

158-168 Western Avenue Zoning Proposal

To the Honorable City Council,

I am filing to ask that the Business BA-3 zone on Western Avenue currently in existence from Howard to Jay Streets be extended onto the even number side of Western Avenue from Jay Street to Kinnaird Street. This only affects 3 small buildings on this short block: 158 (Lot 125-25), 162 (Lot 125-24) and 168 (125-3) Western Avenue, a small block only 3 short blocks from the Mass Ave intersection. See zone extension graphic and diorama pic of area. See support letter from the immediate neighbor/owner of 162 Western. There are no parking issues in this area and making this change will not create any either

Background:

Shortage: There are very few options every year for a small business or a professional to buy an affordable small-sized commercial building in Cambridge. Unlike the residential market that features hundreds of listings for sale at any given time, very few commercial properties ever go on the market, and when they do, they are usually too large and too expensive for most small businesses or professionals to afford. Smaller sized, more affordable buildings are extremely rare. For example in 2014, there were *two* for sale under \$1M. One was an auto mechanics/garage building on Broadway that required expensive remediation, updating, and general construction to bring it to code. Another was the Go Management's offices at 2534 Mass Ave listed at \$795K that required a full gut rehab as the connected old Victorian house was in awful condition. Both eventually costing their new owners well over \$1M to make them useful commercial buildings. There is a large need for affordable commercial property for sale to entrepreneurs, small business owners and professionals in order to help maintain an eclectic balance as well as Cambridge's world reknowned status for entrepreneurship. Acerbating this shortage, in the past two years, eight "BA" zone ground floor retail spaces have been removed and replaced with residential due to the high demand for Res vs the low income producing nature of neighborhood retail.

Growth: With the recent massive increase in building in East Cambridge (especially North Point) and North Cambridge, and future proposed building in those areas as well as in Central Square, there is now and will continue to be significantly more high-end office, lab, and residential space available. Coupled, in the service of increasing residential housing, the variance board has been granting variances to many who are building in their backyard. See a few examples in the "Backyard Building Graphic." So there are high-end commercial rental options being created as well as residential living options in the service to increase housing (which will forever be a constant since so many want to live in Cambridge) but again, proportionally with this new continuing density, not much is available to service the needs of small business and professionals who are the human faces that make Cambridge the vibrant place that it has historically been and should continue to be so in the future.

2015 OCT 15 PM 4:22
OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

Balance: Since there are a few and limited finite numbers of structures to serve the underserved small business and professional community that have reached the position to own their own buildings—what is a possible solution? Rezoning certain areas that are major arteries that can serve a mixed use community.

We feel that to preserve and enhance the existing ratios of small businesses and offices in this particular mixed use neighborhood and to keep pace with the tremendous building and variance granting that has vastly increased the density of mega-expensive office buildings and housing in Cambridge, there needs to be a proportional zone area increase allotted to help small businesses and the professions. See list of existing businesses on Western Avenue.

Family Businesses: We filing this proposal because as a small family owned business, we found it impossible to find anything to buy as an office after years of renting space in the basement of the Old Cambridge Baptist Church. We wanted to stay in Cambridge in a live and work scenario and have our kids grow up in Cambridge. Collectively my wife and I have lived in Cambridge for 35 years now. In typical Cambridge fashion as a serial entrepreneur, I started The Boston Book Review in 1994 while still in grad school because I felt Cambridge/Boston should also have a national review voice besides the other two major book reviews out of New York. In year 2000, I won the MIT \$50k (now \$100k) competition and started a biotech company Eyegen/Genigma. In 2003, I spun out of Harvard's Kennedy School of Government the International Economic Alliance that helps bring investment dollars to emerging market economies. In 2007, I started Big Skinny, my skinny wallet design company. In 2012, I invented and patented an at home fitness device for adults and kids to keep my family fit—that turned into the Gorilla Gym company. Ironically, I moved to Cambridge to study Architecture and Urban Planning at Harvard's Graduate School of Design but changed to English Literature. In many ways, perhaps this is a Cambridge poster child situation in which we are asking the Cambridge City Council to help keep making Cambridge Cambridge.

Conclusion:

Cambridge to remain Cambridge: Cambridge prides itself on the support of small businesses, entrepreneurship, and the professions; this extension of zoning will help maintain the distinctly entrepreneurial, upstart creative flavor of our local area. There are already 20 existing businesses on Western Ave. which is functionally similar to River St. which is already almost all zoned BA-3 yet only has 14 businesses. It is time to formally acknowledge and allow this small block of Western Avenue building owners the freedom to progressively choose the use of their buildings on this very public and busy artery that is geographically already predisposed to carry out this function. This block is only 3 blocks from Central Square at Mass Ave therefore geographically predisposed to commerce; our literal bookend neighbors from both sides are Beantown Taqueria, AJ Spears funeral home, Western Auto, Anytime Pizza.

Sincerely,

✓ 
Kiril Stefan Alexandrov

✓ 
Catherine Alexandrov

158-168 Western Avenue Zoning Proposal

To the Honorable City Council,

We, the residents, registered voters, and homeowners, are signing this petition to urge the City Council to vote in favor of the extension of the Business BA-3 zone on Western Avenue currently in existence from Howard to Jay Streets onto the *even number side of Western Avenue from #s 158-168* which is only three houses from the corner of Kinnaird Street to Jay Street. We feel that to preserve and enhance the existing ratios of small businesses and offices in this mixed use neighborhood and to keep pace with the tremendous building and variance granting that has vastly increased the density of mega-expensive office buildings and housing in Cambridge, there needs to be a proportional zone area increase allotted to help small businesses and the professions. Cambridge prides itself on the support of small businesses, entrepreneurship, and the professions; this extension of zoning will help maintain the distinctly entrepreneurial, upstart creative flavor of our local area. There are already 20 existing businesses on Western Avenue which is functionally similar to River Street which is already almost all zoned BA-3 yet only has 14 businesses. It is time to formally acknowledge and allow this small block of Western Avenue building owners the freedom to progressively choose the use of their buildings on this very public and busy artery that is geographically already pre-disposed to carry out this function.

411

Sign Joyce B. Patterson ✓
Print Joyce B. Patterson
Address: 162 Western Ave. Fl. 2

Sign Jacqueline Y. Patterson ✓
Print Jacqueline Patterson
Address: 162 Western Ave. Fl. 1

abutting
&
immediate
neighbors
on the block

411

Sign Noemi Rosa
Print Noemi Rosa
Address: 270 Western Ave Camb.

✓ = Registered voters.

158-168 Western Avenue Zoning Proposal

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412
Sign Anthony J Speers Anthony J Speers ✓
Print Anthony J Speers
Address: 130 Western Ave Camb, MA 02135

412
Sign Adelaida Speers
Print Adelaida Speers
Address: 130 Western Ave Camb, MA 02135

411
Sign Daniel Beauvais
Print Daniel Beauvais
Address: 14 Howard St Cambridge MA 02139 x

158-168 Western Avenue Zoning Proposal

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Sign

Print

Address:

[Signature]
Domingo J. LOPEZ
212 Western Ave (ANUTIME PIZZA) X

Sign

Print

Address:

[Signature] * abutting
FAWWAZ - M. Abu - Rubayah R
144 Western Ave Cambridge 02139 neighbor

Sign

Print

Address:

[Signature] ✓ R
CHRISTIE BENEYCT
135 WESTERN Ave Cambridge MA 02139

158-168 Western Avenue Zoning Proposal

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5/2
Sign Jarman Allex
Print Jarman Allex ✓
Address: 306 Putnam Ave. Camb.

4/12
Sign [Signature] R
Print Travis Pogue
Address: 9 Soden St X

4/12
Sign [Signature] R
Print Chris Fiore
Address: 10 Soden St #27 X

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4/11 Sign Andrew Tarsy
Print Andrew Tarsy
Address: 8 Howard Street ✓

4/11 Sign David Sears ✓
Print David Sears
Address: 4 Jay St.

4/11 Sign Nick Caramello ✓
Print Nick CARAMELLO
Address: 6 JAY ST

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4/2 Sign Courtney Hite R
Print Courtney Hite
Address: 3 Soden Place ✓

4/2 Sign Marc Lechner R
Print MARC LECHNER
Address: 3 SODEN PLACE ✓

Sign Sarah Miles
Print Sarah Miles ✓
Address: 172 Putnam Ave #1

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4/2
Sign

James Thomas

Print

JAMES THOMAS

Address:

410 FRANKLIN ST CAMB ✓

4/2
Sign

Judy Amendola

Print

JUDITH AMENDOLA ✓

Address:

410 Franklin St. Cambridge, MA

Sign

Dennis Freeman

Print

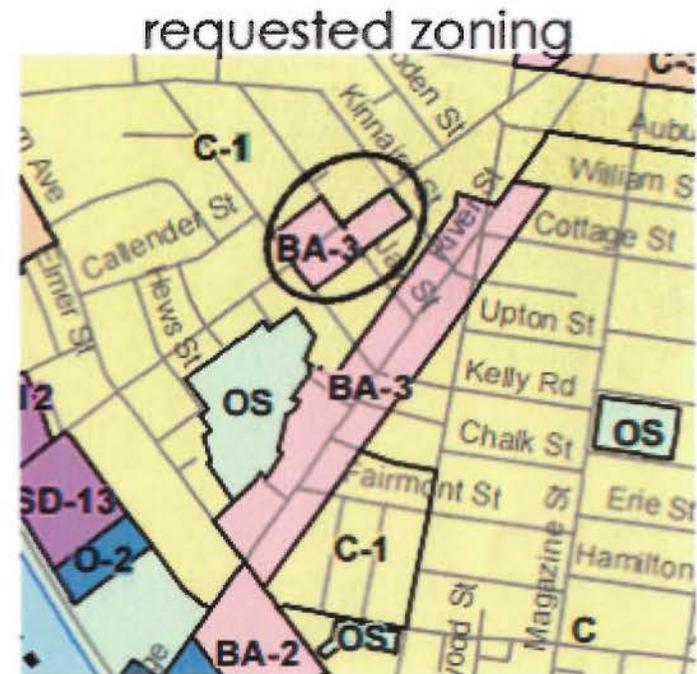
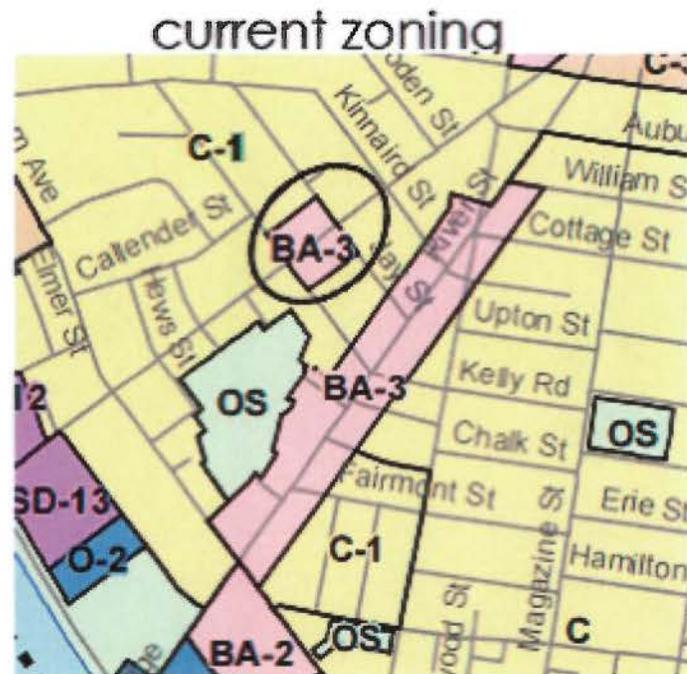
Dennis M Freeman

Address:

15 Kinnaird St

* abutting neighbor

ZONE EXTENSION



Our objective is to extend the existing BA-3 commercial zone that is currently between Howard Street and Jay Street by 1 block on the even numbered side to Kinnaird.

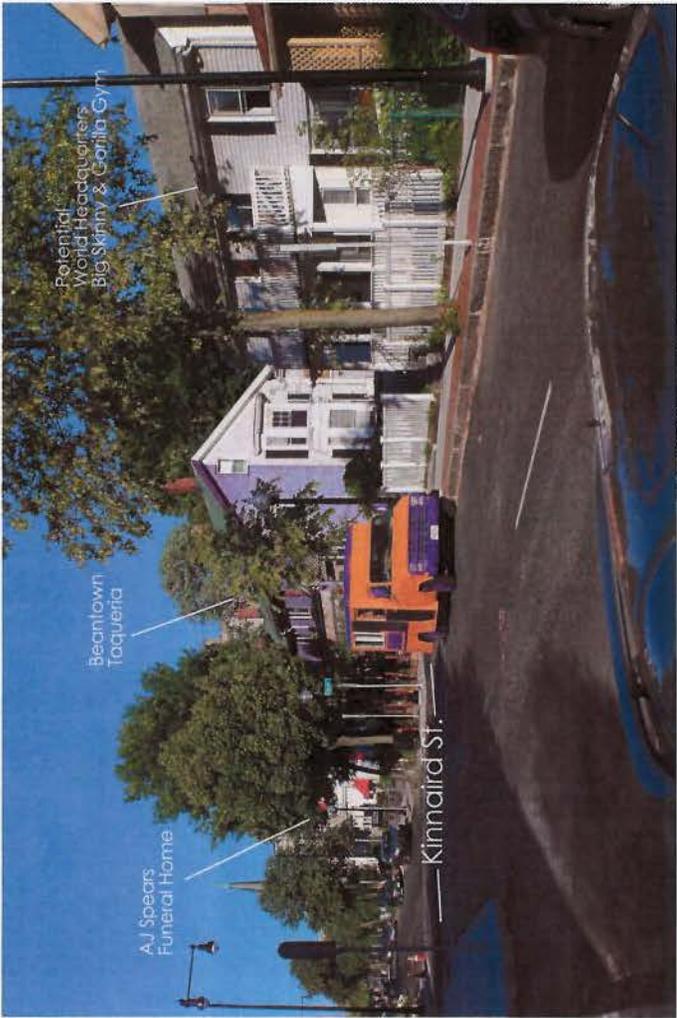
This change would affect only three properties:

158 Western Ave: Lot 125-25

162 Western Ave: Lot 125-24

168 Western Ave: Lot 125-23

There are no parking issues in this area, and none will be created by this change.

