

# Portsmouth Listens



## WEST END STUDY CIRCLE DIALOGUE

### FINAL REPORTS

March 10, 2016

# 2016 West End Dialogue

## Final Report

*“Does the proposed Zoning Ordinance  
make the West End the best place  
to live, work and play for everyone?”*

Group: A

Facilitator: Bert Cohen

Group members:

Doug Adams, Jane Begala, Nancy Brown, Sharon Finley, Linda Mary Langley,  
Larry Lariviere, Robin LeBlanc, Sean Tracey and Maggie Wallace

### **Introduction**

We do not believe the CD-4 ordinances as an entirety work for this neighborhood or for the city. In the main, what does not work is the wholesale duplication of downtown zoning ordinances into the CD4-W district. We do not see this area as simply a second downtown district waiting to be developed. We believe that ordinances need to be examined and evaluated to ensure that the West End retains its own distinct character and quality of life, and that new construction enhances but never detracts from that character. What follows is a record of the best efforts of our group to begin that process of discrete evaluation.

### **Expectations for the West End**

Our expectations for the West End may be clustered under three categories: physical accessibility, economic accessibility, and neighborhood integrity. Some of the elements listed below contribute to more than one category.

#### **Physical accessibility**

- Safe traffic patterns
- Ensuring new developments and infrastructure take into account accessibility for all, meaning Universal Design in addition to ADA compliance.
- Pedestrian-friendly
- Re-design of the pinch point at Islington/Bartlett Streets
- Bike paths
- Protected parking for seniors
- Enhanced linkage between West End and Gateway Districts
- Sufficient parking for all

### **Economic accessibility**

- Increased workforce and senior housing that does not impact the availability of low-income housing.
- A range of small, locally owned food and drink establishments
- Small, independent, locally-owned businesses

### **Neighborhood integrity**

- Preservation and respect for existing neighborhoods.
- New developments should be aesthetically coherent with current neighborhoods and scaled to enhance, not overwhelm.
- Additional green space
- Light and noise pollution controls
- Maintenance of spaces that support the arts and cultural organizations.
- Feels like home, a refuge

## **The CD4 – L1 and L2 proposed zoning ordinance for the Islington Street Corridor:**

### **What works**

Multi-use development, including residential and commercial uses within a single building.

### **What doesn't work**

We are strongly united in our belief that the entrance styles proposed for new construction in CD4-L1 and CD4-L2 need to be reworked. Stoops, steps and other non-ground-level entryways bar access to those who are mobility-challenged. Concord has recently redesigned its Main Street such that all entryways are at ground-level; a similar initiative is underway in Boston. To manifest its aspirations to be an eco-municipality, Portsmouth needs to seize this opportunity to incorporate Universal Design into the specifics of this ordinance. Only in this way can the West End advance toward the goal of “being the best place to live, work and play for *everyone*.”

### **Additions**

Add permitting for motor vehicle service stations (10.440.11.20)

## **The CD4 –W proposed zoning ordinance for the Mill/Plaza area:**

### **What works**

Multi-use development, including residential and commercial uses within a single building.

Limitations on facade lengths

We recognize the potential of incentives as a creative solution to benefit the community, but we take issue with some specifics in the current proposal.

## **What doesn't work**

### **Accessibility:**

We reiterate the importance of accessible design for the benefit of mobility-challenged members of the community. This principle will influence both design constraints (entrance styles and door widths, for example) and permitted uses. Universally Designed access to upper floors needs to be required on the ground floor of all buildings.

Accessibility is a *crucial* element of truly making the West End walkable (safe, convenient, useful and interesting) for a diverse community, including elders, the disabled, and people with young children. Only by making a commitment to accessibility can the West End advance toward the goal of “being the best place to live, work and play for *everyone*.”

Taking this principle one step further: public bathrooms should be made available in the district to make the neighborhood fully accessible to people of all ages.

