

An aerial photograph showing a large commercial building with a dark roof and a large parking lot filled with cars. To the left of the building is a residential area with houses and a swimming pool. To the right is a pond surrounded by trees. The image is used as a background for a presentation slide.

Proposed Zoning Bylaw: Lower Village Business District

March 28, 2023

Purpose

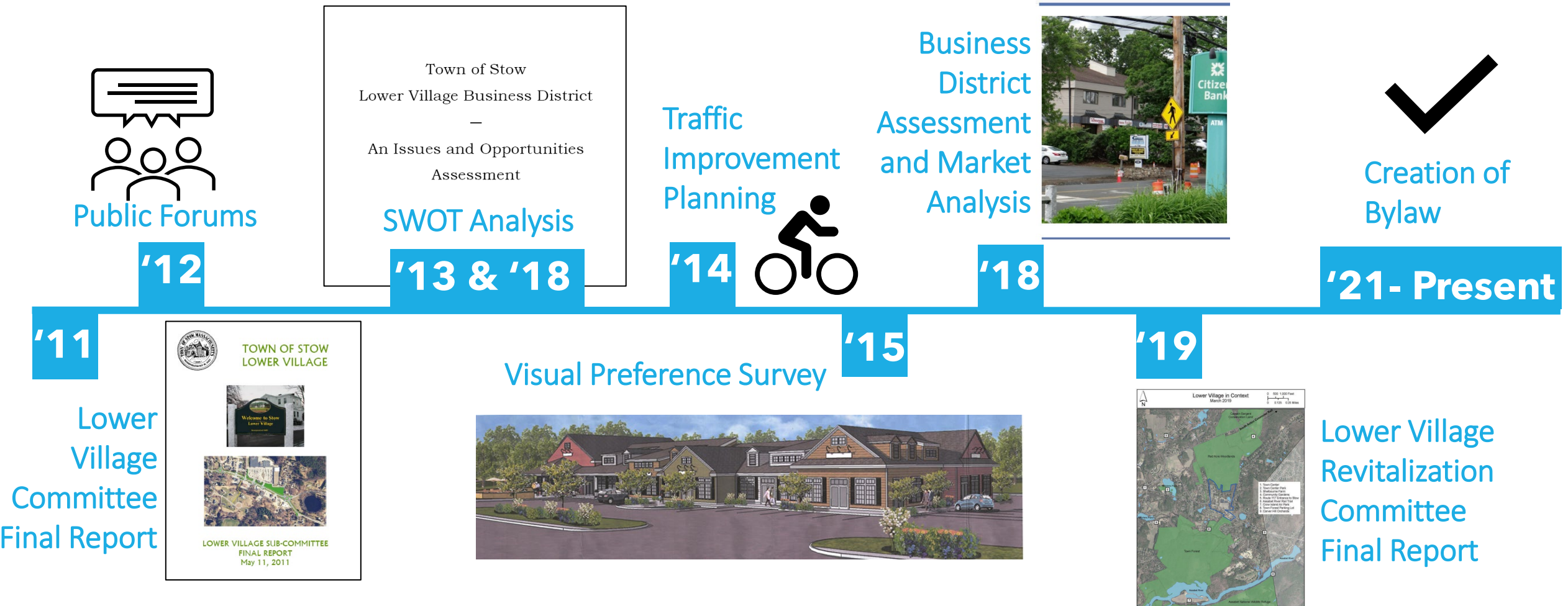
- To direct the long-term revitalization of Lower Village
- To give greater control to the Planning Board and Stow residents over:
 - How Lower Village looks
 - How walkable the district is
 - What type of development is allowed



FAQs

1. What About Water?
2. Will the Proposed Zoning Help Businesses?
3. I live in Lower Village. How will the zoning changes impact me?

