



TOWN OF GRAFTON
GRAFTON MEMORIAL MUNICIPAL CENTER
30 PROVIDENCE ROAD
GRAFTON, MASSACHUSETTS 01519
(508) 839-5335 ext. 1120 • FAX (508) 839-4602
planningdept@grafton-ma.gov
www.grafton-ma.gov

PLANNING DEPARTMENT

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Town of Grafton Planning Board
FROM: Fiona Coughlan, Town Planner
CC: Natalia Alward, Planning Assistant (via email)
DATE: February 20, 2023
SUBJECT: Zoning Bylaw Modifications for Section 12.7.6 and Section 4.2

This memorandum has been prepared as part of the meeting materials for the February 27, 2023, Planning Board meeting. It serves as an update regarding zoning bylaw changes for parking in the VMU districts and Grafton Common.

STAFF ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Section 12.7.6 Off-Street Parking Schedule: The Town Planner spoke with the Town's Zoning Enforcement Officer on multiple occasions about challenges associated with the current parking layout in the Village Mixed-Use Districts, particularly off-street parking requirements. After speaking with CMRPC on February 15, 2023, concerns were raised about the proposed increases in parking spaces per unit in the VMU districts and compliance with MBTA Communities requirements. When considering MBTA Communities zoning compliance alongside the proposed minimum parking increases, it should be understood that increased parking minimums will require, at minimum, increased multi-family district acreage and multi-family building density. Multifamily development that reaches the density requirements of fifteen units per acre must be allowed by right, and extra parking spaces will change the density equation unfavorably. If the parking minimum increases pass as proposed, it may require a blanket exemption for multifamily housing in the new districts that allow for lower parking requirements by right to meet density requirements. Per our Action Plan submitted in January 2023, amendments to the VMU districts are being strongly considered to meet MBTA Communities compliance due to their current regulations, adherence to smart growth principles, and allowance for density, walkability, and connectivity. An initial analysis found that standards in the VMU-SG and VMU-TV districts contribute positively toward meeting final unit capacity per district and density per acre requirements. They also best meet compliance in terms of including only whole parcels, compared to partial partials. Partial parcels are an issue when considering options in the RMF districts. Other options are being considered that may not affect the VMU districts; however, the consultant and the planner need time to evaluate those options. Because of this, the Town Planner recommends not pursuing this further until we can understand the implications these increases may have via testing through the state's Compliance Model. Testing of the current VMU parking configuration in the Compliance Model took place on February 23, 2023, and found Grafton to be compliant when using parcels in the VMU-SG and VMU-TV districts. CMRPC has offered to provide further comment on this matter should the Board request more information.



TOWN OF GRAFTON

GRAFTON MEMORIAL MUNICIPAL CENTER
 30 PROVIDENCE ROAD
 GRAFTON, MASSACHUSETTS 01519
 (508) 839-5335 ext. 1120 • FAX (508) 839-4602
 planningdept@grafton-ma.gov
 www.grafton-ma.gov

PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Section 4.2.1 Off-Street Parking and Loading, General: The Town Planner has incorporated the minor changes requested by the Board for this Section thus far. Noting challenges in getting this passed previously, the Town Planner connected with Bill McCusker of the Zoning Board of Appeals to discuss modifications. His previous concerns were that the language was ambiguous as proposed – “This section shall not apply to existing structures and/or new uses within the Grafton Common Historic District but shall apply to new structures within the Grafton Common Historic District.” After explaining that the new language states the Grafton Common Historic District will be exempt from parking requirements set forth under Section 4.2.2, he stated that it is less ambiguous as written. However, he advised that the Board consider if they wish to include language pertaining to new structures in the Grafton Common Historic District. Ultimately, the language should be clear. He proposed the following language in the past: “ This Section shall not apply to existing structures or new uses of existing structures within the Grafton Common Historic District. This section shall apply to new structure within the Grafton Common Historic District.” The Town Planner suggests keeping the language originally proposed by the Zoning Enforcement Officer, Mr. Berger.

