

South Lincoln Planning Update

Town of Lincoln

State of the Town

November 2, 2021

South Lincoln Planning Advisory Committee (SLPAC)

- The Planning Board has charged SLPAC with pursuing the land use policy goals set out in Lincoln's 2009 Comprehensive Plan:
- “Create a compact, vital, walkable village center in the Lincoln Station area that provides more housing choices near public transportation, goods and services for residents and opportunities for social interaction.”
- SLPAC and the Planning Board will continue to develop a shared and inclusive vision of a sustainable Village Center that benefits the entire Town of Lincoln and ensures a wide range of perspectives are represented and considered.

The Planning Board

- Supports the Town, its values, and its vision for the future through land use policy.
- Implements land use policy that the Town desires through zoning.
- Zoning is created and ratified through public discussion, deliberation and, ultimately, a vote of Town Meeting.
- Zoning creates permitting processes. The best permitting process is clear in its requirements and efficient in its application.
- Zoning does not approve specific projects.

Lincoln Vision Statement

Lincoln is a town that cherishes its rural, agricultural character, its small town heritage, its open space and its historical legacy. The Town is committed to:

- Achieving a balance between preserving these values while making reasonable provision for citizens' safety and convenience;
- Fostering economic, racial/ethnic, and age diversity among its citizenry through its educational, housing and other public policy;
- Excellence in its public educational system; and
- The Town Meeting form of government and the traditions of civic leadership and volunteer public service.

How Do We Put it Together?

The Pieces of the Puzzle

- **A Village Center with Viable Commercial Businesses**
- **Walkability**
 - **Magnolia Path, Wayfinding to Drumlin, Codman, de Cordova**
- **Public Amenities**
 - **MBTA, Public Spaces, Playground, Benches, Bike Racks, etc.**
- **Housing Options: Affordable and Market Rate, Mixed-Use**
- **Diversity and Inclusion**
- **Green Building and Sustainability**

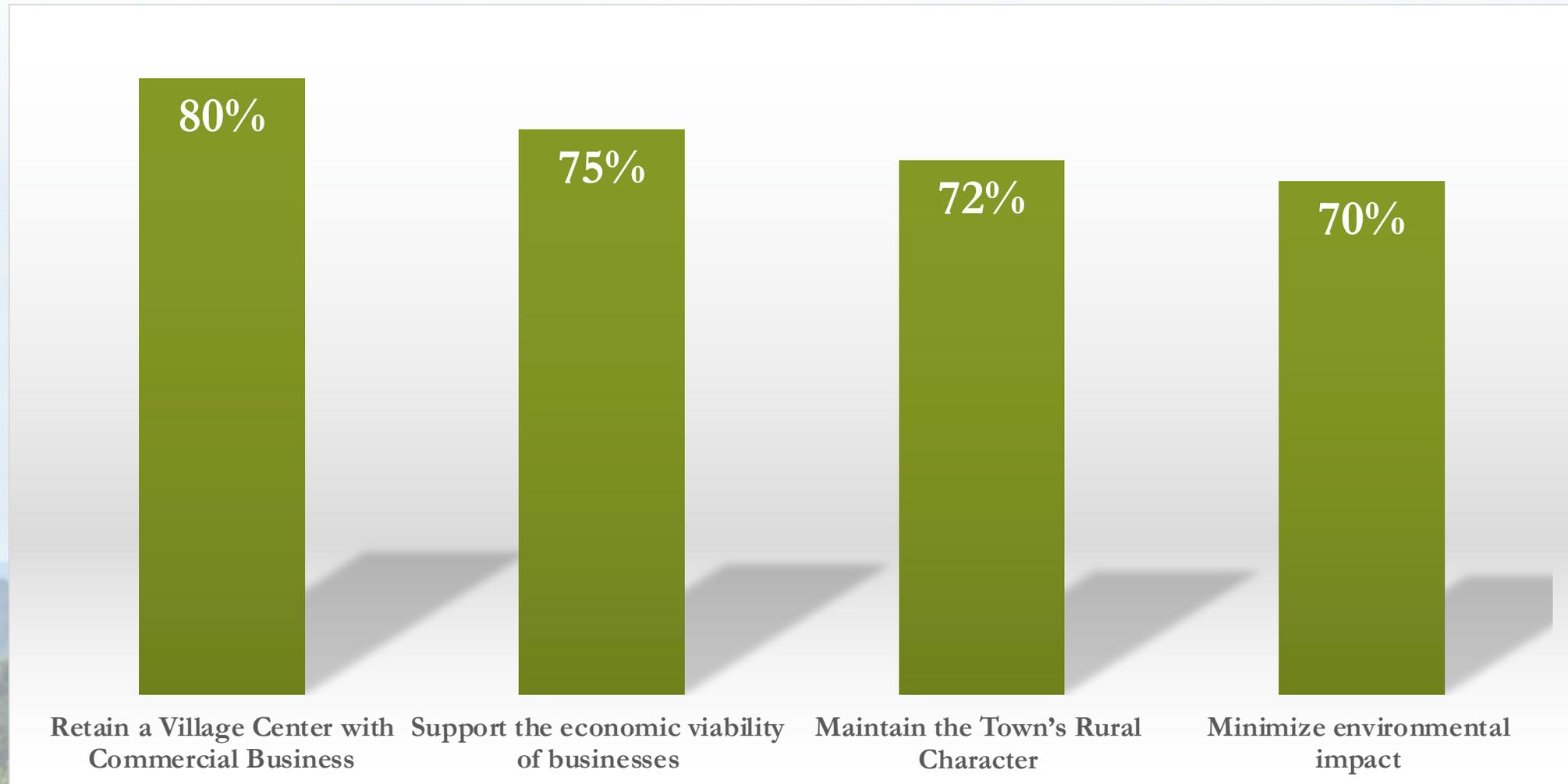
What has been the Feedback on South Lincoln Planning?

