



Southborough Comprehensive Zoning Revision

Route 9
Issues • Challenges • Opportunities

Public Workshop #2
Southborough Town House
May 13, 2009

Welcome

Meeting Agenda

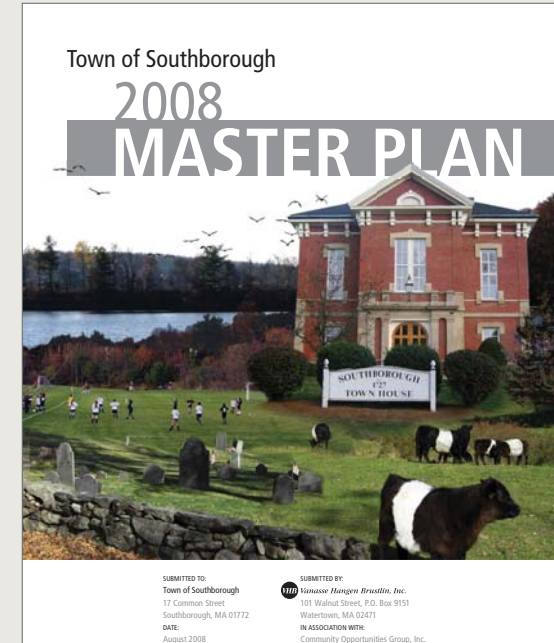
- Presentation
- Discussion
- Breakout Sessions
 - ▶ Route 9/East
 - ▶ Route 9/West
- Compare Notes
- Next Steps



Meeting Purposes

Southborough Master Plan

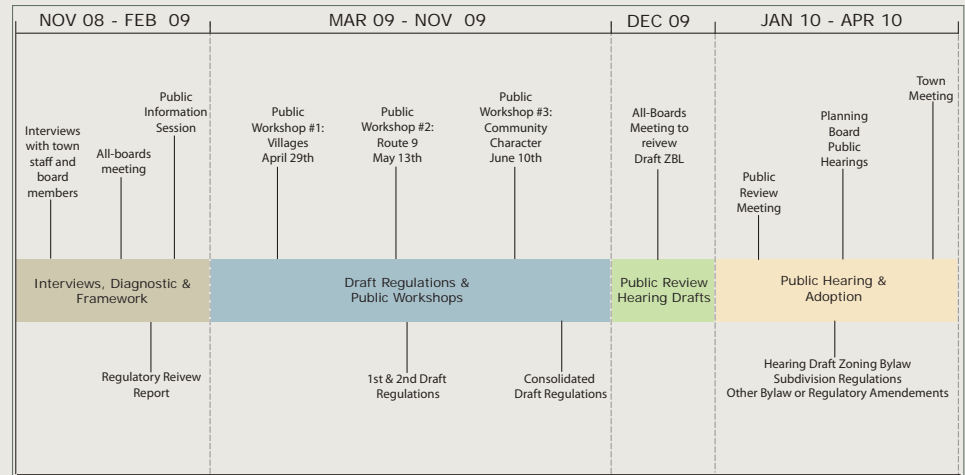
- Adopted 2008
- Priority: Update the Zoning Bylaw
 - ▶ To achieve the town's planning goals
 - ▶ To address major findings and recommendations
 - ▶ To arrive at the best possible balance between private and public interests
 - ▶ To ensure that Southborough has effective regulatory tools to manage future development



Zoning Bylaw Revision Process

“Listening Mode”

- Interviews
- Small-group meetings
- Public workshops
 - ▶ Villages
 - ▶ Route 9
 - ▶ Community Character
- Zoning Advisory Committee meetings
- Public hearings



Zoning Bylaw Revision Process

“Technical Mode”

- Regulatory Diagnostic Report
 - ▶ Technical review
 - ▶ Policy review
 - ▶ Comments from Zoning Advisory Committee
 - ▶ Final report
- Framework Paper & Zoning Outline
 - ▶ Principles
 - ▶ Working assumptions

Zoning Bylaw Revision Process

“Regulatory Mode”

