SUMMARY OF COMMENTS FROM JUNE 24, 2025 PUBLIC CODE WORKSHOP

BELMONT CENTER
FORM-BASED OVERLAY DISTRICTS

Town of
BELMONT
MASSACHUSETTS

INTRODUCTION

On June 24, 2025, the Town of Belmont hosted a public workshop to gather community input on the draft Form-Based Code for the Belmont Center area. The event was designed to introduce residents to the structure, purpose, and key features of the code, and to invite feedback on the draft. The evening began with a presentation by the project team, providing an overview of how the code works and how it is different from the existing code. Following the presentation, attendees were encouraged to review boards displaying the draft code. Participants used post-it notes to leave comments, ask questions, and offer suggestions directly on the boards, and many took the opportunity to engage in conversation with the code writers, Town staff, elected officials, and their neighbors.

This report summarizes the comments received during the workshop and includes photographs of the boards with post-it notes placed by participants. The code remains in draft form, and public input is a critical part of refining it. The Planning Board continues to meet regularly to discuss the draft, consider community feedback, and make recommendations. Once all public comments have been reviewed and incorporated, a revised draft will be released for further public review before entering the formal adoption process.

Community Feedback Summary

Overall, the public feedback indicates strong support for additional development in Belmont Center, particularly when it enhances walkability, public spaces, and quality of life. Residents widely supported urban design improvements such as street trees, plazas, civic spaces, and cafe seating, with a shared desire for a more vibrant and accessible town center. However, this support is contingent upon new development being thoughtfully scaled, context-sensitive, and compatible with Belmont's existing character. Concerns were raised about building height, overdevelopment, parking, and traffic congestion, and the loss of town charm. The community also emphasized the importance of affordable and senior housing, ADA compliance, clear phasing of zoning changes, and greater transparency in the process. These insights underscore the need to balance growth with sensitivity to community values, infrastructure capacity, and long-term resilience.

Themes Found

Housing Preferences and Affordability

Broad range of views expressed:

- Support for more housing, especially smaller-scale and senior-friendly units (townhomes, duplexes, downsized housing)
- Concern about displacement and affordability
- Strong opposition to "overbuilding" from some, particularly around height/density

"Senior housing please"

"Downsizing housing- like townhomes not apartments"

"Add height and housing"

"This will ruin Belmont"

Community Character and Design Compatibility

Mixed Sentiments on Growth:

- Calls for context-sensitive design that fits Belmont's scale and charm
- Concerns about Belmont "becoming like Cambridge or Somerville"
- Support for front porches, character filled facades, and human-scaled building

"Maybe but better building materials to match town's character"

"Would love to see more front stoops and porches- creates a community"

"This building seems to preserve the town's character"

Streetscape, Public Realm, Placemaking

Desire for inviting, social, walkable, public spaces:

- Widespread support for street trees, cafe seating, wide sidewalks, civic spaces, and more public gathering areas
- Suggestions for creative placemaking like plazas, and splash fountains

"Love putting something social and green on Concord Ave"

"Let's consider placemaking where people can gather"

"More civic spaced needed in Belmont"

Parking, Traffic and Mobility

Major concern across nearly every board:

- Strong concern about parking constraints and traffic congestion
- Requests for bike lanes, less car-oriented design and better traffic studies
- Specific concerns about zoning being finalize before resolving parking

"Parking is a critical constraint. Must be solved before zoning is finalized"

"No bike lanes? Not one single bike lane?"

"Claflin should not have been Phase 1"

Accessibility and Inclusivity

- Notes that designs must consider ADA compliance and mobility needs
- Advocacy for senior housing and walkable access to shops/services

"Not ADA friendly"

"Senior housing within walking distance to Belmont Center"

Process Transparency and Phasing

- Frustration expressed over lack of clarity on implementation process
- Requests for phased approaches and clearer communication of who owns what properties

"Check-396 Concord belongs to Falls Church"

"Zoning should be phase 2"

Environment and Infrastructure Concerns

- Attention to stormwater management and climate-resilient design
- Requests to incorporate real climate data projections rather than outdated baselines

"Stormwater management- use updated rainfall projections, not history"

"No loads are needed for this small parcel"

Divided Opinions on Growth and Change

- Many strong support of density, economic development and livelier town center
- Others fear losing Belmont's identity, calling it "overly urban"

"Allowing density like Cambridge will benefit Belmont"

"Why must Belmont become Somerville or Cambridge?"

"Please get this to happen"

"The essence is ugly"

Commercial Vitality and Economic Development

- Support for a livelier, more social environment that draws visitors and supports small businesses
- Interest in placemaking and civic spaces that attract foot traffic and create opportunities to local commerce

"*I want a vibrant city scape"*
"We need more housing units with commercial activity/ tax revenues"
"Tax Revenue!"

Recommendations

Based on public feedback on the draft Overlay Form-Based Code for Belmont Center, the following recommendations are provided to improve communication, clarify implementation strategies, and reinforce standards already embedded in the code. Many of the concerns raised by the community—particularly around design compatibility, placemaking, and infrastructure—are already addressed in the draft and can be highlighted more clearly in outreach and supporting materials.

1. Maintaining Belmont's Character

Recommendation:

Clearly communicate that the Overlay Form-Based Code already includes strong protections for Belmont's existing character, including:

- Building scale and height limits that ensure compatibility with adjacent neighborhoods
- Frontage and architectural standards that require features like porches, stoops, recessed entries, and quality materials
- Façade articulation and massing controls that prevent boxy, monolithic structures and preserve visual variety

In future presentations and public materials, include illustrations and comparison diagrams to show how new development will reflect the scale, rhythm, and design details that define Belmont.

Rationale:

While many residents expressed concern about "overbuilding" or Belmont "becoming Cambridge or Somerville," these worries are often based on misunderstanding. The code already embeds safeguards to preserve town character. Better communicating those safeguards can build public confidence.

2. Reinforce Placemaking in Frontage Design

Recommendation:

Ensure that the code clearly integrates and emphasizes public realm elements within the frontage standards. These include:

- Street trees
- Café seating zones
- Benches and planters
- Other pedestrian-friendly amenities

Designate priority public realm nodes—such as Concord Avenue—as locations for enhanced treatments (e.g., plazas, civic gathering spaces).

Rationale:

These public realm elements received the strongest and most consistent public support. Reinforcing and showcasing them will help achieve early, visible placemaking wins that build momentum and trust in the code.

3. Introduce Long-Term Parking Management Tools

Recommendation:

Encourage the creation of a Parking Management District or equivalent tool to:

- Coordinate shared parking among multiple developments
- Balance supply and demand over time
- Reduce the need for excessive on-site parking in individual projects

Rationale:

While the draft code addresses parking flexibility, public concerns remain high. A management district approach provides a longer-term strategy that supports walkability and efficient land use.

4. Tie Zoning Entitlements to a Phased Implementation Approach

Recommendation:

Clarify the relationship between zoning entitlements and public improvements by:

- Including a description in the code or supporting materials that notes public infrastructure investments (e.g., parking, street improvements, bike/ped facilities) may need to precede or accompany new development
- Allowing for height bonuses or other incentives in exchange for community benefits such as senior housing or improved stormwater infrastructure
- Preparing a public-facing memo or visual guide to clarify:
  - ◊ What land is publicly owned (e.g., right-of-way) vs. privately held
  - ◊ Which public improvements can occur in the public right-of-way (ROW) during redevelopment
  - ◊ How developers may contribute to public realm improvements

Rationale:

Public commenters expressed a strong desire to understand who owns what, how development will be phased, and when infrastructure will be improved. Clarifying these issues supports transparency and reduces misperceptions.

5. Embed Updated Climate and ADA Standards

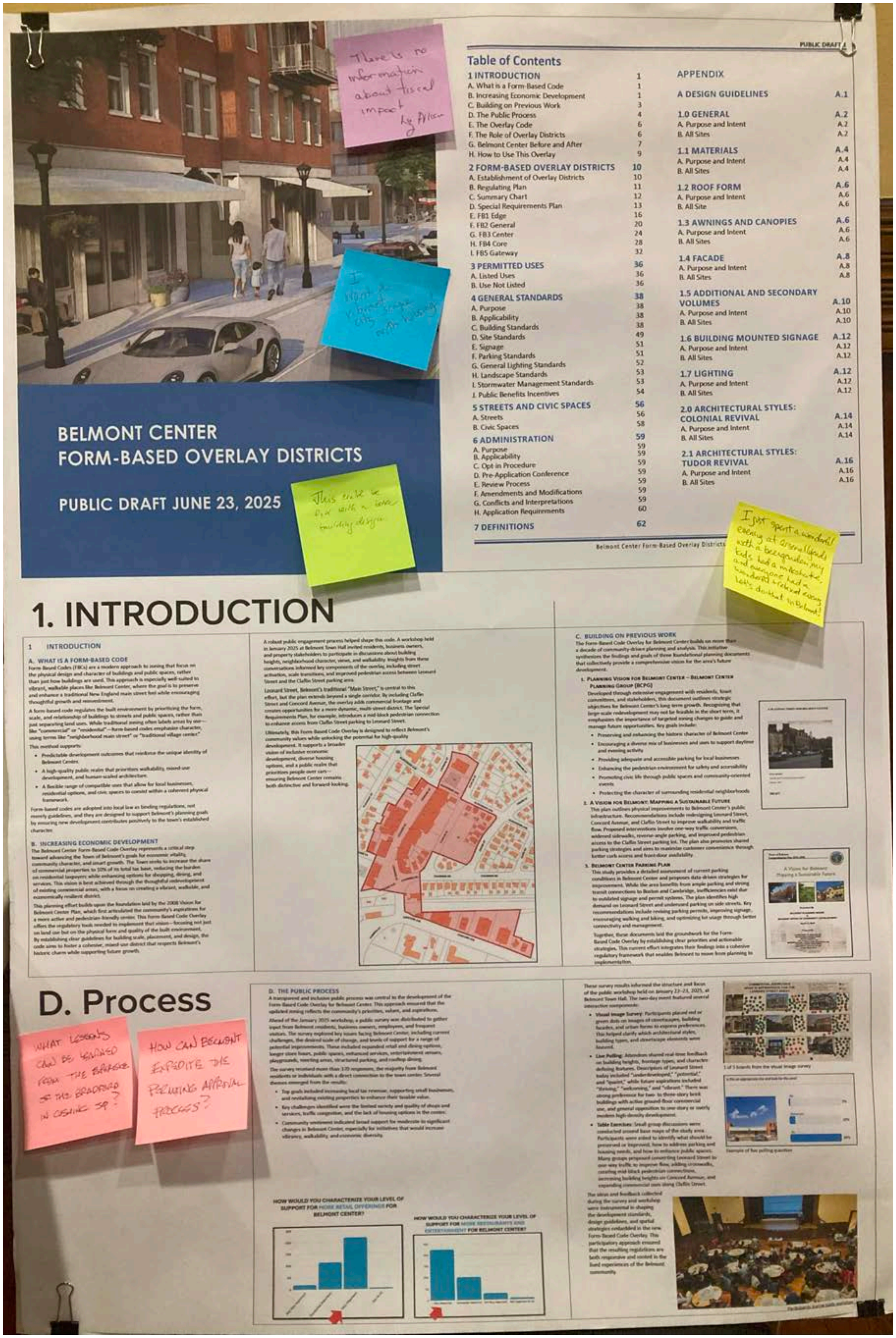
Recommendation:

Incorporate explicit language in the code or supporting documents to:

- Require stormwater management systems to use forward-looking rainfall projections (e.g., NOAA Atlas 14) rather than historical baselines
- Encourage or require green infrastructure as part of private site design and public frontages (e.g., rain gardens, permeable pavement)
- Require ADA-accessible design features for new development and public realm improvements, especially along pedestrian routes

Rationale:

Public comments emphasized the importance of climate resilience and accessibility. Making these expectations visible within the code ensures they are addressed proactively.


There is no information about fiscal impact
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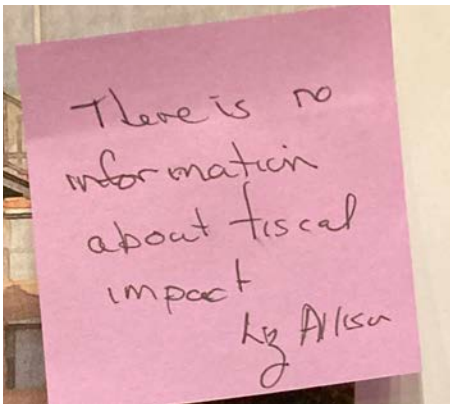
BELMONT CENTER
FORM-BASED OVERLAY DISTRICTS
PUBLIC DRAFT JUNE 23, 2025
1. INTRODUCTION
D. Process
WHAT LESSONS CAN BE LEARNED FROM THE BRADFORD IN COSTING SQ?
HOW CAN BELMONT EXPEDITE THE PERMITTING APPROVAL PROCESS?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about fiscal
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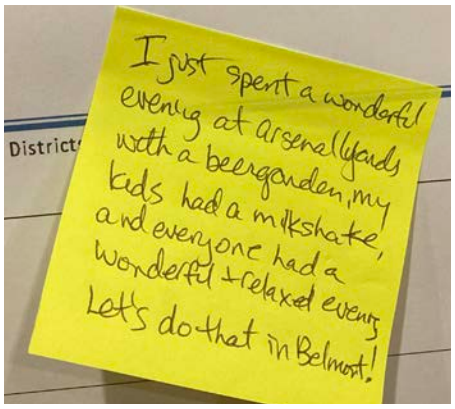
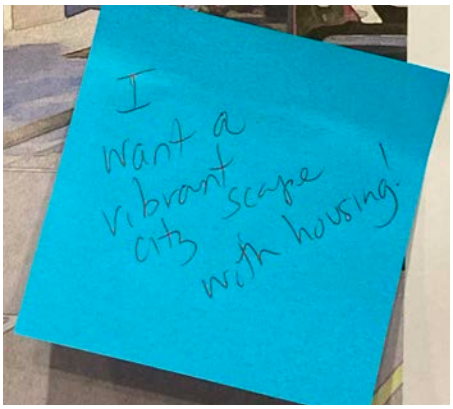
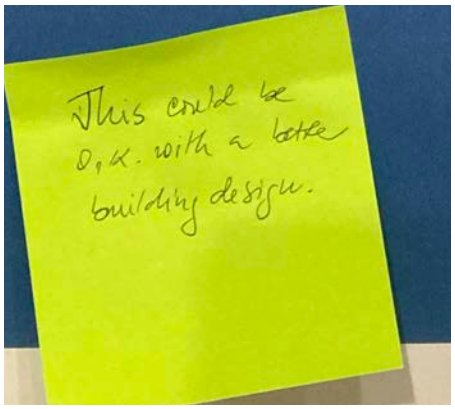
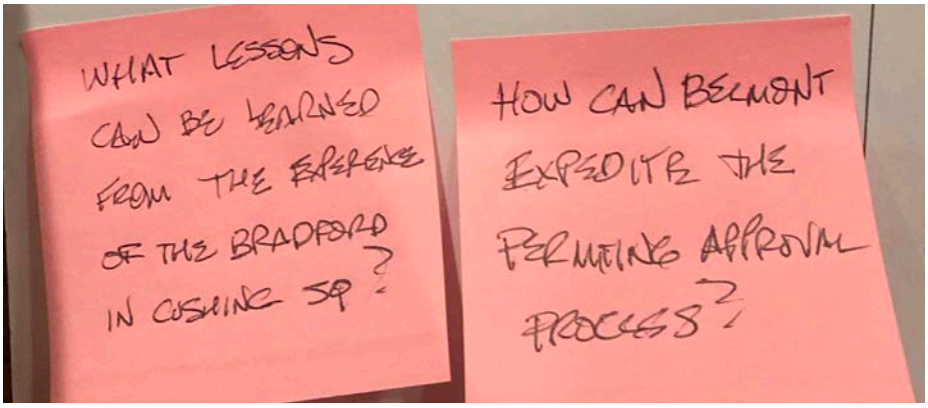
by Alicia


I just spent a wonderful
evening at arsenal yards
with a beergarden, my
kids had a milkshake,
and everyone had a
wonderful + relaxed evening
Let's do that in Belmont!


I
want a
vibrant
city scape
with housing!


This could be
O.K. with a better
building design.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HOW CAN BELMONT
EXPEDITE THE
PERMITTING APPROVAL
PROCESS?

The Overlay Code

PUBLIC DRAFT 1

E. THE OVERLAY CODE

To bring Belmont Center's community-driven vision to life, existing zoning regulations must evolve to support a more walkable, vibrant, and economically diverse downtown. The current zoning, while flexible in some respects, relies heavily on the issuance of Special Permits from the Belmont Zoning Board of Appeals. These permits allow for increases in building height and floor area ratio (FAR), but are reviewed on a case-by-case basis using a variety of subjective criteria, such as compatibility with nearby structures, potential shadow impacts, fire safety, traffic effects, and public benefit. This process lacks predictability and clarity developers and property owners need to invest confidently in the area.

To address these challenges, the Town of Belmont, in collaboration with the consultant team from Able City East, developed this Form-Based Code (FBC) specifically for the Belmont Center area. Unlike traditional zoning, which focuses on land use, a form-based code prioritizes the physical character of the built environment—how buildings relate to streets, sidewalks, and each other. This approach ensures that new development supports the creation of a walkable, visually cohesive, and mixed-use district that enhances both community life and economic performance.

F. THE ROLE OF OVERLAY DISTRICTS

This overlay will complement existing zoning by providing a clearer, more predictable regulatory framework that focuses on building form, frontage types, and public realm design. Key benefits include:

- Encouraging Expanded Commercial Development: Require that new multi-story buildings include commercial spaces beyond just the ground floor, while also promoting the use of rooftops for commercial or public purposes during suitable seasons.
- Preserving Architectural Character: Ensuring that new development respects Belmont's historical context while accommodating thoughtful growth.
- Improving Clarity and Accessibility: Using visual tools such as diagrams, street sections, and illustrations to make the zoning code more user-friendly for residents, property owners, and developers.
- Allowing Types of Housing Missing from Belmont: Allowing more diverse and smaller housing options within the center of Belmont to help address local affordability challenges while supporting a vibrant town center.

Form-Based Codes emphasize placemaking. By regulating the relationship between buildings and the public realm, they create more attractive, functional, and human-scaled environments. In Belmont Center, this means fostering a district where pedestrians feel welcome, businesses can thrive, and architectural integrity is preserved.

Belmont Center Form-Based Overlay Districts ♦ Page 6

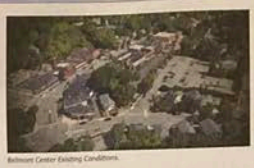
Before and After

PUBLIC DRAFT 1

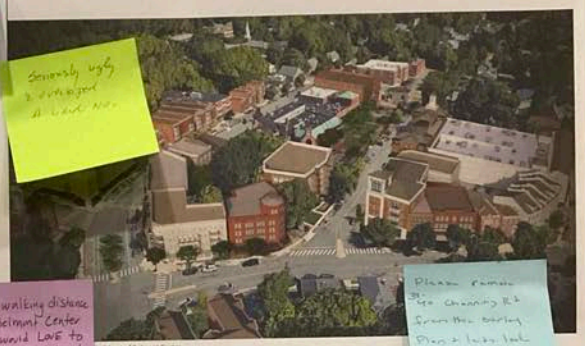
G. BELMONT CENTER BEFORE AND AFTER

While Belmont Center may appear to be fully built out to some, there remains significant opportunity for thoughtful growth and revitalization. A truly vibrant center isn't confined to a single street, and Belmont Center has the potential to expand and evolve, embracing its role as a more integrated, multi-faceted district.

NOTE: This renderings shown here are conceptual illustrations intended to demonstrate one possible outcome under the guidelines of the following Form-Based Code. It is for illustrative purposes only and does not represent an actual development proposal, plan, or project. The design shown is hypothetical and should not be interpreted as indicative of any future development decisions or approvals.



Belmont Center Existing Conditions



Build-out of Belmont Center

Yes! We need this. More housing units, more commercial activity/tax revenues, better quality of life and neighborhoods

I live walking distance to Belmont Center and would LOVE to see this additional density and liveliness!

Belmont Center Form-Based Overlay Districts ♦ Page 7

How to Use This Overlay

PUBLIC DRAFT 1

Claflin Street offers the ideal opportunity to transform from a auto-oriented parking lot into a pedestrian-friendly, commercial corridor. With on-street parking, wide sidewalks, street trees, and new building facades, Claflin Street could become a secondary "Main Street." Additionally, the area will continue to accommodate municipal parking in structured facilities behind the new street frontage, ensuring that the district's parking needs are met without sacrificing the quality of the streetscape.

Concord Avenue offers another strategic opportunity to enhance connectivity and expand the district. It connects Belmont Center to both the high school and the public park, providing a potential corridor for further economic activity. The area's office buildings could be redeveloped into street-oriented commercial properties or into a much-needed hotel, helping to create a more cohesive, pedestrian-friendly environment. This location also provides space for taller buildings, which could accommodate multiple floors of commercial building, maximizing the use of land. With shared parking in the rear of deeper lots, Belmont Center could better support new development while preserving valuable public spaces.

Through these transformations, Belmont Center could emerge as a more dynamic and connected district that enhances the quality of life for residents and the experience for visitors.

Belmont Center Form-Based Overlay Districts ♦ Page 8

H. HOW TO USE THIS FORM BASED OVERLAY

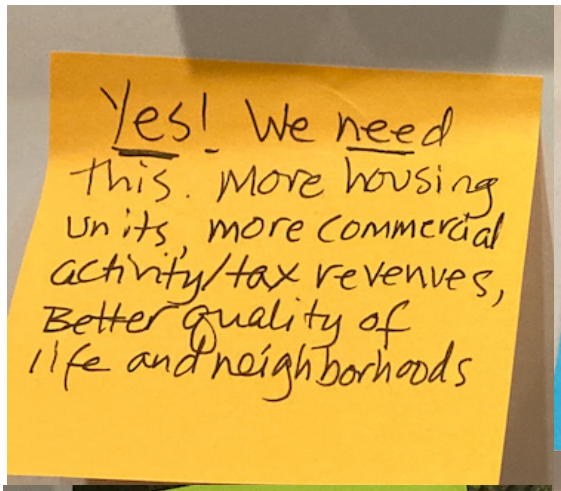
This Form-Based Code is structured to guide development and redevelopment within designated overlay districts through a clear, predictable framework rooted in physical form, public realm, and community priorities. The following steps will help users navigate and apply the code effectively:

1. **Determine If the Overlay Code Applies**
   Start by confirming whether the property in question lies within a designated Form-Based Overlay District. Refer to Section 2A: Establishment of Overlay Districts and consult the Regulating Plan (Section 2B) to identify district boundaries and applicable transect zones (FB1–FB5).
2. **Understand the Vision**
   Before proceeding, review the Introduction (Section 1) to understand the broader goals of the code, including economic development, public involvement, and the intended transformation of Belmont Center and surrounding areas. This context supports informed application of the standards.
3. **Locate the Transect Zone**
   Using the Regulating Plan, identify the specific Form-Based Transect Zone that applies to your property:
   - FB1 Edge
   - FB2 General
   - FB3 Center
   - FB4 Core
   - FB5 Gateway

   Each zone includes a distinct set of regulations tailored to its urban character and development intensity. See Sections 2E–2I for detailed standards.
4. **Check Permitted Uses**
   Review Section 3: Permitted Uses to confirm whether your intended use is allowed within the identified zone. This section outlines both listed uses and the process for considering uses not explicitly listed.
5. **Review Development Standards**
   Once the transect and use are confirmed, refer to Section 4: General Standards for guidance on:
   - Building and site design
   - Parking requirements
   - Lighting and landscaping
   - Stormwater management
   - Incentives for public benefits

   These standards ensure that private development contributes to a cohesive and high-quality public realm.
6. **Understand Streets and Civic Space Requirements**
   Review Section 5 to understand the role of streets and civic spaces in shaping the district. These public elements are key to achieving the code's placemaking objectives.
7. **Follow the Administrative Process**
   If your project is eligible and aligned with the code, consult Section 6: Administration for the procedures required to opt into the overlay, submit applications, attend pre-application meetings, and navigate the review and approval process.
8. **Refer to Definitions**
   Use Section 7: Definitions to clarify key terms and ensure correct interpretation of the code language.

Belmont Center Form-Based Overlay Districts ♦ Page 9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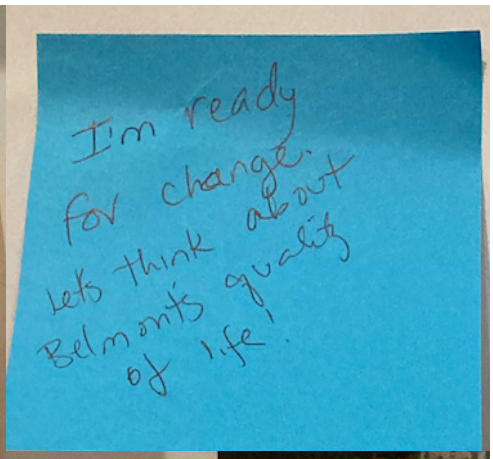
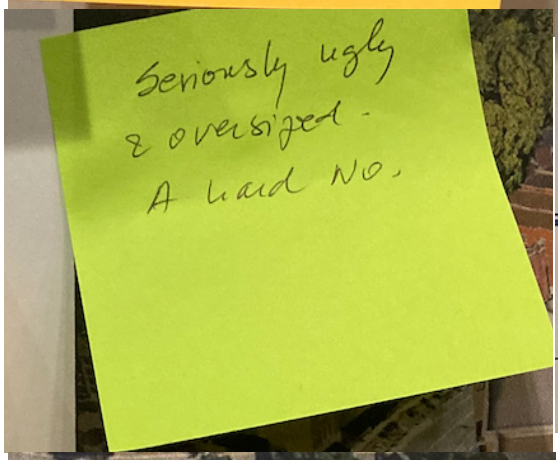
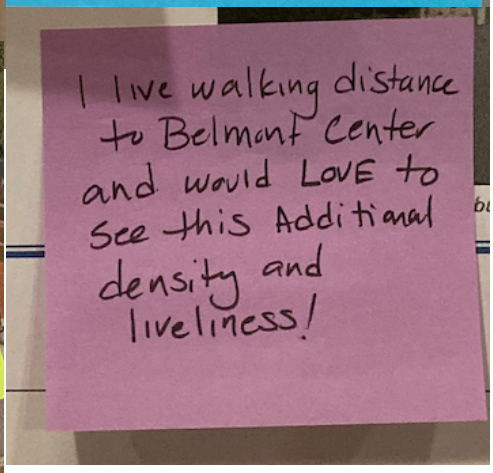

I'm ready for change. Lets think about Belmont's quality of life!


