



Brookline for Everyone
411 Washington Street
Brookline, MA 02446

Members of the Board: As of June 13, 2025

Amanda Zimmerman
Paul Saner
Jeff Wachter
Jonathan Klein
Alden Raine
Katha Seidman
Deborah Brown
Brian Ladd

Chestnut Hill Commercial Area Study Community Advisory Group

% Michael Sandman, Chair (msandman1943@gmail.com)

% Michael Rubenstein, Select Board Liaison (mrubenstein@brooklinema.gov)

% Meredith Mooney, Director of the Economic Development / Long Term Planning Division (mmooney@brooklinema.gov)

Dear CHCAS CAG:

Brookline for Everyone (B4E) is a grassroots group of residents who want Brookline to be economically thriving, racially inclusive, and environmentally sustainable. We believe these goals require a substantial increase in housing, commercial development, and especially mixed-use development. While thoughtful planning is essential, delays can come at a significant cost. That's why we were deeply concerned by the recent [Brookline.News](#) article entitled: "[Route 9 commercial development project stalls, delaying Town's tax revenue hopes.](#)"

The Chestnut Hill West area—prioritized for rezoning decades ago—is the largest and most promising commercial corridor in Brookline. It holds enormous potential for tax-generating development that includes a mix of commercial uses as well as housing at all price points. We strongly support the Town's ongoing planning study, led by the Economic Development Division, which aims to bring forward zoning recommendations to the Select Board ahead of the Spring 2026 Town Meeting.

The study area includes roughly 25 acres between the south side of Route 9 and Heath Street, stretching from Dunster Road to the Newton border, as well as the parcel at the northeast corner of route 9 and Hammond Street. The largest piece of this area is the Chestnut Hill Office Park—over five acres near Newton—recently acquired by City Realty for \$41 million. This stretch is now or soon will be entirely vacant, and the developer has expressed serious interest in mixed-use redevelopment.

While B4E supports efforts to maximize revenue-generating commercial development, we also recognize the challenges facing certain asset types,

especially traditional office space. **If zoning demands more commercial use than the market can support, the result may be no development at all—an outcome that would forfeit substantial new tax revenue.**

City Realty has expressed willingness to build a mixed-use project that includes a hotel (a strong tax generator), along with retail, medical office, and various forms of housing. Such a mix is essential to financial feasibility. The new development could increase tax revenue to around \$8 million annually—compared to just over \$1 million today. After accounting for Town service costs, the net fiscal benefit is likely around \$4 million per year, making it the most significant single economic development opportunity Brookline has seen to date. And this figure does not even include the rest of the Chestnut Hill West study area.

It is both symbolically and practically urgent to rezone the entire Chestnut Hill West area, including the City Realty site. The Town cannot afford further delays. With the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee continuing its work, failing to act now risks not just this project but also continued stagnation across other neglected commercial areas. If Brookline is to fund essential services without repeated overrides, it must embrace the kind of smart, tax-positive growth this project represents.

Thank you for considering our comments.

Sincerely,
Brookline for Everyone

Copies to:

- Brookline Select Board (SelectBoard@brooklinema.gov)
- Kara Brewton, Director of Planning (kbrewton@brooklinema.gov)
- Chas Carey, Brookline Town Administrator (ccarey@brooklinema.gov)
- Anne Meyers, Chair, EDAB (annermeyers@gmail.com)
- EDAB CHCHAS Ad-Hoc Subcommittee (George Cole, george.cole@lmp.com; Sandi Silk sandisilk@gmail.com; Mark Bare, Mark.Barer@lendlease.com; Ken Lewis, KGL232@MSN.com)
- Samual Mintz, Editor, Brookline.News (samueljmintz@gmail.com)