

# Zoning Controls for Residential Development Benchmark Communities Comparison

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RCS Subcommittee  
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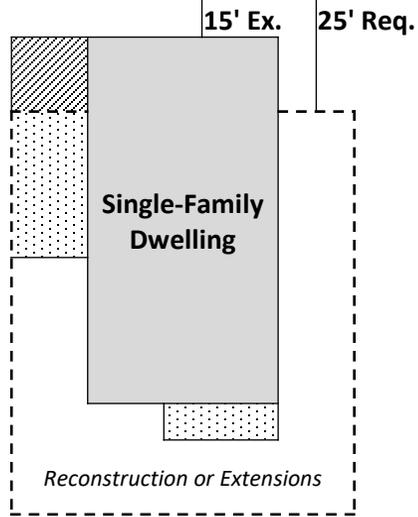
# Hingham Residential Zoning

- Section IV-A Dimensional Requirements:

Minimum Lot Size		Maximum Height		Maximum Percentage which may be Covered by all Buildings	Minimum Yard Dimensions		
Area	Frontage	Feet	Stories		Front	Side	Rear
<b>RESIDENCE DISTRICT A</b>							
20,000 SF	125'	35'	2.5		25'	15'	15'
<b>RESIDENCE DISTRICT B</b>							
30,000 SF	150'	35'	2.5		35'	20'	20'
<b>RESIDENCE DISTRICT C</b>							
40,000 SF	150'	35	2.5		50'	20'	20'

- Section IV-B,9. allows properties in residential districts to maintain an average front yard setback
- Section I-I,6.c. addresses “Character and Scale of Buildings” but does not include objective standards

# Hingham Residential Zoning



## State

- **MGL c. 40A, s. 6** zoning bylaw shall apply to any reconstruction, extension or structural change and to any alteration unless the change does not increase nonconforming nature of the structure and the Zoning Board makes a finding that it is not substantially more detrimental to the neighborhood

## Local

- **Section III-1.2 of the Zoning By-Law** allows alteration, additions, reconstruction, extension or structural change to existing nonconforming Single or Two-Family Dwellings, provided that the change does not further reduce the minimum linear measurement of nonconforming dimensions

Applies to Single-Families (6,244) and Two-Families (161)

# Hingham Residential Zoning

- 1984: Section III-I.2 (previously Section III-H (6))  
“Hatfield Amendment” allows for the extension of dimensional nonconformities such as height or setbacks even on undersized lots by-right; TM transcript confirms that intent was to allow modest additions to small homes
- 2006: Zoning Permit Study Committee created by Town Meeting to consider regulatory controls to manage town growth
- 2007: Report and Warrant Article Submitted with Recommended Motion to modify Section III-I.2:
- Required a Special Permit A1 for Extended Nonconformities
  - By-right allowance for compliant modifications other than frontage/lot area
- The motion failed.

# Communities with No Coverage or FAR

Community	Districts	Minimum Lot Area	Maximum Lot Coverage %	Minimum Open Space %	FAR
Andover	Single Residence A	15,000 SF	NONE	NONE	NONE
	Single Residence B	30,000 SF			
	Single Residence C	43,560 SF			
Hingham	Residence A	20,000 SF	NONE	NONE	NONE
	Residence B	30,000 SF			
	Residence C	40,000 SF			
Lexington	RO	30,000 SF	NONE	NONE	NONE
	RS	15,000 SF			
Milton	Residence A	40,000 SF	NONE	NONE	NONE
	Residence B	20,000 SF			
	Residence C	7,500 SF			
Norwell	Residential Single	40,000 SF	NONE	NONE	NONE
Scituate	Residence R-1	40,000 SF	NONE	NONE	NONE
	Residence R-2	20,000 SF			
	Residence R-3	10,000 SF			
Weston	District A	60,000 SF	NONE	NONE	NONE
	District B	40,000 SF			
	District C	30,000 SF			
	District D	20,000 SF			

