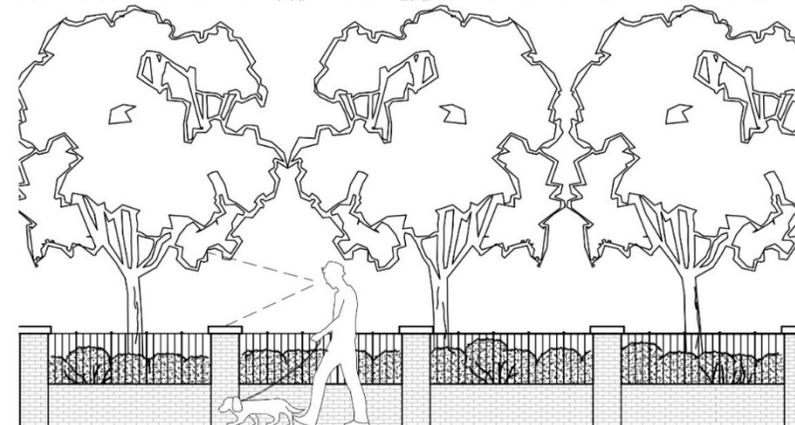
Parking may be located off-site to substitute for some or all of the required on-site parking spaces. Must be within 800 feet of the subject property line, show a clearly defined pedestrian route between the off-site parking and the subject property, provide a binding parking agreement

Parking Standards – Rear Parking:

Parking shall be located behind frontage buildings on the property and shall not be located between the front plane of a building and a street or a public way.

Parking Standards – Side Parking:

The Planning Board may issue a *Special Permit to allow for parking that is to the side, but applicant must provide a landscape buffer that includes a decorative barrier*, which may be designed as brick or stone finish walls, decorative fencing, or a combination of these treatments.

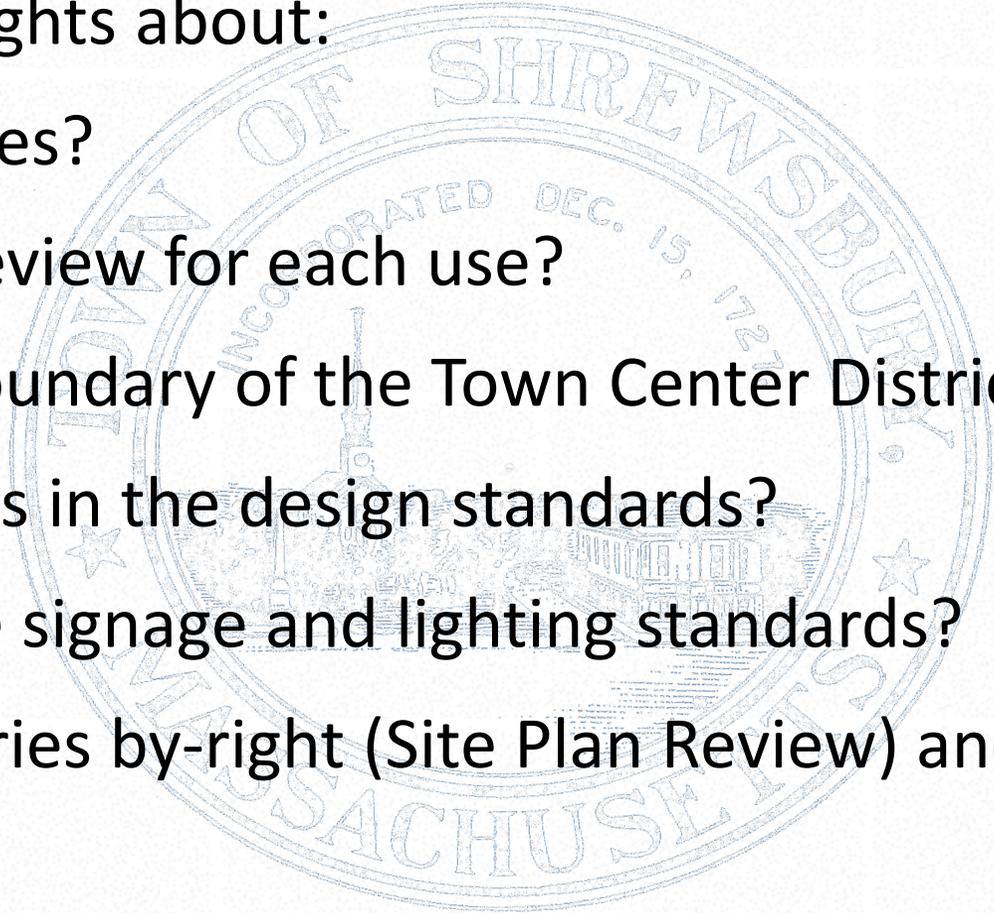


(Example of Decorative Barrier)

