

Project Narrative
670, 648, 686, 690, & 692 Pacific Street and 171 Henry Street
Text Change & Zone Change for Village Commercial (V-C) Designation
March 29, 2021

1. Introduction/Background

Hogg Holdings (“the Applicant”) is the contract purchaser of several contiguous parcels along Pacific Street. The combined site is approximately 1 acre with frontage on Pacific Street and Henry Street and includes the former firehouse, existing 2-family home, and former church property. The site lies within Master Plan Category 6 (Commercial – Neighborhood Business) and Category 4 (Residential – Medium Density Multifamily) and is currently within several Zoning districts including the NX-D (neighborhood Mixed Use Design District), R-MF (Multiple Family Residence Design District), and C-B Community Business District).

The Applicant is looking at a comprehensive redevelopment of the site that will (a) repurpose the historic firehouse with a mix of retail, commercial and/or residential uses; (b) maintain the existing 2-family home on Henry Street; and (c) create a new residential building with an activated street-front, covered parking and 50± new apartments. The applicant is also looking into incorporating the Tabernacle of Grace church property as part of the future development.

To facilitate the potential redevelopment, the applicant is proposing the following:

A. Zone Change to V-C (Village Commercial)

- To further the goals of the Master Plan and continue the recent efforts of the Land Use Department, the proposed Zone Change will encompass the entire eastern side of the block fronting on Pacific Street (from Henry Street to Ludlow Street).
- The notable omission is the previously discussed 2-family home on Henry Street. While the property will be incorporated into the overall development site, the portion of the property housing the 2-family home will remain in the RMF and serve as a “buffer” to other RMF properties located further east.

B. Text Change

- To include Pacific Street (from Dock Street to Ludlow Street) as an “Arterial Street” in the V-C section of the Zoning Regulations and amend the “arterial” designation from 100’ to 150’ from the arterial property line.
- To revise the applicability of Arterial Street zoning to better match the depth of arterial lots.
- To implement language originally drafted by, and coordinated with, the Land Use Bureau staff to define “Zoning Lot” and permit existing internal property lines to remain within an approved development.

If approved, a set of site-specific applications for the proposed redevelopment will follow.

2. Surrounding Area

The surrounding area consists of Master Plan Categories 16 (Transit-Oriented Development district), 9 (Urban Mixed-Use), 6 (Commercial – Neighborhood Business), 5 (Residential – High Density Multifamily) and 4 (Residential – Medium Density Multifamily). The surrounding Zoning designations, including M-G (General Industrial), SRD-N (South End Redevelopment District North), NX-D (Neighborhood Mixed Use District), C-B (Community Business District) and R-MF (Multiple Family Residence Design District), follow a similar pattern.

The surrounding South End neighborhood contains a mix of medium-to-high density residential, commercial, religious, and community uses.

3. Project Area and History

Portions of the site were the subject of several recent approvals from both the Planning and Zoning Board. In June of 2020 the Planning Board approved an application put forth by the Land Use Bureau to amend the Master Plan of parts of the South End. This included putting this stretch of Pacific Street into Category 6. In August, the Zoning Board approved a Zone Change to NX-D and Special Permit for 670 and 686 Pacific Street to facilitate a potential future restaurant/retail use of the firehouse with a large surface parking lot occupying most of the Pacific Street frontage. While the approval served as an improvement by providing the potential to reactivate the firehouse building, a more comprehensive redevelopment is needed to achieve the planning goals set forth by the Master Plan changes.

4. Action Items

To facilitate the potential redevelopment and implement zoning that corresponds to the Master Plan, the applicant has submitted the following applications.

- A. Zone Change to V-C (Village Commercial) as depicted on the enclosed Zone Change Map; and
- B. Text Change to:
 - Include Pacific Street (from Dock Street to Ludlow Street) as an “Arterial Street” in the V-C section of the Zoning Regulations. As this South End neighborhood will be a new Village Commercial district, no such arterial street has been designated within the V-C regulations.
 - Revise the applicability of Arterial Street zoning from 100’ to 150’.
 - Add definitions and language establishing a “Tax Lot”, “Zoning Lot”, and “Zoning Lot Development Agreement”.

If approved, applications for Site & Architectural Plans, Coastal Site Plan Review and Special Permit will follow. An application for Historic Preservation bonuses may also be included if the church property can be incorporated into the overall redevelopment. All site and architectural design details will be further articulated at that time.

5. Conclusions

The proposed changes continue the efforts of the Land Use Bureau and Planning and Zoning Boards to facilitate development that will preserve historic buildings, activate a blighted and underutilized block, and provide new and affordable housing opportunities at a neighborhood scale within the South End. The proposed changes and potential redevelopment will advance many goals and objectives of the City of Stamford, including:

From the Master Plan...

- **3C.3:** Maintain the affordable housing stock to ensure that people who work in Stamford can afford to live in Stamford.
- **5E.1:** Promote neighborhood revitalization.
- **6A.1:** Balance new development with preservation of existing residential communities.
- **6B:** Preserve Existing and Create New Affordable Housing
- **6C.2:** Promote development of a variety of housing types.
- **6D:** Preserve Historic Buildings and Districts
- **6D.3:** Provide tax and zoning incentives for historic preservation and adaptive reuse

From the 2018 South End Study...