Seriously ugly & oversized. A hard No.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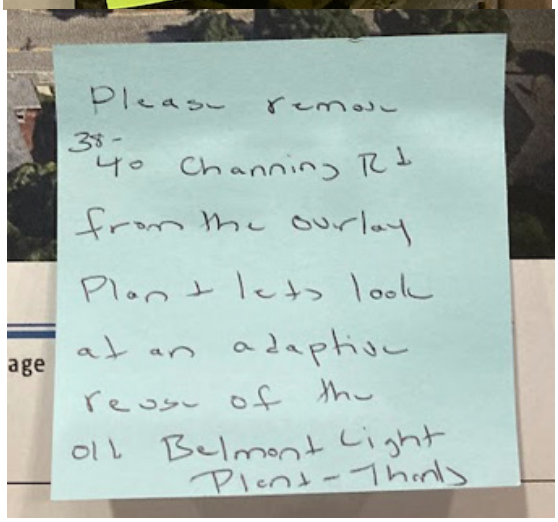

Please remove 38-40 Channing Rd from the Overlay Plan + lets look at an adaptive reuse of the old Belmont Light Plant - Thanks

2. FORM-BASED OVERLAY DISTRICTS

PUBLIC DRAFT 1

2 FORM-BASED OVERLAY DISTRICTS

A. ESTABLISHMENT OF OVERLAY DISTRICTS

The Form-Based Overlay hereby establishes the following Form-Based Districts, as shown on the Regulating Plan herein. Each area is defined by characteristics that correspond with building placement, building form, and building height, all of which influence the level of walkability and vibrancy of a place. The use of this overlay code increases the commercial square footage in the district by requiring a minimum of two floors of non-residential space. The Form-Based Overlay Districts for Belmont include:

FB1: Edge

DESIRED FORM:

- Buildings up to 2.5 stories in height
- Architectural appearance consistent with single-family homes
- Commercial and office uses allowed within a residential form
- Pitched roofs strongly encouraged to maintain compatibility with adjacent neighborhoods
- Limited number of attached dwelling units or townhomes permitted
- Porches, stoops, and front yards encouraged to blend with adjacent streetscapes

INTENT:

The FB1 district serves as a transitional zone between the denser commercial core and surrounding residential neighborhoods. It is designed to maintain the scale, rhythm, and character of nearby single-family homes while subtly integrating commercial and office activity. This form supports neighborhood-serving uses such as small offices, studios, and professional services without disrupting the residential feel. By allowing limited attached housing types and reinforcing the pitched-roof typology, this district ensures a sensitive and visually compatible edge condition that supports walkability and a gradual increase in use intensity.

FB2: General

DESIRED FORM:

- 2.5 to 3.5 story buildings
- Mix of detached, semi-detached, and attached building types
- Combination of pitched and flat roofs
- Varied front setbacks to respond to adjacent uses
- Rear yard transitions with landscaping or step-backs to reduce impact on neighboring residential properties

INTENT:

The FB2 district is a critical transition area that bridges the commercial Leonard Street corridor and the quieter residential neighborhood along Pleasant Street. It enables a diverse range of small-scale commercial, and mixed-use buildings that are compatible with nearby single-family homes. Development should be massed and scaled to protect views, light, and privacy for existing residences, particularly at the rear of the lots. This zone encourages architectural diversity and flexibility, while ensuring a harmonious relationship between different land use intensities.

PUBLIC DRAFT 1

FB3: Center

DESIRED FORM:

- 3 to 4 story buildings
- Attached mixed-use buildings with continuous streetwall
- Predominantly flat roofs to allow rooftop activation
- Narrower lot widths and active frontages

INTENT:

The FB3 district reinforces the pedestrian-oriented character of Leonard Street by preserving and enhancing its continuous streetwall and traditional retail presence. It allows modest increases in building height to support new commercial opportunities, with an emphasis on human-scale design. Rooftop spaces may be used for dining, gardens, or other amenities, providing added value while respecting nearby uses. The goal is to sustain and strengthen the walkable village feel of Belmont Center, with high-quality infill and redevelopment that respects existing scale and rhythm.

FB4: Core

DESIRED FORM:

- 4 to 5 story attached buildings
- Structured parking located behind or beneath buildings
- Flat roofs with potential for green or activated roof uses
- Urban street edge with minimal setbacks

INTENT:

The FB4 district establishes the functional core of Belmont Center. Located at the heart of activity, it accommodates higher-intensity commercial and mixed-use development while supporting parking solutions that serve the broader district. The form and scale are intended to promote a vibrant, walkable environment, with buildings that define and activate the public realm along Claflin Street and Concord Avenue. Structured parking integrated into building footprints or rear lots enhances accessibility and reduces the impact of surface lots. This area is key to long-term economic vitality and district-wide connectivity.

FB5: Gateway

DESIRED FORM:

- 5 to 7 story buildings, tallest in Belmont Center
- Attached or detached buildings with prominent entries and façades
- Structured parking within or behind buildings
- Flat roofs with opportunity for signage, gardens, or hospitality amenities
- Signature architecture encouraged for gateway identity

INTENT:

FB5 functions as the signature gateway to Belmont Center, offering the greatest opportunity for vertical development and landmark architecture. It is envisioned as the location for hospitality and larger commercial uses. The generous lot depths and building heights allow for integrated structured parking and mixed-use programs. As the most urban district, FB5 should convey a strong identity for the Center while transitioning appropriately to adjacent transects. Development here should serve as a visual anchor and economic catalyst for the surrounding area.

Very ugly. Traffic will be horrible.

WAS THERE BEEN A FISCAL ANALYSIS CONCERN FOR VACANT SPACE?

Special Requirements Plan

PUBLIC DRAFT 1

D. SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS

1. PURPOSE AND INTENT

The Special Requirements Plan ensures that certain features are required to ensure that the intent of the Form-Based Overlay District is carried out when development occurs. This includes Required Storefronts, a Mid-block Arcade to allow better pedestrian access without having to walk though businesses, and special Rear Accommodations to ensure adjacent neighbors needs are addressed. These requirements apply to both new developments and significant redevelopments or renovations of existing buildings within these zones.

2. REQUIRED STOREFRONT

In all areas designated as Required Storefront on the Special Requirements Plan, the development of properties shall include Storefronts at street level.

3. MID-BLOCK ARCADE

The Mid-Block Arcade is a critical urban design feature intended to enhance pedestrian permeability within larger block between Claflin and Leonard Street. It provides a convenient, safe, engaging passageway that connects parking areas to Leonard Street. The Mid-Block Arcade serves to:

- Break down large block lengths, improving walkability;
- Create additional opportunities for public-facing commercial frontage;
- Support a fine-grained pedestrian network that enhances the character and functionality of the district;
- Improve connectivity;
- Provide opportunities for public interaction and visual interest through design, lighting, and retail activity.

A Mid-block Arcade is required at the ground level connecting Claflin Street to Leonard Street. It should not be located within 100' of Alexander Street or Channing Road as noted on the Special Requirements Plan. A second Mid-block Arcade may be permitted provided it is not within 100' of the first Mid-block Arcade.

The Mid-Block arcade shall be a minimum of 12' in width.

Requirements for a Mid-Block Arcade can be found in Section 4.1.2.

4. REAR ACCOMMODATIONS

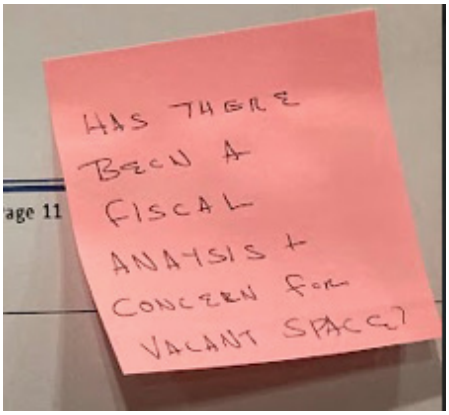
In all areas designated as needing Rear Accommodations, additional rear setbacks are required as designated in the FB2 District Standards. These rear accommodations are intended to minimize the impact of commercial lots abutting residential lots along a rear lot line. The rear accommodations are intended to ensure upper floors of commercial structures are not too close to the rear lot lines and that private residences retain their privacy as well as light.

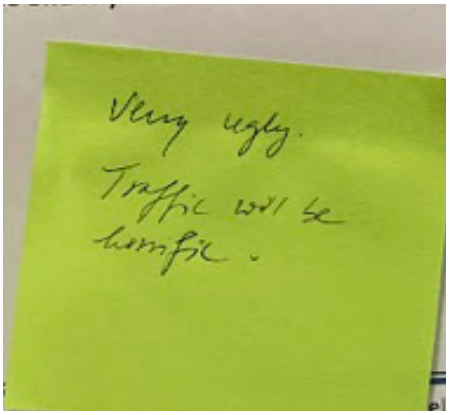
Requirements for a Rear Accommodations can be found in Section 2.F.4.

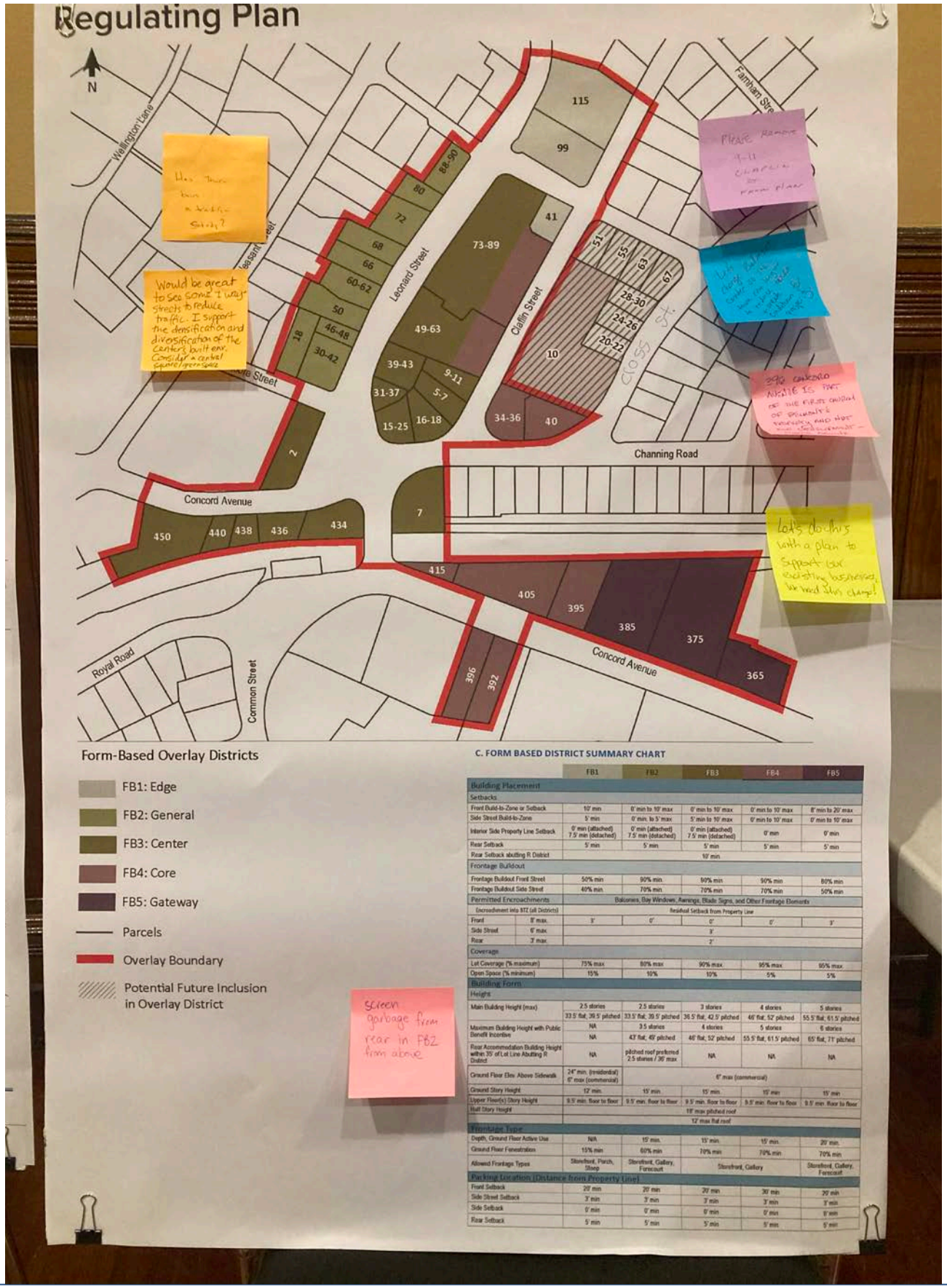
Example of a Mid-Block Arcade

PUBLIC DRAFT 1

5. SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS PLAN

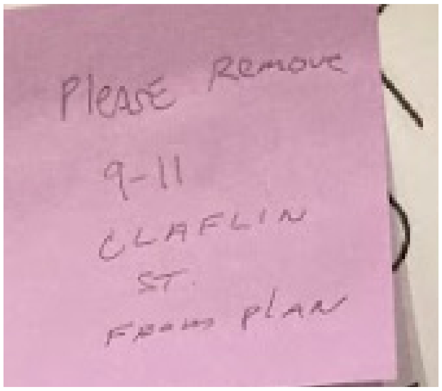

age 11
HAS THERE
BEEN A
FISCAL
ANALYSIS +
CONCERN FOR
VACANT SPACE?

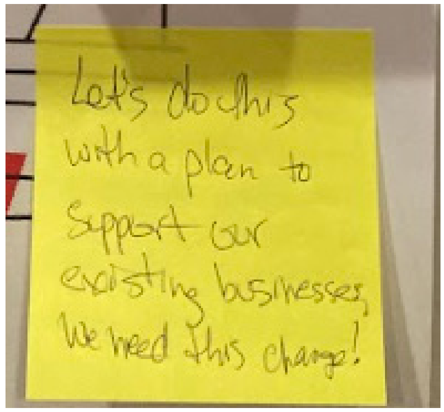

Very ugly.
Traffic will be
horrific.

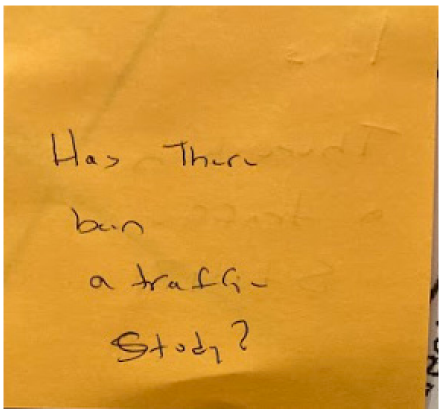


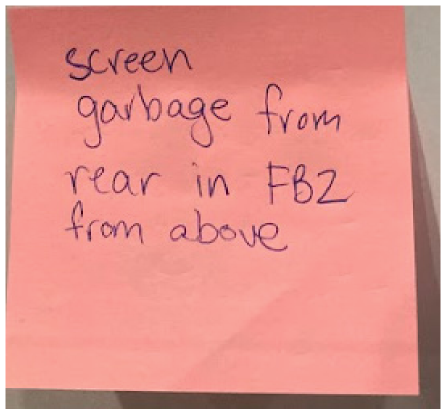
C. FORM BASED DISTRICT SUMMARY CHART

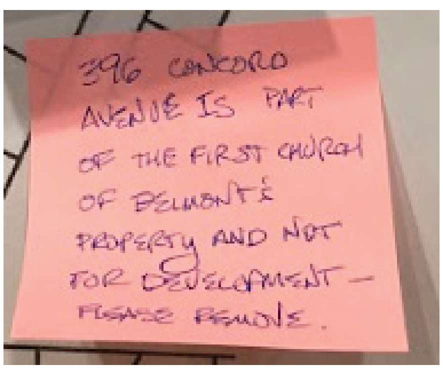
		FB1	FB2	FB3	FB4	FB5
Building Placement						
Setbacks						
Front Build-to-Zone or Setback		10' min	0' min to 10' max	0' min to 10' max	0' min to 10' max	8' min to 20' max
Side Street Build-to-Zone		5' min	0' min. to 5' max	5' min to 10' max	0' min to 10' max	0' min to 10' max
Interior Side Property Line Setback		0' min (attached) 7.5' min (detached)	0' min (attached) 7.5' min (detached)	0' min (attached) 7.5' min (detached)	0' min	0' min
Rear Setback		5' min	5' min	5' min	5' min	5' min
Rear Setback abutting R District		10' min				
Frontage Buildout						
Frontage Buildout Front Street		50% min	90% min	90% min	90% min	80% min
Frontage Buildout Side Street		40% min	70% min	70% min	70% min	50% min
Permitted Encroachments		Balconies, Bay Windows, Awnings, Blade Signs, and Other Frontage Elements				
Encroachment into ROW (all Districts)		Residual Setback from Property Line				
Front	8' max.	3'	0'	0'	0'	3'
Side Street	6' max	3'				
Rear	3' max	2'				
Coverage						
Lot Coverage (% maximum)		75% max	80% max	90% max	95% max	95% max
Open Space (% minimum)		15%	10%	10%	5%	5%
Building Form						
Height						
Main Building Height (max)		2.5 stories	2.5 stories	3 stories	4 stories	5 stories
		33.5' flat, 39.5' pitched	33.5' flat, 39.5' pitched	36.5' flat, 42.5' pitched	46' flat, 52' pitched	55.5' flat, 61.5' pitched
Maximum Building Height with Public Benefit Incentive		NA	3.5 stories	4 stories	5 stories	6 stories
		NA	43' flat, 49' pitched	46' flat, 52' pitched	55.5' flat, 61.5' pitched	65' flat, 71' pitched
Rear Accommodation Building Height within 35' of Lot Line Abutting R District		NA	pitched roof preferred 2.5 stories / 36' max	NA	NA	NA
Ground Floor Elev. Above Sidewalk		24" min. (residential) 6" max (commercial)	6" max (commercial)			
Ground Story Height		12' min.	15' min.	15' min.	15' min.	15' min.
Upper Floor(s) Story Height		9.5' min. floor to floor	9.5' min. floor to floor	9.5' min. floor to floor	9.5' min. floor to floor	9.5' min. floor to floor
Half Story Height		18' max pitched roof				
		12' max flat roof				
Frontage Type						
Depth, Ground Floor Active Use		NA	15' min.	15' min.	15' min.	20' min.
Ground Floor Fenestration		15% min	60% min	70% min	70% min	70% min
Allowed Frontage Types		Storefront, Porch, Stoop	Storefront, Gallery, Forecourt	Storefront, Gallery		Storefront, Gallery, Forecourt
Parking Location (Distance from Property Line)						
Front Setback		20' min	20' min	20' min	30' min	20' min
Side Street Setback		3' min	3' min	3' min	3' min	3' min
Side Setback		0' min	0' min	0' min	0' min	0' min
Rear Setback		5' min	5' min	5' min	5' min	5' min

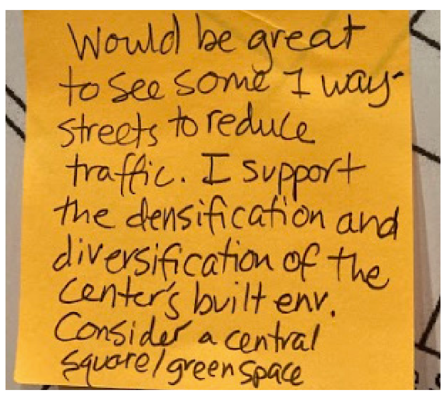

Please Remove
9-11
CLAFLIN
ST.
FROM PLAN

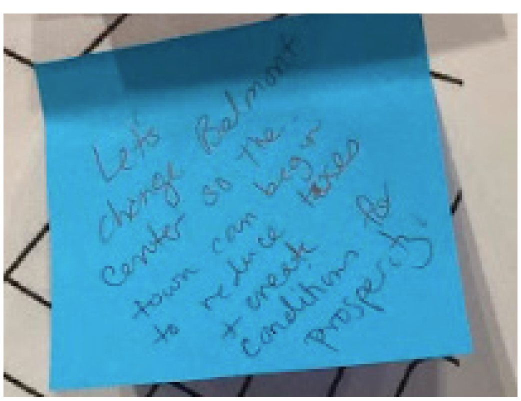

Let's do this
with a plan to
Support our
existing businesses,
We need this change!


Has There
been
a traffic
Study?


screen
garbage from
rear in FB2
from above


396 CONCORD
AVENUE IS PART
OF THE FIRST CHURCH
OF BELMONT'S
PROPERTY AND NOT
FOR DEVELOPMENT –
PLEASE REMOVE.


Would be great
to see some 1 way-
streets to reduce
traffic. I support
the densification and
diversification of the
center's built env.
Consider a central
square/green space


Let's
change Belmont
center so the
town can begin
to reduce taxes
+ create
conditions for
prosperity!

FB1: Edge

PUBLIC DRAFT 1

FB1

E. EDGE

This district includes residential sized buildings on the edge of the commercial area and encourages the addition of more commercial or office uses. It allows 2.5 stories and 37 feet of height, a similar as adjacent residential buildings.

In the Edge Form-Based District, buildings are required to be street-oriented, and typically detached. The intent of this zone is to maintain a residential character similar to the surrounding single family neighborhoods which surround the Center and General Districts while encouraging commercial uses within those structures.

Figure 1.1 - Illustrative example of buildings and site arrangement in the Edge Form-Based District

Belmont Center Form-Based Overlay Districts ♦ Page 16

PUBLIC DRAFT 1

FB1

1. EXAMPLES

Two story commercial building.

Live/Work units have ground level storefronts with residential above.

Multi family buildings are street oriented but set further back than in the other Form-Based Districts.

A corner store and ground level commercial uses.

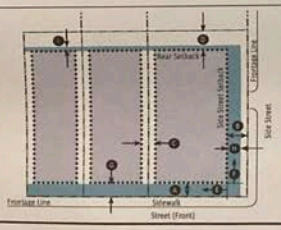
Single family detached houses with front porches transitions to commercial uses.

Belmont Center Form-Based Overlay Districts ♦ Page 17

PUBLIC DRAFT 1

FB1

2. BUILDING FORM



Key

Property Line
Setback Line
Potential Building Area
Encroachment Area

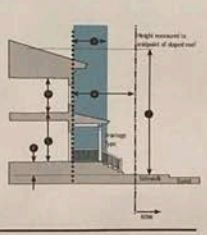
A. Building Placement	
Setbacks	
Front Setback	10' min.
Side Street Setback	5' min.
Interior Side Property Line Setback	3' min. (attached) 7.5' min. (detached)
Rear Setback	5' min.
Rear Setback abutting R District	10' min
Frontage Buildout	
Building façade within Build-to-Zone	
Front Street Frontage	50% min.
Side Street Frontage	40% min.
Permitted Encroachments	
Front	8' max. / Residual Setback from Property Line: 3'
Side Street	6' max. / 3'
Rear	3' max. / 3'
Coverage	
Lot Coverage (% maximum)	75%
Open Space (% minimum)	15%

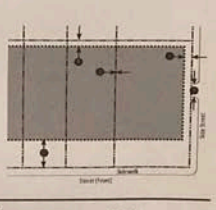
Belmont Center Form-Based Overlay Districts ♦ Page 18

PUBLIC DRAFT 1

FB1

3. PARKING





Key

Property Line
Setback Line
Building Encroachment Area
Parking Area

B. Building Form	
Height	
Main Building (max)	2.5 stories max 35 ft' flat, 39.5' pitched roof
Maximum Building Height with Public Benefit Incentive	NA
Rear Accommodation Building Height within 35' of Lot Line Abutting R District	N/A
Ground Floor Elev. Above Sidewalk	24" min. (residential) 6" max (commercial)
Ground Story Height	12' min.
Upper Floor(s) Story Height	9.5' min. floor to floor
Half Story Height	18' max pitched roof 12' max flat roof
C. Frontage Type	
Depth, Ground Floor Active Use	N/A
Ground Floor Fenestration	15% min
Allowed Frontage Types	Storefront, Porch, Stoop
D. Miscellaneous	
All buildings must have a Principal Entrance along the Front façade.	

A. Parking Location (Distance from Property Line)	
Front Setback	20' min
Side Street Setback	3' min
Side Setback	0' min
Rear Setback	5' min
Parking Curb Cut Width	20' max.

B. Parking Design Requirements

Parking shall be provided as established in the Parking Section 40.

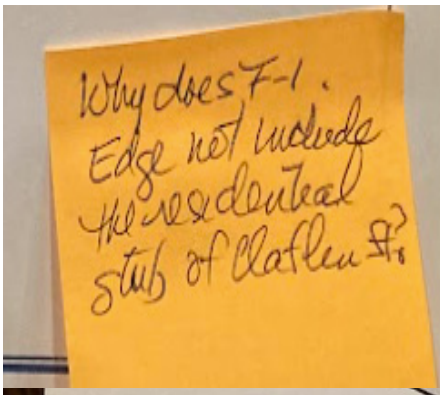
Parking shall be located behind the front façade of buildings and accessed from Side Streets or through adjacent parking areas whenever possible.

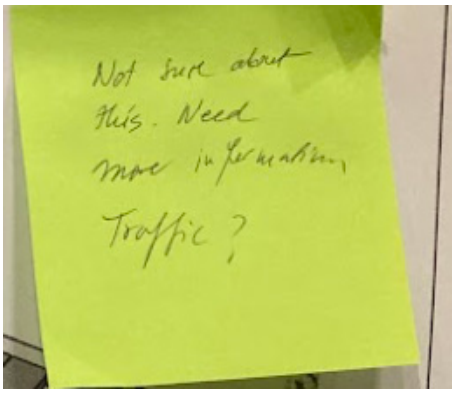
Streetscreens, Garden Walls, Fences, or bollards are required along all un-built Street Right-of-Ways adjacent to parking.

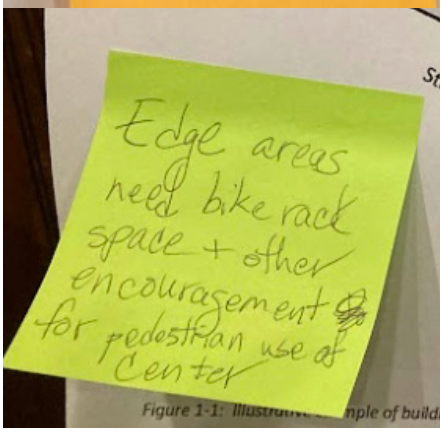
Shared driveways between adjacent lots are encouraged to reduce curb cuts.

Shared parking areas, garages and decks are encouraged to allow more active frontages and reduce the number of on lot parking areas.

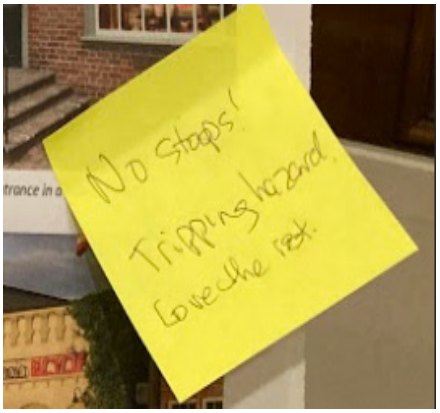
Belmont Center Form-Based Overlay Districts ♦ Page 19

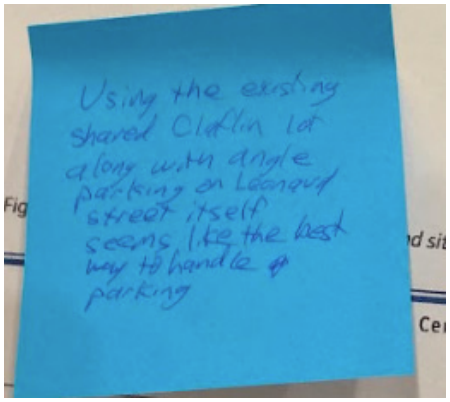

Why does F-1.
Edge not include
the residential
stub of Claflen St?

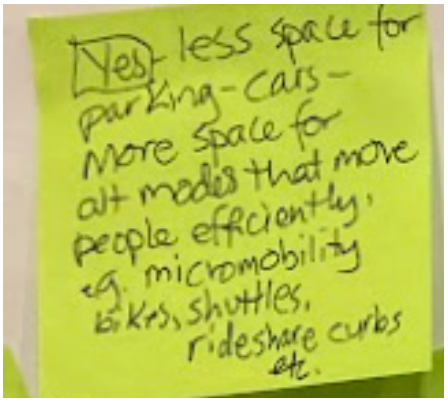

Not sure about
this. Need
more information
Traffic?

