



**Mayor's Zoning Task Force:
Preliminary Draft Report
of the Business
District Subcommittee
January 2010**

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Mayor's Zoning Task Force Preliminary Draft Report of the Business District Subcommittee

The Business District Subcommittee ("BDS) of the Mayor's Zoning Task Force has reviewed the current ordinances of the City of Quincy relating to those areas zoned for business. As a result of the review, the primary focus of the subcommittee has been the areas commonly known as "Wollaston Center" and the "North Quincy Business District", the latter also known as "Norfolk Downs."

The BDS identified these areas as distinct from other business-zoned areas in the City as they are compact yet greater in size, easily delineated, generally recognized as centers of business and commerce, and adjacent to public transportation hubs, i.e. MBTA stations.

The recommendations of the BDS are as follows:

1. **Create "Wollaston Center Districts" and "North Quincy Districts."** The concept for this recommendation is to mirror the re-zoning that occurred by way of the creation of the Quincy Center Districts in 2005. With the re-zoning of Quincy Center, the City Council allowed for mixed use, additional height and greater density, all subject to a special permit granted by the Planning Board after a site plan review process. In such cases, the Planning Board is not allowed to approve a special permit for development within the Quincy Center districts unless certain criteria are met. Design guidelines are in place. One of the purposes in creating the Quincy Center District and providing for the special permit and site plan review process, with design guidelines, was to promote development in the District by streamlining the approval process.

General Characteristics: The general characteristics of the Districts would be as follows:

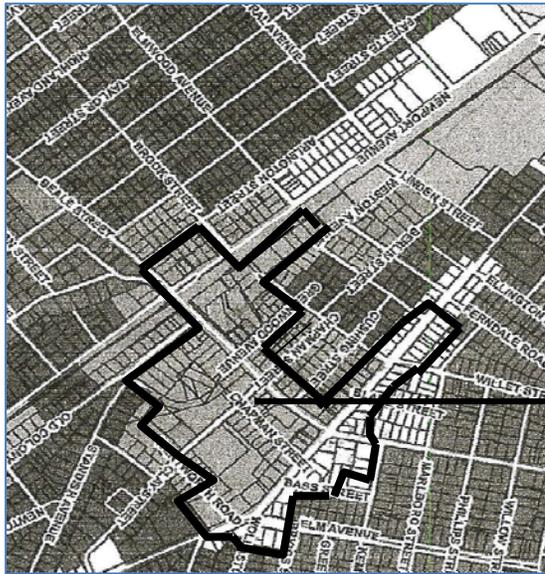
- ✓ Permitted uses within the Districts would include:
 - Multifamily dwellings
 - General office for commercial or professional use;
 - Mixed use of retail business and consumer services with multifamily dwellings or general office for commercial or professional use or-both
- ✓ Minimum lot size would be 15,000 square feet, with a 500 square foot minimum lot area per dwelling unit.
 - Parking for residential use would be subject to the special permits provisions of Section 8.3 of the ordinance as proposed by the Mayor's Zoning Task Force, i.e. found to be adequate and appropriate for the proposed use.
- ✓ All uses and structures, except those where the proposed addition to a structure is less than 20% of the gross area of the existing structure or less than 5,000 square feet, whichever is less, would require a Site Plan Review Special Permit, having to meet the following criteria:

- Historical buildings and places within the districts are to be respected and protected. The Planning Board shall establish design guidelines to implement this subsection.
- In mixed-use projects, uses are to be located carefully to respect the context, e.g. retail should front onto a street, new housing should relate to any adjacent existing residential use, etc.
- Development should be pedestrian friendly, with a positive relationship to its surroundings. Indicators include:
 - Ground floors, particularly where they face public streets, public parks, and publicly accessible pathways, consist of spaces that are actively inhabited by people, such as retail stores, consumer service businesses and restaurants, general office, educational or residential uses. Where a mix of activities is accommodated in a building, the more active uses are encouraged facing public streets, parks and pathways.
 - Covered parking on the lower floors of a building and on-grade open parking, is discouraged where the parking faces a public street, public park, or publicly accessible pathways.
 - Ground floors should be generally 25-50% transparent. The greatest amounts of glass would be expected for retail uses with lesser amounts for office, institutional or residential use.
 - Entries to buildings are located so as to ensure safe pedestrian movement across streets, encourage walking as a preferred mode of travel within the city and to encourage the use of public transit for employment and other trips. Relating building entries as directly as possible to crosswalks and to pathways that lead to bus stops and transit stations is encouraged; siting buildings on a lot and developing site plans that reinforce expected pedestrian pathways over the lot and through the Districts is also encouraged.
- Where appropriate, housing shall be a component of any large, commercial development.