### **Maximum Building Size:**

We oppose carrying over the zoning ordinances from the downtown district to CD4-W without modification. We believe that:

- Buildings in CD4-W should be limited to 15,000 square feet; but, if workforce housing incentives are accepted, a building may be allowed an underground or ground floor parking lot up to 20,000 square feet (10.5A43.43).
- The maximum footprint for a stand-alone parking structure should be 20,000 square feet (10.5A43.44).

### **Maximum building height:**

Current height ordinances do not distinguish between sites along Islington Street, along other streets in the new district, or in close proximity to current residences. Building heights need to blend into the existing structures and adjacent neighborhoods.

### **Parking:**

We continue to be concerned about Incentive #5 (reduced parking space requirements.) While we want a more walkable West End, parking is important to preserving physical accessibility for seniors and people with disabilities.

### **Hotels & restaurants:**

We oppose permitting restaurants designed for occupancy by more than 250 persons. We strongly oppose permitting hotels with more than 125 rooms.

**Outdoor performance spaces:**

Outdoor performance and multi-purpose spaces need to be designed with close consideration of their integration into the surrounding community, including clearly-defined and enforceable controls on lighting, noise levels and hours of operation.

**The small strip of CD4-W on the north side of the railroad tracks:**

CD4-W zoning ordinances are not geared towards preserving, enhancing, or developing the narrow strip of land on the north side of the railroad tracks, which runs along Hodgson Brook and serves as a link between the new Gateway District along the Route One Bypass.

**Arts and performance district:**

CD4-W zoning ordinances, as currently written, do not adequately take into account the special character of the existing art and performance district within this zone.

**Additions**

We suggest that ordinances need to recognize that the new Gateway District flows into the CD4-W, and to require appropriate construction and design ordinances so that the entire region is coherent. The strip of land on the north side of the railroad tracks which includes Hodgson Brook is included in CD4-W zoning. This land abuts what is zoned as a Gateway District and is subject to potentially dramatic changes in automobile, bicycle, and pedestrian traffic flowing into and out of the CD4-W zone. We would like to see specific ordinances protecting this land, including a discussion about ‘daylighting’ Hodgson Brook. To this end, we propose creating a separate ‘environmental incentive overlay’ with appropriate incentives.

We also propose a specific ‘arts district incentive overlay’ with appropriate incentives for the area that includes the Button Factory and adjacent buildings in order to protect and encourage the artists’ studios, maker spaces, and theater venues that lend this district its distinct character.

Increase handicap-designated parking spaces.

If multi-story parking structures are envisioned to replace ground-level parking, require free parking for residents of the district.

Add language clearly defining lighting, noise levels and hours of operation for outdoor gathering spaces.

The existing incentive for workforce housing creation offers incentive benefits to a developer who allocates 30% of a project to workforce housing for sale or 10% for rent. The currently proposed

numbers seem arbitrary and contrary to likely use patterns. We believe the requirement should be raised to 30% of a qualifying project allocated to any workforce housing.

Add permitting for small residential care facilities (10.440.2.21)

Add special exception permitting for motor vehicle service stations (10.440.11.20)

Add special exception permitting for veterinary clinics (10.440.7.50).

## **Deletions**

Eliminate restaurants or bars for more than 250 person occupancy (10.440.9.12, 10.440.9.52, 10.440.9.53)

Eliminate hotels with more than 125 rooms (10.440.10.43, 10.440.10.44\*)

*\*these section numbers are corrected to reflect the system apparent elsewhere in the use tables*

Eliminate conference hotels and conference centers altogether (10.440.10.50)

Subject outdoor performance facilities of any size (10.440.352) to noise ordinance (10.825) (*see "Other" section below*)

## **Other issues that are not in the proposed Zoning Ordinance**

We believe the transition to character-based zoning presents a welcome opportunity for the City to clarify and strengthen the language governing permissible noise levels in any given neighborhood.

Permit electric vehicle charging stations.

## **Related Concerns**

### **Suggestions for additional incentives:**

1. The city could offer fast-track permitting for developments that maximize workforce or low-income housing and/or community spaces.
2. We also suggest considering financial arrangements that are allowed under state law. These might include (a) making use of a Work Force Trust currently in place but unfunded at this time, or (b) using TIF financing.

