

Affordable Housing Overlay (AHO) Zoning Proposal – Comparison Charts

The charts on the following pages compare the use and development standards of Cambridge base zoning districts with the standards in the proposed Affordable Housing Overlay (AHO). The following standards are summarized:

- Land Use Types
- Height, Density, and Scale
- Yard Setbacks
- Open Space

Important Notes:

- These charts are intended to provide an overview of applicable zoning standards. Refer to the text of the Cambridge Zoning Ordinance (refer to Article 4.000 – Use Regulations and Article 5.000 – Development Standards) and the text of the AHO Zoning Petition (referred June 8, 2020) for more detailed standards.
- These charts summarize applicable standards for base zoning districts. Development standards in some areas of the city are modified by overlay zoning or are established in special zoning districts (refer to Articles 13.000, 14.000, 15.000, 16.000, 17.000, and 20.000). AHO standards apply in all zoning districts except Open Space (OS) districts.
- The proposed AHO standards would apply only to residential developments in which all dwelling units are subject to deed-restricted, permanent affordability standards set forth in the proposed AHO Zoning Petition text. In some cases, ground-floor non-residential uses may be allowed within an AHO project.
- Refer to the Zoning Map (attached) for the locations and descriptions of zoning district codes. The following charts only include base zoning districts that are currently established within Cambridge, and exclude some base districts that are listed within the Zoning Ordinance even though there is no land currently zoned with that designation.

Land Use Types

District	Base Zoning – General range of allowed uses	AHO – Allowed uses (as-of-right)	
A-1	single-family detached dwellings	single-family, two-family detached dwellings townhouse, multifamily dwellings	
A-2			
B	single-family, two-family detached dwellings townhouse dwellings (some by special permit)		
C	single-family, two-family detached dwellings townhouse, multifamily dwellings (some by special permit) limited institutional uses	single-family, two-family detached dwellings townhouse, multifamily dwellings ground-floor non-residential (as allowed in district)	
C-1			
C-1A			
C-2			
C-2A			
C-2B			
C-3			
C-3A			
C-3B			
O-1			most types of residential dwellings hotels (except not in some districts) most institutional uses offices and laboratories
O-2			
O-2A			
O-3			
O-3A			
BA	most types of residential dwellings hotels (except not in some districts) most institutional uses offices and laboratories most retail uses	single-family, two-family detached dwellings townhouse, multifamily dwellings ground-floor non-residential (as allowed in district)	
BA-1			
BA-2			
BA-3			
BA-4			
BB			
BB-1			
BB-2			
BC			
IA-1			most types of residential dwellings most institutional, office, laboratory, and retail uses light industrial uses
IA-2			
IA	most types of residential dwellings (by special permit) hotels (not in some districts, by special permit in others) most institutional, office, laboratory, and retail uses light industrial uses some heavy industrial uses		
IB-1			
IB-2			
IB			
OS	open space, religious, or civic uses	no change	

Note: Charts are intended to provide a summarized overview of applicable zoning standards. Refer to the text of the Cambridge Zoning Ordinance and Affordable Housing Overlay Zoning Petition for detailed standards.

