

## Warrant Article Questionnaire Non-Standard Town Agency Articles

### Section III – Questions with Response Boxes – To Be Completed By Petition Sponsor

Article # 24	Date Form Completed: 03.16.2023
Article Title: Establish Center Gateway Zoning District	
Sponsor Name: Planning Board	Email: aloomis@natickma.org

Question	Question												
1	Provide the article motion exactly as it will appear in the Finance Committee Recommendation Book and presented to Town Meeting for action.												
Response	Please see attachment for full motion.												
2	At a summary level and very clearly, what is the proposed purpose and objective of this Warrant Article and the accompanying Motion?												
Response	<p>The Center Gateway (CG) Zoning District is being proposed to promote the redevelopment of and reinvestment in private property so as to establish a transition from abutting zoning districts into Natick Center. The properties that will be rezoned as CG are presently zoned as Residential (RG) and Administrative and Professional (AP). The CG accomplishes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Compliance with MBTA Communities requirements. In accordance with the Act, the CG is within a ½ mile of a commuter rail station, allows multi-family by-right, and residential mixed-use by a majority vote of the permitting authority, creating opportunities for the creation of affordable housing.</li> <li>Increase in opportunity. The CG allows for uses the community wants in the CG to be allowed by-right, while re-establishing the intensity regulations to allow developers to better utilize land through best practices.</li> </ul>												
3	Has this article or one of a very similar scope and substance been on a previous Warrant Article and what have been the actions taken by the Finance Committee, other Boards or Committees and Town Meeting?												
Response	<p>Under the title “East Central/Union Street Intersection (southern side)”, this article was originally heard as <u>2022 Fall Town Meeting Article 24</u>. After the public hearing process ended, the Planning Board identified flaws in the article’s language and requested it be referred to the Sponsor (Planning Board).</p> <p>The <u>current Article 24</u>, which was assigned the same number on the 2023 SATM warrant as the earlier iteration, has been corrected and updated, addressing the issues previously identified.</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; margin-top: 10px;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 25%;">Warrant Period</th> <th style="width: 25%;">Other Committees</th> <th style="width: 25%;">FinCom Action</th> <th style="width: 25%;">Town Meeting</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Ex: 2021 SATM</td> <td>Ex: Planning Bd refer</td> <td>Ex: Referral</td> <td>Ex: Referral</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2022 Fall Annual TM</td> <td>Planning Board refer to sponsor</td> <td></td> <td>Consent agenda, refer to Planning Board</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Warrant Period	Other Committees	FinCom Action	Town Meeting	Ex: 2021 SATM	Ex: Planning Bd refer	Ex: Referral	Ex: Referral	2022 Fall Annual TM	Planning Board refer to sponsor		Consent agenda, refer to Planning Board
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4	Why is it required for the Town of Natick and for the Town Agency sponsor(s)?
Response	<p>The area identified for rezoning has the potential to offer significant development opportunities for the Town.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Reinvestment in parcels along a commercial corridor may not happen without such amendment. Current zoning has significant setbacks and dimensional requirements that make redevelopment unlikely without getting dimensional relief and increasing the nonconformity.</li> <li>2. In 2020, the Commonwealth voted to enact Housing Choice legislation. The Town is required to comply with such effort to provide housing opportunities by-right within a ½ mile of a commuter rail station, with the requirement of an affordable housing component. The new CG district would help ensure compliance with such requirements. Noncompliance would deem the Town ineligible for certain state funding opportunities.</li> <li>3. The new district encourages the distribution of affordable multi-family housing opportunities in key areas throughout the town.</li> <li>4. Increase in tax base associated with redevelopment.</li> </ol>
5	Does this article require funding, how much, from what source of funds and under whose authority will the appropriation be managed and spent?
Response	<p>Funding is not required for Article 24; rather, it is expected that revenue will be generated through private redevelopment of properties within the proposed Center Gateway Zoning District. All work associated with this article was conducted by Town staff, members of the Planning Board, and members of the Natick community who volunteered their time.</p>
6	<p>Does this article act in any way in concert with, in support of, or to extend any prior action of Natick Town Meeting, Massachusetts General Laws or CMR's or other such legislation or actions?</p> <p>Does this article seek to amend, rescind or otherwise change any prior action of Natick Town Meeting?</p>
Response	<p>Article 24 intends to allow Natick to comply with the requirements of MBTA Communities Act (Chapter 358 of the Acts of 2020 amended sections of Massachusetts General Laws (MGL) chapter 40A. Such amendments include <i>MGL c 40A § 3A MBTA community must have at least one zoning district of reasonable size in which multi-family housing is permitted as of right and meets other criteria set forth in the statute.</i>)</p> <p>Article 24, would allow residential mixed-use by a majority vote of a special permit, in addition to multi-family by site plan review.</p> <p><i>More information can be found at</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="https://www.mass.gov/info-details/multi-family-zoning-requirement-for-mbta-communities">https://www.mass.gov/info-details/multi-family-zoning-requirement-for-mbta-communities</a></li> <li>• <a href="http://masscptc.org/pipermail/massplanners_masscptc.org/attachments/20230315/e1be1788/attachment-0001.pdf">http://masscptc.org/pipermail/massplanners_masscptc.org/attachments/20230315/e1be1788/attachment-0001.pdf</a></li> </ul>