# Communities with One Additional Control

Community	Districts	Minimum Lot Area	Maximum Coverage %	Minimum Open Space %	FAR
Canton	Single Resident AA	45,000 SF	25%	NONE	NONE
	Single Resident A	30,000 SF	25%		
	Single Resident B	15,000 SF	25%		
	Single Resident C	10,000 SF	25%		
Cohasset	Single Family R-A	18,000 SF	30%	NONE	NONE
	Single Family R-B	35,000 SF	30%		
	Single Family R-C	60,000 SF	30%		
Concord	Resident AA	80,000 SF	NONE	NONE	.24 + (1200/actual lot area in SF)
	Resident A	40,000 SF			
	Resident B	20,000 SF			
	Resident C	10,000 SF			
Duxbury	Residence Single	40,000 SF	15%	NONE	NONE
Hull	Single Family A	6,500 SF	30%	NONE	NONE
	Single Family B	12,000 SF	30%		
	Single Family C	20,000 SF	30%		

Community	Districts	Minimum Lot Area	Maximum Coverage %	Minimum Open Space %	FAR
Marblehead	Single Residence	10,000 SF	NONE	1 SF of open land area for each 1 SF of gross floor area	NONE
	Expanded Single Residence	35,000 SF			
Needham	Rural Residence Conservation	43,560 SF	15%	NONE	NONE
	Single Residence A	43,560 SF	NONE		
	Single Residence B General Residence	10,000 SF 10,000 SF	25-30% 30-35%		
Rockland	Residence 1	32,670 SF	25%	NONE	NONE
	Residence 2	32,670 SF	30%		
	Residence 3	32,670 SF	35%		
	Residence 4	32,670 SF	40%		
Westwood	Single Residence A	12,000 SF	25%	NONE	NONE
	Single Residence B	20,000 SF	25%		
	Single Residence C	40,000 SF	25%		
	Single Residence D	15,000 SF	25%		
	Single Residence E	80,000 SF	25%		
Weymouth	Residence 1	25,000 SF	30%	NONE	NONE

# Communities with Two Additional Controls

Community	Districts	Minimum Lot Area	Maximum Lot Coverage %	Minimum Open Space %	FAR
Braintree	Residence A	25,000 SF	70%	30%	NONE
	Residence B	15,000 SF	70%	30%	
	Residence C	43,560 SF	65%	35%	
Dedham	Single Residence A	40,000 SF	30%	NONE	0.15
	Single Residence B	12,500 SF	30%		0.5
Wellesley	Single Residence Districts	10,000 - 40,000 SF	15% - 25%	75% of lot area	NONE

# Wellesley example:

TABLE 1

District	10,000 sq. ft.	15,000 sq. ft.	20,000 sq. ft.	30,000 sq. ft.	40,000 sq. ft.
Minimum Frontage	60 ft.				
Minimum Front Yard Width	60 ft.				
Minimum Front Yard Depth (Setback)	30 ft.*				
Minimum Side Yard Width	20 ft.				
Minimum Rear Yard Depth	10 ft.	15 ft.	20 ft.	20 ft.	20 ft.

## Ratio of Building to Lot Area.

In Single Residence and General Residence Districts, Single Residence Districts A, and General Residence Districts A, no building or addition to any building shall hereafter be placed on any lot of land which will result in the covering by buildings of more than the following specified maximum percentages of the area of such lot or maximum building coverage expressed in square feet:

For lots containing less than 10,000 square feet - 25 percent;

For lots containing at least 10,000 square feet but less than 20,000 square feet – the greater of 20 percent or 2,500 square feet;

For lots containing at least 20,000 square feet but less than 40,000 square feet – the greater of 18 percent or 4,000 square feet – but not more than 6,000 square feet; and

For lots containing at least 40,000 square feet - 15 percent;

# Planning Board Member Suggested Research Topics

- Review of Hingham's Zoning By-Law, section IV-A – Schedule of Dimensional Requirements, Residential Districts A, B,C
- Items to Review:
  - Zoning map, zoning districts, review of varying lot sizes in residential districts
  - Lot size
  - Open space requirement
  - Tree Protection requirements
  - Lot coverage
  - Building Coverage
  - Maximum height
  - Minimum setback dimensions, lot frontage and lot width ratios
  - Overlay district requirements, ie., MBTA Communities, Hingham Shipyard, South Hingham Overlay District
  - National Register and Local Historic Districts- Hingham Historic Commission Jurisdiction, Hingham Historic Districts Commission Jurisdiction, Homes listed on State Register of Historic Places but not located in Historic Districts - Hingham Historic Commission Jurisdiction
  - ADU Regulations
  - Special requirements to residential district dimensional requirements
  - Hatfield Amendment, section IV-C.6, Hingham Zoning By-Law which allows for the development of undersize lots for single use if they meet certain exemptions and basically to address concerns about the scale and impact on additions to undersize lots such as requiring a special permit for any alteration which increases the degree of non-conformity.
  - M.G.L. Chapter 40A, section 6 which impacts building on lots which don't meet current zoning requirements.