Height, Density, and Scale

District	District Standards			AHO Standards	
	Max. FAR (residential)	Min. Lot Area per Dwelling Unit	Max. Height (residential)	FAR Limit	Allowed Stories and Height
A-1	0.50	6,000 sq. ft.	35'	2.00	4 stories @ 45' max.
A-2	0.50	4,500 sq. ft.	35'	2.00	4 stories @ 45' max.
B	0.50	2,500 sq. ft.	35'	2.00	4 stories @ 45' max.
C	0.60	1,800 sq. ft.	35'	2.00	4 stories @ 45' max.
C-1	0.75	1,500 sq. ft.	35'	2.00	4 stories @ 45' max.
C-1A	1.25	1,000 sq. ft.	45'	N/A	6 stories @ 65' max.**
C-2	1.75	600 sq. ft.	85'	N/A	7 stories @ 80' max.**
C-2A	2.50	300 sq. ft.	60'	N/A	7 stories @ 80' max.**
C-2B	1.75	600 sq. ft.	45'	N/A	6 stories @ 65' max.**
C-3	3.00	300 sq. ft.	120'	N/A	7 stories @ 80' max.**
C-3A	3.00	300 sq. ft.	120'	N/A	7 stories @ 80' max.**
C-3B	4.00	300 sq. ft.	120'	N/A	7 stories @ 80' max.**
O-1	0.75	1,200 sq. ft.	35'	2.00	4 stories @ 45' max. (50' with non-res. ground floor)
O-2	2.00	600 sq. ft.	85'	N/A	7 stories @ 80' max.**
O-2A	1.50	600 sq. ft.	70'	N/A	7 stories @ 80' max.**
O-3	3.00	300 sq. ft.	120'	N/A	7 stories @ 80' max.**
O-3A	3.00	300 sq. ft.	120'	N/A	7 stories @ 80' max.**
BA	1.75	600 sq. ft.	45'	N/A	6 stories @ 65' max. (70' with non-res. ground floor)**
BA-1	0.75	1,200 sq. ft.	35'	2.00	4 stories @ 45' max. (50' with non-res. ground floor)
BA-2	1.75	600 sq. ft.	45'	N/A	6 stories @ 65' max. (70' with non-res. ground floor)**
BA-3	0.75	1,500 sq. ft.	35'	2.00	4 stories @ 45' max. (50' with non-res. ground floor)
BA-4	1.75 or 2.00	600 sq. ft.	35' or 44'	N/A	6 stories @ 65' max. (70' with non-res. ground floor)**
BB	3.00	300 sq. ft.	80'	N/A	7 stories @ 80' max.**
BB-1	3.25	300 sq. ft.	90'	N/A	7 stories @ 80' max.**
BB-2	3.00	300 sq. ft.	45'	N/A	6 stories @ 65' max. (70' with non-res. ground floor)**
BC	2.00	500 sq. ft.	55'	N/A	7 stories @ 80' max.**
IA-1	1.50	700 sq. ft.	45'	N/A	6 stories @ 65' max. (70' with non-res. ground floor)**
IA-2	4.00	no min	70'	N/A	7 stories @ 80' max.**
IA	1.50	no min	45'	N/A	6 stories @ 65' max. (70' with non-res. ground floor)**
IB-1	3.00	no min	70'	N/A	7 stories @ 80' max.**
IB-2	0.75	1,200 sq. ft.	35'	2.00	4 stories @ 45' max. (50' with non-res. ground floor)
IB	4.00	no min	120'	N/A	7 stories @ 80' max.**
OS	0.25	N/A	35'	N/A	N/A

* An additional five (5) feet of building height is permitted when the ground story is dedicated to an active non-residential use.

** Height reduced by two (2) stories and twenty (20) feet within thirty-five (35) linear feet of a non-residential lot in a district with a maximum residential building height of forty (40) feet or less.

Note: Charts are intended to provide a summarized overview of applicable zoning standards. Refer to the text of the Cambridge Zoning Ordinance and Affordable Housing Overlay Zoning Petition for detailed standards.

Affordable Housing Overlay (AHO) Zoning Petition Comparison Charts – UPDATED WITH AMENDMENTS

