



DMG
INVESTMENTS

201-205 West Main Street, West Ayer Village

Project Information &
Context for Variance Requests

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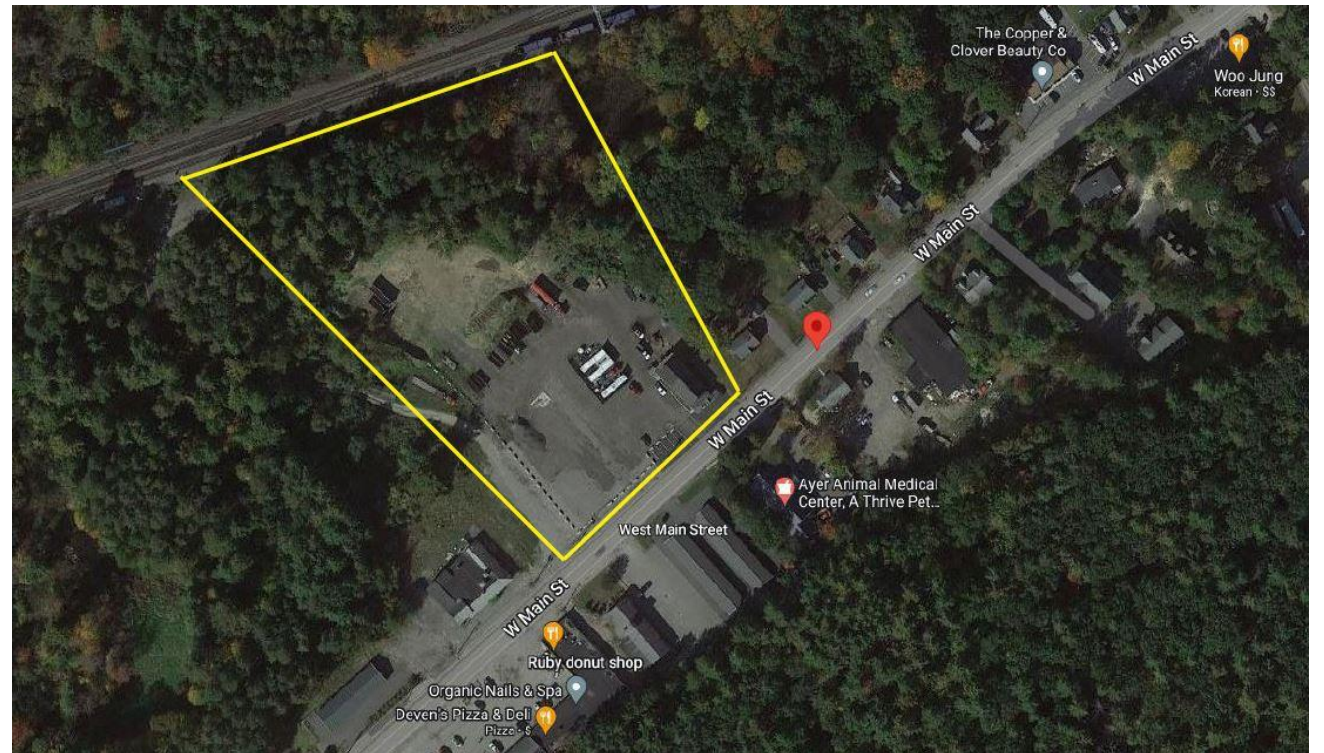
Subject property indicated in GREEN

VARIANCE REQUESTS

Summary of Variance Requests

Applicant is requesting approval for three variances:

