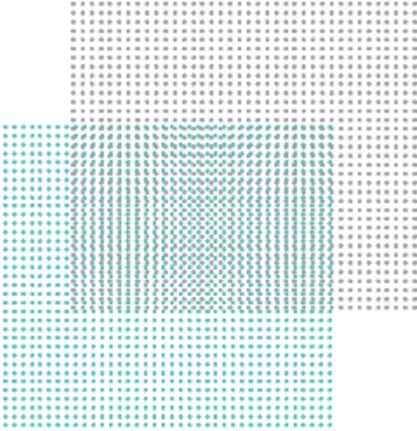




June 15, 2023

Economic Development Committee – Parking, Signs, and Heights



- The Economic Development Committee (EDC) was formed in 2020 by the Select Board following the completion of the Belmont Business Strategy. The role of the Belmont EDC is to develop, implement, and update the recommendations in the Belmont Business Strategy, in conjunction with Town staff and departments

Minimum Parking Requirements

- What are Belmont's Existing Parking Requirement Categories?
- How does this compare to our neighbors?

Signage Bylaw

- What do the current bylaws in Belmont say about signage regulations?
- Goal 1: To give an overview of the current signage regulatory landscape in Belmont
- Goal 2: To highlight any areas within the current bylaws that may be causing difficulty for business owners

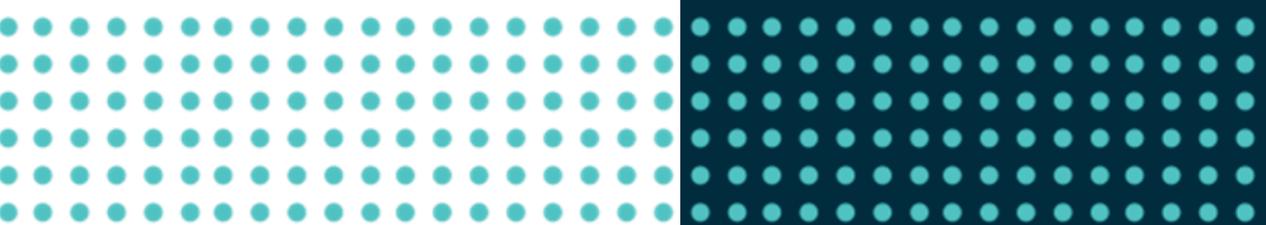
Building Heights

- How should the current bylaws be adjusted based on the survey feedback?
- What are the potential implications of these changes on the broader community
- Goal 1: To consider changes or additions to the bylaws based on the survey results and the current regulatory context

- Outcome: A list of recommended changes to the bylaws for further discussion by VIC and the Select Board



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Current Parking Bylaws

Existing Belmont Parking Categories



Name	Description	Parking Requirement
Dwellings	Residential homes, apartments, condos, other housing	2 per unit, or 1 per unit with <2 bedrooms
Public Assembly	Buildings or spaces used for gatherings that are open to the public, such as concert halls, stadiums, conference centers, and similar venues	1 for each 3 person capacity based on MA state Building Code
Hotels, Motels, Room & Board	Establishments providing lodging or accommodations on a temporary basis, including bed and breakfasts	1 per unit, plus 1 for each 8 units
Restaurant	Establishments serving prepared food and drinks for on-site or off-site consumption	1 per 2 persons seating capacity; up to 20 outdoor seasonal seats shall not count in total
Commercial Recreation	Businesses providing recreation facilities or services for a fee, such as fitness centers, bowling alleys, arcades, or sports complexes	1 per 2 participant capacity, plus 1 per 3 person spectator capacity
Auto Service Station	Establishments where vehicles are serviced and repaired, such as garages, car washes, and auto body shops	3 plus 3 per service bay
Other Service Establishments	Other businesses that provide services rather than good, which can be a wide range of businesses including hair salons, dry cleaners, laundromats, etc.	1 per 250 sqft ground floor gross floor area; 1 per 350 sqft in LB-1 plus 1 space per 400 sqft area on other floors; 600 sqft in LB-1; no fewer than 3 spaces per separate enterprise
Retail	Establishments selling goods directly to consumers, such as shops, supermarkets, and department stores	
Office	Places of business where administrative or professional work is carried out	
Wholesale and Industrial Establishments	Businesses involved in the distribution of goods on a large scale, typically from the manufacturer or producer to retailers, or those involved in the manufacturing or processing of goods	1 per 1.5 employees on largest shift, but capable of expansion to not less than 1 space per 400 sqft gross floor area
Other Uses	Broad categories that could encompass a variety of uses not specifically covered elsewhere	Spaces to be determined by Building Inspector (or Planning Board in cases referred to it for Design & Site Plan Review)
Mixed Use	Properties on which various uses, such as office, commercial, institutional, and residential, are combined in a single building or on a single lot	Requirements for each use are additional, unless determined that a smaller # is adequate due to staggered hours

Belmont vs Arlington Parking Categories



Name	Belmont Parking Requirement	Arlington Parking Requirement
Dwellings	2 per unit, or 1 per unit with <2 bedrooms	1 per unit (for 1, 2, 3-family dwelling or apartment building)
Public Assembly	1 for each 3 person capacity based on MA state Building Code	N/A
Hotels, Motels, Room & Board, Commercial Accommodations	1 per unit, plus 1 for each 8 units	1 per sleeping room, plus 1 space per 400 sqft public meeting area or restaurant
Restaurant	1 per 2 persons seating capacity; up to 20 outdoor seasonal seats shall not count in total	1 per 4 seats total seating; outdoor seating shall not count
Commercial Recreation	1 per 2 participant capacity, plus 1 per 3 person spectator capacity	Health Club or Indoor Athletic Facility: 1 space per 300 sqft of gross floor area
Auto Service Station	3 plus 3 per service bay	N/A
Other Service Establishments	1 per 250 sqft ground floor gross floor area; 1 per 350 sqft in LB-1 plus 1 space per 400 sqft area on other floors; 600 sqft in LB-1; no fewer than 3 spaces per separate enterprise	Retail: 1 space per 300 sqft; Office/business: 1 space per 500 sqft gross floor area
Retail		
Office		
Wholesale and Industrial Establishments	1 per 1.5 employees on largest shift, but capable of expansion to not less than 1 space per 400 sqft gross floor area	Wholesale: 1 space per 1000 sqft; Light Mfg: 1 space per 1000 sqft or 0.75 spaces per employee of the combined employment of the two largest successive shifts, whatever is larger
Other Uses	Spaces to be determined by Building Inspector (or Planning Board in cases referred to it for Design & Site Plan Review	Medical Office: 4 spaces per physician, dentist, practitioner
Mixed Use	Requirements for each use are additional, unless determined that a smaller # is adequate due to staggered hours	Sum or uses computed separately