- The common areas both internal and external shall, where appropriate, be accessible to the pedestrian public. Restrictions on this access can be established by the applicant or its successor in interest.
- The location, dimensional and aesthetic features of the proposed development are not detrimental to the enhancement of the architectural character of the downtown, Wollaston Center and North Quincy; to the improvement of traffic access and circulation; and to the creation of active pedestrian and street life within the Districts.
- There will be no nuisance or serious hazard to vehicles or pedestrians.
- Adequate and appropriate facilities (including, but not limited to parking and loading) will be provided for the proper operation of the proposed use. Said facilities shall be located and designed so as to be compatible with neighboring developments.
- The Board has taken into consideration the general purpose and intent of these provisions and has imposed such conditions and safeguards deemed necessary to preserve community values.

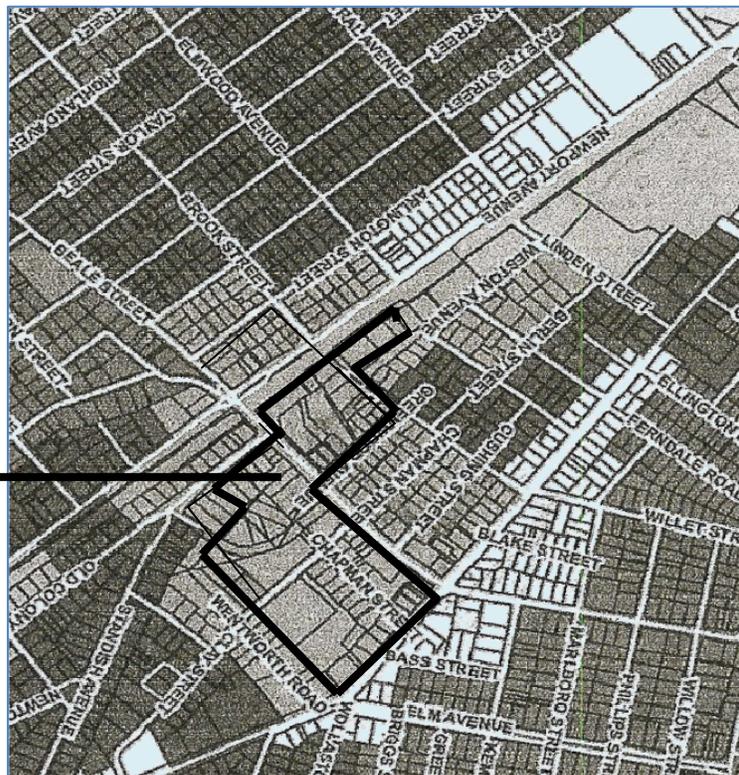
Wollaston Center Districts - The idea for the creation of the Wollaston Center districts is essentially the same as that for the Quincy Center Districts. The recommendation is for two “Wollaston Center Districts”, different from each other only by the height of structures that would be allowed. In the Wollaston Center District 3” the height of buildings would be limited to three (3) stories. In the Wollaston Center District 6” the height of buildings would be limited to six (6) stories.

Boundaries of the Wollaston Center Districts: The boundaries of the districts will be drawn to ensure transition between the districts and abutting districts zoned residential and business. The entire Wollaston Center district is shown below.



Wollaston
Center
Districts

Wollaston Center Height Limitations: Within the Wollaston Center District would be a district that would allow six stories. This area would be bound by Hancock Street, Beale Street, Chapman Street and Standish Avenue, essentially to include the block with the Wollaston Theater and the parcels that include CVS, the parking lot, and Wollaston Wine. This area is already contains ten story buildings. The Wollaston Train Station parking lot would also be zoned for six stories. The six story area is as follows:



Wollaston
Center
District –6
Stories

The balance of the Wollaston Center District would allow three stories. For instance, the block where Brigham's and Great Chow are located would allow for three stories, as would the block containing Tony's Pizza, the Hancock Tavern, Harry's Carpet and the Fuji Restaurant. The three story height limit here would match what exists on some buildings and provide a transition to abutting neighborhoods.