### **And:**

Sub-numbering under 10.40 needs to be corrected.

Is there a specific, expressed policy that governs grandfathering the design/use of existing structures?

How do we encourage shift to alternative modes of transportation (to reduce reliance on individual motor vehicle)? Shuttle bus program? How do we reduce reliance on personal vehicles, facilitate access for everyone, and avoid overflow into adjacent communities at the same time?

## **Conclusion:**

The Portsmouth Listens dialogue groups have been charged with answering the question: “Does the proposed Zoning Ordinance make the West End the best place to live, work and play for everyone?”

Our answer to this question is: NO - not as it is currently written. With significant modifications, it has the potential to become a document that supports the desired goals. In its current form, however, it appears designed to extend downtown zoning and permitted construction into the West End, and it fails to accommodate people with disabilities or seniors.

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## 2016 West End Dialogue Final Report Template

*“Does the proposed Zoning Ordinance  
make the West End the best place  
to live, work and play for everyone?”*

Group: Wednesday Evenings

Facilitator: Gregg Spaulding

Group members: Bob Bowser, Sarah Holly, Esther Kennedy, Zoe Kirkpatrick, Paul Mannle, Ellen Saas, Bill Truslow, and Denise Wheeler.

### **Our group identified the following expectations for the West End:**

- A) Walkability, which includes having sidewalks, lighting, and a general environment that promotes pedestrian safety, to encourage more foot traffic. In the dot voting exercise, this garnered 9 votes;
- B) Maintaining the artist population that West End is known for, through affordable studio rent and housing. This received 6 votes;
- C) Several ideas coalesced under theme having more green space in West End, including lots of trees (6 votes), a trolley on Islington (3 votes), bike paths (6 votes), and burying utility lines (3 votes); and
- D) Preventing uniform or ‘cookie cutter’ development (8 votes), to preserve the industrial feel that makes the Islington corridor visually interesting and functional.

**On the CD4 – L1 and L2 proposed zoning ordinance**, we agreed that low intensity commercial uses are appropriate, if allowed in L1 by exception (all combined, 11 votes). This includes allowing restaurants in L1 by exception and small-scale vendors, such as flower carts, ice cone stands, and food trucks. We agreed that retail would be okay, but a drop off laundry or dry cleaning service would bring too much vehicle traffic in the area. The current street parking is okay, *if* there is a new parking garage in the West End (3 votes). Limiting parking to one side of Islington would allow for the addition of much needed bike lanes (3 votes).

Development should preserve the diversity of character along the Islington Street corridor (11 votes). We agreed that the current building heights work as they maintain natural light and prevent wind tunnels, prevalent in areas with much taller buildings (7 votes).

**In our assessment of the CD4-W proposed zoning ordinance**, we identified the following themes:

- A) No hotels should be permitted (16 votes). The proposal to allow hotels with a 500-room capacity – or even 250-room or 125-room capacity – is out of place in the West End. The size of such a structure would dwarf the scale of the homes and businesses in this section of town and negatively impact the quality of life for those who live, work and play here.
- B) Under the category building types (19 votes), the zoning ordinance should include *apartment* buildings with commercial space on the first floor. Limiting multi-family structures to condominiums reduces the availability of affordable housing, cited as important in maintaining Portsmouth’s artistic community and in expanding workforce housing. We placed building facades under this same heading, to prevent uniform exteriors and create interest along the corridor, and to ensure the builders use high quality materials that can withstand the harsh winters.
- C) Workforce housing should be maintained or safeguarded via deed restrictions or another mechanism, to prevent an owner from flipping the property or from buying multiple workforce units and combining into a larger luxury unit (5 votes).
- D) We agreed that public parking is greatly needed (10 votes) and identified such options as linking a proposed parking garage at Frank Jones to Islington Street, via a pedestrian walkway or tunnel.
- E) Preserving the range of services currently found in CD4-W ranks as critical to ensuring that the West End remains a neighborhood that meets the day-to-day needs of those who live and work here (19 votes). Grocery stores, garages, pharmacies, and retail are within an easy walk or very short car ride. The types of services allowed should also include veterinary care. Zoning should allow mixed use buildings (residential and commercial) and promote more open spaces.
- F) As currently structured, the public transportation options in the West End do not work (4 votes).