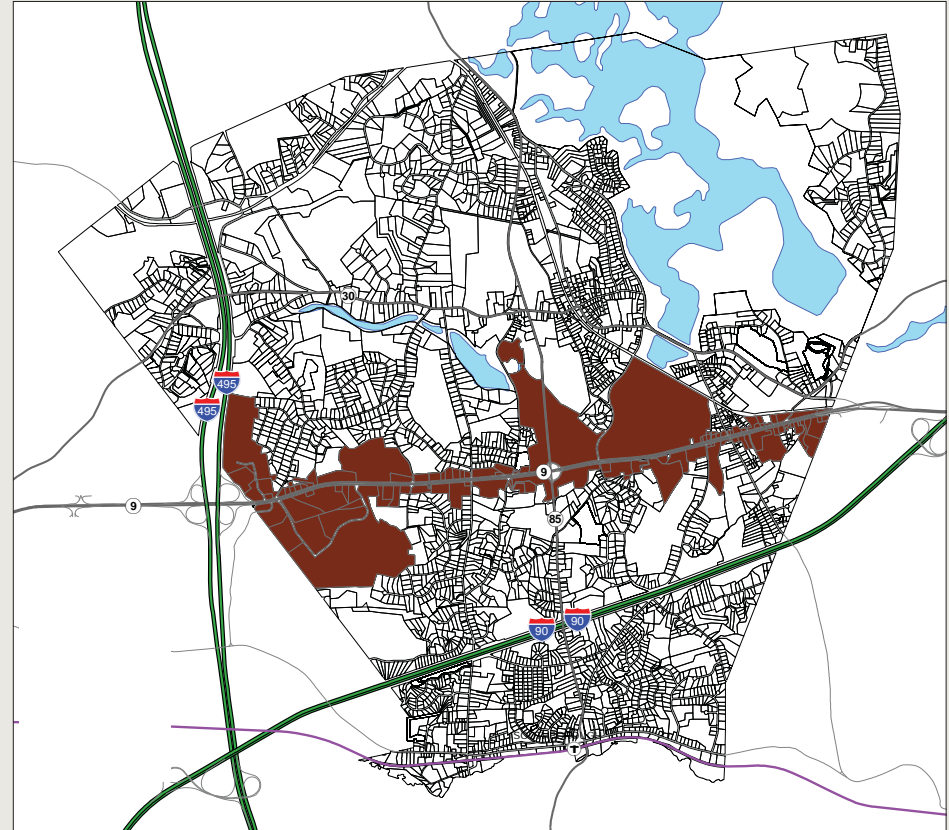
- Zoning Bylaw: Reading Drafts
 - ▶ First reading
 - ▶ Second reading
 - ▶ Third reading
- Hearing draft & annotated version
- Subdivision regulations

“Action Mode”

