



Town of Danvers

Planning & Economic Development Division

Department of Land Use & Community Services

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Downtown Corridor (DTC) Zoning Change

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What area are we talking about? For the sake of brevity, we're calling this base rezoning project area "The Downtown Corridor" (DTC). The boundaries of the DTC run along Elm, High, and Maple Street, as shown on the map included in the 2020 Special Town Meeting warrant book. The proposed DTC is further separated into districts, which are explained in **question six**.

2. Why are we proposing zoning changes for this area? Building upon the successful model adopted by Special Town Meeting in December 2017, the Planning Board has crafted new base zoning regulations for the defined DTC area, which would allow for more pedestrian scale, mixed-use, affordable development. These regulations also serve to support the downtown economy by permitting more compact, mixed-use development. This zoning proposal is intended to create diversity in the Town's housing stock and locate housing units in an area that will help the vitality and quality of existing and new businesses downtown. These regulations were drafted based on input from numerous public workshops and meetings and have been crafted to reflect the community's vision for the downtown.

3. What uses are currently allowed in the area? The downtown area spanning from Maple Street to High Street is primarily comprised of the Industrial I-1 (I-1), Commercial-1 (C1), and Commercial 1-A (C1-A) zoning districts. Within the existing Industrial I-1 Districts, uses such as car dealerships, self-storage/warehouses, car washes, and hotels/motels are allowed by-right. Most residential uses are not permitted in the C1-A district, and no residential uses are permitted in the I-1 or C-1 districts.

4. Why are there currently residential units within the Industrial I-1, C-1, and C1-A districts if it is not an allowable use? Several of the single-family residences within the I-1, C-1, and C1-A pre-date current zoning and are considered "pre-existing, non-conforming," meaning they were built before residential uses were prohibited. Newer residential developments within these districts were approved through use variances from the Zoning Board of Appeals. This system of seeking zoning relief has resulted in mix-matched downtown neighborhoods that have uneven transitions between residential, commercial, and industrial uses. The zoning proposal is intended to bring predictability to future development.

5. If I rent or own space in the proposed district (a business, house, apartment), what impact would the new downtown re-zoning have on me or my property? Changes in the new base zoning will not affect existing residential or commercial properties within the DTC if those properties maintain their existing uses. For example, an existing commercial use in the downtown can continue to operate business as usual under the new zoning, essentially in perpetuity, but if they chose to expand their building to accommodate residential units above

their business, they would be required to meet the neighborhood scale design standards under the new DTC zoning. In simple terms, the new zoning will have no impacts on existing properties *unless* those properties choose to change their existing uses (i.e., residential converting to commercial, etc.)

6. What are the different “districts” within the DTC? Within the DTC, there are three districts. These districts help to separate design types appropriate to each area, providing varying residential densities, and allow for a better transition between commercial, residential, and public space developments. Each district has its regulations, density limits and design standards, which help to shape the overall attractiveness and navigability of the Downtown Corridor. The districts are as follows:

- **Danvers Town Center – Core District (DTC-C)**

The Core District is regulated for mid-scale commercial uses and denser residential development. This district builds upon what is already present in the downtown area by incorporating higher density limits and allowing specific commercial uses by right. The standards for the Core District aim to protect the historic character of existing buildings, improve walkability, enhance public civic spaces, and foster new mixed-uses.

- **Danvers Town Center – Live/Work District**

The Live/Work District aims to provide a range of housing choices and small-scale commercial uses that are compatible with the traditional building forms found in downtown neighborhoods today. The by-right development scales and densities within the L/W District are smaller than that of the Core District and serve to facilitate reinvestment in downtown neighborhoods by expanding small-scale uses and housing choices. Providing different housing options appeals to a broad range of age, income, and household types that otherwise may not be able to afford to live in the downtown. Encouraging differing housing and commercial uses within the L/W district will also serve to enhance the vitality of the downtown – an overall goal of the DTC.

