



Town of New Marlborough, May 7, 2012

Planning for our Village Centers

The New Marlborough Planning Board is in the process of researching and drafting a Village Center District bylaw. Currently New Marlborough has one zoning district, Town-Residential, despite the differences between the density and character of the villages and rural areas. To enhance our villages and help keep our rural areas rural, there is a need for more than a one-size-fits-all approach.

What does a Village Center District Accomplish?

The villages play an important role in our community as the centers for services and socialization (i.e., post offices, stores, Library), with concentrations of housing and clusters of historic buildings. However, our current Town Residential zoning requirements (minimum 1 acre, 150' of frontage) don't allow much opportunity for infill or development. To encourage our villages to remain vibrant and to protect their character, the Planning Board is drafting village-specific zoning requirements.

If accepted at a town meeting, the "Village Center Districts" will apply to the five villages in New Marlborough. These village districts will allow more uses, reflecting the activity that currently exists, or is desirable in the villages. The required lot size may be smaller, and the setbacks will be reduced – more closely reflecting the existing physical patterns.

The intended results will be infill development that is sensitive to village character, easier permitting for village-appropriate businesses, and fewer non-conforming lots, structures and uses. These changes should encourage development in the villages, thereby reducing development pressure on the rural areas.

Get Involved & Next Steps

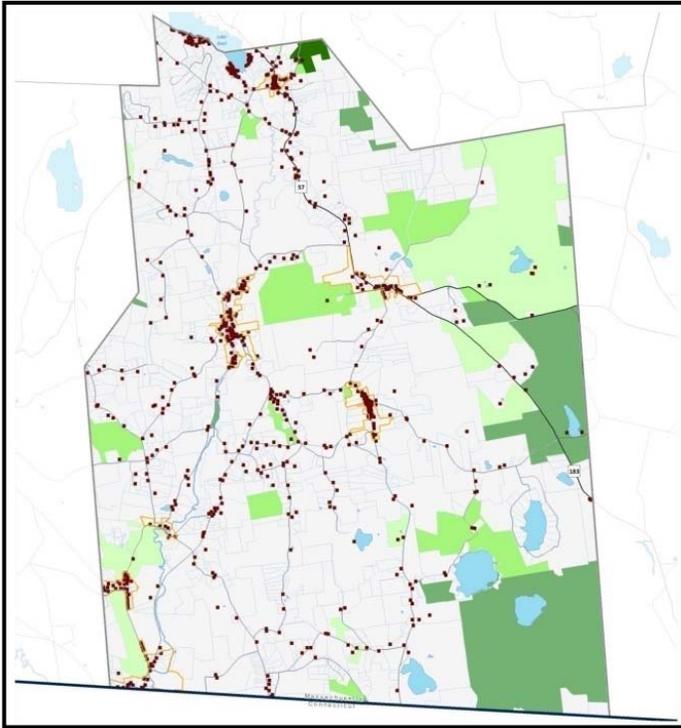
1. The New Marlborough Planning Board will hold informational sessions in late summer. Please watch for the time and date in the Five Village News, the Town Website and Maggie's List: maggies-list@googlegroups.com. Draft documents for review will be posted on the Planning Board webpage* prior to the sessions. At the sessions we'll review zone boundaries, proposed dimensional standards, and permitted uses and provide opportunity for your input.
2. Following the information sessions, the Planning Board will prepare the final draft Village Center District language and a boundary map, incorporating public input.
3. The Planning Board will then hold a public hearing to receive additional comments.
4. Residents will be asked to consider adopting the Village Center District bylaw at a town meeting.

Comments may be referred to the New Marlborough Planning Board at any time. The Planning Board meets every 1st and 3rd Wednesday of the month at 7:00 PM, Town Hall.

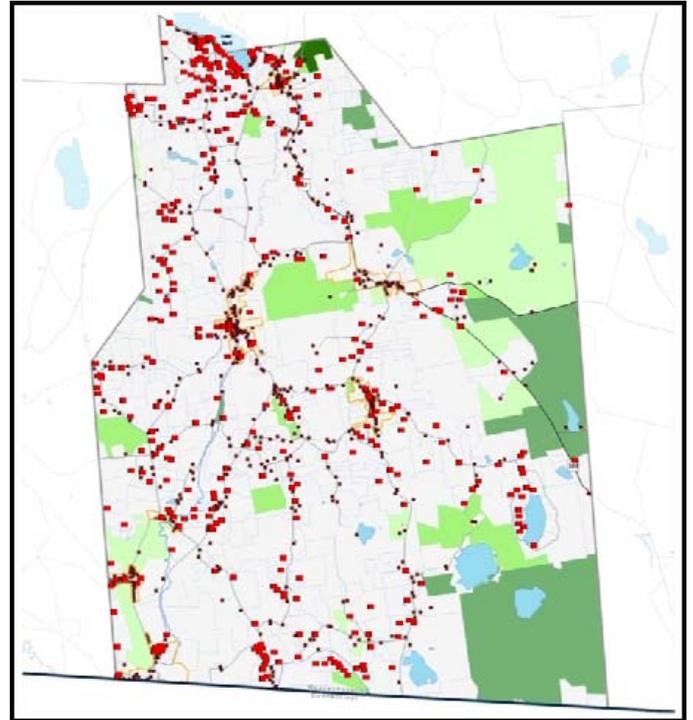
*www.newmarlboroughma.gov/Pages/NewMarlboroughMA_Bcomm/Planning/index

Development Trends

The 2010 New Marlborough Master Plan describes some concerning development trends over the last 25 years. In 1987, 25% of structures were located in the villages. Just over a decade later, in 1999, only 20% were. At the same time, new development predominated in the rural areas, with lot sizes more than doubling.



In 1987, development was still focused in village centers (small dots).



By 1999, development has shifted to rural areas (the large dots represent new development).

Direction for the Future

During the Master Planning process, a public survey was conducted. Many responses were related to the need for village districts:

- Out of 19 options of what they like most about living in New Marlborough: 24.0%* = rural setting
- Out of 26 different responses about what is disliked about living in New Marlborough:
 - 9.3% = development and changes
 - 2.5% = lack of zoning
- If you feel more housing is needed, where should it be located?
 - In the villages
 - 57.0% = **yes**
 - 29.7% = unsure
 - 12.7% = no
- Some of the important issues for the town to work on were rural character, planning, and zoning.

Regarding the development of housing, 47.4%* agreed with the statement, *the community is growing at a good rate; we need to do a better job at managing its development.*

* Highest response rate