- Provide opportunity for a successful Village Center while maintaining current size of commercial space.
- Promote a sense of place and community where all residents wish to gather.
- Control the scope, size, and architecture of development
- Ensure any proposals reflect the character of the Town, including being green and sustainable.
- Promote inclusion and diversity.
- Provide housing options for downsizing, small families, and seniors.

Town Survey

- 790 resident responses
- The next few slides highlight some of the responses.
- The full survey, responses and comments can be found on the Town website: <http://www.lincolntown.org/1274/Village-Center-Survey>
- The Planning Board and SLPAC will continue to solicit feedback over the coming months through a variety of forums.

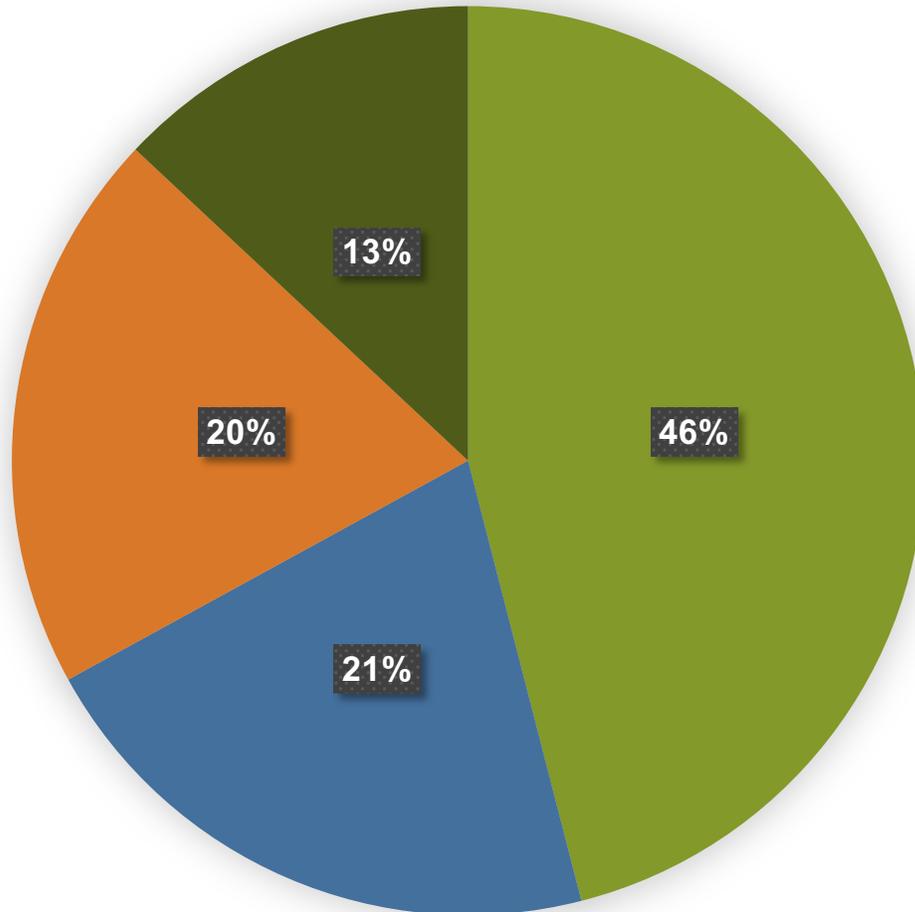
Survey Feedback: The Four Leading Goals