Name	Arlington Parking Requirement
Public Housing for Elderly	1 space per 5 units
Assisted Living Residence	0.4 spaces per dwelling unit
Group Home	2 spaces per 4 residential rooms
Auto Sales and Service	1 space per 1000 sqft
Hospital	2.25 space per bed of design capacity
Nursing Home	1 space per 4 beds of design capacity

Name	Arlington Parking Requirement
Non-Exempt Educational	1 space per 200 sqft of gross floor area in classrooms and other teaching stations, plus spaces for gym or auditorium, whichever has the larger capacity, as specified elsewhere
Other School	2 spaces per classroom in elementary and middle or junior high school; 4 spaces per classroom for HS plus gym/auditorium

Belmont vs Watertown Parking Categories



Name	Belmont Parking Requirement	Watertown Parking Requirement
Dwellings	2 per unit, or 1 per unit with <2 bedrooms	2 per unit; 3 per unit if >4 bedrooms; townhouse/rowhouse: 2/unit; Multifamily (0.75, 1, 1.5, 2 for bedrooms)
Public Assembly	1 for each 3 person capacity based on MA state Building Code	1 per 5 fixed seats or 10 linear feet of bench floor are open to public assembly where no seats/benches are provided
Hotels, Motels, Room & Board, Commercial Accommodations	1 per unit, plus 1 for each 8 units	1 per employee at peak occupancy plus 0.75 per guest room plus 1 per table or 5 seats in a restaurant plus 1 per 250 sqft in function rooms (no eating)
Restaurant	1 per 2 persons seating capacity; up to 20 outdoor seasonal seats shall not	1 per table or 4 seats and 1 per every 4 linear ft of standing table
Commercial Recreation	1 per 2 participant capacity, plus 1 per 3 person spectator capacity	1 per 400 sqft gross floor area
Auto Service Station	3 plus 3 per service bay	1 per 200 sqft gross floor area
Other Service Establishments	1 per 250 sqft ground floor gross floor area; 1 per 350 sqft in LB-1 plus 1 space per 400 sqft area on other floors; 600 sqft in LB-1; no fewer than 3 spaces per separate enterprise	Bank: 1 per 300 sqft; R&D: 1 per 600 sqft
Retail		
Office		
Wholesale and Industrial Establishments	1 per 1.5 employees on largest shift, but capable of expansion to not less than 1 space per 400 sqft gross floor area	1 per 1200 sqft
Other Uses	Spaces to be determined by Building Inspector (or Planning Board in cases referred to it for Design & Site Plan Review	Funeral parlor: 1 per 5 seats; Bowling Alley: 2 per bowling alley; Kennels: 1 per 300 sqft; Self-Storage: 2 per 10,000 sqft with minimum of 6
Mixed Use	Requirements for each use are additional, unless determined that a smaller # is adequate due to staggered hours	Sum of commercial and residential requirements consistent with this ordinance except in CB district

Name	Watertown Parking Requirement
Auto Sales	1 per 600 sqft of space devoted to showrooms
Hospital	1 per staff plus 1 per 4 patient beds
Nursing Home	1 per staff plus 1 per 4 patient beds
Non-Exempt Educational	1 per staff member plus 1 per 3 students driving age (unless car usage is prohibited) or 1 per 8 seats in largest places of assembly, whatever is greater

Name	Watertown Parking Requirement
Retail with Accessory Food	1 per table or 4 seats plus 1 per 250 sqft of function rooms
Other School	1 per 600 sqft gross floor area

Belmont vs Lexington Parking Categories



Name	Belmont Parking Requirement	Lexington Parking Requirement
Dwellings	2 per unit, or 1 per unit with <2 bedrooms	1 per apartment or unit
Public Assembly	1 for each 3 person capacity based on MA state Building Code	1 per each 6 seats in largest assembly area
Hotels, Motels, Room & Board, Commercial Accommodations	1 per unit, plus 1 for each 8 units	1 per guest room
Restaurant	1 per 2 persons seating capacity; up to 20 outdoor seasonal seats shall not	1 per 3 seats, or 1 per 150 sqft; 1 per 5 seats or 1 per 200 sqft in CB
Commercial Recreation	1 per 2 participant capacity, plus 1 per 3 person spectator capacity	1 per 6 seats; 6 per 1000 sqft for indoor athletic facilities
Auto Service Station	3 plus 3 per service bay	2 per bay
Other Service Establishments	1 per 250 sqft ground floor gross floor area; 1 per 350 sqft in LB-1 plus 1 space per 400 sqft area on other floors; 600 sqft in LB-1; no fewer than 3 spaces per separate enterprise	Office: 1 per 250 sqft, 1 per 333 SF in CB; Medical Office 1 per 250 sqft, 1 per 200 sqft in CB
Retail		
Office		
Wholesale and Industrial Establishments	1 per 1.5 employees on largest shift, but capable of expansion to not less than 1 space per 400 sqft gross floor area	1 per 1000 sqft; Manufacturing/R&D is 1 per 500 sf
Other Uses	Spaces to be determined by Building Inspector (or Planning Board in cases referred to it for Design & Site Plan Review	Funeral Parlor: 1 per 4 seats in largest area; Theater: 1 per 6 seats
Mixed Use	Requirements for each use are additional, unless determined that a smaller # is adequate due to staggered hours	n/a

