



MANCHESTER-BY-THE-SEA

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Technical Assistance Program: Project Concept

Lead Municipality: Manchester-by-the-Sea

Lead Contact: Sue Brown, Town Planner

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Project Description and Context: 40R Smart Growth Overlay Zoning District

Manchester-by-the-Sea is looking for Technical Assistance to test the feasibility and create, if feasible, a 40R Smart Growth Overlay Zoning District in the town's Limited Commercial District. A Smart Growth Overlay District has been considered for over a year by the Town as a strategy for guiding development in the Limited Commercial District as is recommended by the Town's recently adopted Master Plan.

In early 2019, the Town invited representatives of the Department of Housing and Community Development Smart Growth Programs and Office of Sustainable Communities to Manchester to provide an overview of the 40R Smart Growth Program to members of the Town's Boards, Committees and Departments. Given the positive response from those attending, the Planning Board created a 40 R Assessment Team to discuss the opportunities and potential impacts of a 40R District. With a consensus to move forward, the Planning Board hosted a community meeting on the subject in the fall as well as a follow up Planning Board meeting. While there were questions about density, protecting natural resources and the potential impact on traffic and municipal services from growth in the LCD, the Planning Board voted unanimously to study the feasibility of a Smart Growth Overlay District to create a greater diversity of housing options and to encourage business development within a mixed use district.

The Town is looking to create a shared Vision for the Limited Commercial District, specifically to confirm consensus on desired uses, identify acceptable density, assess protection needs, and create performance standards and design guidelines needed to ensure quality development. An assessment and a strategy for assuring infrastructure needs can be met are also needed. With a Vision in place, and an understanding of infrastructure needs, the Town would look to identify district boundaries and sub-districts if needed, zoning regulations and design guidelines.

Project Need and Alignment with Local, Regional and State Goals:

Following a three and a half year planning process, the Manchester Planning Board adopted a Comprehensive Master Plan in 2019. Two priority goals of the Master Plan are: 1) to increase Town revenue through planned development within the Limited Commercial District and through incremental growth Downtown, and 2) to support a diversity of housing options throughout town. To those ends the Plan recommends developing and implementing a strategic plan for the Limited Commercial District (LCD) to allow commercial and residential opportunities capable of producing increased tax revenues, and modifying zoning to encourage housing of the size, style, and prices appropriate for downsizing households, elders, young families, singles, and couples. A Smart Growth Overlay District allows the town to address these two principle goals of its Master Plan.

The elements of the imagined Smart Growth Overlay District are also well aligned with regional housing and economic development goals and State smart growth goals: diversified and affordable housing in a walkable neighborhood with employment opportunities, and connectivity to schools, shopping and services.

Project Deliverables(s) and Outcomes:

The Town anticipates that project deliverables would be a District Vision, a report or memo on anticipated infrastructure needs and potential strategies for meeting these needs, a Smart Growth Overlay Zoning District Map, Regulations and Design Guidelines and a completed State 40R Zoning District Application Form for Preliminary Approval.

With the deliverables outlined above, the Town will be well positioned to bring the District to Town Meeting for approval in the spring of 2021. And with several land owners anxious to develop in the Limited Commercial District, we believe this will be the catalyst for well guided growth that serves the town and the region.

Community Engagement:

The Town sees Community Engagement as a critical element for developing a successful Smart Growth Overlay District. The engagement , begun with a number of meetings that addressed development in the LCD during the Master Planning process, and continued with the 40R Smart Growth Overlay District Community Meeting last fall, is expected to receive broad interest . The Town is prepared to fully support these efforts with planning staff and outreach.

The Manchester Cricket, our local paper is very interested in the Town's efforts to create a Smart Growth Overlay District and will be a great partner for outreach in addition to our extensive use of social media and the Town's web site.

Project Timeline:

A six to nine month timeline is anticipated to be sufficient for the study. Our hope would be to have Preliminary State Approval of the District, Regulations and Design Guidelines by the end of the 2020 or early 2021, to enable us to request Town Meeting approval at our Annual Town Meeting in April.

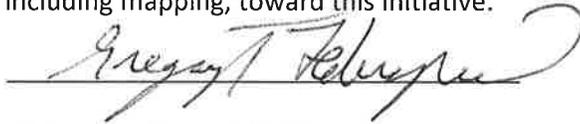
Municipal Commitment:

The Town is highly motivated to implement the recommendations of its 2019 Master Plan. The BOS, Town Administrator, Planning Board, Finance Committee, Manchester Affordable Housing Trust and others see the Smart Growth Overlay District as a strategic opportunity for guiding growth and meeting community needs.

The Town will support the Smart Growth Overlay Zoning District Study with staff and volunteer hours as needed throughout the project. Sue Brown, Town Planner will be the principle point of contact and project manager and will be available as needed to assist with or provide coordination and communication, meet with project team members and review all materials. The Town will appoint a Smart Growth Task Force with representatives from multiple Town Boards and Committees to take part in the planning process and provide guidance to the Consultant Team.

In addition to staff and volunteer time, the Town is able to commit \$10,000 toward the needed technical assistance, including mapping, toward this initiative.

Signature: _____



Gregory T. Federspiel, Town Administrator