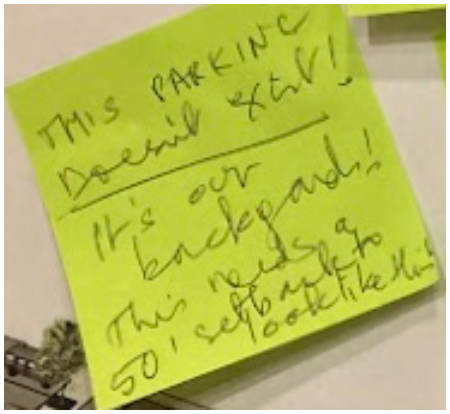

Edge areas
need bike rack
space + other
encouragement
for pedestrian use of
Center

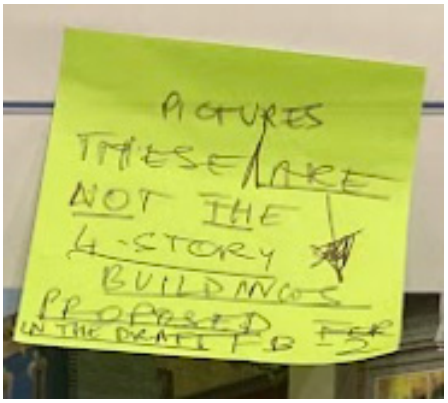

FB2: General
PUBLIC DRAFT 1
FB2
F. GENERAL
This district provides a transition from the main commercial areas to the surrounding residential neighborhoods. Buildings may be 2.5 stories and up to 48 feet in height.
When providing a public benefit, an additional story my be permitted. Rear accommodations for abutting residential neighbors are included within this district.
Yes less space for parking-cars-More space for alt modes that move people efficiently. eg micromobility bikes, shuttles, rideshare curbs
1. EXAMPLES
2. BUILDING FORM
3. PARKING
4. REAR ACCOMODATION
Street (Front)
Side Street

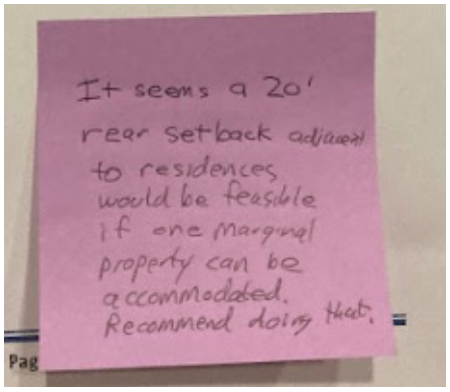

No stoops!
Tripping hazard.
Love the rest.

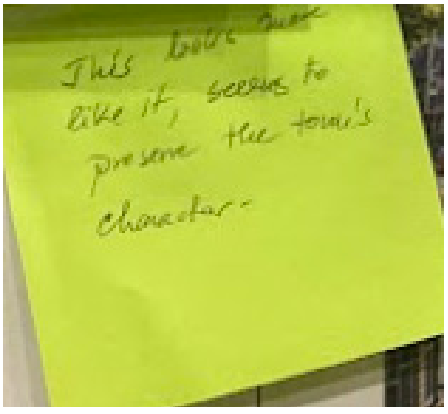

Using the existing shared Claflin lot along with angle parking on Leonard street itself seems like the best way to handle the parking

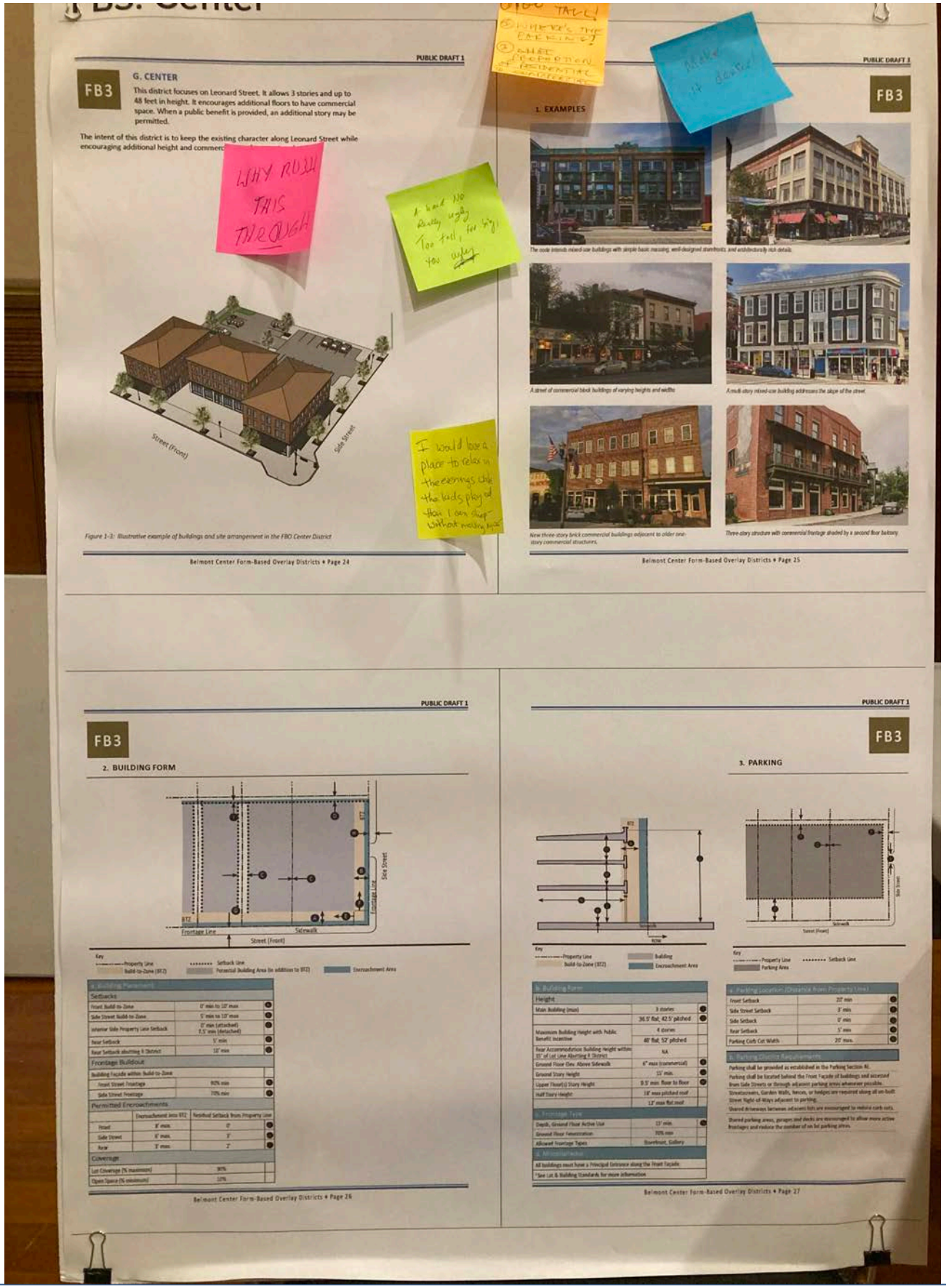

Yes less space for parking - cars - More space for alt modes that move people efficiently, eg. micromobility bikes, shuttles, rideshare curbs etc.

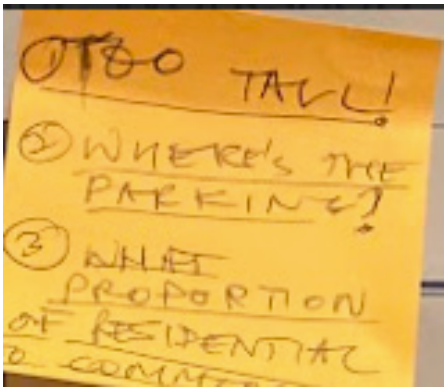

THIS PARKING Doesn't exist!
It's our backyard!
This needs a 50' setback to look like this

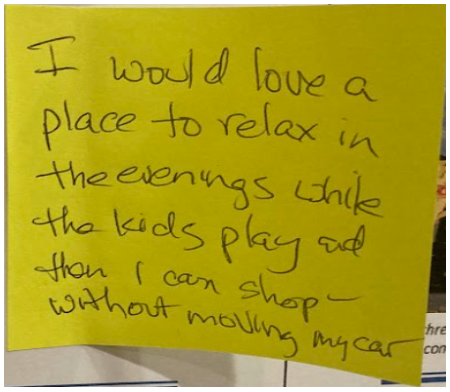

PICTURES
THESE ARE
NOT THE
4-STORY
BUILDINGS
PROPOSED
IN THE DRAFT FBO

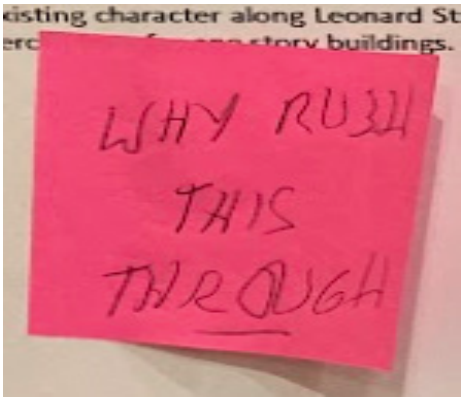

It seems a 20'
rear setback adjacent
to residences
would be feasible
if one marginal
property can be
accommodated.
Recommend doing that.

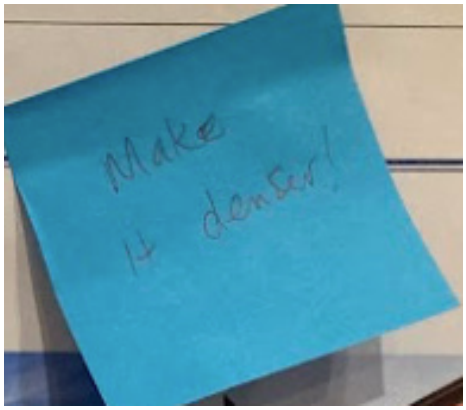

This looks like it seems to preserve the town's character.

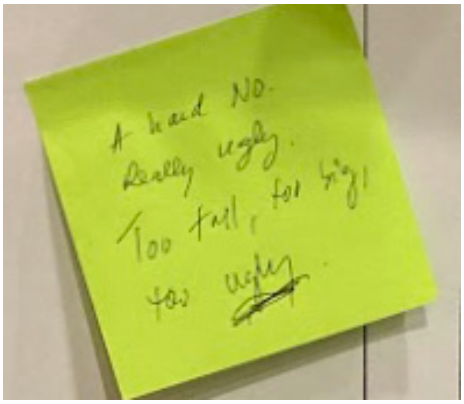

PUBLIC DRAFT 1
FB3
G. CENTER
This district focuses on Leonard Street. It allows 3 stories and up to 48 feet in height. It encourages additional floors to have commercial space. When a public benefit is provided, an additional story may be permitted.
The intent of this district is to keep the existing character along Leonard Street while encouraging additional height and commerc
WHY ROW THIS THROUGH
I would love a place to relax in the evenings while the kids played that I can stop without moving
Street (Front)
Side Street
Figure 1-1: Illustrative example of buildings and site arrangement in the FBO Center District
Belmont Center Form-Based Overlay Districts ♦ Page 24
1. EXAMPLES
The code intends mixed-use buildings with simple basic massing, well-designed storefronts, and architecturally rich details.
A street of commercial brick buildings of varying heights and widths
A multi-story mixed-use building addresses the slope of the street.
New three-story brick commercial buildings adjacent to older one-story commercial structures.
Three-story structure with commercial frontage shaded by a second floor balcony.
Belmont Center Form-Based Overlay Districts ♦ Page 25
2. BUILDING FORM
Frontage Line
Sidewalk
Street (Front)
Side Street
Key
Property Line
Setback Line
Build-to-Zone (BTZ)
Potential Building Area (in addition to BTZ)
Encroachment Area
Setbacks
Front Build-to-Zone
Side Street Build-to-Zone
Interior Side Property Line Setback
Rear Setback
Rear Setback abutting R District
Frontage Buildout
Building Façade within Build-to-Zone
Front Street Frontage
Side Street Frontage
Permitted Encroachments
Front
Side Street
Rear
Coverage
Lot Coverage (% maximum)
Open Space (% minimum)
Belmont Center Form-Based Overlay Districts ♦ Page 26
3. PARKING
Key
Property Line
Setback Line
Building
Encroachment Area
Parking Area
Height
Main Building (max)
Maximum Building Height with Public Benefit Incentive
Ground Floor Elev. Above Sidewalk
Ground Story Height
Upper Floor(s) Story Height
Half Story Height
Depth, Ground Floor Active Use
Ground Floor Fenestration
Allowed Frontage Types
All buildings must have a Principal Entrance along the Front Façade
*See Lot & Building Standards for more information
Front Setback
Side Street Setback
Side Setback
Rear Setback
Parking Curb Cut Width
Parking shall be provided as established in the Parking Section XI.
Parking shall be located behind the Front Façade of buildings and accessed from Side Streets or through adjacent parking areas wherever possible.
Streetscreens, Garden Walls, fences, or hedges are required along all un-built Street Right-of-Ways adjacent to parking.
Shared driveways between adjacent lots are encouraged to reduce curb cuts.
Shared parking areas, garages and decks are encouraged to allow more active frontages and reduce the number of on lot parking areas.
Belmont Center Form-Based Overlay Districts ♦ Page 27


TOO TALL!
WHERE'S THE PARKING?
WHAT PROPORTION OF RESIDENTIAL


I would love a place to relax in the evenings while the kids play out then I can shop without moving my car


isting character along Leonard St
story buildings.
WHY RUSH THIS THROUGH


Make it denser!


A hard NO.
Really ugly.
Too tall, too big!
too ugly

FB4: Core

PUBLIC DRAFT 1

FB4

H. CORE

This district forms the new core of the Belmont Center area. It is concentrated along Claflin Street and Concord Avenue and allows 4 stories and up to 65 feet of height. To maximize vibrancy and walkability, this district adds an additional street for commercial addresses to the area.

It is planned to host a mix of commercial and residential structures. Priority is placed on optimizing the physical characteristics of the built environment for increased walkability. While much of the land encompassed by this district is currently a parking lot, the intent is to facilitate a transition of Claflin Street to an active street with commercial addresses along with new structured parking. When a public benefit is provided, an additional story of height may be permitted.

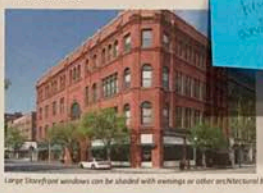
Figure 1-4: Illustrative example of buildings and site arrangement in the FB4 Core District

Belmont Center Form-Based Overlay Districts ♦ Page 28

PUBLIC DRAFT 1

FB4

1. EXAMPLES



Large storefront windows can be shaded with awnings or other architectural building features.

The shallow build-to-zone locates buildings at the sidewalk

The height and massing on this district is based on the four-story buildings

Large, mixed use buildings face public spaces.

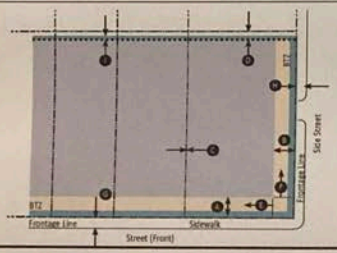
Three and four story buildings can line parking structures.

Belmont Center Form-Based Overlay Districts ♦ Page 29

PUBLIC DRAFT 1

FB4

2. BUILDING FORM



Key

Property Line | Setback Line | Build-to-Zone (BTZ) | Potential Building Area (in addition to BTZ) | Encroachment Area

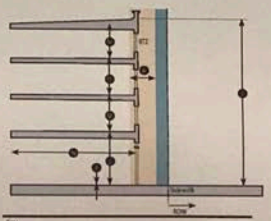
A. Building Placement		
Setbacks		
Front Build-to-Zone	5' min to 10' max	●
Side Street Build-to-Zone	5' min to 10' max	●
Interior Side Property Line Setback	0' min	●
Rear Setback	5' min	●
Rear Setback abutting R District	20' min	●
Frontage Buildout		
Building Façade within Build-to-Zone		
Front Street Frontage	90% min	●
Side Street Frontage	70% min	●
Permitted Encroachments		
	Encroachment into BTZ	Resultant Setback from Property Line
Front	8' max.	2'
Side Street	8' max.	2'
Rear	3' max.	2'
Coverage		
Lot Coverage (% maximum)	95%	
Open Space (% minimum)	5%	

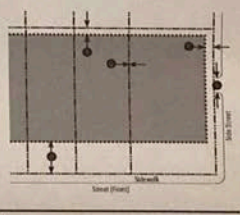
Belmont Center Form-Based Overlay Districts ♦ Page 30

PUBLIC DRAFT 1

FB4

3. PARKING





Key

Property Line | Building | Build-to-Zone (BTZ) | Encroachment Area

Key

Property Line | Setback Line | Parking Area

B. Building Form		
Height		
Main Building (max)	4 stories	●
	40' flat; 52' pitched	●
Maximum Building Height with Public Benefit Incentive	5 stories	
	50.5' flat; 61.5' pitched	
Rear Accommodation Building Height within 35' of Lot Line Abutting R District	NA	
Ground Floor Elev. Above Sidewalk	0" max (commercial)	●
Ground Story Height	15' min	●
Upper Floor(s) Story Height	9.5' min. floor to floor	●
Half Story Height	18' max pitched roof	
	12' max flat roof	
C. Frontage Type		
Depth, Ground Floor Active Use	15' min.	●
Ground Floor Fenestration	70% min	
Allowed Frontage Types	Storefront, Gallery	
D. Miscellaneous		
All buildings must have a Principal Entrance along the Front Façade.		

A. Parking Location (Distance from Property Line)	
Front Setback	20' min
Side Street Setback	3' min
Side Setback	0' min
Rear Setback	5' min
Parking Curb Cut Width	20' max.

B. Parking District Requirements

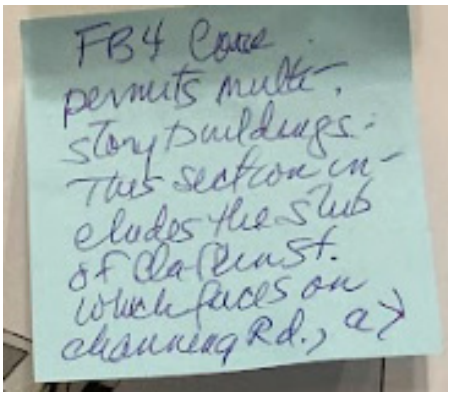
Parking shall be provided as established in the Parking Section 4E.

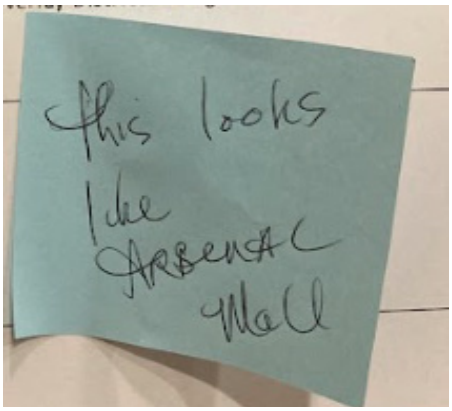
Parking shall be located behind the Front Façade of buildings and accessed from Side Streets or through adjacent parking areas wherever possible.

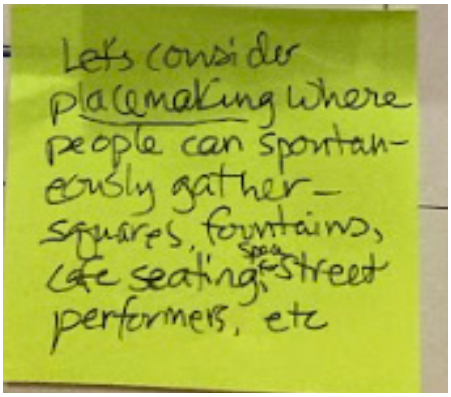
Streetscreens, Garden Walls, fences, or hedges are required along all on-built Street Right-of-Ways adjacent to parking.

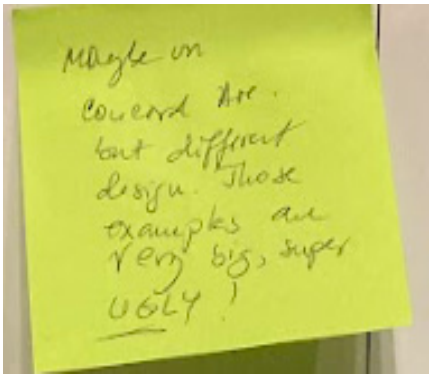
Shared driveways between adjacent lots are encouraged to reduce curb cuts. Shared parking areas, garages and decks are encouraged to allow more active frontages and reduce the number of on lot parking areas.

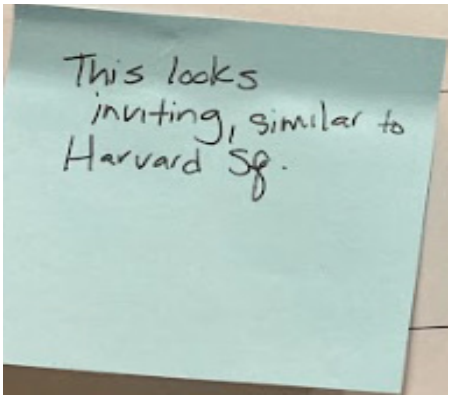
Belmont Center Form-Based Overlay Districts ♦ Page 31

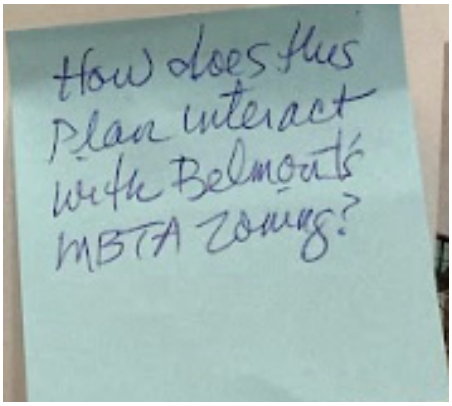

FB4 Core
permits multi-
story buildings.
This section in-
cludes the Sub
of Claflin St.
which faces on
Channing Rd., a

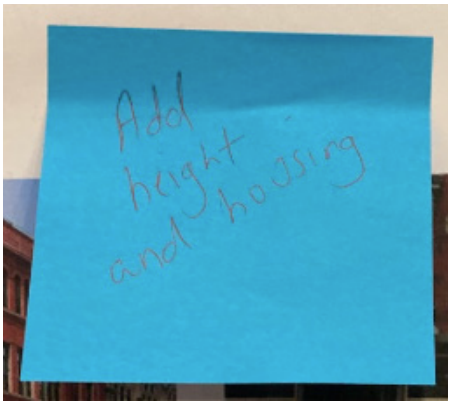

This looks
like
Arsenal
Mall


Lets consider
placemaking where
people can spontan-
eously gather-
squares, fountains,
cafe seating, street
performers, etc

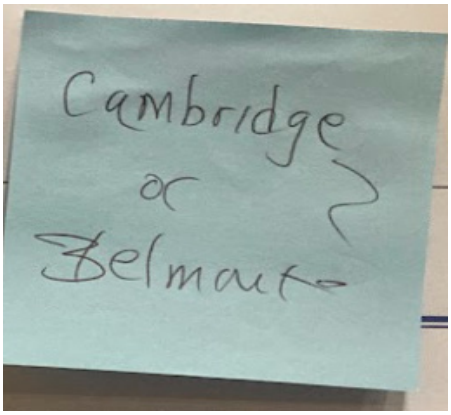

Maybe on
covered Arc.
but different
design. Those
examples are
very big, super
UGLY!

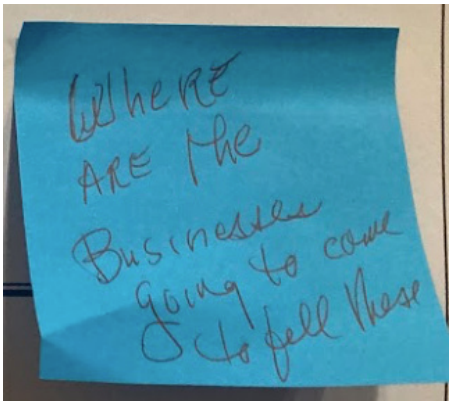

This looks
inviting, similar to
Harvard Sq.

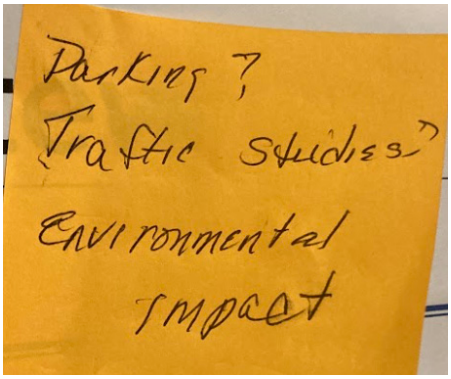

How does this
Plan interact
with Belmont's
MBTA Zoning?

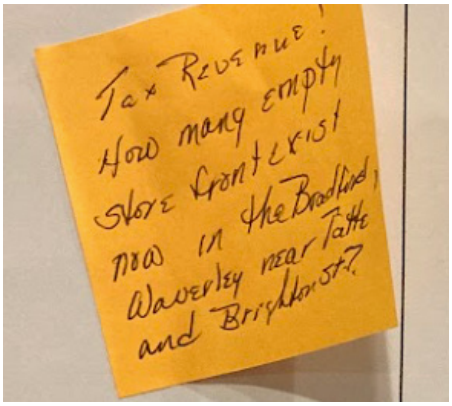

Add
height
and housing

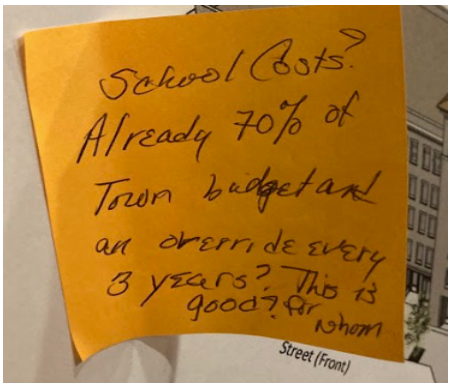

FB5: Gat y
PUBLIC DRAFT 1
FB5
1. GATEWAY
The FB5 District serves as the southeastern gateway to the Belmont Center area, forming a vital connection between the high school and Leonard Street. This district is envisioned as a vibrant, walkable destination that supports a dynamic mix of uses, reinforces a sense of place, and promotes an active public realm.
Designed to accommodate the highest intensity and diversity of development, the FB5 District allows buildings up to five stories and 76 feet in height. An additional story may be permitted when a public benefit is provided. The scale and height of buildings in this district are compatible with adjacent lower-scale neighborhoods due to natural and infrastructure buffers such as wide roads, public spaces, and the rail line.
A hotel use is strongly encouraged in this district. Buildings in this district are strongly encouraged to be redeveloped as a hotel or at minimum are required to have two floors of commercial square footage. These uses are compatible with the overall district supports economic activity while maintaining a pedestrian-oriented streetscape.
FB5 buildings are positioned along wide, shaded sidewalks that encourage walking and social interaction. Parking areas must be screened from view, and shared parking is encouraged. A parking structure is recommended to maximize the buildable footprint and support parking needs.
Street (Front)
Side Street
Figure 1-5: Illustrative example of buildings and site arrangement in the FB5 Gateway District
Belmont Center Form-Based Overlay Districts ♦ Page 32
Cambridge or Belmont
PUBLIC DRAFT 1
FB5
1. EXAMPLES
Entrances to buildings and storefronts should be distinct.
Upper floors can be commercial uses like gyms, rooftop restaurants, office space, or personal services.
Parking garages and decks can be lined with businesses facing the streets.
Belmont Center Form-Based Overlay Districts ♦ Page 33
Please no flat buildings!
PUBLIC DRAFT 1
FB5
2. BUILDING FORM
Frontage Line
Sidewalk
Street (Front)
Side Street
Belmont Center Form-Based Overlay Districts ♦ Page 34
PUBLIC DRAFT 1
FB5
3. PARKING
Belmont Center Form-Based Overlay Districts ♦ Page 35

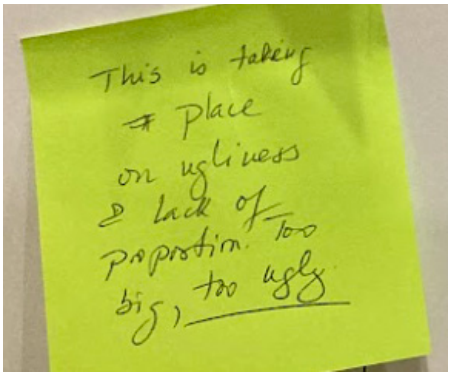

Cambridge
or
Belmont


Where
ARE the
Businesses
going to come
to fill these


Parking?
Traffic studies?
Environmental
Impact


Tax Revenue!
How many empty
store fronts exist
now in the Bradford,
Waverley near Tatte
and Brightmoor?