History of Lower Village Planning Efforts



Vision Statement

*Lower Village will be an **attractive gateway** to Stow, developed in the tradition of a **New England village**, where residents and visitors can **safely and conveniently live, work, shop, dine and recreate**. As the primary gateway into town, Lower Village will project the history and character of Stow through the **architectural compatibility** of its buildings and streetscape, providing residents and visitors with a defined **sense of place**. Lower Village will be a place to **meet and connect**, with civic spaces for gathering, and wayfinding to attractions, including farms, orchards, conservation areas and the Assabet River Rail Trail. **Businesses will thrive** in Stow's revitalized hub, attracting people of all ages to services, shopping and entertainment opportunities **accessible** by all modes of transportation.*

Proposed Zoning changes are
intended to make realization of this
vision possible

A Vision of Traditional Village Design

Exemplified in 5 distinct ways:

- Walkability
- Strong Mix of Uses
- Housing Opportunities
- Accessible by car, bike, and by foot
- Distinct Sense of Place



Why Adopt New Lower Village Zoning?

Auto-dominated District

Persistent vacancies

Unsatisfactory mix of businesses

Lacks a sense of place

Time is of the essence!

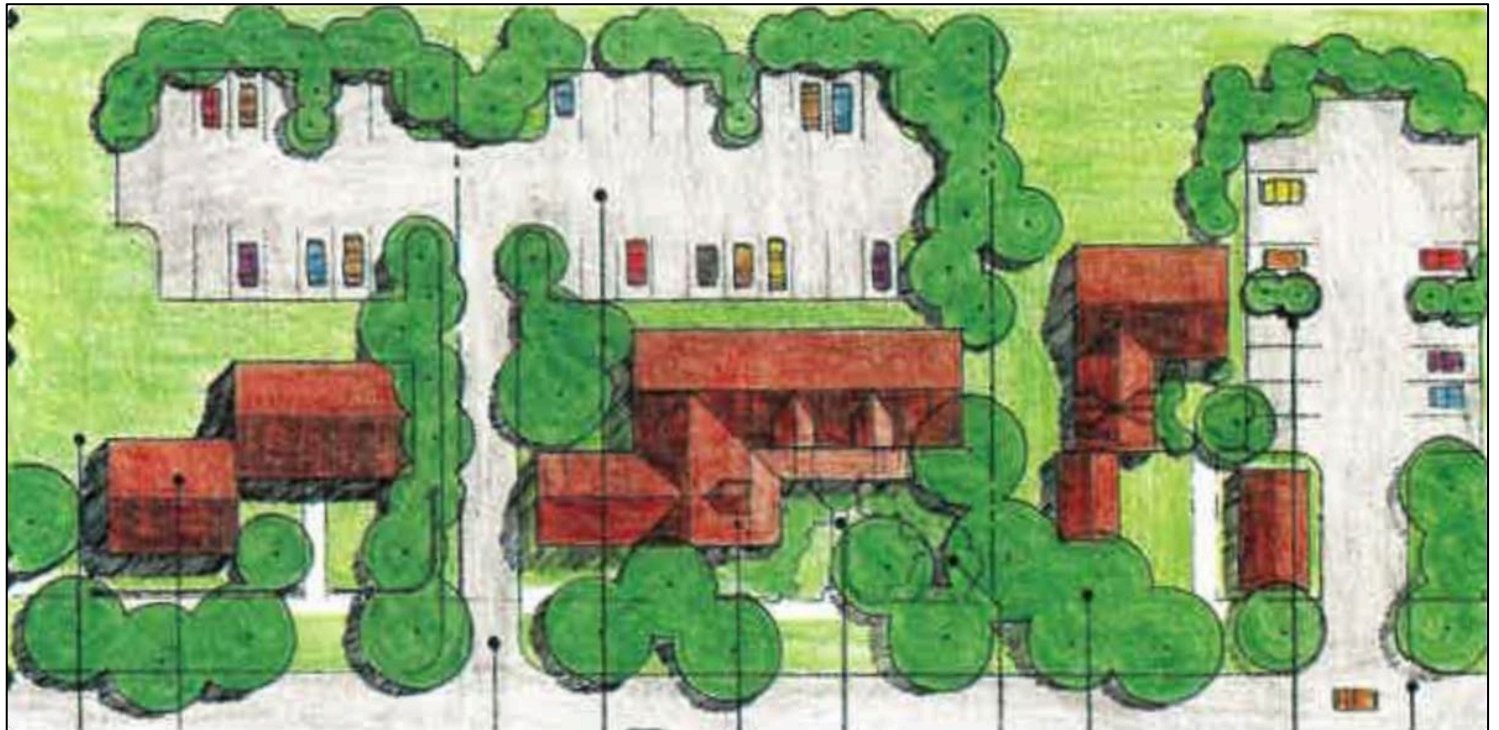
Problem: Automobile Oriented District

- High Parking Requirements
- Sparse Landscaping
- Buildings Line Parking Lots



Solution: Pedestrian-Oriented Neighborhood

- Lower Parking Requirements
- Decentralized Parking
- Landscaping
- Sidewalks
- Accessibility