North Quincy Districts - The idea for the creation of the North Quincy Districts is the same as set forth above relative to the creation of the Wollaston Center Districts. The recommendation is for three "North Quincy Districts", different from each other only by the height of structures that would be allowed. In the "North Quincy District 3" the height of buildings would be limited to three (3) stories. In the "North Quincy District 6" the height of buildings would be limited to six (6) stories, and the "North Quincy District 10" would be limited to ten (10) stories.

Boundaries of the North Quincy Districts: The boundaries of the districts will be drawn to ensure transition between the districts and abutting districts zoned residential and business. The entire North Quincy district is shown below.



North Quincy Districts Height Limitations: Within the North Quincy District would be a district that would allow ten stories. This area would include the State Street Complex to the North, the Hancock Street Corridor from the intersection of Hancock Street and Newport Avenue to the intersection of Hancock Street and West Squantum Street, including the North Quincy MBTA parking lot. This area already contains several eight to ten story buildings, particularly within the State Street Complex. The district that would allow six stories would be bound by Hancock Street on the east, West Squantum Street on the north, the MBTA tracks on the west, and Billings Road on the south. The balance of the District would allow for structures of three stories, where a three story height limit here would match what exists on some buildings and provide a transition to abutting neighborhoods. The districts are as follows:



2. **Rezone Present Business Parcels to Residence B in Wollaston.** Part of the proposal is to rezone areas that are presently zoned Business C and Business B to Residence B to match the existing characteristics of those areas. For instance, structures on Cushing Street and Chapman Street northwest of Beale Street, e.g. behind the Wollaston Library, Barry’s Deli and Brighams, are essentially single, two and three family residential, and yet zoned Business C; the proposal is to re-zone these areas to Residence B, as shown. Similarly, parcels on Willet Street, Marlboro Street, Blake Street and Beach Street would be re-zoned from Business B to Residence B, keeping with the residential nature of those parcels.



3. **Rezone Present Business Parcels to Residence B in North Quincy.** Part of the proposal is to rezone areas that are presently zoned Business Business B to Residence B to match the existing characteristics of those areas. For instance, structures on Hodges Avenue, Pierce Street, East Squantum Street and Hollis Avenue are essentially single, two and three family residential, and yet zoned Business B; the proposal is to re-zone these areas to Residence B, as shown.

Rezone from
Business B to
Residence B

4. **Implement Design Guidelines in the Wollaston Center and North Quincy Districts.**

Design guidelines should be developed that set in place goals and design strategies to meet those goals. The goals should include, but not be limited to, designs to minimize the need for new parking facilities, to encourage underground parking, to reduce the visual impacts of surface parking, to ensure the Districts are pedestrian friendly, to enhance storefront display, to require architectural elements that enhance the aesthetics of the Districts, to establish graphically compatible signage throughout the Districts, to create a safe and attractive urban environment, to provide for a sensible transition between the multi-use districts and the adjacent established residential neighborhoods, and to reduce the need for municipal services.

Examples of multi-use structures that the BDS finds compatible with the above are set forth below.



Multi Story, mixed Use (retail, office & residential condominium) compatible architectural styles, parking to rear



Three story building with architectural elements

Mixed use, signage
band, first floor
transparency



Note
architectural
element

The BDS makes the above recommendations mindful that a full public process should be undertaken, with the process to include presentation to the Ward Councilors for the Districts, neighborhood meetings and public hearings.

8.3 QUINCY CENTER, WOLLASTON CENTER AND NORTH QUINCY DISTRICTS

8.3.1 Purpose. The purpose of this Section is:

1. to channel new development toward underutilized sites within Quincy Center, Wollaston Center and North Quincy;
2. to encourage mixed-use development; to encourage new development in areas accessible to public transit;
3. to provide a predictable, clear and understandable process for the review of new development;
4. to foster an economy that promotes and creates new opportunities for Quincy residents by creating jobs, housing inventory and affordable housing in conformance with the Inclusionary Zoning Ordinance of the City of Quincy;
5. to enhance the architectural character of the downtown, Wollaston and North Quincy districts;
6. to encourage ground floor uses within the Quincy Center, Wollaston Center and North Quincy Districts (Districts) that serve the public; to improve traffic access and circulation; and to create active pedestrian and street life in the Districts.

