

Mixed Use Development Districts



What is the objective of Mixed Use Development Districts?

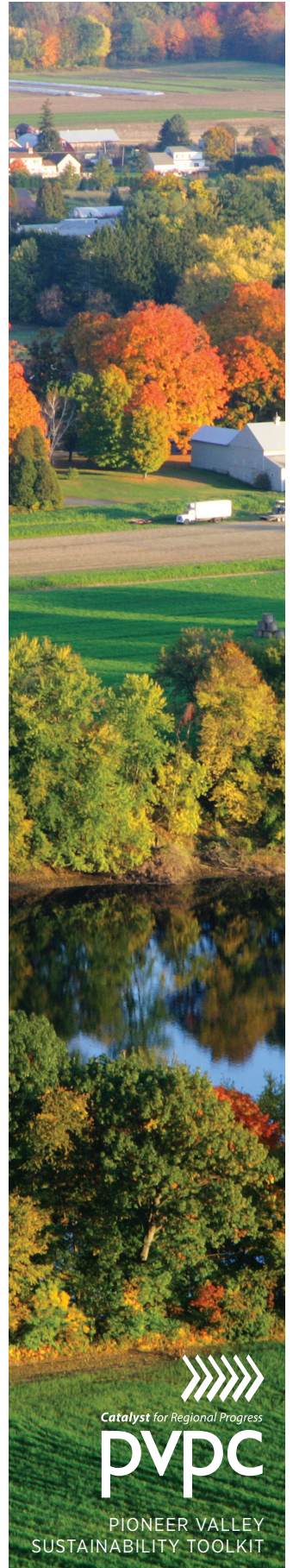
Mixed use districts foster well planned, mixed use, compact developments within downtown and village areas, in keeping with the character of traditional New England villages. They can create places with unique and positive local identities, and provide development opportunities for expanding a community's economic diversity and vitality.

Why are Mixed Use Development Districts needed?

Low density urban sprawl has become the Pioneer Valley's dominant form of growth, consuming open land at an accelerated pace. Smart growth principles promote the mixing of commercial and residential uses to help create more interesting, functional, and environmentally sensitive built environments. Mixed use developments integrate housing, shops, offices, schools, parks, and civic facilities into compact areas to make biking, walking, and using transit easier. They can help limit sprawl and lessen air pollution.

How do Mixed Use Development Districts work?

Communities can adopt mixed use village center zoning to provide for pedestrian-friendly "Main Street" shopping districts with attractive facades, parking on the street or behind buildings, tree-lined streets and human scale buildings with offices/apartments above first-floor shops. Mixed-use projects can combine residential, retail, office, and public institutional uses in compact villages or clusters to provide opportunities for people to live close to work and services.



A Mixed Use Development District can be adopted as either a stand-alone zoning district, or as an overlay district which can be superimposed over several underlying zoning districts. This bylaw/ordinance does not create any new zoning restrictions, but rather allows new opportunities for economic development.

The Bylaw/Ordinance will allow mixed use developments to be constructed with the approval of a Special Permit with Site Plan Approval granted by the Planning Board. The following uses may be included within a mixed use development: retail uses; quality restaurants; multi-family residential uses; home occupations; professional service offices; personal service establishments; municipal uses; banks or financial institutions; health club; small hotel or motel; bed-and-breakfast establishments; townhouses; theatre; park; artist studio/residence; assisted living residential uses; parks and recreation; artisan manufacturing; civic uses; live/work units; multiple uses in the same structure.

The Bylaw/Ordinance prohibits certain uses in Mixed Use developments, such as industrial uses, gas stations, dry cleaning, auto sales, adult uses, bars, and animal hospitals.

To protect the community and neighborhoods, the Bylaw/Ordinance contains detailed performance standards for such issues as: access and traffic impacts; noise; vibration; odors; lighting; storage; waste disposal; loading; vehicular access; parking; architectural design; signs; and landscaping.

Finally, the Bylaw/Ordinance provides a density bonus for Mixed Use developments that include affordable housing.

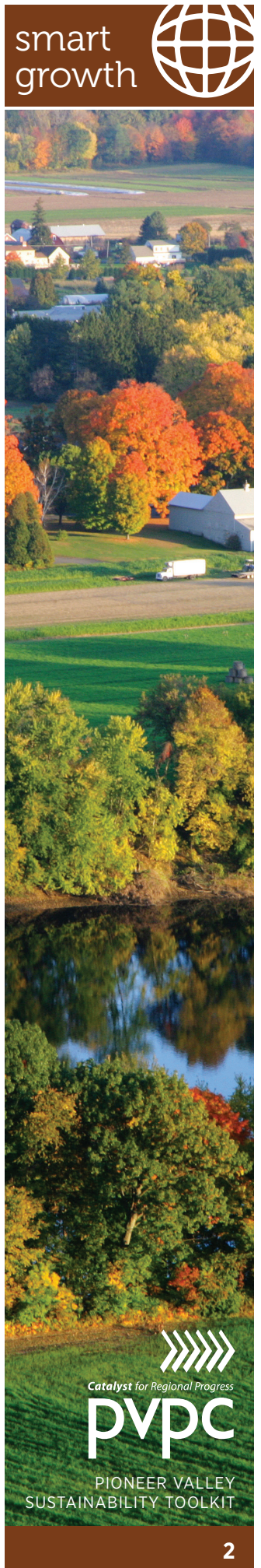
DID YOU KNOW...

In a Seattle study, authors found that by mixing land uses and enhancing the relative convenience on non-auto travel, 12.2% of all trips were non-motorized, compared to 3.9% in single-use residential neighborhoods.

MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT EXAMPLES FROM THE PIONEER VALLEY

South Hadley Village Commons

The Village Commons is an outstanding example of a mixed use development in South Hadley center, which includes retail shops and restaurants, a movie theater, as well as a residential component. It is designed to fit compactly on a small site on the town common, with a well defined street line, pedestrian friendly features and parking in the rear.



Pomeroy Commons, Amherst

Pomeroy Commons is a mixed-use development in Pomeroy Village Center of Amherst. Five townhouse style residential units occupy the top two floors, with commercial space on the street level. The site is located in the center of south Amherst, within walking distance of many amenities. The building features a front porch and balcony in the style of a grand old Berkshires hotel, parking in the rear, and secure bicycle storage in a shed at the end of the building.

A model bylaw or strategy is included in the Pioneer Valley Sustainability Toolkit.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT

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