Visualizing Village Concepts to Implement Zoning

Topic: Visualization, An Overview

What it is: We will be preparing visual representations (*aka*, visualizations) in two- and three-dimensions of three different 'build out' scenarios for the proposed Standish Corner Village Center. Build-outs show the amount of development that is reasonably allowed based upon the suitability of the land for development according to a set of zoning standards. We will do build outs for the existing zoning and 2 other zoning options based upon the Village Design Master Plan. The visualizations we prepare will show variations of the 'Big Issues'.

These illustrations show opportunities for new development and redevelopment, similar to the "possibilities" and choices in Standish Corner.

Source: Assn to Preserve Cape Cod.

These visualizations show the existing neighborhoods surrounding an intersection and two options for development. We will be building up to three 3D models for Standish Corner showing variations in the 'Big Issues' we are discussing.

Source: _____ .

Visualizations come in a variety of forms and formats. We'll use them all.

This visualization shows the relationship between a number of issues we'll discuss: setbacks from the street (min. & max.), building heights/no. of stories (min. & max), and sidewalks & streetscape.

Source: Assn to Preserve Cape Cod.

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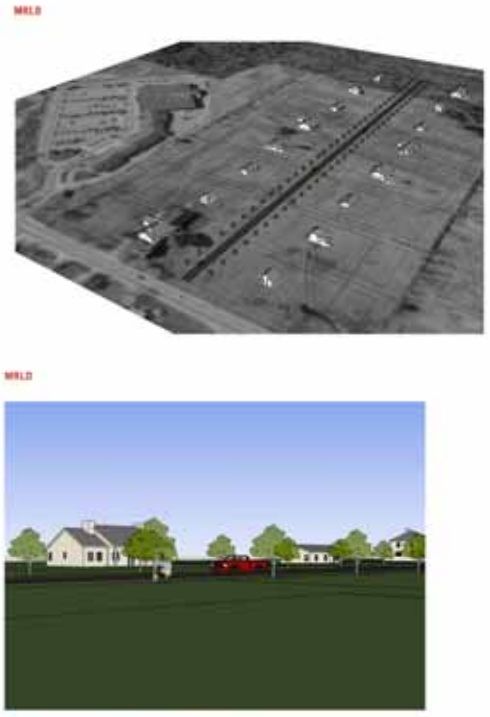
‘Big Issue’ #1: Density & Scale – Residential Lot Sizes

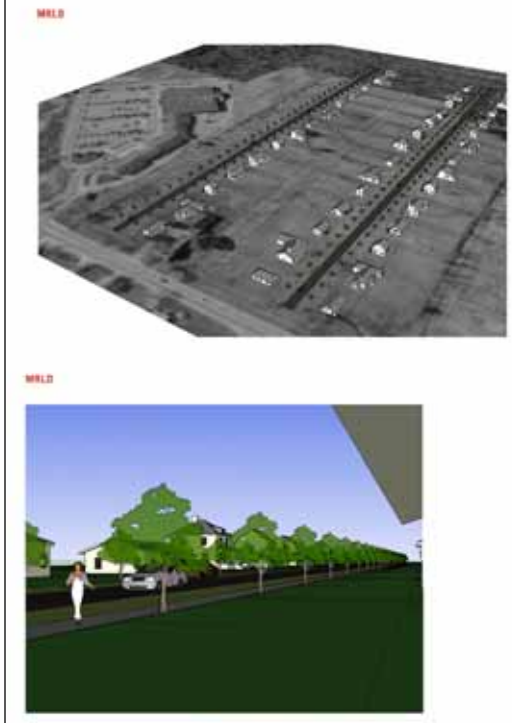
What it is: Minimum Lot size is the minimum land area that is required per residential dwelling unit, generally given in the number of square feet (sf) or acres required. The minimum may vary by type of housing units. For instance, more or less land per unit may be required for multi-unit housing versus single family housing. Minimum lot sizes are typically smaller for village areas (resulting in higher overall density) than in rural areas. Some communities have adopted Maximum Lot Sizes as well (to help ensure some density threshold is met). It is very desirable to have a variety of house lot sizes within a neighborhood, and not a “one size fits all”, cookie cutter approach with lots all the same size and/or houses of the same style and cost. *Lot size diversity is good!*

