

February 25, 2009

PROPOSED REGULATORY CODE FOR WAVERLEY SQUARE

Outline and Draft Content

Purpose of Code

Vision:

Waverley Square is an historic center and an historic neighborhood with many reminders defining its place as a neighborhood center, with the streets, trolleys, buildings and places for shopping and services. This vision predicts the Square will be recreated with all the functionality and qualities that will redefine its place as a premier neighborhood, commercial and civic center. The future Square will become a center for neighborhood pride through reinvigoration of the existing buildings and new high-quality buildings that maintain the historic qualities and provide needed goods and services. The regional train station will be integrated into the fabric of the Square rather than remain a focal point. The streets will become more accessible for walking, biking and trolley, and open spaces will be expanded and improved to accommodate public interaction, use and enjoyment of the Square.

Goal:

Sustain and Enhance Waverley Square

Objectives:

Certain aspects of the Square must be *maintained*, particularly;

- Residential neighborhoods
- Residential nature of the side streets
- Clean public transit
- Historic building and street character
- Mixed used commercial center
- Overhead wires until new technology is available
- Landscape views; particularly of the Wellington Hill ridgeline

Certain aspects should be *enhanced*, particularly;

- Streetscape character
- Pedestrian and bicycle safety
- Mix of uses
- Relationship with the McLean properties
- Community spaces
- Character of development and buildings
- Managed parking
- Sustainable design
- Waverley Trail

Specific steps include:

- Not only protecting the residential neighborhoods, but improving their value through:
 - maintenance of the streets,
 - management of on-street parking and through traffic, and,
 - providing supporting development within the commercial Square.
- Improving and expanding street-level building spaces that can actually be used by people.
- Designing commercial development with design and performance standards that recognize a unique location, including uniqueness within Belmont.
- Defining the building envelopes for new construction and then further refining the standards for the character of buildings and spaces.
- Encouraging structured parking for greater efficiency in use of available spaces, increase the grade-level open space, and to support adjacent uses.
- Use design elements such as wrapping the parking decks with buildings to reduce their visual impact.
- Overall design and specific projects that identify Waverley as a gateway to the town.
- Preservation of open space.

Regulatory and Non-Regulatory Strategies

Zoning:

1. Create a new district for the Waverley Square District.
2. Allow mixed use in the form of any possible mix of commercial uses and residential [the latter above street level on the major streets]
3. Encourage retail and active uses on the major street frontages.
4. Add form-based regulation, design guidelines, and performance standards specific for the Waverley Square District.
5. Articulate buildings with projections, recesses, material changes, cornices, parapets, and varying rooflines to avoid monolithic building forms
6. Set new height limits by feet and stories that relate to the massing diagram with stepped elevations.
7. Add building stepbacks for blocks with the largest buildings as a transition from adjacent blocks.
8. Test shared parking within new developments to reduce parking areas.

Parking (non-zoning):

1. Create additional off-street public parking
2. Add requirements or sticker program for resident-only parking

Street Infrastructure (mitigation):

1. Create a pedestrian-friendly sidewalk and street crossing system.
2. Provide bicycle lanes.
3. Increase utilization of all public transit: trolley, bus, and commuter rail.

Design Guidelines:

1. Articulate buildings with projections, recesses, material changes, parapets, cornices, varying roof heights and lines.
2. Design buildings with clearly defined base, middle and roofline.
3. Add special features to create unique buildings and sites, such as atria, cupolas and gabled roofs.
4. Use setbacks or upper floor terraces to further articulate the buildings.
5. Consider impact of height and setbacks on the visibility of Wellington Hill ridgeline (McLean Hospital).
6. Add distinctive building bases and include a high percentage of glass for storefronts.
7. Include sustainable design elements (option for landscaping: the Green Area Factor)