

Town of Westwood
Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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PLANNING BOARD

Memorandum

To: Finance and Warrant Commission Members

From: Abby McCabe, Town Planner
Planning Board

Date: March 22, 2018

Re: Zoning Amendments & Islington Center Redevelopment Summary

In May 2016, the Town issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the Town-owned properties in Islington Center. The purpose of the RFP was to seek a partner to explore creative and comprehensive redevelopment opportunities in Islington. After several months of public meetings and significant public input a development proposal was given the authorization to submit an application. Eighteen months after the close of the RFP, an application was submitted to the Planning Board. The application requires two zoning changes for this project to be achieved. The Planning Board has thoroughly considered the application and is sponsoring two zoning articles related to this project.

The Planning Board opened the public hearing on January 16 and held continued hearings at their February 13, February 27, and March 20 meetings. The hearing was further continued to Wednesday, April 4 at 7:00 pm in the Downey Elementary School Cafeteria where there will be a concurrent hearing with the Conservation Commission. The April 4 hearing session will be followed by a subsequent hearing session on April 10 at Downey Elementary School.

Below is a summary of the project and related zoning changes. The Planning Board has not formerly voted on the project but has provided direction to the Applicant regarding several form-defining elements of the proposed redevelopment project.

Project Summary:

1. Approximately 13,000 sq. ft. of first floor commercial space with a total of 18 second and third floor condo units and underground parking, in a new mixed-use building to be constructed at the corner of East and Washington St. (288 Washington);

2. Renovation of existing commercial building at 266-278 Washington St. to contain 8,750 sq. ft. of first floor retail use and new 5,000 sq. ft. space for MMO with direct access to parking lot and 40'x 37' playground;
3. New 14,786 sq. ft. CVS pharmacy and retail building (13,074 sq. ft. of floor area plus 1,712 sq. ft. of mezzanine storage) on corner of School and East St.;
4. Relocated, renovated and expanded Wentworth Hall on the west side of Washington Street, for continued use as Islington Branch Library, plus approximately 6,000 sq. ft. addition with first floor Youth & Family Services Department and new lower level Community Space for Library, Y&FS, Recreation, and various community uses;
5. Improved landscaped buffer areas between residential properties on School St. and East St./Stafford Pl., including and 8 ft. fences and dense plantings;
6. Town ownership of approximately 10,000 sq. ft. of open space land, with beneficial wetland replication, behind 9 School Street to serve as buffer between residential and commercial properties;
7. Opportunity to relocate Blue Hart Tavern to Town-owned land on Washington St. for potential restoration and reuse;
8. Addition of new gathering spaces at corner of East. & Washington, between the mixed use building and commercial building, and green space in front of Wentworth Hall;
9. Incorporates traffic signal phasing and timing improvements at intersection;
10. Creation of an additional 85 parking spaces more than what currently exists with a total of 185 parking spaces. The parking for Morrison Park will continue to operate in a similar manner as today and the Town is working to address the Morrison Park parking shortage. The proposed number of parking spaces is more than the projected demand based on the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) parking generation rates.

The project proposes:

- 36 underground parking spaces for mixed-use building on east side of Washington Street;
- 52 surface parking spaces on the east side of Washington Street;
- 12 on-street parking spaces on the east side of Washington Street;
- 45 surface parking spaces for CVS on the west side of Washington Street;
- 34 municipal spaces on west side of Washington Street; and
- 6 on-street parking spaces on the west side of Washington Street.

11. Estimated \$395,800 annual net positive benefit to Town;

12. Three new affordable units which are structured to result in the addition of 12 units to Westwood's Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI).

Affordable Units:

One affordable unit will be restricted in the existing mixed use building at 321 Washington St. Another two existing apartments at 256 Washington St. are proposed for conversion to affordable units. On February 27, the Planning Board unanimously voted to accept this proposal finding that it serves the Town's housing needs because the additional unit at 321 Washington Street makes the full building and all 12 of the units eligible for listing on the Town's Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI), where only 2 individual units are now eligible for listing on the SHI. This will result in a total of 14 Islington Center housing units being added to the Town's SHI, which will go a long way toward helping Westwood stay above the minimum 10% affordability requirement needed to protect against unfriendly 40B development.