Problem: Persistent Vacancies

- Lack of public water and sewer infrastructure
- Lack of opportunities for redevelopment or reconfiguration
- Business and Business Property owners list aesthetics and physical appearance among top locational disadvantages
- Damage appeal and draw



Solution: Flexibility + Aesthetics

- Allow New Uses
- Mixed-Use Development
- Flexible Site Planning
- Look and Feel of the District



Problem:

Current Business Mix

- Office and Service Establishments
- Few restaurants
- Limited opportunities for gathering



Solution: More Business Options

- Add New Allowed Uses
- Mixed Use Development to Increase Vibrancy
- Provide Community Gathering Spaces
- Outdoor Dining



Problem:

Lack of a Sense of Place

- Lack of connection to nearby recreational opportunities
- Lower Common offers only space for public gathering
- Architectural and site design provides low aesthetic appeal



Solution: Connection & Design

- Play, Stay, and Shop
- Gateway to Stow



Proposed Zoning Amendments

- Bylaw leads with Design
- Architectural and Design Standards rather than strict dimensional requirements

Proposed Zoning Amendments

- Special Permit and/or Site Plan Approval Process
 - Work with Applicant to develop plan in accordance with vision
 - Public Hearing required
 - Ability to hear resident feedback on site plans
 - Place conditions of approval

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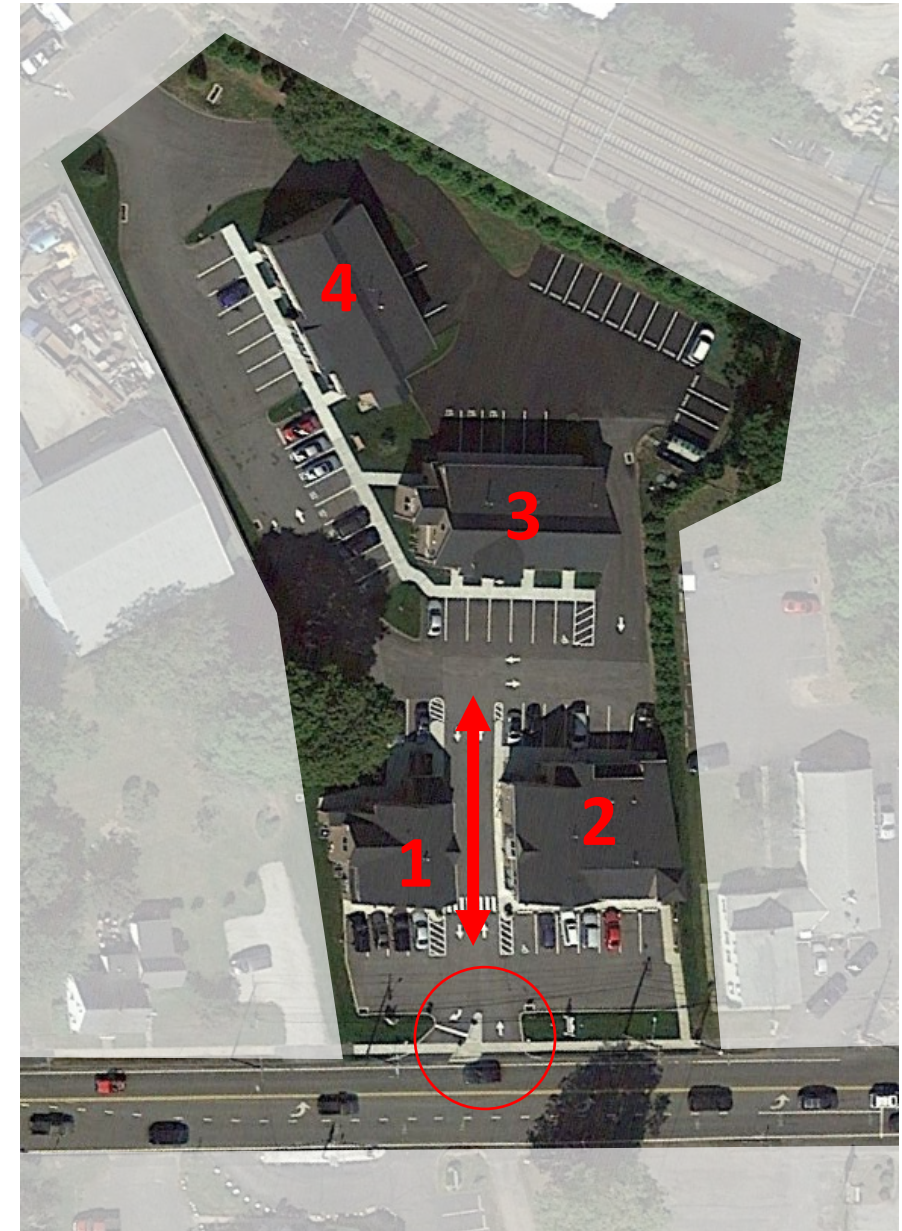


