



Town of Gorham Planning Department

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TO: Comprehensive Plan Amendment Committee,
Ephrem Paraschak, Town Manager

FROM: Thomas M. Poirier, Director of Community Development

SUBJECT: Comprehensive Plan Amendment – South Gorham

DATE: June 24, 2020

Welcome and thank you to all committee members for agreeing to volunteer to be on the committee. The Town has hired Ben Smith, AICP, with North Star Planning to assist the committee with moving through the Comprehensive Plan Amendment process.

Below is information for the committee members regarding the charge put forward to the committee about amending the comprehensive plan:

Item #9506

Moved by Councilor Shepard, seconded by Councilor Wilder Cross and ORDERED, that the Town Council instruct staff to provide recommendations for the composition of a comprehensive plan amendment committee to amend the Future Land Use Map in the Comprehensive Plan’s South Gorham Crossroads District and South Gorham Commercial Center District at the next regular Town Council Meeting and;

Be It Further Ordered, the Town Council instructs the committee to review proposed uses in both districts. **7 yeas**

Chairman & Vice-Chairman

The first item on the committee’s agenda is the nomination of a chairman & vice-chairman to lead the committee meetings. For committee members who are not aware that under the State’s requirements for public zoom meetings any votes are required to be roll call votes.

Background Information

The Comprehensive Plan was adopted by the Town Council on September 6, 2016. The comprehensive plan identified 2 new zoning districts for a portion of South Gorham. The comprehensive plan recommended these future land use districts based on information assembled as part of the process:

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- Proposed future turnpike spur to South Gorham which would serve the western area of greater Portland.
- The ability to serve South Gorham with sewer and water provided that the density and uses were adequate to support the utility extensions.
- To provide Gorham with a variety of mixed-use districts that would give people the ability to work and live in close proximity while also providing a variety of different housing options.
- The extreme development pressure for the area due to its close proximity to the greater Portland area.

The 2 new districts proposed were: South Gorham Crossroads and South Gorham Commercial Center. The vision for the 2 districts are located below with a map of the South Gorham area being located on page 5.

- **South Gorham Crossroads Area**

- **Location** – The South Gorham Crossroads Area includes land on both sides of South Street from the roundabout at the Bernard Rines Village Bypass to the Stroudwater River and extending eastward to Brackett Road (see Figure 6.5).
- **Allowed Uses** – Since the Crossroads Area will potentially be served by the continuation of the East-West connector or related improvements and is potentially serviceable by public sewerage, the allowed residential uses in this designation should be limited to multi-family residential and residential units in mixed-use buildings. Single-family and two-family dwellings should not be allowed in this area. In addition to residential uses, a range of non-residential uses should be allowed as part of a planned, mixed-use development including business and professional offices, retail and service uses, fully enclosed light industrial uses, and community and public uses.
- **Development Standards** – The development standards in the Crossroads Area are intended to require a high-intensity pattern of development. The maximum density for residential uses should be twelve to fifteen units per net acre with provisions for variable density for small units. In addition, the standards should require a minimum overall density of not less than five units per net acre for any individual residential project. The standards for development should require that new buildings be located with access off internal streets when feasible. All development should maintain an attractive roadside appearance with a landscaped buffer strip along the edge of both existing and new streets. The location of large parking lots between buildings and existing streets should be restricted.

To assure that the vision for this area is attained, all development proposals on lots that had at least ten acres as of April 1, 2013 must be done in accordance with an approved development plan for the entire parcel. This plan must establish, in conceptual terms, the overall use and development of the parcel including provisions for roads and other infrastructure. The plan should also include development and design standards to guide building-by-building development. This plan must be approved by the Planning Board prior to any development on the parcel and, once approved; all projects must substantially conform to the development plan.

- **South Gorham Commercial Center Area**

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- **Location** – The South Gorham Commercial Center Area designation includes the land on both sides of the County Road in the vicinity of the intersection with South Street (see Figure 6.5). This designation includes the parcels that have been “contract zoned” thereby creating a consistent pattern for this area of the community.
- **Allowed Uses** – In the longer-term, the land use regulations in this area should be based on a Master Plan for South Gorham and North Scarborough developed jointly with the Town of Scarborough. In the near-term, the zoning should incorporate the provisions of the existing contract zones that have been established within this area. The allowed uses in this designation should include a range of residential uses including eldercare facilities together with a wide-range of smaller-scale non-residential uses including business and professional offices, personal and business services, restaurants, retail uses, B&Bs, and community uses. . Most non-residential uses should be limited to a maximum of 5,000 to 7,500 square feet of floor area. Larger uses such as retail uses with up to 15,000 square feet of floor area may be allowed on “back lots” away from County Road provided that their access is from internal streets and the frontage along County Road is developed with smaller-scale buildings.
- **Development Standards** – As noted above, the land use regulations for this area should evolve as a Master Plan for South Gorham and North Scarborough is developed and adopted. As a general guiding principle, a higher density of activity should be allowed within approximately one thousand five hundred (1,500) feet of the intersection of County Road and South Street with lower density activity in the remainder of the area. Residential uses should be allowed at a density of up to two units per net acre with on-site sewage disposal and four units per acre with public sewerage throughout the area with higher density allowed with public sewerage near the South Street intersection. The basic minimum lot size should be 20,000 square feet that can be reduced to 10,000 square feet or less with public sewerage. The variable density provisions for small units should apply in this designation if public sewerage is utilized.

The development standards should promote a campus style development pattern in the area near the South Street intersection with more of a village character in the remainder of the area. The standards should require that new buildings have a traditional character and scale and be limited to a maximum of two stories except in the area around the South Street intersection if public sewerage becomes available in the future. Buildings should be located on access drives or new streets where feasible to minimize curb cuts on County Road. The creation of an interconnected street network should be required where feasible. New buildings directly fronting on County Road with access from that street should not be allowed unless there is no alternative. Buildings should be located in proximity to the street or access road with a setback of no more than fifty feet along the County Road and 35 feet on other streets or drives.

The Town Council started to draft the South Gorham Crossroads zoning district with the assistance of Ben Smith with North Star Planning. As the Town Council started to draft uses and performance standards for the new district it became clear that the vision identified in the Comprehensive Plan differed from the direction that the Town Council had envisioned for the area. So before the Town

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Council drafted a new district they wanted to ensure that the vision for South Gorham was what the local officials, stakeholders, and the residents envisioned for the area. Ben Smith will provide information to the committee with further background information and possible steps to move forward with the visioning process.

Figure 6.5: South Gorham
Gorham Comprehensive Plan Update

