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Colchester rezones land for commercial and business park use

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The town of Colchester has recently rezoned almost 700 acres of land for commercial and business park land use. These parcels are adjacent to three major roadways and encompass the main area planned for water and sewer expansion.

Commercial builders in Colchester have been seeking these zoning changes for several years. "The majority of lots serviced by water and sewer in the town had been smaller older lots, most of which were not vacant," said town planner Adam Turner. "This led to the market demand being suppressed because there were few parcels large enough to support modern projects. There are now several large parcels zoned for commercial and business park. We have had proposals from many interests that have not proceeded forward because they could not get land large enough to support their plans."

The town has also been developing mixed use regulations to provide maximum flexibility for proposed projects. "We are looking to move away from parking lots surrounded by building. We feel confident that we can provide enough development potential to make the projects economically feasible with all of our design and character concerns met." The town also enacted a zoning plan that provides a defined growth boundary within which municipal services such as water and sewer are provided and outside the growth area is rural. "Colchester is characterized as much by the natural environment as by the built," Turner said. We are working on economic development in agricultural enhancement as well as rehabilitating our downtown. All are part of a multi focused smart growth approach.

"For many years most residents have agreed that we need to develop commercial/business parcels to increase the tax base. Now we are working with developers to ensure that they are developed in way that benefits the developer as well as the town," said first selectman Linda Hodge.

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