

To: Durham Town Council
Subject: Downtown Zoning Amendments

The Town Council requested the Planning Board review a modification to the zoning amendment to remove the three-story height restriction in the Central Business District. During the January 14, 2026 Planning Board meeting, the Board unanimously determined the modifications suggested by the Town Council to be insufficient to the needs of revitalizing the downtown. The Planning Board unanimously believes that a 4-story height limit, with a building height of 50 feet, should be approved.

Durham's development dollars are competing against projects in other nearby communities, counties, and even states. Newmarket, Dover, and Portsmouth all have 50 ft height limits in their downtown zones, higher in certain other business areas. Dover has building story minimums in addition to five story maximums.

The Planning Board recommends this amendment to encourage a variety of future building exterior and interior designs with quality retail space.

Durham Planning Board