Name	Lexington Parking Requirement
Auto Sales	1 per 250 sqft(325 in CB); On Street Level Level floors: 1 per 500 SF
Hospital	0.4 per living unit
Nursing Home	1 per staff plus 1 per 4 patient beds
Non-Exempt Educational	Daycare: 1 per 500 sqft

Name	Lexington Parking Requirement
Retail with Accessory Food	Takeout: 1 per employee plus 1 per 5 linear ft of counter space; 1 per 2 employees plus 1 per 7 linear ft of counter space in CB

Belmont vs Waltham Parking Categories



Name	Belmont Parking Requirement	Waltham Parking Requirement
Dwellings	2 per unit, or 1 per unit with <2 bedrooms	2 per unit (1, 2, multifamily)
Public Assembly	1 for each 3 person capacity based on MA state Building Code	1 for 3 fixed seats and 1 for 36 sqft unseated public floor area
Hotels, Motels, Room & Board, Commercial Accommodations	1 per unit, plus 1 for each 8 units	1 per bedroom
Restaurant	1 per 2 persons seating capacity; up to 20 outdoor seasonal seats shall not	11 per 1000 sqft gross floor area and 1 per 6 seasonal outdoor seats; Fast Food: greater of 1 parking space for every 3 seats in customer food service area, including seasonal outdoor seats, or 6 spaces per 1000 sqft gross floor area
Commercial Recreation	1 per 2 participant capacity, plus 1 per 3 person spectator capacity	Tennis: 6 per court; Handball: 3 per court; Swimming: 3 for each 5 feet or portion thereof in width of 3 per 150 sqft; whichever produces the most spaces; Nature: 1 for every 3 participants
Auto Service Station	3 plus 3 per service bay	N/A
Other Service Establishments	1 per 250 sqft ground floor gross floor area; 1 per 350 sqft in LB-1 plus 1 space per 400 sqft area on other floors; 600 sqft in LB-1; no fewer than 3 spaces per separate enterprise	Stores/Shops: 6 per 1000 sqft; office is 1 per 300 sqft; Banks 1 per 200 sqft
Retail		
Office		
Wholesale and Industrial Establishments	1 per 1.5 employees on largest shift, but capable of expansion to not less than 1 space per 400 sqft gross floor area	1 per 2 workers based on peak employment
Other Uses	Spaces to be determined by Building Inspector (or Planning Board in cases referred to it for Design & Site Plan Review	Medical: 1 per 150 sqft
Mixed Use	Requirements for each use are additional, unless determined that a smaller # is adequate due to staggered hours	n/a

Name	Waltham Parking Requirement
Public Housing	3 for every 4 dwelling units
Hospital	1 per 350 sqft gross floor area

Belmont vs Winchester Parking Categories



Name	Belmont Parking Requirement	Winchester Parking Requirement
Dwellings	2 per unit, or 1 per unit with <2 bedrooms	2 per unit; mid-rise apartment 0.75 per unit in CBD
Public Assembly	1 for each 3 person capacity based on MA state Building Code	Religious: 1 space per 4 seats (same with library and museum); Funeral is 1 per 200 SF
Hotels, Motels, Room & Board, Commercial Accommodations	1 per unit, plus 1 for each 8 units	Not Provided
Restaurant	1 per 2 persons seating capacity; up to 20 outdoor seasonal seats not included	CBD: 0.75 spaces per 1k SF; GBD 1 and 2 is 1 space per 4 seats; Fast Food 1 space per 2 seats
Commercial Recreation	1 per 2 participant capacity, plus 1 per 3 person spectator capacity	Indoor Commercial: 0.75 per 1k/SF or 1 space per 4 seats; Bowling Alley: 0.75/1k SF or 4 spaces per alley; Tennis is 2 spaces per court
Auto Service Station	3 plus 3 per service bay	0.75 spaces per 1k or 1 space per 200 sF elsewhere
Other Service Establishments	1 per 250 sqft ground floor gross floor area; 1 per 350 sqft in LB-1 plus 1 space per 400 sqft area on other floors; 600 sqft in LB-1; no fewer than 3 spaces per separate enterprise	Retail: 0.75/1k SF; GBD-1 is 1 space per 200 SF; IL is 1 per 350 SF on ground floor and 1 space per 500 SF elsewhere; GBD-2 (<10k space per 400 SF; >10k is 1 space per 300 SF
Retail		
Office		
Wholesale and Industrial Establishments	1 per 1.5 employees on largest shift, but capable of expansion to not less than 1 space per 400 sqft gross floor area	Storage or Lumber Yard: 1 per 850 SF
Other Uses	Spaces to be determined by Building Inspector (or Planning Board in cases referred to it for Design & Site Plan Review	Private Club: 1 space per 4 seats; 0.75 spaces per 1k in CBD
Mixed Use	Requirements for each use are additional, unless determined that a smaller # is adequate due to staggered hours	2 spaces per unit; 1 space per 200 SF (non-residential)

Name	Winchester Parking Requirement
Group Home	1 per 3 beds
Hospital	1.5 spaces per hospital bed
Nursing Home	1 space per 3 beds
Non-Exempt Educational	0.75 spaces per 1k SF in CBD; 1 space per 1k elsewhere

Name	Winchester Parking Requirement
Other School	0.75 per 1k in CBD; 1 space per 600 sf elsewhere
Lab Space	1 per 500 sqft