Yard Setbacks

District	District Standards			AHO Standards		
	Front Yard Min. Setback	Side Yard Min. Setback	Rear Yard Min. Setback	Front Yard Min. Setback	Side Yard Min. Setback	Rear Yard Min. Setback
A-1	25'	15' (sum to 35)	25'	15'*	7.5'	20'
A-2	20'	10' (sum to 25)	25'	15'*	7.5'	20'
B	15'	7.5' (sum to 20)	25'	15'*	7.5'	20'
C	10'+ [formula]	7.5' (sum to 20) [+formula]	20'+ [formula]	10'*	7.5'	20'
C-1	10'+ [formula]	7.5' [+formula]	20'+ [formula]	10'*	7.5'	20'
C-1A	10'	[formula]	[formula]	10'*	7.5'	20'
C-2	10'+ [formula]	[formula]	20'+ [formula]	10'*	7.5'	20'
C-2A	5'+ [formula]	[formula]	20'+ [formula]	5'*	7.5'	20'
C-2B	10'+ [formula]	[formula]	20'+ [formula]	10'*	7.5'	20'
C-3	5'+ [formula]	[formula]	20'+ [formula]	5'*	7.5'	20'
C-3A	5'+ [formula]	[formula]	20'+ [formula]	5'*	7.5'	20'
C-3B	10'	no min	no min	10'*	no min	no min
O-1	10'+ [formula]	[formula]	20'+ [formula]	10'*	7.5'	20'
O-2	10'+ [formula]	[formula]	20'+ [formula]	10'*	7.5'	20'
O-2A	10'+ [formula]	[formula]	20'+ [formula]	10'*	7.5'	20'
O-3	10'+ [formula]	[formula]	20'+ [formula]	10'*	7.5'	20'
O-3A	10'+ [formula]	[formula]	20'+ [formula]	10'*	7.5'	20'
BA	C-2B/no min**	C-2B/no min**	20'+ [formula]	10'/no min**	7.5'	20'
BA-1	C-1/no min**	C-1/no min**	20'+ [formula]	10'/no min**	7.5'	20'
BA-2	5'	10'	20'*	5'*	7.5'	20'
BA-3	10'+ [formula]	[formula]	20'+ [formula]	10'*	7.5'	20'
BA-4	[formula] or 10'	[formula] or 10'	[formula] or 10'	10'*	7.5'	10'
BB	C-3/no min**	C-3/no min**	C-3/no min**	5'/no min**	7.5'	20'
BB-1	no min	20' from res. district line	20' from res. district line	no min	7.5' (or 20' from res. district line)	20' from res. district line
BB-2	no min	20' from res. district line	20' from res. district line	no min	7.5' (or 20' from res. district line)	20' from res. district line
BC	no min	no min	20'	no min	no min	20'
IA-1	no min	[formula] or 10'	[formula] or 10'	no min	7.5'	10'
IA-2	no min	[formula] or 10'	[formula] or 10'	no min	7.5'	10'
IA	no min	no min	no min	no min	no min	no min
IB-1	no min	[formula] or 10'	[formula] or 10'	no min	7.5'	10'
IB-2	15'	[formula] or 10'	[formula] or 10'	15'*	7.5'	10'
IB	no min	no min	no min	no min	no min	no min
OS	25'	15'	25'	N/A	N/A	N/A

* May be reduced to average of nearest four buildings, or to 10' (if less than district requirement) on a corner lot.

** Required front yard setback varies between residential and non-residential or mixed-use buildings.

Note: Charts are intended to provide a summarized overview of applicable zoning standards. Refer to the text of the Cambridge Zoning Ordinance and Affordable Housing Overlay Zoning Petition for detailed standards.

Open Space

	District Standards		AHO Standards	
District	Min. OS Ratio	“Private Open Space” Standards	Min. OS Ratio	“Private Open Space” Standards
A-1	50%	Half permeable, half “usable” dimension	30%	75% at ground level and permeable
A-2	50%	Half permeable, half “usable” dimension	30%	75% at ground level and permeable
B	40%	Half permeable, half “usable” dimension	30%	75% at ground level and permeable
C	36%	Half permeable, half “usable” dimension	30%	75% at ground level and permeable
C-1	30%	Half permeable, half “usable” dimension	30%	75% at ground level and permeable
C-1A	15%	All “usable,” half at ground level	15%	75% at ground level and permeable
C-2	15%	All “usable,” half at ground level	15%	75% at ground level and permeable
C-2A	10%(+)	All “usable,” half at ground level	10%	75% at ground level and permeable
C-2B	15%	All “usable,” half at ground level	15%	75% at ground level and permeable
C-3	10%	All “usable,” half at ground level	10%	75% at ground level and permeable
C-3A	10%	All “usable,” half at ground level	10%	75% at ground level and permeable
C-3B	10%	All “usable,” half at ground level	10%	75% at ground level and permeable
O-1	15%	All “usable,” half at ground level	15%	75% at ground level and permeable
O-2	15%	All “usable,” half at ground level	15%	75% at ground level and permeable
O-2A	15%	All “usable,” half at ground level	15%	75% at ground level and permeable
O-3	10%	All “usable,” half at ground level	10%	75% at ground level and permeable
O-3A	10%	All “usable,” half at ground level	10%	75% at ground level and permeable
BA	15% (res)*	All “usable,” half at ground level	15%	75% at ground level and permeable
BA-1	30% (res)*	All “usable,” half at ground level	30%	75% at ground level and permeable
BA-2	no min	N/A	no min	N/A
BA-3	30%	All “usable,” half at ground level	30%	75% at ground level and permeable
BA-4	no min	N/A	no min	N/A
BB	10% (res)*	All “usable,” half at ground level	10%	75% at ground level and permeable
BB-1	15%	All “usable,” half at ground level	15%	75% at ground level and permeable
BB-2	15%	All “usable,” half at ground level	15%	75% at ground level and permeable
BC	no min	N/A	no min	N/A
IA-1	no min	N/A	no min	N/A
IA-2	no min	N/A	no min	N/A
IA	no min	N/A	no min	N/A
IB-1	no min	N/A	no min	N/A
IB-2	15%	“Usable dimension,” half at ground level	15%	75% at ground level and permeable
IB	no min	N/A	no min	N/A
OS	60%	N/A	no min	N/A

