

# Center Gateway Overlay Summary



## What is the Center Gateway Overlay?

A zoning proposal designed to:

**Contribute to the vibrancy of Belmont Center** by increasing foot traffic & attracting customers from outside the community.

**Put Belmont on a more financially sustainable path** by diversifying the town's tax base and increasing commercial tax revenues.

**Designate an area where hotels are allowed**, so that Belmont can benefit from the 6% municipal hotel tax passed by Town Meeting in October 2025. Currently, hotels are not allowed anywhere in town.

The Center Gateway Overlay proposal will be considered at a **Special Town Meeting on March 4, 2026**.

## What Will the Overlay Achieve?

### Meet an Identified Community Need

- Belmont currently lacks a hotel. This is a source of frustration for many residents, who would like to have an option for friends and relatives to stay nearby.

### Expand Commercial Tax Revenues

- Belmont relies heavily (95%) on residential taxes.
- Due to its less diversified tax base, Belmont has less financial stability and fewer resources, **which leads to service cuts and larger, more frequent operating overrides**.
- Hotels are particularly beneficial for municipalities, because they pay property tax, a municipal hotel tax, and often meals and alcohol taxes.

### Capitalize on an Opportunity

- Belmont commissioned a market analysis by the consulting firm RKG, which identified hotels as a promising area of economic growth.
- There is currently strong demand for new hotel construction in greater Boston. Belmont is particularly desirable because it is a hotel desert.
- Town staff and officials have spoken with several hotel developers and financing experts, who have identified Concord Avenue as a viable site for a hotel.



Hotels and inns, such as these in Arlington, Lexington and Concord, generate significant tax revenue for many communities. Belmont's current zoning does not allow hotels or inns anywhere in town.

Community	FY 2025 Room Tax Collection
Arlington	\$623,845
<b>Belmont</b>	<b>\$0</b>
Cambridge	\$18,863,578
Concord	\$565,911
Lexington	\$698,372
Waltham	\$5,541,328

## Where Will the Overlay Apply?

- The overlay will apply to three parcels on Concord Ave (see map).
- The Planning Board is proposing a separate Belmont Center Overlay concentrated around Leonard Street (see separate handout).

## What Uses Are Allowed?

- Commercial (retail, services, office) & hotel.
- Hotel size capped at 150 rooms.

## How Many Stories Are Allowed?

- The allowable height is 5 stories / 55 feet.

## Will the Zoning Overlay Protect the Historic Charm of Belmont?

- Yes, the new Zoning Overlay will use a form-based code, allowing the town to more tightly control building appearance.
- Our current zoning **does not** protect Belmont's historic charm.

## What were the findings of the parking and traffic studies?

- The traffic study modeled 1/2 build out for both the Belmont Center Overlay and Center Gateway Overlay and found no effect on the morning commute and a 15 second delay in the evening commute.
- The parking study found ample parking and recommended a parking management plan to ensure optimal use of existing parking assets.

## What is in the Overlay District Now?

- Two office buildings (see photos at right) and a gas station.

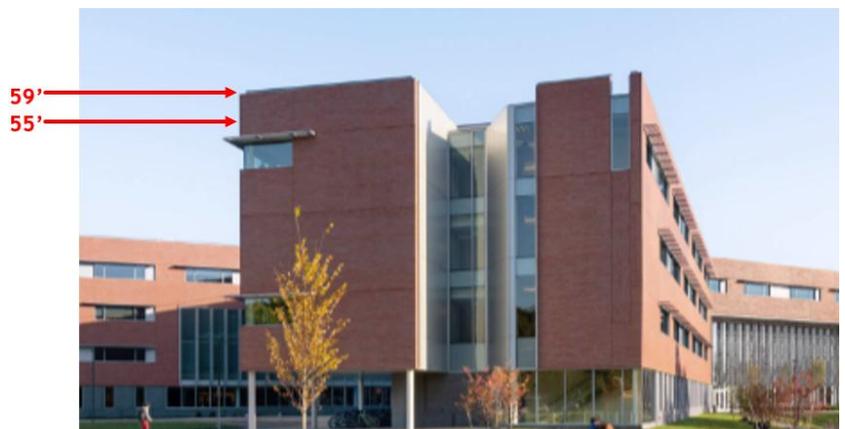
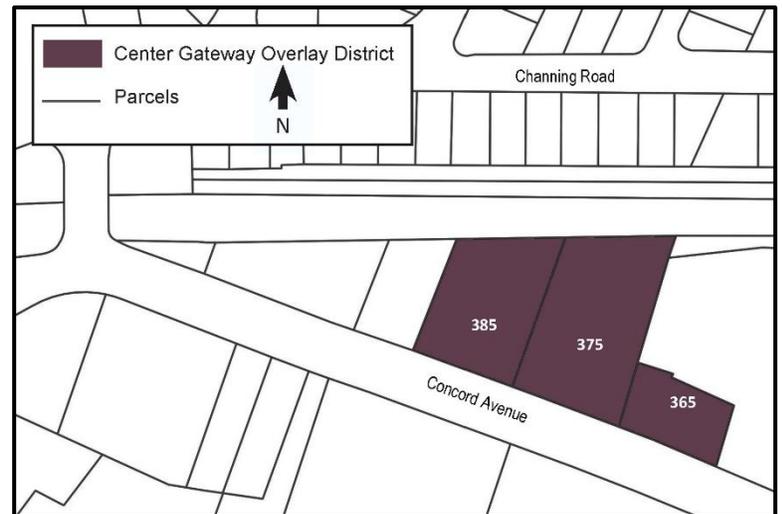
**Change is needed to secure a vibrant and financially secure future for Belmont.**

**Vote Yes on the Center Gateway Overlay on March 4 to make that future possible!**

For more information, visit:

<https://www.belmont-ma.gov/Belmont-Center-Zoning-Project>

*This handout was produced by the Belmont Planning Board*



*The allowable height in the Center Gateway Overlay is 5 stories / 55 feet. This is shorter than BMHS.*

