



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

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To: Planning Board
From: CDD Staff
Date: December 10, 2013
Re: **Lutz, et al. Zoning Petition**

Included is some background information related to the Lutz, et al. Zoning Petition, which proposes rezoning a section of the Residence C-1A District along Richdale Avenue to Residence C-1 (*see attached map*).

This is the second rezoning proposal in the past three years affecting a section of the C-1A District along the railroad line between Porter Square and Danehy Park. When considering the Runkel, et al. Zoning Petition in 2011, the Board suggested a more comprehensive study of the zoning along this corridor. Therefore, although the current zoning petition only affects a portion of the district, this analysis looks at the entire area.

Although the area has a commercial/industrial history, it is now mostly residential. The remaining commercial uses in the C-1A district are at 15-33 Richdale (where the Planning Board has reviewed a residential proposal), an adjacent auto repair garage at 45 Richdale, and a commercial condo building off of Sherman Street to the northwest.

Zoning History (*see attached map for reference*)

- For most of the 20th century, this corridor was zoned for industrial use. By 1980, the uses were mostly commercial, except for some pre-1930s houses that remain.
- In 1978, the Industry A-1 (IA-1) designation was created for this area. Unlike other industrial districts at the time, IA-1 allowed housing by special permit as well as light industry.
- At the time IA-1 was created, much of the northern part of the corridor was rezoned from industrial to Residence B. A section of the northern corridor along Pemberton Street was rezoned from IA-1 to Residence B in 1987.
- In 2001, the Citywide Rezoning changed most of the IA-1 district to a new Residence C-1A designation (one commercial property remains zoned IA-1). This change disallowed commercial and industrial uses, and allowed residential uses at a somewhat lower density than IA-1, with setback and open space requirements.
- In 2011, a portion of the C-1A district west of Sherman Street and south of the railroad line was rezoned to Residence C as a result of the Runkel, et al. Petition.

The chart on the following page summarizes the requirements for the zoning districts that currently exist in the area as well as the proposed Residence C-1 designation.

Zoning Regulations – Uses and Density

District	Allowed Uses	Max. FAR (w/Inclusionary)*	Min. Lot Area per Dwelling Unit (w/Inclusionary)*
B	Single-family residential Two-family residential Townhouse residential	0.50 (0.65)*	2,500/4,000 SF (2,643-3,050 SF)*
C	All residential (including multifamily)	0.60 (0.78)*	1,800 SF (1,285-1,440 SF)*
C-1	All residential (including multifamily)	0.75 (0.975)*	1,500 SF (1,071-1,200 SF)*
C-1A	All residential (including multifamily)	1.25 (1.625)*	1,000 SF (714-800 SF)*
IA-1	All residential (including multifamily) Most commercial uses	1.25 nonres. 1.50 res. (1.95)*	700 SF (500-560 SF)*

* For residential projects of at least 10 units or 10,000 square feet in GFA, Inclusionary Zoning applies an increase in the FAR and number of dwelling units permitted in exchange for affordable housing units.

Zoning Regulations – Height, Setbacks and Open Space

District	Min. Setback Front Yard	Min. Setback Side Yard	Min. Setback Rear Yard	Max. Height	Min. Ratio of Open Space to Lot Area
B	15'	7.5' sum to 20'	25'	35'	40%
C	$(H+L) \div 4$ * at least 10'	$(H+L) \div 5$ * at least 7.5' sum to 20'	$(H+L) \div 4$ * at least 20'	35'	36%
C-1	$(H+L) \div 4$ * at least 10'	$(H+L) \div 5$ * at least 7.5'	$(H+L) \div 4$ * at least 20'	35'	30%
C-1A	10'	$(H+L) \div 7$ *	$(H+L) \div 5$ *	45'	15%
IA-1	no min	no min	no min	45'	no min

* In cases where there are "formula" yard setback requirements, "(H+L)" means the sum of the building height and building length along that particular edge of the lot.