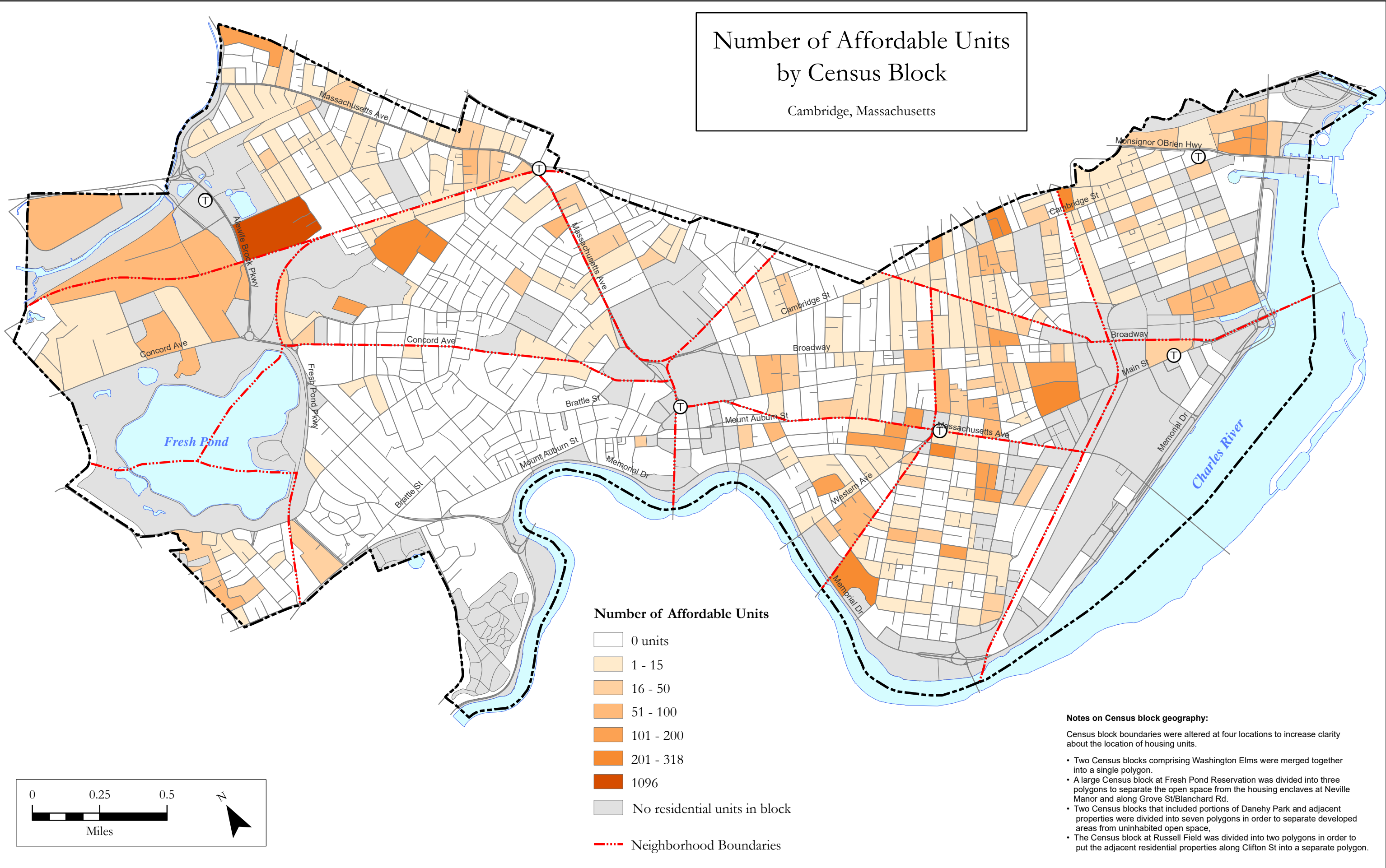
* Denotes districts where the open space requirement is established by reference to a base residential district.

