



**TOWN OF NEEDHAM**  
TOWN HALL  
Needham, MA 02492-2669

Office of the  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN

TEL: (781) 455-7500

FAX: (781) 449-4569

TDD: (781) 455-7558

**REVISED**

**Public Hearing on Proposed Zoning Changes: Area Bounded by  
Highland Avenue, Gould and Ellis Streets, and Route 128/95**

The Board of Selectmen will hold a public hearing on **Tuesday, January 9, 2018, at 7:30 p.m.** in **Powers Hall at Needham Town Hall**, 1471 Highland Avenue, Needham, to consider potential zoning revisions for current industrial zones in the **area bounded by Highland Avenue, Gould and Ellis Streets, and the Route 128/95 Right-of-Way**. The Board seeks this input in order to make a decision as to whether to refer the proposal to the Planning Board for its consideration.

The Board has received recommendations from the Town's Council of Economic Advisors (CEA) which, if implemented, would substantially increase the height and density of allowed development in those areas. The purpose of these revisions would be to increase the economic potential and encourage additional development of these business-zoned areas proximate to Route 128.

A map showing the area under discussion is included in this notice. A summary of the CEA's study and recommendations is below. Additional information and exhibits are posted on the Town's website at [www.needhamma.gov/zoning](http://www.needhamma.gov/zoning).

The Board of Selectmen invites all residents and interested parties to attend and provide input regarding this subject. Written comments may also be submitted to the Board of Selectmen, c/o Needham Town Hall, 1471 Highland Avenue, Needham, MA or by email to [selectmen@needhamma.gov](mailto:selectmen@needhamma.gov).

**Council of Economic Advisors Process and Recommendations**

The CEA began undertaking a review of the Industrial 1 Zoning District (the area bounded by Highland Avenue, Gould Street, Ellis and Crawford Streets and Route 128) and Industrial Zoning Districts on Reservoir Street (the areas bounded by Reservoir Street/Route 128, MBTA railroad, the Charles River and in about 100' off Central Avenue) in 2012. During the CEA's preliminary outreach in 2014 to businesses, residents, and landowners in the areas, it discussed general ideas around rezoning, revised some of the proposals in response to residents' concerns, and provided a detailed build-out analysis, traffic impact report, and elevation drawings to better understand the visual impacts of development.

The goal of the CEA is to create a visible presence along 128 in order to increase the economic viability of the area and promote development. These areas have the potential to be highly productive economically, but have not seen any redevelopment due to the existing zoning scheme. For that reason, the CEA has recommended upgrading the zoning adjacent to Route 128 to make it more economically competitive, while respecting the concerns of the adjacent residential neighborhoods and existing businesses and owners.

Because of the varying nature of topography, location, access/egress to/from the Route 128/I95 interchanges, proximity to residential neighbors, and adjacent zoning, the CEA has recommended the creation of three separate Highway Commercial zones with different dimensional and use zoning. It has also recommended that the highway layout itself, which is presently zoned Single Residence B or Single Residence A, be neutralized so that it no longer contains any zoning designation, regulation, or requirements. Properties abutting the layout would be governed solely by the zone they are in. The recommendation is as follows:

Highway Commercial 1 would be comprised of the area along Gould Street between Highland Avenue and the railroad tracks, across the street from the existing Elder Services District which already allows four stories. The proposal is to increase the height along the Highway (five to six stories or 70' or up to 84' with a special permit) with lower heights (four stories or 54') across from residential districts along Gould Street and Highland Avenue. Because of the topography of these lots, even six stories along the highway will appear to be four stories from the abutting streets. The height transition would take place 50' into the lot, unless the building roof is a pitched or recessed profile approved by the Planning Board. Where heights are increased above 54', the side and front setbacks are increased. A 20' landscaped buffer will be required along Gould Street and Highland Avenue.

Highway Commercial 2 would be comprised of the area along Gould Street between the railroad tracks and Crawford and Ellis Streets, and would have lower allowed heights than those in Highway Commercial 1. This is because of the zone's proximity to the surrounding residential neighborhood, and the flat topography of the surrounding lots. The recommendation is for three stories or 36' along the street edge, transitioning up to 54' at the Highway. The height transition would take place 50' into the lot unless the building roof is a pitched or recessed profile approved by the Planning Board. If the height is increased above 36', the front and side setbacks increase. A 20' landscaped buffer will be required along Gould Street, Ellis Street and Crawford Street (where across from a residentially zoned property).

The CEA has also recommended the creation of a Highway Commercial 3 district in the Reservoir Street area, which will be the subject of discussion by the Board of Selectmen in the future.