1. Relief for Lot Width
2. Relief for Building Height
3. Relief for Parking Requirements



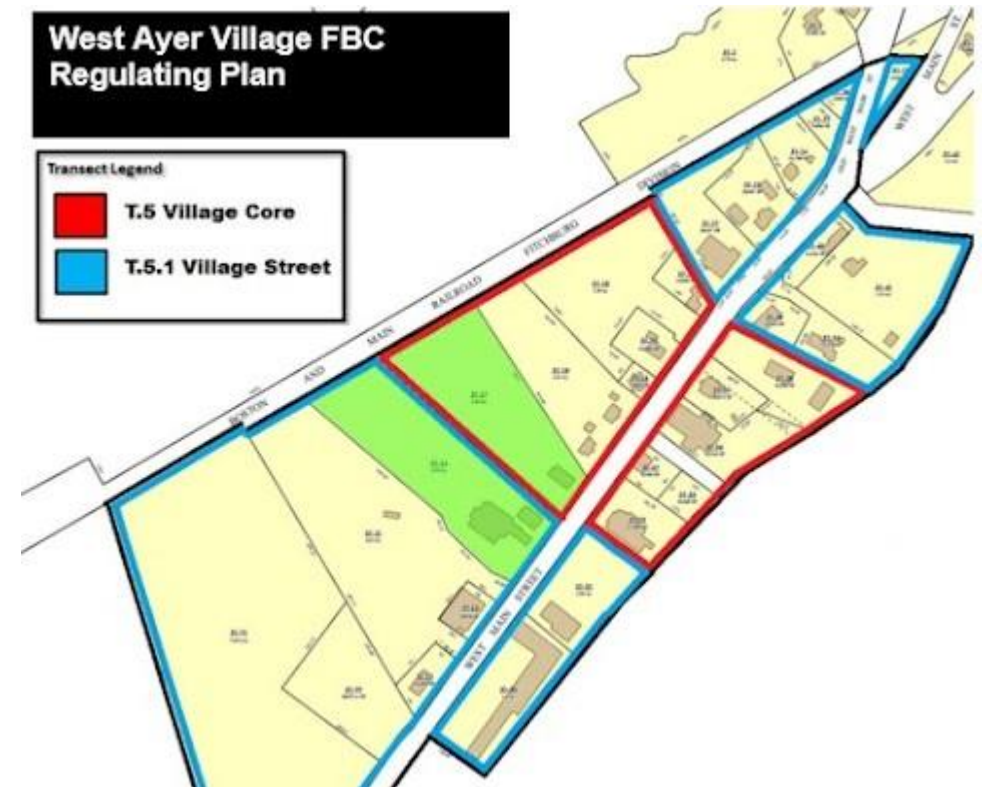
Variance Request #1: Relief for Lot Width

The project is comprised of two parcels:

1. Parcel 32-15: Falls in the **T.5 Village Core (260' max width)**
2. Parcel 32-14: Falls in the **T.5.1 Village Street (192' max width)**

The applicant is requesting relief to allow for a combined lot width of **254' width**. The site as designed already meets the Lot Width requirements for the **T.5 Village Core (260' width)**.

The width of the property is necessary for the proposed retail and residential improvements and are consistent with **Ayer's Master Plan** and the **General Guiding Principals for the WAVFBC**.

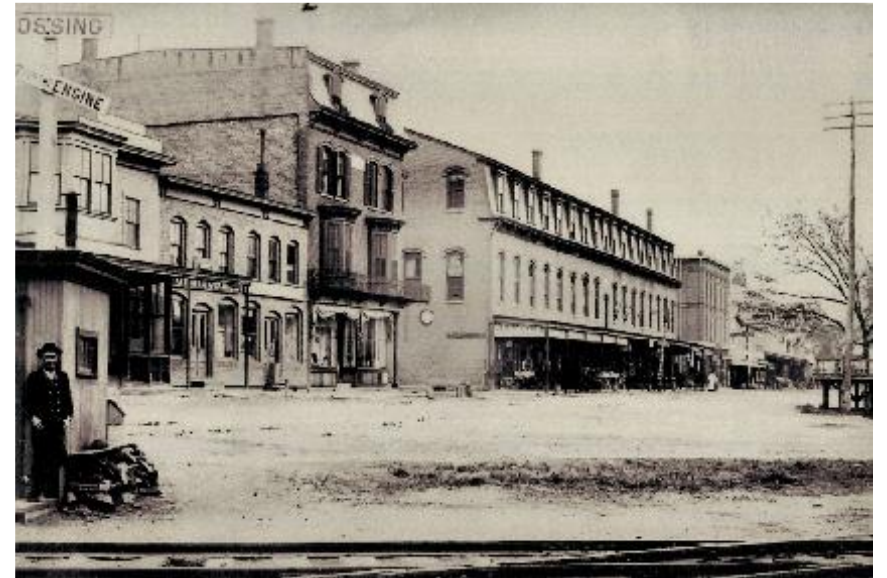


Variance Request #2: Relief for Building Height

Three stories allowed.