Note: Under proposed AHO standards, the required Open Space Ratio could be reduced to no less than 15% to facilitate preservation of a building on the State Register of Historic Places.

Note: Charts are intended to provide a summarized overview of applicable zoning standards. Refer to the text of the Cambridge Zoning Ordinance and Affordable Housing Overlay Zoning Petition for detailed standards.

Number of Affordable Units by Census Block

Cambridge, Massachusetts

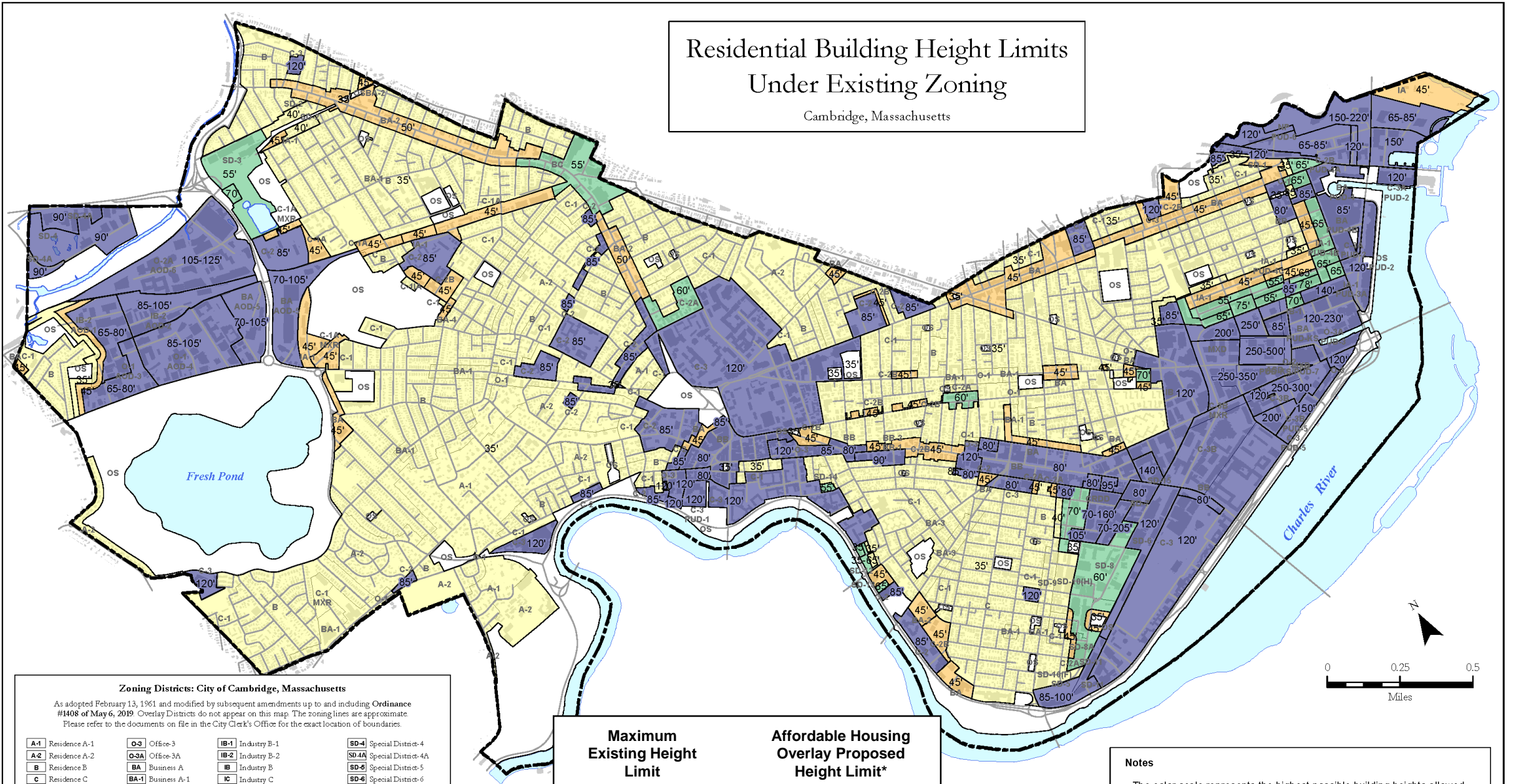


Notes on Census block geography:

- Census block boundaries were altered at four locations to increase clarity about the location of housing units.
- Two Census blocks comprising Washington Elms were merged together into a single polygon.
- A large Census block at Fresh Pond Reservation was divided into three polygons to separate the open space from the housing enclaves at Neville Manor and along Grove St/Blanchard Rd.
- Two Census blocks that included portions of Danahy Park and adjacent properties were divided into seven polygons in order to separate developed areas from uninhabited open space.
- The Census block at Russell Field was divided into two polygons in order to put the adjacent residential properties along Clifton St into a separate polygon.

Residential Building Height Limits Under Existing Zoning

Cambridge, Massachusetts



Zoning Districts: City of Cambridge, Massachusetts
 As adopted February 13, 1961 and modified by subsequent amendments up to and including Ordinance #1408 of May 6, 2019. Overlay Districts do not appear on this map. The zoning lines are approximate. Please refer to the documents on file in the City Clerk's Office for the exact location of boundaries.

A-1 Residence A-1	O-3 Office-3	IB-1 Industry B-1	SD-4 Special District-4
A-2 Residence A-2	O-3A Office-3A	IB-2 Industry B-2	SD-4A Special District-4A
B Residence B	BA Business A	IB Industry B	SD-5 Special District-5