Project History

There have been many projects built in the area along the railroad line over the past three decades. The following summarizes the characteristics of eight significant new housing projects that have been built since 1980. *(See photos on the following page and locations on the attached map.)*

Address	Year Built	Housing Type	Units	FAR	Lot Area per Unit	Max. Height*
1-7 Richdale Ave	1981	Rehab + new multifamily	16	1.37	1,686 SF	45'
45 Cogswell Ave	1982	New townhouses	38	unknown	1,715 SF	26'-34'
189-205 Richdale Ave	1988	New multifamily	40	1.44	1,025 SF	45'
75 Richdale Ave	1995	Rehab multifamily	18	1.36	1,769 SF	40'
177 Pemberton St	1998	New townhouses	20	1.03	2,109 SF	35'
135-175 Richdale Ave	1998	New multifamily	43	1.25	1,447 SF	40'
113 Richdale Ave	2006	New multifamily	20	1.61	932 SF	40'
69 Bolton St	2012	New multifamily	20	1.53	978 SF	35'

* Max. Height is as approved in Planning Board special permit.

General Observations

Although individual projects have varied, some general observations can be made about the area as a whole that the Board may consider in evaluating the proposed rezoning:

- Even when commercial uses were allowed, housing development has been predominant in the area. During this time period, only one new commercial building was built (on the remaining IA-1 site).
- In most cases, housing development has been new construction, with one example of a conversion of a commercial building to residential use, and one combined rehab / new construction project.
- The density of residential projects in square footage (as measured by FAR) has tended to be higher than what would be allowed in Residence C-1. However, the dwelling unit density (as measured by lot area per dwelling unit) has often been similar to Residence C-1.
- The two most recent projects in the area have had a higher FAR and unit density than previous projects, reflecting the incorporation of the Inclusionary Housing provisions.
- Even for projects with a higher density, building heights have tended to remain below the 45' limit, mostly in the range of 35'-45'. Projects have varied between three-story and four-story buildings.



1-7 Richdale Ave (1981)



45 Cogswell Ave (1982)



189-205 Richdale Ave (1988)



75 Richdale Ave (1995)



177 Pemberton St (1998)



135-175 Richdale Ave (1998)



113 Richdale Ave (2006)



69 Bolton St (2012)

Other Residence C-1A Districts

Only a few C-1A districts were created at the time of the Citywide Rezoning in 2001, all within the northern and western portions of Cambridge. Like the subject area, they were all rezoned from a prior Industry A-1 designation, reflecting the “progression” over time in the development of these areas from predominantly commercial to predominantly residential.

In some of the other C-1A areas, there is a Mixed Use Residential (MXR) overlay, which allows limited non-residential uses as they have been previously established in the district.

See the attached map for reference.

Rindge Avenue

Several parcels along Rindge Avenue, near Russell Field and Rindge Towers, are included within a C-1A district, with an MXR overlay on the portions closest to Rindge Avenue. While some commercial uses remain, there have been some new residential projects in that district since 2001, most notably the “Brickworks” condominium development that was approved by the Planning Board in 2003.

Concord Avenue

Some parcels off of Concord Avenue near Danehy Park were also zoned C-1A in the Citywide Rezoning. However, this zoning was later amended by the Woodford, et al. Zoning Petition in 2006.

As a result of the Citywide Rezoning, parcels along New Street and Bay State Road remained zoned IA-1 while the adjacent block containing the “Cambridge Self-Storage” facility was rezoned from IA-1 to C-1A.

Later, the Woodford, et al. Petition changed the Cambridge Self-Storage block to Residence C-1, and rezoned parcels along Bay State Road from IA-1 to C-1A with an MXR overlay. Most parcels along New Street remain zoned IA-1.

The motivation for the Woodford, et al. rezoning was neighborhood concern over plans to redevelop the Cambridge Self-Storage site into housing. Since that rezoning, no redevelopment of the Cambridge Self-Storage site has occurred. However, several new residential projects have been built or proposed in the C-1A district on Bay State Road and the IA-1 district on New Street.

Cambridge, Massachusetts

