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The city of Marlborough approves new mixed-use downtown zoning district

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A rezoning proposal, designed to spur redevelopment in the downtown area, passed with a unanimous vote through city council.

The resulting new mixed-use Marlborough Village District introduces a number of major changes to the city's zoning ordinance, including redefining allowable uses for new developments, relaxing parking requirements for new businesses, and revising design standards for new buildings.

The vote was the culmination of more than a year of municipal planning and public sessions, led by the Marlborough Economic Development Corp. (MEDC), in collaboration with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) and members of the Marlborough City Council, local residents and business leaders.

Among the most popular features of the Marlborough Village District is the introduction of new building uses, including bed and breakfasts, brewpubs, music recording studios, and residential projects. The new regulations will also encourage businesses to create pedestrian-friendly amenities, like outdoor seating, patios, porches and courtyards. City officials hope all this will boost growth and activity on Main St.

"We wanted to design a downtown that can both celebrate the charm and history of Marlborough, and bring buzz and excitement to our streets," said Marlborough city councilor and urban affairs committee chair Joe Delano, who, alongside city council president Trish Pope, was a leading member of the study group working with MEDC on the downtown initiative. "Our vision now is to build value in the city's downtown area by offering more service and entertainment options for our residents and visitors, and more opportunities for our existing and new businesses."

"The Marlborough Village District brings the city's downtown in line with the new urban economy," said MEDC executive director, Tim Cummings. "People want to live and work in cities that allow easy access to the businesses and services they use. Businesses want to operate in areas where they can be close to their customers, and where they can provide a good lifestyle for their employees. The new district will allow for all of this to happen naturally. Now we just need developers and companies to get on board."

A copy of the new Marlborough Downtown Village District Zoning will be available shortly on the MEDC website: www.marlboroughedc.com.

The Marlborough Economic Development Corp. (MEDC) is the state chartered economic development corporation for the city of Marlborough and represents a public-private partnership for planning. MEDC works with municipal and private investors to foster economic development, job growth and community revitalization and development.