School Costs?
Already 70% of
Town budget and
an override every
3 years? This is
good? for whom
Street (Front)


This is taking
place
on ugliness
& lack of
proportion. Too
big, too ugly

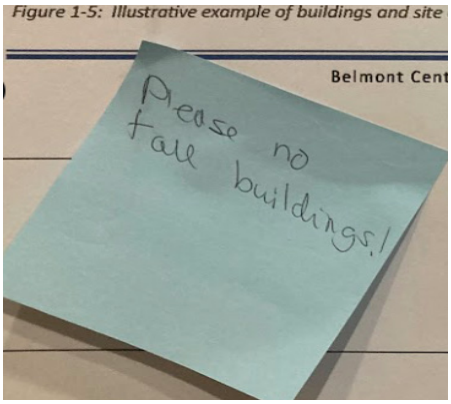


Figure 1-5: Illustrative example of buildings and site
Belmont Cent
Please no
tall buildings!

3. PERMITTED USES

PUBLIC DRAFT 1

3 PERMITTED USES

The Permitted Uses Table lists the various types of uses and identifies whether or not a use is permitted By Right, By Special Permit, or as an Accessory Use.

Y (Yes) = Permitted By Right

N (No) = Not Permitted

SP = Special Permit

A = Accessory Use

A. LISTED USES

1. **PERMITTED USE**
   A use that is allowed by right in a Form-Based District because it is considered to be consistent with the vision and goals established for that Form-Based District.
2. **BY SPECIAL PERMIT**
   A use that is allowed By Special Permit shall seek approval by the Zoning Board of Appeals Special Permit Granting Authority.
3. **ACCESSORY USE**
   A use that is incidental and subordinate to the principal use of a property and located on the same lot or within the same building.

B. USE NOT LISTED:

Uses that are not listed are not allowed.

TABLE 1-2: PERMITTED USES

	FB1	FB2	FB3	FB4	FB5
RESIDENTIAL USE					
Single-Family Detached	N	N	N	N	N
Two-Family Detached	N	N	N	N	N
Multi-Family Residential	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Assisted Living Facility	SP	N	N	SP	N
Nursing Home	SP	N	N	SP	N
Congregate Care Facility	SP	N	N	N	N
Senior Active-Living Residential	Y	N	N	Y	SP
Live/Work Space	SP	SP	SP	N	SP
Lodging/Boarding	SP	N	SP	SP	N
COMMERCIAL					
Animal Services: Sales and Grooming	N	N	SP	SP	SP
Veterinary (No Boarding)	N	N	SP	SP	N
ATM Stand Alone	A	A	A	A	A
Bank (Financial Services)	Y	Y	Y	Y	A
Business Incubator	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Business Services	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Car Sharing or Rental	N	N	N	SP	A
Bicycle or Scooter Rental	Y	Y	Y	Y	A
Car Charging Station (accessory)	A	A	A	A	A
Craft Beverage Establishment	SP	SP	SP	SP	N
Dry Cleaning or Laundry Retail	N	N	Y	Y	A
Food Service Establishment	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Food Service Establishment, Formula Based	SP	SP	SP	SP	A-SP
Food Truck	-	SP	SP	SP	A-SP
Funeral Home	SP	N	N	N	N
Home Occupation (accessory)	SP	SP	SP	SP	N
Hotel or Lodging Establishment	N	N	N	N	Y
Job Printing	SP	SP	SP	SP	N
Medical Office	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Mixed-Use	Y	Y	Y	Y	SP
Office, General	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Open Air Business	SP	SP	SP	SP	A-SP
Parking Structure or Surface Parking Lot, Commercial	A	A	A	A	A
Personal Services	Y	Y	Y	Y	A
Place of Assembly, Amusement, or Athletic Exercise (Indoor)	N	Y	Y	Y	A-Y
Radio or Broadcasting Studio	N	N	Y	Y	N
Retail Sales	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Veterinary Hospital	N	N	SP	SP	N

PUBLIC DRAFT 1

TABLE 1-2: PERMITTED USES

	FB1	FB2	FB3	FB4	FB5
CIVIC / INSTITUTIONAL USE					
Arts Exhibition	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Community Center	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Day Care Center	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Library, Museum	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Public Use	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Religious & Educational Uses Protected by M.G.L. 40A, Sec. 3	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
School, Private, conducted for Profit, including nursery, dancing, and music schools	SP	SP	SP	SP	N
Shared Workspaces & Arts Education	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Theatre or Performance Space	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
PUBLIC FACILITIES					
Research Service	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Public Utilities (Water, Sewer, Electrical, Broadband)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Wireless Transmitter	N	N	N	SP	N
Community Center	N	N	A	A	A
Public Facilities & Services	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
OTHER USES					
Commercial Art Studio	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP
Brewery, Cidery, Winery, Meadery,	N	N	SP	SP	SP
Distillery (non-micro)	N	N	SP	SP	SP
Craft and Artisan Manufacturing or	N	Y	Y	Y	Y
Assembly	N	N	N	N	SP
Research & Development or Laboratory	N	N	N	N	Y

Why do Art studios need a special permit? Just curious...

4. GENERAL STANDARDS - Building Standards

PUBLIC DRAFT 1

4 GENERAL STANDARDS

A. PURPOSE

These General Standards apply to the Form-Based Overlay Districts and they will help new buildings fit the context set by the best the "Main Street" architecture found in New England. These standards also describe parking requirements and the design of signage, lighting, and public open space.

The character of new building façades should reflect and complement the materials and general scale of Belmont's local commercial structures. They should employ materials and construction techniques that will result in long-lasting structures both in durability and design expression and help deliver a high quality public realm.

B. APPLICABILITY

These Building Standards shall apply to all principal buildings in the Form-Based Overlay Districts.

1. The Building Height Standards shall apply to all new or improved buildings.
2. The Site Design Standards (Garden Walls, Fences and Screening; Lighting; Required Landscape) shall apply to all site plan applications.

C. BUILDINGS STANDARDS

New or substantially renovated buildings shall comply with the following:

1. **FAÇADE COMPOSITION**

   A. BASE, BODY AND CAP
   The Base, Body, and Cap of a building communicate height and break down the building into discernible parts to prevent them from being out of scale with the surrounding community. Expression lines can be used to distinguish between each component.

Figure 1-6: The Base, Body & Cap

i. Expression lines shall either be moldings extending a minimum of two inches, or jogs in the surface plane of the building wall greater than two inches.

ii. A building mass may be subdivided by expression lines into one, two, or three horizontal layers.

iii. Required expression lines:

a. An expression line shall be used at the top of Storefronts, which may incorporate a band for signage.

b. The top of each building with a flat roof should be emphasized with a projecting cornice. This cornice should feature a deeper projection, and therefore stronger shadow line, than any other expression line on a façade.

B. WIDE FAÇADES

i. To maintain visual interest, reinforce compatibility with surrounding context, and avoid monolithic building appearances, all new buildings shall incorporate façade articulation that breaks down massing and enhances the pedestrian experience.

ii. Façade Length Threshold: Any building façade facing a public street or pedestrian way that exceeds 60 feet in length shall be visually divided into smaller increments to reflect the scale and rhythm of traditional building patterns.

iii. Required Modulation Techniques: Façade articulation shall be achieved using the following techniques:

a. Changes in wall plane with a minimum depth or projection of 12 inches

b. Material or color changes that correspond with a structural bay or vertical break

c. Vertical articulation elements such as pilasters, engaged columns, or projecting bays.

d. Variation in roofline, including changes in parapet height or cornice detail

e. Recessed building entries or storefronts

f. Regularly spaced bay systems with visible structural rhythm

PUBLIC DRAFT 1

iv. Architectural Consistency: All modulation elements shall be architecturally integrated and consistent with the building's overall design language, rather than appearing as applied or decorative features.

v. Pedestrian Orientation: On street-facing façades, modulation shall contribute to a human-scaled environment by aligning with ground-level entrances, storefront divisions, or other pedestrian-oriented elements.

2. **PRIMARY ENTRANCES**
   The primary entrance of every building must directly face a street or a public space. A public space may include a central garden or courtyard when that public space opens directly onto the primary street. Additional building entrances are permitted.

3. **ENTRY / EXIT DOORS**
   Public entry and exit doors which swing outward shall be recessed into the facade a minimum of three (3) feet where the sidewalk abuts the building.

4. **WINDOW AND DOOR OPENINGS**

   a. Window and door openings in masonry facades should express a structural lintel above to express the conveyance of building weight. A similar method using wood trim can be used on wood-clad facades.

   b. Storefront windows shall extend up from the sill at least eight (8) feet above the adjacent sidewalk.

   c. Doors or entrances for public access shall be provided at intervals no greater than fifty (50) feet, unless otherwise approved. The intent is to maximize street activity, to provide pedestrians with frequent opportunities to enter buildings, and to minimize any expanses of inactive wall.

5. **MATERIAL CHANGES**

   a. When materials are combined on a building façade horizontally, heavier materials should occur below lighter materials. Heavier materials are more substantial or dense, often used to convey a sense of solidity and permanence. These materials can include stone, brick, concrete, or metal panels. These materials are typically used at lower levels or at key structural points to provide a grounded and robust aesthetic.

   b. Cohesive Material Application: Buildings shall present a coherent and restrained material palette. Material and color changes should serve a clear architectural purpose, such as highlighting an entry, anchoring a base, or reinforcing structural rhythm—not simply to add visual variety.

   c. Façades with excessive material or color variation are discouraged. No more than three primary materials should be visible on any single building façade, excluding trim or accent materials.

   d. Material changes should wrap around corners where visible from public streets or pedestrian paths to avoid a false-front appearance.

   e. Changes from one material or color to another along the horizontal direction should occur at inside corner transitions which are design treatments where two walls meet at an interior corner of a building.

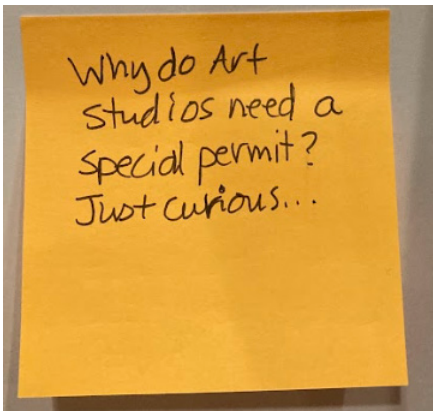
   f. Changes in material or color along the vertical direction should occur at a hard-edge bump-out transition which gives materials a surface to terminate into.

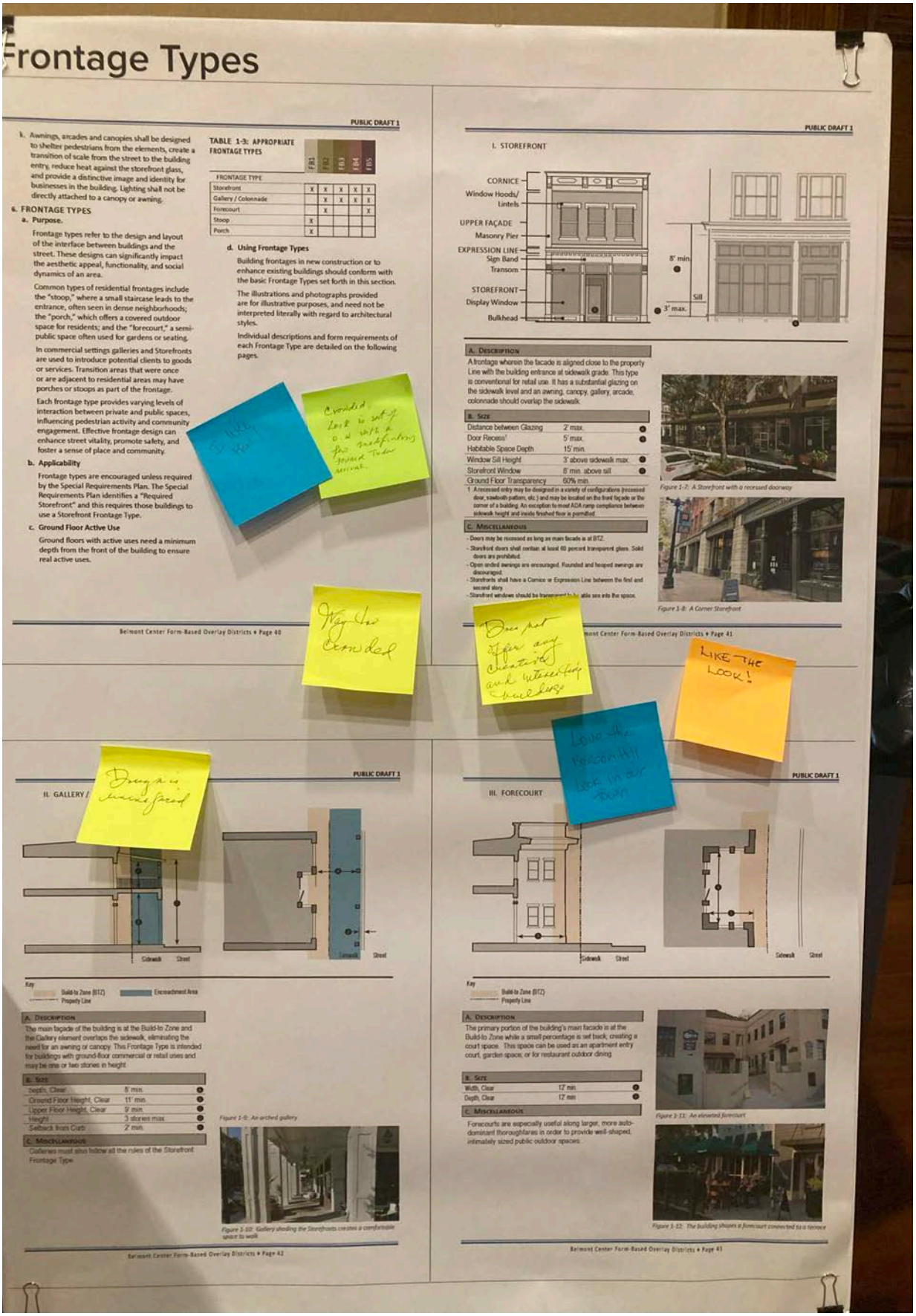
   g. Predominant exterior building materials shall be high quality materials, including, but not limited to, brick, sandstone or other stone, glass, stucco and/or masonry. Exterior building materials shall not include smooth-faced concrete block, tilt-up concrete panels or prefabricated steel panels, unless the visible finish is brick, stucco, slate shingles, or stone.

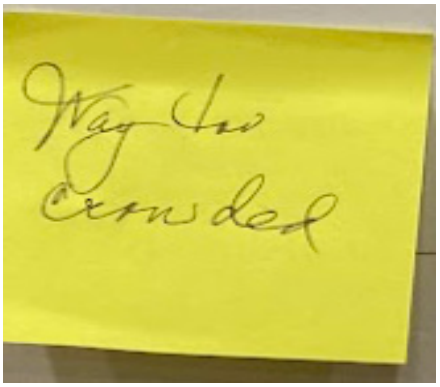
   h. The use of day-glow or fluorescent colors shall be prohibited. Earth-tone colors are encouraged.

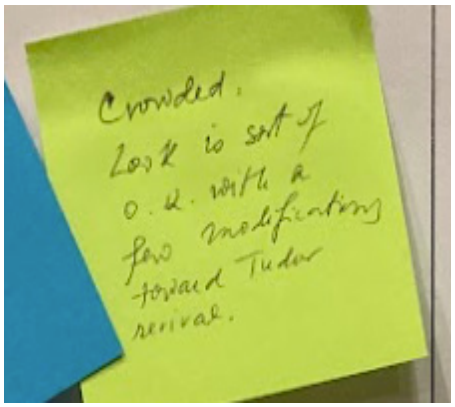
   i. Building trim and accent areas may feature any color(s) not specifically excluded in this division provided said color is limited to ten percent of the affected façade segment, with a maximum trim height of 24 inches total for its shortest distance. Neon tubing shall not be an acceptable feature for building trim or accent areas.

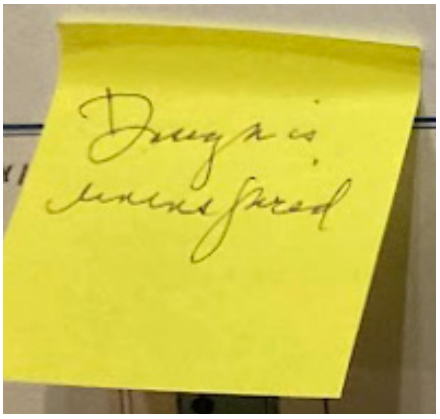
   j. Entrances to a building shall be articulated with porches, porticos, Storefronts, or other architectural forms which create a distinct entrance.

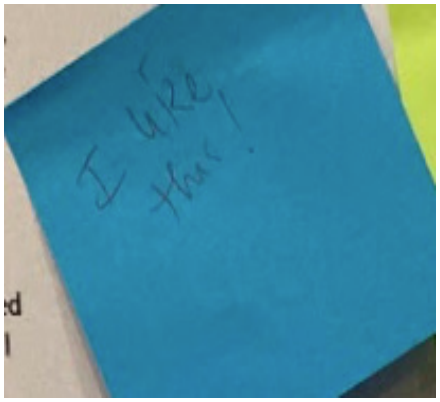

Why do Art
studios need a
special permit?
Just curious...

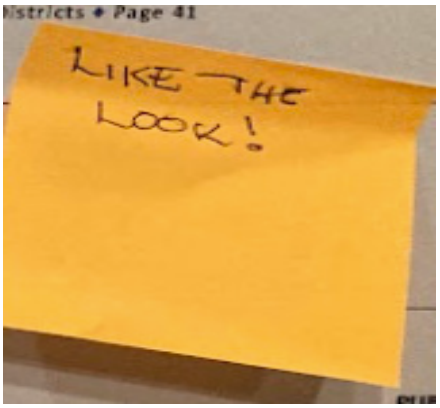

Frontage Types
PUBLIC DRAFT 1
k. Awnings, arcades and canopies shall be designed to shelter pedestrians from the elements, create a transition of scale from the street to the building entry, reduce heat against the storefront glass, and provide a distinctive image and identity for businesses in the building. Lighting shall not be directly attached to a canopy or awning.
6. FRONTAGE TYPES
a. Purpose.
Frontage types refer to the design and layout of the interface between buildings and the street. These designs can significantly impact the aesthetic appeal, functionality, and social dynamics of an area.
Common types of residential frontages include the "stoop," where a small staircase leads to the entrance, often seen in dense neighborhoods; the "porch," which offers a covered outdoor space for residents; and the "forecourt," a semi-public space often used for gardens or seating.
In commercial settings galleries and Storefronts are used to introduce potential clients to goods or services. Transition areas that were once or are adjacent to residential areas may have porches or stoops as part of the frontage.
Each frontage type provides varying levels of interaction between private and public spaces, influencing pedestrian activity and community engagement. Effective frontage design can enhance street vitality, promote safety, and foster a sense of place and community.
b. Applicability
Frontage types are encouraged unless required by the Special Requirements Plan. The Special Requirements Plan identifies a "Required Storefront" and this requires those buildings to use a Storefront Frontage Type.
c. Ground Floor Active Use
Ground floors with active uses need a minimum depth from the front of the building to ensure real active uses.
TABLE 1-3: APPROPRIATE FRONTAGE TYPES
FRONTAGE TYPE
Storefront
Gallery / Colonnade
Forecourt
Stoop
Porch
d. Using Frontage Types
Building frontages in new construction or to enhance existing buildings should conform with the basic Frontage Types set forth in this section.
The illustrations and photographs provided are for illustrative purposes, and need not be interpreted literally with regard to architectural styles.
Individual descriptions and form requirements of each Frontage Type are detailed on the following pages.
Belmont Center Form-Based Overlay Districts ♦ Page 40
I. STOREFRONT
CORNICE
Window Hoods/ Lintels
UPPER FAÇADE
Masonry Pier
EXPRESSION LINE
Sign Band
Transom
STOREFRONT
Display Window
Bulkhead
8' min.
Sill
3' max.
A. Description
A frontage wherein the facade is aligned close to the property Line with the building entrance at sidewalk grade. This type is conventional for retail use. It has a substantial glazing on the sidewalk level and an awning, canopy, gallery, arcade, colonnade should overlap the sidewalk.
B. Size
Distance between Glazing 2' max.
Door Recess[1] 5' max.
Habitable Space Depth 15' min.
Window Sill Height 3' above sidewalk max.
Storefront Window 8' min. above sill
Ground Floor Transparency 60% min.
1 A recessed entry may be designed in a variety of configurations (recessed door, sawtooth pattern, etc.) and may be located on the front façade or the corner of a building. An exception to meet ADA ramp compliance between sidewalk height and inside finished floor is permitted.
C. Miscellaneous
- Doors may be recessed as long as main facade is at BTZ.
- Storefront doors shall contain at least 60 percent transparent glass. Solid doors are prohibited.
- Open ended awnings are encouraged. Rounded and hooped awnings are discouraged.
- Standmarks shall have a Cornice or Expression Line between the first and second story.
- Storefront windows should be transparent to allow see into the space.
Figure 1-7: A Storefront with a recessed doorway
Figure 1-8: A Corner Storefront
Belmont Center Form-Based Overlay Districts ♦ Page 41
II. GALLERY /
Sidewalk
Street
Key
Build-to Zone (BTZ)
Encroachment Area
Property Line
A. Description
The main façade of the building is at the Build-to Zone and the Gallery element overlaps the sidewalk, eliminating the need for an awning or canopy. This Frontage Type is intended for buildings with ground-floor commercial or retail uses and may be one or two stories in height.
B. Size
Depth, Clear 8' min.
Ground Floor Height, Clear 11' min.
Upper Floor Height, Clear 9' min.
Height 3 stories max.
Setback from Curb 2' min.
C. Miscellaneous
Galleries must also follow all the rules of the Storefront Frontage Type.
Figure 1-9: An arched gallery
Figure 1-10: Gallery shading the Storefronts creates a comfortable space to walk
Belmont Center Form-Based Overlay Districts ♦ Page 42
III. FORECOURT
Sidewalk
Street
Key
Build-to Zone (BTZ)
Property Line
A. Description
The primary portion of the building's main facade is at the Build-to Zone while a small percentage is set back, creating a court space. This space can be used as an apartment entry court, garden space, or for restaurant outdoor dining.
B. Size
Width, Clear 12' min.
Depth, Clear 12' min.
C. Miscellaneous
Forecourts are especially useful along larger, more auto-dominant thoroughfares in order to provide well-shaped, intimately sized public outdoor spaces.
Figure 1-11: An elevated forecourt
Figure 1-12: The building shapes a forecourt connected to a terrace
Belmont Center Form-Based Overlay Districts ♦ Page 43
Does not show any curtains and waterfall structures
LIKE THE LOOK!

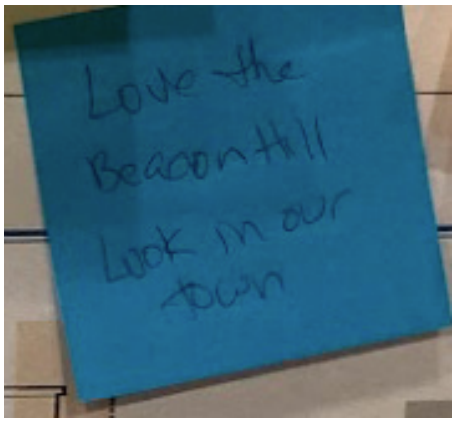

Way too
crowded

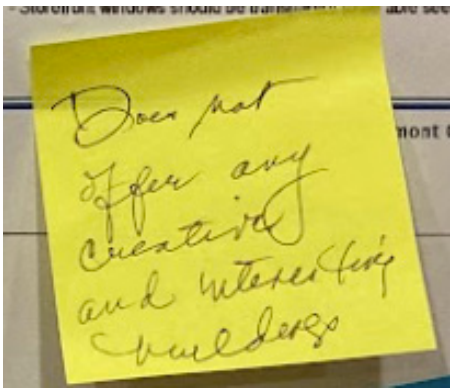

Crowded.
Look is sort of
O.K. with a
few modifications
toward Tudor
revival.

