



# CITY OF CONCORD

*New Hampshire's Main Street™*

## REPORT TO THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

**FROM:** Carlos P. Baía, Deputy City Manager-Development

**DATE:** August 28, 2017

**SUBJECT:** Amendment to Site Plan Thresholds in the Central Business Performance District (CBP)

### **Recommendation**

Accept this report and set the attached ordinance amendment for public hearing.

### **Background**

The City's current zoning ordinance includes thresholds for major and minor site plan reviews by the Planning Board. Typically, most development projects will trigger multiple thresholds due to new construction, increased vehicle trips, parking lot improvements, building expansion, etc. These projects are then compelled to go through the site plan approval process requiring the submittal of survey data, engineered plans, elevations, abutters' notices, etc. This process also entails a one or two month wait to be heard at the Planning Board.

The challenge for staff, and likely for the Planning Board as well, is when these thresholds are applied in the Central Business Performance District (CBP), where the bulk of the City's historic buildings are located and no parking is required or site work contemplated. The CBP was created to stimulate the re-use of the downtown's historic buildings. With the completion of the Main Street project, a growing number of developers are now actively seeking to renovate the interiors of this historic building stock. In many CBP project renovations, no parking is required per the CBP and no exterior work is proposed with the possible exception of windows and doors. As a result, such redevelopment projects do not trigger any of the existing site plan thresholds except for one: the conversion of an existing structure to accommodate three (3) or more dwelling or rooming units (3 or more triggers a minor site plan while 5 or more, a major).

Requiring such projects to undergo site plan review forces developers and/or property owners to lose one to two months of project time and potentially have to spend thousands of dollars on engineers and/or surveyors and city application fees or alternatively seek a long list of waivers from the Planning Board.

Staff recommends an ordinance to exempt from site plan review CBP renovation projects which do not meet any of the site plan thresholds, except, the aforementioned requirement concerning the conversion of an existing structure to accommodate three (3) or more dwelling or rooming units. An ordinance to this effect is enclosed for your review.

The Planning Board is scheduled to review this amendment at their September 20<sup>th</sup> meeting. A supplemental report from the Board with its recommendation is expected prior to the Council's public hearing.