

South Windham Little Falls Village District (SWLFV)

Purpose

The South Windham Little Falls Village District (SWLFV) is established to facilitate the redevelopment and revitalization of the South Windham (Windham) and Little Falls (Gorham) villages. SWLFV aims to transform these areas into vibrant urban village centers amidst the broader rural and suburban landscapes of each town. SWLFV will promote higher residential density, offering diverse housing options, and foster local commercial activity, including restaurants, services, and small-scale retail businesses.

The SWLFV district is comprised of three sub-districts: Core, Extension, and Supporting. The boundaries of these zoning districts are shown in the SWLFV map.

Applicability and Classification of Projects

All development in the SWLFV district is subject to the guidelines and regulations set forth in this ordinance. In addition to the Site Plan and Subdivision requirements in this ordinance, the Review Authority and classification of projects within the SWLFV shall be as follows:

- Division of new or existing structures with 3 or more dwelling units shall be subject to Site Plan Review, per MRSA 30-A, §4402, 6.
 - Division of new or existing structures with 3-12 dwelling units shall be classified as a Minor Site Plan/Minor Development.
 - Division of new or existing structures with more than 12 dwelling units shall be classified as a Major Site Plan/Major Development.
- Development up to 10,000 square feet total new construction or building additions shall be classified as a Minor Site Plan/Minor Development.

Dimensional Standards

	Core	Extension	Supporting
Lot Size (min.)	No minimum	5,000 sq. ft. (sewer/water) 15,000 sq. ft. (septic)	20,000 sq. ft. (sewer/water) 25,000 sq. ft. (septic)
Net Residential Density (min.)	750 sq. ft. / DU	2,500 sq. ft. / DU	7,500 sq. ft. / DU
Front Setback (max.)	10 ft.	15 ft.	20 ft.
Side Setback (min.)	None	None	10 ft.
Rear Setback (min.)	20 ft.	20 ft.	20 ft.
Frontage (min.)	25 ft.	50 ft.	100 ft.
Height (max.) *	4 stories	3 stories	2 stories
Lot Coverage (max.)	None	None	80%

SWLFV – Core Subdistrict

Purpose

The purpose of the Core Subdistrict is to cultivate a dynamic, pedestrian-friendly downtown village characterized by versatile mixed-use development. All development is served by public sewer and water. Lots are encouraged to be smaller and development will be closer to the road. Sidewalks and other pedestrian infrastructure, such as street lighting and esplanades are coordinated and consistent for placemaking and traffic calming.

Mixed-use development in the Core Subdistrict should have active business on the first floor and residential behind or above with no parking on the first floor. New residential uses should take the form of Multifamily development, in building structures that take the form of triplexes, single family attached/townhomes, apartment buildings, and other housing types that do not include single family detached housing. The Core is a place for flexible design standards and uses that are both mindful of those design standards and at the same time supportive of business growth. Tax and permitting incentives for redevelopment of vacant lots are also encouraged as well as infill development where appropriate.

Permitted Uses

Permitted uses in the Core shall flexible and consist broad land use categories that promote and support the vision of an active vibrant downtown.

- (1) Multifamily residential
- (2) Mixed Use Buildings
- (3) Commercial Uses
- (4) Public assembly, institutional or community facilities

Special Exceptions

Any other use similar to Permitted Uses. All Special Exception uses are subject to Site Plan Review by the Planning Board.

Core Subdistrict Standards

The following performance and design standards in the Core are meant to foster appropriate design techniques related to building relation to the street, architectural standards, landscaping, parking, lighting, signage and pedestrian amenities.

Open Space, Natural Features and Public Space Design

(1) Open Space and Trail Connections

- (a) All properties that abut the Mountain Division Trail shall be required to provide a public trail connection to the Trail.
- (b) All properties that abut the Presumpscot River must provide a 25-foot easement along the River to the Town, for the purposes of building and maintaining a public trail along the River.

(2) Natural Features

- (a) Natural features including existing trees and vegetation shall be preserved to the maximum extent possible.
- (b) Proposals for development shall include a plan outlining the preservation of natural features including, but not limited to, trees or other vegetation, floodplains, rock outcroppings, surface water bodies, water quality, and/or wetlands.
- (c) New buildings or building additions shall be located to preserve existing natural features, reduce impact on the natural landscape, and allow for connections to existing trails, parks, and open spaces.