Survey Feedback: Goals With 50% + Support

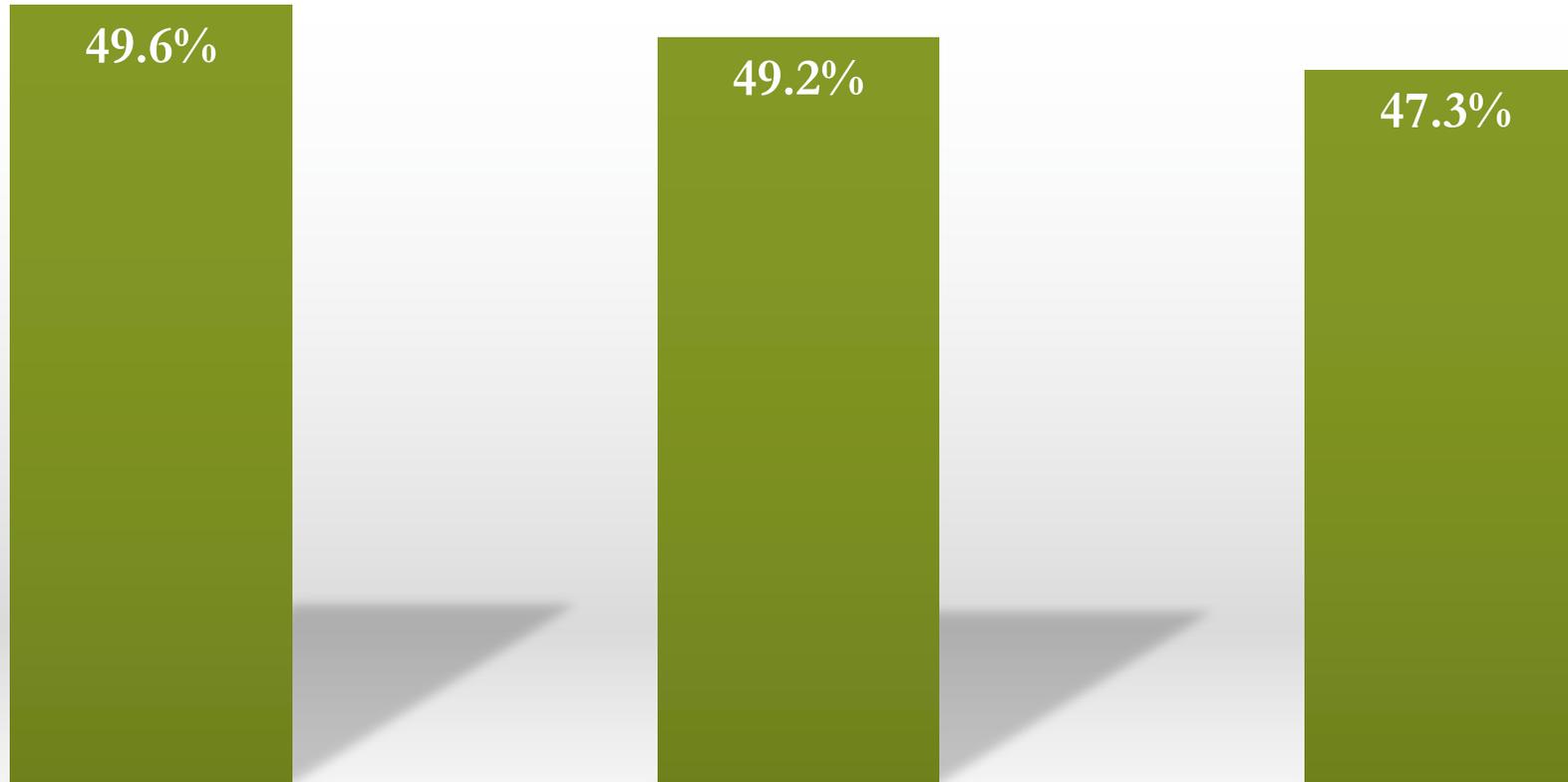
- Create a more active Village Center
- Increase Diversity in Lincoln
- Promote Sustainable/Green Development
- Ensure Accessibility for all ages and abilities
- Create a pedestrian/bike friendly center w/ connections to the broader town.
- Minimize Traffic
- Support the MBTA station

Survey Feedback: Affordable/Moderate Housing



- Support for additional affordable/moderate housing in the Center - 46%
- Need more information to make a decision - 21%
- No Support for additional affordable/moderate housing in the Center - 20%
- Support for additional affordable/moderate housing but not in the Center - 13%

Survey: Top Housing Choices



Mixed income rental units which include market rate and affordable rate

Mixed use development that includes commercial on the first floor and residential units above.