- **Seven Widely Shared Priorities (pg. 4)**
 2. Protection of and reinvestment in the remaining historic district buildings to avoid permanent erasure of character, community culture, and affordable homes and retail spaces.
 3. Immediate revision of zoning codes, through inclusive processes, to define an acceptable level of growth, better integrate new development with the neighborhood, and reduce uncertainty.
 6. Upgrades to streetscape and lighting to improve safety, bring people out, connect the different districts of the South End, and create lively commercial areas.
- **Major Recommendations (pg. 5)**
 - Modify existing zoning regulations in the South End over the next six months. Align them more closely with the goals of the Stamford Master Plan to achieve a defined, mutually agreeable level of growth, to better integrate new development with the neighborhood, and to reduce uncertainty. Ensure transparency and public participation throughout this process.
 - Upgrade South End streetscape design and lighting to improve safety, bring people out, connect the different districts of the South End, create lively commercial areas, and increase the percentage of trips people make on foot, on bike and transit. Prioritize streetscape improvements on Pacific Street.
- **Transfer of Development Rights (pg. 21)**
 - The team recommends the use of Transfers of Development Rights (TDRs) to permit the exchange of unused development rights from parcels containing existing affordable housing and retail, and historically or architecturally significant buildings.

Proposed Text Changes

I. Amend Article, Section 3.B. (Defined Terms) by adding “Tax Lot”, “Zoning Lot” and “Zoning Lot Development Agreement” to read as follows:

Tax Lot

A Tax Lot is a tract of land under single ownership and identified as such on the City of Stamford Tax Assessor’s Tax Map.

Zoning Lot

1. A Zoning Lot is (a) an individual tax lot or (b) a tract of land subject to a Zoning Lot Development Agreement which consists of two or more individual Tax Lots under common or separate ownership that, for Zoning purposes only, is treated as one Lot. A Zoning Lot comprised of multiple Tax Lots which are not proposed to be consolidated, must meet all of the following requirements:

- a. Each Tax Lot that is part of the Zoning Lot must be contiguous to and share a lot line at least twenty feet (20’) in length with at least one of such other Tax Lots and must not be separated by public streets.
- b. The Zoning Lot must conform and comply with the respective Zoning District requirements. If a Zoning Lot is located in more than one Zoning District, buildings or structures must meet the height, setback and use requirements of the respective District, and FAR and other Density calculations must be based on the area of land in the respective Zoning District. Existing nonconformities may remain, but shall be deducted from the overall development rights where applicable.
- c. All Development on a Zoning Lot that is located in more than one Zoning District, regardless of the size of the Zoning Lot or the portion of the Zoning Lot located in each District, shall be subject to administrative Site and Architectural Plan review and approval by the Zoning Board, pursuant to Section 7.2 of these Regulations, unless the respective Zoning Districts require other mechanisms for Site and Architectural Plan review.
- d. Setbacks along adjoining Tax Lot Lines interior to the Zoning Lot may be modified or waived as agreed upon by the property owners.
- e. Floor Area, Density and required off-street parking may be transferred, distributed or allocated throughout the Tax Lots comprising the Zoning Lots as agreed upon by the property owners provided that a proposed Building or Structure may not exceed the Height, Setback and Light and Air regulations of the respective Zoning District in which it is located, and provided the development remains compliant with item (b) above.
- f. Shared driveways and other features to reduce curb cuts and impervious surface are strongly encouraged.
- g. Zoning Lots comprised of more than one Tax Lot shall only be permitted if all individual Tax Lots are located in one or more of the following districts: C-D, CC, C-G, DW-D, MX-D, R-HD, and V-C outside of Glenbrook and Springdale; or when subject to Special Permit approval pursuant to Section 7.3.D.5.

2. A Zoning Lot is a discretionary approval by the Zoning Board subject to a Zoning Lot Development Agreement. The Zoning Board may deny Zoning Lot approval for any reason including but not limited to:

- a. The Zoning Lot created would allow for development inconsistent with the Master Plan.
- b. Development on a Zoning Lot would create a significant adverse impact on neighboring properties or neighborhood character as compared to as-of-right development.

Zoning Lot Development Agreement

A Zoning Lot Development Agreement is a private, legally binding agreement between the owners of two or more adjoining individual Tax Lots under common or separate ownership that allow these lots to be considered as one Zoning Lot to permit the more rational development of said Tax Lots in particular with regard to Yard requirements, building separation requirements such as Setbacks and Light and Air, and shared facilities such as parking. Tax Lots that are to be consolidated into a single Tax Lot shall not require a Zoning Lot Development Agreement.

A Zoning Lot Development Agreement must meet all of the following requirements:

1. The property must meet the definition of a Zoning Lot.
2. The Zoning Lot Development Agreement must be recorded on the land records of all affected properties and specify which density or other development rights or requirements are transferred, distributed or allocated on each Tax Lot. The Zoning Lot Development Agreement shall be subject to all existing legal rights, obligations and limitations (e.g., easements).

A Zoning Lot Development Agreement may not be terminated unless each of the individual Tax Lots comprising the Zoning Lot is in compliance and conformance with the regulations of the applicable Zoning District.

II. Amend Article III, Section 4.B.7 (V-C Village Commercial District) subsection 4.B.7.c. (Development Standards) by adding reference to footnote 1 to the heading titled “V-C Arterial Street all other V-C Districts and adding reference to footnote 2 to the heading titled “V-C Side Street all other V-C Districts”.

III. Amend Article III, Section 4.B.7 (V-C Village Commercial District) subsection 4.B.7.c. (Development Standards) Footnotes 1 and 2 by changing “100” to “150” in each sentence.

- 1) Standards apply for development parcels and parts thereof in all V-C districts within ~~100~~150’ of an Arterial Street, as defined in Subsection 4.B.7.c(12).
- 2) Standards apply for development parcel and parts thereof in all V-C districts on Side Streets more than ~~100~~150’ from an Arterial Street, as defined in Subsection 4.B.7.c(12) below.

IV. Amend Article III, Section 4.B.7. (V-C Village Commercial District) subsection 4.B.7.c. (Arterial Streets) by adding the following language:

Pacific Street (from Dock Street to Ludlow Street)