- Town Meeting

Route 9 - The Land

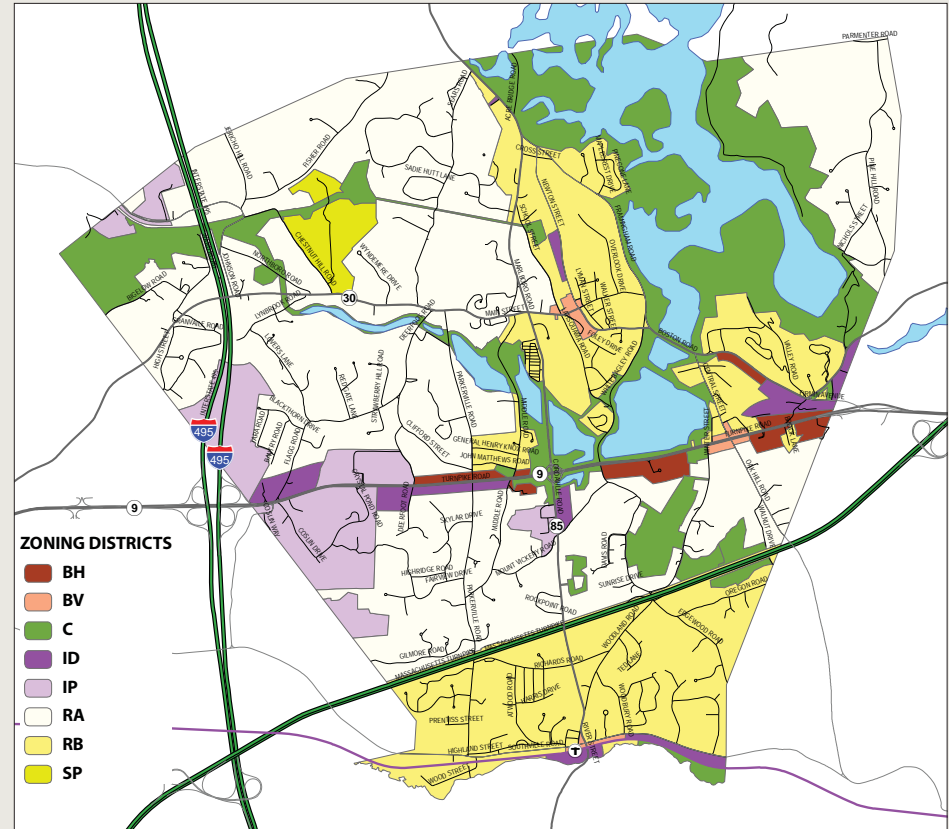
- Route 9 crosses the full width of Southborough in an east-west direction, approximately 3.5 miles
- Parcels with frontage on Route 9:
 - ▶ 124 parcels
 - ▶ About 833 acres
 - ▶ Average 6.7 acres
 - ▶ Range 0.3 acres to large DCR holding (183 acres)



Route 9 - Existing Zoning

Six Districts on Route 9:

- Industrial
- Industrial Park
- Business Highway
- Business Village
- Conservation
- Residence B



Route 9 - Existing Zoning

Basic Requirements

| | Minimum | | Minimum Setback | | | Maximum Height | | Maximum |
|-----|----------|----------|-----------------|------|------|----------------|---------|---------|
| | Lot Area | Frontage | Front | Rear | Side | Feet | Stories | FAR |
| RB | 25,000 | 125 | 30 | 35 | 15 | 35 | 2.5 | 0.30 |
| BV | 10,000 | 60 | *25 | 35 | 10 | 35 | 3.0 | |
| BH§ | 43,560 | 200 | †75 | 50 | 50 | 45 | 3.0 | 0.60 |
| IP§ | 43,560 | 200 | †75 | 50 | 50 | 45 | 3.0 | 0.60 |
| ID§ | ‡43,560 | 200 | †75 | 50 | 50 | 45 | 3.0 | 0.60 |

*On Route 9; otherwise 10 feet

†On Route 9; otherwise 50 feet

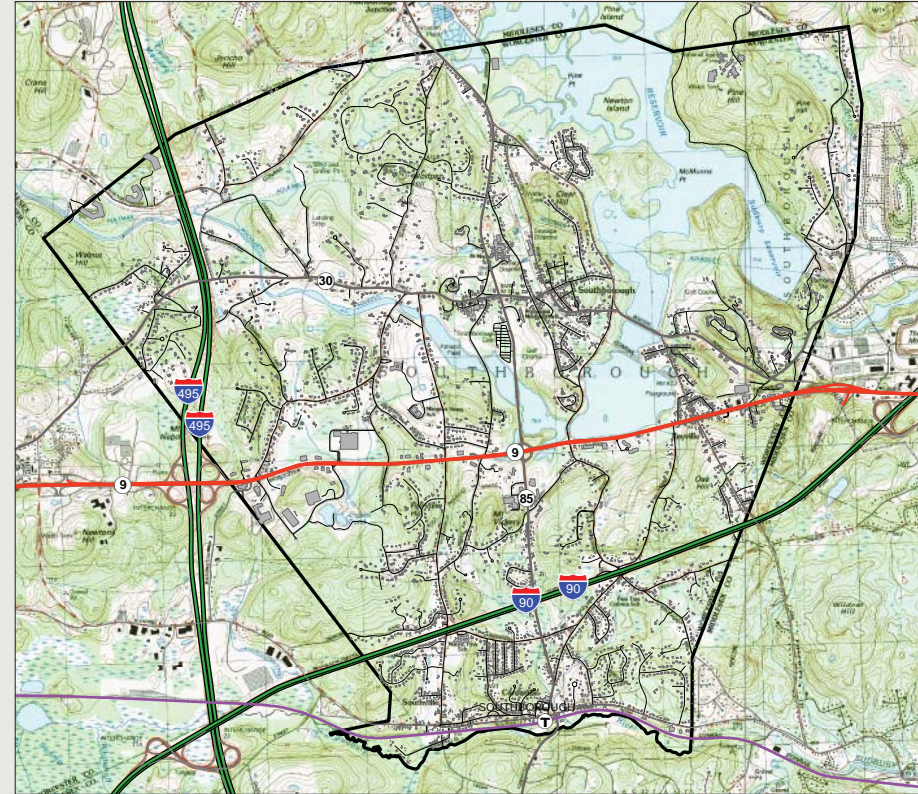
‡At least 20,000 sq. ft. exclusive of wetlands

