
Exit 1 Development Area Development Guidelines

Town of Hopkinton Planning Department

Exit 1 Development Area Development Guidelines accompany the Hopkinton Zoning Ordinance and *Land Development/Subdivision Regulations* to provide guidance for project applicants to balance development and natural resource protection. This zoning has been proposed in accordance with *Land Use: 2025, the State Guide Plan Element* to encourage an attractive density of development in areas with (or proposed for) sewer and water service while protecting open space. Guidance on achieving this “anti-sprawl” balance is presented below.

The Exit 1 Development Area extends from a point south of the Town House near Hopkinton City along Route 3, south to a point north of the intersection with Maxson Hill Road near Ashaway Village. See the Exit 1 Development Area District map. Roads included in the district include Wellstown Road, Gray Lane, and Frontier Road south of I-95. Four zones are designated to encourage development of the district as an employment (growth) center with supportive mixed uses:

- The Technology Campus Zone facilitates the development of high technology and light industrial development that is compatible with protection of the Ashaway River aquifer.
- The Office Mixed Use Zone enables construction of campus-style Class A office space and a hotel/conference center.
- The Village Mixed Use Zone encourages development of a traditional village with small-scale retail, office use, and a range of residential housing options (including 15 percent affordable as defined by the Hopkinton Affordable Housing Plan).
- The Residential / Conservation Zone enables single-family construction while reserving over 50 percent of the land as preserved open space.



Smart growth planning: Smaller lot sizes, reduced setbacks, parking to the rear (or side) create walkable communities which contain development while protecting buffers and conservation areas from disturbance. The Village Mixed Use Zone encourages construction of dense development within the village center with decreasing bands of density in outlying areas. Many of these strategies reflect current planning practices for New Urbanism and Traditional Neighborhood Development and avoid many of the problems associated in the past with “strip commercial” development and large-lot single-family subdivisions. Both New Urbanism and Traditional Neighborhood Development emphasize walkable communities with smaller lots than typical rural residential



zoning allows. Campus development for light industrial and office parks assures that large areas of green/open space are retained. Low Impact Design assures that stormwater management for parking lots and roofs are naturally treated to preserve the quality of ground and surface waters.

Utilities: Sewer and water service are critical to achieving the density of development and protection of resources envisioned for the Exit 1 Development Area. A public or private water district must be formed to service the area south of I-95. An existing well within the Ashaway River aquifer reportedly has yields to serve future light industrial, office, hotel/ conference center, retail, and residential use. A 1,750-foot wellhead protection area extends from the well, located on Parcel 9 on Gray Lane. Development within the wellhead area must be in accordance with state regulation to protect the integrity of the drinking water source. A water tower on the high point on Parcel 62A on Frontier Road would serve the area south of I-95. Although the formation of a water district is in early stages, several funding options will be considered utilizing private funding from property owners as well as US Department of Agriculture funding. It will be the responsibility of private developers to construct distribution lines from the proposed water tower.

Distributive wastewater treatment using Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems (OWTS) must be utilized to achieve the density of development envisioned south of I-95 in the Exit 1 Development Area. Developers are responsible for implementing innovative wastewater systems that incorporate distributive systems which may include grinder pumps with low-pressure sewer systems and remote leaching systems. Restaurants, supermarkets, and others with pretreatment requirements will pre-treat wastewater before transmitting flow to the leach field. The Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems (OWTS) will be owned, operated and maintained by property owners.

Development in areas north of I-95 will continue to be served with on-site wells and OWTS.

Buffer zones: Implementation of the Exit 1 Development Area zoning results in preserving 49 acres within 100-foot buffer zones along sections of I-95, Route 3, and Maxson Hill Road. Undisturbed buffers serve several purposes:

- Undeveloped buffers will retain the rural image for those traveling northbound on I-95 from Connecticut. The Exit 1 area will continue to serve as a gateway to Rhode Island.
- Undeveloped buffers help balance development with rural character. By defining a 100-foot buffer on Route 3 south of I-95, hay fields and horse farms will be protected from development.
- Undeveloped buffers will prevent sprawl by confining development to areas away from Route 3 and I-95.
- Undeveloped buffers will help protect adjacent residential neighborhoods on Maxson Hill Road from visual impacts, noise, and light pollution associated with more intense mixed-use development.