Examples by Various Business Types and Sizes



Belmont	Arlington	Watertown	Waltham	Lexington	Winchester
5000 SQFT Restaurant Example (assumed seating of 133 seats)					
67 spaces	33 spaces	33 spaces	55 spaces	34 spaces	33 spaces (non-CBA)
133 persons/2	133 persons/4	133/4	11 per 1000 sqft	(5000 sqft/150)	(133/4)

3000 SQFT Medical Office					
12 spaces	8 spaces	20 spaces	20 spaces	15 spaces	8 spaces
1 per 250 sqft (3000/250)	~2 physicians, 4 per	3000/150	3000/150	3000/250	3000/400 (in GBD-2)

30,000 SQFT Bowling Alley with 20 Lanes (assumed capacity of 400 people)					
100 spaces	100 spaces	40 spaces	200 spaces	180 spaces	80 spaces
400 people/4 people per space	30k/300	20*2	1 space per 2 people	30k/1000*6 (6 spaces per 1000 SQFT)	4 spaces per lane * 20 lanes

3000 SQFT Retail Store					
12 spaces	10 spaces	10 spaces	18 spaces	12 spaces	10 spaces
3000/250	3000/300	3000/300	3 per 1000 sqft * 6	3000/250	3000/300

Examples by Various Business Types and Sizes



Belmont	Arlington	Watertown	Waltham	Lexington	Winchester
8-story, 240k sqft lab and office building					
800 spaces	480 spaces	400 spaces	800 spaces	960 spaces	480 spaces
240k sqft/300	240k sqft/500	240k sqft/600	240k sqft/300	240k sqft/250	240k sqft/500

5-acre residential development at 18 units per acre (90 units)					
113 spaces	90 spaces	135 spaces	180 spaces	90 spaces	180 spaces
90*1.25	90 * 1	90*1.5	90*2	90*1	90*2

80 unit hotel with 20 employees					
90 spaces	80 spaces	80	80	80	n/a
80 + 1 for each 8 units	1 per unit	80 units * 0.75 + 20 employees	80 units	80 units	No mention of hotels

110,000 sqft soccer bubble					
220 spaces	367 spaces	275 spaces	83 spaces	660 spaces	100 spaces
110k *2 per 1000 sqft	'indoor amusement' at 1 space per 300 sqft	1 per 400 sqft * 110k	1 per 2 participants; 1 per 3 spectators = 50 participant + 33 spectator spaces	6 spaces per 1000 sqft	1 space per 4 seats (25 total capacity?)



- **What is the Current Parking Utilization?**
 - Understanding how current parking spaces are used can provide insights into whether there is an over-supply or under-supply. This should involve surveys or studies of current parking usage patterns at different times of day and week.
- **What are the Future Growth Plans?**
 - The committee should understand the town's growth plans, including anticipated residential, commercial, and industrial development. This will help in forecasting future parking needs.
- **How do Parking Requirements Affect Development Costs?**
 - Parking requirements can significantly impact the cost of development. The committee should consider whether current requirements could be a deterrent to desired development or economic activity.
- **Can Parking Requirements be Flexible?**
 - Rather than having a one-size-fits-all approach, consider flexible parking requirements that can adapt to the unique needs of each development, location, and use. For example, mixed-use developments or areas with good public transit may not need as much parking.
- **Are There Opportunities for Shared Parking?**
 - Shared parking arrangements can maximize the utilization of parking spaces, especially in mixed-use developments where different uses have peak parking demands at different times.
- **How to Encourage Alternate Modes of Transportation?**
 - Reducing the need for parking spaces could also be achieved by encouraging public transit, cycling, walking, or ride-sharing. What infrastructure or policy changes are needed to promote these modes?
- **How do Parking Requirements Align with Community Goals?**
 - The committee should consider how parking requirements align with broader community goals, such as promoting vibrant commercial areas, affordable housing, and sustainability.
- **How can Technology Improve Parking Efficiency?**
 - Consider how technology, such as apps showing available parking or smart parking systems, can improve parking efficiency and user experience.

Parking Minimum Elimination Questions



- **Impact on Development:** How have parking minimums affected the cost and feasibility of past developments in our town? Could eliminating these requirements facilitate more affordable and diverse housing options, and stimulate economic development?
- **Transit-Oriented Development:** How can we better leverage our existing public transit infrastructure? Could eliminating parking minimums encourage transit-oriented development and reduce our town's carbon footprint?
- **Shared and Managed Parking:** How can we incentivize shared parking arrangements and manage demand more efficiently, rather than mandating a certain number of spaces per development?
- **Neighborhood Character:** How do large parking areas affect the character of our neighborhoods? Could more flexible parking policies help us create more walkable, human-scaled communities?
- **Case Studies:** How have cities like Cambridge and Somerville benefited from eliminating parking minimums? What challenges have they faced and how have they overcome them?
- **Alternate Transportation:** If parking minimums were removed, how could we support alternatives to personal car ownership, such as walking, biking, and public transit?
- **Reduced Construction Costs:** Can eliminating parking minimums reduce construction costs, thereby supporting the development of affordable housing or other desired development?
- **Environment and Sustainability:** How could reducing or eliminating parking minimums align with our sustainability goals, such as reducing impervious surface areas and managing stormwater runoff?
- **Market-Based Solutions:** Rather than mandating parking requirements, could we allow the market to determine the appropriate amount of parking based on each project's individual needs?
- **Quality of Life:** How might the removal of parking minimums improve overall quality of life, by promoting walkable neighborhoods, reducing congestion, and facilitating a more efficient use of land?