Section 4.2.2 Off-Street Parking Schedule: This Section warrants more discussion regarding Industrial use parking schedules. The Board requested an analysis of (1): if a number of employees versus gross floor area is a preferable benchmark when determining units of measurement for parking spaces; and (2): if industrial and warehouse uses should be separated into two separate line items in Table 4.2.2 Below is a list of parking requirements for industrial uses in surrounding communities to use as points of reference.

MILFORD:

INDUSTRIAL USES	
Industrial and wholesale uses, including research and development, design, testing and product repair, excluding related offices:	1 space per employee for facilities with 1 shift or 1.2 spaces per employee for facilities with multiple shifts.
Executive, administrative and other office uses which are ancillary to, and located on the same premises as, an industrial or wholesale facility; such office not involving regular visits of clients or customer's to obtain services on the premises:	3.5 spaces for each 1000 square feet of office floor space
Contractors yard	1 space for each employee plus 3.5 spaces for each 1,000 square feet of office space

- Where the requirement is based on the number of employees, the number of spaces shall be based on the number of employees working on the subject premises during the peak employment shift or period. Employees shall include contract workers, temporary workers, and volunteers.

SHREWSBURY:

- Warehouses: One (1) parking space for each fifteen hundred (1,500) square feet of gross floor area;



TOWN OF GRAFTON

GRAFTON MEMORIAL MUNICIPAL CENTER

30 PROVIDENCE ROAD

GRAFTON, MASSACHUSETTS 01519

(508) 839-5335 ext. 1120 • FAX (508) 839-4602

planningdept@grafton-ma.gov

www.grafton-ma.gov

PLANNING DEPARTMENT

- All other non-residential establishments, except agricultural, one (1) parking space for each one thousand (1,000) square feet of gross floor area exclusive of storage areas, or one (1) parking space for each two (2) employees, whichever is greater. Adequate loading space shall be provided in addition to the parking requirements.

NORTHBOROUGH:

- Industrial uses. The minimum number of off-street parking spaces listed below shall be in addition to space for storage of trucks or other vehicles used in connection with a business.
 - Office for administrative, executive, professional, medical sales and other similar uses, the normal operation of which does not involve retailing activities on the premises: minimum one (1) space per three hundred (300) square feet gross floor area, maximum one (1) space per two hundred (200) square feet gross floor area.
 - Laboratory for scientific, industrial research, research and development, or biomedical research and technology: minimum one (1) space per four hundred (400) square feet gross floor area; maximum one (1) per three hundred (300) square feet gross floor area.
 - Wholesale warehouse, truck freight terminal or storage warehouse: minimum one (1) space per one thousand five hundred (1,500) square feet gross floor area; maximum one (1) space per one thousand (1,000) square feet gross floor area.
 - Light industrial use, including manufacturing, storage, processing, fabrication, packaging, and assembly; printing or publishing facility; data processing center; or public utility building or structure: minimum one (1) per five hundred (500) square feet gross floor area; maximum of one (1) per three hundred (300) square feet of gross floor area.
 - Industrial park services: Restaurant: minimum one (1) space per three (3) seats plus one (1) for every two (2) employees on shift of greatest employment; bank: minimum one (1) space per two hundred fifty (250) square feet gross floor area and maximum of one (1) space per two hundred (200) square feet gross floor area.

WESTBOROUGH:

- Industrial: one (1) space per each one and one-half (1-1/2) employees per shift

UPTON:

- Shops of the building trades. Shops of the building trades, printing and publishing establishments, and all storage, manufacturing or other uses specifically listed herein a Commercial & Industrial District shall have at least one off-street parking space for each two persons employed, or anticipated being employed, on the largest shift.



