



OFFICE OF PLANNING AND BUILDING

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MEMORANDUM

To: Town Meeting Members
Cc: Select Board, Town Administrator
From: Christopher J. Ryan, Director of Planning and Building
Date: Friday, November 21, 2025
Re: **Planning Board Report to the 2026 March Special Town Meeting**

Pursuant to the requirements of Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 40A, Section 5, and the Town of Belmont Zoning By-Laws, Section 7, the Planning Board submits the following recommendation on four (4) proposed zoning amendments to the 2026 March Special Town Meeting. The Board held a public hearing on the articles on April 15, 2025; May 6, 2025; June 3, 2025; June 17, 2025; July 8, 2025; July 29, 2025; August 6, 2025; August 19, 2025; September 9, 2025; September 18, 2025; September 30, 2025; October 7, 2025; October 17, 2025; October 23, 2025; October 28, 2025; November 5, 2025; and November 20, 2025. Sitting for the Board were Thayer Donham, Chair; Rui Guo, Vice-Chair; Alisa Todreas-Gardner; Andrew Osborn; and Dan Barry, with Steve Weinstein as Associate member.

The hearing was closed and a vote on whether to recommend favorable action on the proposed by-laws was taken on November 20, 2025. Voting affirmatively were members Donham, Guo, Osborn, and Barry.¹

Proposed Amendment – New Zoning By-Law Section 10: Belmont Center Overlay District (“BCOD”) and Overlay Zoning Map.

The Planning Board developed and has recommended the adoption of a new Zoning By-Law Section 10, Belmont Center Overlay District (BCOD), which establishes a clear, predictable, and design-oriented regulatory framework for Belmont Center. The amendment would establish an overlay zoning district with

¹ Todreas-Gardner was not present and did not vote.

form-based standards that strengthen the pedestrian environment, support vibrant mixed-use activity, guide appropriate building scale, and protect adjacent residential neighborhoods. The Board finds that this bylaw reflects best practices, aligns with Belmont's long-range planning goals, and will enhance the economic vitality, walkability, and character of the town center while providing meaningful opportunities for new housing consistent with state policy. The Board voted 4-0-0 to recommend favorable action on this new By-Law chapter and map amendment.

Proposed Amendment – New Zoning By-Law Section 10A: Center Gateway Overlay District (“CGOD”) and Overlay Zoning Map.

The Planning Board developed and has recommended the adoption of a new Zoning By-Law Section 10A, Center Gateway Overlay District (CGOD), which establishes a planning and regulatory framework for strategic reinvestment on Concord Avenue. The amendment would establish a commercial overlay zoning district that promotes walkable, transit-supportive commercial development with carefully calibrated building height, massing, and frontage standards. It introduces requirements for high-quality design and public realm improvements. The Board finds that Section 10A is consistent with Belmont's planning objectives and positions the district as an economic development catalyst for the town. The Board voted 4-0-0 to recommend favorable action on this new By-Law chapter and map amendment.

Proposed Amendment – New Zoning Bylaw Section 6.15, Hotel Use Regulations.

The Planning Board developed and has recommended the adoption of a new Zoning By-Law Section 6.15, Hotel Use Regulations, which establishes clear criteria and performance standards for the development of high-quality hotel uses in Belmont. The amendment provides needed clarity regarding allowed locations, design expectations, operational characteristics, and review requirements, while ensuring compatibility with surrounding uses and enables an important commercial use that can diversify the Town's tax base, support local businesses, and provide needed accommodations for visitors, while maintaining strong protections for abutters and the community. The Board voted 4-0-0 to recommend favorable action on this new By-Law Section.

Proposed Amendment – Zoning Bylaw Section 2.1, Classes.

The Planning Board recommends the adoption of an amendment to Section 2.1, Classes, which updates Belmont's district classifications to include the BCOD and CGOD as overlay districts. The Board voted 4-0-0 to recommend favorable action on this proposed amendment.

Ultimately, the Planning Board unanimously voted (4-0-0) to recommend favorable action on all proposed amendments.

Questions or requests for additional information regarding this proposed amendment can be directed to this office. Members of the public may download and view the specific amendment text on the following Planning Board page:

<https://www.belmont-ma.gov/2221/Proposed-Text-and-Map-Amendments-to-Zoni>