Potential Land Uses



All potential Land-Use Types to Consider

Single-Family Residential
 Duplex
 Triplex
 Quadruplex
 Apartment Building
 Condominium Complex
 Townhouse Complex
 Mobile Home Park
 Senior Housing Complex
 Assisted Living Facility
 Nursing Home
 Group Home
 Dormitory
 Hostel
 Bed & Breakfast
 Motel
 Hotel
 Resort
 Vacation Rental Property
 Restaurant
 Fast Food Restaurant
 Takeout Restaurant
 Coffee Shop
 Bakery
 Bar or Pub
 Nightclub
 Catering Service
 Grocery Store
 Supermarket
 Convenience Store
 Farmer's Market
 Butcher Shop
 Fish Market

Specialty Food Store
 Wine or Liquor Store
 Pharmacy
 Health Food Store
 Clothing Store
 Shoe Store
 Jewelry Store
 Department Store
 Discount Store
 Hardware Store
 Furniture Store
 Electronics Store
 Pet Store
 Garden Center
 Sporting Goods Store
 Bookstore
 Toy Store
 Music Store
 Art Supply Store
 Antique Store
 Thrift Store
 Office Supply Store
 Dry Cleaner
 Laundromat
 Tailor or Dressmaker
 Print Shop
 Photo Studio
 Hair Salon
 Nail Salon
 Day Spa
 Barber Shop
 Beauty Supply Store
 Tattoo Parlor

Fitness Center or Gym
 Yoga Studio
 Dance Studio
 Martial Arts Studio
 Swimming Pool
 Bowling Alley
 Indoor Climbing Facility
 Golf Course
 Miniature Golf Course
 Driving Range
 Tennis Court
 Skate Park
 Baseball Field
 Soccer Field
 Football Field
 Basketball Court
 Ice Skating Rink
 Hockey Rink
 Skateboard Park
 Racetrack
 Stadium or Arena
 Theater
 Cinema
 Art Gallery
 Museum
 Library
 Concert Hall
 Dance Hall
 Banquet Hall
 Conference Center
 Church
 Synagogue
 Mosque
 Temple
 Religious Retreat Center
 Public Park
 Beach
 Campground
 Marina
 Ferry Terminal

Airport
 Train Station
 Bus Station
 Subway Station
 Taxi Stand
 Rideshare Pickup/Dropoff Point
 Bike Share Station
 E-Scooter Share Station
 Public Parking Lot
 Public Parking Garage
 Private Parking Lot
 Private Parking Garage
 Car Wash
 Auto Repair Shop
 Tire Shop
 Auto Parts Store
 Car Dealership
 Motorcycle Dealership
 RV Dealership
 Boat Dealership
 Bicycle Shop
 School (Preschool)
 School (Elementary)
 School (Middle)
 School (High)
 College or University
 Adult Education Center
 Vocational School
 Music School
 Art School
 Language School
 Tutoring Center
 Daycare Center
 Hospital
 Urgent Care Clinic
 Doctor's Office
 Dentist's Office
 Veterinary Clinic
 Physical Therapy Center
 Blood Donation Center

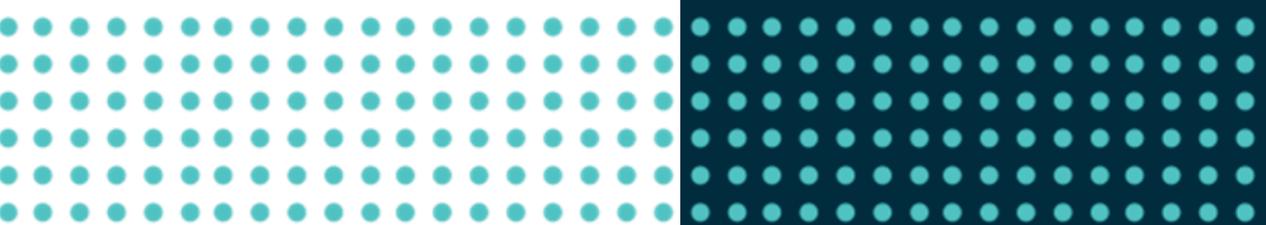
Post Office
 Courier Service
 Bank
 Credit Union
 Real Estate Agency
 Insurance Agency
 Travel Agency
 Advertising Agency
 Law Office
 Accounting Firm
 Consulting Firm
 Architectural Firm
 Engineering Firm
 IT Services Firm
 Staffing Agency
 Security Services Firm
 Cleaning Services Firm
 Home Health Care Services
 Non-Profit Organization
 Social Services Organization
 Co-working Space
 Business Incubator
 Community Center
 Public Utility Office
 Government Office
 Police Station
 Fire Station
 Military Base
 Prison or Jail
 Cemetery
 Funeral Home
 Crematorium
 Waste Management Facility
 Recycling Center
 Water Treatment Plant
 Power Plant
 Wind Farm
 Solar Farm

Oil or Gas Facility
 Mine
 Quarry
 Sawmill
 Grain Elevator
 Factory
 Warehouse
 Distribution Center
 Data Center
 Radio Station
 Television Station
 Newspaper Office
 Internet Service Provider
 Telecommunications Facility
 Observatory
 Research Laboratory

Should Belmont increase its parking categories and associated requirements?



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Current Sign Bylaws



5.2.1 – Intent and Purpose

5.2.2 – Permits – No sign (other than a temporary sign in a window or a sign pursuant to section 5.2.5 a) 1. Shall be erected, altered, or enlarged in a General or Local Business District until a permit has been issued by the Building Inspector, to be issued only for signs complying with all applicable provisions of this By-Law

Any party seeking to erect a sign that does not meet dimensional or operational requirements of this By-Law may seek a waiver of the requirements from the Planning Board. The Planning Board may provide such a waiver if it finds that such a waiver will not adversely impact the health and safety of nearby persons or property and that granting the waiver is materially consistent with the purpose of this By-Law. In granting such a waiver, the Planning Board shall specify the size, type, and location of the sign(s) and impose such other terms and conditions as deemed necessary to promote the purposes of this By-Law

5.2.3 – General Requirements

5.2.4 – Prohibited Signs

5.2.5 – District Regulations

b) Business Districts: Attached Signs. One sign for each exterior wall of an establishment if such wall faces a public way, private way, or contains a public entrance

