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CITY OF CAMBRIDGE  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

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To: Planning Board  
From: CDD Staff  
Date: October 12, 2011  
Re: **City Council Rezoning Petition on Central Square Overlay District**

**Background**

The petition proposes to delete paragraph 20.304.5(3)(b), which currently reads:

b. Bar or establishment where alcoholic beverages are consumed and where dancing and entertainment is provided, dance hall or similar place of entertainment; Section 4.35 g shall be permitted only if the principal public entrance or entrances are directly from Massachusetts Avenue or Main Street.

This language was adopted with the creation of the Central Square Overlay District in 1989. The intent was to prevent bar and nightclub activity from being located near residential areas. Establishments like T.T. The Bear's Place and the former Man Ray nightclub (at the corner of Brookline and Green Streets), which tended to generate noise and traffic late at night, raised concerns about similar kinds of establishments locating along the edges of the Central Square business district.

**Analysis**

Bars and entertainment venues (such as nightclubs) are allowed uses in all business-zoned portions of the Central Square Overlay District (in pink or red on the accompanying map). Removing the restrictions on entrance locations would effectively allow bar or nightclub entrances in most portions of the district, including along streets that are adjacent to residential uses.

Some alternative approaches may achieve the goal of expanding the allowed areas for bars and entertainment establishments while addressing concerns about adjacency to residential uses:

- Select only a few additional streets not adjacent to residential uses where bar entrances would be allowed, such as Prospect Street, Western Ave and Magazine Street (within one block of Massachusetts Ave) and portions of Landsdowne Street and Windsor Street.
- Require a special permit for a bar or entertainment establishment serving alcohol to locate its entrance on a non-designated street. Criteria could include distance from residential uses.
- Allow bar entrances anywhere except within 100 feet (or some other distance) of a residential district.

# Central Square Bars and Entertainment Venues

Central Square  
Overlay District

● Entrance to bar or establishment  
where alcohol is served and where  
dancing/entertainment is provided