C Residence C	BA-1 Business A-1	IC Industry C	SD-6 Special District-6
C-1 Residence C-1	BA-2 Business A-2	MXD Mixed Use Development	SD-7 Special District-7
C-1A Residence C-1A	BA-3 Business A-3	ASD Ames Street District	SD-8 Special District-8
C-2 Residence C-2	BA-4 Business A-4	AOD Alewife Overlay District	SD-8A Special District-8A
C-2A Residence C-2A	BB Business B	PUD Planned Unit Development Overlay	SD-9 Special District-9
C-2B Residence C-2B	BB-1 Business-1	MXR Mixed Use Residential Overlay	SD-10 Special District-10(F)
C-3 Residence C-3	BB-2 Business-2	NP North Point District	SD-10H Special District-10(H)
C-3A Residence C-3A	BC Business C	CRDD Cambridgeport Revitalization Development District	SD-11 Special District-11
C-3B Residence C-3B	BC-1 Business C-1		SD-12 Special District-12
O-1 Office-1	IA-1 Industry A-1		SD-13 Special District-13
O-2 Office-2	IA-2 Industry A-2		SD-14 Special District-14
O-2A Office-2A	IA Industry A		SD-15 Special District-15
			OS Open Space

Maximum Existing Height Limit	Affordable Housing Overlay Proposed Height Limit*
35 - 40'	4 stories, 45' / 50'
45 - 50'	6 stories, 65' / 70'
55 - 78'	7 stories, 80'
80 - 500'	7 stories, 80'

□ Open Space Districts

* Taller height permitted if development includes an active non-residential Ground Story.

Notes

- The color scale represents the highest possible building heights allowed under current zoning. Please note that a special permit may be required to build to the limit in certain areas.
- Height labels separated by a hyphen (e.g., 120-230') indicate areas where the maximum allowed height is increased when certain conditions are met, such as under a special permit.
- This map represents a broad summary of detailed zoning requirements. Please refer to the Zoning Ordinance for full information on the types and sizes of buildings allowed, and for the exact locations of height limit boundaries.