- Wall Mounted – shall not exceed the lesser of 10% of the wall area or 65 square feet (10x6 feet)
- Projecting – may not exceed 12 sqft (3x4) if projecting perpendicular to the wall
- More than One Sign – SP Only by Planning Board

5.2.6 – Maintenance

5.2.7 – Nonconforming Signs

- 1. Remove the requirement for a SP for a sign *ex ante* (except standing sign), but if a compliant is received and the sign violates the sign laws, the Planning Board would need to issue a SP for the business to keep it.**

Benefits: Cuts red tape, Planning Board would have discretion to allow signs that are technically in violation but are substantially fine; also have a tool to adjust substantively delirious/obnoxious signs; cuts down on SPs needing to be issued; Only requires a 5.2.2 change to the Bylaw

Other Considerations and Possibilities

1. Allow all common sign types (e.g., wall signs, projecting signs, window signs, freestanding signs, awning signs, temporary signs) in the commercial district, as long as they meet basic size and placement guidelines.
2. Establish simple and consistent size, height, and area restrictions for signs, depending on the type, that are easy to understand and apply across various locations.
3. Limit each business to one primary sign and one secondary sign (such as a window or awning sign), with size and placement restrictions that maintain visual harmony and avoid clutter. Consider providing specific guidelines on the size and placement of primary and secondary signs for further clarity.

Ideas to Simplify the Signing Bylaw



4. Encourage businesses to use high-quality materials and clear, legible lettering but allow for flexibility in design, color, and illumination to promote creativity and individual expression. This could be further detailed by providing examples of acceptable materials and illumination methods
5. Maintain simple guidelines for sign placement that ensure pedestrian and vehicular safety, without overly restricting businesses. A mention of specific safety considerations might be helpful here
6. Streamline the sign permit process, with clear documentation requirements, reasonable fees, and a prompt approval timeline. Elaborating on what constitutes a 'prompt approval timeline' could provide clearer expectations for businesses
7. Provide a straightforward temporary sign policy that allows for easy installation and removal of banners, sandwich boards, or event-related signage, with simple size and placement restrictions. More specific guidelines on size and placement could be beneficial here as well
8. Require businesses to maintain their signs in good condition, without imposing overly complex maintenance rules or regulations
9. Streamline the sign permit process, with clear documentation requirements, reasonable fees, and a prompt approval timeline
10. Provide a straightforward temporary sign policy that allows for easy installation and removal of banners, sandwich boards, or event-related signage, with simple size and placement restrictions

Comprehensive Streamlining of Signing Bylaw



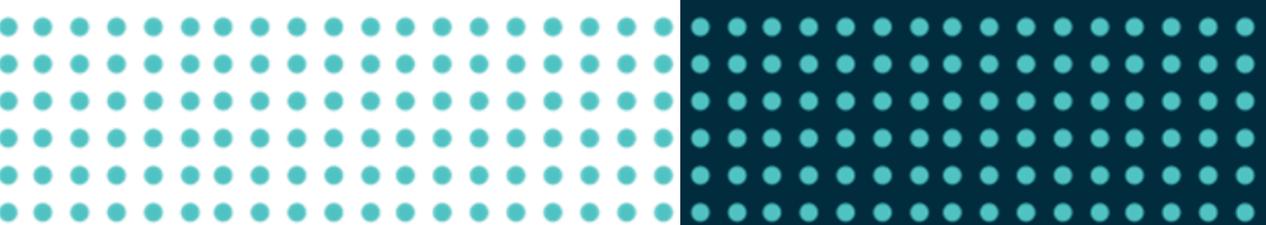
- Identify and Define Common Sign Types (i.e. Wall, Window, Projecting, Freestanding, Awning, Temporary)
- Sign Size, Height, and Area Restrictions (for each sign type)
- Illumination Requirements
- Materials and Colors
- Multilingual Signs
- Signage for Multiple Tenants
- Prohibited Signs
- Signage in Historic Districts
- Sign Removal and Replacement

■ Design Review and Approval Process

- Remove the requirement for a special permit for sign installation ex ante (except for freestanding signs due to their potential to create hazards). Instead, operate under a presumption of compliance, where a sign is considered approved unless a complaint is received.
- In case a complaint is received and the sign is found to be in violation of the signage laws, the Planning Board would then be required to review the sign. A special permit would be required for the business to keep the noncompliant sign. This approach cuts down on red tape and simplifies the process of erecting a sign.
- The Planning Board would have the discretion to allow signs that technically violate the law but are substantially fine or to adjust signs that are found to be substantively deleterious/obnoxious. This allows for case-by-case consideration and maintains the quality of the commercial district's visual environment.
- The Planning Board would be responsible for addressing and resolving any complaints regarding signs. This effectively reduces the number of special permits the Planning Board would have to deal with initially, focusing their attention on signs that have been flagged as potentially problematic.
- A process for complaint submissions should be clearly defined and made accessible to the public. The process should specify what constitutes a valid complaint and how the resolution process works, including timelines and possible outcomes.
- The only required change to the existing bylaws would be within section 5.2.2, thereby streamlining the transition to this new process.
- This approach does come with potential downsides such as the risk of inconsistent enforcement due to the reactive nature of the process. However, with clear guidelines, this risk could be managed effectively.
- This new process balances the need for regulatory oversight with the desire for flexibility and ease of doing business, aligning with the overall goals of your form-based code for signs.



