



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Community Development Department

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To: City Council
From: Iram Farooq, Assistant City Manager for Community
Development
Date: May 17, 2023
Subject: Proposed Alewife Overlay District: Quadrangle (AOD-Q) Zoning
Petition & Design Guidelines

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To the Honorable, the City Council,

We are pleased to transmit the attached Alewife Overlay District: Quadrangle (AOD-Q) Zoning Petition and updated Alewife Design Guidelines for the Council's consideration.

Approximately one year ago, the Council adopted a [development moratorium](#) on new office and laboratory uses in Alewife Overlay Districts 1-5 until December 31, 2023, or until the time of enactment of new zoning for the Quadrangle. The purpose of the moratorium was to create and enact amended requirements for the Alewife Overlay Districts in consultation with stakeholders of the Alewife Overlay Districts and surrounding neighborhoods, based on development plans and guidelines published by the City.

Soon thereafter, the City formed the [Alewife Zoning Working Group](#) (the "Working Group") consisting of residents, representatives of the business community, local institutions, property owners, and developers, led by staff from the Community Planning and Zoning and Development Divisions of the Community Development Department, to meet regularly and develop an urban design framework and zoning recommendations for the Quadrangle and provide these recommendations back to the City Council for its consideration.

The Working Group met nine (9) times since June 2022 to discuss the recommendations from the [Envision Alewife District Plan \(2019\)](#), offer updates and refinements based on current development conditions in the Quad, and build strong consensus around a unified vision for the neighborhood. The Working Group's primary planning objectives for the future of the Quad included:

- Create a balanced, vibrant, and mixed-use district;
- Increase housing supply, including affordable housing;
- Promote uses which help to establish and support a self-sustaining neighborhood;

- Prioritize the early delivery of critical infrastructure to support the district; and
- Transition and scale development appropriately to existing adjacent neighborhoods.

Today, that new vision has been translated into an actionable development strategy in the form of a new Alewife Overlay Quadrangle district zoning ordinance and accompanying updated Alewife Design Guidelines. The attached package contains two primary parts:

- A **zoning petition** to replace the current Alewife Overlay Districts 1-4 with a new Alewife Overlay District: Quadrangle (AOD-Q). The zoning petition consists of the zoning amendments necessary to effectuate the change, as well as accompanying maps which identify certain height subdistricts and a future street map which implement a form-based approach to front yard setbacks per the Alewife District Plan recommendations.
- An updated **Alewife Design Guidelines** document which will ensure new development in the Quad is reinforcing the planning objectives of the Working Group and results in a distinct, high-quality urban realm.

We want to sincerely thank the Working Group members, members of the broader public, and other critical stakeholders who made this vision come to life. We look forward to continuing the conversation with the City Council.