



# The Town of Barnstable

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March 19, 2018

Ms. Janice O'Connell, Clerk  
Barnstable County Assembly of Delegates  
3195 Main Street  
Barnstable, MA 02630

Re: Cape Cod Commission Growth Incentive Zone (GIZ) Regulations

Dear Clerk O'Connell:

I am writing in support of Proposed Ordinance No. 18-05 to amend Chapter G of the Cape Cod Commission Regulations of General Application relative to Growth Incentive Zones.

The Town of Barnstable designated Downtown Hyannis as a Growth Incentive Zone (GIZ) in 2006. The GIZ designation has played a key role in the ongoing revitalization of downtown and progress towards the community's goals of creating a year-round, livable, walkable community and economic center.

Through our experience with an active GIZ and work on the 2018 Downtown Hyannis Growth Incentive Zone application, we can testify to the added value these regulations will have for Cape Cod municipalities. The proposed regulations reflect that revitalization and community development are long-term, additive and iterative processes that require sustained commitment from the community and its leaders.

The 2006 Downtown Hyannis Growth Incentive Zone (DHGIZ) application was developed through a process that focused largely on the impacts of potential development from a regulatory review perspective. The revised Chapter G regulations focus on community goals and how the infrastructure, community/social, and natural systems at work within the GIZ must be supported, analyzed and measured if progress towards the identified goals is going to be accomplished. The proposed regulations shift the focus from parcel-specific development impacts to the impacts of sustained "place-based" planning and investment in infrastructure, processes, and community.

The proposed elimination of offset requirements is a key change in support of municipalities. Barnstable's 2006 DHGIZ application was supported by a number of offsets that were not directly related to the Town's efforts to promote "smart growth." The Town was able to take advantage of these fortuitously timed efforts in the 2006 GIZ application, but the revised Chapter G regulations

reflect the need to support municipalities' revitalization and economic development efforts independently.

The proposed revisions to Chapter G also support a meaningful new approach to measuring progress within designated Growth Incentive Zones. The 2006 DHGIZ measures progress towards development thresholds: new commercial square footage and number of new housing units within the area. The revised GIZ regulations ask communities to measure progress towards meeting community-defined goals and objectives. This shift is fundamentally important to supporting long-term, community-based, data-driven decision-making.

Lastly, we strongly support the proposed regulatory changes relative to GIZ duration. The proposed revisions to Chapter G recognize downtown revitalization and economic development as long-term community efforts that require sustained commitment and reevaluation.

We encourage the Assembly to support these amendments, and by extension, an expanded number of Growth Incentive Zones throughout the region. It is imperative that towns have a range of tools available to direct growth to appropriate areas and to streamline review processes to support new investment. The proposed revisions to Chapter G, notably the elimination of the requirement to provide "offsets", will provide towns with the necessary flexibility in the process and outcomes to designate and maintain Growth Incentive Zones.

I encourage you to vote to support the proposed amendments to Chapter G to help Barnstable and other Cape towns strengthen the local and regional economy.

Thank you for your consideration,

Sincerely,

  
Mark S. ELLS, Town Manager