Belmont
MASSACHUSETTS
The Town of Homes



Current Height Bylaws

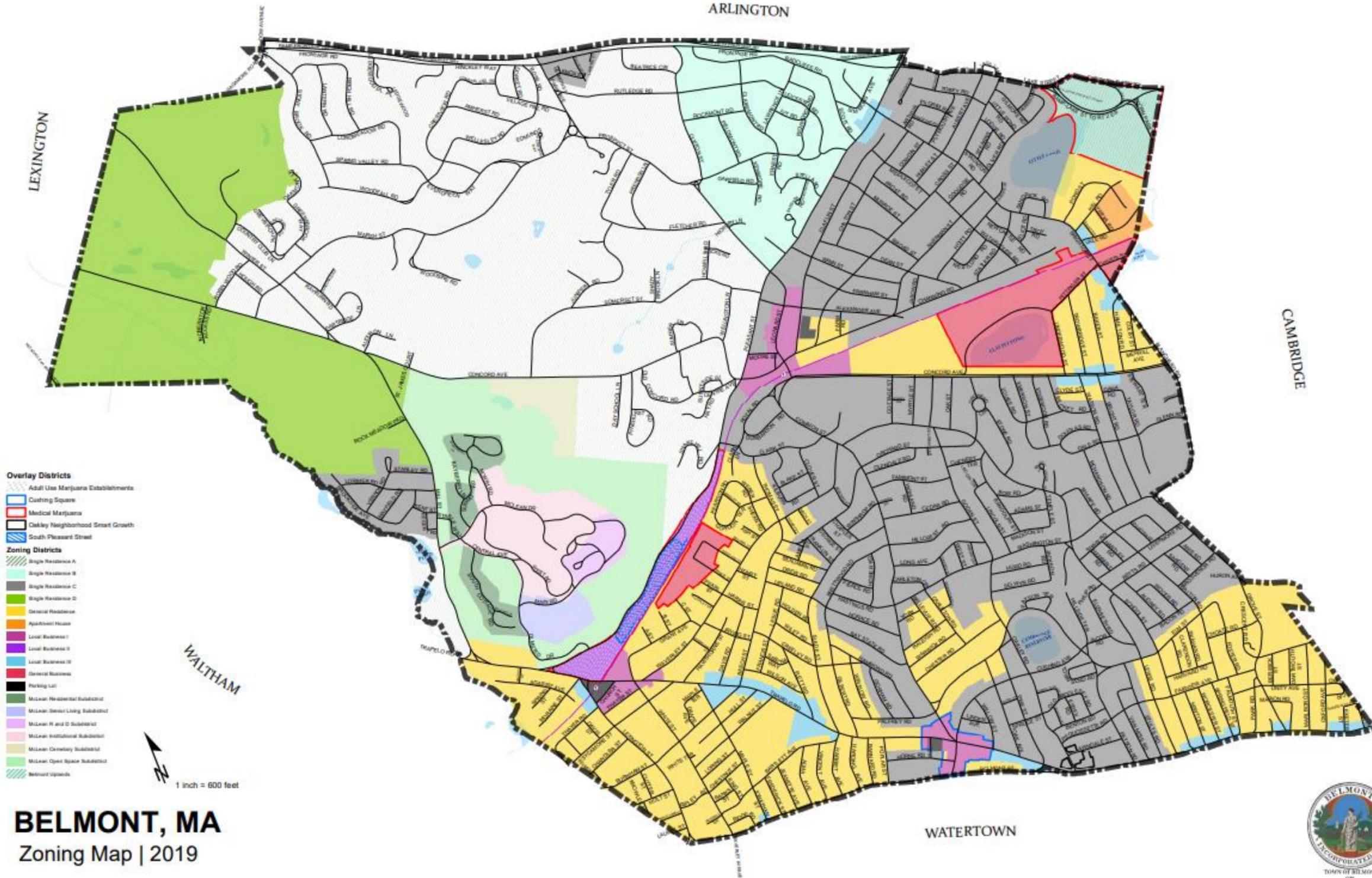
Belmont Business District Height Requirements



Commercial District	Maximum Building Height		Comment
	Feet	Stories	
LB I	28	2	Max of 32 ft and 3 stories may be allowed by SP from ZBA
LB II	32	2	
LB III	28	2	
GB	36	-	
McLean Research & Development Subdistrict	67	4	6A.2.3 a) – with max area of 150,000 sqft
McLean R&D Subdistrict Parking	45	5	3.5 spaces per 1k sqft (525 spaces for 150k building)
S. Pleasant St Overlay	28	2	40 ft and 3 stories allowed by SP
Cushing Square Overlay	28	2	36 and 3 allowed by SP; or 48 and 4 by SP

Cushing Square 8.4 – Four Story Developments (48 feet) – must be on a single lot with area not to exceed 15k; development project including underground parking areas on site; 4th floor must be for residential use only

Current Zoning Map



Overlay Districts

- Adult Use Marijuana Establishments
- Cushing Square
- Medical Marijuana
- Oakley Neighborhood Smart Growth
- South Pleasant Street

