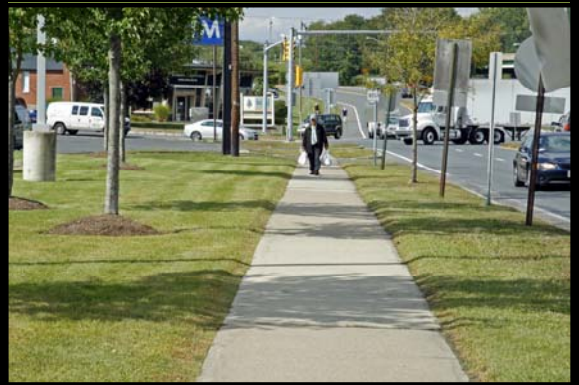


### Rezoning King Street for a Sustainable Future



### The Zoning Revisions Committee (ZRC)

- Who We Are
  - A volunteer committee, appointed by the Planning Board
  - Formed to help implement "Sustainable Northampton" (the city's comprehensive master plan adopted in 2008)
  - Selected to represent a variety of viewpoints, expertise and neighborhoods.



### Rezoning Northampton for a Sustainable Future

- Our Charge: Get Sustainability into Zoning

### King Street Process

- The Zoning Revisions Committee received a new zoning proposal from the Chamber of Commerce
- We are seeking community input to help review the proposal and develop recommendations

#### Tonight's Goal

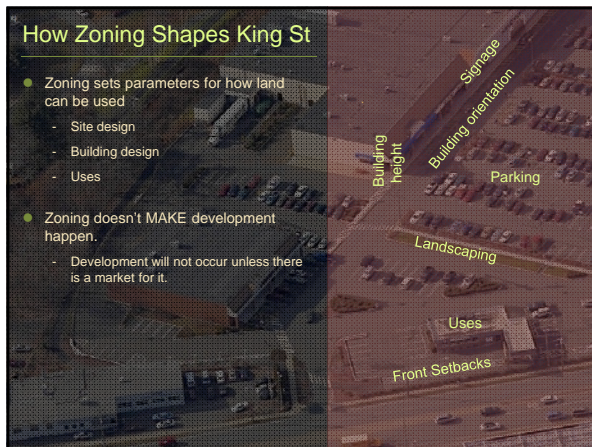
- Get public input about changing the zoning on King Street with the Chamber Proposal as a starting point for discussion

#### After this forum, the ZRC will:

- Formulate recommendations for zoning changes
- Continue discussions with key stakeholders and focus groups
  - Conduct additional public forums
  - Present recommendations to Planning Board
- Ultimately, City Council votes on zoning changes

### How Zoning Shapes King St

- Zoning sets parameters for how land can be used
  - Site design
  - Building design
  - Uses
- Zoning doesn't MAKE development happen.
  - Development will not occur unless there is a market for it.

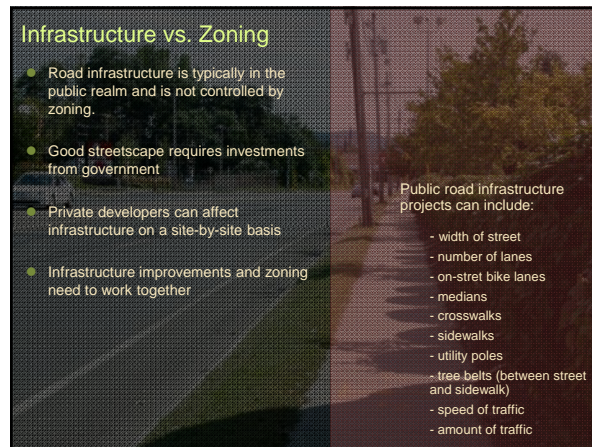


### Infrastructure vs. Zoning

- Road infrastructure is typically in the public realm and is not controlled by zoning.
- Good streetscape requires investments from government
- Private developers can affect infrastructure on a site-by-site basis
- Infrastructure improvements and zoning need to work together

#### Public road infrastructure projects can include:

- width of street
- number of lanes
- on-street bike lanes
- medians
- crosswalks
- sidewalks
- utility poles
- tree belts (between street and sidewalk)
- speed of traffic
- amount of traffic