§Up to 50,000 sq. ft. allowed by right; over 50,000 sq. ft. requires a special permit

Route 9 - Development Context

Physical Constraints

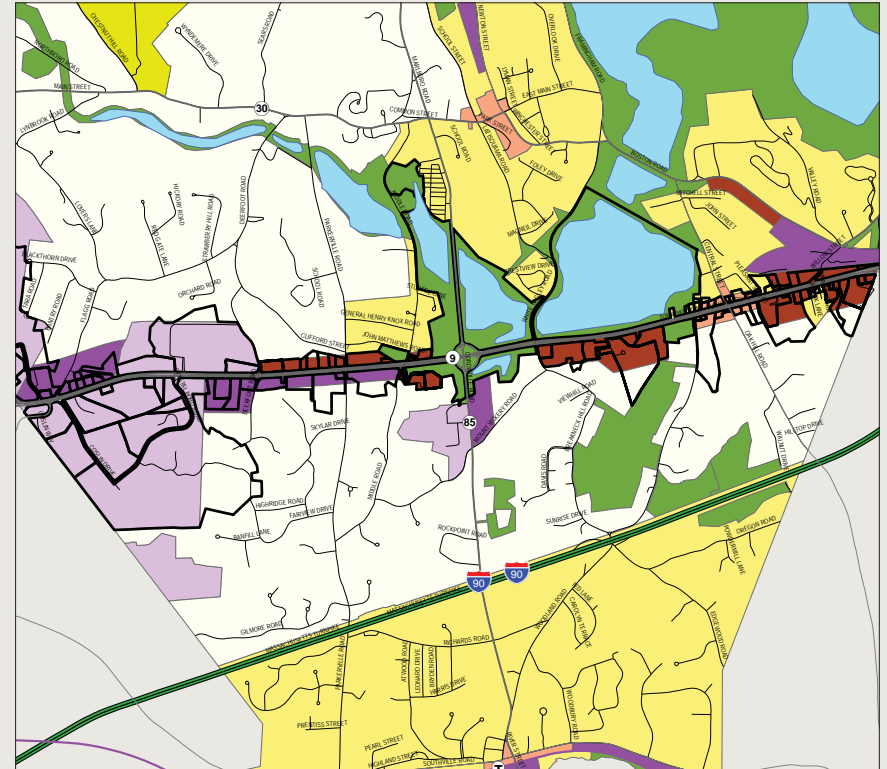
- Rolling topography in some areas, especially south of Route 9; and east of I-495 and between Central St. and Boston Rd. north of Route 9
- Water
- Pockets of wetlands, especially south of Route 9



Route 9 - Development Context

Policy Constraints

- Wastewater disposal
- Parking requirements
- Low-rise buildings
- Special permit for more than 50,000 sq. ft. of floor area, regardless of lot size
- Numerous “split lots”
- Adjacent land uses



