POST ROAD WORKSHOP

September 30, 2019
North Kingstown Town Council
Welcome
The Background of the Current Regulatory Framework – outdated but not irrelevant

Villages

Guiding Principles
In order to realize their full potential for quality of life, North Kingstown neighborhoods should be a collection of unique community assets that exemplify the following qualities:

- Safe for all residents,
- Offers economic diversity and opportunity,
- Supports social interaction and civic involvement,
- Provides recreation and education opportunities,
- Accessible by a network of varied multi-modal transportation alternatives, and
- Families are strengthened and youth are supported.
Post Road Corridor Concepts

From the Post Road Corridor Plan (2005)

• Recommended a coordinated public/private approach
• Generation of 2 village center areas: Quonset/Davisville and Reynolds Farm/Oakdale Road
• Pedestrian and bicycle connections, built environment relative to these modes
• Supported concentrated commercial design concepts/concentration in appropriate locations
• Locate buildings close to the street
• Break up parking lot pavement
• Potential for “zero” side yard setback and shared access
• Potential for streamlined permitting
Post Road Framework - Still Relevant?

Regulatory Framework (zoning and subdivision regulations)
- Different density categories/density bonuses
- Increased inclusionary zoning
- Reduced setbacks
- Building to front, parking to rear
- Design guidelines
- Streamlined permitting
- Transfer of development rights
The TDR Concept

- The owner of the “sending” parcels sells development rights in exchange for permanent conservation easement.
- Owner of “receiving” parcel buys development rights to build at densities higher than allowed under base zoning.

Concentrate new growth where infrastructure exists and preserve town’s character with open space
76% of survey participants consider Post Road revitalization a priority, but traffic counts are far higher around Route 4/102.
### Post Road Framework - Updated

#### 1.6 Foster conditions to allow for the revitalization and growth of Post Road.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRIORITY</th>
<th>ACTION #</th>
<th>ACTIONS</th>
<th>RESPONSIBLE PARTY</th>
<th>TIMEFRAME</th>
<th>PARTNER AGENCIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.6.a</td>
<td></td>
<td>Undertake collaboration to address common needs of businesses and coordinate improvements along Post Road.</td>
<td>EDA</td>
<td>3 to 5 years</td>
<td>Staff time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6.b</td>
<td></td>
<td>Revise Post Road ordinances to allow for greater flexibility in uses, including mixed use, commercial, and residential, and address standards for height, parking and buffers, lighting, signage, frontage, sidewalks.</td>
<td>Planning Commission</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Staff time, developers, local programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6.c</td>
<td></td>
<td>Assess the quality and marketability of vacant parcels on Post Road by reducing the impact of utility poles and easements.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 1.7 Improve the pedestrian environment of Post Road to better connect with the community.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRIORITY</th>
<th>ACTION #</th>
<th>ACTIONS</th>
<th>RESPONSIBLE PARTY</th>
<th>TIMEFRAME</th>
<th>PARTNER AGENCIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.7.a</td>
<td></td>
<td>Update Post Road design guidelines to improve Post Road's appearance and pedestrian experience, and encourage Complete Streets design.</td>
<td>Planning Department</td>
<td>1 to 3 years</td>
<td>Staff time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.7.b</td>
<td></td>
<td>Reduce curb cuts, improve safety and congestion on Post Road.</td>
<td>Planning Commission</td>
<td>3 to 5 years</td>
<td>Staff time, town budget, RIDOT, business owners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.7.c</td>
<td></td>
<td>Develop an access management plan for Post Road to create space for landscaping, crosswalks and pedestrian amenities.</td>
<td>Planning Department</td>
<td>5 to 7 years</td>
<td>Staff time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.7.d</td>
<td></td>
<td>Provide incentives to Post Road property owners to make improvements, including but not limited to landscaping, signage, 50-50 sidewalks partnerships and façade improvement.</td>
<td>Town Council</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Town budget, staff time, RIDOT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.7.e</td>
<td></td>
<td>Develop pocket parks and other scenic areas on Post Road.</td>
<td>Planning Department</td>
<td>5 to 7 years</td>
<td>Town budget, staff time, RIDOT</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Progress: Post Road Diet
PROS:
- Lower vehicular speeds
  - Reduced speed differential
- Reduced crash rates
- Improved pedestrian safety
- Wider shoulders and lanes

CONS:
- Reduced capacity – is this going to continue to work?
  - Generally the roadway should not exceed 24,000 vehicles per day
Progress: Construction
Progress: Construction

Commercial Projects on PR
- O’Reilly’s (New Build)
- Tractor Supply (Redev)
- Coal Fire Pizza (Redev)
- Dragon Palace (New Build)
- Seasons (Redev)
- Riverhead (Redev)

Residential Developments
- Reynolds Farm: Phase 1,2,3

Nearby Residential Developments
- Austin Meadows
- Saw Mill Square
- Harbor View
Progress: Post Road Façade Improvement Program

Round 1 (Update)
Year: 2017
Max Amount per parcel: $5000

Round 2 (Update)
Year: 2019
Max Amount per parcel: $20,000
Open until: June 2020, rolling
Potential: Market Study