**Other issues to be considered about the West End that are not in the proposed Zoning Ordinance** include the following with regard to the Development Incentive Overlay:

- A) The maximum building footprint should not exceed 15,000 square feet;
- B) Allow for the inclusion of apartment buildings rather than limiting multi-residential buildings to condominiums;
- C) Institute deed restrictions to preserve workforce housing;
- D) When considering community spaces, go for larger, combined spaces rather than smaller spaces dispersed among different developments; and
- E) Have the Land Use Board determine the incentive, not the developer.

**Two themes reflect our priorities for the West End.** The first is *Residents not tourists*. Maintain the diversity of the West End – retail and services fill the need of those who live and work here rather than catering to tourists. Instead of zoning that allows for large-scale hotel projects, create affordable apartments for the artist population and workforce that make Portsmouth what it is. The second theme is *No Faux*, or keep West End real. Keep the different types of architecture rather than adopting sterile, uninteresting designs, create varied housing options, and safeguard real services used by those who live and work in the West End.

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## 2016 West End Dialogue Final Report Template

*“Does the proposed Zoning Ordinance  
make the West End the best place  
to live, work and play for everyone?”*

Group: C

Facilitator: Maria Sillari

Group members: Barbara Massar, Lauren Colanto, Martin Ryan, Rich Matthes,  
Jerry Zelin, Mike Thiel, Jeff Bartolini, Rachel Roemer, Rebecca Perkins

### **1. What are your expectations for the West End?**

- Maintain the unique personality and diversity of the West End, which is distinct from downtown
  - Varied architecture with varied building materials and esthetics
  - Varied uses of buildings
  - Diverse range of businesses and retailers
  - Maintain the diversity of residents – multigenerational, families
- Provide more affordable and available housing
- Mixed use buildings that promote commerce as well as community living
- Promote multi-story buildings of a traditional scale (i.e. no single-story, single-use buildings)
- New open spaces
- Better pedestrian & cycling access to connect the West End to downtown – provide pleasant walkability
- Improved infrastructure – new sidewalks, better and more uniform lighting, roads with bike lanes

### **2. What is your assessment of the CD4 – L1 and L2 proposed zoning ordinance for the Islington Street Corridor:**

- *What works?*
  - Mixed use buildings

- Specifications for community space
- Community space mixed in with buildings
- Mirrors a lot of elements already in existence
- Allows commercial space on 1<sup>st</sup> floor in CD4-L2
- *What doesn't work?*
  - Relatively low building height allowed in CD4-L2 as it nears the CD4W area
  - Limited 1<sup>st</sup> floor use for light office space only in CD4-L1 – may impact the retail and development goals for CD4W as it would create an area with no first floor retail space between downtown and the rest of the West End
- *Additions?*
  - Increase building height allowance at west end of CD4-L2 to blend building height into CD4W area
- *Deletions?*
- *General considerations?*
  - Are the community space requirements effective? So these requirements encourage development or deter it?

**3. What is your assessment of the CD4 – W proposed zoning ordinance for the Mill/Plaza area:**

- *What works?*
  - Allows many uses
  - Allows for greater density than is currently present
- *What doesn't work?*
  - Not allowing any 1<sup>st</sup> floor residential may be too inelastic if there is not enough demand for commercial space
  - Possible contradiction of allowing row house buildings (considered residential) while not permitting residential use on 1<sup>st</sup> floor
- *Additions?*
- *Deletions?*
- *General considerations?*
  - Unclear how a large, contiguous community space is achieved (as in the vision plan) versus many smaller spaces that are small percentages of individual lots.
  - To actually achieve any of the larger proposed open community spaces as in the vision plan the city needs to incentivize

developers to create open space *and* coordinate planning in order to avoid a hodgepodge of small open spaces that may not achieve the intended outcome.