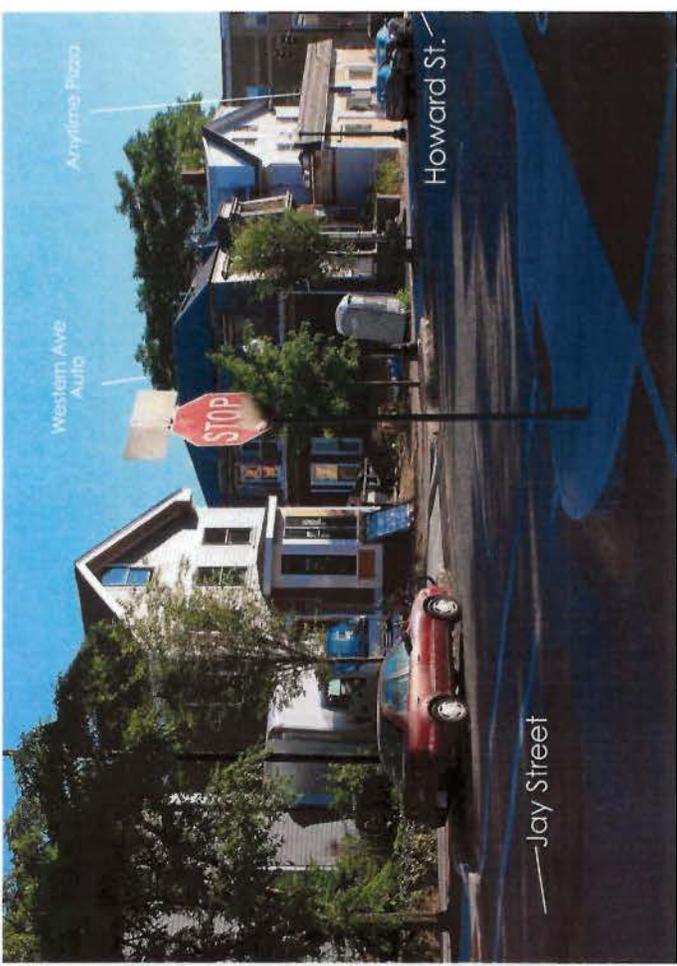


A.J. Spears
Funeral Home

Beantown
Taqueria

Potential
World Headquarters
Big Skinny & Gorilla Gym

—Kinnaird St.



Western Ave.
Auto

Anytime Pizza

—Howard St.

—Jay Street

BACK YARD BUILDING



Between 7 & 15 Kinnaird
[no green space remains on this lot now]



97 & 99 Kinnaird
[formally a small single house in this lot]



Next to 208 Western Ave
[no green space remains on this lot now]



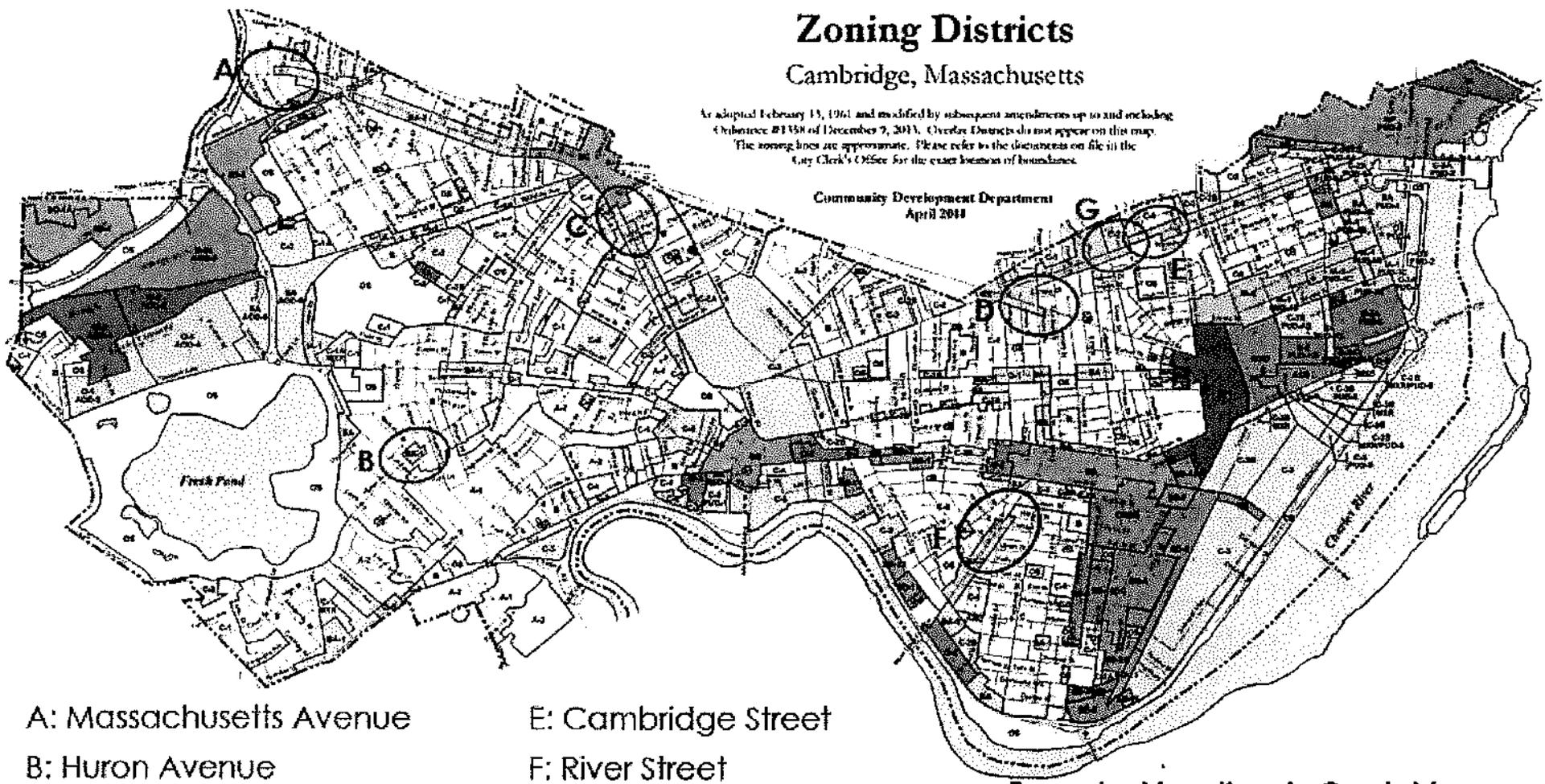
33 Kinnaird
[recently purchased by developer who will put another large building in rear]

Just a few examples in our neighborhood alone, where the Cambridge variance board is allowing large scale residential building way beyond FAR and increasing residential housing density.

Zoning Districts Cambridge, Massachusetts

As adopted February 13, 1961 and modified by subsequent amendments up to and including Ordinance #1338 of December 7, 2013. Overlay Districts do not appear on this map. The zoning lines are approximate. Please refer to the documents on file in the City Clerk's Office for the exact location of boundaries.

Community Development Department
April 2014



- A: Massachusetts Avenue
- B: Huron Avenue
- C: Massachusetts Avenue
- D: Hampshire Street

- E: Cambridge Street
- F: River Street
- G: Cambridge Street

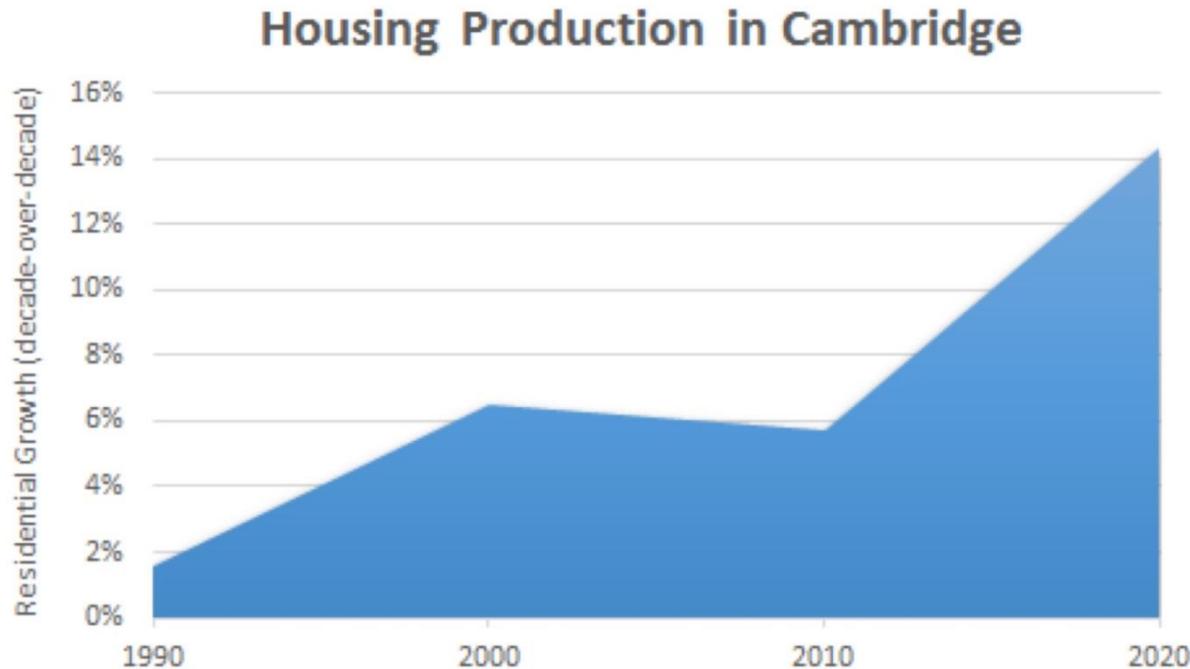
Precedent locations in Cambridge where business zoning has been extended by a block or less, on just one side of the street.

We are petitioning to change the 158 – 16 Western [3 building] block to be BA-3 to allow for commercial or residential use.

This endeavor is to counter the lack of affordable office space in Cambridge to purchase.

Cambridge amply provides affordable housing for its residents but does not address the severe shortage of affordable office space, thus driving businesses out of town.

“When the 1,356 housing units that have been built since 2010 are added to the 5,408 units that are currently permitted and/or under construction, it is clear that Cambridge has already built and/or permitted **6,764 units of new housing since 2010, more than enough to surpass MAPC's "Stronger Region" housing target for the year 2030.”** –post on Councilor Dennis Carlone’s site by Mike Connolly



Look at North Point and West Cambridge and other pockets of large scale development

BACK YARD BUILDING



Just a few examples in our neighborhood alone, where the Cambridge variance board is allowing large scale residential building way beyond FAR and increasing residential housing density.

33 Kinnaird

[recently purchased by developer who will put another large building in rear]

TWO commercial properties for sale: nothing less than **\$2.1 million**
Do YOU have \$2.1million to spend on an office??

367 Walden St

367 Walden St, Cambridge, MA 02138

\$2,300,000

5,200 SF | Office | Get Financing

Contact Listing Broker | Watch Property | Create Report | Share | Print



219 Prospect St

219 Prospect St, Cambridge, MA 02139

\$2,100,000

5,540 SF | Retail | Get Financing

Contact Listing Broker | Watch Property | Create Report | Share | Print



Answer:

Affordable office space for small businesses and start-ups help keep business in Cambridge, providing jobs for residents.

Small businesses are different from the major corporations flooding Cambridge: they provide jobs for people who may not be highly educated, but are still hard working and responsible [therefore, less dependent on the city]

158 Western Avenue: corner of Kinnaird

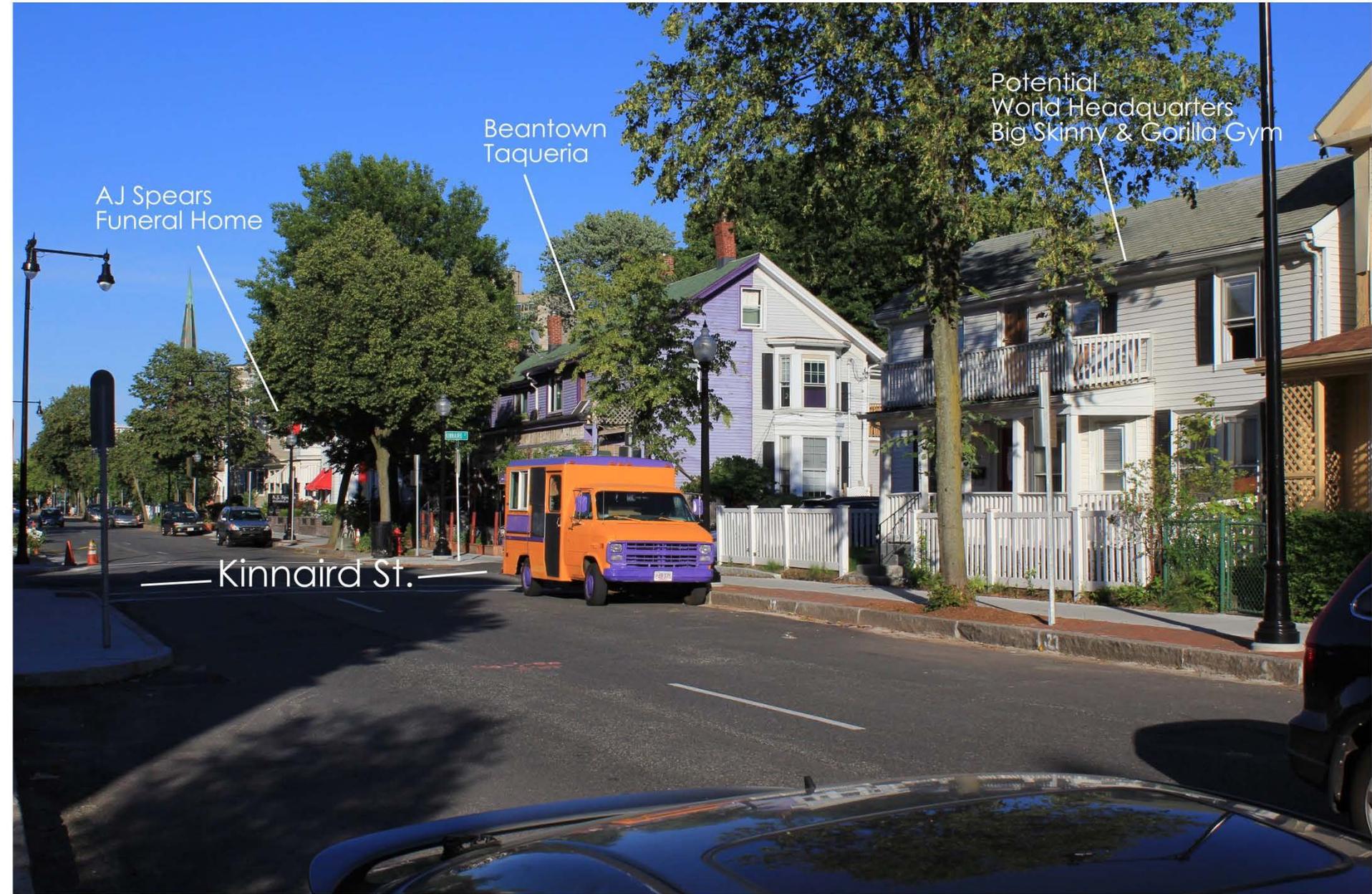


AJ Spears
Funeral Home

Beantown
Taqueria

Potential
World Headquarters
Big Skinny & Gorilla Gym

Kinnaird St.