### Sustainability and King St.

- Sustainability
  - If you keep on doing it, you can keep on doing it
  - Environment, Economy, Equity
- ZRC Goals for King St.
  - More types of businesses
  - Bike and pedestrian friendly
  - Buildings fit with local character
  - Concentrate development on King St to reduce sprawl
  - Businesses that strengthen the local economy
  - Less unused parking, better stormwater mgmt
  - Buildings built to last



### King Street Evolution

- Developed in distinct Sections
  - Main St to North St.
  - North St. to Bike Path
  - Bike Path to River Valley Market
- Upper King transition
  - Industrial; then
  - Commercial single-use, auto-oriented, *Anywhere, USA*
- Today:
  - Important economic engine
  - Provides key services
  - Opportunity to reinvest



### Current Zoning of King Street Corridor

- Central Business District (CBD)
  - multi-story, mixed-use & pedestrian-focus
- General Business (GB)
  - mixed use, single or multi-story pedestrian oriented
- Urban Residential C (URC)
- Highway Business Zone (HB)
  - large footprint commercial, typically single story, larger setbacks




### 2002 Changes to Highway Business

- Goal: Development that frames the street
- 55' Maximum Setbacks for large retail, varying standards for other
- Two Story incentive
- Limited design standards

### Does current zoning work?

- CBD is successful zoning district
- GB is generally working, but can be more pedestrian-oriented
- Mixed opinions about the success of HB




### 2002 Zoning Success



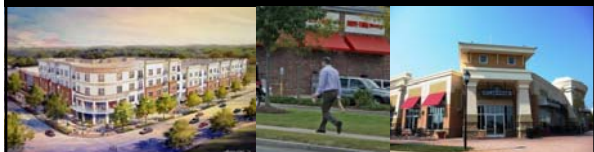
### 2002 Zoning Failures

- Lost Development Opportunities
- Buildings not to sidewalk
- No Two Story Buildings
- Not Bicycle Friendly



### What is King Street Good for?

- King St. is one of Northampton's best locations for:
  - mixed-use infill development
  - goods and services within walking distance of dense residential neighborhoods
  - large footprint businesses
  - transportation connectivity (pedestrian, bike, auto, train, bus)
  - generating property taxes
  - providing an attractive gateway into the city



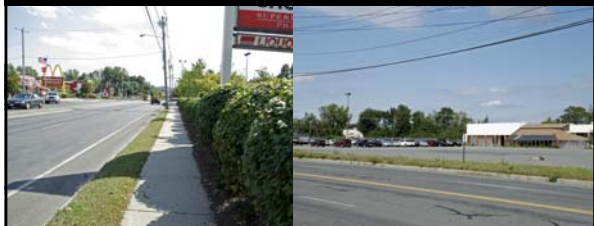
### Opportunities & Constraints

- Opportunities**
- Residential neighborhoods wrap around southern and western King St.
  - Cars, buses, pedestrians and cyclists travel King St. In the future, a multi-modal station with commuter rail may be sited on lower King St.
- Constraints**
- Railroad tracks, Industrial Park, and Barrett St. Marsh limit access to King St
  - High land prices



### What's Wrong with (North) King St?

- Streetscape is not pedestrian or bike-friendly
- Most buildings erode Northampton's sense of place
- Site design is inconsistent
- Large areas of unused parking
- Not achieving economic potential



### Design Comparison - CVS



### Design Comparison – Sherwin-Williams Paints



### Design Comparison – Honda



### Design Comparison – Athletic Club



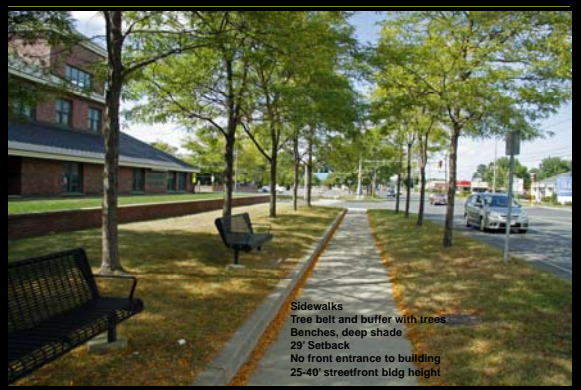
Sidewalks  
Tree belt  
59' setback  
No front entrance to building  
15' streetfront bldg height