Zoning Districts

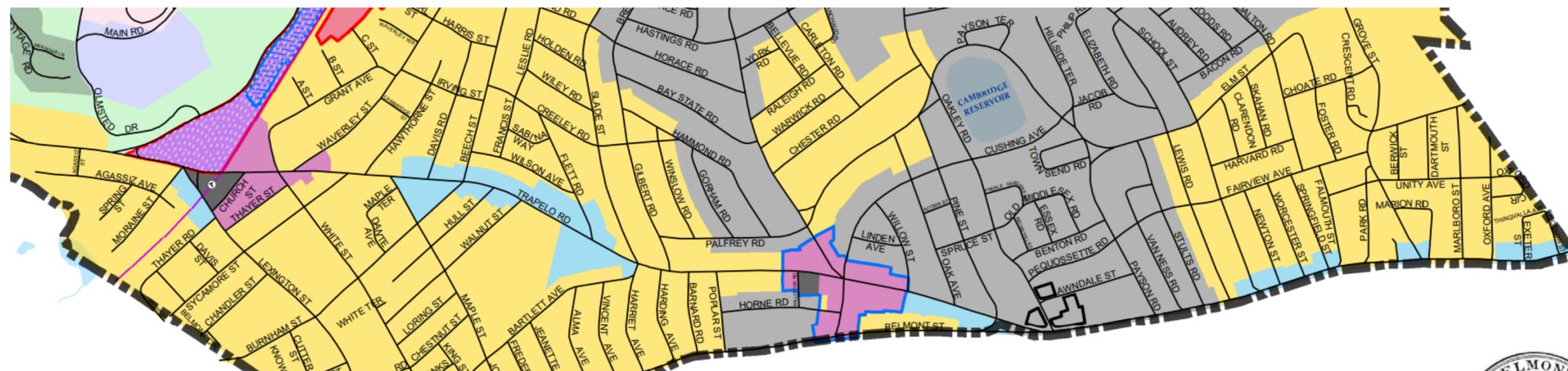
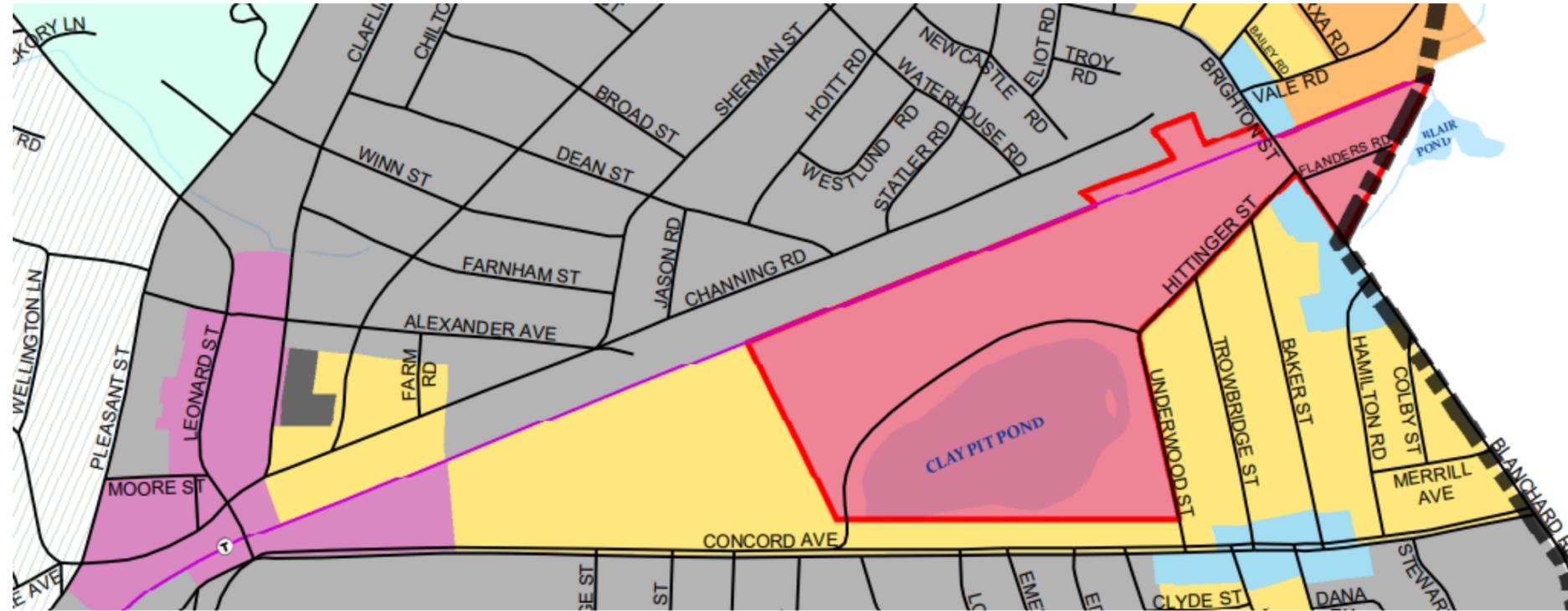
- Single Residence A
- Single Residence B
- Single Residence C
- Single Residence D
- General Residence
- Apartment House
- Local Business I
- Local Business II
- Local Business III
- General Business
- Parking Lot
- McLean Residential Subdistrict
- McLean Senior Living Subdistrict
- McLean R and D Subdistrict
- McLean Institutional Subdistrict
- McLean Cemetary Subdistrict
- McLean Open Space Subdistrict
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BELMONT, MA
Zoning Map | 2019



Current Zoning Map



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Zoning Districts

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Key Considerations to Building Heights



Neighborhood Character: How do current height restrictions shape the character of our neighborhoods? Would changes in these restrictions disrupt the existing aesthetic or enhance it?

Economic Feasibility: Are the current height restrictions limiting the economic feasibility of new developments? Would changes encourage more economic activity, leading to job creation and increased tax revenue?

Urban Density: How would adjusting height limits impact urban density? Could this contribute to more vibrant, walkable communities, or would it potentially lead to overdevelopment?

Infrastructure Impact: How might taller buildings impact existing infrastructure, such as sewer, water, and transportation systems? Are these systems equipped to handle increased demand?

Environmental Impact: What is the potential environmental impact of taller buildings? Could they, for instance, lead to more efficient land use and lower carbon footprints, or might they contribute to issues like loss of green spaces or solar access?

Emergency Services: Can our current emergency services accommodate taller buildings, in terms of fire safety and evacuation procedures?

Public Opinion: How does the public feel about potential changes to building heights? How can we ensure that residents' views are heard and considered in the decision-making process?

Case Studies: Are there examples of similar communities successfully increasing their height restrictions? What lessons can we learn from these examples?

Urban Planning Principles: How do proposed changes align with current best practices and principles in urban planning and sustainable development?

Areas of Belmont where allowable building heights could be increased?

View Corridors or Skyline

Potential for Development (i.e. underdeveloped or vacant plots)

Transit Access

Land Use Compatibility

Location-Specific Analysis

LEONARD ST., BELMONT, MASSACHUSETTS

**BELMONT BUSINESS CENTER
1930'S**

Source: Belmont Historical Society