Existing Min. Lot Size
60,000 sf lots (~ 1.5 acres each)

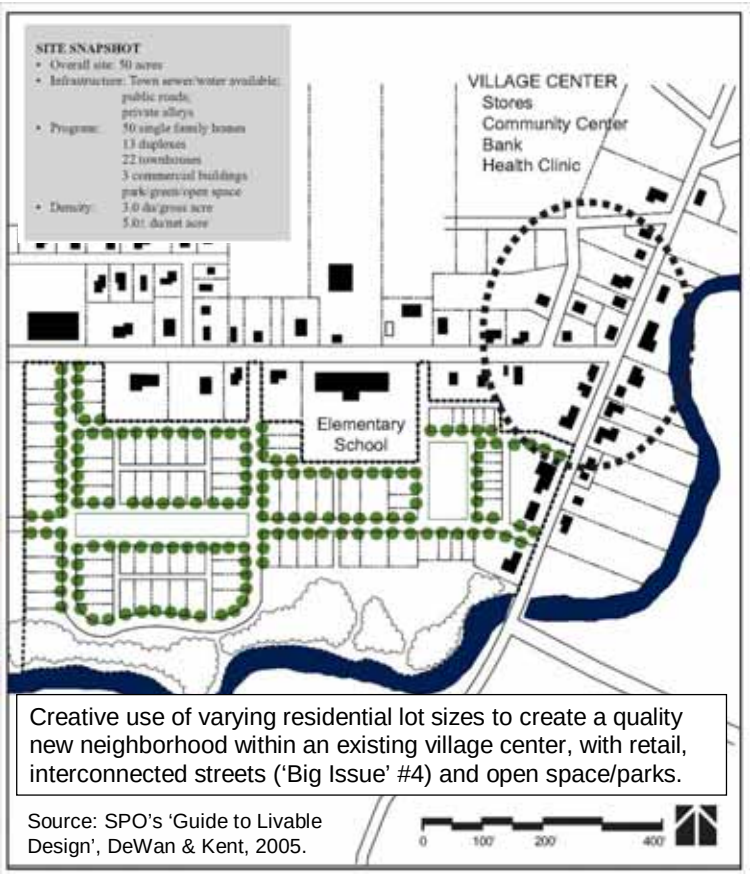


Source: MRLD.

Potential Min. Lot Size
20,000 sf lots (~ half acre each)



Source: MRLD.



Creative use of varying residential lot sizes to create a quality new neighborhood within an existing village center, with retail, interconnected streets (‘Big Issue’ #4) and open space/parks.

Source: SPO’s ‘Guide to Livable Design’, DeWan & Kent, 2005.

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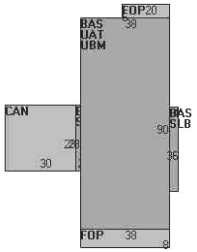
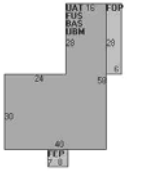
'Big Issue' #1:
Density & Scale – Commercial Building Footprint

What it is: This is the maximum area of each floor a building may have. In tandem with "Permitted Land Uses", a maximum building footprint strongly influences the type of development that can occur. There are a variety of ways, through architectural detailing and configuration of buildings, to make much larger buildings "seem" smaller. It is also possible to allow larger individual buildings but regulate the maximum size of a single use within a single building.



Norway Savings Bank
~3620 sf (main bldg)

Dunkin Donuts
~1825 sf (main bldg)



Merritt House
~1650 sf

All building footprint images are shown at the same approximate scale (roughly 1"=50').

Source: Standish Assessor.

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Big Issue #2: Zoning Boundaries

What it is: Zoning Boundaries very specifically identify which development regulations pertain to the individual parcels of land within those boundaries. This includes regulations relating to the Land Uses (Big Issue #3) that are permitted, the Density and Scale of development that is allowed (Big Issue #1), and the all the other accompanying site development standards.