### Design Comparison - Toyota



Sidewalks  
10' buffer with trees, bench  
No shade  
55' setback  
Clear path to front door  
30-35' streetfront bldg height

### Design Comparison – Fire Station



Sidewalks  
Tree belt and buffer with trees  
Benches, deep shade  
29' Setback  
No front entrance to building  
25-40' streetfront bldg height

### ZRC Sustainability Goals for King St.

- Allow a greater mix of uses
- Encourage design for bikes and pedestrians
- Encourage design that reflects local character
- Maximize development on King St to reduce sprawl
- Attract businesses that strengthen Northampton's economy
- Reduce excess parking and improve stormwater management
- Encourage buildings that are built to last
- Make zoning easier to understand and enforce

## Rezoning King Street

Recommendations by  
the Greater Northampton Chamber of Commerce



Go to [www.explorenorthampton](http://www.explorenorthampton) for the full report.

### The Chamber's Intent



Strengthen the street's success as an important commercial district in Northampton.

Generate new investment in public infrastructure and private property.

Concern about the impact of current zoning requirements on development interest.

Improve the street's convenience and appeal for automobiles, pedestrians, bicyclists, businesses and residents.

Improve King Street's appearance.

### The Chamber's Viewpoint



King Street is a regional destination for everyday goods and services.

The current zoning of highway business limits development interest.

King Street's automobile-oriented identity will continue to be slow to change.

King Street is an important gateway to Downtown Northampton.

King Street's adjacent neighborhoods are a vital part of the commercial district's success.

Go to [www.explorenorthampton](http://www.explorenorthampton) for the full report.

### The Chamber's Approach



Host public meetings to learn from the experience of King Street business and property owners and residents.

Meet with developers to understand the background stories of both successful developments and those that were not completed.


Assess the anticipated market demand for commercial and residential development.

Understand the requirements of lenders for financing commercial projects.

Understand what tenants require for parking, visibility and location.

Go to [www.explorenorthampton](http://www.explorenorthampton) for the full report.

### Key Themes for Zoning



Reflect the distinct character of each part of King Street.

Be flexible for the current and emerging roles of the street.

Create a safe environment for pedestrians and bicycles.


An attractive landscaped environment to frame the street and beautify the gateway.

Provide a predictable outcome of the permitting process.

Go to [www.explorenorthampton](http://www.explorenorthampton) for the full report.

### The new Entranceway Business Zone

*Trumbull Road to the Bike Path*



### Key Findings

This area is distinct in character from Downtown and the automobile-oriented area north.

There are significant parking conflicts between the residential neighborhoods and businesses.


Significant public investment is necessary to improve the safety of pedestrians.

This mixed use zone includes a variety of small businesses and institutional uses.

Go to [www.explorenorthampton](http://www.explorenorthampton) for the full report.

### The new Entranceway Business Zone

*Trumbull Road to the Bike Path*



### Recommendations

Require an 8' landscaped buffer between the property line and buildings.

Expand the mix of allowed uses to mimic Central Business District.

Beef up landscaping requirements between the back of buildings on King Street and the adjacent residential properties.


Spend public dollars on parking, street amenities and pedestrian crosswalks.

Establish the boundaries at Trumbull Road and the Bike path

Go to [www.explorenorthampton](http://www.explorenorthampton) for the full report.

### The Highway Business Zone

*The Bike Path to River Valley Market*



### Key Findings

Defined by high traffic counts, an automobile orientation, available parking and businesses requiring visibility from the street.

Generates a significant amount of property tax revenue.

Agreement that current zoning has been one deterrent to development – to a greater or lesser degree.

Historic and recent development pattern of a landscaped buffer.


A wide variety of lot depths and frontage.

Unfriendly for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Go to [www.explorenorthampton](http://www.explorenorthampton) for the full report.