(3) Public Space

- (a) Any new Commercial or Mixed Use development shall provide for shared public space adjacent to sidewalks consisting of either pocket parks, outdoor dining and seating, and small courtyards.
- (b) Front setbacks should incorporate front gardens, courtyards, or other forms of green space and are encouraged to create additional common open space and include features to enhance the space's use and enjoyment, such as tables and chairs, seating and street furniture, shade structures and artwork. Seating is especially recommended along retail frontages.

- (c) Unbuilt lot area should be utilized for public access including creative pockets of public space and walkways as connections between open and public spaces.
- (d) All structures, street furniture, and other elements of public space design, including but not limited to benches, bike racks, tables, and lighting, shall be integrated into the architectural concept of the design and landscaping plan. Materials shall be compatible with buildings, building materials, and the surrounding public space.

Landscaping and Buffering

(1) Landscaping

- (a) All new development in the Village Core shall incorporate landscaping including, but not limited to native trees and shrubs, green roofs, ground cover, perennials, fencing, or art for the purpose of creating an inviting street pattern, reducing urban heat island, supporting wildlife and pollinator habitat and enhancing pedestrian amenities.
- (b) Areas between the principal façade of a building and the public right of way shall be landscaped with ground covers, annual or perennial flowers, native trees and shrubs. Plant materials shall not encroach into the sidewalk or public right-of-way. Lawns, extensive mulched areas and boulders are discouraged from use as landscaping.
- (c) Any development with frontage along Route 202 shall be required to plant street trees of native variety at intervals of 25 to 50 feet on center at least 8 feet in height at the time of planting. Landscaping plans shall include details on tree species and size, soil volume and quality, sufficient root space, proper irrigation and infrastructure, and ensure protection during construction.
- (d) Existing trees and vegetation shall be incorporated into the site design and retained to the extent possible. Existing trees must be protected from damage during construction using barriers or other protective measures.
- (e) All development is encouraged to utilize low-impact development and green-infrastructure wherever possible.

(2) Buffers and Screening

- (a) Buffers in the Core shall provide for visual screening and compliment surrounding landscaping. Large buffers greater than 10 feet wide are not permitted in the Village Core.
- (b) Any off-street parking, parking lots of 10 spaces or more, utilities or storage materials shall require buffering to screen and soften views from the public street and abutting properties.
- (c) Any dumpsters, electric equipment, mechanical equipment, etc. shall be screened from public view and adjacent properties using compatible materials and design. Dumpsters should be barricaded with post fencing that is not chain-linked.
- (d) Rooftop appurtenances shall be screened from public view.

Signage

- (a) Appropriate signage in the Village Core is encouraged to be incorporated into the street design where appropriate to help reinforce sense of place and encourage visitors to explore area amenities. Signage may consist of attached building signs, directional signs, kiosks, temporary signs and street signs. Free standing signage and electronic signage is not allowed.
- (b) Building attached sign size in the Core is limited to 6 square feet.
- (c) No sign shall interfere with pedestrian movement.
- (d) No sign may be illuminated by flashing lights of any color.

Parking and Vehicular Access

- (a) There shall be no minimum on-site parking requirements in the Core. The amount of parking needed for each project should be determined by estimated demand on a project-to-project basis.
- (b) Wherever possible, shared parking agreements shall be established between lots to consolidate parking and reduce the need for additional parking space. All developments utilizing shared parking agreements shall submit a parking plan and agreements.
- (c) Parking lots with more than ten (10) spaces should include landscaping to break up pavement, add visual appeal and reduce urban heat island.

- (d) Off-street parking shall be located in the rear and may not be located between the front of the building and the street.
- (e) Surface parking lots shall include a plan for snow storage areas and/or removal and hauling of snow.
- (f) Site layout should be designed so that automobile and delivery vehicles will not back out onto Main Street/Route 202.
- (g) Shared driveway entrances between adjacent lots are encouraged to minimize curb cuts.
- (h) Drive-through facilities are not allowed in the Core Subdistrict.