# Planning Board Member Suggested Research Topics

- Planning and Land Use – Subcommittee Issues for Consideration
  - Site plan review
    - Require site plan review for proposed residential uses requiring tear down demolition where the residence is over a specified size.
    - Managing the impact when a new larger home replaces a smaller home as a teardown
      - ie., Cohasset By-Law – Large Home Review Applications.
    - Develop specific metrics and standard to codify Site Plan Review Standard C, Character and Scale of Buildings to allow the Planning Board specific guidance and review criteria.
    - Codify Policy 4.5 of 2020 Town-wide Master Plan which identified concerns about over- development, large home construction and the loss of starter homes. Recommendations include establishing maximum FAR to regulate massing, amending zoning by-laws to set read and side yard setbacks based on building height, regulating massing of new construction to maintain neighborhood consistency, establishing a lot coverage ratio, minimum open space requirements, residential compatibility dimensional standards, and tree protection guidelines. Coordinating alignment with preservation of neighborhood character, Climate Action , and environmental sustainability goals.

# Planning Board Member Suggested Research Topics

- Maintain neighborhood scale and character by ensuring proportionality between building size and lot size
  - Zoning regulations should govern floor area ratio (FAR) and lot coverage. Hingham zoning regulations should include floor area ratio (FAR) and lot coverage. The floor area ratio (FAR) should be the ratio of the total gross floor area, including conditioned area, attic area, garages, and porches to the lot area. Lot coverage refers to the percentage of a lot which can be covered by buildings and impervious surfaces. Lowering the maximum allowed lot coverage is a strategy to preserve and increase open space and manage development to maintain the scale and character of the residential neighborhoods.
  - Develop review criteria incorporating specific qualitative standards for review in proposed redevelopment applications to codify maintenance of scale and character in the residential neighborhoods in proposed redevelopment. Example – gross floor area exceeding 4000 sq. ft., lot coverage area more than 8% of lot area or 6500 sq. ft.
  - Develop percentage of lot coverage criteria in coordination with possible floor area ratios of 0.17 for residence district A, 0.12 for residence district B, and 0.09 for residence district C.
  - Evaluate the proposed floor area ratio system as a metric to supersede lot coverage as the primary method for regulation of house size in residential districts.
  - Develop spreadsheets of FAR metrics based on existing neighborhood density data and updated FAR metrics reflecting current development trends in the residential neighborhoods ensuring that the new regulations reflect existing development trends.

# Planning Board Member Suggested Research Topics

- Control Density
  - Floor Area Ratio (FAR) could be implemented on a sliding scale based on lot area in a zoning district:
    - Higher FARs in zoning districts with smaller lot areas and lower FARs in districts with larger lot areas.
  - Building Coverage Ratio and Lot Coverage Limitation. Lot coverage determines the maximum area of a lot that can be covered by all buildings on the lot. Establish floor area ratios and possible maximum lot coverage percentages of 35% for lots less than 7000 sq. ft., 25% for lots less than 10,000 sq. ft., 20% for lots between 10,000 sq. ft. and 20,000 sq. ft., and 18% for lots between 20,000 sq. ft. and 30,000 sq. ft. and 15% for lots greater than 30,000 sq. ft.
  - Increase front, rear and side yard setbacks
  - Relate maximum building height to distance from lot lines and reduce maximum building heights in small and smaller lots in residential districts.
  - Review possibility to review requirement building setbacks in order to reduce building envelope and maximum structures on lot.

# Planning Board Member Suggested Research Topics

- Control Building Massing and Bulk – Management of maximum height to building setback from lot lines.
  - Reduce maximum building height and number of stories in small lots. Require a third story by special permit.
  - Review Building Height and Required Grade in Hingham's By-Law
  - Manage Visual Impact – Insure visual scale which is consistent with neighboring properties., ie., manage building width along street line
  - Strategies:
    - Preservation of landscape
    - Relation of buildings to natural environment
    - Building design, character and scale, and landscaping
    - Requirement of special permit Site Plan Review for all teardowns in residential districts
    - Set priorities:
      - Control of building density
      - Lot coverage density requirements
      - Preservation of open space
      - Visual impacts: Streetscape, neighborhood scale and character, lot coverage