Affordable/Moderate rate rental units.

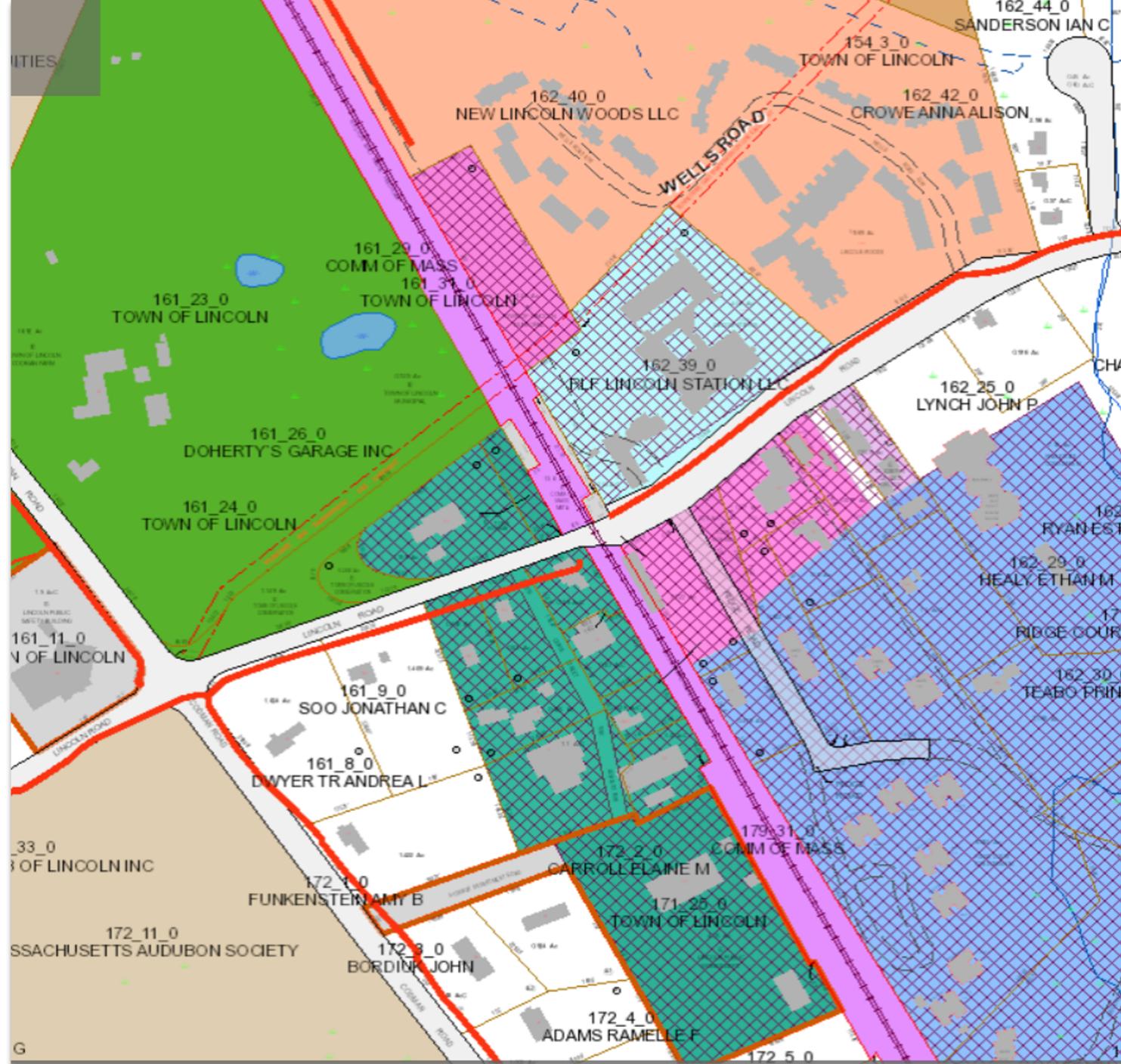
Current Zoning in Village Center

Currently there is a hodgepodge of zoning districts and permitting procedure: B-1, B-2, R-2, R-4, and the South Lincoln Overlay

- Difficult to achieve mixed-use in B-2 and not allowed in B-1.
- Most businesses require a special permit, permits are of short duration, and cannot be transferred to new owners
- South Lincoln Overlay District
 - Permits flexibility without predetermined standards and requires a Town Meeting vote.