Master Plan & Route 9

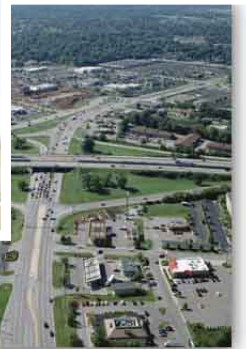
Key Findings

- Nearly all of Southborough's vacant commercial and industrial land is located in the vicinity of Route 9
- Under current zoning, the vacant land could support as much as 3.2 million sq. ft. of new floor area
- Off-street parking requirements, the absence of sewer service, wetlands, oddly shaped zoning districts, and zoning regulations make some parts of Route 9 difficult to develop

Master Plan & Route 9

Key Findings, cont'd

- Under current zoning, Route 9 could evolve as a mix of incompatible uses
 - ▶ Single-family homes
 - ▶ Research and development
 - ▶ Wholesale suppliers
 - ▶ Light industry
 - ▶ Automotive uses
 - ▶ Hotels



Master Plan & Route 9

Key Recommendations

- Southborough should:
 - ▶ Evaluate options to modify the boundaries of the Highway Business District
 - ▶ Eliminate potential use conflicts - and also allow compatible mixed-use development
 - ▶ Change the permitting process to eliminate unreasonable “bottlenecks”
 - ▶ Explore opportunities for shared wastewater disposal

Master Plan & Route 9

Key Recommendations, cont'd

- Southborough should:
 - ▶ Overhaul and update off-street parking requirements
 - ▶ Encourage “green” development
 - ▶ Ensure consistency between site development standards, stormwater management, LID, and subdivision regulations

Note: some of these recommendations apply to all business and industrial districts, not only Route 9

MAPC Route 9 Study (2009)

Four-Town Buildout and Traffic Impacts Analysis

- Potential for new growth:
 - ▶ Southborough: up to 6.9 million sq. ft.
 - ▶ Framingham: up to 6.7 million sq. ft.
 - ▶ Natick: up to 2 million sq. ft.
 - ▶ Wellesley: none

EOEA Buildout Analysis (2000)

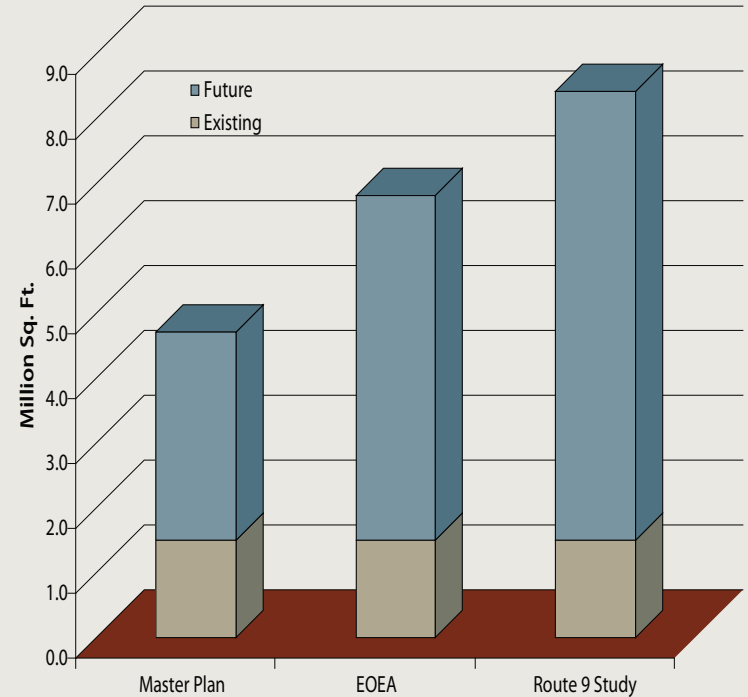
Statewide Buildout Studies

- Potential for new growth in Southborough:
 - ▶ Industrial Park District: 4.6 million sq. ft.
 - ▶ Industrial District: 526,000 sq. ft.
 - ▶ Business Highway District: 156,000 sq. ft.
 - ▶ Total: 5.3 million sq. ft. (rounded)

Issues

Future Development Capacity

- Buildout forecasts vary because of different assumptions
- Whether 3.2 million or 6.9 million sq. ft. of floor area, Route 9 has *significant* untapped development capacity under current zoning
- Total existing floor area = about 1.5 million sq. ft.