TOWN OF GRAFTON
 GRAFTON MEMORIAL MUNICIPAL CENTER
 30 PROVIDENCE ROAD
 GRAFTON, MASSACHUSETTS 01519
 (508) 839-5335 ext. 1120 • FAX (508) 839-4602
 planningdept@grafton-ma.gov
 www.grafton-ma.gov

PLANNING DEPARTMENT

SUTTON:

Industrial and Institutional	
Industrial, Contractors	1 space/1,000 sq. ft. nfs
Wholesale Sales, Manufacturing	1 space/1,000 sq. ft. nfs
Wholesale Industrial	1 space/1000 sq. ft. nfs
Manufacturing	1 space/750 sq. ft. nfs
Hospital	1 space/3 beds
Convalescent or Nursing Home	1 space/3 beds
Medical Offices	1 space/250 sq. ft. nfs
Warehouse and/or Distribution	1 space/2000 sq. ft.
Business, Industrial, Community Facility (school, church, town building, recreation, etc.) or public utility establishments	1 space per 7,500 sq. ft. nfs and an additional space per each additional 15,000 sq. ft nfs.

NORTHBRIDGE:

- Industrial and institutional:
 - Wholesale industrial - 1 per 1,000 square feet of nfs
 - Manufacturing - 1 per 750 square feet of nfs
 - Hospital - 1 per 3 beds
 - Convalescent or nursing home - 1 per 3 beds
 - Medical offices - 1 per 250 square feet of nfs
 - Contractor's yard - 1 per 750 square feet of nfs
- *For the purposes of this section of the Northbridge Zoning Bylaws, net floor space (nfs) shall be the actual occupied area, not including unoccupied areas or thickness of walls

HOPKINTON:

- General office, medical, and dental: 3 per 1,000 square feet of office, research and development gross floor area and industrial uses;
- Warehouse uses 1 per 1,000 square feet of gross floor area.

WEBSTER:

- Industrial: All industrial uses except those specified below - 1 per 1.5 employee plus 1 per each company vehicle plus 1 per each 25 required spaces for visitors
- Auto wrecking, junk, and scrap establishments -1 per employee plus 1 per 10,000 square feet of storage area
- Freight and trucking terminals, wholesale distribution and warehouses, moving and storage, parcel delivery - 1 per employee plus 1 per each company vehicle



TOWN OF GRAFTON

GRAFTON MEMORIAL MUNICIPAL CENTER
30 PROVIDENCE ROAD
GRAFTON, MASSACHUSETTS 01519
(508) 839-5335 ext. 1120 • FAX (508) 839-4602
planningdept@grafton-ma.gov
www.grafton-ma.gov

PLANNING DEPARTMENT

HINGHAM:

<u>Industrial</u>	
Manufacturing	2 spaces/1000 SF of GFA
Research & Development	3 1/2 spaces/1000 SF of GFA
Warehousing & Wholesaling	1 space/1000 SF of GFA

DOUGLAS:

- Storage, manufacturing, and industrial buildings: 1 space per 250 square feet of office space, 1 space per 2,000 square feet used for storage, and 1 space per 500 square feet for other uses on site.

Based on this information, I recommend modifying the zoning to: (1) separate parking requirements for Warehouse uses as its own line in 4.2.2 and base the parking on square footage between 500 and 1,000 sq. ft.; (2) separate Industrial uses as its own line in 4.2.2 and base the parking on square footage on 500 sq. ft; and (3) change the unit of measure for Transportation and Utility uses to one parking space for an amount between 500 and 1,000 sq. ft. of gross floor area. Consultation suggested gross square footage is reliable as it is a fixed factor, and number of employees can vary depending on the use / intensity of the use. Also, if there are additions to the building, it is easy to recalculate. Employee counts are often an estimate by the applicant who may round down. Storage or warehousing do not have many employees but tend to have larger buildings and generate traffic from deliveries, etc.

The Town Planner respectfully requests that the Board review this information, finalize their concerns for Section 4.2, and vote at the February 27, 2023, meeting to put these issues forward for the May 2023 Town Meeting Warrant Article.

Thank you.

Fiona Coughlan