



Town of Malta

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Saratoga County

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Memorandum

Date: June 30, 2016
To: Town Board
From: Route 67 West Comprehensive Master Plan Committee
Subject: Neighborhood 7 Comp-Plan recommendations

Dear Supervisor DeLucia and Members of the Town Board:

The Town Board members of the Route 67 West Comprehensive Master Plan Committee appointed March 21, 2016 respectfully submit to you recommendations for zoning and policy changes for the Neighborhood 7 study area. Committee members John Hartzell (Chair), Tom Hickey, Cynthia DeRubertis, Leo Martin, George Hannah, Roger Crandall, Dave Wallingford and Linda DuPrey met over the course of 5 meetings conducted at Town Hall with members of the public present and participating, have reviewed current zoning, planning documents, policies, plans, reports and surrounding land uses and zoning.

During the various meetings, the Committee was provided applicable information from support staff and real estate professionals.

During the Committee's second meeting two real estate professionals, one residential and one commercial, provided good insight to existing challenges and how potential zoning amendments may impact the area.

The residential broker, a Malta resident, provided the following guidance:

- Commercial uses could help to improve existing traffic problems
- Route 67 is a dangerous road

- Residential development, especially single or two family, is not marketable/viable given the issues regarding Route 67
- Although sales of homes along Route 67 have been very poor, sales along Ruhle Road are generally OK
- Sales in Marvin Woods have been difficult where homes are close to Route 67

The commercial broker provided the following guidance:

- While Saratoga County has excellent north-south road networks, east-west routes are challenging
- If zoning is amended to permit commercial uses along Route 67, it should extend at least 300 feet from the highway
- It is unlikely that any business or number of businesses, such as office or small business, will have the wherewithal to be able to pay for off-site improvements to the existing street network in Neighborhood
- If a very large business (such as a Cabela's) were to site along Route 67, it could have adequate resources to pay for off-site improvements, however the business would also generate a high volume of traffic, which could offset road improvements
- Traffic problems could potentially scare away some types of small business
- Noted that a flex-park/distribution center would be viable
- Not sure if retail will work on Route 67
- Malta will likely get some single and two-unit types of commercial uses
- Noted that properties like Double M, Catholic Church site could turn into an industrial park similar to Curtis
- Office and some retail may be viable
- There will probably be a need to consolidate parcels in some locations along Route 67 to establish developable parcels
- Apartments and owner-occupied commercial buildings are the most viable options

The Committee has developed a revised rendition of the Neighborhood 7 text within the Comprehensive Master Plan, and recommends its adoption by the Town Board. The revised vision and plan for Neighborhood 7 is intended to establish policy to appropriately allow the Town Board to adopt zoning amendments and other related actions in the future.

The Committee identified several elements within the Neighborhood & Comprehensive Master Plan policy which require revision, broader delineation, or new inclusion. The elements that were of highest concern include:

- The need to amend zoning to more appropriately reflect various characteristics of the Route 67 corridor, so that the highest and best use of property may be established in the future;
- Identification of traffic problems that have developed to become of substantially higher concern from what was identified in the 2005 Neighborhood 7 plan;
- Recognition that the segment of the Route 67 corridor serves as an important gateway given its location between the Northway and Town's western boundary at

Eastline Road, and the need to ensure high aesthetic quality evolves within this corridor.

The Committee took special note of adjoining zoning in the Town of Ballston, as well as recent development approvals in Ballston and Ballston Spa, and deliberated how Route 67 in Malta would be impacted. The Committee felt that zoning amendments should be made to simultaneously take advantage of the presently high and growing traffic volume along the corridor by enacting appropriate zoning amendments, but taking care to permit uses which would generally be supported by pass-by traffic or uses that would be less likely to generate significant increases to traffic volume.

An assessment of the recent amendments to C-2 zoning was made and determined that, with appropriate modifications, the C-2 would likely serve to regulate highway commercial development well along Route 67, within Neighborhood 7. Overlay work that is currently under development for the C-2 zone was generally described and understood by the Committee. The C-2 overlay work along Route 9 is targeting to address design standards, architecture, greenspace and buffers.

To tailor C-2 zoning to better correlate zoning regulations to the Route 67 corridor, the Committee recommends that similar overlay provisions be established, and further recommends that additional overlay district regulations be developed to address the following issues, and others:

- Delete one and two dwelling development as permitted
- Establish a minimum 50' building setback from the Route 67 right-of-way
- Permit parking in front of buildings, provided that such parking is set back a minimum of 50' from the Route 67 right-of-way and provided that a minimum 100' building setback is established.
- Include buffer provisions to protect residential uses, similar to FBC provisions
- Prohibit tree clearing in setback areas where residential property is adjacent to new development, unless otherwise permitted by the Planning Board upon development review.
- Increase maximum lot coverage from 50% to 60% to reduce average development costs in order to promote more cost effective improvements to utility infrastructure.

Development of multifamily residential uses was given consideration by the Committee. The Committee attempted to take into account the Town Board's evolving perspective regarding multifamily development, however there was some difficulty understanding what direction the TB as a body may be taking. Subsequently, the Committee is recommending that multifamily development be permitted, but situated such that it is no closer than 500 feet from the Route 67 right-of-way and this dimensional requirement be included as part of the overlay district regulations.

Committee Chair John Hartzell met with a representative of the Catholic Diocese of Albany to gain an understanding of what future development plans may exist, if any. John learned that the Church does not have immediate plans to develop. As part of the discussion, the Church indicated that it would not generally oppose zoning changes

which would relate to their property, and that commercial/residential mixed use development would not be objectionable. The Diocese, did, however, wish to preserve its rights to develop its property for church purposes.

Perhaps the largest concern among the Committee was in regard to traffic problems related to Route 67 and the sense that, despite DOT's projections of future intersection functionality, traffic is presently very problematic and believed to become substantially worse as uses in the Town of Ballston and Village of Ballston Spa develop. Committee members stressed that the highway surface conditions are poor, it is difficult and hazardous to take left turns onto or from Route 67, traffic volume is already very high, and while the roundabouts improved traffic circulation, the improvements have become detrimental to local residents because there are no 'breaks' to allow safe turning movements. While it is understood that adding traffic volume to Route 67 will result in further burden to drivers, if no action is taken to address the under-zoning and subsequent economic impacts to Neighborhood 7 residents the result will be a continued deterioration of the overall Neighborhood due to traffic impacts, and Malta will not enjoy the benefits of tax base growth, employment opportunities and additional amenities which will result from allowing reasonable commercial development along Route 67.

The amendments to the Neighborhood 7 section of the Comprehensive Master Plan, which is attached, include information and recommendations for improvements to Route 67. While the Committee recognized that the Comp Plan cannot automatically generate actual improvements, establishing a policy that reflects these needs would be helpful as future evaluations and/or improvements to Route 67 and/or the overall neighborhood street network are considered.

The Committee expresses its gratitude to the Town Board for trusting members to carry out recommendations to amend the Comprehensive Master Plan, zoning amendments and transportation improvements. The Committee hopes that the Town Board finds its final work useful.