Pedestrian Access

(1) Access and Site Layout

- (a) All development shall include a primary entrance oriented to face the public sidewalk or public right-of-way. For corner lots, the primary entrance should orient towards the more significant street.
- (b) Mixed-use buildings must have separate primary entrances for each distinct use facing the public sidewalk or public right-of-way ensuring clear and direct access to each use.
- (c) Pedestrian entrances must be clearly visible from the public sidewalk or right-of-way and well-lit to enhance safety and accessibility.

(2) Sidewalks

- (a) All new development shall construct and/or repair the existing sidewalk along the frontage of the building. New sidewalks shall connect to the nearest existing sidewalk to enhance connectivity of the Village Core.
- (b) Sidewalks along Main Street/Route 202 shall be a minimum of 4 feet wide with a 4-foot planted esplanade.
- (c) All new commercial and multifamily residential development shall provide for adequate bicycle parking facilities. Bicycle parking shall be placed proximate to building entrances. Acceptable bicycle parking shall be “U” shaped or post and ring form, provide at least two points of contact for the bicycle and allow the wheels to remain flat on the ground.

Architectural Standards

- (a) Adjacent buildings of different architectural styles shall be made compatible by such means as screens; site breaks and materials.
- (b) Harmony in texture, lines and masses is required. Monotony of design shall be avoided.
- (c) With respect to building footprint and orientation, where a consistent pattern exists in terms of the existing buildings and spaces between buildings, all new development must be compatible with the existing building pattern. Determination of compatibility will be based on the overall building footprint square footage, the dimensions of each footprint side, placement of the building footprint on the lot, and the pattern of buildings and spaces along the street edge.
- (d) New and in-fill development must, where such a pattern exists, maintain the line of buildings, thus maintaining the integrity of the street façade. For buildings on corner lots, the setback relationship on both streets must be maintained. The creation of empty corners must be avoided through the placement of buildings or other site features.
- (e) Additions to buildings shall reflect and be consistent with the style of the existing building, including such elements as trim, fenestration, roof pitch and exterior cladding.
- (f) Architectural style shall not be restricted. Evaluation of the appearance of a development shall be based on the quality of its design and relationship to surroundings.
- (g) The materials, textures and colors of a single building must be visually harmonious. Modifications to existing buildings shall avoid the patchwork application of different materials. New buildings must use materials that are visually compatible with adjacent and nearby buildings.
- (h) The following building materials are acceptable to use:
 - (i) Brick (colonial red or brown)
 - (ii) Wood (clapboard, shiplap or shingles)
 - (iii) Vinyl, or metal, in traditional patterns (clapboard, shiplap, or shingle)
 - (iv) Natural stone
- (i) The following building materials are unacceptable to use:

DRAFT – South Windham/Little Falls Villages Zoning

7/3/2024

- (i) Smooth, stucco-like finishes
- (ii) Concrete block (except for foundations and fire walls)
- (iii) Precast concrete (except foundations and fire walls and lintels and sills in masonry buildings)
- (iv) Corrugated metal, fiberglass or plastic
- (v) Asphalt shingles
- (vi) Reflective materials, such as mirror or metalized reflective glass, plastic panels and brushed aluminum (except for windows and doorways)

Lighting

- (a) Site lighting should promote safety and create an attractive environment while avoiding light pollution and light trespass onto abutting properties.
- (b) All lighting should be directed downwards and be motion activated wherever possible.
- (c) Pedestrian lighting for safety including streetlighting is encouraged.
- (d) Building facades may be illuminated with soft lighting of low intensity. The light source of the building façade illumination shall be concealed.

SWLFFV – Extension Subdistrict

Purpose

The purpose of the Extension Subdistrict is to create residential neighborhoods of adequate density to enhance and sustain the non-residential uses in the Core. Additionally, the Extension Subdistrict will allow a range of non-residential and Commercial uses that support local residents. The Extension Subdistrict prioritizes the creation of sidewalks, trails, and paths for better pedestrian infrastructure to seamlessly integrate residential areas with commercial services, open space, and key village activity centers.

Permitted Uses

Permitted uses in the Extension Subdistrict shall be flexible and consist of broad land use categories that promotes well connected and integrated residential neighborhoods and businesses.

