

City of Cambridge  
Community Development Department

# Joint Meeting of Transportation Committees

April 23, 2025





# Welcome

## Purpose

Get feedback from appointed members of the committees, the City's "community experts" on pedestrian, bicycle, and transit issues

## Objective

Committee members to understand the proposal for Jerry's Pond, to form an opinion, and, if desired, decide to send a letter to Planning Board

Committee members to understand Zoning + Development process in Cambridge

## Process

Presentation from guest speakers followed by questions from committee members, public to type in questions in Zoom Q&A, and make verbal comments during public comment

Discussion will try to alternate between committees and in-person/remote participants

# Meeting Agenda

1. Agenda Review, Roll Call, Minutes

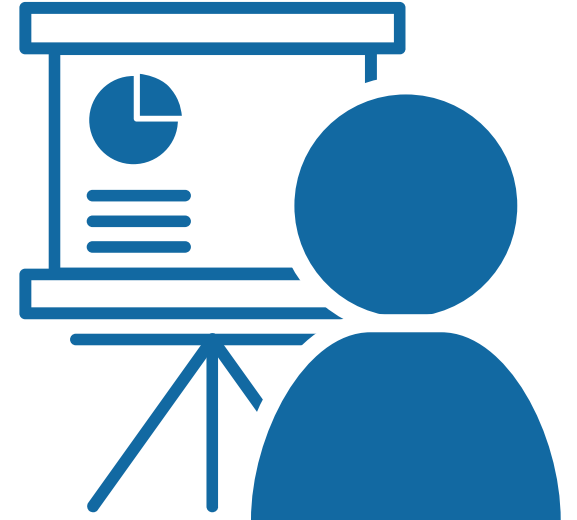
2. City Updates

1. Transportation Planning
2. Street Management
3. Public Works

3. Presentation: IQHQ Jerry's Pond

4. Presentation: Zoning 101

5. Public Comment





**Roll Call**





# **Approval of March 2025 Minutes**



# Proposed motion

- Approve meeting summary for March 2025, posted on Joint Meeting page
- Vote will be by roll call



**Volunteer Notetaker Needed**



# City Updates



# Announcements

- Cambridge Department of Transportation beginning April 1:
  - Traffic, Parking, and Transportation Department expands to become Cambridge Department of Transportation (DOT)
  - The Transportation Planning Division at Community Development will move to the Department of Transportation (DOT) as a division alongside the existing Street Management and Parking Management Divisions
  - Transportation committees will move over, too. More information will be sent soon to the transportation committees.



# Upcoming Community Meetings

- Kirkland Road Reconstruction – Tuesday, April 29, 4-6 p.m.
  - In-person “pop-up” at Kirkland Road at Kirkland St



# Upcoming CSO Community Meetings

- Broadway
  - May 1, 6 p.m.— Open House (Drop-by), Cambridge Arts Ctr., 119 Windsor St





# Upcoming Committee Meetings

- Transit Advisory Committee – May 1
- Bicycle Committee – May 7
- Tentative Joint Meeting of Committees – May 14
- Pedestrian Committee – May 22



# **Process for Comment Letters to Planning Board**



## **Presentation tonight includes an item up for consideration at a future Planning Board meeting**

One way that the advisory committees can influence outcomes of city planning is to write a comment letter to the Planning Board

- Letter can include what a committee thinks is important, appreciated, or lacking in proposals going to the Planning Board
- Must be submitted before the Planning Board meeting through supporting city staff



## The process required to draft a letter

After the presentation tonight, a committee with quorum can:

- Discuss whether to send a letter, outline the main points
- Select a letter writer, vote to approve outline and writer
- Signed by Chair or Vice-Chair of the committee

Letter is due to City staff by Wednesday April 30.