Some Questions for Consideration

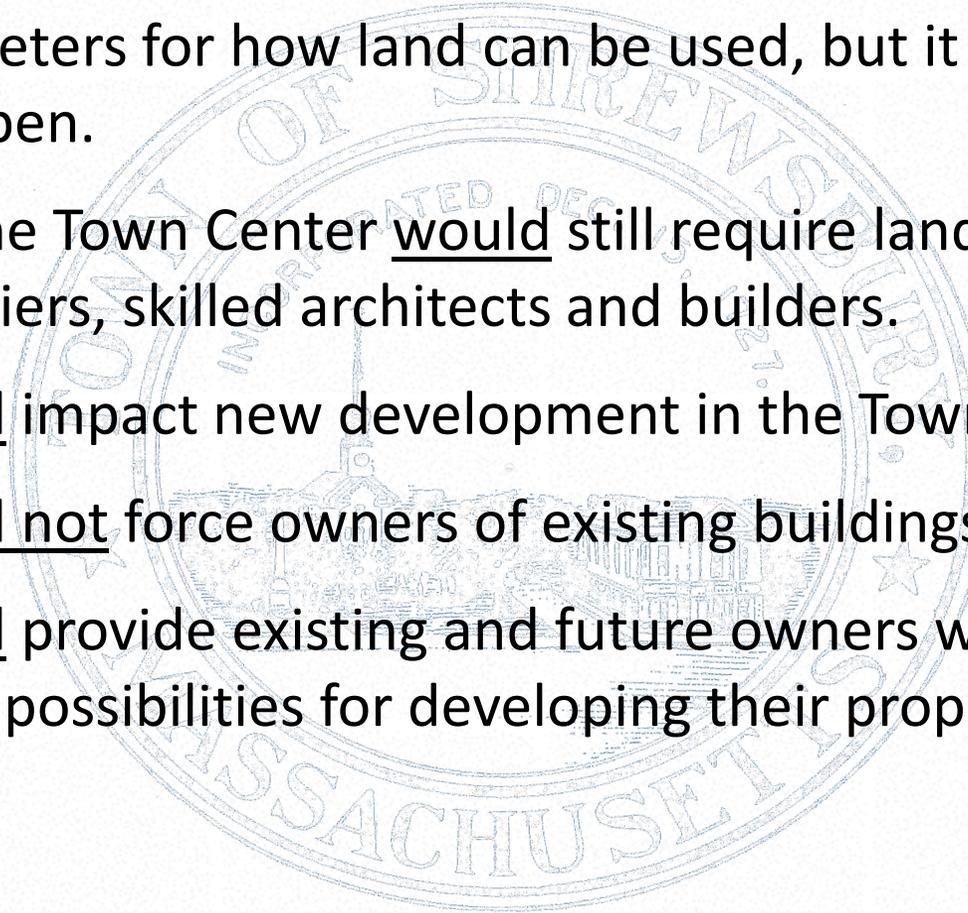
What are your thoughts about:

- The proposed uses?
- Levels of town review for each use?
- The proposed boundary of the Town Center District?
- The requirements in the design standards?
- The clarity of the signage and lighting standards?
- Allowing 2 ½ stories by-right (Site Plan Review) and 3 stories by Special Permit?



