



# CONTEXT SENSITIVE ZONING

## ELEMENTS OF THE CODE:

- *Regulating Plan:* A map of the City designating the locations where different building form standards apply, based on clear community intentions regarding the physical character of the area being coded.
- *Public Space Standards.* Specifications for the elements within the public realm (e.g., sidewalks, travel lanes, on-street parking, street trees, street furniture, etc.).
- *Building Form Standards.* Regulations controlling the configuration, features, and functions of buildings that define and shape the public realm.
- *Administration.* A clearly defined application and project review process.
- *Definitions.* A glossary to ensure the precise use of technical terms.

## For More Information:

Department of Planning and Community Development  
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 Dover, NH 03820  
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## Implementing the CSZ in Dover

### Introduction:

Context Sensitive Zoning (CSZ) is a method of regulating land use which places more emphasis on community character and the impact development has on the public realm than traditional zoning.

A guiding principal behind the development of a CSZ is that the buildings and physical alteration of land is more long lasting than the initial use the building is constructed for, and that long term impact on community character and appearance is important.

### What does the CSZ do?

The CSZ recognizes the value of existing buildings in an area, so that the building fabric, as ob-

served from the public right of way, is relatively consistent. It looks to see if buildings on this street are multi-story? Do they rest at the back edge of the sidewalk? Then so should new construction. Are they of brick or masonry construction? Then efforts should be made either to replicate those materials completely, or to use them as decorative accents to assist the new construction in “fitting” with the existing fabric of the community. Are front yards ten feet or less for existing homes? Then new construction be set back a similar distance.

Context Sensitive zoning replicates the organic process by which our existing downtown neighborhoods grew, over time, but with each new element generally trying to fit with those ele-

ments that came before it.

### The Transect:

Context Sensitive Zoning uses a transect, which is a planning tool to define a series of zones that transition from sparse rural to the dense urban core.

A major feature of a transect is that it incorporates a variety of residential and commercial spaces into a single neighborhood.

Dover created a transect around the downtown core, and replaced the previous 5 zones downtown, which had been in place since 1980, with one district.

In 2012/2013, the City reviewed the roadways leading into downtown to ensure that the development on these roadways reinforce the core.

## GOALS OF THE CONTEXT SENSITIVE ZONING

- Utilize a code that is more visual based than text, thus easier for the public to use and understand.
- Document the community’s vision based on time-tested forms of urbanism.
- Position downtown Dover for positive and flexible future development and redevelopment.
- Review and encourage responsible development that reuses established infrastructure.
- Continue downtown’s trend to promote a walkable community with affordable housing options.