



Date: November 9, 2023
To: City Council
From: Councilor R. Lisle Baker
Re: Amendments to the Village Center Overlay District

Memorandum

Dear Colleagues,

During Committee discussions on item #38-22 I had proposed amendments to require parking within the VCOD. These include requiring 1 parking space for each 1000 sf of commercial space and 1 space for every 8 employees for commercial uses not within a half mile of mass transit. I also proposed 0.5 parking spaces for each residential unit not within a have mile of mass transit. Both parking requirements would be waivable by special permit, as now.

These amendments were not voted on in Committee, in part because the Law Department wanted to make sure that they do not violate the uniformity and predictability requirements in the Zoning Act. The Law Department has weighed in and these amendments are compliant with these requirements. Also, as I understand that all MBTA Communities VCODs are within half a mile of mass transit, these parking requirements would not apply to them.

This approach seems simpler than creating separate non-MBTA Communities VCODs, such as MRT-A, VC2 -B and VC3-C. However, I understand from the Law Department that such parallel overlay zones remain options if other changes are desired for those areas not within the MBTA Communities overlay zones.

Sincerely,
Councilor R. Lisle Baker

Cc: Newton Law and Planning Departments