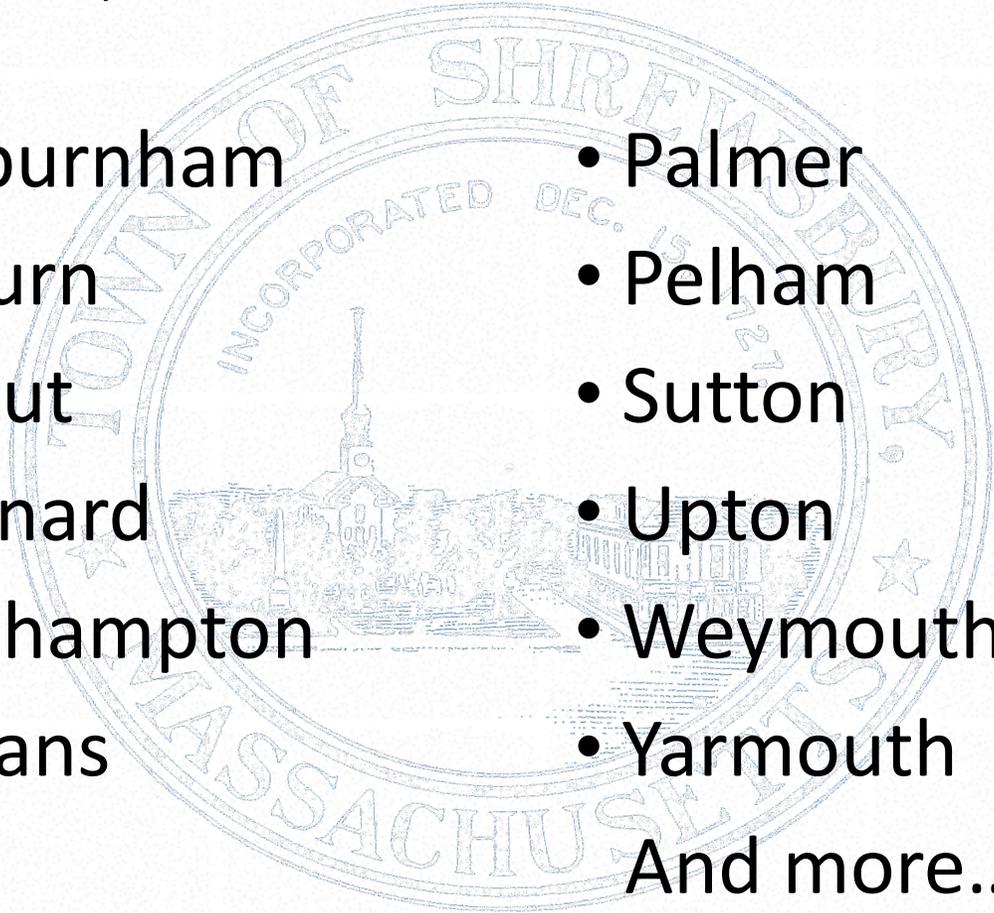
A Note Regarding Planning and Zoning

- 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 impact new development in the Town Center.
- New Zoning would not force owners of existing buildings to comply.
- New Zoning would provide existing and future owners with new and creative opportunities and possibilities for developing their property.

