

Date: March 27, 2020 Job No.: 5996
To: Cheryl Tougias, Town of Milton Planning Board – Chair
Cc: William Clark, Director of Planning & Community Development
From: Jeff Maxtutis
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Subject: Milton Village Mixed-Use Zoning Review – Milton, MA

BETA Group, (BETA) reviewed the draft Zoning By-Law Amendment to amend Section 10, by adding Subsection S to Section III: Milton Village Mixed-use Planned Unit Development. This review was limited to the adequacy of the proposed minimum parking requirements in the overlay district. BETA's review will evaluate these proposed minimum parking requirements for Residential and Business uses against other regional communities and/or similar comparative locations/documents to Milton Village. This memorandum is provided to summarize evaluations and recommendations.

BASIS OF REVIEW

The following documents were received by BETA and will form the basis of the review:

- Town of Milton Proposed Zoning Amendment, to amend Section 10 of the General Bylaws, known as the Zoning Bylaws, by adding the following Subsection S to Section III: Milton Village Mixed-use Planned Unit Development.

In addition, the following documents were reviewed as comparative studies and documentation in which the proposed zoning amendment will be compared to:

- DRAFT TOD Policies and Guidelines, prepared by Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) and Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT), Dated March 31, 2017.
- Metro Boston Perfect Fit Parking Initiative Phase II Report, prepared by Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), Dated July 2019.

PARKING EVALUATION

TOWN OF MILTON, ZONING BY-LAWS

EXISTING ZONING BY-LAWS

In a review of the Town of Milton Zoning By-Laws, parking rates required by zone, land use and district were assessed to understand the current parking regulations within Milton Village Business District. The existing regulations require the following parking rates per square foot (SF) of Gross Floor Area (GFA):

- Retail Space: One space per every 250 SF of GFA.
- Office Space: One space per every 250 SF of GFA.
- Storage/Distribution/Manufacturing/Industrial Space: One space per every 250 SF of GFA.

While the proposed zoning amendment will feature mixed uses, it is key to note the existing parking regulations for residential uses. The existing residential regulations require the following:

- Detached One-Family Dwelling:
 - District AA, A or B: At least two spaces per dwelling unit.
 - District C: At least one space per dwelling unit.
- Two-Family House:
 - District AA, A or B: At least two spaces per each of the two dwelling units.
 - District C: At least one space per each of the two dwelling units.

PROPOSED ZONING AMENDMENT

The Proposed Zoning Amendment to amend Section 10, by adding Subsection S to Section III: Milton Village Mixed-use Planned Unit Development would result in a minimum of one parking space per 1,000 square feet of gross floor area for all business uses and a minimum of one parking space per each dwelling unit. All proposed mixed-uses shall be a combination of the above rates based on SF and dwelling units.

COMPARATIVE STUDIES

TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT (TOD) POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

In a review of the Draft Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Policies and Guidelines developed by the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) and the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT), TOD's main approach to parking is to reduce parking ratios to promote the use of public transit. With Milton Village's proximity to multiple transit options, these TOD policies and guidelines relate directly with the proposed zoning amendment regarding future growth and development. Milton Village is served by MBTA Bus Route 217 with stops at the intersection of Adams Street at Eliot Street and Adams Street at Randolph Avenue and provides access between Quincy Center Station (Commuter Rail/Red Line) and Ashmont Station (Red Line). In addition, the Mattapan Trolley Line's Milton Station has direct access via Adams Street at the intersection with Eliot Street and provides access between Ashmont Station (Red Line) and Mattapan Square (MBTA Bus). Both Bus and Trolley service are frequently used, with highest ridership seen in the peak commuting periods. In the study, MassDOT and the MBTA both support the reduction in parking ratios for TODs with the recommended ratios as follow:

- Retail Space: 1.5 – 3.0 spaces per every 1,000 SF of GFA.
- Office Space: 1.0 – 2.5 spaces per every 1,000 SF of GFA.
- Residential: 0.75 – 1.5 spaces per dwelling unit.