### The Highway Business Zone


*The Bike Path to River Valley Market*



**Recommendations**

- Eliminate the 55' maximum setback.
- Require a vegetative buffer area of 25' between the property line and any building or parking lot, in addition to the tree belt and sidewalk.
- Allow flexible site plan layouts for buildings and parking behind the buffer area.
- Public investment in pedestrian crossings, underground utilities and landscaping.
- Eliminate the requirement for a 2<sup>nd</sup> story; increase height limit to 65' and a minimum height of 20'.
- Expand the uses permitted by right to include medical/office, manufacturing, and hotels.

Go to [www.explorenorthampton](http://www.explorenorthampton) for the full report.



### ZRC Goals for King Street

- Allow a greater mix of uses
- Encourage design for bikes and pedestrians
- Encourage design that reflects local character
- Maximize development on King St to reduce sprawl
- Attract businesses that strengthen the local economy
- Reduce excess parking and improve storm water mgmt
- Encourage buildings that are built to last
- Make zoning easier to understand and enforce

### Overview of the Recommendations

- Flexibility for property owners.
- Expanded uses
- Greater pedestrian and bicycle access and safety.
- Increased public investment.
- Enhanced visual appeal.
- Higher potential for investment & tax growth.
- Attention to short- and long-term opportunities.



### OPD Analysis: Precedents

- Addressing market demands









Cambridge Porter Sq



### OPD Analysis: Precedents

- Main to Rail Trail - 0.6 miles
- Main to Downtown - 1.3 Miles
- Downtown Saratoga
- new JTB commercial
- strip 4 miles (around 810 1.7 miles)



### OPD Analysis: Neither Fish nor Foul

- Urban model: 55' does NOT achieve
- Ideal - 1:3 height-to-width ratio
- Focus on buildings NOT framing the street
- Challenging - 1:7 height-to-width ratio

### OPD Analysis: Opportunities

- High vehicle traffic
- Rail trail access
- Neighborhood & CBD access
  - rail trail to downtown 3,300'

### South of Rail Trail Crossing

- Streetscape for people
- Urban development that market can absorb



### North of Rail Trail Crossing- ALL modes

- Tree belt
- Multi-use trail
- Parking lot buffer zone



### Tree Belt

- Vistas
- Catch plowed snow



### Multi-Use Trail (NOT Side Trail)

- Shoppers, pedestrians, bicycles
- Roadside Multi-Uses Trails are NOT sidewalks
  - Strict access control (very few curb cuts)
  - Driveway crossings (signage, materials, deflection...)
  - Does NOT replace in-road bicycling option

### Inner Tree Belt

- Soften multi-use trail
- Separate pedestrians from parked cars
- Visual



### ZRC Analysis of Chamber Proposal

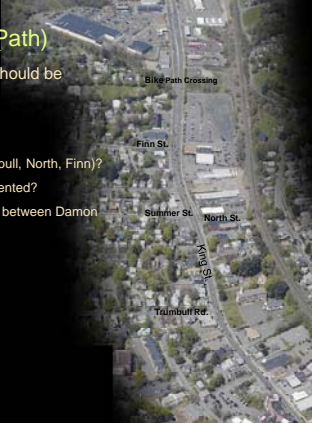

### Emerging Consensus

The ZRC agrees that revised zoning should....

- Reduce the number of uses requiring special permits...
  - to encourage more types of businesses on King Street
- Develop detailed landscaping requirements...
  - to make King St greener, more uniform, and more pedestrian friendly
- Establish multiple zoning districts to...
  - respond to different characters along King Street
  - begin phased transition to pedestrian/bike-oriented development

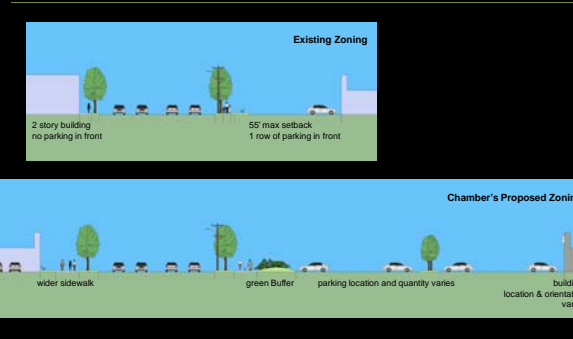
### Entranceway Business (between CBD and Bike Path)

- The ZRC agrees that this zone should be established
- Considerations:
  - Where should the zone begin (Trumbull, North, Finn)?
  - Should design standards be implemented?
  - Would this zone also be appropriate between Damon Road and Barrett St?