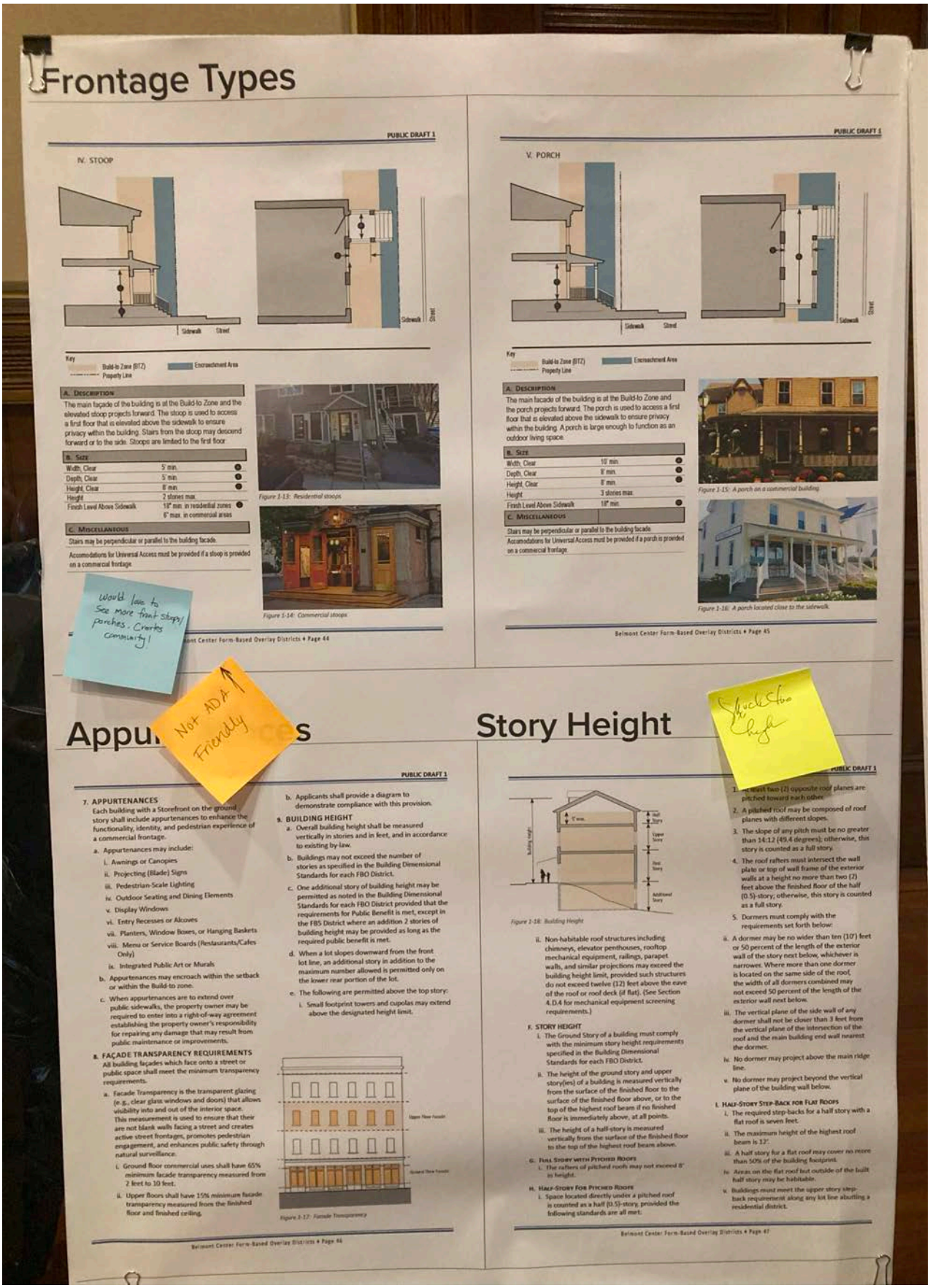

Design is
unsatisfactory

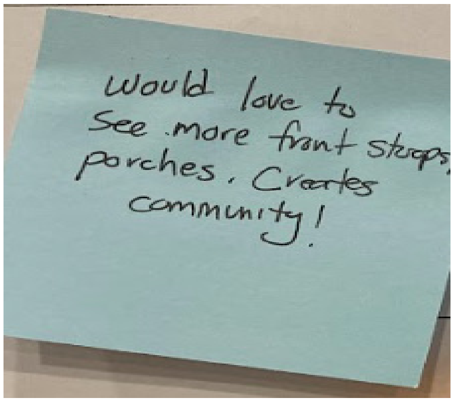

I like
this!

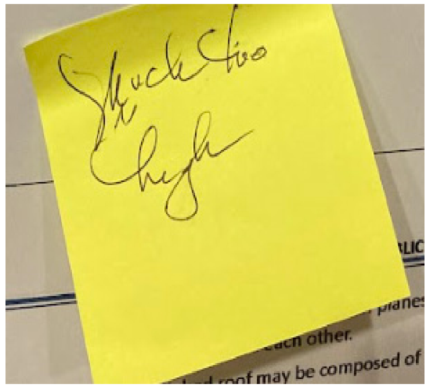

Districts ♦ Page 41
LIKE THE
LOOK!

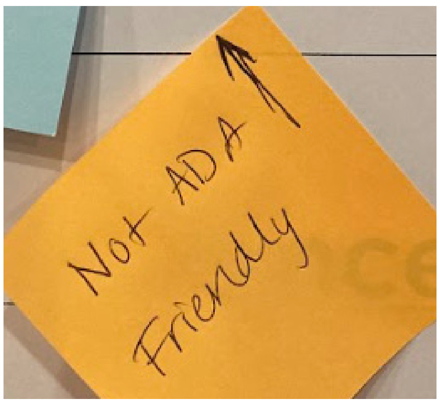

Love the
Beacon Hill
Look in our
town

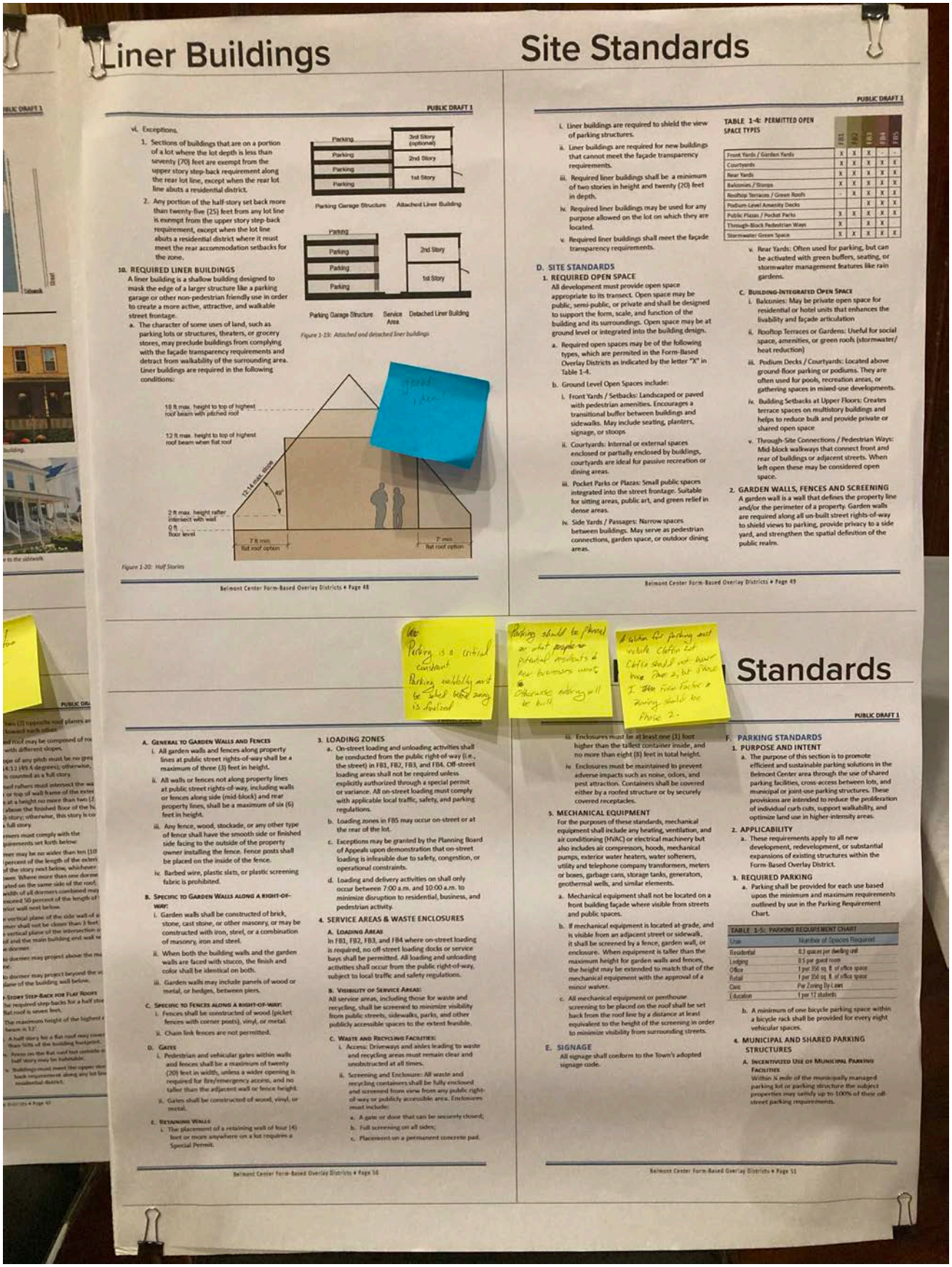

Does not
offer any
creative
and interesting
builders

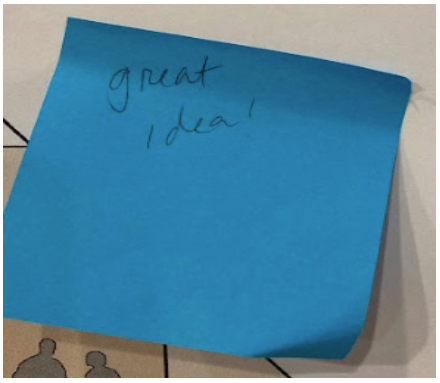

Frontage Types
PUBLIC DRAFT 1
IV. STOOP
Sidewalk
Street
Key
Build-to Zone (BTZ)
Encroachment Area
Property Line
A. Description
The main façade of the building is at the Build-to Zone and the elevated stoop projects forward. The stoop is used to access a first floor that is elevated above the sidewalk to ensure privacy within the building. Stairs from the stoop may descend forward or to the side. Stoops are limited to the first floor.
B. Size
Width, Clear 5' min.
Depth, Clear 5' min.
Height, Clear 8' min.
Height 2 stories max.
Finish Level Above Sidewalk 18" min. in residential zones
6' max. in commercial areas
C. Miscellaneous
Stairs may be perpendicular or parallel to the building façade.
Accomodations for Universal Access must be provided if a stoop is provided on a commercial frontage.
Figure 1-13: Residential stoops
Figure 1-14: Commercial stoops
Would love to see more front steps/ porches. Creates community!
Belmont Center Form-Based Overlay Districts ♦ Page 44
PUBLIC DRAFT 1
V. PORCH
Sidewalk
Street
Key
Build-to Zone (BTZ)
Encroachment Area
Property Line
A. Description
The main façade of the building is at the Build-to Zone and the porch projects forward. The porch is used to access a first floor that is elevated above the sidewalk to ensure privacy within the building. A porch is large enough to function as an outdoor living space.
B. Size
Width, Clear 10' min.
Depth, Clear 8' min.
Height, Clear 8' min.
Height 3 stories max.
Finish Level Above Sidewalk 18" min.
C. Miscellaneous
Stairs may be perpendicular or parallel to the building façade.
Accomodations for Universal Access must be provided if a porch is provided on a commercial frontage.
Figure 1-15: A porch on a commercial building
Figure 1-16: A porch located close to the sidewalk
Belmont Center Form-Based Overlay Districts ♦ Page 45
Appu s
Not ADA Friendly
PUBLIC DRAFT 1
7. APPURTENANCES
Each building with a Storefront on the ground story shall include appurtenances to enhance the functionality, identity, and pedestrian experience of a commercial frontage.
a. Appurtenances may include:
i. Awnings or Canopies
ii. Projecting (Blade) Signs
iii. Pedestrian-Scale Lighting
iv. Outdoor Seating and Dining Elements
v. Display Windows
vi. Entry Recesses or Alcoves
vii. Planters, Window Boxes, or Hanging Baskets
viii. Menu or Service Boards (Restaurants/Cafes Only)
ix. Integrated Public Art or Murals
b. Appurtenances may encroach within the setback or within the Build-to zone.
c. When appurtenances are to extend over public sidewalks, the property owner may be required to enter into a right-of-way agreement establishing the property owner's responsibility for repairing any damage that may result from public maintenance or improvements.
8. FAÇADE TRANSPARENCY REQUIREMENTS
All building façades which face onto a street or public space shall meet the minimum transparency requirements.
a. Facade Transparency is the transparent glazing (e.g., clear glass windows and doors) that allows visibility into and out of the interior space. This measurement is used to ensure that their are not blank walls facing a street and creates active street frontages, promotes pedestrian engagement, and enhances public safety through natural surveillance.
i. Ground floor commercial uses shall have 65% minimum facade transparency measured from 2 feet to 10 feet.
ii. Upper floors shall have 15% minimum facade transparency measured from the finished floor and finished ceiling.
b. Applicants shall provide a diagram to demonstrate compliance with this provision.
9. BUILDING HEIGHT
a. Overall building height shall be measured vertically in stories and in feet, and in accordance to existing by-law.
b. Buildings may not exceed the number of stories as specified in the Building Dimensional Standards for each FBO District.
c. One additional story of building height may be permitted as noted in the Building Dimensional Standards for each FBO District provided that the requirements for Public Benefit is met, except in the FBS District where an addition 2 stories of building height may be provided as long as the required public benefit is met.
d. When a lot slopes downward from the front lot line, an additional story in addition to the maximum number allowed is permitted only on the lower rear portion of the lot.
e. The following are permitted above the top story:
i. Small footprint towers and cupolas may extend above the designated height limit.
Figure 1-17: Façade Transparency
Belmont Center Form-Based Overlay Districts ♦ Page 46
Story Height
Muck Stoo Chgs
PUBLIC DRAFT 1
Figure 1-18: Building Height
ii. Non-habitable roof structures including chimneys, elevator penthouses, rooftop mechanical equipment, railings, parapet walls, and similar projections may exceed the building height limit, provided such structures do not exceed twelve (12) feet above the eave of the roof or roof deck (if flat). (See Section 4.D.4 for mechanical equipment screening requirements.)
F. STORY HEIGHT
i. The Ground Story of a building must comply with the minimum story height requirements specified in the Building Dimensional Standards for each FBO District.
ii. The height of the ground story and upper story(ies) of a building is measured vertically from the surface of the finished floor to the surface of the finished floor above, or to the top of the highest roof beam if no finished floor is immediately above, at all points.
iii. The height of a half-story is measured vertically from the surface of the finished floor to the top of the highest roof beam above.
G. Full Story with Pitched Roofs
i. The rafters of pitched roofs may not exceed 8' in height.
H. Half-Story for Pitched Roofs
i. Space located directly under a pitched roof is counted as a half (0.5)-story, provided the following standards are all met:
1. At least two (2) opposite roof planes are pitched toward each other.
2. A pitched roof may be composed of roof planes with different slopes.
3. The slope of any pitch must be no greater than 14:12 (49.4 degrees); otherwise, this story is counted as a full story.
4. The roof rafters must intersect the wall plate or top of wall frame of the exterior walls at a height no more than two (2) feet above the finished floor of the half (0.5)-story; otherwise, this story is counted as a full story.
5. Dormers must comply with the requirements set forth below:
ii. A dormer may be no wider than ten (10') feet or 50 percent of the length of the exterior wall of the story next below, whichever is narrower. Where more than one dormer is located on the same side of the roof, the width of all dormers combined may not exceed 50 percent of the length of the exterior wall next below.
iii. The vertical plane of the side wall of any dormer shall not be closer than 3 feet from the vertical plane of the intersection of the roof and the main building end wall nearest the dormer.
iv. No dormer may project above the main ridge line.
v. No dormer may project beyond the vertical plane of the building wall below.
I. Half-Story Step-Back for Flat Roofs
i. The required step-backs for a half story with a flat roof is seven feet.
ii. The maximum height of the highest roof beam is 12'.
iii. A half story for a flat roof may cover no more than 50% of the building footprint.
iv. Areas on the flat roof but outside of the built half story may be habitable.
v. Buildings must meet the upper story step-back requirement along any lot line abutting a residential district.
Belmont Center Form-Based Overlay Districts ♦ Page 47

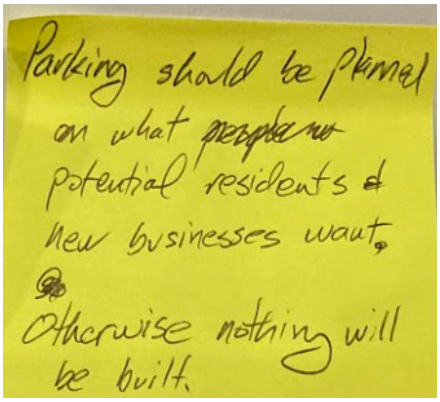

would love to
see more front stoops,
porches. Creates
community!

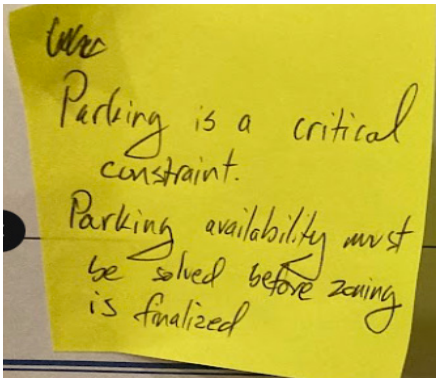

roof may be composed of

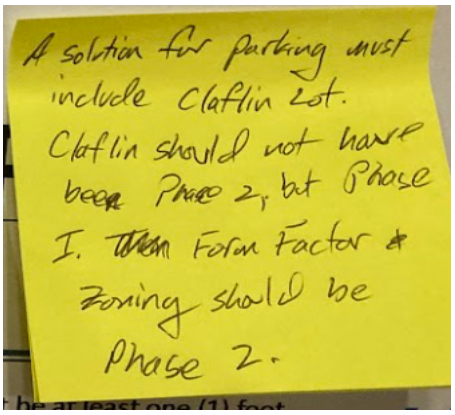

Not ADA
Friendly

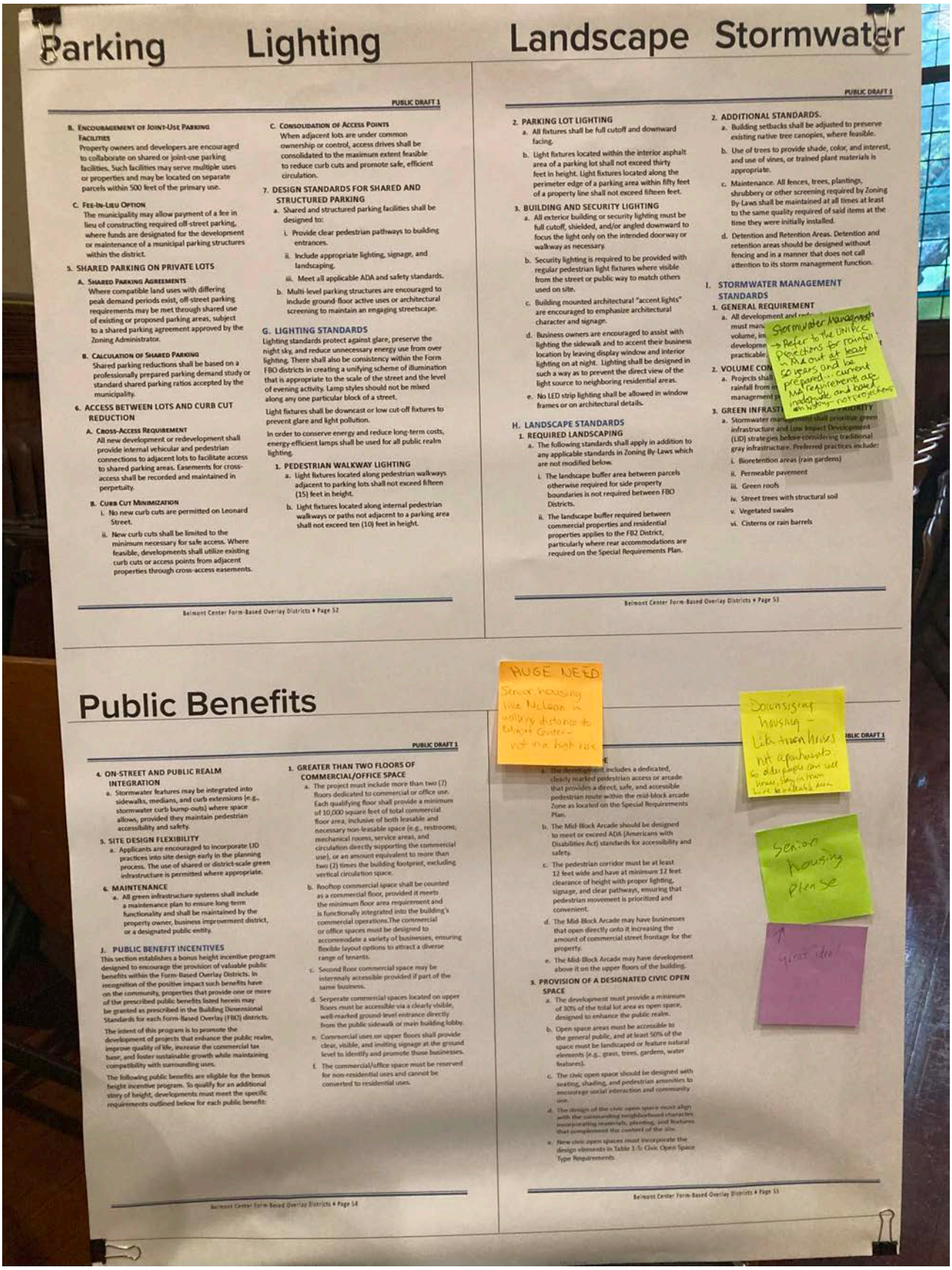

Liner Buildings
Site Standards
PUBLIC DRAFT 1
vi. Exceptions.
1. Sections of buildings that are on a portion of a lot where the lot depth is less than seventy (70) feet are exempt from the upper story step-back requirement along the rear lot line, except when the rear lot line abuts a residential district.
2. Any portion of the half-story set back more than twenty-five (25) feet from any lot line is exempt from the upper story step-back requirement, except when the lot line abuts a residential district where it must meet the rear accommodation setbacks for the zone.
10. REQUIRED LINER BUILDINGS
A liner building is a shallow building designed to mask the edge of a larger structure like a parking garage or other non-pedestrian friendly use in order to create a more active, attractive, and walkable street frontage.
a. The character of some uses of land, such as parking lots or structures, theaters, or grocery stores, may preclude buildings from complying with the façade transparency requirements and detract from walkability of the surrounding area. Liner buildings are required in the following conditions:
Parking
3rd Story (optional)
2nd Story
1st Story
Parking Garage Structure
Attached Liner Building
Service Area
Detached Liner Building
Figure 1-19: Attached and detached liner buildings
18 ft max. height to top of highest roof beam with pitched roof
12 ft max. height to top of highest roof beam when flat roof
12:4 max. slope
40°
2 ft max. height rafter intersect with wall
0 ft floor level
7 ft min. flat roof option
T min. flat roof option
Figure 1-20: Half Stories
Belmont Center Form-Based Overlay Districts ♦ Page 48
i. Liner buildings are required to shield the view of parking structures.
ii. Liner buildings are required for new buildings that cannot meet the façade transparency requirements.
iii. Required liner buildings shall be a minimum of two stories in height and twenty (20) feet in depth.
iv. Required liner buildings may be used for any purpose allowed on the lot on which they are located.
v. Required liner buildings shall meet the façade transparency requirements.
D. SITE STANDARDS
1. REQUIRED OPEN SPACE
All development must provide open space appropriate to its transect. Open space may be public, semi-public, or private and shall be designed to support the form, scale, and function of the building and its surroundings. Open space may be at ground level or integrated into the building design.
a. Required open spaces may be of the following types, which are permitted in the Form-Based Overlay Districts as indicated by the letter "X" in Table 1-4.
b. Ground Level Open Spaces include:
i. Front Yards / Setbacks: Landscaped or paved with pedestrian amenities. Encourages a transitional buffer between buildings and sidewalks. May include seating, planters, signage, or stoops
ii. Courtyards: Internal or external spaces enclosed or partially enclosed by buildings, courtyards are ideal for passive recreation or dining areas.
iii. Pocket Parks or Plazas: Small public spaces intergrated into the street frontage. Suitable for sitting areas, public art, and green relief in dense areas.
iv. Side Yards / Passages: Narrow spaces between buildings. May serve as pedestrian connections, garden space, or outdoor dining areas.
TABLE 1-4: PERMITTED OPEN SPACE TYPES
FB1 FB2 FB3 FB4 FB5
Front Yards / Garden Yards X X X - -
Courtyards X X X X X
Rear Yards X X X X X
Balconies / Stoops X X X X X
Rooftop Terraces / Green Roofs - X X X X
Podium-Level Amenity Decks - - X X X
Public Plazas / Pocket Parks X X X X X
Through-Block Pedestrian Ways X - X X -
Stormwater Green Space X X X X X
v. Rear Yards: Often used for parking, but can be activated with green buffers, seating, or stormwater management features like rain gardens.
C. BUILDING-INTEGRATED OPEN SPACE
i. Balconies: May be private open space for residential or hotel units that enhances the livability and façade articulation
ii. Rooftop Terraces or Gardens: Useful for social space, amenities, or green roofs (stormwater/heat reduction)
iii. Podium Decks / Courtyards: Located above ground-floor parking or podiums. They are often used for pools, recreation areas, or gathering spaces in mixed-use developments.
iv. Building Setbacks at Upper Floors: Creates terrace spaces on multistory buildings and helps to reduce bulk and provide private or shared open space
v. Through-Site Connections / Pedestrian Ways: Mid-block walkways that connect front and rear of buildings or adjacent streets. When left open these may be considered open space.
2. GARDEN WALLS, FENCES AND SCREENING
A garden wall is a wall that defines the property line and/or the perimeter of a property. Garden walls are required along all un-built street rights-of-way to shield views to parking, provide privacy to a side yard, and strengthen the spatial definition of the public realm.
Belmont Center Form-Based Overlay Districts ♦ Page 49
Use Parking is a critical constraint. Parking visibility must be limited before zoning is finalized
Parking should be planned as what people or potential residents & new businesses want. Otherwise nothing will be built
A station for parking and vehicle clutter but Clifton should not have Phase 2 but Station 1. The first factor is zoning should be Phase 2.
Standards
PUBLIC DRAFT 1
A. GENERAL TO GARDEN WALLS AND FENCES
i. All garden walls and fences along property lines at public street rights-of-way shall be a maximum of three (3) feet in height.
ii. All walls or fences not along property lines at public street rights-of-way, including walls or fences along side (mid-block) and rear property lines, shall be a maximum of six (6) feet in height.
iii. Any fence, wood, stockade, or any other type of fence shall have the smooth side or finished side facing to the outside of the property owner installing the fence. Fence posts shall be placed on the inside of the fence.
iv. Barbed wire, plastic slats, or plastic screening fabric is prohibited.
B. SPECIFIC TO GARDEN WALLS ALONG A RIGHT-OF-WAY:
i. Garden walls shall be constructed of brick, stone, cast stone, or other masonry, or may be constructed with iron, steel, or a combination of masonry, iron and steel.
ii. When both the building walls and the garden walls are faced with stucco, the finish and color shall be identical on both.
iii. Garden walls may include panels of wood or metal, or hedges, between piers.
C. SPECIFIC TO FENCES ALONG A RIGHT-OF-WAY:
i. Fences shall be constructed of wood (picket fences with corner posts), vinyl, or metal.
ii. Chain link fences are not permitted.
D. GATES
i. Pedestrian and vehicular gates within walls and fences shall be a maximum of twenty (20) feet in width, unless a wider opening is required for fire/emergency access, and no taller than the adjacent wall or fence height.
ii. Gates shall be constructed of wood, vinyl, or metal.
E. RETAINING WALLS
i. The placement of a retaining wall of four (4) feet or more anywhere on a lot requires a Special Permit.
3. LOADING ZONES
a. On-street loading and unloading activities shall be conducted from the public right-of-way (i.e., the street) in FB1, FB2, FB3, and FB4. Off-street loading areas shall not be required unless explicitly authorized through a special permit or variance. All on-street loading must comply with applicable local traffic, safety, and parking regulations.
b. Loading zones in FB5 may occur on-street or at the rear of the lot.
c. Exceptions may be granted by the Planning Board of Appeals upon demonstration that on-street loading is infeasible due to safety, congestion, or operational constraints.
d. Loading and delivery activities on shall only occur between 7:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. to minimize disruption to residential, business, and pedestrian activity.
4. SERVICE AREAS & WASTE ENCLOSURES
A. LOADING AREAS
In FB1, FB2, FB3, and FB4 where on-street loading is required, no off-street loading docks or service bays shall be permitted. All loading and unloading activities shall occur from the public right-of-way, subject to local traffic and safety regulations.
B. VISIBILITY OF SERVICE AREAS:
All service areas, including those for waste and recycling, shall be screened to minimize visibility from public streets, sidewalks, parks, and other publicly accessible spaces to the extent feasible.
C. WASTE AND RECYCLING FACILITIES:
i. Access: Driveways and aisles leading to waste and recycling areas must remain clear and unobstructed at all times.
ii. Screening and Enclosure: All waste and recycling containers shall be fully enclosed and screened from view from any public right-of-way or publicly accessible area. Enclosures must include:
a. A gate or door that can be securely closed;
b. Full screening on all sides;
c. Placement on a permanent concrete pad.
Belmont Center Form-Based Overlay Districts ♦ Page 50
iii. Enclosures must be at least one (1) foot higher than the tallest container inside, and no more than eight (8) feet in total height.
iv. Enclosures must be maintained to prevent adverse impacts such as noise, odors, and pest attraction. Containers shall be covered either by a roofed structure or by securely covered receptacles.
5. MECHANICAL EQUIPMENT
For the purposes of these standards, mechanical equipment shall include any heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) or electrical machinery but also includes air compressors, hoods, mechanical pumps, exterior water heaters, water softeners, utility and telephone company transformers, meters or boxes, garbage cans, storage tanks, generators, geothermal wells, and similar elements.
a. Mechanical equipment shall not be located on a front building façade where visible from streets and public spaces.
b. If mechanical equipment is located at-grade, and is visible from an adjacent street or sidewalk, it shall be screened by a fence, garden wall, or enclosure. When equipment is taller than the maximum height for garden walls and fences, the height may be extended to match that of the mechanical equipment with the approval of a minor waiver.
c. All mechanical equipment or penthouse screening to be placed on the roof shall be set back from the roof line by a distance at least equivalent to the height of the screening in order to minimize visibility from surrounding streets.
E. SIGNAGE
All signage shall conform to the Town's adopted signage code.
F. PARKING STANDARDS
1. PURPOSE AND INTENT
a. The purpose of this section is to promote efficient and sustainable parking solutions in the Belmont Center area through the use of shared parking facilities, cross-access between lots, and municipal or joint-use parking structures. These provisions are intended to reduce the proliferation of individual curb cuts, support walkability, and optimize land use in higher-intensity areas.
2. APPLICABILITY
a. These requirements apply to all new development, redevelopment, or substantial expansions of existing structures within the Form-Based Overlay District.
3. REQUIRED PARKING
a. Parking shall be provided for each use based upon the minimum and maximum requirements outlined by use in the Parking Requirement Chart.
TABLE 1-5: PARKING REQUIREMENT CHART
Use Number of Spaces Required
Residential 0.3 spaces per dwelling unit
Lodging 0.5 per guest room
Office 1 per 350 sq. ft. of office space
Retail 1 per 350 sq. ft. of office space
Civic Per Zoning By-Laws
Education 1 per 12 students
b. A minimum of one bicycle parking space within a bicycle rack shall be provided for every eight vehicular spaces.
4. MUNICIPAL AND SHARED PARKING STRUCTURES
A. INCENTIVIZED USE OF MUNICIPAL PARKING FACILITIES
Within ¼ mile of the municipally managed parking lot or parking structure the subject properties may satisfy up to 100% of their off-street parking requirements.
Belmont Center Form-Based Overlay Districts ♦ Page 51

