

# Proposed Amendments to Article 19 of the Cambridge Zoning Ordinance

## Description

With the alarming news that Eversource has reached maximum capacity in Cambridge for its electrical infrastructure and is moving ahead with transfer station expansions at Alewife and Putnam Ave, as well as planning a new transfer station in East Cambridge, at Fulkerson St., it's becoming glaringly obvious that our planning and approval processes for large developments in the city do not fully account for the utility infrastructure needs of additional buildings. Upon reviewing the zoning code we determined that the following changes may begin to address this concern, and so we put them forward as a proposal for consideration by the council.

ADD TO Section 19.24: This section outlines the application procedures for large projects, which require a Project Review Special Permit. It lists requirements such as a parking study, a tree study, sewer and water infrastructure narratives, and a noise mitigation narrative. So it seems relevant and appropriate to add requirements to this section around electrical service infrastructure and gas service infrastructure narratives, which is what we have proposed below.

ADD TO Section 19.25.2: Add a "project specific urban design overview" requirement. This requires a project specific urban design analysis and set of recommendations that are presented to the planning board and the public.

ADD Section 19.25.3: Utility Impact Findings. This section requires the planning board to grant the permit only if it finds that the utility impacts of the project would not be significant.

We further recommend that if these provisions are adopted, the application form be changed via regulation to add the following requirements:

Electricity Service Infrastructure Narrative Project Review Special Permit (19.20)

(certified by Electrical Dept.)

Gas Service Infrastructure Narrative Project Review Special Permit (19.20) D

(certified by Dept. of Public Works)

# Zoning Language

ADD to Section [19.24](#):

(8)

Electric Service Infrastructure Narrative. The application shall include a report by the applicant detailing the anticipated impact of the project on the city's electricity infrastructure and supply. It shall indicate the likely improvements to infrastructure necessary to accommodate the identified impacts. Where such determinations cannot be made at the time of application, the report shall indicate what investigations must be undertaken by the applicant to make such determination, their anticipated costs, and the schedule for their completion. The applicant shall provide certification that this report has been submitted to the Electrical Department and the Electric Utility (Eversource).

(9)

Gas Service Infrastructure Narrative. The application shall include a report by the applicant detailing the anticipated impact of the project on the city's methane gas delivery infrastructure and supply. It shall indicate the likely improvements to infrastructure necessary to accommodate the identified impacts. Where such determinations cannot be made at the time of application, the report shall indicate what investigations must be undertaken by the applicant to make such determination, their anticipated costs, and the schedule for their completion. The applicant shall provide certification that this report has been submitted to the Public Works Department and the Gas Utility (Eversource).

EDIT Section 19.25.2:

Urban Design Findings. The Planning Board shall grant the special permit only if it finds that the project is consistent with the urban design objectives of the city as set forth in Section 19.30. In making that determination the Board may be guided by or make reference to urban design guidelines or planning reports that may have been developed for specific areas of the city, **or in their absence, there shall be prepared a project specific urban design overview that will be presented to the Planning Board and the public at the appropriate hearing(s).** They shall apply the standards herein contained in a reasonable manner to nonprofit religious and educational organizations in light of the special circumstances applicable to nonprofit religious and educational activities.

ADD Section [19.25.3](#):

Utility Impact Findings. The Planning Board shall grant the special permit only if it finds that the project would not cause undue adverse impacts on the residents and the environment by requiring extensive additional utility infrastructure to be added to the city, including electrical, gas, sewer, stormwater and any other utility service.