Western Ave
Auto

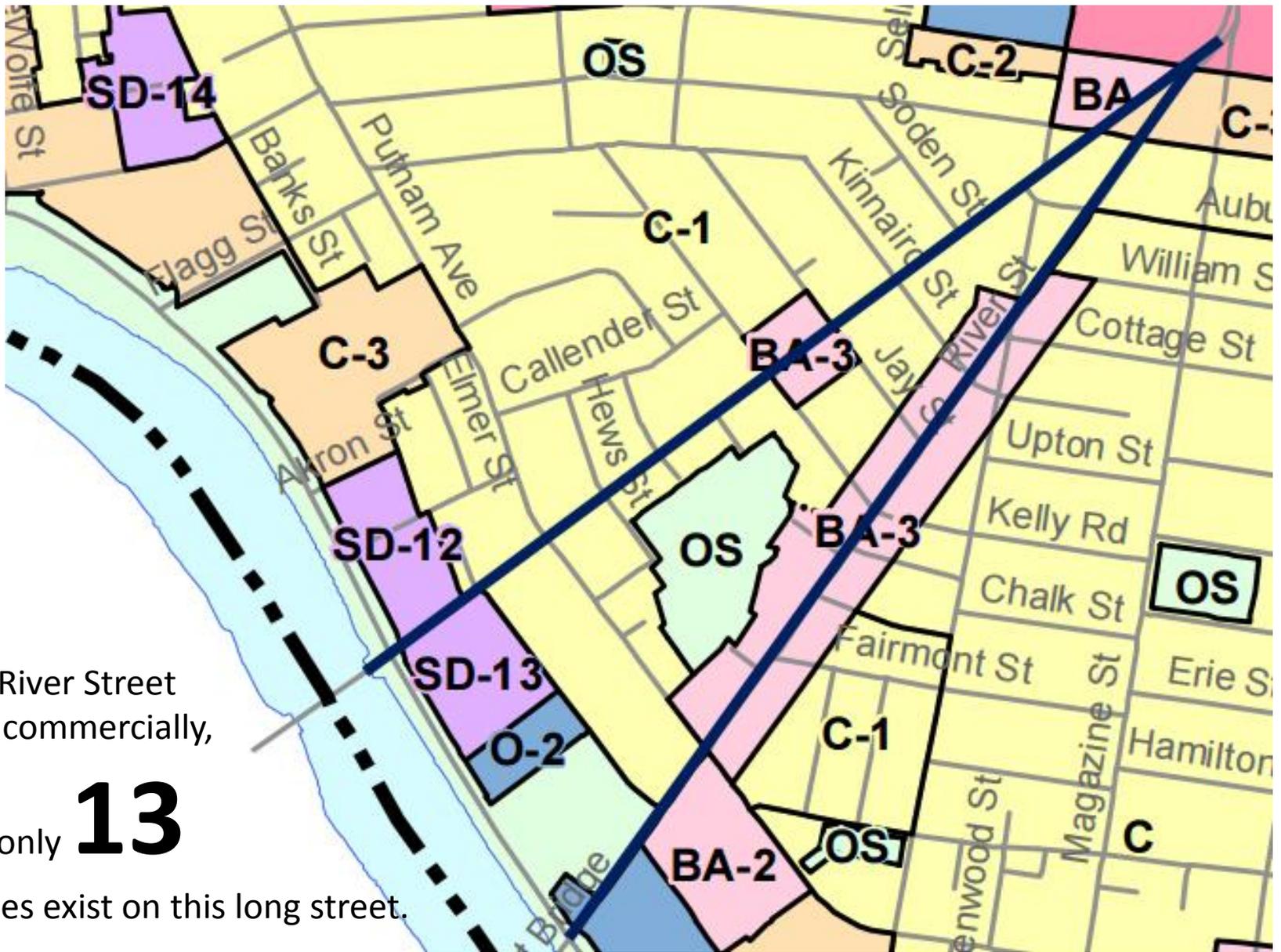
Anytime Pizza



Howard St. ↗

— Jay Street





Most of River Street
is zoned commercially,

And yet only **13**
businesses exist on this long street.

Businesses & Churches on Western Avenue:

- 1. **H&R Block, Classic Graphics etc.**—678 Mass Ave & Corner of Western Ave. in the tall 8 story office building
- 2. **Moody’s Falafal Palace**—25 Central Square but really on 1st block of Western Ave
- 3. **Marty’s Computer Workshop**—66 Western Avenue
- 4. **India Pavilion Restaurant**—17 Central Square but really on 1st block of Western Ave
- 5. **Bedworks**—15 Central Square but really on 1st block of Western Ave
- 6. **Cambridge Housing Authority**—362 Green Street and corner of Western Avenue
- 7. **Window Book Inc Software Store**—300 Franklin and corner of Western Ave
- 8. **Enterprise Rent-a-Car**---25 River Street but straddles entire corners of Western Ave, Franklin St. & River St.
- 9. **A.J. Spears Funeral Home**--- 124 Western
- 10. **Justice House of Prayer**—135 Western (almost across the street)
- 11. **Beantown Taqueria**----148-150 Western Avenue, literally next door corner of Kinnaird, next block

• Proposed Office use at 158 Western

- 12. **Western Auto**—206 Western
- 13. **Anytime Pizza**---212 Western
- 14. **Convenient Market and Record Shop** --- 215 Western Avenue
- 15. **CHA Riverside Health Center** ---205 Western Avenue
- 16. **Radcliff Institute for Advanced Study**--219 Western
- 17. **Chew Innovation Food Labs**—279 Western Avenue
- 18. **Western Avenue Baptist Church**—299 Western
- 19. **Basta Pasta**—319 Western
- 20. **Sly’s Barber Shop**—321 Western
- 21. **Former Western Front Nightclub & Bar**—343 Western

Businesses and Churches on River Street

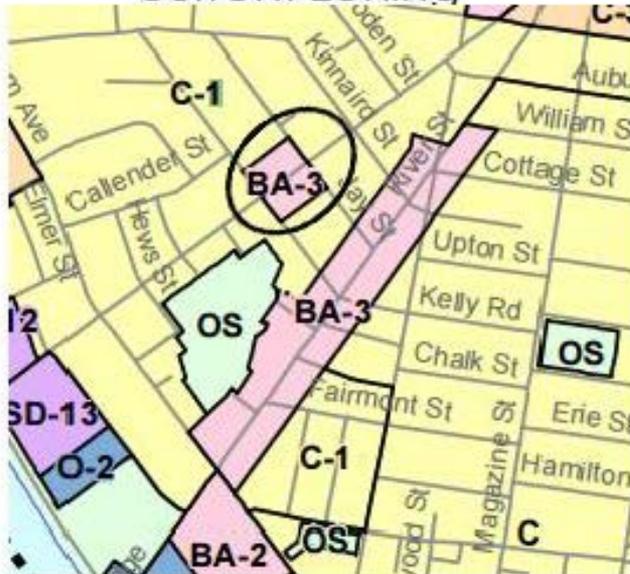
- 1. **Coast Café**—233 River
- 2. **Whole Foods**—340 River
- 3. **Rite Aid**—330 River
- 4. **Keezers**—140 River
- 5. **River Gods Bar & Grill**—125 River
- 6. **Nu Image Barbershop**—96 River
- 7. **Cambridge Deli & Grill**—92 River
- 8. **Charlie Allen Renovations**—91 River
- 9. **Eddie Priest Barbershop**—89 River
- 10. **Wash & Dry**—73-75 River
- 11. **Law Office of Paul Kearns**—75 River
- 12. **Great Eastern Trading Company**—49 River
- 13. **Rapid Realty Company**—25 River

Why isn't River Street more developed?

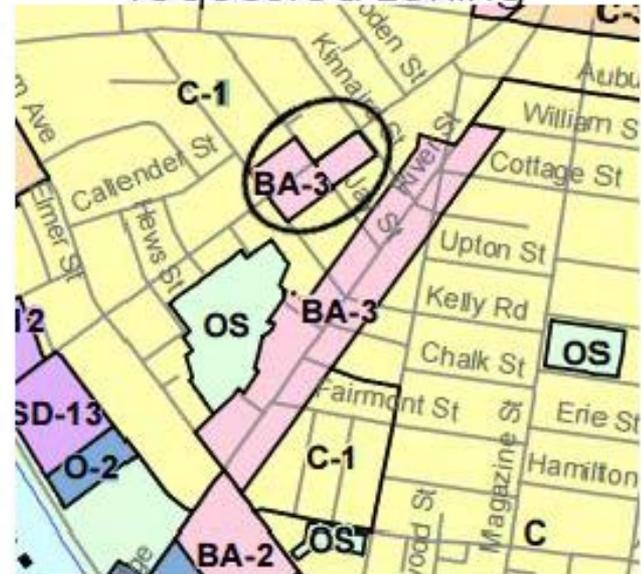
Because most business need parking lots and/or major foot traffic. Both Western Avenue and River Street don't have the foot traffic Mass Ave has, therefore we can conclude that even if this block is zoned commercially, Western Ave won't "trend" in the direction of commercialism, as evidenced by River Street.

ZONE EXTENSION

current zoning



requested zoning



Our objective is to extend the existing BA-3 commercial zone that is currently between Howard Street and Jay Street by 1 block on the even numbered side to Kinnaird.

This change would affect only three properties:

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162 Western Ave: Lot 125-24

168 Western Ave: Lot 125-23

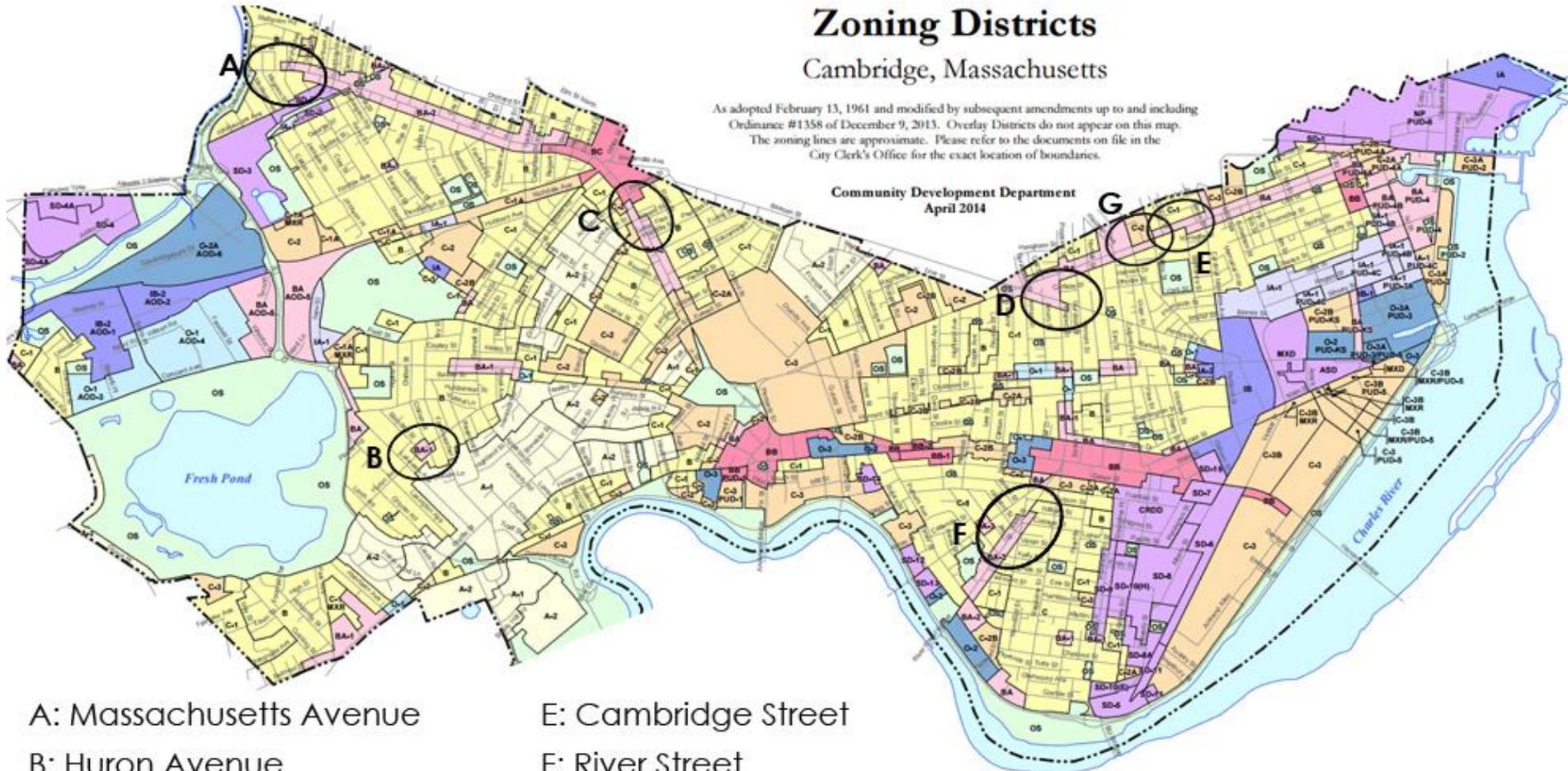
There are no parking issues in this area, and none will be created by this change.

Zoning Districts

Cambridge, Massachusetts

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Community Development Department
April 2014



A: Massachusetts Avenue

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D: Hampshire Street

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G: Cambridge Street

Precedent locations in Cambridge where business zoning has been extended by a block or less, on just one side of the street.



Jay St

Western Ave

Soden St



Kinnaird St



Why not?

Because if people are here working during the DAY, most employees will take the subway, bus, or bicycle. Even if they did drive, they would be gone by 5pm, when neighboring residents are returning home, thus

***FREEING UP PARKING SPACES
AT NIGHT AND ON WEEKENDS***

Parking: Is this actually an issue if this short block is zoned commercially?

NO.

This is what the 158 Western Ave block looks like at 2:27pm on Monday afternoon, December 7th:
18 parking spaces available within a 1/2 block radius.





WOW! What an
empty neighborhood
during the day!

In fact, Cambridge residents have told us that they **PREFER to have a business near their house because:**

-guaranteed to be quiet during the nights and weekends

-someone around to watch the neighborhood for suspicious characters during the day

With the recent string of break-ins in this area, wouldn't you prefer to have someone keeping an eye out during the day?

How Does **Business Impact** Cambridge?

Postcard mailed by the city of Cambridge
PROMOTING business growth

Cambridge is a **center of innovation**, attracting new businesses, entrepreneurs, and a diverse workforce. This economic activity **supports** an unparalleled array of **City services & amenities**, **revitalizes neighborhoods** and keeps residential property **taxes far below average**.

Here's How

Lower Taxes



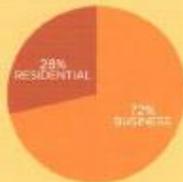
\$7.82*
RESIDENTIAL
PER \$1000



\$19.29
BUSINESS
PER \$1000

*Tax bill on a \$389,500 home in Cambridge = \$1,472, on average \$2,500 less than surrounding communities.

CITY TAX REVENUES



72 percent of the City's Revenue comes from business property taxes — up from 60% in 2001 — supporting an unparalleled level of City Services.

Unparalleled City Services



Business property taxes support a level and quality of services not offered in any other community in the Commonwealth. A SAMPLING: Playgrounds & Open Space; War Memorial Recreational Center; Bike Lanes; Hubway; Affordable Housing Trust; Community Learning Center; Community Schools; Baby University; Center for Children; South Centers; Cambridge Senior Centers; Multi-Service Center; Cambridge Youth Council; Summer Food Program; Cambridge Prevention Coalition; GLBT Commission; Human Rights Commission; Cambridge Employment Program; Cambridge Biomedical Careers Program.



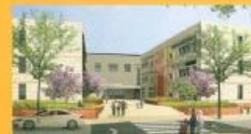
So how do **Cambridge Businesses Impact** the city?



NEW LIBRARY



PLAYGROUNDS



NEW SCHOOLS



HUBWAY

WANT MORE INFO?