Challenges
- Features more retail than can be supported by existing household and worker base
- Some existing functionally (physical or economically) obsolete

Opportunities
- Specialty service retail
- Large health club
- Child care services
- Allied health professionals/ambulatory medical office

Post Road includes over 200 businesses
- Majority small, independently owned
- Food/drinking establishments are largest share of businesses by industry category
- Second largest is personal and professional services
Externalities

Not everything is in municipal control
• Post Road- state road, RIDOT
  sidewalks, crosswalks, timing of lights, maintenance
  width of the right-of-way
• National Grid (Sea View) Easement
• Quonset Business Park – quasi state agency
• Almost no town-owned property/property rights

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Title</th>
<th>TIP ID</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Existing Fu</th>
<th>Proposed</th>
<th>Funding D</th>
<th>Old Start</th>
<th>New Start</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Post Road - Curbing and Sidewalks</td>
<td>5120</td>
<td>North Kingstown</td>
<td>$2.00</td>
<td>$2.00</td>
<td>$0.00</td>
<td>2019</td>
<td>2022</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ENGAGING BUSINESSES AND RESIDENTS IN POST ROAD REVITALIZATION

North Kingstown Economic Development Advisory Board Report and Recommendations
Presented to the Town Council September 30, 2019
EDAB work prior to 2018

• 2015-2016: negative impacts of National Grid easement
• 2016-2017: housing for Quonset employees
2018: Explore Community Engagement

- January, 2018: initial community meeting
- EDAB Working Group: Kerrie Lanoie, Sheila Brush, Bob Jackson
- April, 2018: meeting for residents – 35 attendees
- Resident Connectivity Team – multiple meetings
- August and October, 2018: meetings for property owners and business owners
Issues raised

• By both residents and property/business owners
  • Frustration with Post Road appearance – vacancies, poor maintenance
  • Frustration that little revitalization progress has been made
  • Mixed feelings about road diet

• By residents
  • Pedestrian safety
  • Bikeability
  • Green space important – especially parks/play areas near Reynolds Farm

• By property owners/businesses
  • Important to understand market forces and financial realities
  • Regulatory issues – signage, zoning, length of reviews
  • Neglectful property owners
EDAB’s Takeaways

- NK residents and businesses are deeply concerned about Post Road conditions.
- Residents and businesses want accurate facts and information.
- Town can work with existing neighborhood groups to communicate with residents.
- Communicating with and engaging property owners and business operators is particularly challenging.
- Citizen/business engagement initiatives should have clear purposes, achievable goals.
- Frustration with past Post Road studies/initiatives that didn’t seem to produce results
Recommended Actions

A. Prioritization
B. Communications and Public Engagement
C. Infrastructure Improvements and Connectivity
D. Outstanding Infrastructure/Connectivity Issues
E. Maintenance and Beautification
F. Incentives/Regulatory Processes
Recommended Actions

A. Prioritization

• Declare Post Road revitalization an on-going priority
Recommended Actions

B. Communications and Public Engagement

- Establish/maintain Post Road page on town website
  - Regular progress reports about town and state work
  - Information about regulations, processes, incentives
- Promote local media coverage of Post Road
- Develop/maintain database of Post Road businesses, property owners, neighborhood associations
  - Use to send out progress reports, information, meeting notices
- Partner with neighborhood groups
- Hold community meeting as follow up to Jan. 2018 meeting
- Identify specific opportunities for business/resident engagement – be sure there will be outcomes
Recommended Actions
C. Transportation Infrastructure Improvements

• Provide updated schedules and progress reports for sidewalks

• Request clearly marked pedestrian crosswalks and pedestrian signals at intersections with existing traffic lights
  • Need to be installed at Camp Ave, Oakdale Rd, Stony Lane/Huling Road
  • Can existing crosswalks be zebra-striped so that they are more visible to drivers? (Existing crosswalks at School St, south end of Kingstown Plaza and Newcomb/Devils Foot Rd are not zebra striped.

• Plan/engineer sidewalks, driveway access

• Address drainage and street flooding – identify locations, determine reasons, develop mitigation plans

• Resolve bike lane/path question
Recommended Actions
D. Addressing Property Redevelopment Impediments

• Continue to work with National Grid on easement
• Monitor demand for sewer extension north of RI 403
Recommended Actions

E. Maintenance and Beautification

- Improve road/sidewalk sweeping, weeding, curb repair, plowing
- Provide info about parties responsible for sidewalk and property maintenance
- Publicize town standards for property maintenance and means of enforcement
  - Ensure confidentiality for entities reporting maintenance violations
- Plan and promote landscaping, public art
  - Grants
  - Volunteer efforts
- Install “Welcome to North Kingstown” sign
Recommended Actions
F. Incentives/Regulatory Processes

- Evaluate Façade Improvement Program
- Evaluate Property Tax Phase-In
- Review timing of permitting/regulatory processes
- Evaluate current signage ordinances
Detailed Action Steps Index

- See Post Road Action Steps and Accountability Index in written report
Future EDAB Work