#### **4. Other issues to be considered about the West End that are not in the proposed Zoning Ordinance?**

- Is our city infrastructure (water, sewer, parking, schools, etc.) ready for more residents as currently accepted projects and vision plan include potential development of living space for 1000s more residents?
- Do the zoning regulations encourage development that creates continuity with existing buildings versus creating “islands” of newer, larger buildings?
- Addition of incentives to specifically encourage development of mixed-use buildings?
- The proposed zoning regulations don’t provide incentives for existing owners to adopt aspects of the new ordinances, i.e. creating community space on existing properties, etc.
- Future parking issues are not addressed in the plan. If the city wants to encourage development including additional housing and commercial/retail spaces, the anticipating parking concerns need to be addressed. This may include de-incentivizing larger surface parking lots and encouraging parking garages or below ground parking.
- The zoning ordinances do not include a biking and pedestrian accessibility plan. Creating better non-car access to the West End might mitigate many of the anticipated parking concerns, especially if West End residents feel safer and more comfortable walking and cycling within their own community.

#### **5. Other?**

- No validating evidence has been presented with these ordinances that shows how effective similar changes have been in other similar communities.
- We as a group don’t have a clear understanding of whether the incentives are attractive to potential developers or if they are too burdensome and may, in fact, discourage development. Specific feedback from current and potential developers would be beneficial to

this process and, as far as we know, has not been collected or made public.

- The incentives generally need to be reviewed. Perhaps more specific incentives for certain projects or lots would encourage the desired development in the West End. For example, additional incentives for re-developing particular types of buildings (single-story, single-use structures), and stronger incentives for affordable housing and open space may be needed to achieve these goals for the West End and bring the Vision to life.
- To achieve any of the larger goals in the Vision Plan, the city needs to create a better defined, overarching plan. The zoning ordinances can only go so far in guiding development. Public and private redevelopment needs to be coordinated and managed.
- We recommend unbundling the West End zoning ordinances from the Northern Tier and Downtown amendments, as these are distinctly different areas. The Northern Tier and Downtown areas should be given the same level of consideration by residents in those areas as the West End zoning ordinances have been given.

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## 2016 West End Dialogue Final Report

*“Does the proposed Zoning Ordinance make the West End  
the best place to live, work and play for everyone?”*

**Group:** West End Warriors

**Facilitator:** Rose Sulley

**Group members:** Genevieve Aichele, Robin Albert, Jonathan Blakeslee, Anna Bruning, Ellen Fineberg, Aubrey Gewehr, Julie Gilston, Angela Lambert, Vince Lombardi, Leslie McCarthy

### TOP TWO PRIORITIES PLUS UNIQUE ISSUE

**1 Priority deals with mixed use and diversity.** Our group felt that maintaining diversity, mixed-use and character in residences and businesses was important. Also to ensure affordable workforce neighborhoods-business and residential options. Keep buildings on a “human scale”

**2 Priority addresses way finding and walkability.** Well marked streets and business signage. Walkable, safe, well-lit sidewalks and crosswalks. Keep it accessible to less mobile residents. Connected transportation to other hubs. Provide a well-marked biking path and encourage a walking-friendly West End, Restaurants and Businesses would not be limited by parking spaces determined by zoning rules.

**Unique issue:** Our unique issue concentrates on Community Value. Continue to nurture arts and culture in the West End. Provide community/green spaces, for example the Majora Carter South Bronx Greenway Project.