Four stories proposed.

Ayer has historic precedent for **four story buildings dating back to the 1800's**, and therefore this should not be considered out of context. The overall height of the building will be equal to or lower than that of existing buildings in the town.



Economic drivers require a certain density for the project to be feasible. It is not possible to expand the building footprint without impacting the sensitive wetlands and flood zone located in the rear of the property. Therefore, the only solution is to add a fourth floor that is in keeping with the historical context of the town.

Variance Request #2: Relief for Building Height

Example building heights in the town:



Approximately 48'-8" height



Approximately 50'-4" height

The applicant's proposed building height is approximately **49'** – shorter than some three-story buildings

Variance Request #3: Relief for Parking Requirements

288 parking spaces required.

172 parking spaces proposed.

- Parking will be hidden from view and located behind the property at grade.
- It is anticipated that the majority of residents will work locally in Ayer or Devens, and will utilize the proposed shuttle bus, public transport, and bicycle lanes, as their primary mode of transportation.
- A new bus stop will be in front of the building.
- Furthermore, of the 170 units, **86%** will be One-Beds or Studios, so parking needs should be significantly reduced based on market research of similar-type developments in the surrounding areas.
- Ample bicycle storage facilities will be provided.
- There will be six on-street parking spaces in front of the building (in addition to the 172 spaces).
- There will be two emergency vehicle parking spaces located behind the property.
- Compact parking spaces are being requested to avoid having to place parking in the sensitive wetlands area and flood zone.

COMMUNITY QUESTIONS & COMMENTS

Community Questions & Comments

The applicant has received many questions and comments to the ZBA application. Please see below for our responses:

Does the town have the infrastructure to support a project of this size?

Yes. The Town of Ayer has invested millions of dollars in new utilities, infrastructure and road paving, to support and encourage new development along West Main Street.

Does this project fulfill the long-term objectives of the town as outlined in the town's Master Plan?

Yes. The Master Plan outlines two goals related to the project:

- Increase housing opportunities for Ayer's residents
- Improve and enhance Ayer's gateways

Will the project include affordable housing?

Yes. There will be 25 affordable units, which is 15% of the total number of units

Community Questions & Comments

What public benefits to the community does the project provide?

The project will provide significant public benefits to the community, including but not limited to:

1. Market rate housing (145 units)
2. Affordable housing (25 units)
3. Entrepreneurial opportunities
4. Creation of hundreds of jobs (construction, retail, restaurant, property management)
5. Community revitalization
6. Long-Term tax revenue for Ayer to reinvest into the community

Who will be living at the property?

It is anticipated that the residents will be young professionals working in Ayer and Devens.

The unit mix, 86% One-Beds and Studios, is not conducive to many children living at the building.

Community Questions & Comments

Can the town support the financial burden of additional children at the property entering the school system?

There will be only 24 Two-Bed apartments. It is anticipated that those units will be occupied by young professionals wanting a home office or guest bedroom. Therefore, it is anticipated that there will be very few, if any, children living at the property.

What does the Ayer Master Plan outline regarding rental units?

The Master Plan outlines a decline in the number of available rental units over the last 15 years. This project aims to counter that decline.

Will there be underground parking?

No. All parking will be at grade. It will be hidden from street view behind the building to not interrupt the streetscape of the new West Ayer Village.

Community Questions & Comments

Will parking spaces be assigned to each unit?

No. A parking plan shall be managed and monitored allowing for maximum efficiency of parking use during various times of the day.

How much parking is being made available to the commercial retail space?

There will be approximately 18 parking spaces available to the retail space, in addition to the flexible use of the residential parking. Residential parking demand is anticipated to be very low, particularly during business hours.