Infill Development (Framingham MA)

### Highway Business Changes (Section Views)



**Existing Zoning**


- 2 story building
- no parking in front
- 55' max setback
- 1 row of parking in front

**Chamber's Proposed Zoning**

- wider sidewalk
- green Buffer
- parking location and quantity varies
- building location & orientation varies

### Highway Business Changes

- Possible Results (Economic Impacts)
  - Development on King St. may proceed faster than if zoning is not changed
  - There may be increases in tax revenue
- Considerations
  - Will a desirable mix of uses be achieved?
  - Is there concern over national retail chain development?
  - Long-term economic effects are difficult to predict




### Highway Business Changes

- Possible Results (Streetscape Impacts)
  - Wider sidewalk, tree belt, landscape buffer
  - New buildings may be built further from the sidewalk, may be oriented away from the street
  - Potentially more parking in front of buildings





### Highway Business Changes

- Considerations (Green Buffer & Path)
  - Will the green buffer provide an adequate pedestrian experience?
  - How long will it take to be established?
  - Will the multi-use trail be safe for bicyclists?
  - What can we do to minimize conflicts between automobiles and bicyclists?



Bike sidepath along University Drive (The Swift Bikerway Connector)



- Uniform treeline along strip development  
Fairly mature trees ~20-30 yrs old?  
Renton, VA
- Uniform treeline along strip development  
Fairly mature trees ~15-20 yrs old?  
Poughkeepsie, NY
- Berm in front of parking  
Ellicott, NY



### Highway Business Changes

- Considerations (Site Layout)
  - Should the goal of framing the street with tall buildings and small setbacks be abandoned?
  - Does the distance between the sidewalk and buildings matter? From a car? From the sidewalk?
  - Does the orientation of buildings to the sidewalk matter?



55' setback



85' setback



284' setback  
Oriented at an angle

### Highway Business Changes

- Considerations (Parking)
  - Does amount of parking between the sidewalk and buildings matter?
  - Does the placement of parking matter (front?, side? rear?)



One row of parking



Two rows of parking



Many parking spots

### Highway Business Changes

- Considerations (Second Story)
  - How important is multi-story development on King St.?
  - Can we encourage multi-story buildings without slowing development?



Former strip mall, Saratoga Springs, NY



Illustration of a multi-story building on King St.



Strong Ave, Northampton

### Highway Business Changes (Design Standards)

- Considerations (Design Standards)
  - Should we improve building and landscape design standards in this district?
  - What should they be?



Staples  
Wickford, RI (left)



Wakefield RI (right)



Monro Muffler  
Saranac Lake, NY (left)



Dublin, Ohio (right)



Buffer + Smaller Setback + Design Standards



Smaller Landscaped Buffer & Setback



Very Small Setback + Taller Building



### What Should the future of King St. Zoning be?

#### Questions for Discussion

##### General

- What is working on King St.?
- What do you want King St. to be in the future (e.g. walkable, more retail, car-oriented)?
- What is your biggest concern about King St.?
- Should the current zoning on King Street be changed? Why?
- Does the idea of zoning different sections of King Street differently make sense?
- Is a landscaped buffer between the sidewalk and buildings or parking desirable?
- Are building design standards important?
- Should more uses (e.g. medical offices, professional offices, banks) be allowed by right?

##### Specific

- Where should the different zoning district break points be? (Trumbull, North, Finn, Stop and Shop, Barrett, Damon)
- Should the penalty for retail projects without a second story be eliminated?
- Is there concern over national retail chain development?
- Should the current zoning requirements about building and parking placement and orientation be changed?