Existing Zoning

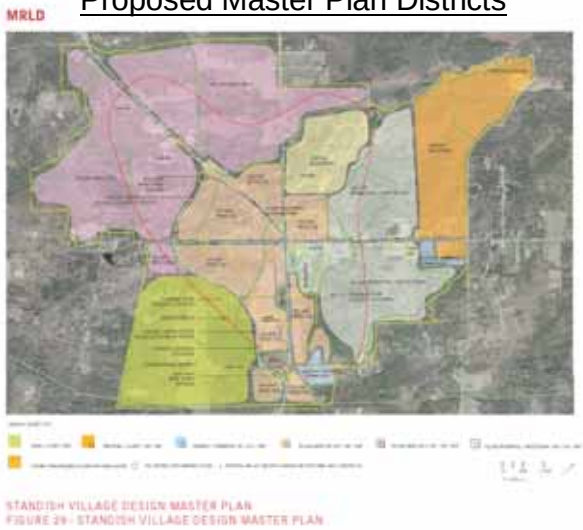
The Village Commercial (VC) zoning district is centered around Route 25, encouraging a more linear pattern of development rather than creating the desired depth to the village center that is expressed in the Master Plan.

The VC district is surrounded by the Residential district which allows a minimum lot size of 60,000 sf.

The area also includes several Commercial districts and an Industrial district.

Source: MRLD.

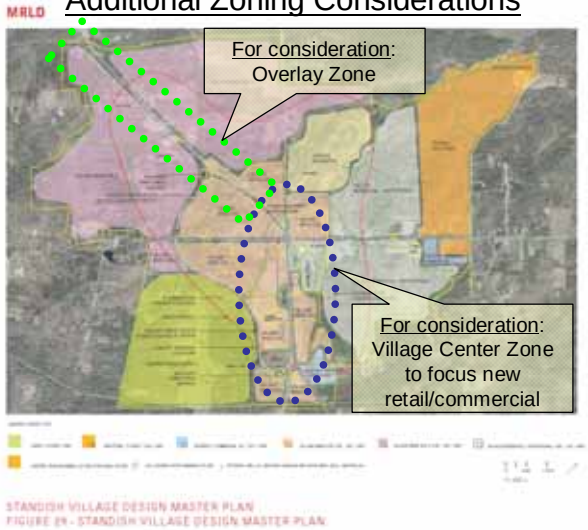
Proposed Master Plan Districts



The proposed Village Mixed Use I (VMU I) district zoning district is designed to encourage depth to the village center, supported by a new network of local streets (as described by the Roadway Plan). It is intended to be the target area for most retail and commercial development in the village as well as Residential development. This district would allow the same land uses within this larger area, including along the primarily residential areas along Route 35/Northeast Road west of Standish Corner.

The VMU I district is surrounded by two other mixed use districts, VMU II and Village Professional.

Additional Zoning Considerations



A couple of options for the zoning boundaries are to:

- Further refine the VMU I district by adding a redefined Village Center district that would focus the area for the majority of retail and commercial development to a smaller, central area within the VMU I district (the blue line, above)
- Further refine the VMU I and VMU II districts along Route 25 west of Standish Corner with an overlay district that refines the permitted uses and development standards from the rest of the district (the green line, above).

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'Big Issue' #3: Land Uses (& Design)

What it is: Land Uses are the types of activities and uses that are allowed within a zoning district. Some zones allow only a narrow range of land uses (for example, residential only, or industrial only), while others purposefully try to achieve a diverse and broad range of compatible land uses ("Mixed Use" areas). These Mixed Use areas typically include single family and multifamily homes, retail shops, offices, light manufacturing, banks and restaurants. Mixed use areas often not only want to create this mix within the districts, but within the buildings themselves. This might take the form of retail businesses on the first floor and offices and apartments above. *How the uses fit together is critical!*

MIXED USE NEIGHBORHOODS

Homebuyers who fit a Great American Neighborhood profile (see page 4) often seek out places that offer a healthy mix of people and land uses. They are looking for socially dynamic, public and private places that offer a range of compatible uses, within or close to their neighborhood.

