NORTHSTAR PLANNING

MEMORANDUM

TO: Lisbon Planning Board

CC: Mark Stambach, Code Enforcement Officer
Ross Cunningham, Director of Economic and Community Development

From: Kate Burch, Senior Planner, North Star Planning

RE: Lisbon Village Building Height Regulations

Date: June 3, 2024

Overview

Lisbon's Land Use Ordinance currently limits building height to 35' throughout town. The Route 196 Design Standards allow a 1½ to 2 story height in the Village Character District (Lisbon Falls & Lisbon Village.) The Lisbon Development Corporation and Economic Development Director are interested in the possibility of a higher height limit to encourage multifamily residential development.

The Planning Board discussed height limits at a workshop at the May 9, 2024 Planning Board meeting and requested two ordinance update scenarios:

1. Increase the height limit in the Village zone;
2. Increase the height limit only in the Lisbon Village area suggested by the Economic Development Director.

At the May 9 workshop, the Board discussed how increasing the height limit would open up opportunities for residential development in these areas, and would be compatible with historic patterns of development in Lisbon Falls and Lisbon Village.

Ordinance changes for both options follow. In addition to the edits below, we recommend adding a column for maximum building height to the dimensional standards table (Sec. 70-536), as the current location of the height limit nested under Supplementary District Requirements -> Lot Requirements (Sec. 70-638) is not easy to find.

When considering these options, the Board should identify if there is something unique about the identified Lisbon Village area that warrantdifferent zoning treatment than in Lisbon Falls and the larger areas zoned Village.

Option 1: Increase the height limit in the Village zone.

Sec. 70-638. - Building height.

No building shall exceed 55 feet in height in the Village zone and 35 feet in height in any other zone. Features of buildings and structures, such as chimneys, towers, ventilators and spires, may exceed ~~35 feet in~~ height limits but shall be set back from the nearest lot line a distance not less than the height of such feature or structure unless a greater setback is required by other provisions of this chapter.

Sec 70-833

1. *Site layout and general design.*
    a. *General standards by district.* In addition to the General Standards, (b) through (f) below, these character district standards shall apply.
        i. *Village character district.*
            1. *Lot layout.* In village areas, buildings shall have small setbacks from the roadway, with frontage areas between the building and roadway that are well landscaped and have appropriate pedestrian access. Village areas will typically have speed limits 35 mph or lower, with an emphasis on pedestrian-scale site layout and less auto-oriented development.
            2. Buildings shall be located close to the sidewalk or public right-of-way, consistent with surrounding buildings.
            3. Off-street parking shall be located to the side or rear of the building, not in front.
            4. *Scale and density.* Buildings shall be constructed to a minimum ~~1½ to~~ 2 story height ~~(maximum building height of 35 feet)~~, unless a lower building height is determined to be more compatible with the surrounding buildings. In cases of a building or buildings (connected) with a larger footprint (>5,000 square feet), the building massing must be broken up architecturally to be consistent with the village scale and surrounding buildings. The village districts are intended to support higher building density, with greater percentage of lot coverage and more units/square footage and mixed uses.
            5. *Architecture and character.* Historic buildings and building character are to be maintained to the greatest extent possible; new construction should be generally described as "Typical New England Character" (*See (2) Architecture Standards*).
        ii. *Village/Main Street character district.*
            1. *Lot layout.* In the Village/Main Street districts, buildings shall be located right next to or very close to the sidewalk or right-of-way,

with emphasis on streetscape and pedestrian access in front of the building. Off-street parking is not allowed in front of buildings in this character district, only to the side or rear. The Village/Main Streets will typically have speed limits of 25 mph, with an emphasis on pedestrian-scale site layout and less auto-oriented development.

2. *Scale and density.* Buildings shall be constructed to a minimum ~~1½ to~~ 2 story height ~~(maximum building height of 35 feet)~~, unless a lower building height is determined to be more compatible with the surrounding buildings. In cases of a building or buildings (connected) with a larger footprint (>5,000 square feet), the building massing must be broken up architecturally to be consistent with the village scale and surrounding buildings. The village districts are intended to support higher building density, with greater percentage of lot coverage and more units/square footage and mixed uses.

Option 2: Amend Route 196 Design Standards to expand Lisbon Village and apply height limit change to Lisbon Village only.

Sec. 70-638. - Building height.

No building shall exceed 35 feet in height, except in the Lisbon Village Village/Main Street Character District as defined in 70-832(1)(b)(2)(b). Features of buildings and structures, such as chimneys, towers, ventilators and spires, may exceed ~~35 feet in~~ height limits but shall be set back from the nearest lot line a distance not less than the height of such feature or structure unless a greater setback is required by other provisions of this chapter.

Sec. 70-832. - Character districts.

(1) Because the Route 196 Corridor Plan identified that different sections of the corridor have differing character, there are, in some cases, standards and guidelines that apply only to specific character districts along the corridor. The area of design guidelines applicability and the designated character districts are illustrated on the Route 196 Design Standards Overlay Map, (e) below.