Download the **Cambridge Business Impact report** and learn more about the **services & programs** supported by Cambridge businesses! (www.businessimpactscambridge.com)

LET US KNOW YOUR THOUGHTS

@CambridgeChamb
#Bizimpact #CambMA

CAMBRIDGE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
 859 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE
 CAMBRIDGE MA 02139

KIRIL S ALEXANDROV
 406 FRANKLIN ST
 CAMBRIDGE MA 02139-3114



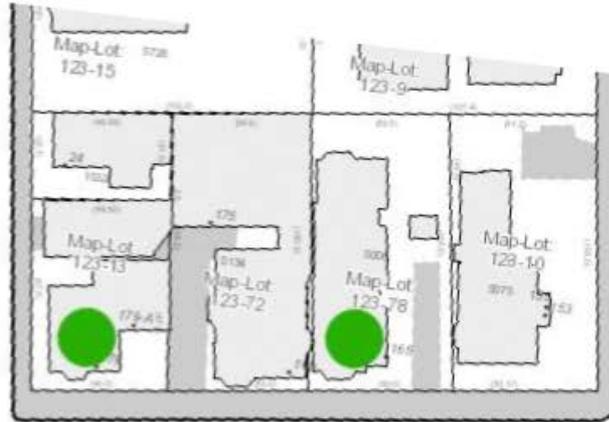
PERMIT STD
 US POSTAGE PAID
 HOLListon MA
 PERMIT 74

27

-local businesses provide **LOCAL JOBS**

-businesses help **alleviate the burden of tax** from the residents of the city and **provide funding for:** schools, libraries, playgrounds, charitable organizations, street improvement, bike lanes, Hubway and so many, many more!

Signed support and letters of support from abutting neighbors



Jay St

Western Ave

Kinnaird St



Dear Cambridge City Council and Planning Board,

I am writing in support of the extension of BA-3 commercial zoning to also cover the even-sided block of Western Avenue from the block next door between Jay and Howard Streets to continue from Jay to Kinnaird Street. I live at 144 Western Avenue and own the Beantown Taqueria location there also. I live on the close corner of Kinnaird and Western practically next to 158 Western Avenue.

I am in support of this City Council petition initiated by Kiril and Catherine Alexandrov who own 158 Western Avenue and also live around the corner at 406 Franklin Street. This will help support small businesses like theirs in a live where you work community and continue to maintain the interesting mixed-use character of our neighborhood that has been in existence for decades.

In the near past, Ben Corey practiced law from 158 Western and his wife provided bookkeeping/accounting services to many clients who visited 158 Western. Kiril bought this house from the Corey estate---so 158 Western has a long and prior history as being used as an office; and the Alexandrovs will be merely upholding that tradition by having their office there.

I feel that they should choose how to use their building on Western Avenue especially since their choices will not affect the neighborhood in any negative way but rather make it a better more interesting place. They have already fixed up many exterior aspects of 158 Western Ave.

Thank you for your quick and positive consideration because I look forward to having another fellow small businessman as my neighbor.

Sincerely,

Fawwaz M. AbuRubayeh
Fawwaz M. AbuRubayeh

Asma Nofal

144 Western Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02139

“In the near past, Ben Corey practiced law from 158 Western and his wife provided book-keeping and accounting services...”

“...158 Western has a long and prior history as being used as an office.”

“...their choices will not affect the neighborhood in any negative way.”



Abutting
neighbor

To the Cambridge City Council and Planning Board,

I am writing in support of the Alexandrov Petition concerning the extension of BA-3 commercial zoning to also cover the even-sided block of Western Avenue from the block next door between Jay and Howard Streets to continue from Jay to Kinnaird Street.

I am an abutting neighbor of the Alexandrov property at 158 Western Avenue as I live next door at 15 Kinnaird Street; my house is literally less than 6 feet from the Alexandrov property. As a neighbor, I much prefer that the Alexandrovs' use their property as their office for their innovative companies rather than rent it. I don't like to imagine what it would be like to live next to 5 college students that are constantly having parties. In the short time they have owned the building, the Alexandrovs have repainted the front, replaced doors, fixed the gutters, planted grass, fixed and painted the concrete porch. I expect that they are likely to continue to improve the property after setting up their offices there.

I hope that you choose to rule favorably on this petition. I believe that as neighbors who live just two blocks away on Franklin Street, the Alexandrovs are deeply committed to improving the neighborhood. I support their efforts.

Sincerely,



Dennis Freeman, PhD, MIT

“I don't like to imagine what it would be like to live next to 5 college students that are constantly having parties.”

“15 Kinnaird Street; my house is literally less than 6 feet from the Alexandrov property.”

“As a neighbor, I much prefer that the Alexandrovs use their property as their office for their innovative companies rather than rent it.”



Abutting
neighbor

Dear Cambridge City Council,

We are writing in support of the extension of BA-3 commercial zoning to also cover our even-sided block of Western Avenue from the block next door between Jay and Howard Streets. We are in support of this City Council petition initiated by our neighbors Kiril and Catherine Alexandrov who own 158 Western Avenue and also live around the corner at 406 Franklin Street. This will help support small businesses like theirs in a live where you work community and continue to maintain the interesting mixed-use character of our neighborhood that has been in existence for decades. With the rapid rise of mega office and lab spaces as well as variance granting which has allowed many home-owners to build additional residential structures in their backyard that has altered the existing density ratios, we feel that we would like to have the freedom to have a progressive voice towards how we choose use our buildings on this even-sided block of Western Avenue.

We thank you for your fair consideration to this matter,

Sincerely,

Joyce B. Patterson

162 Western

“...continue to maintain the interesting mixed-use character of our neighborhood that has been in existence for decades.”

“We would like to have the freedom to have a progressive voice towards how we choose to use our buildings.”



Immediate
abutter,
2 feet away

Letters of support from surrounding neighbors

ETHAN D. COREY

64 OAK CLIFF ROAD, NEWTON, MA 02460

CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
BOARD OF ZONING APPEAL
831 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge MA 02139

** next door neighbors
18 Kinnaird*

Dear Sir/Madam:

As the owner of 18 Kinnaird Street, on the corner of Western Avenue and Kinnard Street, and an immediate neighbor of 158 Western Avenue. I am writing to express my support in favor of Catherine and Kiril Alexandrov to move their family of consumer products businesses, Big Skinny Wallets & Gorilla Gym Family exercise products, into the 158 Western Avenue location. As a matter of coincidence, I have been a Big Skinny wallet owner for the past 3 years and I am happy to support their local entrepreneurial spirit in this neighborhood and the re-zoning of 158 Western Avenue as a commercial office location. I especially support their variance for 158 Western Avenue since there are so many other businesses also on Western Avenue (including a business abutting 18 Kinnaird Street that received a variance within the past few years in order to open a restaurant in space previously zoned residential), it would add to the diversity and eclectic feel of this already mixed use neighborhood. Having some designers and entrepreneurs is exactly in the Cambridge/Riverside historical tradition. Why should the South End and Waltham be the only places for such folks?

Cordially,



Ethan D. Corey

64 OAK CLIFF ROAD, NEWTON, MA 02460

“...support small businesses
Like theirs in a live where you
Work community.”

Owner of 18 Kinnaird which
is on the corner across the
Street from 158 Western
Avenue

Abutting
neighbor



Abutting
neighbor

Dear Planning Board,

I am writing to offer my support of the Alexandrov zoning petition to expand the BA-3 zone along Western Ave.

The expansion across three properties will have no visible effect on the community as it is predominantly a mixed use district. That an owner wishes to use his property "commercially" bucks the current trend which has rendered the existing neighborhood business district at complete odds with the vastly more commercially lucrative residential real estate. In the past few years at least four commercial spaces in the "neighborhood business" district have been lost to residential conversion.

Further, BA-3 zoning is essentially the same as the current C-1 zoning the petitioner is under. The setbacks are the same equation, the height is the same, the parking requirements are the same in fact it is only a footnote in the code that allows for extremely limited commercial use that makes BA-3 distinguishable from C-1 zoning in any meaningful way. Thus, from a massing and building perspective the area will not change at all.

The locus in question is also surrounded by commercial uses. Beantown Taqueria and the funeral home are its direct abutters and there exists a continuum of businesses that exist, 20 in all, that dot this mixed use corridor. Thus the commercial uses allowed under the BA-3 would fit perfectly and connect what is already a bit of a disjointed district.

Lastly, while the city contemplates its master planning strategy, can anyone on this board imagine an outcome where increased density and a mixture of uses isn't adopted? I cannot. Utile, stated as much at the first master planning hearing suggesting the city will try to turn development in directions that are not typically instinctual. Mixed use development is exactly what they were talking about. At \$20 or per square foot or less for commercial spaces it makes no sense from a maximizing income perspective to build anything but residential in areas like this, yet we want to enhance local business opportunities, reduce traffic, increase individual ownership, and retain the brain trust of this city. There is no planner on this planet that will suggest mixed use isn't the way to go in the urban core. Adopting this type of petition is also exactly what Utile was describing when they said we should be "live tv planning." This is a small change whose outcome over the next three years will only seek to inform the master plan and offer real empirical data to how this type of development effects the area, and its unanimously supported by those affected by the change.

It is for these reasons and tons more that I hope the planning board passes this petition with a positive recommendation for the council. DO NOT WAIT FOR THE MASTERPLAN, approving this now only will help buttress the inevitable conclusions of the planning team against the inevitable voices that have always and will always try to stop the evolution of this great city! We cannot afford to keep losing talented people like Kiril and Catherine to cities that welcome mixed use with open arms.

Regards,

Patrick W. Barrett III, Esq.
41 Pleasant St.

“...[the city’s] master planning strategy, can anyone on this board imagine an outcome where increased density and a mixture of uses isn’t adopted?”

“...we want to enhance local business opportunities, reduce traffic, increase individual ownership, and retain the brain trust of this city.”

“...no planner on this planet will suggest mixed use isn’t the way to go in the urban core.”



078 MASSACHUSETTS, CAMBRIDGE, MA 02139, UNITED STATES
15 201 540 0340 - ADMINISTRATION@CHEW

To the Cambridge Planning Board and City Councilors,

I am writing in support of the Alexandrov's petition to extend the existing BA-3 zoning. This would include the short block of Western Ave., comprising the three buildings located at 158, 162, and 168 adjacent to my location at 279 Western Ave.

The spirit of innovation and entrepreneurship is evident everywhere in Cambridge. Largely, areas where innovators and entrepreneurs can find space available and affordable to execute on their ideas is very limited, as the long shadows of the large Fortune 500 and BioPharmas have appropriated desirable professional space. My own company, Chew, certainly knows what that is like. It is just one of the many reasons we chose to establish in the interesting Western Avenue corridor.

The support that Cambridge provides to innovators and entrepreneurs is very attractive, and one reason so many stay after their formal Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Harvard University educations. Cambridge supports the folks who start the next interesting companies, who create interesting products, which enrich our lives and make the world a better place.

I am pleased to learn that with just a minor zone extension, Kiril and Catherine Alexandrov's innovative companies Big Skinny and Gorilla Gym might be permitted to legally have their office at 158 Western Avenue. This location is a mere 3 short blocks from my location at 279 Western Avenue. A fellow innovator so close in proximity helps to build the local ecosystem. Over the past two years, buildings have succumbed to market pressure to convert to residential in the pursuit of making more money. This has depleted the area of perfectly affordable zoned commercial buildings, where entrepreneurs could have done their work. As such, and the mixed use area of Western Avenue can certainly use more commercial endeavors.

This is a wonderful opportunity for Cambridge to continue their support for innovators and entrepreneurs. I hope the Cambridge Planning Board and City Council will do the right thing for the community they represent. Western Avenue deserves to maintain its history of mixed use, where live and work spaces reside side by side, maintaining the area's cultural vibrance.

Adam Melonas
Founder of Chew Food Labs

“...long shadows of the large Fortune 500 and BioPharmas have appropriated desirable professional space.”

“It is just one of the many reasons we chose to establish in the interesting Western Avenue corridor.”

“A fellow innovator so close in proximity helps to build the local ecosystem.”

“...depleted the area of perfectly affordable zoned commercial buildings, where entrepreneurs could have done their work.”

“Western Avenue deserves to maintain its history of mixed use, where live and work spaces reside side by side, maintaining the areas cultural vibrance.”

Dear Cambridge Planning Board,

I write in strong support of the Alexandrov, et al. Zoning Petition (Business A-3).

I live four houses in from Western Avenue on Kinnard St., very close to the property in question.

Mr. Alexandrov offers a modest and reasonable proposal consistent with the character of the community. Indeed, his “business” would be intellectual in nature: we are not talking about a bar or noisy nuisance. He is a neighborhood resident, too, and so he stands to gain, as do we all, by maintaining a well-cared for neighborhood. Specifically, that means his property will be used for the development of ideas and gadgets—rather than deteriorating into something like college student housing.

Some might argue that a business somehow mars or detracts from the neighborhood. But what is being proposed here is not a Kendall Square biotech building. In contrast, the owner here has renovated and improved a house that formerly held a home business, and he is keeping his business within Cambridge rather than leaving for another place. At the same time, his work is entirely consistent with the quiet character of our neighborhood and will impose absolutely no hardship on anyone. In fact, he adds value to the neighborhood by being a friendly neighbor whose innovation will keep modest businesses remaining in Cambridge, adds to the tax base, and keeps people with established community ties as owners of local properties.

I urge you to approve his proposal and I am in complete support of it.

Thank you for your consideration of my concerns.

Sincerely,

Frederic P. Fitts
40 Kinnard St.
Cambridge, MA 02139

“...reasonable proposal consistent with the character of the community.”

“...rather than deteriorating into something like college housing.”

“...his work is entirely consistent with the quiet character of our neighborhood and will impose absolutely no hardship on anyone.”

“...adds value to the neighborhood.”

Andrew Farrar
4 Lawrence Street,
Cambridge, MA 02139

October 15, 2015

Dear Cambridge City Council,

I am writing in support of the City Council petition initiated to extend for 1 block a BA-3 Commercial zone by our neighbors Kiril and Catherine Alexandrov who own 158 Western Avenue.

I am a former resident of 14 Kinnard and have lived in this neighborhood for 32 of the past 35 years.

I know the applicant Kiril Alexandrov personally, I coached his son in soccer, and I know him professionally, as he is a current client. I am also a customer. I love his Big Skinny Wallet product.

Twenty years ago I started a new toy company. We tried very hard to find space in Cambridge, but it was not possible. We moved to Woburn than Wilmington then Lawrence, and created many good paying, quiet assembly and customer service jobs, for many high school graduates, as well as college graduates. Only as a reconfigured and mature company were we able to move back to Cambridge.

Finding space is essential. Not just for hi-tech start ups, but other innovative start up companies, like HandsOnToys 20 years ago, and Kiril's consumer product business today. And this is very hard to do. Western Ave seems to be an ideal area for smart integration of right sized commercial accessible to its employees without overtaxing the area. It will also bring additional revenue to other Central Square based companies.

I am confident that Kiril's company will be a great neighbor, and without a doubt will act responsibly. The design, marketing and customer service work associated with his company will be non-disruptive and make the neighborhood safer with business day activity when many homeowners are away. And as a business, this use will reduce the stress of overnight parking that could be an issue if the property remains a multifamily residential structure.

Finding viable commercial space in Cambridge is next to impossible. If Cambridge wants to be a mecca for not just high-tech and bio-pharmaceutical, this is the kind of innovative approach that will serve Cambridge well, today, and into the future.

I humbly and heartily support the one block, even side, extension of a BA-3 commercial zone.

Respectfully submitted,

Andrew E. Farrar

“...former resident of 14 Kinnard for 32 years.”

