

Danversport I-1 Site Visit of September 17, 2008
Summary and Introduction to Next Steps
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Summary: On September 17, MAPC staff attended a site visit to the Waters River I-1 zoned areas, the Danversport neighborhood. The site visit was attended by about 15 people, mostly residents of the Danversport neighborhood who live within one of the two I-1 districts, as well as staff from the Danvers Planning and Community Development Department.

The purpose of the site visit was to inspect current uses, setbacks and heights being used within the two I-1 Danversport areas, to get an up close look at the district and take pictures of development there, and to get first hand input from neighborhood residents on the character of their neighborhood and what types of development they envision for the future in Danversport.

Primary Issues

Height of Buildings in both Waters River I-1 Areas

Most attendees felt that maximum building heights needed to be moderated in I-1 areas on both sides of Route 35 (Water Street), particularly on the east side of the street where views through to the Waters River were mentioned several times. Moderated building heights were seen to be a better fit with passive recreational uses, abutting residential neighbors and planned condominium development at the New England School for the Deaf on the Peabody side of the Waters River.



Some felt that the Danversport Bakery offered an appropriate maximum height for the east side of Water Street I-1 area

Safety and Public Access to the Waterfront

This issue was raised by site visit participants as being of prime importance, primarily for the east side I-1 area. Historically, this waterfront area has attracted neighborhood residents to the Water Street Bridge to fish, go boating, walk the waterfront and generally spend time near the water, particularly during the warmer months of the year. Currently, neither side of Water Street has sidewalks on it and besides the fountain and kids playground, there does not seem to be dedicated public walkways or access to the river at the new Dunkin Donuts located there.



Looking south across Waters River from Dunkin Donuts site



Marina east of Dunkin Donuts site along river

Most of the businesses visited on the site walk were on the west side of Water Street. Many participants seemed to indicate that they felt that the businesses located in this area were working to be good neighbors by maintaining well kept buildings, landscaping and buffering and by trying to reduce speed limits on private access ways near residential areas. Support remains for moderating allowed uses and building heights in this section of the I-1 district while maintaining strong support for good business neighbors.



Landscaping buffer between Atlantic Lobster access drive and Rainbow Terrace homes



Well maintained business site in I-1 area west of Water Street



Existing small mixed use business on west side of Water Street is seen as a good example of transitional use between business and residential areas.

Inappropriate Existing Uses

Of the businesses and sites visited during the site walk, only one existing business was sited by most as being inappropriately configured or screened for the neighborhood at present, the contractor's yard on the west side of Waters Street next door to Eastern Propane.



Contractor's yard on Water Street

Next Steps

Using the Danvers Visual Preference Survey of 2007, analysis of both existing uses and setbacks within the Danversport I-1 zoned areas, input from the Danvers Planning Board and town staff, and the recent September 17 site visit to the Danversport neighborhood east and west of Water Street, MAPC is working to develop draft proposals for the Waters Rivers I-1 zoned areas which will incorporate the following:

- Designating the portion of I-1 west of Water Street as a new zoning district, Waterfront Industrial. This district would have a reduced maximum building height from the currently allowed 55-foot maximum along with a decreased number of allowable uses by right, excluding noxious or grossly inappropriate uses that would not fit with the existing mix of business and residential uses.
- The portion of the I-1 east of Water Street would also be rezoned to become a new zoning district, the Waterfront Commercial District. This area would become primarily a commercial district with appropriate commercial uses allowed by right combining with smaller mixed use development that could be considered through the Special Permit process. Building height and setbacks could be similar to other commercial areas in Danvers, with shorter building heights, view corridor maintenance and public access to the waterfront and bridge areas.
- MAPC will present its full recommendations for these areas at an October 23 public meeting at Town Hall.