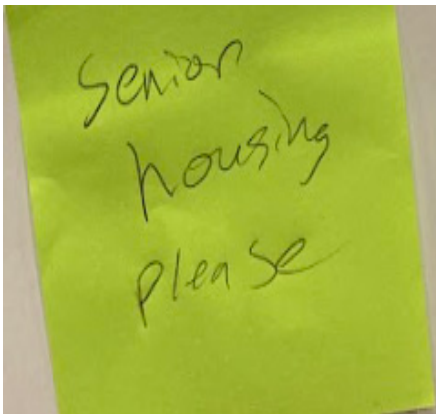

great
idea!

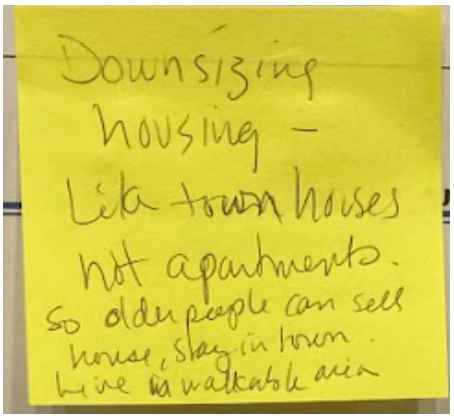

Parking should be planned
on what people or
potential residents &
new businesses want,
Otherwise nothing will
be built.

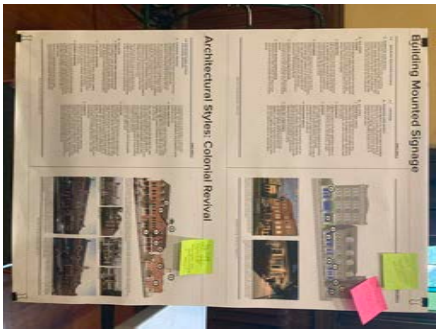

Parking is a critical
constraint.
Parking availability must
be solved before zoning
is finalized

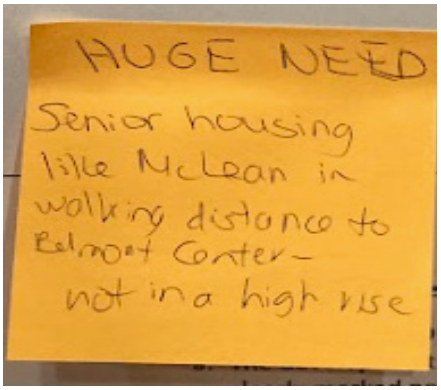

A solution for parking must
include Claflin Lot.
Claflin should not have
been Phase 2, but Phase
I. Then Form Factor &
Zoning should be
Phase 2.

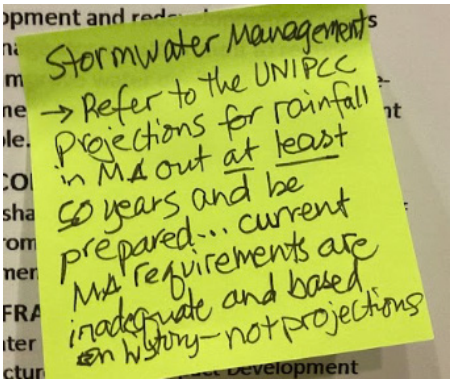

Parking
Lighting
Landscape
Stormwater
Public Benefits
PUBLIC DRAFT 1
B. Encouragement of Joint-Use Parking Facilities
Property owners and developers are encouraged to collaborate on shared or joint-use parking facilities. Such facilities may serve multiple uses or properties and may be located on separate parcels within 500 feet of the primary use.
C. Fee-In-Lieu Option
The municipality may allow payment of a fee in lieu of constructing required off-street parking, where funds are designated for the development or maintenance of a municipal parking structures within the district.
5. SHARED PARKING ON PRIVATE LOTS
A. Shared Parking Agreements
Where compatible land uses with differing peak demand periods exist, off-street parking requirements may be met through shared use of existing or proposed parking areas, subject to a shared parking agreement approved by the Zoning Administrator.
B. Calculation of Shared Parking
Shared parking reductions shall be based on a professionally prepared parking demand study or standard shared parking ratios accepted by the municipality.
6. ACCESS BETWEEN LOTS AND CURB CUT REDUCTION
A. Cross-Access Requirement
All new development or redevelopment shall provide internal vehicular and pedestrian connections to adjacent lots to facilitate access to shared parking areas. Easements for cross-access shall be recorded and maintained in perpetuity.
B. Curb Cut Minimization
i. No new curb cuts are permitted on Leonard Street.
ii. New curb cuts shall be limited to the minimum necessary for safe access. Where feasible, developments shall utilize existing curb cuts or access points from adjacent properties through cross-access easements.
C. Consolidation of Access Points
When adjacent lots are under common ownership or control, access drives shall be consolidated to the maximum extent feasible to reduce curb cuts and promote safe, efficient circulation.
7. DESIGN STANDARDS FOR SHARED AND STRUCTURED PARKING
a. Shared and structured parking facilities shall be designed to:
i. Provide clear pedestrian pathways to building entrances.
ii. Include appropriate lighting, signage, and landscaping.
iii. Meet all applicable ADA and safety standards.
b. Multi-level parking structures are encouraged to include ground-floor active uses or architectural screening to maintain an engaging streetscape.
G. LIGHTING STANDARDS
Lighting standards protect against glare, preserve the night sky, and reduce unnecessary energy use from over lighting. There shall also be consistency within the Form FBO districts in creating a unifying scheme of illumination that is appropriate to the scale of the street and the level of evening activity. Lamp styles should not be mixed along any one particular block of a street.
Light fixtures shall be downcast or low cut-off fixtures to prevent glare and light pollution.
In order to conserve energy and reduce long-term costs, energy-efficient lamps shall be used for all public realm lighting.
1. PEDESTRIAN WALKWAY LIGHTING
a. Light fixtures located along pedestrian walkways adjacent to parking lots shall not exceed fifteen (15) feet in height.
b. Light fixtures located along internal pedestrian walkways or paths not adjacent to a parking area shall not exceed ten (10) feet in height.
Belmont Center Form-Based Overlay Districts ♦ Page 52
2. PARKING LOT LIGHTING
a. All fixtures shall be full cutoff and downward facing.
b. Light fixtures located within the interior asphalt area of a parking lot shall not exceed thirty feet in height. Light fixtures located along the perimeter edge of a parking area within fifty feet of a property line shall not exceed fifteen feet.
3. BUILDING AND SECURITY LIGHTING
a. All exterior building or security lighting must be full cutoff, shielded, and/or angled downward to focus the light only on the intended doorway or walkway as necessary.
b. Security lighting is required to be provided with regular pedestrian light fixtures where visible from the street or public way to match others used on site.
c. Building mounted architectural "accent lights" are encouraged to emphasize architectural character and signage.
d. Business owners are encouraged to assist with lighting the sidewalk and to accent their business location by leaving display window and interior lighting on at night. Lighting shall be designed in such a way as to prevent the direct view of the light source to neighboring residential areas.
e. No LED strip lighting shall be allowed in window frames or on architectural details.
H. LANDSCAPE STANDARDS
1. REQUIRED LANDSCAPING
a. The following standards shall apply in addition to any applicable standards in Zoning By-Laws which are not modified below.
i. The landscape buffer area between parcels otherwise required for side property boundaries is not required between FBO Districts.
ii. The landscape buffer required between commercial properties and residential properties applies to the FB2 District, particularly where rear accommodations are required on the Special Requirements Plan.
2. ADDITIONAL STANDARDS.
a. Building setbacks shall be adjusted to preserve existing native tree canopies, where feasible.
b. Use of trees to provide shade, color, and interest, and use of vines, or trained plant materials is appropriate.
c. Maintenance. All fences, trees, plantings, shrubbery or other screening required by Zoning By-Laws shall be maintained at all times at least to the same quality required of said items at the time they were initially installed.
d. Detention and Retention Areas. Detention and retention areas should be designed without fencing and in a manner that does not call attention to its storm management function.
I. STORMWATER MANAGEMENT STANDARDS
1. GENERAL REQUIREMENT
2. VOLUME CON
3. GREEN INFRAST PRIORITY
i. Bioretention areas (rain gardens)
ii. Permeable pavement
iii. Green roofs
iv. Street trees with structural soil
v. Vegetated swales
vi. Cisterns or rain barrels
Belmont Center Form-Based Overlay Districts ♦ Page 53
4. ON-STREET AND PUBLIC REALM INTEGRATION
a. Stormwater features may be integrated into sidewalks, medians, and curb extensions (e.g., stormwater curb bump-outs) where space allows, provided they maintain pedestrian accessibility and safety.
5. SITE DESIGN FLEXIBILITY
a. Applicants are encouraged to incorporate LID practices into site design early in the planning process. The use of shared or district-scale green infrastructure is permitted where appropriate.
6. MAINTENANCE
a. All green infrastructure systems shall include a maintenance plan to ensure long-term functionality and shall be maintained by the property owner, business improvement district, or a designated public entity.
J. PUBLIC BENEFIT INCENTIVES
This section establishes a bonus height incentive program designed to encourage the provision of valuable public benefits within the Form-Based Overlay Districts. In recognition of the positive impact such benefits have on the community, properties that provide one or more of the prescribed public benefits listed herein may be granted as prescribed in the Building Dimensional Standards for each Form-Based Overlay (FBO) districts.
The intent of this program is to promote the development of projects that enhance the public realm, improve quality of life, increase the commercial tax base, and foster sustainable growth while maintaining compatibility with surrounding uses.
The following public benefits are eligible for the bonus height incentive program. To qualify for an additional story of height, developments must meet the specific requirements outlined below for each public benefit:
1. GREATER THAN TWO FLOORS OF COMMERCIAL/OFFICE SPACE
a. The project must include more than two (2) floors dedicated to commercial or office use. Each qualifying floor shall provide a minimum of 10,000 square feet of total commercial floor area, inclusive of both leasable and necessary non-leasable space (e.g., restrooms, mechanical rooms, service areas, and circulation directly supporting the commercial use), or an amount equivalent to more than two (2) times the building footprint, excluding vertical circulation space.
b. Rooftop commercial space shall be counted as a commercial floor, provided it meets the minimum floor area requirement and is functionally integrated into the building's commercial operations.The commercial or office spaces must be designed to accommodate a variety of businesses, ensuring flexible layout options to attract a diverse range of tenants.
c. Second floor commercial space may be internally accessible provided if part of the same business.
d. Serperate commercial spaces located on upper floors must be accessible via a clearly visible, well-marked ground-level entrance directly from the public sidewalk or main building lobby.
e. Commercial uses on upper floors shall provide clear, visible, and inviting signage at the ground level to identify and promote those businesses.
f. The commercial/office space must be reserved for non-residential uses and cannot be converted to residential uses.
Belmont Center Form-Based Overlay Districts ♦ Page 54
HUGE NEED
Senior housing like Nichols in walking distance to Belmont Center – not in a high rise
Downsizing housing – Lib-town Homes not apartments so older people can still have stairs in their home to walk down
Senior housing please
great idea!
a. The development includes a dedicated, clearly marked pedestrian access or arcade that provides a direct, safe, and accessible pedestrian route within the mid-block arcade Zone as located on the Special Requirements Plan.
b. The Mid-Block Arcade should be designed to meet or exceed ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) standards for accessibility and safety.
c. The pedestrian corridor must be at least 12 feet wide and have at minimum 12 feet clearance of height with proper lighting, signage, and clear pathways, ensuring that pedestrian movement is prioritized and convenient.
d. The Mid-Block Arcade may have businesses that open directly onto it increasing the amount of commercial street frontage for the property.
e. The Mid-Block Arcade may have development above it on the upper floors of the building.
3. PROVISION OF A DESIGNATED CIVIC OPEN SPACE
a. The development must provide a minimum of 30% of the total lot area as open space, designed to enhance the public realm.
b. Open space areas must be accessible to the general public, and at least 50% of the space must be landscaped or feature natural elements (e.g., grass, trees, gardens, water features).
c. The civic open space should be designed with seating, shading, and pedestrian amenities to encourage social interaction and community use.
d. The design of the civic open space must align with the surrounding neighborhood character, incorporating materials, planting, and features that complement the context of the site.
e. New civic open spaces must incorporate the design elements in Table 1-5: Civic Open Space Type Requirements
Belmont Center Form-Based Overlay Districts ♦ Page 55


Senior
housing
please


Downsizing
housing -
Like townhouses
not apartments.
So older people can sell
house, stay in town.
Live in walkable area


Building Mounted Signage
Architectural Styles: Colonial Revival


HUGE NEED
Senior housing
like McLean in
walking distance to
Belmont Center -
not in a high rise


Stormwater Managements
→ Refer to the UNIPCC
Projections for rainfall
in MA out at least
50 years and be
prepared... current
MA requirements are
inadequate and based
on history - not projections

5. STREETS & CIVIC OPEN SPACE

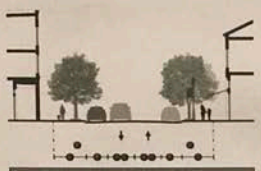
PUBLIC DRAFT 1

5 STREETS AND CIVIC OPEN SPACES

A. STREETS

Street configurations, public or private, shall be as designated on the Streets and Civic Spaces Map or as otherwise approved.

1. **STREET DESIGN**
   The design of streets and modifications to existing streets shall adhere to the following requirements:
   a. Improvements to existing thoroughfares shall be coordinated with the Town Engineer. Some dimensional flexibility is permitted for street types to account for varying ROW widths, however they shall be designed to have all the basic functional characteristics including roadway width, on-street parking, sidewalks, street trees and landscaped areas.
   b. On-street parking lanes shall not be closer than twenty-five (25) feet to intersections measured from the curb line.
   c. All streets shall have sidewalks which are a minimum width of five (5) feet, and have a continuous unobstructed path of a width no less than sixty (60) inches. This path shall be unobstructed by utility poles, fire hydrants, benches or any other temporary or permanent structures.
   d. With the exception of fire hydrants, utilities shall run underground and above-ground projections of utilities shall be placed in rear service areas wherever practicable.
2. **CLAFLIN STREET SECTION**
   Claflin Street shall be designated as a Local Public Street and shall no longer function as a drive aisle within a parking lot.
   a. Two-way Street Section – The standard cross-section for Claflin Street shall accommodate two-way vehicular travel, on-street parking, sidewalks, and landscaping consistent with the City's Local Street Design Manual.
   b. One-Way Street Section – Where appropriate and subject to approval by the Planning Board, Claflin Street may be configured as a one-way street functioning as a pair with Leonard Street. The one-way pair configuration must maintain multimodal access and meet minimum public safety and circulation standards.
3. **CURB RADIUS**
   Corner curb radius designs fall into two distinct categories: corners with, and without, on-street parking.
   a. Streets with on-street parking shall have curb radii of ten (10) feet maximum. Tight curb radii inhibit drivers from turning corners at high speeds, enhancing safety for pedestrians. The effective turning radius is larger than the curb radius when parking is present. Thus, the effective turning radius is larger.
   b. Corners without parallel parking shall have a turning radii of fifteen (15) feet. Radii should not exceed 15 feet unless justified by specific turning movement needs (e.g., frequent large truck turns).



Available Elements	Claflin Street ROW
ROW Width	48'
Vehicle Lanes	2 lanes, 10' each
Parking Lanes	8', both sides
Target Speed	15 mph
Bike Facility	Shared Lane
Sidewalk	8', both sides
Planting area	5' Tree Grates (soil cells encouraged) Aligned with on-street parking
Edge/Radius/Drainage	Vertical curb / 15' radius

Figure 1-22: Claflin Street Section

PUBLIC DRAFT 1

4. STREETS AND OPEN SPACE MAP

Check – I think 396 Concord belongs to First Church

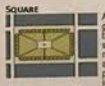
Adminstration

PUBLIC DRAFT 1

B. CIVIC OPEN SPACES

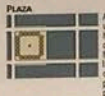
1. New civic open spaces may be of the following types, which are allowable in various Form-Based Overlay Districts as indicated by the letter "X" in Table 1-5.
2. Civic space shall be in the form of squares, plazas, or playground and shall meet the requirements in Table 1-6 Open Space Type Requirements.
3. All designated civic spaces shall be at grade level and shall be accessible to the public.
4. Ground surface shall be a combination of paving, lawn or ground cover integrated in design with trees and shrubs. Fountains, sculpture, and works of art are encouraged. Street furniture shall not obstruct sight visibility triangles at street intersections.
5. Storm water management improvements shall be integrated with the final landscape design as aesthetically and visually pleasing design elements.
6. Whenever appropriate, landscape design shall promote sustainability awareness and education through interpretive signs, demonstrations and other forms of interpretation.

SQUARE



A Square is a formally designed, primarily green public open space framed by building frontages and streets on multiple sides. Typically located at the center of a neighborhood, commercial district, or civic area, squares serve as focal gathering places for passive recreation, social interaction, or programmed events.

PLAZA



A Plaza is a predominantly hardscaped, urban open space located adjacent to high-activity buildings such as commercial or civic. Plazas are typically paved and furnished with seating, lighting, and landscaping elements such as planters or trees. They are designed for high pedestrian use, casual gathering, and programmed events like performances or markets.

PLAYGROUND

An open space designed and equipped for children's recreation.

Figure 1-23: Civic Open Space Types

TABLE 1-6: APPROPRIATE CIVIC OPEN SPACE TYPES

	F-B1	F-B2	F-B3	F-B4	F-B5
Square		X	X	X	X
Plaza		X	X	X	X
Playground	X	X	X	X	X

TABLE 1-7: OPEN SPACE TYPE REQUIREMENTS

	Size Range	Frontage & Location	Typical Features	Planting	Surrounding Building Frontages	Accessibility
Square	5,000 sf – 1 acres	Bounded on at least 2-3 sides by streets with active frontages	Formal lawn, trees, symmetrical layout, central monument/fountain, café seating	Formally arranged trees, planters	Minimum 50% active ground-floor frontages	Directly accessible from sidewalks
Plaza	1,000–10,000 sf	Fronts civic, commercial, or mixed-use buildings, near intersections	Hardscaped; seating, lighting, kiosks, shade structures; may support events	Sparse, primarily potted or perimeter trees	75% fronted by building façades	Public or semi-public, level access required
Playground	1,500–10,000 sf	Near schools, parks, or residential areas; may be within larger park	Play equipment, seating for caregivers, fencing, shade structures, water play	Shade trees, turf, perimeter planting	Passive building or park edges	Fully ADA accessible; secure perimeter

PUBLIC DRAFT 1

6 ADMINISTRATION

A. PURPOSE

The Belmont Center Form-Based Code (FBC) Overlay District is established to provide an optional regulatory framework that supports a walkable, mixed-use, and context-sensitive urban environment in Belmont Center. This section governs the administration and application of the FBC Overlay.

B. APPLICABILITY

1. The FBC Overlay applies to properties within the area defined on the Belmont Center FBC Overlay Map.
2. Property owners may choose to opt in to the Form-Based Code as an alternative to the underlying zoning regulations.
3. Upon opting in, the property shall be subject to all applicable provisions of the Form-Based Code and shall not be required to comply with the dimensional and use standards of the underlying base zoning district, except where explicitly stated.

C. OPT-IN PROCEDURE

1. Applicants must submit a complete Form-Based Code Development Plan in accordance with Section 6.H (Application Requirements).
2. The applicant shall indicate their intent to proceed under the FBC Overlay on the cover sheet of the application materials.
3. Projects using the FBC shall be reviewed and approved by the Planning Board as the Special Permit Granting Authority (SPGA) for the overlay district.

D. PRE-APPLICATION CONFERENCE

Applicants are strongly encouraged to schedule a pre-application meeting with Planning Department staff to review overlay standards, goals, and procedures prior to formal submission.

E. REVIEW PROCESS

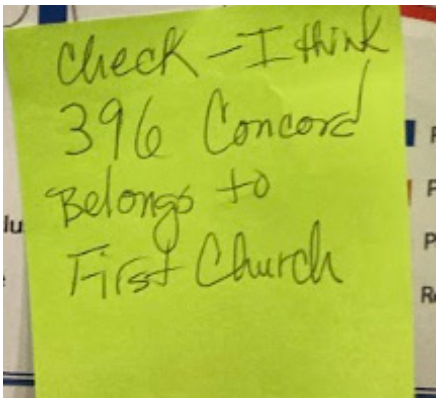
1. All FBC applications shall follow the Site Plan Review and Special Permit process as described in Section 7.4 of the Belmont Zoning Bylaw.
2. The Planning Board shall evaluate the proposal for compliance with the Form-Based Code, including:
   a. Building form and frontage type
   b. Street and public realm relationship
   c. Pedestrian orientation and scale
   d. Architectural and material standards
3. Design input from the Belmont Design Review Committee may be requested at the discretion of the Planning Board.

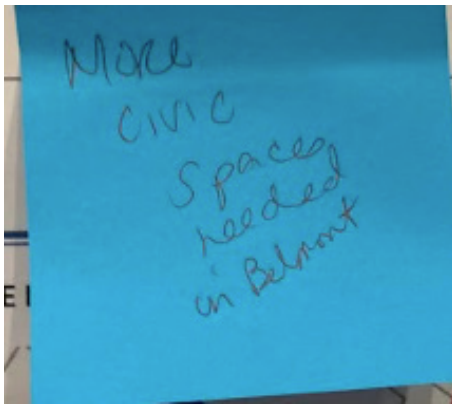
F. AMENDMENTS AND MODIFICATIONS

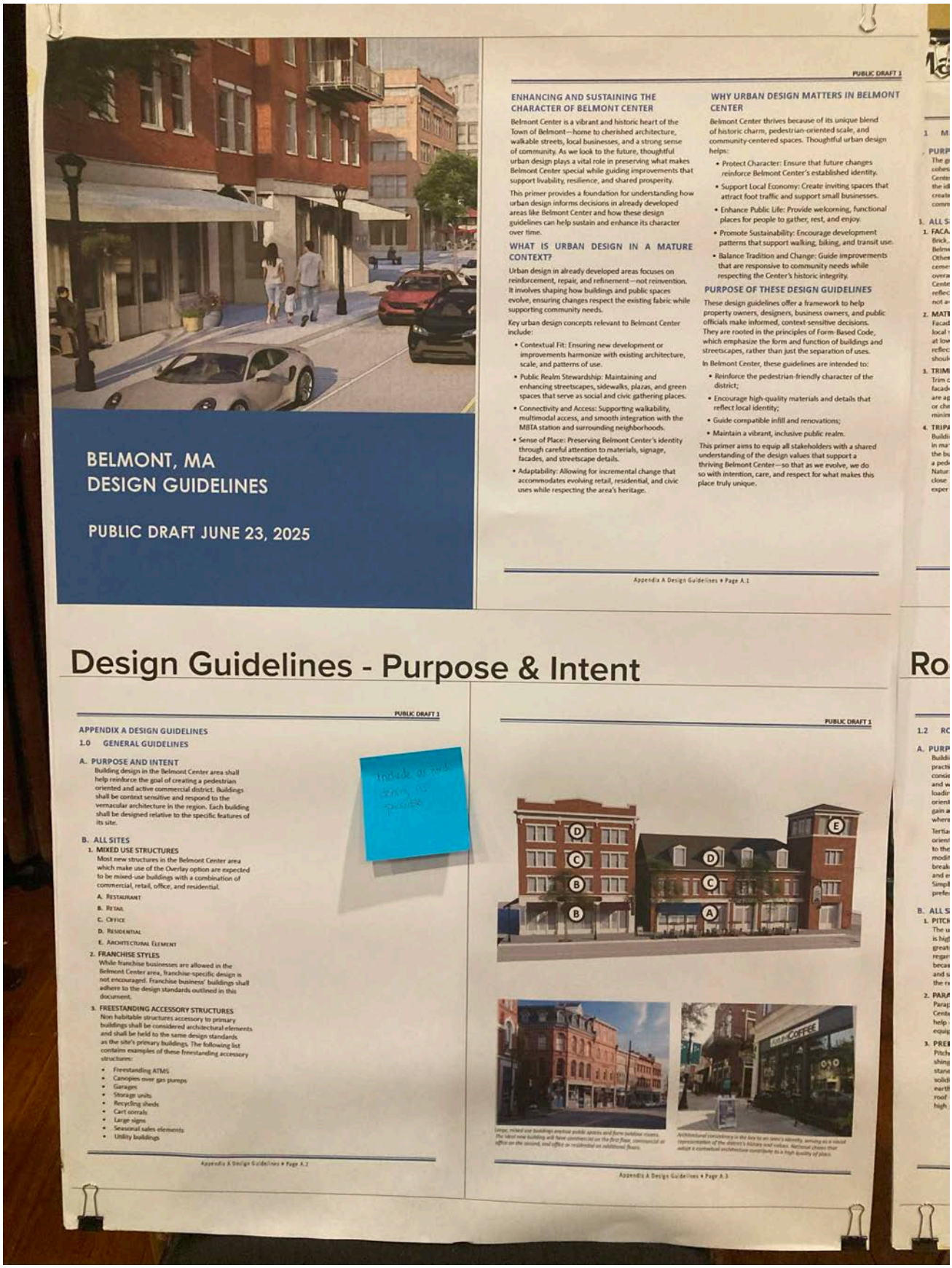
1. Minor modifications to approved FBC projects may be authorized by the Planning Department.
2. Major amendments require Planning Board review and may trigger a new public hearing.