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### 6. **Group expectations for the West End in order of importance:**

- Maintain diversity, mixed-use and character in residences and

- Ensure affordable workforce neighborhoods – businesses and residential options. Not easily codified but important to us. What the city can use for mechanisms, we'd like to see.
- Walkable, safe, well-lit sidewalks and crosswalks
- Continue to nurture arts and culture in the community
- Community space/green space
- Well-marked streets and business signage
- Accessible for less mobile folks
- Connected transportation to other hubs
- To encourage lively street activity, use lots of doors and shop windows
- Promote multiple architectural styles fitting the character of the area (preserve/maintain)

7. What is your assessment of the CD4 – L1 and L2 proposed zoning ordinance for the Islington Street Corridor?

**a. What Works**

- Height scale and taper; varied roof lines
- Setbacks and recessed entry ways match with existing character of the street
- Like the encouragement of mixed-use residences and businesses
- Like keeping the “housy” look connecting the downtown and West End

**b. What doesn't work? (suggested changes to make)**

- District should have special exceptions for first floor residential use or multi-floor business use
- 3000 s/f minimum lot/dwelling is too restrictive. It wouldn't allow for standard sized or micro-housing. Density is the key to affordability. Recommendation: 1000 sf/dwelling minimum lot size

**c. Additions**

- Allow for dwellings that accommodate both living and working spaces (sometimes called Live/Work space)
- Consider extending work force housing incentives to L1/L2

8. What is your assessment of the CD4 – W proposed zoning ordinance for the Mill/Plaza area?

a. **What works**

- Outdoor performance/art space
- Mixed use residential and businesses
- Incentives exist for workforce housing and community space
- Overall vision of secondary downtown

b. **What doesn't work (changes to make)**

- Minimum 2500 sf/dwelling lot size; change to 1000 sf/dwelling minimum lot size
- Performance spaces greater than 500 person seating; would lose sense of intimacy
- Basic building height for tallest area, specifically on Islington adjacent to residential district, should be kept to “people-scale.” If the building heights are as written, we need to avoid oppressive visuals by using setbacks and scaling such as buildings with stepped back upper levels... (scale/height)
- Huge hotels greater than 250 rooms

c. **Additions**

- Should allow boarding houses as special exceptions. These are housing alternatives that may address low-income housing needs.
- Hotels with rooms between 126 to 250 should be a special exception

d. **Deletions**

- Do not allow hotels with 250+ room use

9. Recommendations for Incentive Overlay

e. **What we like...**

- That the incentives exist
- 30% for condos seemed reasonable
- 100% median income for workforce housing and 60% median income for others

- Encourages green space, community space and workforce housing
- f. **What we don't like...**
  - We think 30% workforce housing to qualify for incentives should be across the board with condos and rentals vs 30% for condos and 10% for rentals
- g. **Other considerations**
  - Ensure community input on what the developer proposes
  - Extra incentives for cooperative community/green space ventures, design of which should be led by the city. For example Venice, CA and Majora Carter's work in the Bronx
  - Add arts and cultural incentive overlay that provides and protects affordable artist living and studio space. This overlay area should incentivize developers to protect and/or enhance space, like the Button Factory, for arts and artists. (Live/work spaces)

## **10. Other issues to consider...**

- Fake historic is undesirable. We don't want buildings that attempt to replicate our historic buildings. Buildings should encapsulate what Portsmouth is now, while still fitting with the character of the neighborhood. Character and varied styles desired. NO PORTWALK-like buildings.
- Develop Bartlett Street as a connector from traffic circle hotels to the West End by creating comfortable safe walking. This supports tourism and doesn't involve building large hotels in the West End.
- Parking should be addressed in the zoning. How can zoning encourage a walking-friendly West End where restaurants and businesses aren't limited by the number of parking spaces they can provide. We love the idea of turning Islington Street into a walking-only tree-lined boulevard with a trolley connecting downtown and the West End.
- Encourage developers to collaborate on parking solutions

- Need to improve sidewalks immediately: wider, better lit, and accessible year-round (plowed in the winter)
- Slow down the traffic: narrower roads and create bike lanes
- Provide incentives for both small and large green spaces throughout both zoning districts; could include outdoor performance/ art spaces

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## 2016 West End Dialogue Final Report

*“Does the proposed Zoning Ordinance make the West End  
the best place to live, work and play for everyone?”*

