

***The former Lumber Company lot on Railroad Avenue is one area that could see development under a proposed mixed-use bylaw.***



---

**Editor's Note:** The Bedford Planning Board has an article on the 2006 Annual Town Meeting warrant that would establish "mixed use" zoning within the Depot Park area. So that FBDP's members are better informed about this initiative, we are publishing this letter from Board member Sandra Hackman. FBDP takes no official position on the proposed Town Meeting article.

---

### ***Annual Town Meeting to Consider Village-Style Zoning for Depot Park Area***

By Sandra Hackman, Bedford Planning Board

The Planning Board is proposing a **village-style zoning amendment** at the 2006 Annual Town Meeting that is designed to spur continued revitalization of the **Depot Park area**. The zoning overlay would allow small shops, restaurants, and single-family and multi-family housing—*uses that zoning for the district does now not permit*. The goal is to create well-designed, pedestrian-friendly mixed-use development that fosters a sense of community and builds on the area's unique identity.

Both the Bedford Comprehensive Plan and its Affordable Housing Plan recommend a mixed-

different amenities within walking distance of each other. For example, to emphasize the pedestrian and bicycle-friendly nature of the Depot Park area, the bylaw would require developers to place parking behind or beside buildings where possible.

The bylaw is based on a series of public meetings held by the Planning Board to solicit the ideas and preferences of town residents and business owners regarding the look and feel of the Depot area. Consultants from the Metropolitan Area Planning Council, funded by a state grant, helped the Planning Board create the proposed bylaw based on this public input. For example, the bylaw limits development to two stories. This is in response to residents' preferences.

The **village-style overlay** would apply to most of the existing commercial district. This area includes the intersection of Loomis Street and South Road and parts of Railroad Avenue and DeAngelo Drive. If Town Meeting approves the zoning overlay, developers could continue to propose projects under **existing zoning**. However, the overlay would give them the option of applying for a **special permit** if they

In determining whether to grant a special permit for this alternative style of development, the Planning Board would consider whether a proposal includes:

- A balanced mix of uses;
- Connections between those uses;
- Consistency with the area's character;
- Good bicycle and pedestrian access;
- Village-style development with retail, restaurant, and office uses on the first floor facing the street;
- Landscaped gardens, plazas, and sitting areas available to the public;
- Design features that add visual interest to buildings and reduce their mass;
- Best practices in energy efficiency, environmental protection, and stormwater management.

To read this bylaw and a similar one that emphasizes the historic nature of the North Road area, please see the the Planning Board's section of the the Town of Bedford's web site:

**[www.town.bedford.ma.us](http://www.town.bedford.ma.us)**