Questions



Interior Streetscapes & Lot Connections

- Decentralized parking lots
- Multiple buildings on one site
- Sidewalks throughout site
- Single vehicular entrance from main street



Proposed Bylaw Supports Businesses:

- ✓ Property Owners may further develop their sites, increasing the number of tenant spaces
- ✓ Improved customer accessibility
- ✓ Visually appealing district will draw businesses to Stow
- ✓ Addition of residential units will bring vibrancy to the district



Proposed Bylaw Supports Businesses:

- ✓ New Allowed Uses will diversify the business mix
- ✓ Draw Customers In:
 - ✓ Outdoor Dining
 - ✓ Pop-up Markets
 - ✓ Food Trucks
 - ✓ Community Gathering



What About Water and Sewer Infrastructure?

- Timing:

Paramount to have zoning in place before any potential infrastructure improvements so that design aligns with the Town's vision

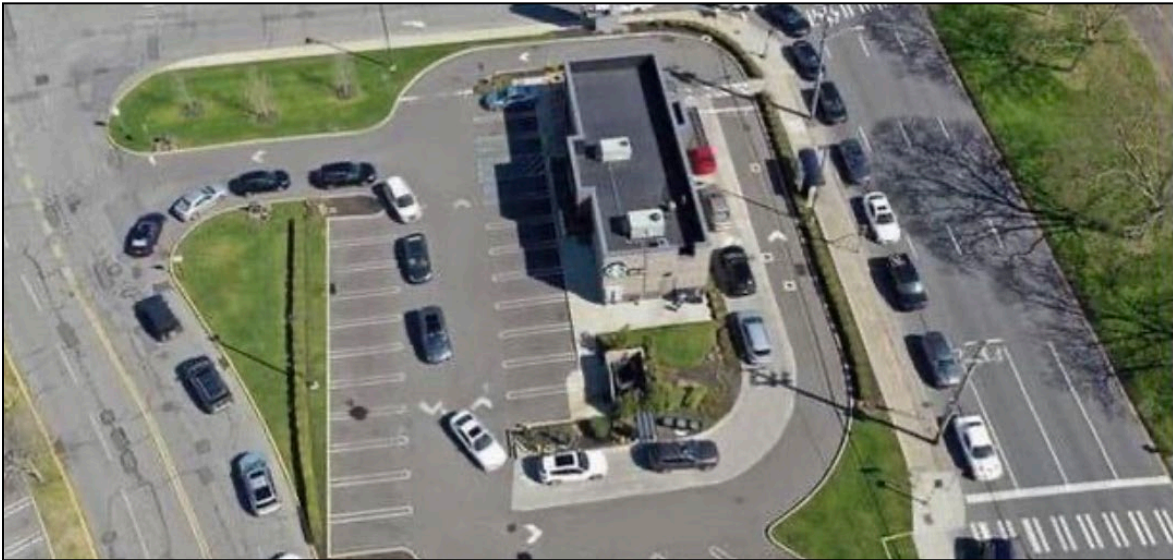
THIS



NOT THAT



30 People Getting Coffee



Vs.



30 People Getting Coffee



