

Canton Mixed Use: Washington Place Condominiums, The Village at Forge Pond, and Grover Estates

Washington Place: 29 units, ground floor retail; **Village at Forge Pond:** 39 units, ground floor retail; **Grover Estates:** 45 units, ground floor retail.
Zoning: Mixed Use Overlay District

Funding: Developer funded; PWED for streetscape and reconstruction.
Date(s): 2000-2005
Goals: Downtown revitalization; housing opportunities.



Canton Mixed-Use Developments
Source: MAPC, Canton Mixed Use Examples PDF, 2009

Background

At the end of the 1990s, downtown Canton, a suburb south of Boston, was in a rundown state. The downtown was characterized by small lots and deteriorated buildings, all of which were fifty or more years old. There were a lot of zoning restrictions that prevented larger developments and no multifamily zoning existed. The town was eager to revitalize its fading town center, which had also lost much of its businesses to strip mall style shopping centers.

Site Development

The Washington Place Condominiums was the first mixed-use development project in downtown Canton. This was followed by The Village at Forge Pond and Grover Estates. Today, there are five Marini develop-

ments in downtown Canton. Washington Place Condominiums replaced several smaller buildings with retail space on the street level, rental apartments filling the upper floors, 27 of which are affordable units, and parking in the rear. The Village at Forge Pond replaced an abandoned industrial site and created new retail with 39 housing units, including 35 affordable units. Grover Estates created 45 condominiums, two of which are 40B, and restored two historic structures for commercial use. All three developments are in close proximity to the Canton Center MBTA commuter rail station.

Development Process

Developer John Marini of the local Marini Management Company bought a collection of small lots in the downtown. Working with architects, engineers and multiple community groups, Marini designed the Washington Place Condominiums to fit in with 1950s look of the town. The revitalization strategy led to the adoption of the Canton Center Economic Opportunity District Bylaw in 2000, a mixed-use bylaw



Canton's Washington Street improved streetscape with no-longer visible buried utility wires, before and after.

to directly encourage transit oriented development and better connect the station itself with the downtown. Following the zoning change, the existing buildings were torn down and replaced with the Washington Place development. The town also changed its parking requirement to one parking space per housing unit, assuming that a couple would

only have one car because at least one spouse would be likely to com-mute by rail. Subsequently, Canton undertook a multi-year project to extensively improve the streetscape and the bury the utility wires along much of Washington Street.

Canton and MetroFuture Goals

Sustainable Growth Patterns

The zoning overlay district was a catalyst for a constant stream of new housing development in the downtown, concentrated around the transit station. Five new housing development totaling 207 new residential units have been built within a five minute walk of the train station. The close proximity of the developments to transportation and landscaped walkways have created walking traffic in Canton Center, allowing for the retail space to be patronized. The downtown has a new positive atmosphere and healthy neighborhoods.



The Village at Forge Pond, Canton, 2010.

Transportation Choices

There are currently a total of 375 units within 1000 ft of the train station. According to a traffic study done by Marini Management, 74% of the people who live in these units walk to the station and commute by rail.

Healthy Environment

The Village at Forge Pond opened up and cleaned up a beautiful waterfront to the community that was previously hidden. In order to increase density, the Conservation Commission required Marini to setback his development 50 ft from the waterfront (as opposed to the mandated 30 ft no-build zone on land abutting a waterway), clean the pond and establish open space around the pond with trails, benches and space for passive recreation.



Grover Estates: Historic preservation and new townhouses, 2010.

Contact Information

For more information about the development of Washington Place Condominiums, The Village at Forge Pond, or the Grover Estates, contact John Marini, Developer, Marini Management Company, at johnmarini@marinimgmt.com.

“The secret is that you have to get the community involved before you develop. Then you can design a nice project with everyone’s input and support.” – John Marini, Developer of five mixed-use developments in Canton Center.