Village Center Zoning Districts

- ▶ B-1 is in Pink
- ▶ B-2 is in Teal
- ▶ R-2 is in Blue
- ▶ R-4 is in Orange
- ▶ South Lincoln Overlay is Hatched



The Bylaw Already Allows Flexible Residential Projects by Planning Board and/or ZBA approval

- Cluster Development in R-1 requires Planning Board special permit and site plan review.
- Open Space Developments, and Planned Community Developments require a Town Meeting vote to establish the district (R-3 or R-4) but DO NOT require TM vote to approve the specific project.
- The specific project is permitted by the ZBA and Planning Board.
- Lincoln Woods was permitted under R-4 Special Permit Process.
- Detailed process and requirements are specified in the zoning bylaw.
- The special permit hearings are public hearings which provide opportunity for public input.

The South Lincoln Overlay Process

- The South Lincoln Overlay District requires Town Meeting approval to establish the district AND approve the specific project.
- A project must be designed and vetted before being brought to a Town Meeting vote.
- There is no practical way to negotiate changes to a project at Town Meeting.
- There are no parameters or requirements for a project
- There are no incentives for affordable units, sustainability, green building.
- Process takes at least a year, and an applicant risks significant development funds on an up or down, Town Meeting vote.
- Since the addition of the South Lincoln Overlay District in 2004, there has been 1 project in the Village Center that has been passed by Town Meeting, the RLF expansion of the Mall.

How Can a New Zoning Bylaw Control Development and Deliver a Better Project?

- A new Zoning Bylaw can:
 - Explicitly define what is required of a project therefore minimizing risk of a “bad project”.
 - Require compliance with design criteria.
 - Regulate height, setbacks, use.
 - Control size and scope.
 - Require vetting: studies on traffic, fiscal analysis, and potential impacts on services.
 - Provide a framework for incentivizing green building, community spaces, green spaces, affordable housing (that cannot be required under state law).
- All Zoning changes require a vote by Town Meeting.
- Neither the Town nor the Planning Board are developers.

Proposed Village Center Zoning Goals

- Promote the values of the Town – Rural Character, Sustainability, Diversity.
- Support a viable village center by providing a framework for a variety and flexibility of uses: commercial, housing, mixed-use, live-work.
- Facilitate adaptability, agility, certainty, and efficiency for landowners seeking to do a project and allow the Town to adapt in an ever-changing world.
- Ensure the desirability of projects by a permitting process that is clear and specific in its requirements-requirements that are determined by Town Meeting process.

Progress on Information Gathering and Analysis

- Evaluation of the Wastewater Treatment Plant
- Traffic Study
- School Enrollment and Capacity Memo
- Fiscal Impact Analysis
- Development of Design Requirements for the Village Center area
- Town Wide Survey: Many respondents asked for more information because there is no specific project to review.

Other Considerations

- **Housing Choice and MBTA Communities Legislation:** <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/housing-choice-and-mbta-communities-legislation>
 - MBTA communities must create a zoning district that allows “by right” 15 units/acre within ½ mile of train station suitable for families OR forfeit access to sizeable grant opportunities.
- **Senate Bill 9 - An Act Creating a Next Generation Roadmap for Massachusetts Climate Policy:** <https://www.mass.gov/news/governor-baker-signs-climate-legislation-to-reduce-greenhouse-gas-emissions-protect-environmental-justice-communities>
 - Achieve net zero emissions by 2050:
 - Emissions limit of no less than 50% by 2030
 - Emissions limit of no less than 75% by 2040

Next Steps

- **Continue Public Outreach and Discussion.**
 - Schedule smaller meetings and listening sessions.
 - Site walk at the Mall.
- **Continue dialogue with stakeholders including Lincoln Woods, and the RLF.**
- **Complete Wastewater Treatment Evaluation.**
- **Draft Zoning Language that incorporates the values and implements the goals of the Town.**

Information Available on Website

- Village Planning and Zoning History: <http://www.lincolntown.org/931/Village-Planning-and-Zoning>
- SLPAC <http://www.lincolntown.org/507/South-Lincoln-SLPIC>
- Studies and Reports: <http://www.lincolntown.org/1242/Studies-and-Reports>
- Village Center Survey <http://www.lincolntown.org/1274/Village-Center-Survey>
- Design Guidelines: <https://www.lincolntown.org/DocumentCenter/View/71970/Lincoln-Station-DGs-Draft-110219-2>