Issues

What does Southborough want on Route 9?

- Employment base with a variety of jobs?
- Retail and restaurants?
- Business mix weighted toward industrial uses or commercial uses?
- Multi-family housing?
- Tax revenue?
- More open space?
- Other?



Challenges

What could make it difficult to achieve a coherent vision for Route 9?

- Southborough controls land use (zoning), but the state controls access (curb cuts)
- Zoning Bylaw - what it says and doesn't say
- Physical constraints
- Interests of adjacent neighborhoods
- Traffic
- Policies and expectations of neighboring towns

Challenges

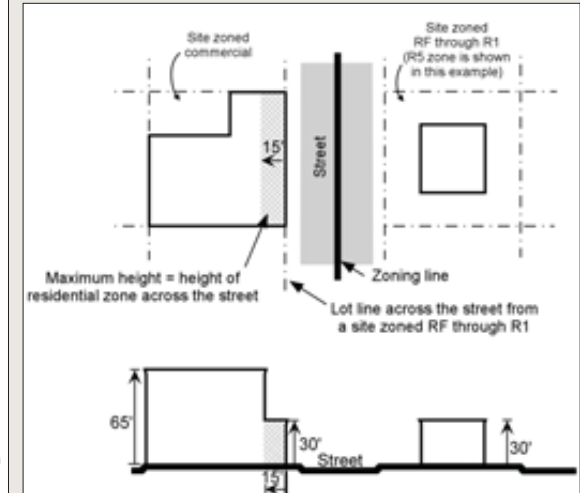
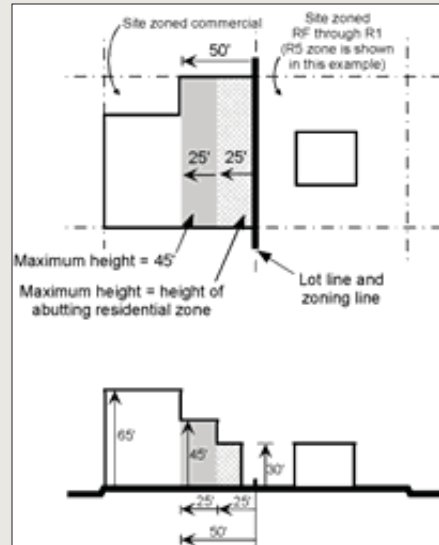
Opinions about development

- Is development inherently “negative”?
- What makes a project “look like” Southborough?
- Is it possible to create a permitting process that is highly controlled and discretionary on one hand and fair, transparent, and efficient on the other hand?
- Does Southborough want to *allow, encourage, or discourage* development on Route 9?

Challenges

Policy trade-offs

- Taller buildings in exchange for more open space and less pavement on commercial sites?
- More height in exchange for special design treatment of façade, roof? For bringing buildings closer to the road and away from adjacent neighborhoods? For structured parking?



Challenges

Policy trade-offs, cont'd

- A more efficient permitting process for projects that address agreed-upon goals?
- Reduced parking in exchange for shared parking by two or more adjacent uses?
- Reduced lot frontage in exchange for shared access and shared parking agreements by two or more adjacent uses?
- Other?

Opportunities

Master Plan Implementation

- Revising and updating the Zoning Bylaw
 - ▶ Physical form
 - ▶ Quality of the built environment
 - ▶ Stormwater management
 - ▶ Mixed uses and market value
 - ▶ Reasonable permitting procedures
 - ▶ Requirements, conditions, incentives
 - ▶ Transportation Demand Management (TDM)

Breakout Sessions

For the next 40 minutes...

- Route 9 Working Groups
- Discuss:
 - ▶ The positive qualities of Route 9 that you would want to preserve and enhance in the future
 - ▶ What uses would make sense on Route 9 - and *where*, generally, on Route 9?



Breakout Sessions

Structure

- ZAC members will guide the discussion
- Each group needs to select a speaker
- After 20 minutes, rotate to another working group
- Everyone will have a chance to participate in a discussion about Route 9/East and Route 9/West
- After 40 minutes, reconvene for presentations and discussion of each working group's ideas

Questions? Comments?

