



Malden Master Planning Public Forum

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Residential Development Alternatives

Prepared by Metropolitan Area Planning Council

The Malden Community Vision Statement identifies a need for "housing opportunities that meet the needs of all ages and income levels, including choices close to public transit." There are many different ways that the City can allow and encourage the development of additional housing opportunities.

Malden's zoning ordinance specifies what uses are allowed in each zoning district, and establishes limits on that development, in terms of lot size, density, height, setbacks, and parking. Changes to the zoning ordinance can allow different amounts and types of development or can discourage certain types of development.

MAPC has prepared four alternatives that project the amount and type of residential development that might occur in Malden given different zoning regulations. The first scenario is based on the current zoning code. Three alternative scenarios project different outcomes by changing two elements of zoning: the boundaries of the zoning districts, and the intensity of development allowed in each district.

These alternative scenarios are not specific recommendations regarding actual zoning changes, nor are they predictions of what development would occur—they are modeled outcomes that can stimulate discussion about the future of Malden.

1. Current Zoning

This scenario assumes no major changes in current zoning. No new districts would be created, and there would be no changes in the type or intensity of uses allowed in each district. Existing development that does not conform to the current zoning would be permitted to remain (e.g., two family homes in the Residential A district), and variances for two-family homes would be issued in accordance with the zoning. Nonconforming non-residential uses in the Residence A district would gradually convert to high-density residential uses through the special permit process.

2. Neighborhood Infill

This scenario includes zoning changes that would encourage more small-scale residential development distributed throughout the City's neighborhoods. Minimum lot sizes would be reduced so that it would be easier to create new small lots for single family homes. The practice of permitting 2-family homes would continue and owner-occupants of single-family homes would be allowed to create "accessory apartments" (AKA "in-law" apartments). These changes would be accompanied by a decrease in allowable height and density in Malden Center. The City would establish restrictive density regulations on new residential development on currently "nonconforming" lots

Continued on reverse

3. Center and Squares

This scenario focuses new residential development in certain areas of the City: in Malden Center, in selected business districts, and in selected industrial areas. The existing Residential Incentive Overlay district would be eliminated. A new zone for 4-story mixed use development would be created in the industrial areas south of Centre Street, possibly utilizing the Commonwealth's "Smart Growth Zoning District" program that provides fiscal incentives for housing development. A new "Squares District" would be established in limited areas to encourage new development (up to four stories) with commercial uses at street level and offices or housing on upper floors. Residential zoning would become more restrictive, with larger lot sizes for single family homes and fewer variances for two-family homes.

4. Slow Growth

This scenario includes zoning and regulatory changes that reduce the amount of residential development potential in the City. The Residential Incentive Overlay district in Malden Center would be eliminated and the Planning Board would be more restrictive about granting Special Permits for residential development in the Central Business District. New single family homes would require more lot area than they do now, and the city would end the practice of granting variances for new two-family homes in the Residence A District.

Comparing the Scenarios

MAPC has prepared some summary indicators that help to highlight the differences among the scenarios. These indicators do not tell the whole story, but they can help support inform discussion about alternative zoning and impacts that cannot be modeled.

<i>Distribution</i>	Current Zoning	Neighborhood Infill	Center & Squares	Slow Growth
Total Housing Units	3,639	2,922	3,617	1,041
New units in Residence A	1,688	1,551	714	472
New units Downtown	1,671	1,091	1,820	348
New units in "Squares" Districts	NA	NA	889	NA
New units in other zoning districts	280	280	194	221

<i>Housing Type</i>				
Single-family homes	470	551	221	108
Accessory apartments	39	388	15	7
2- to 4-family homes	274	271	59	29
Multifamily housing	2,751	1,561	3,301	792

<i>Proximity</i>				
New units near* Orange Line	1,098	727	1,710	277
New units near* local business districts	1,711	1,203	1,986	481
New units near* Bike to the Sea	1,346	922	1,828	378

*Near = within ¼ mile

<i>Height</i>				
Maximum height, Downtown	12 stories	6 stories	6 stories	4 stories
Maximum height, Squares	2 stories	2 stories	4 stories	2 stories