“...an ideal area for smart integration of right sized commercial...without overtaxing the area. It will also bring additional revenue to other Central Square based companies.”

“Work associated with his company will be non-disruptive and make the neighborhood safer with business day activity when many homeowners are away.”

“Finding viable commercial space in Cambridge is next to impossible.”

Dear Cambridge City Council,

Re: Extension of BA-3 zoning to cover even sided block of 158-168 Western Avenue

I am writing in support of the extension of BA-3 commercial zoning to also cover the even-sided block of Western Avenue from the block next door between Jay and Howard Streets to continue from Jay to Kinnaird Street.

I am in support of this City Council petition initiated by Kiril and Catherine Alexandrov who own 158 Western Avenue and who also live around the corner at 406 Franklin Street. This will help support small businesses like theirs in a live where you work community and continue to maintain the interesting mixed-use character of their neighborhood that has been in existence for decades.

As the city council well knows in areas around Cambridge many families grew up in Cambridge and worked in shops and buildings around the city interspersed within residential areas. Having people that live and work in our city is a good idea and builds community and improves the quality of life for everyone. The simple fact is that individuals that live and work here are among our most integrated citizens. Simply put, they are here all the time. The city council should do everything they can to encourage this.

As a long time Cambridge resident and serial entrepreneur from the MIT, I've seen many companies, small and large, leave Cambridge due to space constraints and costs. As a city I think we should be thoughtful of Cambridge's loss and would encourage you to help this family that has lived in Cambridge cumulatively for 35 years not only continue to live here, but work here as well.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Satayan Mahajan

25 year resident of Cambridge and serial entrepreneur out of MIT

“...live and work in our city
Is a good idea and builds
Community.”

“...individuals that live and work
Here are among our most
Integrated citizens.”

“As a[n]...entrepreneur from MIT,
I've seen many companies small
And large, leave Cambridge due
To space constraints and costs.”

133 River Street, #1
Cambridge, MA 02139
13 April 2015

Constantine Alexander, Chair
Board of Zoning Appeal
City of Cambridge, City Hall
Cambridge, MA 02139

158 Western Avenue

Dear Mr. Alexander,

I'm writing in support of a change in zoning for the house at the end of our block, Kinnaird Street, at 158 Western Avenue.

We understand that Kiril and Catherine Alexandrov hope to move their company into the house, remodeling it into offices for their marketing and sales staff. As happy customers of Big Skinny Wallets, my wife Mary and I would be glad to have them there. The newly redone Western Avenue seems like a great corridor to attract low-impact small and medium-sized businesses to the existing mixed use. We support the re-zoning of the property as a commercial office location.

We're eager to see our part of Cambridge nurture homegrown small businesses, and Big Skinny (with Gorilla Gym) is already a local success story. Attracting and supporting designers, entrepreneurs, and expanding businesses is something the Riverside neighborhood needs. We're pleased that the Alexandrov family has moved their home to Franklin Street, and we hope that their business settles on Western, continues to grow, and soon needs to hire more local talent.

Thank you.



Bob Woodbury
woodbury@gmail.com
(617) 935-3253

cc: Kiril Alexandrov

“The newly re-done Western Ave seems like a great corridor to attract low-impact small and medium-sized businesses to the existing mixed-use.”

“We’re eager to see our part of Cambridge nurture home-grown small businesses.”

“We hope their business settles on Western, continues to grow and soon needs to hire more local talent.”

Signatures of support from surrounding neighbors

We, the signees of this petition, are in favor of Catherine and Kiril Alexandrov to move their family of consumer products businesses, Big Skinny Wallets & Gorilla Gym Exercise products, into 158 Western Avenue. We are in support of their entrepreneurial spirit and the re-zoning of 158 Western Avenue as a commercial office location. We especially support their variance for 158 Western Avenue since there are so many other businesses also on Western Avenue.

* Next Door Neighbor

* Sign Fawwaz Muband

Print Fawwaz M. Abu Rubaya

Address: 144 Western Cambridge MA 02139

* Sign Joyce B Patterson * Next Door Neighbor

Print Joyce B. Patterson

Address: 162 Western Ave, Cambridge 02139

* Sign Jacqueline B Patterson * Next Door Neighbor

Print JACQUELINE PATTERSON

Address: 162 WESTERN AVE, CAMBRIDGE 02139

Letters of support from surrounding neighbors

We, the signees of this petition, are in favor of Catherine and Kiril Alexandrov to move their family of consumer products businesses, Big Skinny Wallets & Gorilla Gym Exercise products, into 158 Western Avenue. We are in support of their entrepreneurial spirit and the re-zoning of 158 Western Avenue as a commercial office location. We especially support their variance for 158 Western Avenue since there are so many other businesses also on Western Avenue.

Sign Jennifer Brill

Print Jennifer Brill

Address: 138 Western Ave

Sign AJ Speer

Print AJ Speer

Address: 130 Boston Ave Amb Ar 02135

Sign Dennis M Freeman

Print Dennis M Freeman

Address: 15 Kinnaird St * Next door Neighbor

Letters of support from surrounding neighbors

We, the signees of this petition, are in favor of Catherine and Kiril Alexandrov to move their family of consumer products businesses, Big Skinny Wallets & Gorilla Gym Exercise products, into 158 Western Avenue. We are in support of their entrepreneurial spirit and the re-zoning of 158 Western Avenue as a commercial office location. We especially support their variance for 158 Western Avenue since there are so many other businesses also on Western Avenue.

Sign SKuhle

Print Simone Kuhnle

Address: 102 Western Avenue

Sign Alex P

Print Alex Pomyrko

Address: 104 Western Ave

Sign AT

Print Nicole Teeny

Address: 122 Western Ave

Letters of support from surrounding neighbors

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Sign D. DeGru

Print David Gmther

Address: 16 Kinnaird St., Cambridge, MA

Sign Chris

Print Chris Hanson

Address: 9 Kinnaird St #2 Cambridge MA

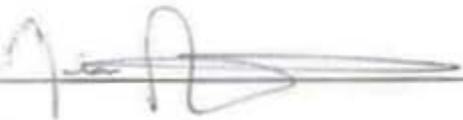
Sign Robert

Print Robert Mercurio

Address: 168 Western Ave, Cambridge

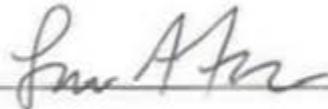
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Sign 

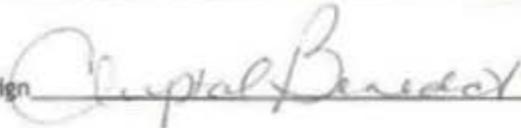
Print TINA ANDERSON

Address: 179 Western Ave Cambridge Ma 02139

Sign 

Print Louis Ferraro, 10 Soden St. Cambridge, MA 02139

Address: _____

Sign 

Print CRYSTAL BENEDICT, 135 WESTERN Ave Cambridge MA 02139

Address: _____

Letters of support from surrounding neighbors

We, the signees of this petition, are in favor of Catherine and Kiril Alexandrov to move their family of consumer products businesses, Big Skinny Wallets & Gorilla Gym Exercise products, into 158 Western Avenue. We are in support of their entrepreneurial spirit and the re-zoning of 158 Western Avenue as a commercial office location. We support their variance for 158 Western Avenue

Sign

HP Bush

Print

Hillary Bush

Address:

38 Kinnaird St. #3

Sign

~~HP Bush~~ *Clinton Heilett*

Print

Clinton Heilett

Address:

50 Kinnaird St

Sign

Kate Lebeau

Print

Kate Lebeau

Address:

43 Kinnaird St.

Letters of support from surrounding neighbors

We, the signees of this petition, are in favor of Catherine and Kiril Alexandrov to move their family of consumer products businesses, Big Skinny Wallets & Gorilla Gym Exercise products, into 158 Western Avenue. We are in support of their entrepreneurial spirit and the re-zoning of 158 Western Avenue as a commercial office location. We especially support their variance for 158 Western Avenue since there are so many other businesses also on Western Avenue.

Sign Tim Sweeney

Print Dan Sweeney

Address: 260 Columbia Street Cambridge

Sign Scott Schlissel

Print Scott Schlissel

Address: 27 Kinnaird St #2, Cambridge

Sign Angela Carini

Print Angela - Carini

Address: 27 Kinnaird St #3 Cambridge 02139

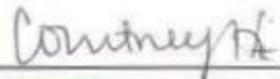
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Sign  _____

Print MAREL LUCIANO _____

Address: 3 SODEN PL CAMBRIDGE MA 02139 _____

Sign  _____

Print Courtney Hite _____

Address: 3 Soden Place Cambridge 02139 _____

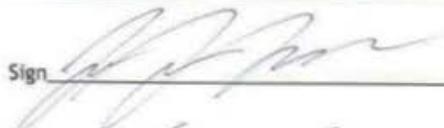
Sign  _____

Print Daniel J Gaudet _____

Address: 9 Soden St Cambridge 02139 _____

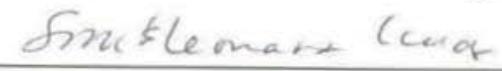
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Sign 

Print James J. McNamara

Address: 9 Soden Street, Cambridge MA 02139

Sign 

Print Susan & Leonard Lucas

Address: 36 Kinnaird St, Cambridge MA

We, the signees of this petition, are in favor of Catherine and Kiril Alexandrov to move their family of consumer products businesses, Big Skinny Wallets & Gorilla Gym Exercise products, into 158 Western Avenue. We are in support of their entrepreneurial spirit and the re-zoning of 158 Western Avenue as a commercial office location. We especially support their variance for 158 Western Avenue since there are so many other businesses also on Western Avenue.

Sign 

Print C. Kerns

Address: 147 Western Ave

Letters of support from surrounding neighbors

Alexandrov Zoning Petition for 158-168 Block Western Ave

To the Honorable Cambridge City Council and Planning Board,

We, the signees of this petition, are in favor of the extension of the commercial BA-3 zone on Western Avenue currently in existence from Howard to Jay Streets onto the even number side of Western Avenue from #s 158-168 so it extends to Kinnaird Street.

Sign 

Print Douglas Banty

Address: 178 Putnam Ave, Cambridge, MA 02139

Sign 

Print Laura Banty

Address: 178 Putnam Ave, Cambridge, MA 02139

Sign 

Print David Berger 87 KINNAIRD ST. Camb. 02139

Address: ~~76 HUSSEY~~

Sign 

Print 10 HUSSEY way Cambridge MA 02141

Address: 10 Liaska Rivera

Sign 

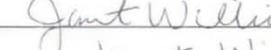
Print Israel Shaw

Address: 135 Western Ave Cambridge MA

Sign _____

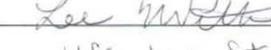
Print Aalen ny ten

Address: 277 Harvard St, Cambridge, MA, 02139

Sign 

Print Janet Williams

Address: 48 Jay St.

Sign 

Print 48 Jay St. Lee Williams

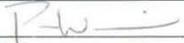
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Letters of support from surrounding neighbors

Alexandrov Zoning Petition for 158-168 Block Western Ave

To the Honorable Cambridge City Council and Planning Board,

We, the signees of this petition, are in favor of the extension of the commercial BA-3 zone on Western Avenue currently in existence from Howard to Jay Streets onto the even number side of Western Avenue from #s 158-168 so it extends to Kinnaird Street.

Sign 

Print Peter Willis

Address: 39 Magee St, Cambridge 02139.

Sign 

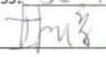
Print Sahil Shethar

Address: 39 Magee St, Cambridge 02139.

Sign 

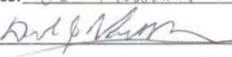
Print Newsha Ghazli

Address: 36 Howard Street, Unit 2, Cambridge 02139

Sign 

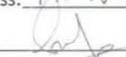
Print Mengchen HAN

Address: 60 Howard St, Cambridge 02139.

Sign 

Print DAVID J RAMBERG

Address: 191 WESTERN AVE CAMBRIDGE MA 02139

Sign 

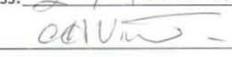
Print PEER SHATIDEEN

Address: 7 DODGE ST, CAMBRIDGE, MA 02139

Sign 

Print Scott Schlissel

Address: 27 Kinnaird St, #2 Cambridge MA 02139

Sign 

Print 27 Kinnaird St " " 2

Address: _____

Letters of support from surrounding neighbors

Alexandrov Zoning Petition for 158-168 Block Western Ave

To the Honorable Cambridge City Council and Planning Board,

We, the signees of this petition, are in favor of the extension of the commercial BA-3 zone on Western Avenue currently in existence from Howard to Jay Streets onto the even number side of Western Avenue from #s 158-168 so it extends to Kinnaird Street.

Sign B = M

Print Brian Kardos

Address: 226 Banks St. #6, Cambridge

Sign ELK

Print Elias Feghali

Address: 63 Magee St, Cambridge, MA

Sign ~~Rachel Plattus~~ Rachel Plattus

Print Rachel Plattus

Address: 63 Magee St, Cambridge, MA

Sign Smith Wilton

Print Smith Wilton

Address: 30 Jay St

Sign Rachel Graham

Print 78 Howard Street

Address: Rachel Graham

Sign Ben

Print Ben Arnsfein

Address: 32 Elmer St.

Sign KC

Print Kevin Burk

Address: 32 Elmer St

Sign Michael Shoit

Print Michael Shoit

Address: 72 Elmer

Letters of support from surrounding neighbors

Alexandrov Zoning Petition for 158-168 Block Western Ave

To the Honorable Cambridge City Council and Planning Board,

We, the signees of this petition, are in favor of the extension of the commercial BA-3 zone on Western Avenue currently in existence from Howard to Jay Streets onto the even number side of Western Avenue from #s 158-168 so it extends to Kinnaird Street.

Sign 

Print Whitney Mims

Address: 66 Callender St #3

Sign 

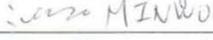
Print Thomas Gordanis

Address: 66 Callender St #3

Sign 

Print Jenny Heller

Address: 9 Montpelier St Apt B

Sign 

Print 21 Putnam Ave #3

Address: _____

Sign 

Print Maher Bhamlaush

Address: 11 Jay St, Cambridge, MA 02135.

Sign 

Print Max Tesdike

Address: 164 Putnam Ave, Cambridge MA 02139

Sign 

Print Peter O'Brien

Address: 165 Western Ave #2 Camb. Ma. 02139

Sign 

Print MATT PICKETT

Address: 119 PLEASANT ST.