(a) *Village character district.*

1) *Purpose*. The purpose of standards and guidelines for the village character districts along the Route 196 Corridor is to maintain the areas of existing village character and scale, and encourage village character and scale for development and redevelopment in other appropriate areas of the corridor.

2) *District locations.* Character districts shall include all abutting properties on Route 196 within the sections of road below, including any development within 500 feet of the right-of-way.

a. Lisbon Falls—between Topsham town line and Sugg Drive/Route 9.

b. Lisbon Center and Lisbon Village—between River Road and Littlefield Road, excluding the area included in the Village/Main Street character district as defined in 70-832(1)(b)(2)(b).

(b) *Village/Main Street character district.*

1) *Purpose*. The purpose of standards and guidelines for the Village/Main Street character districts adjacent to the Route 196 Corridor is to maintain the areas of existing village character and scale that are distinct to the village "Main Streets." These areas have definable significance for Lisbon's character. This development form, unique architecture, and pedestrian scale, is part of Lisbon's unique character and must be protected.

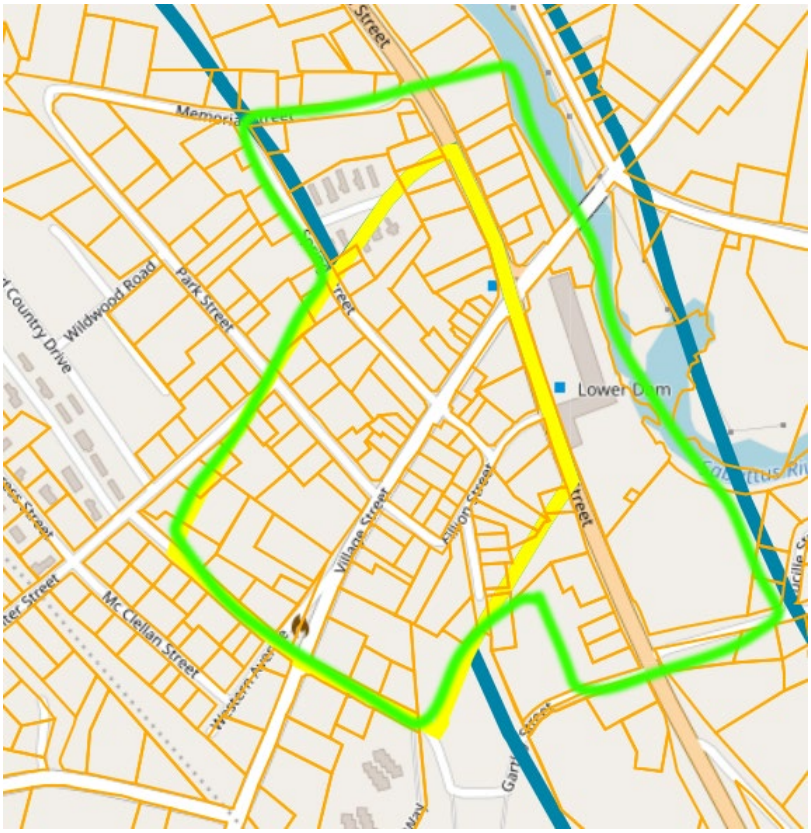
2) *District locations.* Character districts shall include all abutting properties on Route 196 within the sections of road below, including any development within 500 feet of the right-of-way.

a. Lisbon Falls: Main Street—between Lisbon Street and School Street.

b. Lisbon Village: Village Street—between ~~Lisbon Street~~ the Sabattus River and Franklin/Gartley Streets, and Lisbon Street between Memorial Street and Gartley Street.

(e) Route 196 Design Standards, Character District Overlay Map.

[existing Lisbon Village Village/Main Street Character District outlined in yellow; proposed boundary outlined in green.]



Sec 70-833

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            1. *Lot layout.* In the Village/Main Street districts, buildings shall be located right next to or very close to the sidewalk or right-of-way, with emphasis on streetscape and pedestrian access in front of the building. Off-street parking is not allowed in front of buildings in this character district, only to the side or rear. The Village/Main Streets will typically have speed limits of 25 mph, with an emphasis on pedestrian-scale site layout and less auto-oriented development.
            2. *Scale and density.* Buildings shall be constructed to a 1½ to 2 story height (maximum building height of 35 feet) in the Lisbon Falls

location of the Village/Main Street character district, unless a lower building height is determined to be more compatible with the surrounding buildings. Buildings shall be constructed to a maximum building height of 55 feet in the Lisbon Village location of the Village/Main Street Character District. In cases of a building or buildings (connected) with a larger footprint (>5,000 square feet), the building massing must be broken up architecturally to be consistent with the village scale and surrounding buildings. The village districts are intended to support higher building density, with greater percentage of lot coverage and more units/square footage and mixed uses.