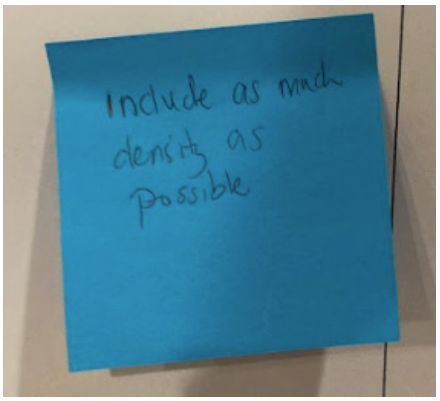
G. CONFLICTS AND INTERPRETATION

1. Where the Form-Based Code is silent, the provisions of the underlying zoning district shall apply.
2. In case of conflict between the FBC Overlay and the base zoning, the provisions of the FBC Overlay shall govern for opted-in properties.
3. The Planning Board shall have the authority to interpret the provisions of the Form-Based Code.


Check – I think
396 Concord
Belongs to
First Church


More
Civic
Spaces
needed
in Belmont


BELMONT, MA
DESIGN GUIDELINES
PUBLIC DRAFT JUNE 23, 2025
PUBLIC DRAFT 1
ENHANCING AND SUSTAINING THE CHARACTER OF BELMONT CENTER
Belmont Center is a vibrant and historic heart of the Town of Belmont—home to cherished architecture, walkable streets, local businesses, and a strong sense of community. As we look to the future, thoughtful urban design plays a vital role in preserving what makes Belmont Center special while guiding improvements that support livability, resilience, and shared prosperity.
This primer provides a foundation for understanding how urban design informs decisions in already developed areas like Belmont Center and how these design guidelines can help sustain and enhance its character over time.
WHAT IS URBAN DESIGN IN A MATURE CONTEXT?
Urban design in already developed areas focuses on reinforcement, repair, and refinement—not reinvention. It involves shaping how buildings and public spaces evolve, ensuring changes respect the existing fabric while supporting community needs.
Key urban design concepts relevant to Belmont Center include:
• Contextual Fit: Ensuring new development or improvements harmonize with existing architecture, scale, and patterns of use.
• Public Realm Stewardship: Maintaining and enhancing streetscapes, sidewalks, plazas, and green spaces that serve as social and civic gathering places.
• Connectivity and Access: Supporting walkability, multimodal access, and smooth integration with the MBTA station and surrounding neighborhoods.
• Sense of Place: Preserving Belmont Center's identity through careful attention to materials, signage, facades, and streetscape details.
• Adaptability: Allowing for incremental change that accommodates evolving retail, residential, and civic uses while respecting the area's heritage.
WHY URBAN DESIGN MATTERS IN BELMONT CENTER
Belmont Center thrives because of its unique blend of historic charm, pedestrian-oriented scale, and community-centered spaces. Thoughtful urban design helps:
• Protect Character: Ensure that future changes reinforce Belmont Center's established identity.
• Support Local Economy: Create inviting spaces that attract foot traffic and support small businesses.
• Enhance Public Life: Provide welcoming, functional places for people to gather, rest, and enjoy.
• Promote Sustainability: Encourage development patterns that support walking, biking, and transit use.
• Balance Tradition and Change: Guide improvements that are responsive to community needs while respecting the Center's historic integrity.
PURPOSE OF THESE DESIGN GUIDELINES
These design guidelines offer a framework to help property owners, designers, business owners, and public officials make informed, context-sensitive decisions. They are rooted in the principles of Form-Based Code, which emphasize the form and function of buildings and streetscapes, rather than just the separation of uses.
In Belmont Center, these guidelines are intended to:
• Reinforce the pedestrian-friendly character of the district;
• Encourage high-quality materials and details that reflect local identity;
• Guide compatible infill and renovations;
• Maintain a vibrant, inclusive public realm.
This primer aims to equip all stakeholders with a shared understanding of the design values that support a thriving Belmont Center—so that as we evolve, we do so with intention, care, and respect for what makes this place truly unique.
Appendix A Design Guidelines ♦ Page A.1
Design Guidelines - Purpose & Intent
PUBLIC DRAFT 1
APPENDIX A DESIGN GUIDELINES
1.0 GENERAL GUIDELINES
A. PURPOSE AND INTENT
Building design in the Belmont Center area shall help reinforce the goal of creating a pedestrian oriented and active commercial district. Buildings shall be context sensitive and respond to the vernacular architecture in the region. Each building shall be designed relative to the specific features of its site.
B. ALL SITES
1. MIXED USE STRUCTURES
Most new structures in the Belmont Center area which make use of the Overlay option are expected to be mixed-use buildings with a combination of commercial, retail, office, and residential.
A. Restaurant
B. Retail
C. Office
D. Residential
E. Architectural Element
2. FRANCHISE STYLES
While franchise businesses are allowed in the Belmont Center area, franchise-specific design is not encouraged. Franchise business' buildings shall adhere to the design standards outlined in this document.
3. FREESTANDING ACCESSORY STRUCTURES
Non habitable structures accessory to primary buildings shall be considered architectural elements and shall be held to the same design standards as the site's primary buildings. The following list contains examples of these freestanding accessory structures:
• Freestanding ATMS
• Canopies over gas pumps
• Garages
• Storage units
• Recycling sheds
• Cart corrals
• Large signs
• Seasonal sales elements
• Utility buildings
Appendix A Design Guidelines ♦ Page A.2
PUBLIC DRAFT 1
D
C
B
B
D
C
A
E
Appendix A Design Guidelines ♦ Page A.3


Include as much
density as
possible

Materials

PUBLIC DRAFT 1

1.1 MATERIALS

A. PURPOSE AND INTENT

The goal of this document is to encourage cohesive building design throughout the Belmont Center area. This building design shall bolster the identity of the Belmont Center area and create a sense of cohesion through the use of common,complementary, materials.

B. ALL SITES

1. FACADE MATERIALS
Brick, clapboard, and shingles shall be used on the Belmont Center area buildings as primary materials. Other more contemporary materials, like fiber cement or vinyl siding, are acceptable as well if the overall aesthetic aligns with the rest of the Belmont Center area. Large blank facades and highly reflective plastic or unfinished metal materials are not acceptable.

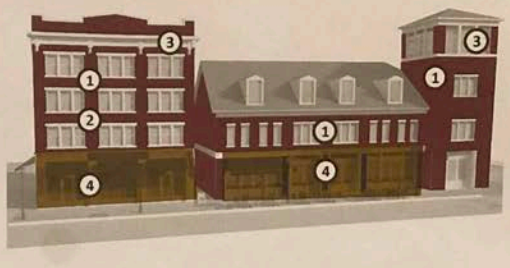
2. MATERIAL COLORS
Facade colors shall be subdued and relate to the local vernacular. Colorful facades are appropriate at low saturation and low intensity. High gloss, or reflective chrome, metallic, and fluorescent colors should not be used at the Belmont Center area.

3. TRIM
Trim colors shall always complement the primary facade color. Intensely colored or metallic trims are appropriate as accents only. Highly reflective or chrome trims are not permitted. Simple and minimalistic approaches are encouraged.

4. TRIPARTITE FACADE ARTICULATION
Buildings of three stories or more shall use changes in material to delineate the base, middle, or top of the building. These material changes help create a pedestrian scale and reduce the building's mass. Natural materials should be used at the base level, close to pedestrian spaces, to create a more tactile experience.

Appendix A Design Guidelines ♦ Page A.4

PUBLIC DRAFT 1



A consistent trim color in an area with architectural variety adds a visual unity to a commercial district.

New buildings that use a brick facade to fit the local context can distinguish new additions with more modern materials like glass, steel, and iron.

Appendix A Design Guidelines ♦ Page A.5

Roof Form

PUBLIC DRAFT 1

1.2 ROOF FORM

A. PURPOSE AND INTENT

Building roof forms shall be designed with practicality and functionality in mind with careful consideration for Massachusetts's unique climate and winter weather patterns, including snow loading and shedding. Secondarily, roof pitch and orientation shall seek to take advantage of solar gain and opportunities for roof-mounted solar where possible.

Tertiary consideration should be given to orientation of ridge and gable ends as they present to the street or public space. Building roof lines modify the form of buildings, create visual interest, break up building mass, emphasize primary facades and entrances, and provide respite for people. Simple and pragmatic approaches are highly preferred over unnecessarily complicated designs.

B. ALL SITES

1. PITCHED ROOFS
The use of pitched roofs at the Belmont Center area is highly encouraged. The aesthetic is part of the greater design vernacular of Massachusetts. With regard to practicality, pitched roofs are encouraged because they create shadow patterns for interest and shade, and allow for snow to easily shed off of the roof.

2. PARAPETS
Parapets are encouragnd to be used at the Belmont Center area. They can and should be used to help conceal rooftop mechanical units and other equipment.

3. PREFERRED MATERIALS AND COLORS
Pitched roofs shall be made with composite asphalt shingles, treated cedar shingles and shakes, or standing seam; non-glare metal. Roofing shall be a solid complementary color or black, gray, white, or earth tone. Colorful patterns are not acceptable. All roof materials shall be matte finish. Reflective and high gloss materials are prohibited.

4. ROOF MOUNTED ELEMENTS
Equipment mounted on top of roofs shall be screened from view from the ground or from other buildings, or located behind buildings with other utility equipment, where it would also need to be screened. Rooftop screening shall be cohesive with other building design elements so that it blends in to the rest of the architecture.

5. DORMERS
Dormers shall be used as additional roof forms that help break up building mass. Dormers shall not occupy more than half of the width or depth of the roof.

1.3 AWNINGS AND CANOPIES

A. PURPOSE AND INTENT

Awnings can help highlight primary entrances, provide shelter and shade for people, and produce shadow patterns that create visual interest. Awnings and canopies shall complement their building's design by using complementary materials and colors. They shall not be used as exclusively advertising features. Awnings can also be included for environmental reasons. They can provide shade for passive cooling in the summer and also serve as mounts for solar panels.

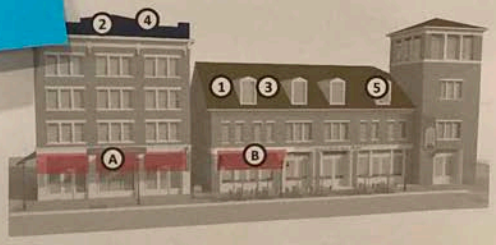
B. ALL SITES

1. LOCATION
Where awnings are used they shall be integrated into the building's architecture and facade. The use of retractable awnings is not encouraged. Awnings shall be located directly over windows or doors to provide protection from the elements for pedestrians.

2. MATERIALS AND GRAPHICS
Where awnings are used they shall be integrated into the building's architecture and facade. The use of retractable awnings is not encouraged. Awnings shall be located directly over windows or doors to provide protection from the elements for pedestrians.

Appendix A Design Guidelines ♦ Page A.6

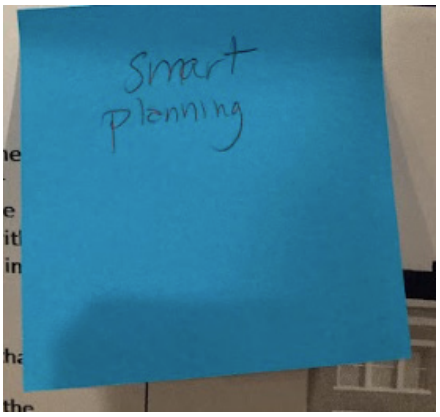
PUBLIC DRAFT 1

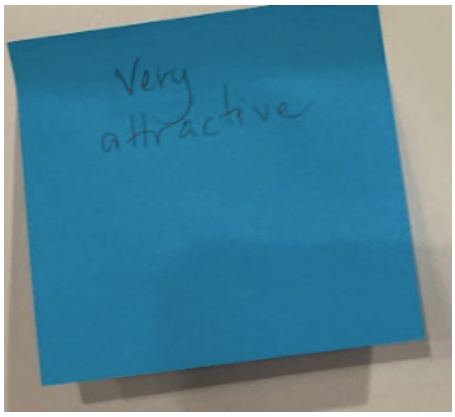


Cloth awnings are aesthetically preferable to vinyl or other synthetic materials. Cloth is also more versatile in terms of style, offering a wide variety of colors, patterns, and textures that can complement any architectural design.

Dormers enhance the interior environment of a structure, adding character and visual interest.

Appendix A Design Guidelines ♦ Page A.7


Smart
Planning


Very
attractive

Facade

PUBLIC DRAFT 1

1.4 FACADE

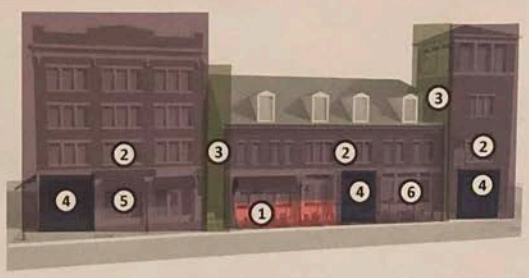
A. PURPOSE AND INTENT

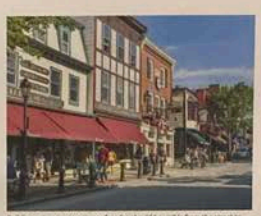
One of the goals of the Belmont Center area is to focus on pedestrian orientation. New and redeveloped buildings shall reinforce this goal and the goal of quality architecture. All building facades shall be attractive and consistent in design across all facades to the street, internal driveways, parking areas, and surrounding neighborhoods. Special attention shall be given to facades with entrances to ensure ease of pedestrian access from the street on which the facade fronts.

B. ALL SITES

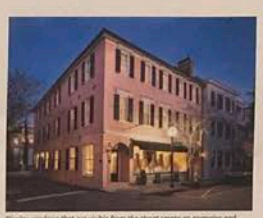
1. **SITE ELEMENTS**
   All site elements, including furnishing, lighting, signage, and planting, in addition to other exterior elements, shall complement building facades and highlight pedestrian spaces. Complementary materials and colors shall be used in site elements to match building facades. In addition, all exterior elements shall be coordinated with building and site plans to avoid functional conflicts, maintain visibility, and avoid safety hazards.
2. **PRIMARY FACADES**
   Primary facades are building facades that face a street or public space and include a main entrance to the building. There can be more than one main building entrance, and consequently there can be more than one primary facade. Building entrances on primary facades shall be visible from the street on which the primary facade is oriented, and provide unobstructed spaces adjacent to entrances for pedestrians. Highly visible customer entrances on primary facades shall include three or more of the following design components:
   - Canopies or porticoes
   - Overhanging roof lines that can provide shelter for people
   - Recesses or projections
   - Raised corniced parapets over the door
   - Peaked roof forms
   - Outdoor seating or dining areas
   - Display windows that are visible from the street
   - Architectural details that are integrated into the design of the building
   - Planted beds and/or raised planters
   - Sense of rhythm and scale
3. **SECONDARY FACADES**
   Secondary facades are any building facades that do not face a public space or street and do not include a main building entrance. Secondary facade design does not need to match primary facade design, but should be complementary to the primary facade. Building utilities not located on roofs shall be located along secondary facades and screened accordingly from public view. Private entrances, such as maintenance or secondary residential tenant entrances, shall be located along the secondary facade.
4. **ENTRANCES**
   Main building entrances shall be located along primary facades. If a common building entrance is needed for more than one building tenant, that entrance should also be located along a building's primary facade. Additional private entrances at secondary facades are permitted. The Planning Board may waive these requirements if the building is part of a common development scheme approved by the Planning Board in which the building relates to the overall development and public and private streets in a manner that is consistent with these standards.
5. **DETAILING**
   Increased detail at the pedestrian level shall provide a sense of human scale. Detailing may include elements such as change in materials, trim, and accessory elements such as awnings, lighting fixtures, benches, or signage.
6. **WALL TREATMENTS**
   Increased detail at the pedestrian level shall provide a sense of human scale. Detailing may include elements such as change in materials, trim, and accessory elements such as awnings, lighting fixtures, benches, or signage.

PUBLIC DRAFT 1





Building entrances on primary facades should be visible from the street to promote accessibility, enhance safety, and create a welcoming atmosphere. Visibility ensures that visitors or residents can easily locate the entrance, making the building more inviting and functional.



Display windows that are visible from the street create an engaging and dynamic connection between a building's interior and the outside world. These windows attract passersby and spark curiosity, which can drive foot traffic to retail stores, galleries, or restaurants.

Addi Secondary Volumes

Much too high.

PUBLIC DRAFT 1

1. UTILITIES

All utility equipment, such as vents, downspouts, flashing, electrical conduits, meters, HVAC equipment, vending machines, and service connections, shall be treated as integral elements of the building's architecture, starting in the conceptual building phase. Exterior utility equipment, like meters and HVAC equipment shall be located to the rear of the building and screened appropriately as stated in other standards. When functional elements need to be part of the building facade they shall be incorporated into the building's architecture accordingly, with matching colors, materials, and detailing. Building elevations presented for Planning Board review shall show the location and treatment of all functional elements, including vending machines.

2. FENESTRATION

Windows shall generally be vertical in orientation across all facades. A minimum of approximately 35% of the primary facade of the first level of commercial/retail establishments shall have transparent fenestration. All other commercial primary facades shall have a minimum of approximately 30% transparent fenestration. A minimum of approximately 15% of secondary facades shall have transparent fenestration. Fenestration shall create a sense of rhythm and cadence, and a sense of scale and continuity, as well as activate buildings on the street level. Blank walls are not permitted on any facades.

1.5 ADDITIONS AND SECONDARY VOLUMES

A. PURPOSE AND INTENT

Any work done to existing buildings and sites the Belmont Center area will be held to the standards as new buildings and sites. This i building rehabilitation and additions, which provide opportunities to update buildings a feeling of cohesion to the built environme the Belmont Center area.

Height looks appropriate to me. Not much higher than what we have now above Revolve ...

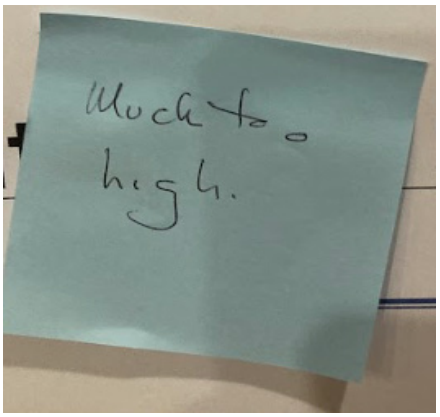
B. ALL SITES

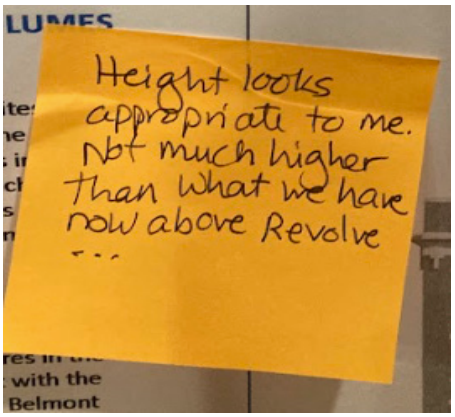
1. **VOLUME AND MASSING**
   Any work completed on existing structures in the Belmont Center area shall be consistent with the architectural standards outlined for the Belmont Center area in this document.
2. **MATERIALS**
   Materials used in alterations or additions shall complement the materials used on the original structure and consistent with these design standards.
3. **PRESERVATION**
   When building rehabilitation is required, every effort shall be made to preserve any distinct architectural features or examples of skilled craftsmanship present on existing buildings.
4. **PEDESTRIAN SCALE**
   New additions and building alterations create the opportunity to add pedestrian scale features and fenestration like entryways, windows, lighting, etc. to buildings that emphasize the pedestrian centric goals in the Belmont Center area.

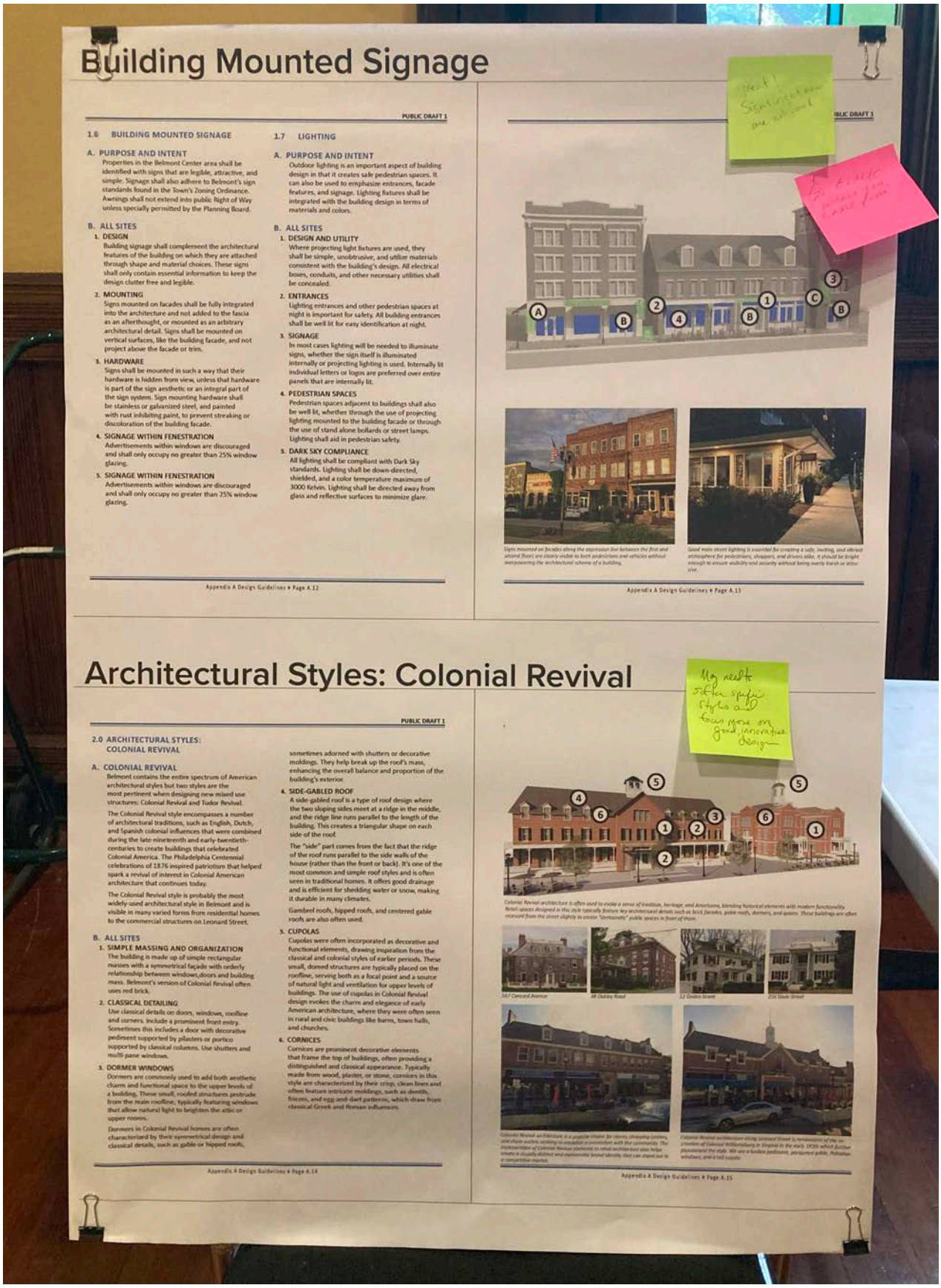
PUBLIC DRAFT 1

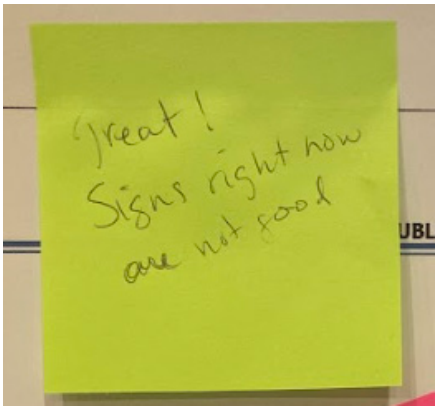
Minimum fenestration standards on main street buildings are beneficial because they promote vibrant, active, and visually appealing streetscapes. By requiring a certain amount of windows or glass openings, these standards ensure that buildings maintain a sense of openness and connection between the interior and exterior.

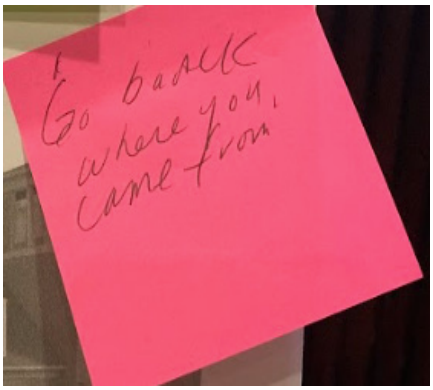
Storefront windows provide a direct line of sight into the store, allowing businesses to showcase their products, services, and displays, which can attract potential customers from the street.

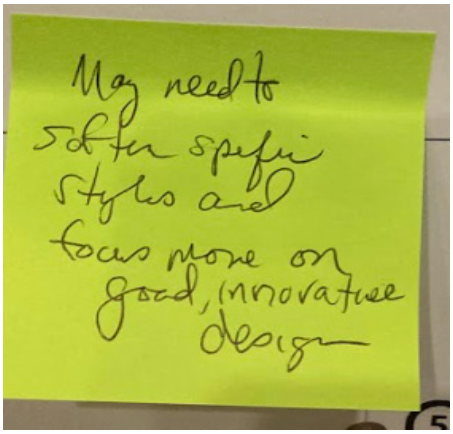

Much too
high.