How will illegal or “creative” parking be prevented?

The building will create full-time and part-time employment opportunities for management staff whose duties will include the implementation, management, and monitoring of the parking plan.

Community Questions & Comments

What happens if the variances are not approved?

The project is not economically or financially feasible without the additional density needed through a fourth floor. This problem is not unique to the applicant but is the unfortunate reality facing real estate developers throughout the state. Density is needed to offset shockingly high costs that have resulted from rising interest rates, rising construction costs, and inflation.

The applicant has conducted exhaustive feasibility analysis of other parcels along West Main Street and has determined, at great expense, that as-of-right scenarios do not work.

Furthermore, the denial of the variances will send a chilling message to other developers to only consider as-of-right development scenarios. Given that as-of-right scenarios do not work in the area, no development can take place, hindering the town's short-term and long-term goals for generating economic and community development.

Why did the town spend \$4.2MM on new utility infrastructure along West Main Street?

The town is spending \$4.2MM to encourage the development and construction of the new West Ayer Village district. The town's goal is to capitalize on the enormous success of neighboring Devens by encouraging the current and future employees to live in Ayer and contribute to the local economy. through their rent and discretionary income. The town wants to create a district for residents to live, work, dine and leisure.

Community Questions & Comments

Will a Special Permit be required for impervious surface area?

Yes. Any need for a Special Permit shall be addressed at Site Plan Review with the Planning Board.

Will there be a storage area for dumpsters?

Yes. Interior dumpster storage shall be addressed at the Site Plan Review with the Planning Board.

Will there be a storage area for snow removal?

Yes. Snow removal storage shall be addressed at the Site Plan Review with the Planning Board.

Will the required wetlands buffer be maintained?

Yes. The building as designed accounts for all required buffers and setbacks.

Community Questions & Comments

What is the unit mix for the proposed project?

Studios – 21

One-Beds – 125

Two-Beds – 24

Total – 170

Who is designing the project?

The applicant has hired a team of world-class consultants with a nation-wide presence, including Bergmeyer Architects and Bohler Engineering. They have designed a building that would set a very high architectural standard for West Ayer Village.

Devens employs over 6,000 people and contributes \$3.8 BILLION to the MA economy each year. How much of that is Ayer capitalizing on?

The town recognizes the opportunity offered by its proximity to Devens and has rezoned West Main Street to encourage higher density housing with a retail component to attract those working in the area to live in Ayer.

Community Questions & Comments

What specific language in the Master Plan pertains to this project?

The Great Junction: Town of Ayer Master Plan (Page 7)

Land Use Goals

1. Actively protect, conserve, and preserve Ayer's natural resources and supporting infrastructure to protect critical environmental habitats, drinking water supplies, recreational areas, and open spaces.
2. Encourage the expansion and continued redevelopment of Downtown Ayer to expand housing opportunities, for both renters and owners at all income levels, and promote a vibrant downtown through the creation of new public gathering places, increased pedestrian access, and new commercial space.
3. Expand and upgrade multimodal transportation opportunities, including sidewalks, paths, and trails, and rails in addition to roadways, to ensure that residents, workers, and business transportation needs are efficiently met.

Community Questions & Comments

What is the tax benefit to the town?

The approximate full property tax revenue for the parcels today is **\$19,200** per year.

The approximate full property tax revenue for the completed project is anticipated to be over **\$600,000** per year. Additionally, tax revenue from a thriving retail space and new residents will benefit the town enormously.

Are the town's government agencies aware of the project?

The project was conceptualized over 18-months with input from the town departments through multiple meetings, workshops and discussions.

Each department has had the opportunity to submit comments and feedback to the application.

Each department that has met with the applicant has provided positive and constructive feedback, which has encouraged the applicant to bring the project to the Zoning Board of Appeals.