Letters of support from surrounding neighbors

Alexandrov Zoning Petition for 158-168 Block Western Ave

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Sign Yaelin De la Cruz

Print Yaelin

Address: 1 Newtowne Ct

Sign Ryan Barralts

Print Ryan Barralts

Address: 40 Jay Street

Sign _____

Print KATE LESLIE

Address: 248 River St Cambridge

Sign Kate Leslie

Print MARK LUIGGI

Address: 369 FRANKLIN ST # 603 CAMB, MA

Sign [Signature]

Print Amy Markham

Address: 55 Magee St

Sign Amy Markham

Print DAWN BROWNE

Address: 237 WESTERN AVE

Sign [Signature]

Print MULIN CEUK

Address: 237 WESTERN AVE

Sign [Signature]

Print _____

Address: _____

Letters of support from surrounding neighbors

Alexandrov Zoning Petition for 158-168 Block Western Ave

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Sign [Signature]

Print Tricia Kiefer

Address: 10 Jay St. Apt 2R Cambridge, MA 02139

Sign [Signature]

Print Melissa Greene

Address: 29 River St #2 Cambridge MA 02139

Sign Jasmine Elder

Print 50 York St #104 Cambridge MA 02141

Address: _____

Sign MaryCarol Dart

Print MARY-CAROL DART

Address: 149 Western Ave. Cambridge MA 02139

Sign Karen Kopnyanski

Print Karen Kopnyanski

Address: 6 Newton St. Apt 2 Cambridge MA 02139

Sign [Signature]

Print ISABEL FERNANDEZ ESCADA

Address: 10, AKRON STREET #410

Sign [Signature]

Print Jessica Kahmerberg

Address: Peabody Terrace

Sign [Signature]

Print [Signature]

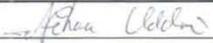
Address: 226 Banks #6

Letters of support from surrounding neighbors

Alexandrov Zoning Petition for 158-168 Block Western Ave

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Sign 

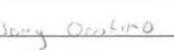
Print NEHAR UDDI

Address: 5, Dulham Gardens

Sign 

Print Ignacia

Address: 65 HOWARD ST. APT #1

Sign 

Print Jany 905 Main St, Cambridge

Address: 10 Sibley St

Sign 

Print Madeline Gramer

Address: _____

Sign  Rithi Srinivas 5 Wendell St, Cambridge, MA 02138

Print _____

Address: _____

Sign 

Print TESFAYE KEBEDE

Address: 42 HAYES STREET

Sign 

Print Karen Escarucha

Address: 363 Western Ave

Sign 

Print Cory Firstenberg

Address: 363 Western Ave

Letters of support from surrounding neighbors

Alexandrov Zoning Petition for 158-168 Block Western Ave

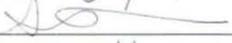
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Sign  _____

Print Wendy Aeger _____

Address: 37 Jay St. _____

Sign  _____

Print Anne Hirschhorn _____

Address: 515 Green St Apt 3 02139 _____

Sign  _____

Print Gary Epstein _____

Address: 423 Franklin St. Apt 2R 02139 _____

Sign L. Lal _____

Print LAURA Chandhok _____

Address: 423 Franklin St. Apt 2R 02139 _____

Sign  _____

Print JEFF MacLear _____

Address: 150 AUSTON ST 02139 _____

Sign  _____

Print Yael Yurkster _____

Address: 515 green st #3 02139 _____

Sign  _____

Print MARTY BOLIVAR _____

Address: 220 PUTNAM AVE 02139 _____

Sign  _____

Print Theresa Dieterich _____

Address: 220 Putnam Ave 02139 _____

Letters of support from surrounding neighbors

Alexandrov Zoning Petition for 158-168 Block Western Ave

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Sign 

Print Sergio Miranda-Elmuleh

Address: 65 Kinnaird St.

Sign 

Print Susan Suljter

Address: 40 Kinnaird Street

Sign Frederic P. Fitts

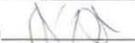
Print 40 Kinnaird St T.Fitts@bv.edu

Address:

Sign 

Print CONNIE M

Address: 124 HANCOCK ST

Sign 

Print Agye E H

Address: 220 Western Ave

Sign Jaden Young

Print Jaden Young

Address: Franklin St.

Sign 

Print

Address: 801 Mass Ave

Sign 

Print Maimona Jalwanka

Address: 375 Western Ave, Cambridge MA 02139

158-168 Western Avenue Zoning Proposal

To the Honorable City Council,

We, the residents, registered voters, and homeowners, are signing this petition to urge the City Council to vote in favor of the extension of the Business BA-3 zone on Western Avenue currently in existence from Howard to Jay Streets onto the **even number side of Western Avenue from #s 158-168** which is only three houses from the corner of Kinnaird Street to Jay Street. We feel that to preserve and enhance the existing ratios of small businesses and offices in this mixed use neighborhood and to keep pace with the tremendous building and variance granting that has vastly increased the density of mega-expensive office buildings and housing in Cambridge, there needs to be a proportional zone area increase allotted to help small businesses and the professions. Cambridge prides itself on the support of small businesses, entrepreneurship, and the professions; this extension of zoning will help maintain the distinctly entrepreneurial, upstart creative flavor of our local area. There are already 20 existing businesses on Western Avenue which is functionally similar to River Street which is already almost all zoned BA-3 yet only has 14 businesses. It is time to formally acknowledge and allow this small block of Western Avenue building owners the freedom to progressively choose the use of their buildings on this very public and busy artery that is geographically already pre-disposed to carry out this function.

Sign Joyce B. Patterson
Print Joyce B. Patterson
Address: 162 Western Ave #12

Sign Jacqueline Y. Patterson
Print Tacqueline Patterson
Address: 162 Western Ave #11

Sign Neemi Rosa
Print Neemi Rosa
Address: 270 Western Ave Camb

abutting
&
immediate
neighb
on the 158-168
block

158-168 Western Avenue Zoning Proposal

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Sign Anthony J Speas Anthony J Speas
Print Anthony J Speas
Address: 130 Western Ave Camb. MA 02135

Sign Adelaida Speas
Print Adelaida Speas
Address: 130 Western Ave Camb. MA 02135

Sign Daniel Bewley
Print Daniel Bewley
Address: 14 Howard St Cambridge MA 02134

158-168 Western Avenue Zoning Proposal

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Sign

Domingo J. LOPEZ

Address: 212 Western Ave (ANITIME PIZZA)

Sign

Fauvaz M. Abul

Print Fauvaz - M. Abul - Rubayah

Address: 144 Western Ave Cambridge 02139

* abutting

R
neighbor

Sign

Christal Benedict

Print CHRISTAL BENEDICT

Address: 135 WESTERN Ave Cambridge MA 02139

R

158-168 Western Avenue Zoning Proposal

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Sign Jaym Allica
Print Jaym Allica
Address: 302 Burton Ave. Camb.

Sign [Signature]
Print Travis Peagle
Address: 9 Soden St

Sign [Signature]
Print Chris Fiore
Address: 10 Soden St #27

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Sign Andrew Tarsy
Print Andrew Tarsy
Address: 8 Howard Street

Sign David Sears
Print David Sears
Address: 4 Jay St.

Sign Nick Caramello
Print Nick CARAMELLO
Address: 6 JAY ST

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Sign Courtney Hite R
Print Courtney Hite
Address: 3 Soden Place

Sign M. Leuchner R
Print MALL LEUCHNER
Address: 3 SODEN PLACE

Sign Sarah Miley
Print Sarah Miley
Address: 172 Putnam Ave #1

158-168 Western Avenue Zoning Proposal

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Sign James Thomas
Print JAMES THOMAS
Address: 40 FRANKLIN ST CAMB

Sign Judy Amendola
Print JUDITH AMENDOLA
Address: 410 Franklin St. Cambridge, MA

Sign Dennis M Freeman *abutting*
Print Dennis M Freeman *neighbor*
Address: 15 Kinnaird St

Petitioning Cambridge Planning Board and City Council and 1 other

Extend the BA-3 mixed-use zone for 158-168 even-sided block of Western Ave for Big Skinny

 [kiril.stefan.alexandrov](#) cambridge, MA

91 supporters

Share this petition

91 supporters



9 needed to reach 100

 Share on Facebook

Add a personal message (optional)



Cambridge Planning Board and City Council, City of Cambridge, MA: Extend the BA-3 mixed-use zone for 158-168 even-sided block of Western Ave for Big Skinny

 Post to Facebook



After ten years, Big Skinny wants its own office building. But Cambridge, MA has become so expensive that there are basically no affordable

211 signed supporters

12 letters of support

Change is inevitable except for
vending machines



WESTERN | AVENUE
BAPTIST CHURCH
158-168 WESTERN AVENUE, CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS
EST. 1916

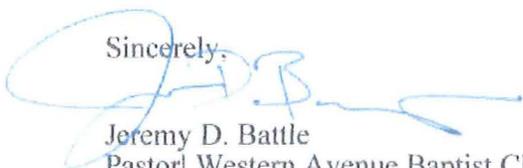
December 7, 2015

To The Cambridge Planning Board and City Council,

My name is Jeremy Battle, and I serve as the Pastor of Western Avenue Baptist Church. I am writing in support of Alexandrov's petition to extend the BA-3 zoning to cover the even-numbered block of 158-168 Western Avenue between Kinnaird and Joy Streets. Our church owns a significant parcel of land dedicated as our parsonage at 168 Western Avenue, which will be impacted by this zoning change. We support this effort, and in recent months have obtained legal and developmental counsel from Sean Hope Legal and Peter Quinn Architects and Associates to review ways that we may develop our property as well. The proposed BA-3 zoning offers support for our development potential also.

Like my wife and I, Kiril and Catherine are Cambridge residents who we find share our commitments to community and church-based efforts. Cambridge forged its history through its rich religious institutions and innovators, and its continued historicity depends on making efforts like this possible for the *least* in our growing community. My conversations with Kiril and Catherine have demonstrated to me that they are committed to protecting the interests of our great city, and the life of the church. Therefore, your support for this petition is appreciated.

Sincerely,



Jeremy D. Battle
Pastor | Western Avenue Baptist Church

Maggie

ATTACHMENT D

December 8, 2015

Cambridge City Councilors
Cambridge, MA 02139

and Jay St

We, the home owners on Kinnaird Street and Western Avenue section of the Riverside neighborhood, are opposed to the request from the owners of 158 Western Avenue to change the zoning on their behalf to business zoning.

When the owners first approached the Zoning Board in June 2015, a significant number of residents of the area wrote to the Zoning Board and attended the Zoning Board meeting to express our opposition to this change. The Zoning Board denied the request.

Now, the owners of the property are scheduled to address the City Council on December 8th at 5pm and then later that evening appear in front of the Zoning Board, this time to request a change in zoning to accommodate their interests. Again, a significant number of residents of Kinnaird Street and Western Avenue affected by this requested change are in strong opposition, and urge you to deny re-zoning our neighborhood from a residential district to a mixed residential-business district.

We believe, first and foremost, that we live in a residential neighborhood and we are invested in keeping this as such. We have purchased residential property in the Riverside Residential Neighborhood and we are concerned that a request by 158 Western Avenue to change their zoning from Residential to Business would impact our residential community negatively.

We live close to business districts (Central Square/Harvard Square) and there are some outlying businesses nearby (related to past zoning allowances). However, it is known that residential land uses are best located next to other residential uses and away from office and commercial use. As owners of residential property in this area we are invested in keeping this area residential zoning. We are concerned about changing the zoning regulations to accommodate the owners of 158 Western Avenue. We believe that rezoning to a mixed business-residential zone will impact the following: business signage, noise, traffic and lack of parking as significant issues for us residents.

We also feel our neighborhood is under attack. Those invested in making money are coming into Riverside Residential Community and buying up property and building two structures/multiple dwellings in what was once a single dwelling property. Ridding our neighborhoods of green space - backyards where children could safely play/families can unwind/relax. Now we have structures upon structures that cut at the core of what defines a livable residential community. We don't see this happening in West Cambridge. Our zoning ordinances in this part of Cambridge are not congruent with other parts of the City of Cambridge. This causes concern.

We hear that the owner of 158 Western claims to be a low impact business, "we just want to put a

couple of desks in the house". There are no safe guards in granting a zoning change that would prohibit them from becoming a "high impact" business that will affect our residential community. We are invested in the future of our Riverside Community and want to keep the focus on Residential Space.

We the undersigned residents of the Kinnaird Street-Western Avenue section of Riverside urge you to oppose rezoning our neighborhood into a business-residential zone.

Sincerely,

David Cohen, 37 Kinnaird St, Apt A
Adele Kane 45 Kinnaird St
Evelina Coffey 47 Kinnaird St.
J. O'Sullivan 34 Kinnaird St
Clinton Hollett 50 Kinnaird St
Anette Hosoi 59 Kinnaird St
Karen Turley, 38 Kinnaird St. #1, Cambridge, 02139
Herman Killan 41 Kinnaird St # Cambridge 02139
James M. Golden 153 Western Ave
Vehner Brooks 155 Western Ave.
Matt Murphy 27 Kinnaird St #5, Cambridge
Cynthia Tuttle 31 Kinnaird St Cambridge
Kate Gakenheimer 6 Kinnaird St. 02139

Joshua Z. Begin 6 Kinnaird St.

Deborah Gordon 8 Kinnaird St

Bob Perlis 8 Kinnaird St.

Pat 16 Kinnaird St.

Kalman Glantz 12 Kinnaird St

Jim Bill 138 Western Ave

Jamene Aron 138 Western Ave

Randy Z. Brooks 155 Western Ave

Jim H. Ott 27 KINNARD ST #1

Nancy W. Cooper 27 Kinnaird St #1

Lee Williams 48 Jay St. 02139

Janet Williams 48 Jay St. 02139

Alicia Williams 48 JAY STREET CAMPB. 02139

Diana Williams 48 Jay St. 02139

Judith Wilson 36 Jay St.

Rachelle Boyce 179 Western Ave

Lou Phillips 48 Howard St.

Major E. Brooks Jr. 155 Western Ave.

~~Armond Carabon~~ 147/149 Western Ave

Armond Carabon 147/149 Western Ave.

Patricia Coleman 13 Putnam Gardens Cambridge, MA 02139
Aurora Graham 189 Western Ave. Camb. MA.
Edith Boyce 179 Western Ave Cambridge Mass

Erchelle Boyce 179 Western Ave. CAMB.

MANUEL MASA 165 WESTERN AVE. 02139
JOHN A. BARNES 21 JAY ST. 02139

Robert H. Barnes 21 Jay St. 02139

Paul J. Putnam 171 WESTERN 02139

M. Kevin Moore 242 Western Ave.

DAVID GRAHAM 189 WESTERN AVE

Paul Graham 189 WESTERN AVE
NATASSA MASON 189 WESTERN AVE

From: Carol Greenwood <cgnumu@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, December 07, 2015 12:31 PM
To: Lopez, Donna; Paden, Liza
Subject: Petition by Kiril Stefan Alexandrov et al to amend Zoning Map to Business A-3 158-168 Western Avenue

To the Ordinance Committee and the Planning Board:

The purpose of this communication is to state our opposition to the Kiril & Catherine Alexandrov petition to re-zone 158-168 Western Avenue, changing from residential to A3 business use.

We moved to this location from Bent Street (yes, a few people do live on Bent Street) specifically because this is a residential neighborhood that offers walking-distance services to the people who live here. This petition raises several troubling issues for the residents of this neighborhood:

1) removing residential housing from the already tight availability in Cambridge and Central Square

We are not aware that there is any strong data to indicate that we have too much housing in Cambridge (affordable or not). The increased number of tech and pharma companies in Kendall Square puts further pressure on the need for housing options for the influx of employees. This petition seems to go in the wrong direction on this issue.

2) impact on the neighborhood of less housing and more businesses/ value to the community

The possible value here might be for specific types of businesses that serve the needs of local residents, or businesses that will contribute significantly to the tax base. However, in both these cases the ultimate constituency isn't the small businesses but rather the residents. Communities and local residents benefit from funeral homes, restaurants and hair salons being in the neighborhood. From the arguments raised in the petition, it would appear that the only constituent to benefit from the proposed rezoning would be the petitioner. (Of note: there is only ONE signature on the petition from anyone on the Kinnaird St block between River St. & Western Ave.)

