



Measure #: 2026-058

# TOWN COUNCIL MEASURE SUBMITTAL

Date: 2/23/2026

Submitted By: Town Manager

Telephone #: 508-699-0100

### MEASURE DESCRIPTION:

To amend the the Zoning Bylaws, Use Schedule B, to Allow New and Used Auto Dealerships in the C-30, C-60, and IC-30 Zones by Planning Board Special Permit.

Signed:

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email=mdborg@nattleboro.com, c=US  
Reason: I am the author of this document  
Date: 2026.02.18 16:12:45 -05'00'

### PURPOSE AND JUSTIFICATION:

The purpose of this zoning amendment is to regulate the establishment and expansion of motor vehicle sales uses in a manner that protects public health, safety, welfare, and the orderly development of the Town.

Motor vehicle sales establishments, including new and used automobile dealerships, are high-intensity commercial uses that generate substantial traffic volumes, require large areas for vehicle storage and display, and can have significant visual, environmental, and infrastructure impacts. Without appropriate review, the proliferation or expansion of such uses may adversely affect roadway capacity, pedestrian safety, stormwater management, neighborhood character, and the economic balance of commercial districts.

This amendment:

Requires Planning Board Special Permit approval for new motor vehicle sales establishments in designated commercial and industrial districts to ensure site-specific evaluation of impacts and compatibility with surrounding land uses;

Allows existing lawfully established dealerships to continue operating and to maintain, renovate, and improve their facilities by right within their current footprint;

Requires Special Permit review for expansion beyond existing site boundaries or building footprints to ensure that growth occurs in a controlled and appropriate manner;

Provides clear standards for evaluating traffic, safety, environmental impacts, visual effects, and consistency with the Town's planning objectives.

This approach balances the protection of established businesses with the Town's responsibility to manage future development in a manner consistent with sound land use planning principles and M.G.L. Chapter 40A.

The amendment does not prohibit motor vehicle sales uses but ensures that new establishments and expansions are subject to reasonable review to protect the public interest and promote sustainable economic development.

### SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS:

ATTACHMENTS: Zoning Use Schedule B Proposed Amendment

REFER TO SUB-COMMITTEE: By-law Subcommittee and Planning Board

**SCHEDULE B**

| PRINCIPAL USE | Office and Business |       |      |      |      |       |      |      |       |       |
|---------------|---------------------|-------|------|------|------|-------|------|------|-------|-------|
|               | R-10                | R-10S | R-15 | R-20 | R-40 | C-7.5 | C-30 | C-60 | OP-60 | IC-30 |

**RETAIL AND SERVICE**

|        |     |     |     |     |     |     |                 |                 |     |                 |     |
|--------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----------------|-----------------|-----|-----------------|-----|
| 1      | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | P   | P               | P               | --- | S               | --- |
| 2      | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | P   | P               | P               | --- | S               | --- |
| 3      | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | P   | P               | P               | S   | S               | S   |
| 4      | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | P               | S               | --- | ---             | --- |
| 5      | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | <del>S-pb</del> | <del>P</del>    | --- | <del>S-pb</del> | --- |
| 5a     | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | ---             | ---             | --- | <del>S-pb</del> | P   |
| 5b     | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | <del>S-pb</del> | <del>S-pb</del> | --- | <del>S-pb</del> | --- |
| ****6  | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | P   | S               | P               | --- | ---             | --- |
| 7      | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | S               | S               | --- | S               | S   |
| 8      | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | S   | P               | P               | S   | S               | S   |
| 9      | S   | S   | --- | --- | --- | S   | S               | ---             | --- | S               | --- |
| ****10 | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | S   | S               | S               | --- | S               | S   |
| 11     | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | P   | P               | P               | --- | P               | P   |

## **Zoning Amendment — Motor Vehicle Sales Establishments**

**Amend Schedule B and related sections of the Zoning Bylaw as follows:**

### **1. New Motor Vehicle Sales Establishments**

Establishments engaged in the retail or wholesale sale, lease, rental, display, or brokerage of new or used motor vehicles, including those requiring a Class I or Class II license under M.G.L. c. 140, shall be permitted only by Special Permit issued by the Planning Board acting as Special Permit Granting Authority (SPGA) in the C-30, C-60, and IC-30 zoning districts.

### **2. Existing Lawful Establishments**

Any motor vehicle sales establishment lawfully in existence as of the effective date of this amendment shall be considered a pre-existing lawful use and may continue.

Such establishments may, by right, without Special Permit:

- Perform interior renovations
- Conduct routine maintenance and repairs
- Replace structures within the existing building footprint
- Upgrade utilities, safety systems, and site infrastructure
- Modify building facades
- Reconfigure on-site parking within the existing site boundaries

### **3. Expansion of Existing Establishments**

Expansion beyond the existing site area or building footprint shall require a Special Permit from the Planning Board acting as SPGA.

Expansion includes, but is not limited to:

- Increase in lot area devoted to vehicle sales or display
- Construction of new buildings or additions
- Expansion of outdoor display areas
- Acquisition of adjacent land for dealership use
- Increase in service bay capacity beyond existing structures

### **4. No Increase in Nonconformity**

Nothing in this section shall permit the extension of a nonconforming use in a manner that increases any existing dimensional nonconformity unless otherwise allowed under MGL c. 40A, §6.

### **5. Special Permit Criteria**

In addition to the general Special Permit criteria of the Zoning Bylaw, the Planning Board shall consider:

- Traffic generation and roadway capacity
- Site circulation and public safety
- Visual impact and buffering
- Stormwater management
- Compatibility with surrounding land uses
- Pedestrian safety
- Environmental impacts