Given these ratios and the proximity of transit options serving Milton Village, a reduction in vehicle trips and the need for parking will be reduced. Furthermore, workers of these business uses would also benefit with the transit options provided and could result in a reduction of service zone parking use/need. The proposed zoning amendment, providing minimum parking regulations of one space per 1,000 SF of GFA for business uses and one space per dwelling unit for residential uses, fall within, or closely to, these TOD ratios provided in the study. With the business use (retail and office space) including employee parking in its ratios, Milton Village provides service zone parking for businesses which can add to this proposed parking ratio. Service zone parking in Milton is provided as employee parking for a yearly fee. Service zone parking in Milton Village is provided along Wharf Street and Eliot Street and should be factored into all proposed parking ratios.

METRO BOSTON PERFECT FIT PARKING INITIATIVE

The Metro Boston Perfect Fit Parking Initiative developed by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) studied 189 sites over a three-year period in the Inner Core subregion, measuring the actual supply of and demand for residential parking. This included Boston and 20 surrounding cities and towns. While Milton was not one of these towns, several of these sites border or are in close proximity to Milton. The data provided in this study shows that parking is underutilized in this region with many of the site's parking supply unused by approximately 30%. The study surveyed residential complexes for the number of parking space required (per zoning regulations); the actual spaces provided and used; as well as other factors including proximity to transit, percentage of affordable housing and size of residences. The study found several key characteristics in relation to parking supply, demand and utilization, summarized below:

Parking Supply:

- Average and median ratios of parking supply were found to be 1.0 spaces per dwelling unit.
- Approximately 33% of sites provided fewer than 0.8 spaces per unit.
- Approximately 30% of sites provided more than 1.2 spaces per unit.

Parking Demand:

- Average ratio of parking demand was 0.73 spaces per dwelling unit.
- Approximately 73% of sites had parking demand of less than 1.0 spaces per unit.
- Approximately 27% of sites had parking demand of less than 0.5 spaces per unit.
- Approximately 10% of sites had parking demand of more than 1.2 spaces per unit.

Parking Utilization:

- Approximately 14 sites (7%) of the sites were 100% utilized.
- Only 13% of the sites had a utilization over 90%.
- Approximately half (50%) of the sites had a utilization between 70-90%.
- Approximately 17 sites (9%) of the sites were less than 50% utilized.

These study findings suggest that parking within this Inner Core region is underutilized and in general is overestimated for required parking as opposed to the actual parking use. In these study sites, the requirements put forth by cities and towns for minimum parking appear to be larger than actual needs. Milton Village has many similarities to these sites, both in location and in limited area, and with the results of this study, lower parking minimums should be considered.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based upon the review of the documents provided and a review of comparable study's conclusions and recommendations, the following recommendations are provided for the proposed zoning amendment to amend Section 10 of the General Bylaws, known as the Zoning Bylaws, by adding the following Subsection S to Section III: Milton Village Mixed-use Planned Unit Development:

- Residential parking minimums of one space per dwelling unit are acceptable. Given the proximity of public transit option within Milton Village, there are opportunities to reduce the needed parking. In addition, studies show underutilization of the parking supply provided and where this can be reduced it would serve two-fold: reducing the land needed for parking and a reduction in unused parking. Given these findings, the Town may also consider eliminating residential parking minimums for some areas such as Milton Village.
- Business space parking minimums of one space per every 1,000 square feet of gross floor area are acceptable. Similar to residential land uses, the proximity of public transit can allow for both patrons and employees to use transit to access business space.
- It is recommended that service zone parking be evaluated within Milton Village to ensure that employees of any proposed business use have adequate parking. While there currently are two service zone parking sections within Milton Village, these parking spaces should be observed to ensure there is existing capacity, or if more spaces are needed to accommodate future development.