3) parking

The first paragraph of the petition states "There are no parking issues in this area and making this change will not create any either." The petition provides no supporting evidence for this statement. There are a few homes on Kinnaird Street that have off-street parking, but many more do not, and we have a number of two- or multi-family properties on the block and many residents have cars and non-Cambridge guests. On-street parking in this immediate block has been reduced over the past few years by the Western Ave re-construction (some spaces were lost) and the redevelopment of two parcels on the block that have off-street parking that is not used or is too difficult to use. Winter snow storms, coupled with the lack of space to put shoveled/plowed snow, also reduce on-street parking availability, and snow emergencies further exacerbate the situation as Western Ave parking gets pushed to the surrounding side streets.

In summary, we cannot support this petition that provides no value or benefit to the residents in our neighborhood.

Carol Greenwood
Richard Probert
10 Kinnaird St
Cambridge, ma 02139

Kalman Glantz
12 Kinnaird Street
Cambridge MA 02139

617-876-6253
email: kalman.glantz@gmail.com

2015 DEC -7 PM 2:23
OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

12/7/2015

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a Cambridge homeowner. I am writing about the proposed conversion from residential to business zoning of the block of Western Avenue between Kinnaird St. and Jay St.

The proposal is of great concern to me. While there are some businesses on Western Ave., these businesses generally provide services to residents and enhance the livability of the area.

The people who bought houses in this area did so in good faith. They liked the characteristics of the neighborhood and were confident that it would remain livable because of the zoning regulations. Significant changes to those regulations are experienced as a breach of faith.

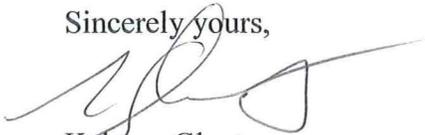
Recently, the owners of the home at 160 Western Ave sought to get permission to turn that home into a business. That request was turned down because of neighborhood concerns. The current proposal, to rezone an entire block as open for business, is even more potentially damaging.

Any proposal to change the nature of the neighborhood must take the parking situation into account. Parking is a serious problem in the area. Many residents and even homeowners do not have off-street parking. They already often have to drive around the area to find parking. One resident who owns a business elsewhere, now parks his business' truck on the street, because he has nowhere else to put it.

A conversion to commercial use of a residential home, let alone an entire block, would result in a real change in the character of the neighborhood and have a significant negative impact on the quality of residential life here. None of the residents here bought their homes or moved in anticipating that they would be living in a commercial district.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely yours,



Kalman Glantz

From: jennifer brill <brilljenn@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 08, 2015 10:22 AM
To: Lopez, Donna; Paden, Liza
Subject: Alexandrov, et al, Zoning Petition for Western Ave

I am writing in opposition to the petition to rezone the block of Western Ave between Kinnaird and Jay St for business use.

I live at 138 Western Ave, between the Spear's Funeral Home and the site of Beantown Taqueria, in a home with no driveway.

I moved to Cambridge, originally to Pearl St, in the late 1970's, living in a rent controlled apartment. With the exception of a couple of years in Watertown in order to save some money, I have lived in Cambridge ever since and raised a family here. We purchased our home in 1994, precisely because it was in a residential neighborhood with close proximity to Central Square. It also had two well-established, neighborhood-oriented businesses-- namely the Spears Funeral home and a barbershop. Our kids have been attending the Cambridge Public Schools. In addition, I am a social worker by profession, and for the past 30 years have served the communities of Cambridge and Somerville in different settings and capacities. I say all this to make it clear that I have a committed and long-time stake in the community and the neighborhood.

My objections to the proposed change fall into 2 general categories.

Character of the Neighborhood:

The petitioners seem to make the argument argue that the city is responsible for supporting small businesses at the expense of current residents and residential neighborhoods. It is not clear how the fact that there are currently some mixed use sections in our area suggests that there should therefore be more, and that this would not affect the balance of the use. There is currently storefront property available nearby on River St; there are also plenty of blocks and neighborhoods nearby with no commercial property mixed in with the residential properties. Converting this particular section of Western Ave, in an area that already houses some commercial business and already has a significant parking issue, provides no benefit to current long-time residents and in fact poses a real threat to the character of the neighborhood.

The petitioners further imply that increasing the presence of small business in the neighborhood will somehow contribute to the fabric of the neighborhood and the city. It is not at all clear how running an internet phone sales business will in any way add to the neighborhood. Further, there would be no limit to what other types of businesses could open on the block in the future also with no immediate value for the neighborhood. We have witnessed long-time elderly neighbors vacating property which is then turned into prohibitively unaffordable housing stock, and now a proposal to remove some housing stock altogether and replace it with internet-based businesses.

Parking:

Anyone who says there is "no parking problem" (as the petitioners do) in that section clearly doesn't live in the immediate area. Parking has become increasingly difficult since we moved there. We have lost spaces over the years to the Funeral Home, to new construction and to the Western Ave renovation. Some of the remaining spots are difficult to use even in good weather because of new plantings placed directly against the curb and will likely become unusable with snow piled up. There is already only one available resident parking spot on our section of Western Ave wedged between the non-permit spaces of both the Beantown restaurant and the Funeral Home. In addition to whatever parking needs arise from a new venue opening in the Beantown space, there is also a religious group operating out of a house across from us on Western Ave with frequent gatherings and need for parking. We often

have great difficulty parking as things are now. Any further reduction would honestly cause significant hardship.

For these reasons, we strongly oppose the rezoning petition and ask that the requested change not be granted.

Jennifer Brill
Laurence Weil
138 Western Ave.



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

IRAM FAROOQ
Assistant City Manager for
Community Development

To: Planning Board
From: Jeff Roberts, Land Use and Zoning Planner
Date: December 2, 2015
Re: **Alexandrov, et al., Zoning Petition**

Overview

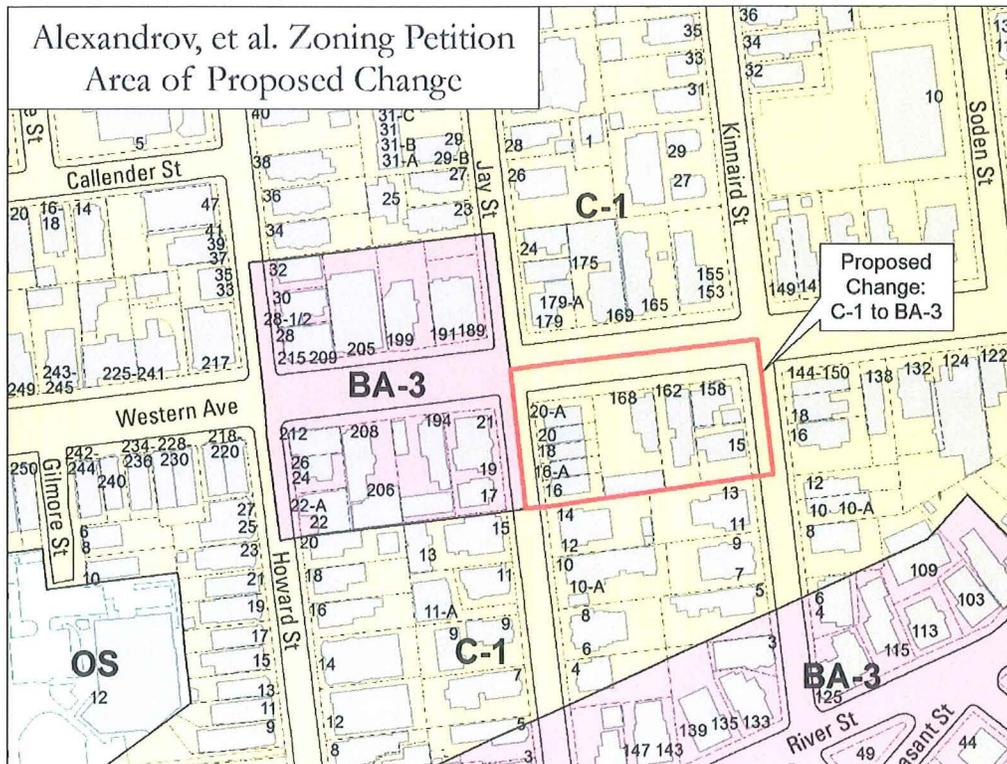
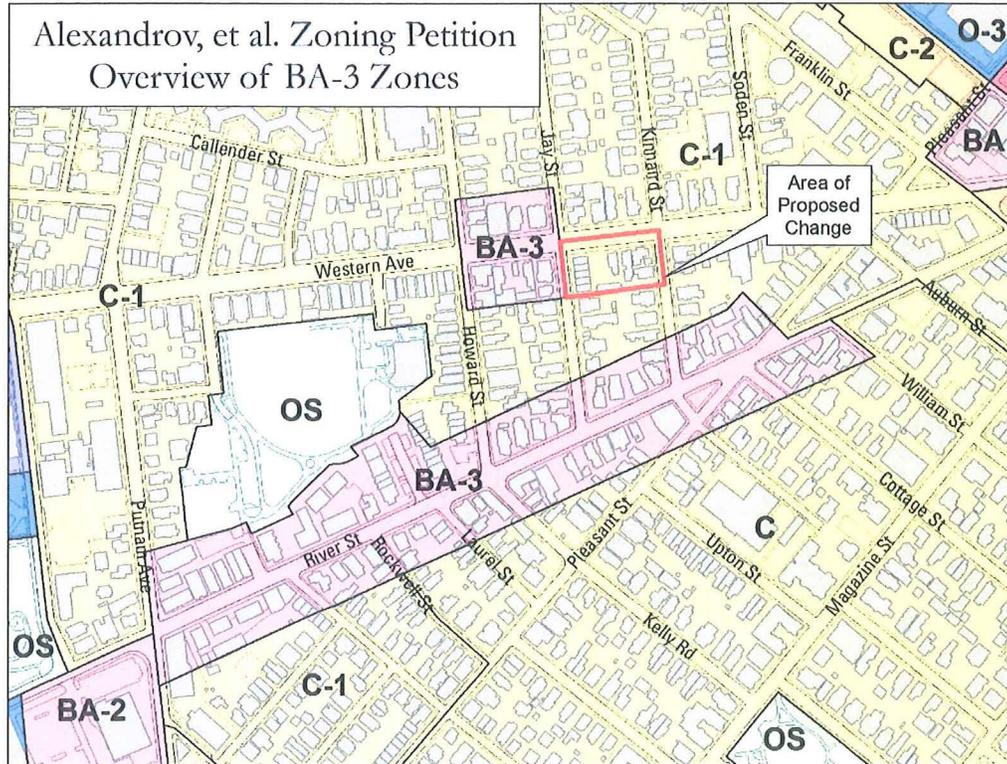
The Kiril Stefan Alexandrov and Catherine Alexandrov, et al. Zoning Petition proposes to extend the current boundary of a Business A-3 (BA-3) district to encompass a small part of the adjoining area currently zoned Residence C-1. The current BA-3 district covers a small section of the Western Avenue corridor between Howard Street and Jay Street, and the proposed change would extend the area one block past Jay Street to Kinnaird Street on the south side of Western Ave. *See map on following page.*

The allowed scale and dimensional requirements for buildings in BA-3 are the same as in Residence C-1. The major impact of the change would be to expand the range of allowed non-residential uses. BA-3 allows commercial uses including offices, retail stores, restaurants and arts/crafts studios, provided that all non-residential uses meet the following limitations (Zoning Ordinance Section 4.40, Footnote 1):

- Permitted nonresidential uses must be located in a building containing residential uses.
- Permitted nonresidential uses may not occupy more than 40% of the Gross Floor Area in the building; all remaining GFA must be devoted to permitted residential uses.
- The permitted nonresidential uses may only be located on the first floor or basement of the building.
- No accessory parking shall be provided for any nonresidential use.

Background information on the BA-3 district, along with the existing conditions in the current BA-3 district and the proposed expansion, are provided on the following pages.

Context Maps



Maps prepared by Brendan Monroe, CDD GIS.

Context Images



158 Western Ave.

162 Western Ave.

168 Western Ave.

20-A Jay St. (from Jay Street)

Business A-3: Background and Requirements

The BA-3 designation was created in the “Riverside Rezoning” in 2003. All of the districts zoned BA-3 are in the Riverside neighborhood, along Western Ave. and River Street. Those areas were previously zoned Business A (BA), which allowed buildings at a higher density and height as well as a broader range of commercial uses.

The zoning change was an outcome of the *Riverside Neighborhood Study*, conducted in 2003 by CDD, a resident study committee, and a consultant team led by Stull and Lee, Inc. The new BA-3 district was intended to be the “retail analog to the Residence C -1 residential district and the Office-1 district.” The report provides the following explanation for the rezoning of areas from BA to the newly created BA-3:

The Committee has made its recommendation in order to preserve the significant inventory of housing and freestanding buildings that characterize the areas, while offering the opportunity to expand small neighborhood-serving commercial activity along the streets. The proposed regulations are intended to allow retail activity at a neighborhood scale without encouraging the transformation of the street from a residential extension of abutting blocks to a full fledged retail district of streetwall buildings and large stores.

	Current Zoning	Proposed Zoning
Districts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residence C-1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business A-3
Allowed Uses (summarized)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Single-family, two-family, multifamily residential Limited institutional uses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Single-family, two-family, multifamily residential Limited institutional uses Limited office, retail, restaurant
Maximum FAR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 0.75 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 0.75
Minimum Lot Area per Dwelling Unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1,500 square feet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1,500 square feet
Maximum Height	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 35 feet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 35 feet
Minimum Yard Setbacks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10 feet front (or more by formula) 7.5 feet side (or more by formula) 20 feet rear (or more by formula) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10 feet front (or more by formula) 7.5 feet side (or more by formula) 20 feet rear (or more by formula)
Open Space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Min. 30% of lot area (private) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Min. 30% of lot area (private)

Existing Conditions

The current BA-3 district on Western Ave is characterized primarily by residential wood-frame buildings of 2-3 stories, with the exception of two small ground-floor retail spaces that are attached to residential buildings on opposite sides of the corner of Western Ave and Howard Street (212 and 215 Western Ave.). Another atypical lot in the district is the building that was formerly home to the Riverside Health Center at 205 Western Ave.

The area that is proposed to be rezoned includes only wood-frame single-family, two-family and townhouse buildings along Western Ave., Jay Street and Kinnaird Street. One of the houses has been used as a rectory for a religious institution, but otherwise the uses are residential.

Impacts of Proposed Change

The proposed zoning change is not likely to impact the patterns of development in the area, because it will not change the allowed scale, height or other dimensional aspects of the zoning requirements. Also, the areas currently zoned BA-3, which are similar in character to the subject area, have not experienced much change over the past twelve years.

The main effect of the proposal is that existing homes could be converted to provide small office or retail spaces at the first floors or basements. Given the small size of existing buildings, the size of any commercial establishment created would be roughly 1,000 square feet or less; even if buildings were enlarged to the largest allowable extent, commercial spaces would be limited to about 2,000 square feet. Parking for commercial uses would not be provided. Given that the current BA-3 zoning along Western Ave. and River Street has not resulted in a drastic expansion of commercial uses, it is not clear how attractive this option would be to property owners in the area of proposed change.

As described by the petitioners, the intent of the proposal is to provide additional opportunities for small businesses to find space in Cambridge. This proposed change could provide those opportunities, though at a very modest level and for only a handful of properties. One potential concern with this proposal is that because it does not increase the capacity for development, any new commercial space would displace existing space that is used for housing, or potential space that could otherwise be used to expand housing. Again, because the scope of the change is so small and the BA-3 allowance for commercial space is limited, this effect would be very modest from a citywide perspective.