### Group E:

Nancy Lehoux, Facilitator

Tom Holbrook, Deb Chag, Peter Weeks, Jonathan Sandberg, Maureen Donnelly, MiMi Salmon, Robin McLane, Michael Letendre

**Priority Issue Number 1: Change the ordinance to NOT allow hotels or conference centers of any size.**

It seemed to be the consensus of those who attended the charrette as well as those in our group that while a more urban feel was desirable for the West End, it should NOT be a continuation of downtown, but rather a place for locals. One clear way to accomplish this, besides the ever needed affordable housing, is to not allow hotels or conference centers in the CDW district. The district is a stone’s throw from the traffic circle, which already boasts four hotels. It does not seem necessary.

**Priority Issue Number Two: Strengthen the tradeoffs.** The limits to what a developer can do in the district need to be stricter, so they will be more likely to take advantage of the tradeoffs. If the developer can make more money by creating luxury condos than they can by availing themselves of one of the tradeoffs, that’s what they will do. We know this from experience.

**Unique Issue: We believe any new construction in the West End should have some level of LEED certification required, NOT as one of the proposed incentives, but just as a matter of course.**

**Summary:** What a great group we had! Besides the issues above, we advocate improved streetscapes to improve walkability and safety. We want to see more affordable housing, including microhousing, less parking requirements per unit, and the elimination of large parking lots.

We worry that this Zoning change is being put into place without results from a traffic and parking study. At this point, no one really knows how many cars are currently using the area, and how many will be

added by the four major developments already approved. It seems to us this sort of information should be considered before making zoning changes.

While there is little that zoning can do to affect this, we talked at length about the need to maintain affordable commercial space for cultural activity. For instance institutions like PMAC, the radio station, and West End Theatre need affordable rental space to continue to provide the rich cultural experience we value in the West End. Spaces like the Button Factory that provide affordable studio space are also important to the flavor of the West End, If there is any way at all to promote and encourage this type of use, please do it.

Finally, we combed through the acceptable uses for CDW4 and came up with following recommended changes: (see page 2)

Changes to zoning line items:

3.5 Performance facility

3.51 Indoor performance facility

3.511 Occupancy up to 500 persons: **change to 'S'**

7.10 Day Care

7.11 Family day care facility: **change to 'P'**

7.50 Veterinary Care: **change to 'S'**

8.4 Shopping centers. **These should be disallowed, or at the very least changed to 'S'. The strip mall that currently exists at 800 Islington exhibits exactly the over paving/under utilization issues we are trying to fix with this zoning change.**

9.30 Restaurant, fast food: **change to 'S'**

9.50 Restaurant, place of public assembly or function room

9.52 Occupant load from 250 to 500: **change to 'S'**

9.53 Occupant load greater than 500: **change to 'N'**

10.4 Hotel or motel

9.51 Up to 125 rooms: **change to 'N'**

9.52 Up to 250 rooms: **change to 'N'**

9.53 Up to 500 rooms: **change to 'N'**

10.5 Conference hotel: **change to 'N'**

10.6 Conference center: **change to 'N'**

# portsmouth listens...

## 2016 West End Dialogue Final Report Template

*“Does the proposed Zoning Ordinance  
make the West End the best place  
to live, work and play for everyone?”*

Group: Thursday Night

Facilitator: Jeffrey Cooper

Group members: Deanna Strand, Karen Jacoby, Rick Becksted, Inga Wyman,  
Doug Roberts

### **Expectations for the West End**

The West End offers Portsmouth residents a place to live, do errands, experience art and see friends all on foot. Our desire is to see these characteristics nurtured and expanded. The priorities noted below support our expectations.

- Building mass and scale in the West End should be less than is proposed in the new character based ordinance. It is both too big and too high.
- Enhancement of the area as a walkable mixed-use area for residents of all income levels should be supported through the prohibition of uses that are too intense for such an area (i.e. large scale restaurants, bars, hotels and retail facilities), through the preservation of the historic nature of area by prohibiting tear down of buildings with historic merit and through the promotion of workforce housing.
- Parking requirements should be considered creatively so that available parking can be maximized, and new parking creation can be minimized as too much pavement can reduce walkability of area.