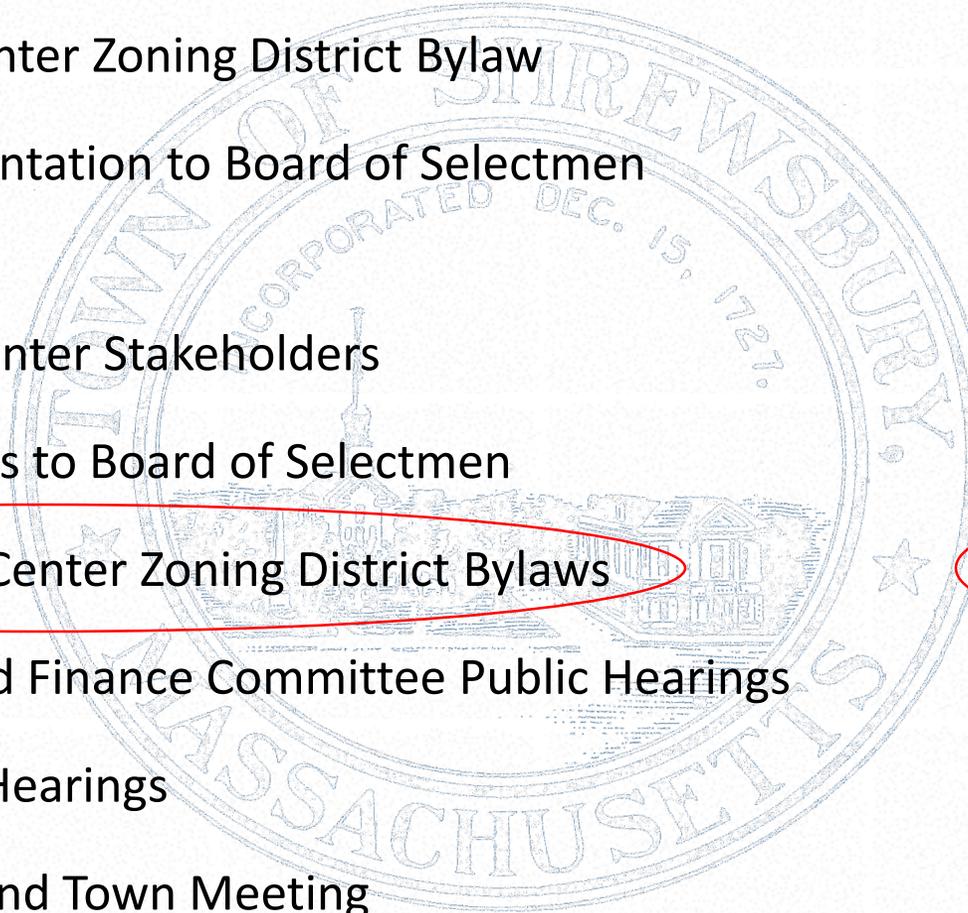


Sample of Massachusetts Towns that already have, or have recently approved, their own Town Center Village Districts

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



Next Steps for the Town Center Re-Zoning Process

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- The seal of the Town of Shrewsbury, Massachusetts, is a large, faint watermark in the background. It features a central illustration of a town with a church steeple, surrounded by the text "TOWN OF SHREWSBURY, MASSACHUSETTS" and "INCORPORATED DEC. 15, 1727".
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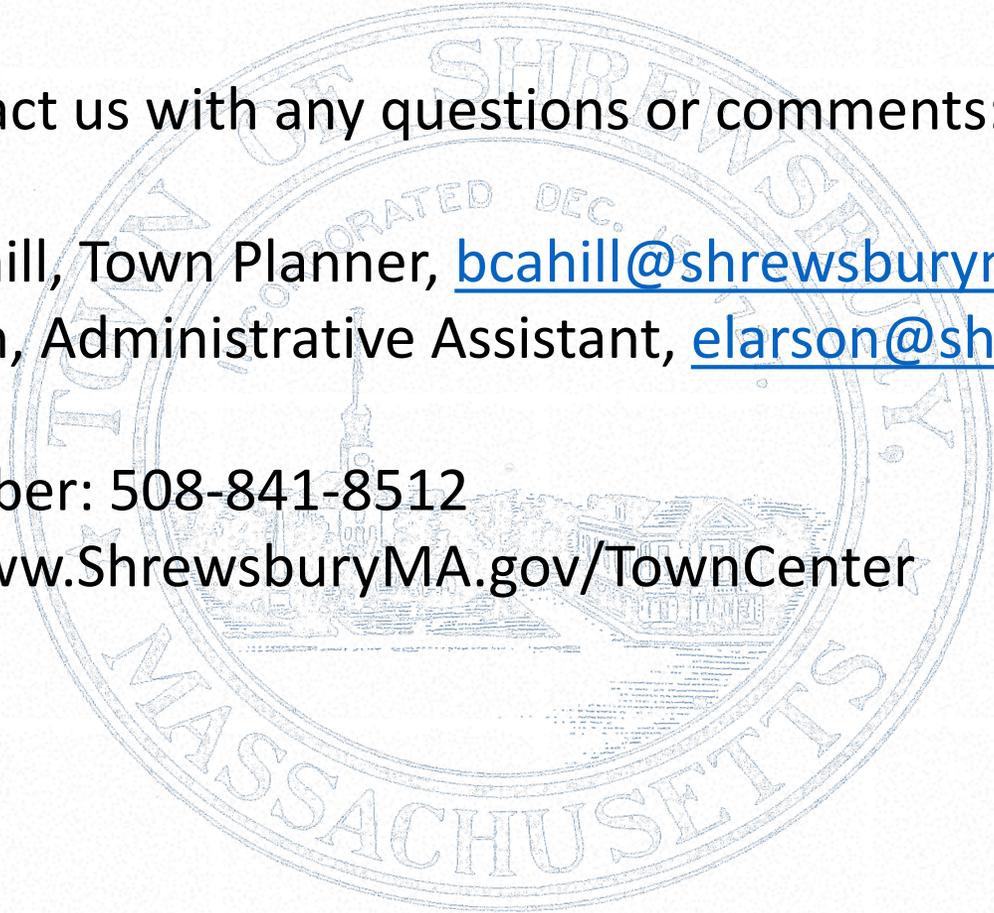
Please contact us with any questions or comments:

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Phone Number: 508-841-8512

Website: www.ShrewsburyMA.gov/TownCenter



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.