Traffic and Circulation:

The Applicant's and the Planning Board's engineering consultant do not anticipate significant traffic impacts with this project. The Planning Board has standards on width of travel lanes and has received turning templates demonstrating the adequacy for maneuvering through the project by Westwood's largest fire truck. The Planning Board is carefully considering the proposed uses and will restrict construction and delivery trucks from traveling down residential neighborhoods, particularly on School Street into any approval.

Zoning Amendments:

Map Change: The Zoning Map Amendment Related to Islington Center Redevelopment Project to expand the LBB and the FMUOD 6/Washington Street Business District is necessary to include all of the land currently under consideration by the Planning Board FMUOD Special Permit. The parcels proposed to be rezoned include a portion of the new CVS building, parking associated with the adjacent municipal uses, landscaping, the wetland replication area, and the open space area.

Size of Retail Business: The proposed amendment allows the Planning Board to consider retail sales and services establishments between 10,000 sq. ft. to 15,000 sq. ft. by Special Permit in the FMUOD6. The Zoning Bylaw in both the underlying LBB and FMUOD currently limits the size of retail sales and service establishments to 10,000 sq. ft. per business. The new CVS was submitted to the Planning Board with a pharmacy and mezzanine storage area. The combined size of the retail sales floor, pharmacy and mezzanine storage area exceed the current maximum 10,000 square foot requirement (13,074 sq. ft. retail sales floor and pharmacy, 1,712 sq. ft. storage).

The Zoning Bylaw previously allowed 15,000 sq. ft. retail establishments in the LBB (Washington Street area) and LBA (High Street area) Districts by-right and was reduced to the 10,000 sq. ft. in 2014 with the establishment of the FMUOD 6 & 7 zones for Washington and High Streets. In 2014, the Planning Board

aimed to prevent the development of large scale chain retailers' by-right and the zoning was changed in the underlying business districts zones through an amendment to the Principal Use Chart and in the FMUOD for 6 & 7. The proposed amendment does not revert back the 2014 amendment because the proposal only applies to the FMUOD6 and requires a Special Permit and is not by-right as was prior to 2014.

There has been some confusion related to the size of the proposed new CVS. Current zoning requirements allow buildings to exceed 10,000 sq. ft. in size, however, those requirements limit the size of any single business establishment within a building to no more than 10,000 sq. ft. The proposed CVS includes a sales floor, pharmacy and storage area all on one floor, bringing the establishment size over the 10,000 sq. ft. limit. For comparison purposes, below is a list of existing buildings on High and Washington Streets that are larger than 10,000 sq. ft., and a list of recently constructed CVS buildings in nearby towns.

Buildings Over 10,000 sq. ft. in High St. & Washington St. Business Districts	
Address	Building Envelope (Building Footprint)
301-315 Washington St. (Post Office, Islington Pizza, Wild Blossom Building)	11,268 sq. ft.
679-697 High St. (Good Plaza: Post Office, Toast Office, High St. Market, Walgreens)	15,145 sq. ft.
725-745 High St. (Stagecoach Plaza: Comella's, Arch Orthodontic)	18,071 sq. ft.
Roche Bros Supermarket	47,568 sq. ft.

CVS Comparisons Size Comparisons	
67 Central St., Foxborough, MA	13,648 sq. ft.
67 Main St. Medway, MA	13,092 sq. ft.
555 Main St. Medfield, MA	10,413 sq. ft.
492 Concord St., Framingham, MA	15,856 sq. ft.
947 Providence Hwy., Dedham, MA	12,088 sq. ft.

Update: At the Planning Board's March 20th public hearing, CVS proposed redesigning the building to comply with the 10,000 sq. ft. size limit, but then requested a drive-thru. The Planning Board has asked for updated plans to review the drive-thru queueing, vehicle circulation, safety, and traffic impacts. The Planning Board will review the revised plans and will consider the drive-thru at the continued hearing. If the project can be redesigned to no longer require the proposed zoning amendment, the Planning Board will consider withdrawing the amendment or recommending against its approval at Town Meeting.

General Zoning Housekeeping Amendments

This article was submitted as a placeholder and can now be withdrawn because it is no longer needed.