

# Article 9 (Citizen Petition): Pausing to Make Downtown 40R “Smart Growth” Smarter



TOWN MEETING  
INSTRUCTIONAL  
VOTES: “THE  
WILL OF THE  
COMMUNITY”

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November 2020 – create **public spaces** in part by **reducing lot coverage to at least 85%** (down from current 100%)

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**Passed 119-39**

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April 2021 – similar language, include requirements of **15-foot setbacks to all residential uses**, even if in business zone

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**Passed 125-3**

195 NEW 40R  
HOUSING UNITS  
NOW IN SMALL  
DOWNTOWN AREA –  
PLUS “THE MET”

FULL OCCUPANCY  
HAS NOT YET  
OCCURRED

TIME TO PAUSE AND  
ASSESS BEFORE  
CONTINUING

<b>Project</b>	<b>Housing Units</b>	
<b>30 Haven</b>	<b>53</b>	
<b>Ace Flats (Gould Street)</b>	<b>55</b>	
<b>475 Main</b>	<b>31</b>	
<b>PostMark</b>	<b>50</b>	
<b>Chronicle</b>	<b>6</b>	
<b><i>Chute Street (proposed)</i></b>	<b><i>31</i></b>	
<b><i>18-20 Woburn (proposed)</i></b>	<b><i>7</i></b>	

# CONCERN: Lack of Public Open Spaces

Women on Work  
Break Sit in Parking  
Space

Few Open Areas to Sit  
or Congregate

*Need More Than Just  
Big Buildings*

*Make Depot a  
Destination / Create  
Sense of Place*



**CONCERN: No space/walkways between new buildings (30 Haven)**





CONCERN: No setbacks to street  
or abutting homes  
(475 Main Street, for example)



# CONCERN: Inadequate setbacks to abutting houses (Gould/Green Street)





1 A302 CHUTE ST. FACADE  
1" = 10'-0"

# PROPOSED ON CHUTE STREET

*(Green Tomato/Last Corner site)*

- SAME SCALE AND POTENTIAL CHALLENGES AS THE OTHERS
- MODEST CHANGES COULD MAKE THIS MORE SUCCESSFUL



## Apparent Parking Impacts: Sanborn Street

- 15-18 Cars Now Parked 12 Hours Every Night
- Coincides with “Postmark” Residential Occupancy
- *And Many Businesses Aren’t in Place Yet*
- Need Street Spaces for Businesses, Patrons
- Cumulative Impact Unknown But May be Large

## GOALS for REVISIONS

- Create Open Public Areas
- Reduce Units Per Acre
- Establish Minimum 15-Foot Setback to All Residences
- Prevent Parking Shortages
- Create Downtown 40R Master Plan

## *GOAL: Open Public Areas*

*We want more  
areas like this.  
Our 40R does  
not provide for  
them. We can  
change that!*



GOAL:  
Reduce  
Units/Acre

- Reading's 40R is exceptionally dense. Massachusetts 40R law requires 20 units/acre.
- Four of six Reading 40R projects are **70-80 units per acre**
- Many 40Rs in Massachusetts are **20-50 units per acre.**
- There is room for somewhat reduced scale, as in other towns!

Reading 40R  
Projects Are  
Exceptionally  
Dense:  
*Frames of  
Reference*

**Table 1. Gross Density of Recent Apartment Developments in Boston-Area Suburbs**

Town	Development	Total Units	Site (Acres)	Gross Density	Source
Needham	Needham Mews	268	6.0	44.5	Town Planner
Acton	Avalon Acton	360	35.0	10.3	Consultant's Files
Andover	Rolling Green	224	45.3	4.9	Consultant's Files
Braintree	Ridge at Blue Hills	186	17.1	10.9	Online
Burlington	Arborpoint at Seven Springs	331	37.8	8.8	Online
Concord	Concord Mews	350	30.0	11.7	Online
Foxborough	The Lodge at Foxborough	250	22.8	11.0	Consultant's Files
Hingham	Avalon at Hingham Shipyard	235	9.9	23.6	Consultant's Files
Hopkinton	Alta Legacy Farms*	240	18.2	13.2	Town Planner
Lexington	Avalon at Lexington Hills	387	22.1	17.5	Online
Lexington	Avalon at Lexington	198	16.9	11.7	Online
Melrose	Windsor at Oak Grove	401	16.0	25.1	Online
Needham	Charles River Landing	350	7.9	44.1	Consultant's Files
Newton	Avalon at Newton Highlands	294	7.8	37.7	Online
Newton	Arborpoint at Woodland Station	180	8.8	20.3	Online
Northborough	Avalon Northborough	382	42.0	9.1	Online
Pembroke	Pembroke Woods (Alexan)	240	51.0	4.7	Online
Saugus	Residences at Stevens Pond	326	82.6	3.9	Online
Shrewsbury	Madison Place*	96	12.0	8.0	Town Planner
Shrewsbury	Avalon Shrewsbury	251	23.6	10.6	Online
Stoughton	Lodge at Stoughton	240	13.1	18.3	Online
Tewksbury	Lodge at Ames Pond	364	52.7	6.9	Town Planner
Watertown	Watertown Mews**	206	6.5	31.7	Town Planner
Westborough	Flanders Hill at Westborough	280	62.0	4.5	Online

\*Inclusionary zoning, not a Chapter 40B comprehensive permit.  
 \*\*Watertown Mews is Phase II of a larger housing project on Pleasant Street.

GOAL: Create Overall Master Plan for 40R District  
Other Towns Have 40R Master Site Plans  
*But Reading is Working Lot-by-Lot Downtown*



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VOTE YES TO PAUSE 40R APPROVALS AND GIVE TIME TO  
PLAN AND ADJUST THE ZONING PROPERLY

MODEST DENSITY REDUCTIONS AND ADDED PUBLIC  
SPACES WILL GREATLY IMPROVE THIS 40R ZONE!



DOWNTOWN WILL BE MORE APPEALING  
-- INCLUDING FOR THE 100s OF NEW RESIDENTS --  
FOR THE NEXT CENTURY

*THANK YOU!!*