### **Assessment of the CD4 – L1 and L2 proposed zoning ordinance**

We like the size, façade, coverage and setback requirements for L1 and L2, however, we feel the allowed uses could be even more similar in the L1 and L2. With that in mind, we have suggested the following changes to the usage charts.

- Change Not Permitted to *Special Exception for craft, upholstery shops and the like, or someone like a plumber or electrician using their home as a base of operations* could operate in the area in Section 7.40 in L1.

- Change Not Permitted to *Special Exception for small scale retail* that has a minimal traffic impact, like the sew and vac, and that offer services that residents need in Section 8.31 in L1.
- Change Not Permitted to *Special Exception for craft, coffee shops, or bakeries* that have a minimal traffic impact and offer services that residents enjoy in Section 8.70 in L1.

## General Considerations

We want to promote the development of a walkable pedestrian oriented way. To this end, we would discourage large trucks from using Islington Street. Therefore, we would oppose any uses that include a high volume of truck deliveries.

In addition, we believe that the historic nature of this area should be preserved. Therefore, we want to discourage teardowns of buildings with historic merit. We would like to encourage teardowns of buildings without historic or aesthetic merit.

We support the use of incentives in the area to promote workforce housing and green space, however, we want to be aware of their impact on building heights. Therefore, on Islington Street, we recommend that the maximum height be 3 stories with a 4<sup>th</sup> floor as a special exception if workforce housing or green space is provided.

An alternative to providing additional building height or mass might be to charge “in lieu of” parking fees that can be waived as a tradeoff for parks or workforce housing.

## Assessment of the CD4-W zoning ordinance for the Mill/Plaza area:

Proposed modifications to the Zoning Use chart for CD4-W include:

- Change Permitted allowance of hotels to *Prohibit hotels* of any size in Section 10.40
- Change Prohibited owner occupied bed and breakfast in L1 and L2 to *Permitted owner occupied bed and breakfast in L1 and L2*
- Change Permitted and Special Exception allowance for eating and drinking places to *Prohibit eating and drinking places of over 250 patrons in Sections 9.11 & 9.12 for CD4-W.*
- Change Permitted and Special Exception allowances for restaurants for over 250 patrons to *Prohibit restaurants for over 250 patrons in CD4-W*
- Create a new category for restaurants and night clubs that *Permits less than 150 patrons and promotes shared parking at these facilities.*
- Allow senior housing in CD4-W; Explore assisted living facility vs home - what is the difference?
- Change Section 7.30 veterans home to Special Exception

## General Considerations

We believe that the mass of the buildings in this area will have a large impact on the walkability of the area. Buildings that are too large can inhibit people’s perception of the safety and desirability of walking. Therefore, we propose limiting building footprints in CD4-W to 10,000 SF footprint with the possibility of an exception for an up to 20,000 SF footprint if one of the following is provided:

- underground parking;
- workforce housing; or
- community greenspace

We would also limit building height to 4 stories with a 5th floor as an exception if the building meets all other development standards and

- underground parking;
- workforce housing; or
- community greenspace

We would also like to ensure that the façade of buildings has modulation. The purpose of this is to offer an interesting landscape for walking. At the moment, buildings that are all brick or have masonry are exempt from the modulation requirement. We believe that this should be changed to require that all buildings have modulation on the principal front yard side. (Section 10.5A43) Another method of increasing interest in the building facades, and not creating a canyon effect, would be to require that buildings with four floors have the 2nd or 3rd floor set back further from the street.

To further support walkability, we would like to encourage alternatives to the provision of parking. Our concern is that parking lots reduce walkability within the West End area. Possible alternatives include:

- Unbundle the parking from the rent/sale price of the unit to reduce the parking requirement for a building
- Allow shared parking in existing parking lots, and reduce the parking requirement for SF or per unit if shared parking is used.
- Allow a developer to satisfy their parking requirement by leasing from a nearby owner when they both have differing peak hours