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CITY OF CAMBRIDGE  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

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To: Robert W. Healy, City Manager  
From: <sup>BR</sup> Beth Rubenstein, Assistant City Manager for Community Development  
Date: September 2, 2008  
Re: Council Order #43 dated July 28, 2008 on number of properties that could be affected by the Kaya Ka zoning petition.

The Kaya Ka Rezoning Petition adjusts the boundaries of the Massachusetts Avenue Overlay District and allows for waivers, via a Special Permit from the Planning Board, of transitional zone requirements and parking requirements, and allows an increase in FAR for hotel use on lots in the Massachusetts Overlay District. These changes affect only lots that are in the Business C district (BC) and also have a contiguous portion in an adjacent residential district. The intent of the proposed zoning is to help support the addition of a modestly scaled hotel use in Porter Square and, through a Special Permit, to remove impediments to creating such a use on appropriately sized lots that are split between a commercial zoning district and a residential zoning district. The proposed zoning changes also encourage underground parking in lieu of surface parking lots and the creation of new at grade open space. The area affected by the rezoning proposal is within and adjacent to the BC zoning district along Massachusetts Avenue at Porter Square.

There are approximately 29 properties that have contiguous areas within the BC zoning district as well as in an adjacent residential zoning district. These are the lots targeted in the proposed zoning petition; however, many are not likely to take full advantage of the proposed zoning changes for a variety of reasons. There are several lots (as along Upland Road) that, although they are split between the BC zone and a residential zone, have only very small portions of the lots within the BC zone; those lots are not feasible for new development, except as it would normally be permitted in the residential district. In addition, some lots contain buildings that are currently already over 1.6 FAR (the bonus floor area granted in the Petition to a hotel use); therefore, if they were to redevelop under the proposed zoning, new structures would likely be smaller than what currently exists on the site.



The following nine lots currently have buildings less than the 1.6 FAR for hotel use permitted in the Petition; they have the potential to redevelop or expand for hotel use under the provisions of the new zoning language. These 9 properties lie within both the BC district and an adjacent residential district and would be most able to take advantage of the proposed zoning changes. If these properties were to redevelop under the proposed zoning, an increase in FAR would be possible (the review below is illustrative and not intended to predict future development decisions by the owners of the properties).

MAP LOT#	ADDRESS	DESCRIPTION	EXISTING FAR	LAND AREA
177-71	1826 MASS AVE	Lesley University parking lot	0	12,007
177-79	1840 MASS AVE	Lesley University parking lot	0	13,263
177-34	1868 MASS AVE	Gourmet Express	0.37	13,370
178-21	1924 MASS AVE	Kaya Restaurant	0.39	14,880
178-133	1906 MASS AVE	Multi-story retail	0.81	15,024
179-51	1971 MASS AVE	1-story retail	0.96	14,026
178-52	1-16 RICHDAL E AVE	Residential buildings	1.14	26,971
179-74	15 DAVENPORT ST	3-story residential building	1.21	18,381
200-68	2026 MASS AVE	3-story residential with 1 <sup>st</sup> floor retail	1.55	10,012

- The two Lesley University owned properties at 1826 and 1840 Massachusetts Avenue (Lots # 177-71 and 177-79) are currently used for surface parking. The lots have been a part of Lesley University's discussions with the community regarding long term campus planning. It is anticipated by the University that they will be used for academic and administrative purposes and also include retail in the future, consistent with long term campus planning efforts.
- The Gourmet Express site at 1868 Massachusetts Avenue (Lot # 177-34) is a likely candidate for redevelopment for a wide range of uses, including additional commercial retail or office development and housing. The Petition provides a slight bonus in FAR for hotel use above that allowed for commercial activity but requires the provision of a minimum amount of open space and underground parking after the issuance of a special permit, factors that might make the use of the site for hotel more complicated to achieve than other development options.

- The lot at 1924 Massachusetts Avenue (Lot # 178-21) is the site of the Kaya Restaurant, whose anticipated redevelopment has shaped the details of the proposed rezoning.
- 1906 Massachusetts Avenue (Lot # 178-133) contains a multi-story, 19<sup>th</sup> century commercial building. Conversion to a hotel use under the proposed zoning provisions would require much of the existing onsite parking in the rear to be converted to open space and construction of a new building in order to make it possible to put required parking underground as mandated in the proposed language.
- 1971 Massachusetts Avenue (Lot # 179-51) is a one story retail building that essentially occupies its entire site. It is a site that could be expected to be redeveloped in the future for residential, commercial or hotel use if economic circumstances are favorable. However, redevelopment will probably be complicated because any new development would be subject to current parking and other zoning requirements that are not presently being met on the site. Hotel use under the proposed petition language would impose particularly stringent underground parking and open space requirements, factors that might make that use less competitive with alternate housing or office options.
- 15 Davenport Street (Lot # 179-74) was recently redeveloped for housing. Further redevelopment to hotel use under the proposed regulations would require demolition of half of the buildings on the site and conversion of that area to open space, which is unlikely.
- 1-16 Richdale Avenue (Lot # 178-52) is an early condominium and townhouse development. Conversion to a hotel under the proposed regulations would require demolition of existing building and removal of parking to create open space, which is unlikely.
- 2026 Massachusetts Avenue (Lot #200-68) has a very high existing FAR; conversion to a hotel would necessitate considerable reworking of the site, with loss of parking to provide the required at grade open space. It is unlikely that additional development would occur on this site. In addition this lot would most likely require a survey to establish the precise location of its lot lines in relation to the zoning district boundary lines to determine whether the lot is actually subject to the proposed zoning.