



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

PLANNING BOARD

CITY HALL ANNEX, 344 BROADWAY, CAMBRIDGE, MA 02139

Date:	December 14, 2020
Subject:	MXD Amendments Zoning Petition
Recommendation:	The Planning Board recommends ADOPTION , with modifications.

To the Honorable, the City Council,

The Planning Board (the “Board”) held a public hearing on November 17 on a Zoning Petition (the “Petition”) by the Cambridge Redevelopment Authority (the “Petitioner”) to Amend Article 14.000 of the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Cambridge, Mixed Use Development District: Kendall Center (MXD) to permit up to an additional 800,000 square feet of Gross Floor Area (GFA) for commercial development in conjunction with the development by NSTAR Electric Company d/b/a Eversource (or its successors and assigns) of a substation within the District.

At the November 17 hearing, the Board heard a presentation by representatives of the Petitioner, testimony from the public and received information from City staff. During discussion of the Petition, Board members expressed strong support for the concept of relocating the Eversource substation from the planned site at Fulkerson Street to the subject site as a positive outcome for the East Cambridge and Wellington-Harrington communities. Further, Board members acknowledged that the development of the Eversource substation is crucial to providing reliable electricity to the eastern part of Cambridge.

At the conclusion of Board discussion, the Board moved to transmit a favorable recommendation on the Petition and make a finding that the proposal is in conformance with the general plan of the community, as required for the Council’s consideration of the amendment to the Kendall Square Urban Redevelopment Plan (KSURP). The Board reached consensus that there are tremendous benefits of locating the substation on the proposed site, both in terms of meeting the electricity needs of the City, but also improving the environment for East Cambridge and Wellington/Harrington neighborhoods and improving the open space network in the eastern part of the City.

The Board’s recommendation includes the following points for the Council’s consideration:

- The zoning language can be clarified in some areas, particularly by more clearly explaining the distinction between the “Substation Project” and “Substation GFA.” As is typically the case, the Board recommends that staff from the Community Development

Department and Law Department conduct a review of the Petition text prior to adoption in case additional improvements and clarifications can be made.

- The Board raised several questions regarding the proposed parking standards, and generally believes that such issues will be addressed more directly during the special permit review process, provided that the Traffic, Parking & Transportation Department has the necessary tools to fully evaluate a proposed parking plan at that time.
- The Board supports the City Council's review of an economic analysis of the Petition, which will be provided at a future time, to assess the requested 800,000 square feet of new commercial gross floor area in comparison to the costs and risks of the proposed substation project.

On this motion, the Planning Board voted 5-0 to transmit a favorable recommendation to the City Council.

Respectfully submitted for the Planning Board,



Mary Flynn, Vice-Chair.