- **High-Street Mixed-Use Corridor District (HSMUC)**

Unlike the other districts within the corridor center, the HSMUC District serves to encourage more commercial development rather than dense residential development. Although this District provides more opportunity for commercial development, it also seeks to transform the existing auto-oriented corridor into an attractive, walkable, mixed-use district. Within the HSMUC District, certain household types (townhouses and multi-family) are allowed by Special Permit and commercial uses (fabrication and civic) are permitted by right.

7. What does a “mixed-use” building look like? The Tapleyville Overlay has an excellent example at *78 Holten Street*, with a café (Daniella’s) on the first floor and six units of housing above. The site is .41 acres with a building design that has a great fit in the surrounding neighborhood. This building is 51 feet tall, where the proposed maximum building height in the DTC is limited to 45 feet. 20 Locust Street is a similar example, which was approved (through

use variance) in 2016. This project is a mixed-use building with commercial space on the first floor and 24 residential units above.



8. Why do we need to consider including an affordability provision in our new zoning? The new base zoning includes requirements regarding how developments will assist the Town in ensuring that a portion of the units created in the district will qualify for inclusion on the State's subsidized housing inventory (SHI). Development within the proposed district will help us stay in compliance with Chapter 40B, which requires that 10% of housing units qualify under SHI (currently, the Town is at 10.3%); like the Town's existing Inclusionary Bylaw (CITE), smaller developments pay an in-lieu-of fee, bigger proposals will contribute a portion of the units built toward the SHI.

9. How do we know that the development within the new district will be attractive and will fit the character of Danvers? The proposed zoning includes extensive Design Standards that provide predictability for developers, the Planning Board, and residents as projects go from concept to approval. These standards were continually crafted throughout the public input process and address details such as building treatments, signage, and facades. These standards also aim to preserve the historic character of Danvers by requiring designs that incorporate turn of the century architectural elements.

10. Will there be improvements to the streetscapes and public ways? What about open space? Unlike most conventional zoning regulations that have a minimum percentage requirement for landscaping, the proposed DTC design standards allow for a variety of Outdoor Amenity Spaces (OAS) that must be included in new development projects. OAS range from neighborhood parks, playgrounds, and community gardens, to plazas, rooftop terraces, courtyards, outdoor dining areas, or even common yards for private residences. The overall purpose is to ensure that the DTC includes a variety of passive and active recreational spaces.

11. What is the plan for traffic and parking downtown? The proposed new base zoning specifically provides for parking demand management (i.e., developments must accommodate their own parking) and traffic mitigation by paying into a town-controlled transportation management fund. This aspect of the zoning proposal ensures when new development occurs, it is contributing to traffic management improvements within the DTC. The parking standards and regulations within the DTC also provide incentives for new developments that implement alternative transportation mode programs (carpooling, car-share, public transit reimbursement).

12. What timeframe(s) are we talking about? Will Danvers Square be completely redeveloped in a few years? No, it is likely to take many years to achieve anything close to build-out in the DTC. A reasonable timeline for build-out could be in the range of 30 to 50 years. Tapleyville and Danversport area redevelopment provide notable examples of the pace of redevelopment since adoption. Typical additions to the local housing stock in Danvers are in the range of 20-30 units annually. While the Planning Division aims to help regulate, guide, and encourage growth, it has no control over the pace of development.

13. Have there been any additional studies or plans that address Downtown initiatives and re-zoning? There have been a number of studies and reports over the past ten years that relate to both re-zoning industrial districts and downtown revitalization:

- Danvers Zoning Bylaw Review & Recommendations (2006)
- Danvers Mixed-Use Industrial-1 (I-1) Study (2009)
- Danvers Maple Street I-1 District Action Plan (2015)
- Downtown Danvers Parking Study (2015)
- Danvers Bicycle Network & Pedestrian Priority Plan (2015)
- Maple Street I-1 Area Placemaking Audit and Vision Plan (2017)
- Maple Street I-1 Area Draft C40R Zoning Code and Design Standards (2017)
- Downtown Area Traffic Management Report (2017)