



**Route 100 Committee**  
**Wednesday, December 17, 2014**  
**Minutes**

**Committee/Staff Attendance:**

Name	Present	Name	Present	Name	Present
Sarah Boudreau	√	Chuck Gerry	-		
Joe Cooper	√	Rebecca Grover	√	Joe McDonnell	√
Andrea Ferrante	√	Lori Legere	√	Steve Melchiskey	√
Charlie McBrady, Council Liaison	√	Anne Theriault, FEIC Liaison	√	Jim Thibodeau, LPAC Liaison	√
Theo Holtwijk, Staff	√	Nathan Poore, Staff	√		

**Others present:** Tom Farmer, Eydie Pryzant, Tom Greer

Andrea called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

**1. Review of Draft Minutes of November 19 and December 3 meetings**

The draft minutes of November 19 and December 3 meetings were approved as written.

**2. Discuss Land Use Ideas for Route 100**

Theo explained that the two draft technical reports needed some additional work and that the best use of the committee's time was to defer a review and discussion of them until that work was completed. He expected that revised reports would be distributed to the committee in time before its first meeting in January. He suggested that the 12/17 meeting could be devoted to having some additional discussion on land use.

Jim stated that he felt strong consideration should be given to adding turn lanes on Route 100. Theo explained the initial reports will assess existing conditions but will not propose specific improvements, such as turn lanes. That will happen in the subsequent work.

Theo commented that, while there are many land use details to consider with land use, the committee should keep its thinking at a high, vision-like level. He saw three basic elements that the committee should address:

- a. What types of uses are considered OK on what stretch of Route 100?
- b. What can the scale of those uses be?
- c. What aspects of design should future improvements comply with (such as building and parking placement, building design, etc.)?

He had compiled a handout that showed a sampling of existing buildings along Route 100 and their sizes, so the committee could get a feel what a specific size looked or felt like.

Jim felt that the Village Mixed Use was a great zoning district and that this zone should not be more restrictive as to allowable uses. He mentioned that some new uses (such as a combination of residential and office uses) require new classifications.

Sarah commented on uses that could be quite appropriate in the Farm and Forest zone, such as Art Gallery or Studio, but that are currently not allowed. She wondered if there could be a category of “Other Uses” that would be allowed as a Conditional Use. She felt there should be more flexibility given to using existing structures versus new structures.

Joe commented that the Route 100 Overlay District required him to comply with design standards. As he is dealing with existing buildings, it made his project more expensive than it otherwise would be. Joe stated several existing ordinances and specifically standards that ask owners to bring sites into conformance have an extremely negative impact on developing and updating existing properties. His opinion was that many developers stay away from Falmouth or become so frustrated with all the restrictions or standards they now have to face to improve or update a property.

Steve felt that traffic concerns should dictate what type of zoning the Town should allow. How does traffic impact the street? The issues of turning lanes, traffic management, and bus service were mentioned, as well as the fact that traffic on Route 100 consists of both destination traffic as well as through traffic. Steve felt that traffic and land use on Route 100 were at odds and wanted to be sure that land use and traffic considerations work well together. Jim stated that the Long-Range Planning Advisory Committee, of which he is a member, has thought a lot where new growth should be put and that Route 100 is one of those areas.

Lori felt that more development on Route 100 would slow traffic down, which, in turn, may encourage more drivers to use the Turnpike instead. Theo commented that, with the proposed improvements on Route 1, traffic speeds there are expected to be slightly reduced, but that traffic studies show that such a decrease in speed actually increases the capacity of the road and the volume of traffic that is able to handle. He said that Tom Errico could probably address that issue when he meets with the committee.

Steve thought it was very important to cluster uses and have multiple businesses that can be visited off Route 100 in one turn. He cited the Portland North Business Park as an example of that. Multiple turns on Route 100 made the road feel “choppy” to him. Parking lot connections would also help to reduce traffic turning in and out of Route 100. Jim felt that the issues that had been mentioned were obstacles that could be surmounted.

Next, the committee discussed some scale issues. Andrea felt that the credit union building was of an appropriate scale that she would like to see more of. She hoped that new development could increase the neighborhood feel and walkability of Route 100. She felt that buildings larger than the credit union could be allowed south of Leighton Road.

Steve felt that with a big box he looked at the size of that different than the use of it. He was OK with a large size, but not necessarily a single retail use. Andrea commented that she thought a small boutique hotel, like a Hilton Garden Inn, south of Leighton Road would be OK. She felt the left turns into Hannaford and TD Bank could be improved.

Joe felt that a big box store would be a good thing as such developments typically make traffic improvements to an area. Rebecca countered that such developments also come with additional, infill development, which brings more traffic.

Rebecca felt that bed and breakfast uses between Mountain and Leighton Road would be OK. Steve wondered how a big box use would help feed activity to a zone. He felt that a similarly sized mall would have a different, more positive effect.

Tom Greer commented on the typical sizes of hotels that he has worked on. They range from 14,000 to 22,000 sf, have multiple stories and take up about 3 or so acres of land. He felt that the big attraction of Route 100 was that it had a Turnpike entrance/exit, and that its limitation on development was the current limit of the sewer service. It was noted that consideration of a possible sewer extension by the committee was on the table. Tom Greer felt that while bank projects are typically quite small, developers generally only look to do projects that 20,000 sf or more. The committee discussed if the limit of 5,000 sf on retail uses in the Village Mixed Use was OK. That seemed to be the case.

Tom Greer felt that the Town should allow as much residential use in the Village Mixed Use zone as possible, as that would allow more people to walk to places of work along Route 100. He was thinking that 10 units/acre was OK. The committee discussed this and was in favor of encouraging more residential use along Route 100. Nathan suggested that such developments could come with a certain amount of required commercial use as well. The committee liked that idea. Larger developments, Nathan stated, could have buildings that faced an internal street. Rebecca was wondering if there was demand for residential uses along Route 100. Nathan felt that was the case. Steve wondered what the school impact of new residential uses would be.

Sarah felt that it was important that new buildings have an esthetically pleasing design. While the design guidelines encourage more traditional looking buildings, she felt that modern design could be quite appropriate.

Steve commented that the area north of Mountain and Falmouth Roads felt different, and should be treated differently, as the Piscataqua River was coming close to the road. It was noted that any area close to the river is already subject to a shoreland zoning overlay district which places development restrictions on such properties. Tom Farmer pointed out that the map that Wright-Pierce had prepared showed these restricted areas and that relatively little land in that area was free from that.

Theo thanked the committee for its feedback and will prepare a draft summary of the land use suggestions made for review at an upcoming meeting.

### **3. Next Steps**

The consultants will update the two draft reports, one on infrastructure and one of traffic, which will be reviewed at the next meeting.

### **4. Next Meeting**

Next meeting is January 14, 2015 at 6:00 PM.

The meeting was adjourned around 8:00 PM.

Draft minutes prepared by Theo Holtwijk, December 26, 2014