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7	How does the proposed motion (and implementation) fit with the relevant Town Bylaws, financial and capital plan, comprehensive Master Plan, and community values as well as relevant state laws and regulations?
Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Natick 2030+ Master Plan, Chapter 3, R5.1 includes an Action Step: Develop a <i>“Transitional Mixed Use Zone” with uses similar to the existing DM Zone, but with lower densities compatible with adjacent residential development: South side of Central Street from Lincoln Street to Union Street.</i>”</li> <li>• Natick 2030+ Master Plan, 1-5 Years: <i>There also are several locations where gateways into Natick Center could serve as transition zones from the adjacent RG residential neighborhoods. It is recommended that a “Transitional Mixed Use” Zone be considered that allows uses similar to the DM zone, but with lower densities compatible with adjacent residential development. This new district should be considered for the south side of Central Street from Lincoln Street to Union Street (currently zoned RG) and the north side of Middlesex Avenue from Spring Street to Washington Avenue. The zone is designated as DM-Transition on the Proposed Zoning Changes Diagram on page 3.37.</i></li> <li>• Clear and transparent permitting of development projects. Through the development of Rules and Regulations specific to the Center Gateway, developers will understand the clear expectations for development.</li> </ul>
8	Who are the critical participants in executing the effort envisioned by the article motion?
Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Natick Planning Board</li> <li>• Community and Economic Development staff</li> <li>• Landowners and parties of interest</li> </ul>
9	What steps and communication has the sponsor attempted to assure that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interested parties were notified in a timely way and had a chance to participate in the process</li> <li>• Appropriate Town Boards &amp; Committees were consulted</li> <li>• Required public hearings were held</li> </ul>
Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legal ad for the opening public hearing, scheduled for February 15, 2023, was published in the Metro West Daily Newspaper on February 1, 2023 and February 8, 2023</li> <li>• Legal mailers were sent to the abutting communities and required parties of interest prior to February 2, 2023</li> <li>• Legal mailers were sent to landowners in and within 300’ of the Center Gateway Zoning District</li> <li>• Public hearings for Article 24 was held on February 15, March 1, March 15, 2023</li> </ul>

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<b>10</b>	Since submitting the article have you identified issues that weren't initially considered in the development of the proposal?
Response	No issues were identified since the submission of Article 24.
<b>11</b>	If this Warrant Article is not approved by Town Meeting what are the consequences to the Town and to the sponsor(s)? Please be specific on both financial and other consequences?
Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Non-compliance with the MBTA Communities requirements of MGL c 40A §3A. Natick has until December 2024 to comply with the requirements of MBTA Communities, otherwise the Town will no longer be eligible for certain state funding (MassWorks, etc.)</li> <li>• The Town would expect to see little redevelopment of the parcels within the proposed Center Gateway Zoning District. Any development within this area would be limited to existing restrictive dimensional and limited use options.</li> <li>• Loss of potential tax revenue and building permit fees that are associated with new development or redevelopment.</li> </ul>