PROJECT CONTEXT INFORMATION

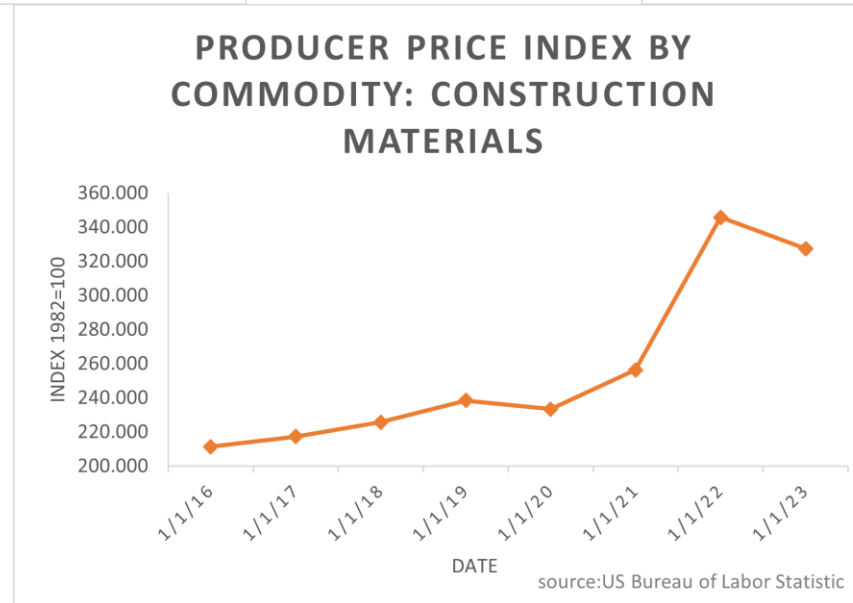
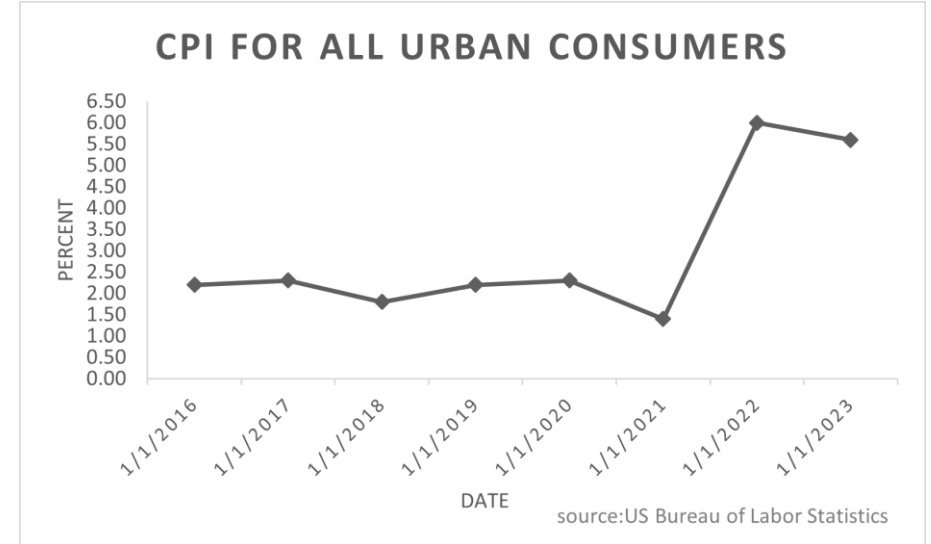
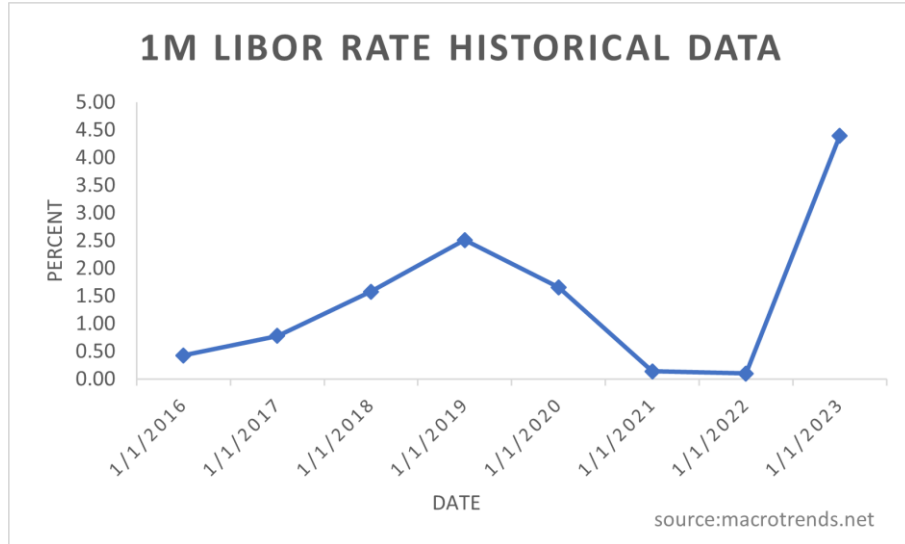
Project Context Information