These neighborhoods may include a variety of housing types, stores, services, offices, health clinics, gyms, and places of entertainment. Your ability to provide some or all these service may be limited by market, zoning, or size of the surrounding community. However, there may be substantial benefits to a mixed use approach, especially if two or three story structures can be marketed with stores below and offices and/or residences above.

- Consider a mix of housing types and prices. Higher density housing may include duplexes, townhouses, patio homes, low rise multifamily apartments, studio apartments, carriage houses, granny flats, and live-work units.
- Encourage day and night activity and socializing by building housing units over commercial buildings – making sure these areas are designed to be good neighbors to any nearby single family homes.

'Rather than argue for concentration of people, we identify the small things...that draw people together into denser settlements and make the mix and mingle a pleasure rather than a dose of liver oil.'

David Sucher, *City Comforts: How to Build an Urban Village* (1995). www.citycomfort.com

- Seek sites near places that already have mixed use activity. An urban or village infill site located next to an arterial street with stores, offices and other mixed uses already on it, might be ideal, provided the plan allows for easy access and there is a sense of belonging and connection between what exists and what is proposed.

Small shops on the ground floor with apartments above.

In some cases, commercial uses may not be allowed or appropriate in the neighborhood. It may still be desirable to integrate duplexes, carriage houses, granny flats and over-the-garage apartments among single family homes. Not only will this increase the overall density of the neighborhood, but it will provide for a mix of housing sizes, incomes, and life stages of residents as well as variety in the streetscape. It will better accommodate singles, childless couples, young families, empty nesters, and elderly and provide the opportunity for a diverse and multi-generational group of residents.

Live-work units where owners live on the top floor, lease the second floor, and have offices or shops on the street level.

Apartments over garages are an efficient way to incorporate affordable housing into a neighborhood.

Source: SPO's 'Guide to Livable Design', DeWan & Kent, 2005.

Mixed-use Design Issues

Scale
- Does the project's scale fit the neighborhood?
- At what scale is the project economically feasible?

Density
- Do development intensity and housing density support each other?
- Is the density high enough to support transit?

Mix of housing and other uses
- Does the project include a mix of housing options, such as affordable and life-cycle housing?
- What types of businesses does the neighborhood need?

Pedestrian environment
- Is a well-connected system of sidewalks included in the project plan?
- Are pedestrian amenities—such as benches, shade trees, planters, and pedestrian-scaled lighting—included in the design?
- Do buildings front the street, providing a pleasant walking environment?
- Does the street frontage include windows, or is it a blank wall?
- How can large walls be detailed to provide visual interest?

Transit access
- Is transit convenient to residents and workers?
- Are bus shelters and benches provided where needed?

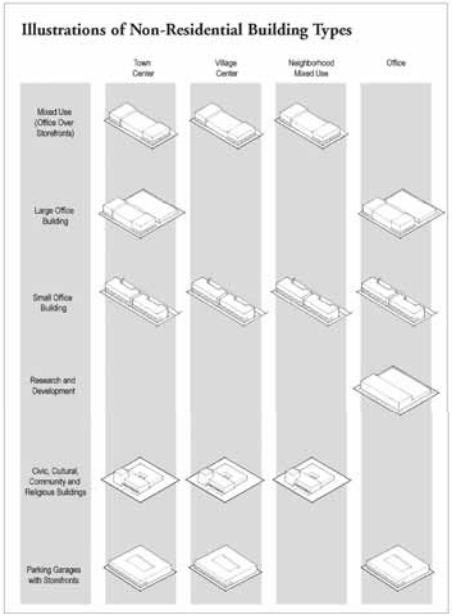
Parking
- Is the parking convenient?
- Do the various uses have peak parking demands at different times of the day allowing for shared parking?
- Is the parking located so that it does not negatively affect the pedestrian experience?
- Can the parking be built behind or under proposed buildings?

Open space and environment
- Is open space incorporated into the project?
- Does the design provide convenient access to open space?

Source: Metro Design Center, MN.

Benefits of Mixed-use

- **Populates and activates neighborhoods during both day and evening hours**
- **Increases housing options for more household types**
- **Reduces need to use a car for every trip**
- **Reduces traffic congestion and pollution**
- **Creates vibrant communities**



Source: City of Albuquerque.