From: dmgunther@comcast.net
Sent: Tuesday, December 08, 2015 10:55 AM
To: Lopez, Donna; Paden, Liza
Cc: Bari Brodsky
Subject: Fwd: Concerns of Neighbors Regarding 158-168 Western Avenue Zoning Proposal / Alexandrov, et al. Zoning Petition (Business A-3) / Referral: October 19, 2015; Planning Board and Ordinance Cmte: December 8, 2015 --- CORRECTED VERSION

Dear Ms. Lopez and Ms. Paden,
 I just noticed a couple of typos in the letter I emailed you last night. That letter is corrected with blue type at the far bottom of this email. A fully corrected version is directly below; please use the corrected version.

I apologize for the trouble and confusion.

Regards,
 David Gunther

 December 7, 2015

Re: Concerns of Neighbors Regarding 158-168 Western Avenue Zoning Proposal
 Alexandrov, et al. Zoning Petition (Business A-3)
 Referral: October 19, 2015; Planning Board and Ordinance Cmte: December 8, 2014

To Whom It May Concern,

We are Cambridge residents and homeowners who live around the corner from the block on Western Avenue between Kinnaird St. and Jay St. that is the subject of a proposed conversion from residential to business zoning. This proposal to convert this block to business use is of great concern to us.

The petitioner recently made a similar effort to gain permission to use their newly purchased residential property at 158 Western Ave. for a business. They had asserted that this was their intention when they purchased the property. That request was turned down in light of significant neighborhood concerns. The petitioner's new proposal suffers from all the problems associated with that previous effort and more. It strikes us as unfortunate that the petitioner recently bought a residential property with an unreasonable expectation of subsequently converting it to business use, but this history does not seem to us material to the proper outcome of this petition.

Our concerns about the proposal are founded in the *real threat of worsening parking conditions in our neighborhood*, and in *our love for the residential qualities of the community* that we moved into fifteen years ago and have contributed to ever since.

The petitioner presents several explicit and implicit arguments in an attempt to demonstrate benefits of the proposal and to deflect attention from its harms. Each of the petitioner's core arguments appears to us to be unfounded. Essentially, these arguments seem to be:

1. That his business, and any and all other businesses that may come to occupy this block, would now - and forever - have negligible impact on parking

This is highly doubtful and not supported by any evidence the petitioner has offered. As things stand, a food truck from the business on the parcel on Western Ave. adjacent to that of the petitioner routinely parks in front of our house which is around the corner from it on Kinnaird St. Neighbors of ours on Western Ave. who lack off-street parking routinely have to scout the wider neighborhood to find a place to park their car. Parking conditions have become even more difficult since the petitioner

purchased the property and curb changes were made on Western Ave. There is every reason to believe that parking conditions would worsen further if one, two or even three new businesses were to open up in the neighborhood, bringing some combination of employees and customers to compete with residents for parking.

2. That small businesses, particularly new ones, are a disadvantaged class in Cambridge, entitled to be given access to low-cost real estate

We are not aware of the city having an obligation to take, or having an interest in taking, special steps to accommodate new businesses except insofar as a business may either directly serve the needs of Cambridge residents or it may contribute substantially to the city's tax base. There are a number of existing businesses on Western Avenue, however each of these provides a useful service to the local community, whether it be a restaurant, a hair salon, or a funeral home. There is no imaginable advantage to the local community in having in its midst a call center servicing customers around the country and perhaps the world. For this very reason, call centers are commonly placed in outlying suburbs and rural states. Cambridge residents already have relatively low real estate tax rates in large part due to the various more profitable companies situated in Cambridge.

3. That because there are already some businesses in our neighborhood we should therefore accommodate more businesses here

The purported logic of this assertion strikes us as completely backwards. If anything, an enumeration of small businesses already in our neighborhood ought to lead one to the conclusion that we already have more than our fair share, and that space should be created for small business not in our neighborhood but rather in one of the areas of the city that presently have few if any small businesses. Conceivably the petitioner lives in such a neighborhood.

A conversion to business use of a residential home near us, let alone an entire block, would result in a real change in the character of the neighborhood, worsen an already difficult parking situation, and have a significant negative impact on the quality of residential life here. None of the residents here bought their homes or moved here anticipating that they would be living in a business district. I have heard no good argument for why we and our neighbors should have to live in a business district now.

Sincerely,

David Gunther Bari Brodsky
dmgunther@comcast.net bsbrodsky@comcast.net

c: 617-417-5424
16 Kinnaird St.
Cambridge, MA 02139

Lopez, Donna

ATTACHMENT J

From: Jytte Klausen <klausen@brandeis.edu>
Sent: Tuesday, December 08, 2015 11:40 AM
To: Lopez, Donna
Cc: Jayne Tan; Chris Rigopoulos; json; Christine Sigman; Michael Sigman
Subject: Protest against proposed rezoning of Western Avenue # 158-168

I write to register my protest against the proposal from Kiril Stefan and Catherine Alexandrov to rezone three houses on Western Avenue between Jay and Kinnaird Street.

I protest on multiple grounds:

1. The abutters and neighbors were not properly informed about this proposal. I and my neighbors on Jay Street only learned about this proposal by coincidence this past week, and we learned about the meeting today to review Mr. and Mrs. Alexandrov's petition only on Saturday.
2. Mr. and Mrs. Alexandrov previously obtained exemptions to current zoning rules to vastly expand their house on Franklin Street. The construction shows that they will push the rules as far as they can.
3. The reconstruction of Western Avenue has vastly improved the neighborhood but the neighborhood is now at risk from overdevelopment. Multiple construction projects are underway. It is time for the Board to take a broader view of development in the area. Approaching rezoning in a piecemeal fashion risks causing more harm than benefit to the neighborhood.
4. Rezoning from residential to commercial is a permanent decision. Mr. and Mrs. Alexandrov purchased the property knowing that it was zoned for residential use. If they needed to relocate their employees, they could have purchased one of the many properties available in the Central Square area that are already zoned for business use. I therefore conclude that the petition is really motivated by a desire to flip the property for financial gain.

Jytte Klausen
30 Jay Street unit 2

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Jytte Klausen
Lawrence A. Wien Professor of International Cooperation
Tel (781) 736-2762 (office); 617 688-3897 (mob)

Mailing Address:
Department of Politics
Mailstop 058
P.O. Box 549110
Waltham, Massachusetts
02451-9110

Lopez, Donna

ATTACHMENT K

From: Janet Sonenberg <json@mit.edu>
Sent: Tuesday, December 08, 2015 12:13 PM
To: Lopez, Donna
Subject: proposed rezoning of Western Avenue # 158-168

Dear Ms. Lopes,

Unfortunately, I have to work this evening, and will not be able to attend the public hearing on the rezoning of Western Ave, #'s 158-168. I therefore send this protest against the proposal to rezone.

I write to register my protest against the proposal from Kiril Stefan and Catherine Alexandrov to rezone three houses on Western Avenue between Jay and Kinnaird Street.

I protest on multiple grounds:

1. The abutters and neighbors were not properly informed about this proposal. I and my neighbors on Jay Street only learned about this proposal by coincidence this past week, and we learned about the meeting today to review Mr. and Mrs. Alexandrov's petition only on Saturday.
2. Mr. and Mrs. Alexandrov previously obtained exemptions to current zoning rules to vastly expand their house on Franklin Street. The construction shows that they will push the rules as far as they can.
3. The reconstruction of Western Avenue has vastly improved the neighborhood but the neighborhood is now at risk from overdevelopment. Multiple construction projects are underway. It is time for the Board to take a broader view of development in the area. Approaching rezoning in a piecemeal fashion risks causing more harm than benefit to the neighborhood.
4. Rezoning from residential to commercial is a permanent decision. Mr. and Mrs. Alexandrov purchased the property knowing that it was zoned for residential use. If they needed to relocate their employees, they could have purchased one of the many properties available in the Central Square area that are already zoned for business use. I have my suspicions that the petition is really motivated by a desire to flip the property for financial gain.

Sincerely,

Professor Janet Sonenberg
MIT
home address:
30 Jay Street
unit 1
Cambridge, MA 02139

ATTACHMENT L

12/7/2015

Dear Planning Board and City Council,

I am writing to offer my support of the Alexandrov zoning petition to expand the BA-3 zone along Western Ave.

The expansion across three properties will have no visible effect on the community as it is predominantly a mixed use district. That an owner wishes to use his property "commercially" bucks the current trend which has rendered the existing neighborhood business district at complete odds with the vastly more commercially lucrative residential real estate. In the past few years at least four commercial spaces in the "neighborhood business" district have been lost to residential conversion.

Further, BA-3 zoning is essentially the same as the current C-1 zoning the petitioner is under. The setbacks are the same equation, the height is the same, the parking requirements are the same in fact it is only a footnote in the code that allows for extremely limited commercial use that makes BA-3 distinguishable from C-1 zoning in any meaningful way. Thus, from a massing and building perspective the area will not change at all.

The locus in question is also surrounded by commercial uses. Beantown Taqueria and the funeral home are its direct abutters and there exists a continuum of businesses that exist, 20 in all, that dot this mixed use corridor. Thus the commercial uses allowed under the BA-3 would fit perfectly and connect what is already a bit of a disjointed district.

Lastly, while the city contemplates its master planning strategy, can anyone on this board imagine an outcome where increased density and a mixture of uses isn't adopted? I cannot. Utile, stated as much at the first master planning hearing suggesting the city will try to turn development in directions that are not typically instinctual. Mixed use development is exactly what they were talking about. At \$20 or per square foot or less for commercial spaces it makes no sense from a maximizing income perspective to build anything but residential in areas like this, yet we want to enhance local business opportunities, reduce traffic, increase individual ownership, and retain the brain trust of this city. There is no planner on this planet that will suggest mixed use isn't the way to go in the urban core. Adopting this type of petition is also exactly what Utile was describing when they said we should be "live tv planning." This is a small change whose outcome over the next three years will only seek to inform the master plan and offer real empirical data to how this type of development effects the area, and its unanimously supported by those affected by the change.

It is for these reasons and tons more that I hope the planning board passes this petition with a positive recommendation for the council. DO NOT WAIT FOR THE MASTERPLAN, approving this now only will help buttress the inevitable conclusions of the planning team against the inevitable voices that have always and will always try to stop the evolution of this great city! We cannot afford to keep losing talented people like Kiril and Catherine to cities that welcome mixed use with open arms.

Regards,

Patrick W. Barrett III, Esq.
41 Pleasant St.

ATTACHMENT M

To the Cambridge City Council and Planning Board,

I am writing in support of the Alexandrov Petition concerning the extension of BA-3 commercial zoning to also cover the even-sided block of Western Avenue from the block next door between Jay and Howard Streets to continue from Jay to Kinnaird Street.

I am an abutting neighbor of the Alexandrov property at 158 Western Avenue as I live next door at 15 Kinnaird Street; my house is literally less than 6 feet from the Alexandrov property. As a neighbor, I much prefer that the Alexandrovs' use their property as their office for their innovative companies rather than rent it. I don't like to imagine what it would be like to live next to 5 college students that are constantly having parties. In the short time they have owned the building, the Alexandrovs have repainted the front, replaced doors, fixed the gutters, planted grass, fixed and painted the concrete porch. I expect that they are likely to continue to improve the property after setting up their offices there.

I hope that you choose to rule favorably on this petition. I believe that as neighbors who live just two blocks away on Franklin Street, the Alexandrovs are deeply committed to improving the neighborhood. I support their efforts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Dennis Freeman".

Dennis Freeman, PhD, MIT

ATTACHMENT N

Dear Cambridge City Council,

Re: Extension of BA-3 zoning to cover even sided block of 158-168 Western Avenue

I am writing in support of the extension of BA-3 commercial zoning to also cover the even-sided block of Western Avenue from the block next door between Jay and Howard Streets to continue from Jay to Kinnaird Street. I am in support of this City Council petition initiated by my neighbors Kiril and Catherine Alexandrov who own 158 Western Avenue and also live around the corner at 406 Franklin Street. This will help support small businesses like theirs in a live where you work community and continue to maintain the interesting mixed-use character of our neighborhood that has been in existence for decades. With the rapid rise of mega office and lab spaces as well as variance granting which has allowed many home-owners to build additional residential structures in their backyard that has altered the existing density ratios, I feel that they should have the freedom to have a progressive voice towards how they choose use their building on the even-sided block of Western Avenue.

I thank you for your fair consideration to this matter,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ethan D. Corey". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'E' and 'C'.

Ethan Corey

Owner of the 18 Kinnaird which is on the corner across the street from 158 Western Avenue



279 WESTERN AVENUE, CAMBRIDGE, MA 02139, UNITED STATES

+1 617 945 1868 CHEWINNOVATION.COM

To the Cambridge Planning Board and City Councilors,

I am writing in support of the Alexandrov's petition to extend the existing BA-3 zoning. This would include the short block of Western Ave., comprising the three buildings located at 158, 162, and 168 adjacent to my location at 279 Western Ave.

The spirit of innovation and entrepreneurship is evident everywhere in Cambridge. Largely, areas where innovators and entrepreneurs can find space available and affordable to execute on their ideas is very limited, as the long shadows of the large Fortune 500 and BioPharmas have appropriated desirable professional space. My own company, Chew, certainly knows what that is like. It is just one of the many reasons we chose to establish in the interesting Western Avenue corridor.

The support that Cambridge provides to innovators and entrepreneurs is very attractive, and one reason so many stay after their formal Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Harvard University educations. Cambridge supports the folks who start the next interesting companies, who create interesting products, which enrich our lives and make the world a better place.

I am pleased to learn that with just a minor zone extension, Kiril and Catherine Alexandrov's innovative companies Big Skinny and Gorilla Gym might be permitted to legally have their office at 158 Western Avenue. This location is a mere 3 short blocks from my location at 279 Western Avenue. A fellow innovator so close in proximity helps to build the local ecosystem. Over the past two years, buildings have succumbed to market pressure to convert to residential in the pursuit of making more money. This has depleted the area of perfectly affordable zoned commercial buildings, where entrepreneurs could have done their work. As such, and the mixed use area of Western Avenue can certainly use more commercial endeavors.

This is a wonderful opportunity for Cambridge to continue their support for innovators and entrepreneurs. I hope the Cambridge Planning Board and City Council will do the right thing for the community they represent. Western Avenue deserves to maintain its history of mixed use, where live and work spaces reside side by side, maintaining the area's cultural vibrance.

Adam Melonas
Founder of Chew Food Labs

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

ATTACHMENT A

Dear Cambridge City Council,

We are writing in support of the extension of BA-3 commercial zoning to also cover our even-sided block of Western Avenue from the block next door between Jay and Howard Streets. We are in support of this City Council petition initiated by our neighbors Kiril and Catherine Alexandrov who own 158 Western Avenue and also live around the corner at 406 Franklin Street. This will help support small businesses like theirs in a live where you work community and continue to maintain the interesting mixed-use character of our neighborhood that has been in existence for decades. With the rapid rise of mega office and lab spaces as well as variance granting which has allowed many home-owners to build additional residential structures in their backyard that has altered the existing density ratios, we feel that we would like to have the freedom to have a progressive voice towards how we choose use our buildings on this even-sided block of Western Avenue.

We thank you for your fair consideration to this matter,

Sincerely,

Jayce B. Patterson

162 Western