- (1) Multifamily residential
- (2) Duplex residential
- (3) Commercial Uses
- (4) Public assembly, institutional or community facilities

Special Exceptions

Any other use similar to Permitted Uses. All Special Exception uses are subject to Site Plan Review by the Planning Board.

Extension Subdistrict Standards

The following performance and design standards in the Extension Subdistrict are meant to establish relationships between the downtown Core Subdistrict to denser well connected residential neighborhoods.

Open Space, Natural Features and Public Space Design

(1) Open Space

- (a) All properties that abut the Mountain Division Trail shall be required to provide a public trail connection to the Trail.
- (b) All properties that abut the Presumpscot River must provide a 25-foot easement along the River to the Town, for the purposes of building and maintaining a public trail along the River.
- (c) Maximum impervious coverage area is 75% of the lot area.

(2) Natural Features

- (a) Natural features including existing trees and vegetation shall be preserved to the maximum extent possible. Tree clearing should be limited to the developed area of the site.
- (b) Special effort should be made to retain trees with a diameter greater than 6 inches.
- (c) Proposal for development shall include a plan for identifying how the developer shall preserve natural features including, but not limited to, trees or other vegetation, floodplains, rock outcroppings, surface water bodies, water quality, wetlands etc.
- (d) New buildings shall be sited to preserve the natural integrity and landscape character wherever possible providing connections to existing trails, parks and open spaces.

(3) Public Space

- (a) Any new commercial development shall provide for shared public space in appropriate areas consisting of either pocket parks, outdoor dining and seating, green space and small courtyards.
- (b) Residential setbacks should provide front gardens, courtyards, porches, and stoops.

- (c) Front setbacks should incorporate front gardens, courtyards, or other forms of green space and are encouraged to create additional common open space and include features to enhance the space's use and enjoyment, such as tables and chairs, seating and street furniture, shade structures and artwork. Seating is especially recommended along retail frontages.

Landscaping and Buffering

(1) Landscaping

- (a) All new development in the Extension Subdistrict shall be required to incorporate landscaping including, but not limited to native trees and shrubs, ground cover, perennials, fencing, or sculpture for the purpose of creating an inviting street pattern, reducing urban heat island, creating wildlife and pollinator habitat and enhancing pedestrian amenities.
- (b) The areas between the principal façade of a building and the public right of way shall be landscaped except for driveways, sidewalks and allowable building projections.
- (c) Lawns shall be discouraged in commercial and mixed-use development, but shall be considered for residential development. Front yard landscaping shall consist of ground covers, annual or perennial flowers, native trees and shrubs. Plant materials shall not encroach into the sidewalk or public right-of-way.
- (d) Existing trees and vegetation shall be incorporated into the site design and retained to the extent possible.
- (e) Short picket or split rail style fences up to 4-feet in height are acceptable in residential front setbacks. Solid panel opaque fencing is not appropriate.

(2) Buffering

- (a) All such side and rear yards abutting properties with residential uses shall maintain the property boundary in either its natural state or with additional and enhanced native landscaping to provide a visual screen between the nonresidential uses and abutting properties.
- (b) Natural vegetation should be prioritized as buffers. A buffer may also include hedges, solid panel fencing, or combinations thereof.
- (c) Large buffers greater than 10 feet are not permitted in the Extension Subdistrict.

Parking

- (a) There shall be no minimum on-site parking requirements in the Core. The amount of parking needed for each project should be determined by estimated demand on a project-to-project basis.
- (b) Wherever possible, shared parking agreements shall be established between businesses to consolidate parking and reduce the need for additional parking space.
- (c) Parking lots with over ten (10) spaces should include landscaping to break up pavement, add visual appeal and reduce urban heat island.
- (d) In order to provide the inviting appearance in commercial areas and other buildings set close to the street, off-street parking must be located in the rear or side yards and may not be located between the front of the building and the street.
- (e) Surface parking lots should facilitate snow removal and should designate space for on-site snow storage that is mindful of drainage.
- (f) Drive-through facilities are allowed in the Extension Subdistrict, provided that windows and service areas are located on the side or rear of the principal structure and safe pedestrian movement is incorporated into the design, including safe crossings and pathways that are clearly marked.

Building Relationship

- (a) Building placement should relate to natural topography and vegetation and to the surrounding built environment.

