

## About Bedford Marketplace

Bedford as a town is changing. Some of the changes are out of the control of Bedford citizens, and that's as it should be. People who buy houses have a right to do what they need to do to make their homes work for them, regardless of what other people think. But we as citizens have to take responsibility for the open spaces in town, and certainly for the big developments that are arising along the Great Road.

Leave town for a few weeks and all of a sudden there are long walls, right next to the sidewalk where the old Post Office used to be. No room for trees, no real separation from the street to the building except for sidewalk. No softer surfaces, just hard, cold concrete.

I used to think that Bedford took great care with what would be built here. Certainly it took time. Now it feels like if a shopping center is desired by a developer, someone pushes the shopping center button, and out comes a structure (or set of structures) that could be equally at home in Saugus or Newark.

No charm, no recognition that the Historic District is a block away, no relationship to surrounding neighborhoods, not even a nod to the history of the town or to the way spaces were used before.

The issue isn't about the size of the stores that will be in these structures, at least not entirely. Small stores don't seem to fare very well here in Bedford and bigger stores seem to do better.

The issue is big, ugly buildings whose development seems to be unstoppable.

We are the citizens who live here, we pay taxes; it is our town, not the developers' town. As citizens, let's make our voices heard and say "no" to more vast, cold, impersonal and unwelcoming buildings.

Let's pay attention to what our zoning laws allow, and if they don't do what we need, commit some time to changing the laws.

In the meantime, let's stop letting development go unchecked. It's up to us.

Lee Vorderer