8.3.2 Permitted Uses. Within the Quincy Center, Wollaston Center and North Quincy Districts, no buildings or premises shall be used, and no structure shall be permitted for other than one of the following specified uses:

1. Multifamily dwelling;
2. General office for commercial or professional use;
3. Retail Business and Consumer Services allowed as of right in a Business C District, provided that no more than 25% of the building gross floor area is Retail Business and Consumer Services and provided further that the remaining building gross floor area is either Multifamily dwelling or General office for commercial or professional use or both;
4. Those uses allowed as of right or allowable with a Special Permit (except those uses set forth in items 1,2 and 3 immediately above) in a Business C District as shown in the Table of Uses. Notwithstanding any other provision of this Ordinance to the contrary, mixed uses within a single building or structure (i.e., retail/residential; retail/commercial office) shall be allowed within the Quincy Center, Wollaston Center and North Quincy

Districts if the structure conforms to the Dimensional Requirements set forth in this provision.

8.3.3 Dimensional Requirements. Within the Quincy Center Districts, the following dimensional requirements shall apply:

Minimum Lot Size (sq. ft.)	15,000
Minimum Lot Area per Dwelling Unit (sq. ft.) QCD-10 and QCD-15	325
Minimum Lot Area per Dwelling Unit (sq. ft.) Wollaston Center and North Quincy Districts	500
Maximum Number of Stories QCD-10	10
Maximum Number of Stories QCD-15	15
Maximum Number of Stories –Wollaston Center District 3	3
Maximum Number of Stories –Wollaston Center District 6	6
Maximum Number of Stories –North Quincy District 3	3
Maximum Number of Stories –North Quincy District 6	6
Maximum Number of Stories –North Quincy District 10	10

8.3.4 Off-Street Parking. For purposes of these requirements, a residential studio unit and each room in a lodging house shall be considered to be a one bedroom dwelling unit. Off-street parking facilities in the Wollaston Center and North Quincy Districts shall conform to the requirements of Section 8.3.8. Off-street parking facilities in the Quincy Center Districts shall be provided as follows:

Residential	Min. Number of Parking spaces Per Bedroom Within Dwelling Unit Where 80% or More of Building Gross Floor Area is Residential	1.0
Residential	Min. Number of Parking Spaces	0.75 for the 1st

	Per Bedroom Within Dwelling Unit Where Less than 80% of Building Gross Floor Area is Residential	bedroom in a unit and 0.5 for each additional bedroom in a unit
Assembly	Seats per one space	10
Institution	Square feet of Gross Floor area per Space	2,000
Office	Square feet of Gross Floor area per Space	600

8.3.5 Special Permit Required; Uses. All uses allowed pursuant to Section 8.3.2.4 shall require the issuance of a Special Permit.

8.3.6 Site Plan Review. All uses and all structures within the Quincy Center Districts, Wollaston Center Districts and North Quincy Districts shall require site plan review. However, if the proposed addition to a structure is less than 20% of the gross square area of the existing structure or less than 5000 square feet, whichever is less, site plan review shall not be required.

8.3.7 Special Permit Granting Authority. The Quincy Planning Board is hereby designated the special permit granting authority for all matters within the Quincy Center Districts, Wollaston Center Districts and North Quincy Districts. The Planning Board is authorized to approve or disapprove:

1. All Special Permits for uses;
2. All Site Plans;
3. All applications seeking a finding pursuant to MGL c. 40A § 6; and
4. All Special Permits for a use or structure in the Flood Plain Overlay District.

8.3.8 Special Permit and Site Plan Approval Criteria. The Planning Board shall not approve a special permit or site plan unless it finds that all of the following additional criteria are met:

1. Historical buildings and places within the Quincy Historical District are to be respected and protected. Special consideration shall be given to the preservation of historical buildings and places within the Quincy Center Districts, Wollaston Center Districts and North Quincy Districts. The Planning Board shall establish design guidelines to implement this subsection.