• Suggest content for Post Road web page on town site
• Complete Post Road database
• Hold EDAB meeting focused on Post Road
  • Follow-up to January, 2018 meeting
  • Widely publicized
  • Opportunity for Council to present action plan
• Monitor property maintenance for one year
• Review/make recommendations re Façade Improvement Program and economic development tax incentive
• Research revitalization incentives/strategies used elsewhere
Feasibility Study for the Relocation and Consolidation of Existing Overhead Electric Facilities along Post Road in North Kingstown, RI
Perspective: James Grundy, Planning Commission Chair

- Development guidelines are utopian and add significant cost
- Village ideology contradicted by major road with high speed traffic.
- Unintended penalties make redevelopment cumbersome
- Hard to create connectivity through rear parking areas one lot at a time/business security concerns
- Property owners with unrealistic sales expectations
- Sewer costs high and impact redevelopment
- Sea-View (National Grid) easement challenges
- State-related challenges
- Missing sidewalks and too long before they are accomplished
- The reality of retail
- Route 403
- Quonset Gateway
Perspective: James Grundy, Planning Commission Chair

- Evaluate what is a balanced design standard that protects the vision of North Kingstown while allowing for economically practical construction along Post Road.

- Allow for administrative approval for certain hardships

- Clarify what the intent of mixed use is. Is it mixed use through a zone or on a per lot basis

- Re-identify what lots really belong in the Post Road district.

- Utilize Post Road as a center for true “work force” housing. Consider using a bedroom count instead of a housing unit count in determining density.

- Create or utilize a town position in Planning Department as a constituent liaison. People are intimidated by the process. Many of these lots are owned by entities that would rather maintain the status quo than deal with the intricacies of development.

- Good planning is both community and developer friendly: you will not make everyone happy. It is about looking at projects with an overall view of the benefits and impact on the town as a whole.
Taking Steps Forward: Where We Can Improve

Post Road Review

■ Zoning Ordinance
  - Section 21-94: Post Road District
  - Article III: Land Use Table
  - Article IV: Dimensional Regulations-Table 2B: Business Districts
  - Article X: Signage

■ Subdivision & Land Development Regulations
  - Article 14.3: Post Road Design Standards and Guidelines
TYPES OF REVIEW

**Administrative Review**
- When is this allowed?
- Example- Dragon Palace
- Positives/Negatives

- **Planning Commission Review**
- When is this required?
- What does the process involve?
- Example- O’Reilly’s
- Positives/Negative

**Zoning Board Review**
- When is this required?
- What does the process involve?
- Example- O’Reilly
- In addition to ZBR, current ordinance requirement (Section 21-13 (b) “for any commercial or mixed-use project” requiring a SUP or variance the PC shall report its recommendation”;
- all commercial ZBR projects required PC review first
- Positives/negative of ZBR review.
Planning Staff Thoughts for Consideration

- Not all projects for PR should be treated the same. While intent was for a mix used zone; some developments zoned PR have been solely residential or commercial.
- What are the impacts of this and considerations moving forward?

  ▪ Commercial and residential needs are very different after construction ends and living begins.

  ▪ Some uses allowed in the commercial districts should not be allowed in existing and built out residential portions of the Post Road district.

  ▪ Should there be a strategy in place for different uses or to prohibit commercial uses once a PR property is developed as residential?
How far “back” should design be a concern? Should it only be required when visible from Post Road? Or should it remain important throughout these residential developments to promote high quality design?
Do we really want to see all buildings setback between 10’-20’ from Post Road?
Or should consideration be given to the adjoining building(s) setback to determine proposed setback?
If an easement exists on a property which prohibits the required setbacks, should the applicant be able to get this waived by the Planning Director, rather than go the Planning Commission to do so?
What about a property that has multiple “fronts” - should this require review by the PC to designate frontage?
Quality or quantity?

Is it important to strive for high quality of design for development for items such as building façade, signage, landscaping, lighting, sidewalks? Does the town want continue in this direction?
Streamlining: While regulations allow for a streamlined process with administrative review, it is not very often that this can occur due to the need for waivers or variances from requirements.

2016 had a few ordinance changes; can we allow for more administrative review?
- Front setbacks/easements
- Designation of front for corner properties

Potential obstacles that could be addressed
- Height to width and depth ratio
- Section 21-13(b)
- Is 10’ to 20’ dimensional setback working or reasonable?
- Is 5,000 sq. ft. footprint for single story structures necessary?
- Any use allowed on residential property in PR zone
- Design guidelines focus on commercial development rather than residential

Post Road Façade Program
- Market via website and via mailings
Action Items – Longer Term

- In house business liaison/"how-to" assistance
- Commerce RI new Site Readiness Program (begins Oct 1): simplified pre-permitting?

- Clarify mixed use (generally) or mixed use (per site)
- Update design guidelines to reflect distinctions between commercial and residential needs, continue to improve user friendliness
- Improve zoning ordinance and development regulations related to redevelopment vs. new development
- Consider incentives for items such as signage and lighting

- Additional topic-specific workshops for Post Road
- Continued marketing

- Beautification opportunities, placemaking
- Consider sewer infrastructure next steps
Thank you for joining us!

Planning Department & Ralph Mollis, Town Manager