

Discussion Questions

1. While Pepperell residents indicate that they wish to preserve the town's rural landscape, constructing single-family residential subdivisions on 2-acre lots throughout most of town is contrary to this objective. Should Pepperell modify the current zoning districts to allow for more moderate density development in some areas, as proposed in the previous Master Plan (see the Action Plan map from the last Comprehensive Plan attached to this technical paper)?
2. While Pepperell's OSRD Bylaw sets a high bar in terms of the 40% set aside requirement for open space, the bylaw also states that the open space is to be distributed between the one-acre residential lots. This is not necessarily the best methodology for protecting habitat.
 - a) Should Pepperell revise this section of the bylaw to allow for smaller lot sizes for the residential portion of an OSRD project (perhaps ½-acre lots) and consolidate the open space to one section of the site, in order to maximize habitat and open space areas so that they would likely have a higher ecological value?
 - b) Should OSRD be mandatory outside of the sewer district, as recommended in the previous Master Plan?
 - c) Are there other improvements that need to be made to the OSRD bylaw?
3. Should the Town lead by example and establish municipal policies that encourage healthy community design, such as installing benches, water fountains, street trees, public restrooms and bicycle racks at municipal properties, and within the downtown business district?
4. Should the Town strengthen the design standards within the zoning bylaw to provide more detailed guidance on the design of signs, lighting and landscaping? For example, such guidance could more tightly regulate that actual design elements of the signs (rather than just size and placement); the type, energy efficiency and amount of lighting for development projects; and the selection of landscaping materials to minimize irrigation requirements and encourage the use of native plant materials.
5. Currently, there are no minimum lot size requirements in the Commercial and Industrial districts (although there are some dimensional requirements). In addition, some of the allowed uses in the Commercial district do not seem compatible with the area around Railroad Square and the Town Center (for example, self storage facilities and contractor yards).

- a) Should the Town re-examine the uses for these areas and set minimum lot size standards?
- b) Should there be more than one commercial zone, to more closely reflect the character of these areas?
- c) Are there other locations in Pepperell that should be zoned for limited, small-scale commercial use, such as neighborhood style businesses?

6. The previous Master Plan recommended that the potential for a new mixed-use village in the Brookline Street/Hollis Street area be examined, as well as allowing mixed use in the Historic District, in order to preserve older, large homes by allowing for adaptive reuse.

- a) Should these recommendations be carried forward into the new Master Plan?
- b) Are there other locations in town where mixed use should be explored?

7. The zoning in the area around Railroad Square and the adjoining neighborhood does not reflect the land use pattern that is there today. In fact, most of the homes in this neighborhood could not be built under the current zoning bylaw. Should the zoning in this area be revised to allow for similar village-style development?

8. Should Pepperell adopt inclusionary zoning requiring that affordable housing units for low- and moderate-income residents in residential development be incorporated in projects over a certain size, for example seven (7) units?

9. Should Pepperell strengthen and modernize its flood/floodplain regulations and incorporate the regulations within the Town's zoning bylaw, as is the case in most communities?

10. Should the Town modify its development regulations to ensure that proposed projects provide safe access and internal circulation for older adults, and that housing is designed to allow residents to age in place?

11. Should the Town modify its zoning bylaw to accommodate and encourage solar energy systems?

12. Should the town modify its land use regulations to support and promote agricultural enterprises? This could include allowing farm retail sales in residential districts, and/or allowing farm co-ops and food processing facilities by right.

13. Should the zoning bylaw be amended to encourage art and artisan related establishments, such as Artist work/live space, studio space, galleries, and museums?

14. Should contractor yards and commercial landscaping businesses continue to be allowed by special permit as accessory uses in residential neighborhoods?