- (b) Where possible buildings should frame the streets to create a sense of enclosure.
- (c) Exterior service, loading, storage, dumpsters and utility areas should be located at the side or rear of the building and should be screened or sheltered so as to minimize visibility from sensitive viewpoints such as pedestrian paths, building entries, and abutting residential properties.
- (d) For mixed-use buildings, ground floors shall incorporate detailed design and active uses.
- (e) Architectural features should relate to surrounding buildings and building materials should be harmonious wherever possible.

Supporting Residential Subdistrict

Purpose

The purpose of the Supporting Residential Subdistrict is to preserve existing neighborhood building character, while allowing for additional infill residential development. The Supporting Residential Subdistrict creates a balanced transition from the more active Core and Extension areas to surrounding rural spaces and resources and enhances connectivity and access from the Village to surrounding natural landscapes.

The Supporting Residential Subdistrict provides for compatible density development that relates to surrounding natural resources, open space, agricultural lands and farmlands and forest lands. Additional trail connections and easements between properties like Hawkes Tow Path Preserve and the Mountain Trail should be prioritized where appropriate. To the greatest extent possible off-street parking should be limited in order to maximize development potential and minimize disturbance to natural resources. In place of off-street parking, development should include additional common/yard areas, gathering spaces and landscaping treatments. Low impact development measures for street development and stormwater should be encouraged.

Permitted Uses

Permitted uses in the Supporting Village Residential shall include predominantly residential uses and other commercial uses where appropriate to support infill development compatible with surrounding natural landscapes.

- (1) Duplex residential dwellings
- (2) Single Family Dwellings
- (3) Commercial Uses
- (4) Public assembly, institutional or community facilities
- (5) Special exceptions, (including other uses as deemed appropriate)

Supporting Residential Subdistrict Standards

The following performance and design standards in the Supporting Village Residential are suggested to preserve open space resources while allowing for development in appropriate places.

Open Space and Natural Features

(1) Open Space

- (a) Open space shall be incorporated into the design proposal for any new development. Open space can take the form of parks, agricultural lands, forest lands, greenbelts and other natural areas of undeveloped land.
- (b) Maximum impervious coverage area in the Supporting Village Residential is 50% of the lot area.
- (c) Wherever possible open space shall be publicly accessible, and not limited to the residents or users of the project that created the open space.

(2) Natural Features

- (a) Natural features including existing trees and vegetation shall be preserved to the maximum extent possible. Tree clearing should be limited to the developed area of the site.
- (b) Special effort should be made to retain trees with a diameter greater than 6 inches.
- (c) Proposal for development shall include a plan for identifying how the developer shall preserve natural features including, but not limited to, trees or other vegetation, floodplains, rock outcroppings, surface water bodies, water quality, wetlands etc.
- (d) New buildings shall be sited to preserve the natural integrity and landscape character wherever possible providing connections to existing trails, parks and open spaces.

Landscaping and Buffering

(1) Landscaping

- (a) Landscaping in the Supporting Village Residential could take the form of primarily small residential home gardens, perennials, trees or shrubs or other natural vegetation with less emphasis on pedestrian amenities including street lighting, street trees, fencing and seating.
- (b) Any new development shall be required to provide landscaping to enhance the site appearance, reduce impervious area, and compliment the surrounding natural environment.

(2) Screening

- (a) Short picket or split rail style fences up to 4-feet in height are acceptable in residential front setbacks. Solid panel opaque fencing is not appropriate.
- (b) At minimum the buffer shall consist of one or more of the following techniques to provide screening:
 - (i) Dense evergreen plantings: every green screening should be a minimum height of 6 feet at installation. Two staggered rows of plantings spaced 12 feet on center should be provided to accomplish the required buffering.
 - (ii) Deciduous trees and shrubs: two staggered rows should be placed 6 feet on center based on their fullness with a minimum height of 6 feet at installation.
 - (iii) Earthen berm: berms should be graded with slopes 1:3 to 1:4. The crest of the berm should be planted with evergreens with minimum height of berm and planting 6 feet at installation and the side slopes planted with deciduous and/or evergreen plants.
 - (iv) Grade change: natural topographic variation and existing vegetation may be used to replace part or all required screening.