In areas where the entire 100-foot buffer is open fields, a 25-foot wide vegetated screen of varied evergreens (6-foot minimum) will shield the view of development from I-95, from Route 3, or from Maxson Hill Road neighborhoods.

Incentive zoning will assure that property owners are afforded economic return for preserving the buffer and 25-foot vegetated screen by enabling increased density on buildable portions of the remaining parcel. This will encourage a denser development pattern which reduces infrastructure costs and results in more efficient land use patterns. The buildable area within designated buffers shall be used in calculating gross floor area or residential yield plans for development proposed on the remainder of the parcel (i.e., there shall be no decrease in build-out potential for parcels with buffer restrictions). At the discretion of the planning board, building height restrictions and parking requirements may be adjusted to accommodate additional gross floor area/parking as compensation for preserving the buffer. Buffer zones may be utilized as percentage of lot designated as pervious.

To retain existing character within the buffer zones, land must be maintained/retained as existing conditions (mowed hay fields in agricultural use, or as wetlands or woodlands). To remain natural, no clearing or grading may be conducted within the buffer, except for the creation of a driveway/roadway. Open areas will not be allowed to revert to old-field growth or woodlands by assuring that a minimum of two cuttings per year are conducted. Stonewalls are to be maintained and overgrowth along the walls to be trimmed routinely to maintain views of open fields from Route 3.

To protect the integrity of the 100-foot buffer zone or the 25-foot vegetated screen adjacent to a 100-foot open meadow or field buffer, buildings will be constructed at least 15 feet from the buffer or buffer/screen. This 15-foot setback assures that clearing, grading and construction activities, and subsequent building maintenance, landscaping, or fire access will not adversely affect the buffer with incremental disturbance.

The Planning Board shall review proposals that include buffer zones on a parcel-by-parcel basis to assure the adequacy of the parcel to support proposed development, to assure that natural resources are adequately protected, and to assure that sufficient buffering is achieved to adequately screen development from adjacent residential zones. Any deviation from the established 100-foot buffer shall be made for that application alone, based on site conditions. Any deviation shall not serve as precedent for another parcel.

It is preferable that the buffer zone not be disturbed with driveway crossings to avoid segmenting habitat and changing meadow views. Access to the rear of the parcel via an internal roadway is preferable to disturbing the buffer with a driveway crossing. To assure the developability of the rear of the parcel in situations where a rear access is not feasible, the Planning Board may grant a driveway exception to the buffer zone. To minimize segmentation of the buffer, driveway access should be combined with driveway access for an adjacent parcel with construction along the property line where possible. The width of disturbance for driveway construction through the buffer is limited to 25 feet. By maintaining a minimum 250-foot separation between driveways through the buffer zone, disturbance is limited while assuring the developability of the rear of the parcel.

To prevent future development and incremental disturbance of the buffer, the buffer zone shall be permanently marked with granite bounds and its location registered with the deed. The buffer zone shall survive in perpetuity.

Focus of development: To protect Route 3 viewsheds and to buffer Maxson Hill Road residential neighborhoods, future development south of I-95 shall be oriented to new streets and access

ways. By reducing curb cuts and access through the designated buffer zone, future Technology Campus and Office Mixed Use Zones development will be focused on Wellstown Road and on Frontier Road. New roads off these roads will further protect the view from either Route 3 or Maxson Hill Road. In the Village Mixed Use Zone, density of development is focused on a new village center located between Route 3 and Maxson Hill Road.

Infrastructure: Construction of a new village main street and roadways is envisioned through the Village Mixed Use Zone and the Office Mixed Use Zone. Construction of these roadways by private developers will focus growth in areas away from Route 3 and Maxson Hill Road. A continuous roadway network that avoids cul de sacs reduces vehicular travel, encourages pedestrian connections, and improves emergency response.

