



DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

November 30, 2020

COMMENTS ON DRIVE-UP WINDOWS

To: Planning Department; Board of Selectman
From: Design Review Board (DRB)
Re: Comments for the December 8, 2020 Forum on Drive-Up Windows

At the Design Review Board's meeting on November 30, 2020 the proposed zoning change to allow drive-up windows was discussed. After review and discussion of photographs of multiple installations of drive-up windows the Design Review Board agreed that:

1. The Design Review Board believes that drive-up windows do not contribute to the desired character of the Town of Acton, as exemplified by the Complete Streets program and the Kelly's Corner project.
2. The DRB will not support a zoning change to allow drive-up windows for any businesses beyond the current exemption for banks.
3. The DRB believes that drive-up windows will fundamentally alter the physical character of Acton, are unnecessary, and will prove detrimental to Acton for the following reasons:

Additional drive-up windows are antithetical to the planning efforts over the past decade or so to promote a less vehicle-centric environment as exemplified by the promotion of the Complete Streets Program emphasizing more walkable streets, bike lanes and public transit possibilities;

Zoning changes should not be instituted in times of uncertainty. Until the long-term effects of Covid-19 on the built environment can be determined, the DRB believes that efforts to effect a zoning change allowing drive-up windows to accommodate Covid-19 concerns is premature and should be paused.

The integration of drive-up windows into the building stock leads to a significant increase in space required for traffic management on project sites, results in a building developed as an island within an asphalt paved

car centric yard rather than a pedestrian friendly walkable town environment, and results in much more carbon waste and greenhouse emissions as cars queue in conflict with Acton's community goals for energy use reduction.

Additional vehicular curb cuts would undoubtably be required for drive-up windows. Considerable time, effort and monies have been expended on, for instance, the Kelley's Corner project which was promulgated to the resident's as a future pedestrian friendly environment. Considerable sums are being expended to obtain ROW agreements that will eliminate curb cuts.

Additional curb cuts pose a safety hazard for pedestrians and slow down traffic flow.

As a practical matter, there isn't any need for drive-up windows as Covid-19 has accelerated the use of, and established the viability of, multiple pick-up and delivery options for prescriptions, food, liquor and goods of all kinds without the use of drive-up windows.

The DRB suggests exploring the use of WALK-UP windows as an alternative.

4. Should it come to pass that the Town does proceed with a zoning change for drive-up windows, the DRB would like to weigh in on the attributes that will be likely be associated with the development of drive-up facilities.

Respectfully submitted,

Design Review Board