Timeline:



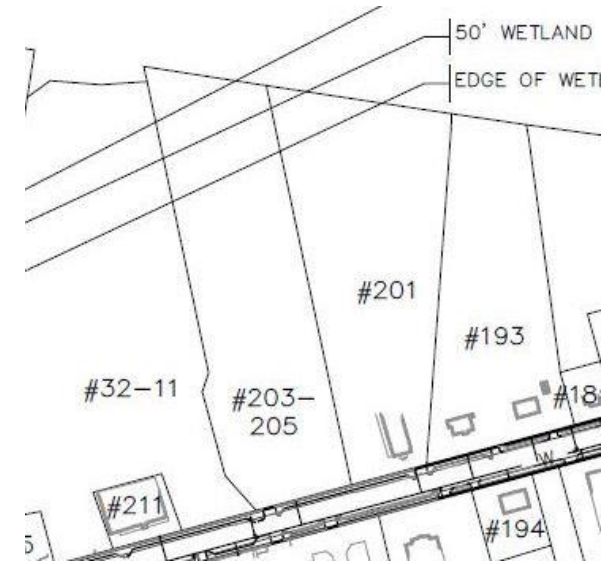
Project Context Information

Increase in **interest rates**, **inflation**, and **construction costs** since the Form-Based code was adopted:



Project Context Information

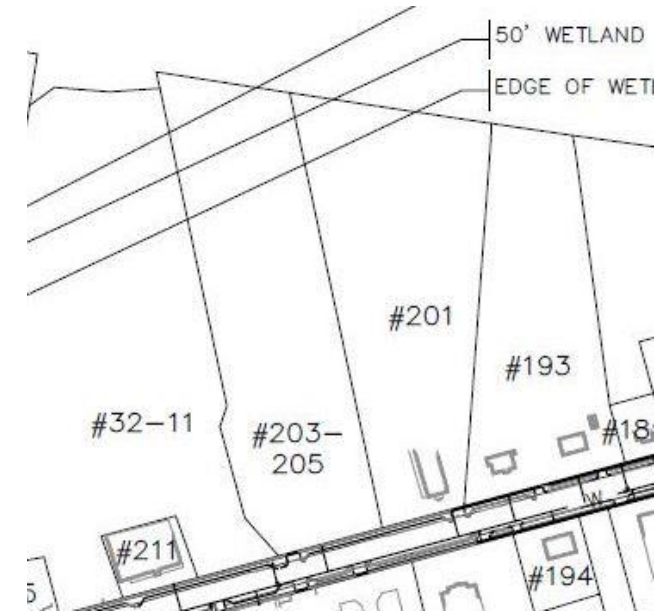
Existing site conditions:



Project Context Information

Public Benefits of the Project:

1. Market-Rate Housing (145 units)
2. Affordable Housing (25 units (1-in-7))
3. Entrepreneurial Opportunities
4. Job Creation – Construction
5. Job Creation – Retail
6. Job Creation – Property Management
7. Community Revitalization
8. Long-Term Tax Revenue for Ayer



Project Context Information

Preliminary Building Rendering



View looking North

Conclusion

It is our hope that the Town of Ayer can recognize the **long-term benefits** of the proposed project and grant the variances necessary to bring the project to fruition.



Thank You



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