It is the responsibility of applicants to construct required public and private improvements as demonstrated through the approval process. Such improvements may include but are not limited to roadway construction, geometric improvements of preexisting intersections, traffic signalization or roundabout construction, installation of sidewalks, planting of street trees at 35-foot intervals, and installation of underground utilities and ornamental lighting for new public roadways, as determined necessary and reasonable by the planning board.

Gateway, Greenway, Village Common, and Open Space Preservation: It is important to balance development of the Exit 1 Development Area with public access to many of the valued natural and cultural resources identified in the area. Preservation of fishing access on the Ashaway River from the Wellstown Road bridge, access to a newly established trail system along the Ashaway River greenway, creation of a gateway on Route 3, and development of a village common are four examples of proposed public access. Private developers of these sites will be responsible for construction while maintenance will be the responsibility of the property owners, the Town and / or the Hopkinton Land Trust, as determined through the approval process. The greenway along the Ashaway River is a recreational asset for employees and residents that fosters appreciation of the river as a natural resource and protects the underlying aquifer from more dense development. Uses of the 5-acre gateway parcel may include a heritage visitor' center, farmers market, festival space, or active recreation fields. The village common, identified as the center of a vibrant mixed-use community, will serve as a social gathering point for residents, as a location for summer performances, and as a place for patriotic holiday celebrations and other events.



To further preserve open space, the Town of Hopkinton and the Hopkinton Land Trust are encouraged to proceed with conservation easements or purchase of development rights for all or a portion of the 108-acre farm (Parcel 3) located north of I-95 and immediately east of the Connecticut line. This property is only accessible via Exit 93 on I-95 in Connecticut. Coordination with the property owner and the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management is encouraged to preserve the agricultural heritage of this property.

Transportation Options: The Exit 1 Development Area seeks to encourage a range of transportation and/or design options to decrease dependence on the private automobile, minimize dependence on fossil fuel, and encourage a healthy life style. Constructing sidewalks and a greenway trail is encouraged throughout the district to connect neighborhoods, village centers,

and employment locations. All new roadway construction shall include provisions for potential “share the road” designation by the Rhode Island Department of Transportation. “Share the road” designation by the Rhode Island Department of Transportation should be investigated on existing roadways to facilitate on-road bicycling as an alternative transportation mode. Landowners, applicants for development approvals, building owners, business owners, tenants and employees located within the Exit 1 Development Area are encouraged to work with ride-share organizations (van-pools, carpools) in both Rhode Island and Connecticut to minimize dependence on single-occupant vehicles for commuting. With dense development, reduced setbacks, and sidewalks, expanded bus service may be feasible in the future. Most of the Exit 1 Development Area will be within walking distance of the Route 3 Park and Ride lot for bus and carpool access to I-95 destinations.

Large Format Retail: To encourage economic development and provide an opportunity to serve the retail needs of local and regional customers, approximately 55 acres have been zoned for construction of retail buildings larger than 13,000 square feet. Retail use is only one of several uses permitted for the 55 acres. High technology and limited industrial use is preferred for parcels bounded by Gray Lane, I-95, and Route 3 in the Technology Campus Zone. To ensure that impacts of large format retail development is adequately mitigated, applicants are required to conduct an Impact Statement for construction of retail buildings with 30,000 square foot gross floor area or more.

The *Exit 1 Development Area Development Guidelines* and amendments to the *Hopkinton Zoning Ordinance* and *Land Development/Subdivision Regulations* provide a roadmap for development of the Exit 1 area that improves the tax base, generates employment opportunities, creates a range of housing types to meet the changing needs of residents, and protects natural resources and adjacent neighborhoods. Rezoning assures an orderly, efficient, and predictable approval process for development. These efforts represent the culmination of several years’ discussion by the Ad Hoc Committee, the Hopkinton Planning Department, Town officials, and property owners.