2. In mixed-use projects, uses are to be located carefully to respect the context, e.g. retail should front onto a street, new housing should relate to any adjacent existing residential use, etc.
3. Development should be pedestrian friendly, with a positive relationship to its surroundings. Indicators include:
 - a. Ground floors, particularly where they face public streets, public parks, and publicly accessible pathways, consist of spaces that are actively inhabited by people, such as retail stores, consumer service businesses and restaurants, general office, educational or residential uses. Where a mix of activities are accommodated in a building, the more active uses are encouraged facing public streets, parks and pathways.
 - b. Covered parking on the lower floors of a building and on-grade open parking, is discouraged where the parking faces a public street, public park, or publicly accessible pathways.
 - c. Ground floors should be generally 25-50% transparent. The greatest amounts of glass would be expected for retail uses with lesser amounts for office, institutional or residential use.
 - d. Entries to buildings are located so as to ensure safe pedestrian movement across streets, encourage walking as a preferred mode of travel within the city and to encourage the use of public transit for employment and other trips. Relating building entries as directly as possible to crosswalks and to pathways that lead to bus stops and transit stations is encouraged; siting buildings on a lot and developing site plans that reinforce expected pedestrian pathways over the lot and through the Districts is also encouraged.
4. Where appropriate, housing shall be a component of any large, commercial development.
5. The common areas both internal and external shall, where appropriate, be accessible to the pedestrian public. Restrictions on this access can be established by the applicant or its successor in interest.
6. The location, dimensional and aesthetic features of the proposed development are not detrimental to the enhancement of the architectural character of the downtown; to the improvement of traffic access and circulation; and to the creation of active pedestrian and street life within the Districts.
7. There will be no nuisance or serious hazard to vehicles or pedestrians.

8. Adequate and appropriate facilities (including, but not limited to parking and loading) will be provided for the proper operation of the proposed use. Said facilities shall be located and designed so as to be compatible with neighboring developments.
9. The Board has taken into consideration the general purpose and intent of these provisions and has imposed such conditions and safeguards deemed necessary to preserve community values.

And amend Flood Plain Overlay Districts as follows:

SECTION 8.0 SPECIAL DISTRICTS

8.1 FLOOD PLAIN OVERLAY DISTRICT (FPOD)

8.1.9 Special Permit. In the FPOD where the Quincy Center Districts, Wollaston Center Districts and North Quincy Districts are the underlying districts, the Planning Board shall act as the special permit granting authority. In the FPOD for all other underlying districts, the Board of Appeals shall act as the special permit granting authority. In all such cases, the Planning Board or the Zoning Board of Appeals may grant a special permit for any use or structure allowed in the underlying district, subject to the following:

1. The request has been referred to the Planning Board, the Health Commissioner, the City Engineer and the Conservation Commission and reported upon by all, or thirty five days shall have elapsed following such referral without receipt of such reports.
2. The land is shown to be neither subject to flooding nor unsuitable for the proposed use because of hydrological and/or topographic conditions.
3. The proposed use will not be detrimental to the public health, safety and welfare.
4. The proposed use and/or structure will be built in accordance with the one hundred year flood elevation as defined by the Department of Housing and Urban Development, Federal Insurance Map for the City of Quincy.
5. The proposed use will comply in all respects to the provisions of the underlying district or districts within which the land is located.
6. All new construction and substantial improvements (the cost of which equals or exceeds fifty percent of the market value of the structure) of residential and nonresidential structures shall have the lowest floor, including the basement or cellar, elevated to or above the one hundred year flood elevation, or in the case of

nonresidential structures be floodproofed, watertight to the one hundred year flood elevation.

8.1.9 Variances. Where either the Planning Board or the Board of Appeals grants a variance to the regulations set forth in the FPOD, the following additional procedures will be adhered to. The Planning Board or the Board of Appeals shall only issue a variance upon:

1. a showing of good and sufficient cause;
2. a determination that failure to grant said variance would result in exceptional hardship to the applicant;
3. a determination that the granting of the variance will not result in increased flood heights, additional threats to public safety, extraordinary public expense, create nuisances or conflict with existing local law;
4. a determination that the issuance of the variance is the minimum necessary considering the flood hazard to afford relief.
5. Variances may be issued for structures to be erected on a lot of one half acre or less in size, contiguous to and surrounded by lots with existing structures constructed below the base flood level. Variances may also be issued for a structure listed on a National Register of Historic Places or a State Inventory of Historic Places that is to be restored or reconstructed.
6. If a variance is granted, the Planning Board or the Board of Appeals shall notify the applicant in writing over their signature that the issuance of such variance to construct below the one hundred year base flood elevation will result in increased premium rates for flood insurance up to amounts as high as twenty five dollars for one hundred dollars of insurance coverage; and such construction below the one hundred year base flood elevation increases risks to life and property.
7. The Planning Board or the Board of Appeals shall maintain a record of all variance actions, including justifications for issuance and report such variances in the annual report submitted to the Federal Insurance Administration.