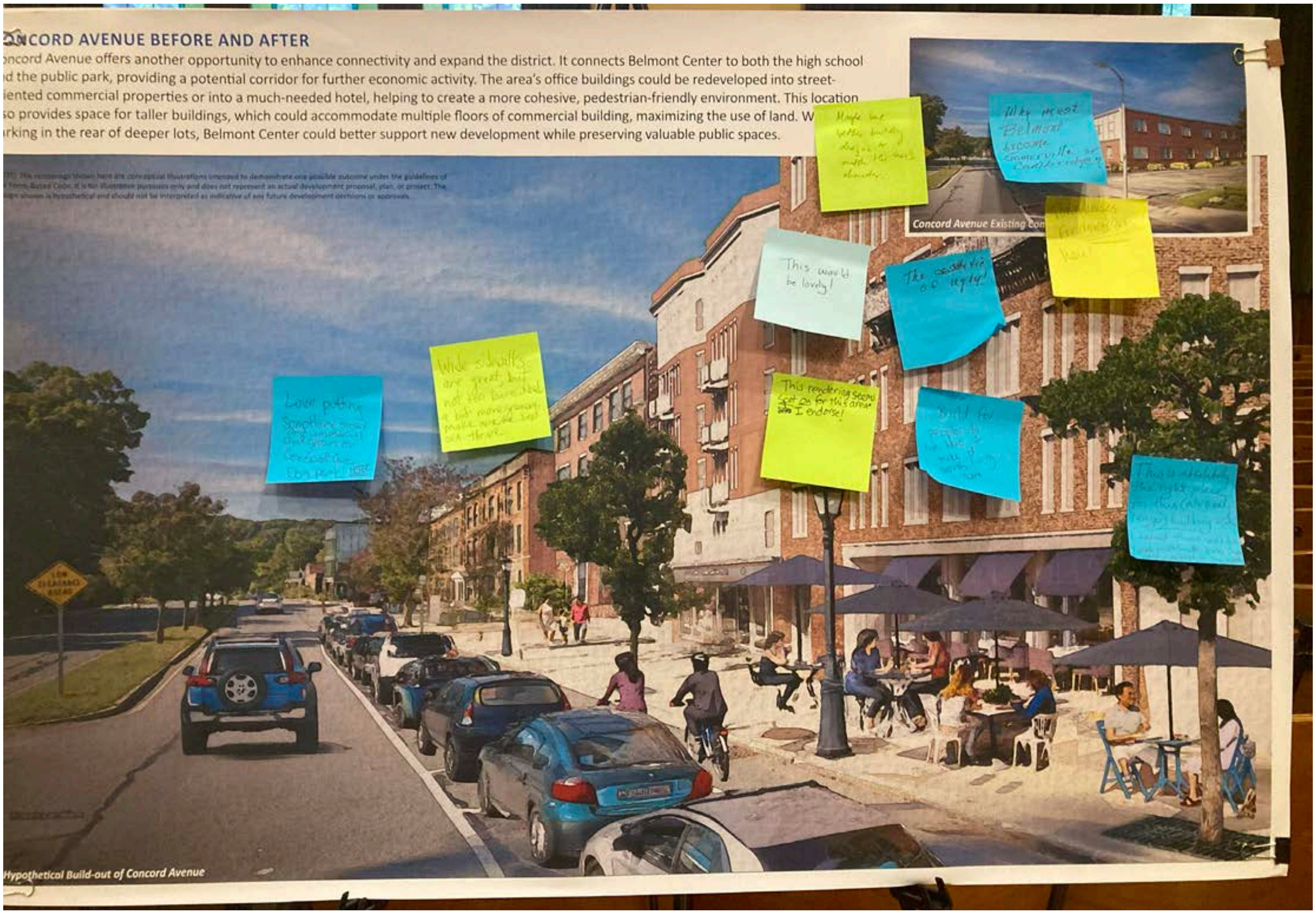

Height looks
appropriate to me.
Not much higher
than what we have
now above Revolve
...
with the
Belmont

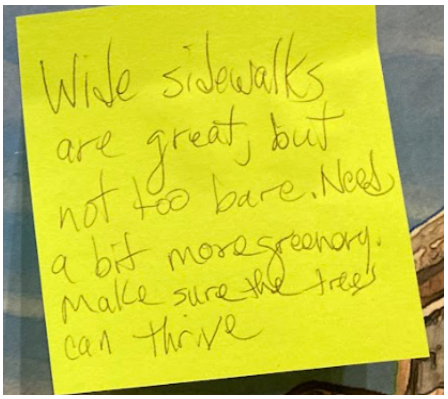

Building Mounted Signage
PUBLIC DRAFT 1
1.6 BUILDING MOUNTED SIGNAGE
A. PURPOSE AND INTENT
Properties in the Belmont Center area shall be identified with signs that are legible, attractive, and simple. Signage shall also adhere to Belmont's sign standards found in the Town's Zoning Ordinance. Awnings shall not extend into public Right of Way unless specially permitted by the Planning Board.
B. ALL SITES
1. DESIGN
Building signage shall complement the architectural features of the building on which they are attached through shape and material choices. These signs shall only contain essential information to keep the design clutter free and legible.
2. MOUNTING
Signs mounted on facades shall be fully integrated into the architecture and not added to the fascia as an afterthought, or mounted as an arbitrary architectural detail. Signs shall be mounted on vertical surfaces, like the building facade, and not project above the facade or trim.
3. HARDWARE
Signs shall be mounted in such a way that their hardware is hidden from view, unless that hardware is part of the sign aesthetic or an integral part of the sign system. Sign mounting hardware shall be stainless or galvanized steel, and painted with rust inhibiting paint, to prevent streaking or discoloration of the building facade.
4. SIGNAGE WITHIN FENESTRATION
Advertisements within windows are discouraged and shall only occupy no greater than 25% window glazing.
5. SIGNAGE WITHIN FENESTRATION
Advertisements within windows are discouraged and shall only occupy no greater than 25% window glazing.
1.7 LIGHTING
A. PURPOSE AND INTENT
Outdoor lighting is an important aspect of building design in that it creates safe pedestrian spaces. It can also be used to emphasize entrances, facade features, and signage. Lighting fixtures shall be integrated with the building design in terms of materials and colors.
B. ALL SITES
1. DESIGN AND UTILITY
Where projecting light fixtures are used, they shall be simple, unobtrusive, and utilize materials consistent with the building's design. All electrical boxes, conduits, and other necessary utilities shall be concealed.
2. ENTRANCES
Lighting entrances and other pedestrian spaces at night is important for safety. All building entrances shall be well lit for easy identification at night.
3. SIGNAGE
In most cases lighting will be needed to illuminate signs, whether the sign itself is illuminated internally or projecting lighting is used. Internally lit individual letters or logos are preferred over entire panels that are internally lit.
4. PEDESTRIAN SPACES
Pedestrian spaces adjacent to buildings shall also be well lit, whether through the use of projecting lighting mounted to the building facade or through the use of stand alone bollards or street lamps. Lighting shall aid in pedestrian safety.
5. DARK SKY COMPLIANCE
All lighting shall be compliant with Dark Sky standards. Lighting shall be down-directed, shielded, and a color temperature maximum of 3000 Kelvin. Lighting shall be directed away from glass and reflective surfaces to minimize glare.
Appendix A Design Guidelines ♦ Page A.12
Appendix A Design Guidelines ♦ Page A.13
Architectural Styles: Colonial Revival
PUBLIC DRAFT 1
2.0 ARCHITECTURAL STYLES: COLONIAL REVIVAL
A. COLONIAL REVIVAL
Belmont contains the entire spectrum of American architectural styles but two styles are the most pertinent when designing new mixed use structures: Colonial Revival and Tudor Revival.
The Colonial Revival style encompasses a number of architectural traditions, such as English, Dutch, and Spanish colonial influences that were combined during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-centuries to create buildings that celebrated Colonial America. The Philadelphia Centennial celebrations of 1876 inspired patriotism that helped spark a revival of interest in Colonial American architecture that continues today.
The Colonial Revival style is probably the most widely-used architectural style in Belmont and is visible in many varied forms from residential homes to the commercial structures on Leonard Street.
B. ALL SITES
1. SIMPLE MASSING AND ORGANIZATION
The building is made up of simple rectangular masses with a symmetrical façade with orderly relationship between windows,doors and building mass. Belmont's version of Colonial Revival often uses red brick.
2. CLASSICAL DETAILING
Use classical details on doors, windows, roofline and corners. Include a prominent front entry. Sometimes this includes a door with decorative pediment supported by pilasters or portico supported by classical columns. Use shutters and multi-pane windows.
3. DORMER WINDOWS
Dormers are commonly used to add both aesthetic charm and functional space to the upper levels of a building. These small, roofed structures protrude from the main roofline, typically featuring windows that allow natural light to brighten the attic or upper rooms.
Dormers in Colonial Revival homes are often characterized by their symmetrical design and classical details, such as gable or hipped roofs, sometimes adorned with shutters or decorative moldings. They help break up the roof's mass, enhancing the overall balance and proportion of the building's exterior.
4. SIDE-GABLED ROOF
A side-gabled roof is a type of roof design where the two sloping sides meet at a ridge in the middle, and the ridge line runs parallel to the length of the building. This creates a triangular shape on each side of the roof.
The "side" part comes from the fact that the ridge of the roof runs parallel to the side walls of the house (rather than the front or back). It's one of the most common and simple roof styles and is often seen in traditional homes. It offers good drainage and is efficient for shedding water or snow, making it durable in many climates.
Gambrel roofs, hipped roofs, and centered gable roofs are also often used.
5. CUPOLAS
Cupolas were often incorporated as decorative and functional elements, drawing inspiration from the classical and colonial styles of earlier periods. These small, domed structures are typically placed on the roofline, serving both as a focal point and a source of natural light and ventilation for upper levels of buildings. The use of cupolas in Colonial Revival design evokes the charm and elegance of early American architecture, where they were often seen in rural and civic buildings like barns, town halls, and churches.
6. CORNICES
Cornices are prominent decorative elements that frame the top of buildings, often providing a distinguished and classical appearance. Typically made from wood, plaster, or stone, cornices in this style are characterized by their crisp, clean lines and often feature intricate moldings, such as dentils, friezes, and egg-and-dart patterns, which draw from classical Greek and Roman influences.
Appendix A Design Guidelines ♦ Page A.14
Appendix A Design Guidelines ♦ Page A.15

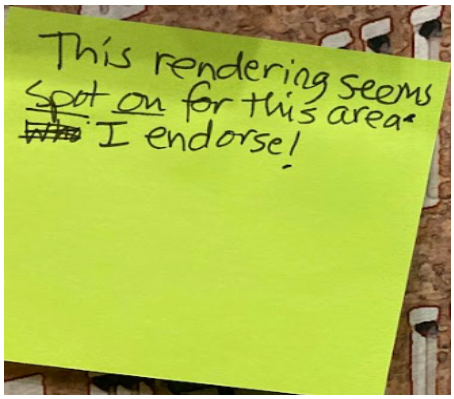

Great!
Signs right now
are not good

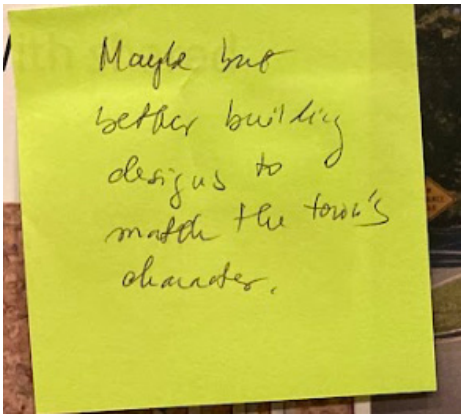

Go back
where you
came from

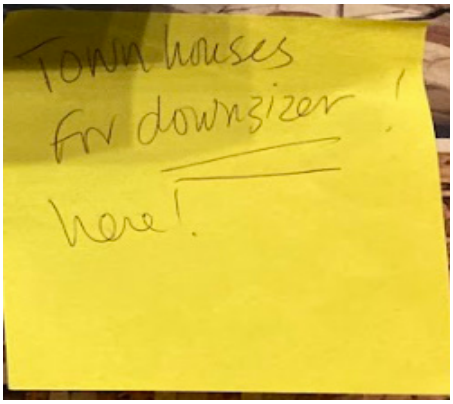

May need to
soften specific
styles and
focus more on
good, innovative
design

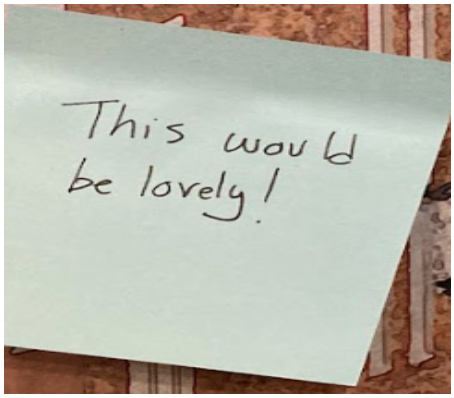

ONCORD AVENUE BEFORE AND AFTER
oncord Avenue offers another opportunity to enhance connectivity and expand the district. It connects Belmont Center to both the high school
d the public park, providing a potential corridor for further economic activity. The area's office buildings could be redeveloped into street-
iented commercial properties or into a much-needed hotel, helping to create a more cohesive, pedestrian-friendly environment. This location
so provides space for taller buildings, which could accommodate multiple floors of commercial building, maximizing the use of land. W
rking in the rear of deeper lots, Belmont Center could better support new development while preserving valuable public spaces.
This would be lovely!
This rendering seems spot on for this area I endorse!
Concord Avenue Existing Con
Hypothetical Build-out of Concord Avenue

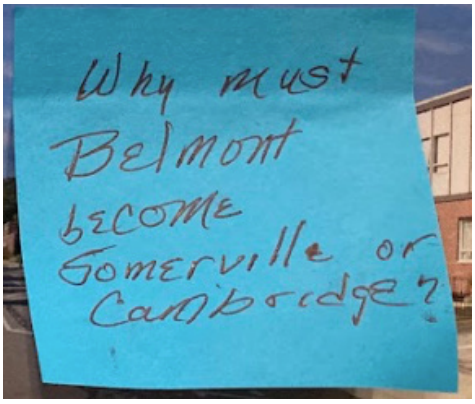

Wide sidewalks are great, but not too bare. Need a bit more greenery. Make sure the trees can thrive

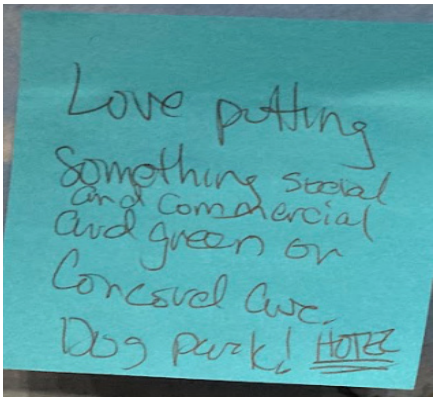

This rendering seems spot on for this area. I endorse!

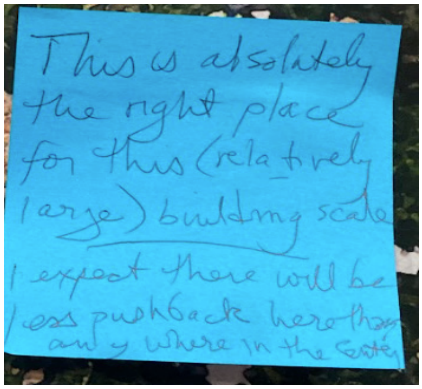

Maybe but better building designs to match the town's character.

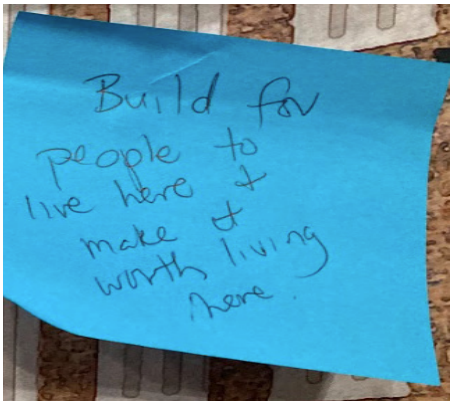

Townhouses for downsizer here!

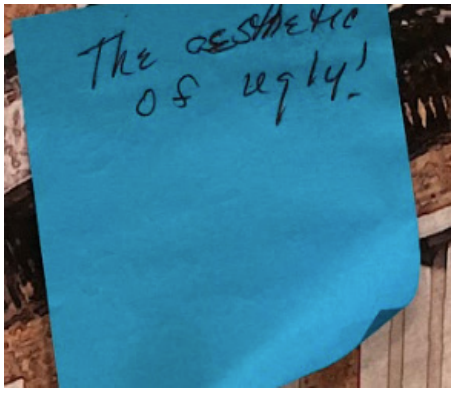

This would be lovely!

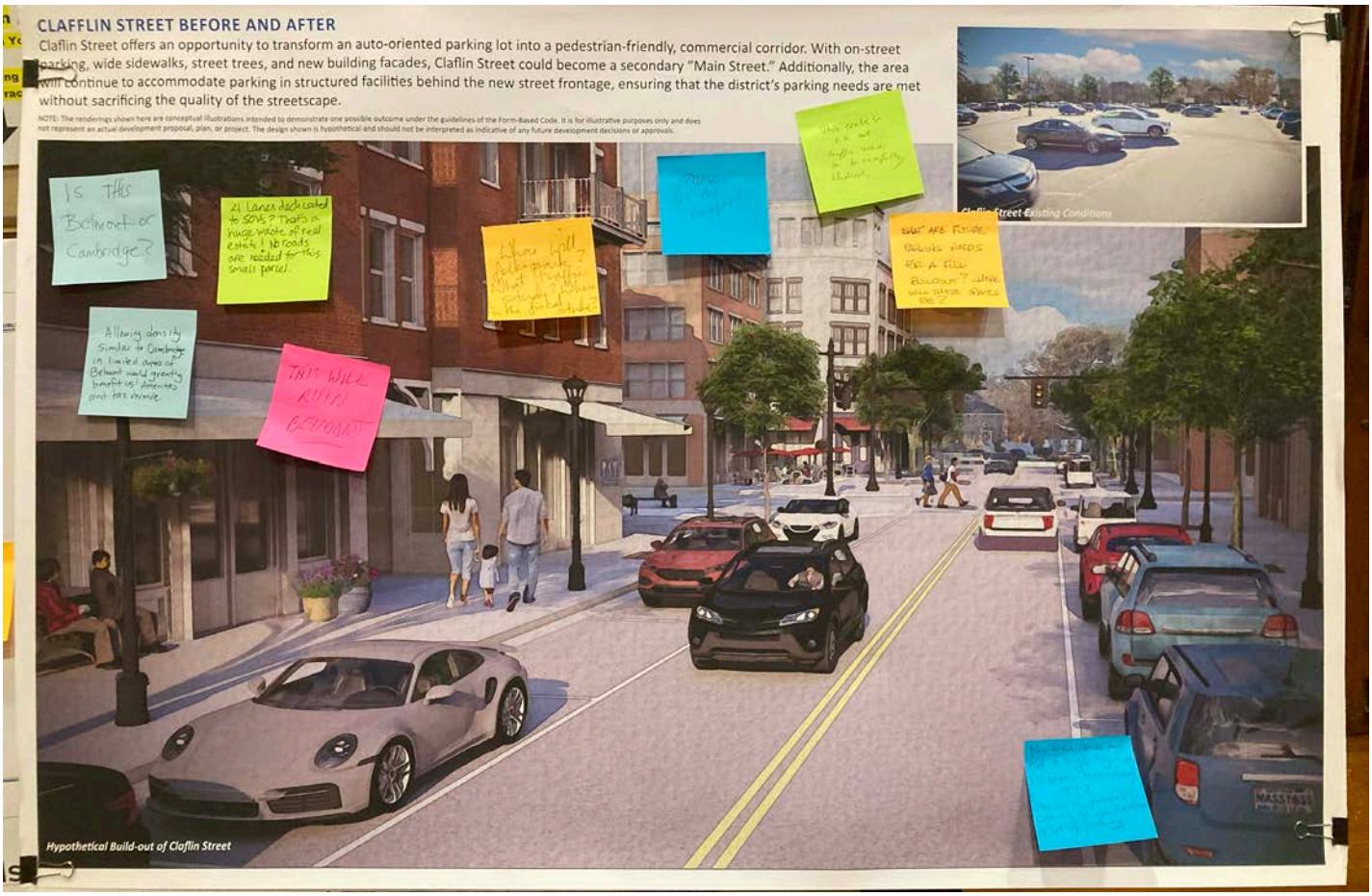

Why must Belmont become Somerville or Cambridge?

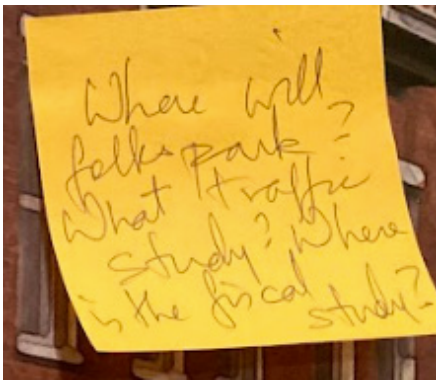

Love putting something social and commercial and green or covered area. Dog park! HOTEL

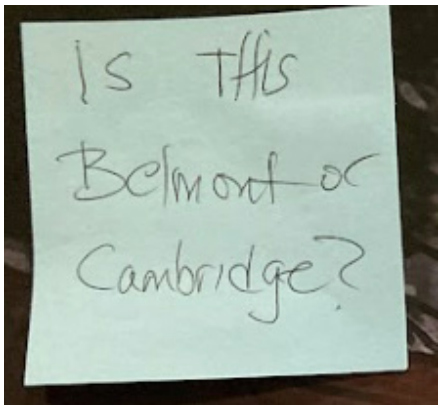

This is absolutely the right place for this (relatively large) building scale. I expect there will be less pushback here than anywhere in the center

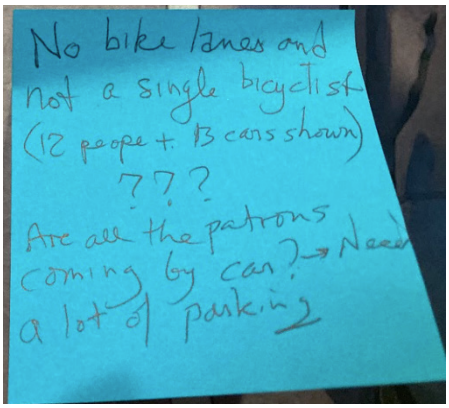

Build for people to live here & make it worth living here.

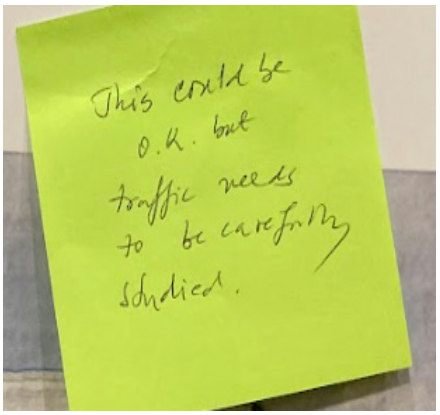

The aesthetic of ugly!

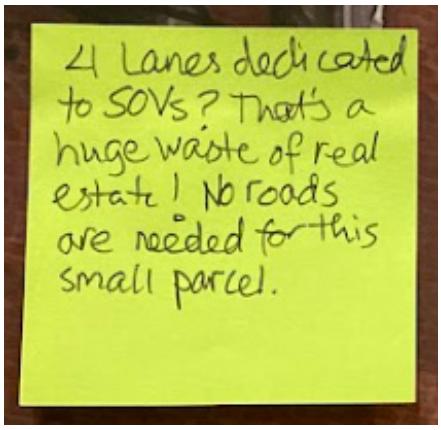

CLAFFLIN STREET BEFORE AND AFTER
Claflin Street offers an opportunity to transform an auto-oriented parking lot into a pedestrian-friendly, commercial corridor. With on-street parking, wide sidewalks, street trees, and new building facades, Claflin Street could become a secondary "Main Street." Additionally, the area will continue to accommodate parking in structured facilities behind the new street frontage, ensuring that the district's parking needs are met without sacrificing the quality of the streetscape.
NOTE: The renderings shown here are conceptual illustrations intended to demonstrate one possible outcome under the guidelines of the Form-Based Code. It is for illustrative purposes only and does not represent an actual development proposal, plan, or project. The design shown is hypothetical and should not be interpreted as indicative of any future development decisions or approvals.
Is THIS Belmont or Cambridge?
4 Lanes dedicated to SOVs? That's a huge waste of real estate! No roads are needed for this small parcel.
THIS WILL RUIN BELMONT
Hypothetical Build-out of Claflin Street
Claflin Street Existing Conditions

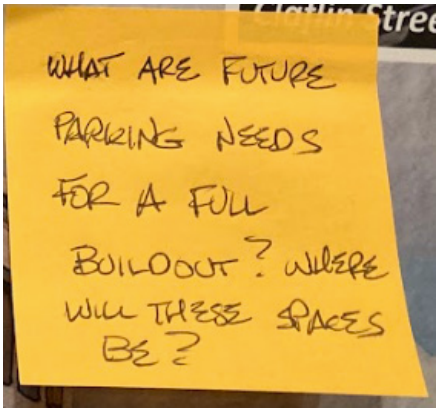

Where will folks park? What traffic study? Where is the fiscal study?

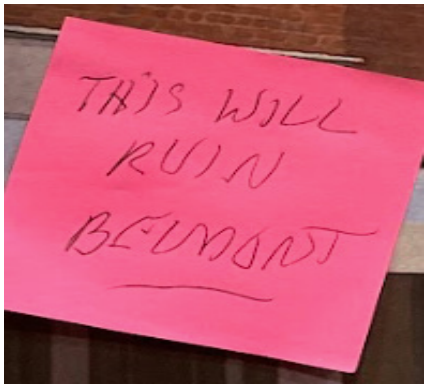

Is This Belmont or Cambridge?

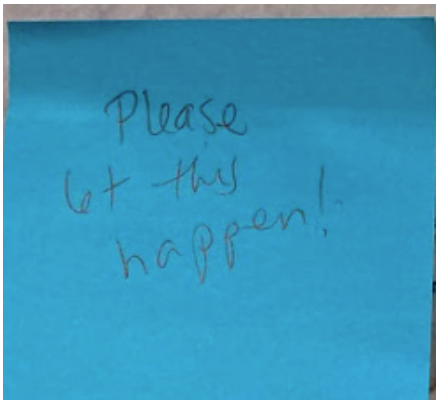

No bike lanes and not a single bicyclist (12 people + 13 cars shown) ??? Are all the patrons coming by car? → Need a lot of parking

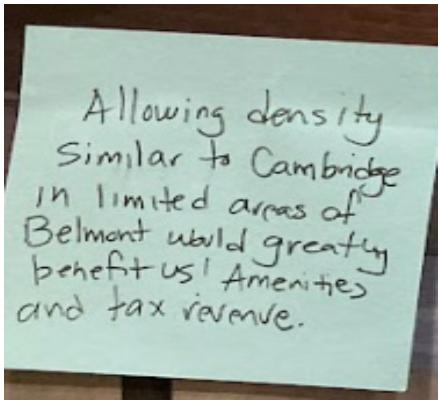

This could be O.K. but traffic needs to be carefully studied.


4 Lanes dedicated to SOVs? That's a huge waste of real estate! No roads are needed for this small parcel.


WHAT ARE FUTURE PARKING NEEDS FOR A FULL BUILDOUT? WHERE WILL THESE SPACES BE?


THIS WILL RUIN BELMONT


Please let this happen!


Allowing density Similar to Cambridge in limited areas of Belmont would greatly benefit us! Amenities and tax revenue.