# **IQHQ Jerry's Pond Improvements**

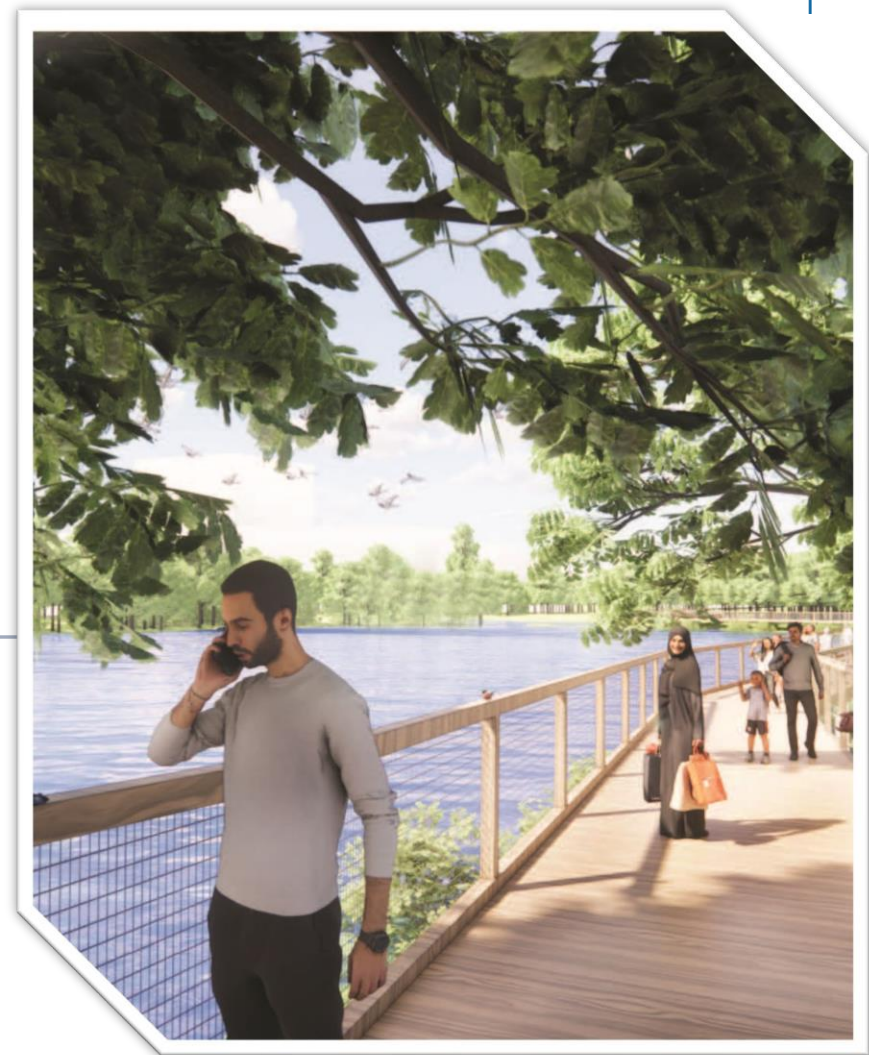
Danny Frias, IQHQ  
Howard Moshier, VHB

# Jerry's Pond Improvements

Joint Transportation Committee

IQHQ

04/16/2025

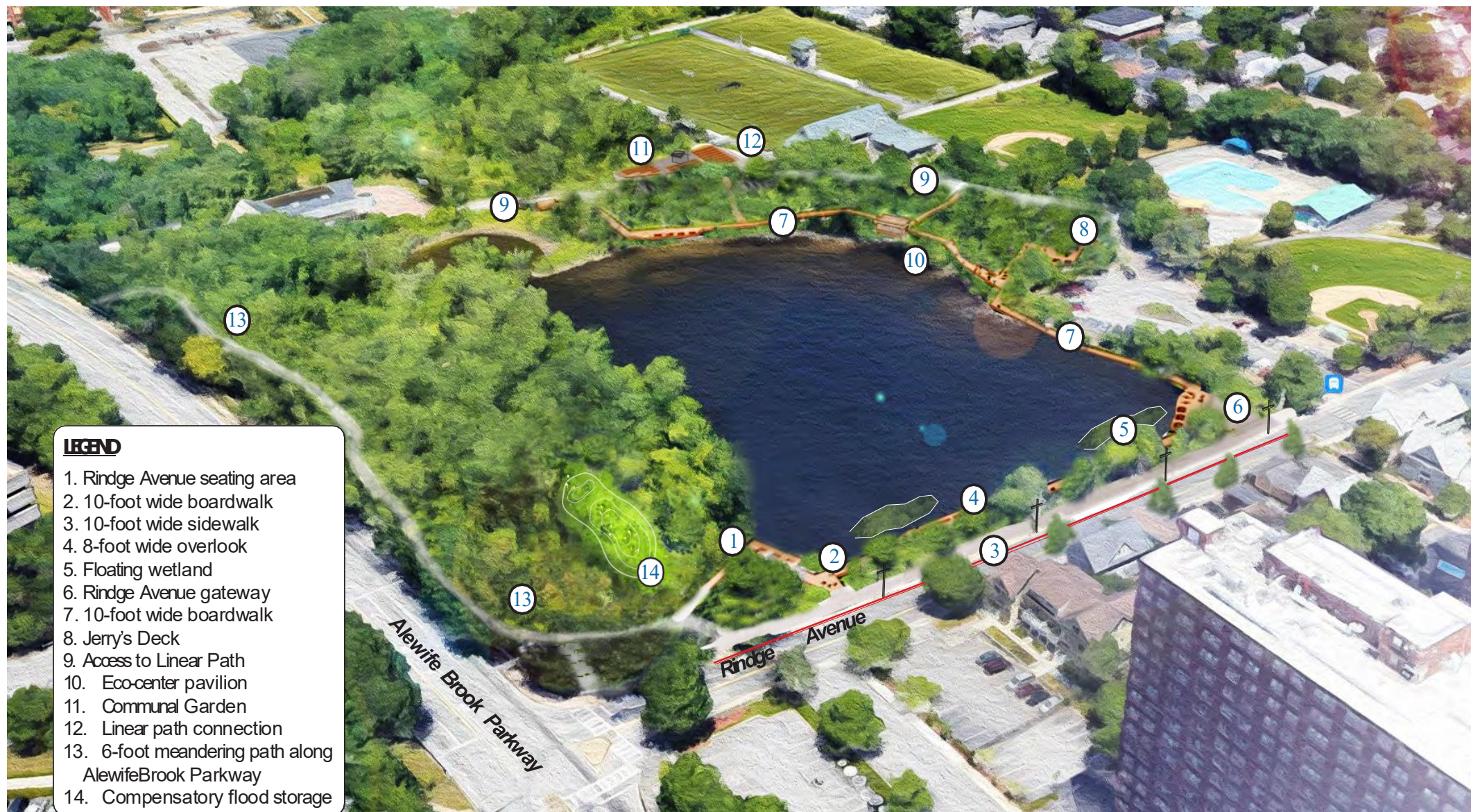


# Permitting Process

- IQHQ started the permitting and public process in January 2021.
- **Close to 200 meetings** since 2021 with community members. Rindge Avenue was the main topic in 90% of 2023-2024 meetings and at least 40% of all meetings.
- In June 2021 and November 2023, IQHQ met with the Joint Transportation Committee, along with CDD, TPT, MBTA, DPW, and members of the public present.
- In May 2022, IQHQ was granted special permit approval for the development area, which included improvements to Jerry's Pond as a condition.
- In March 2024, Jerry's Pond received Conservation Commission approval with an Order of Conditions for the entire public access plan.
- In March 2025, IQHQ submitted its application for a Flood Plain Overlay District Special Permit, pursuant to Article 20.70 of the Cambridge Zoning Ordinance.



# OVERALL PLAN





# SITE PLAN



N.T.S.

APPROXIMATE PROJECT  
AREA LIMITS



FEMA 100-YEAR FLOODPLAIN  
(ZONE AE)



NOTE: ALL PROPOSED  
WALKWAYS, SIDEWALKS  
& BOARDWALKS ARE  
ACCESSIBLE

ADDITIONS SINCE  
NOVEMBER 2021



CONNECTION TO  
LINEAR PATH

6-FOOT WIDE FLEXIBLE  
POROUS PAVEMENT  
PEDESTRIAN WALKWAY

SITE LIGHT FIXTURE, TYP.

6-FOOT HIGH CHAIN  
LINK FENCE

12-FOOT WIDE  
CONCRETE SIDEWALK

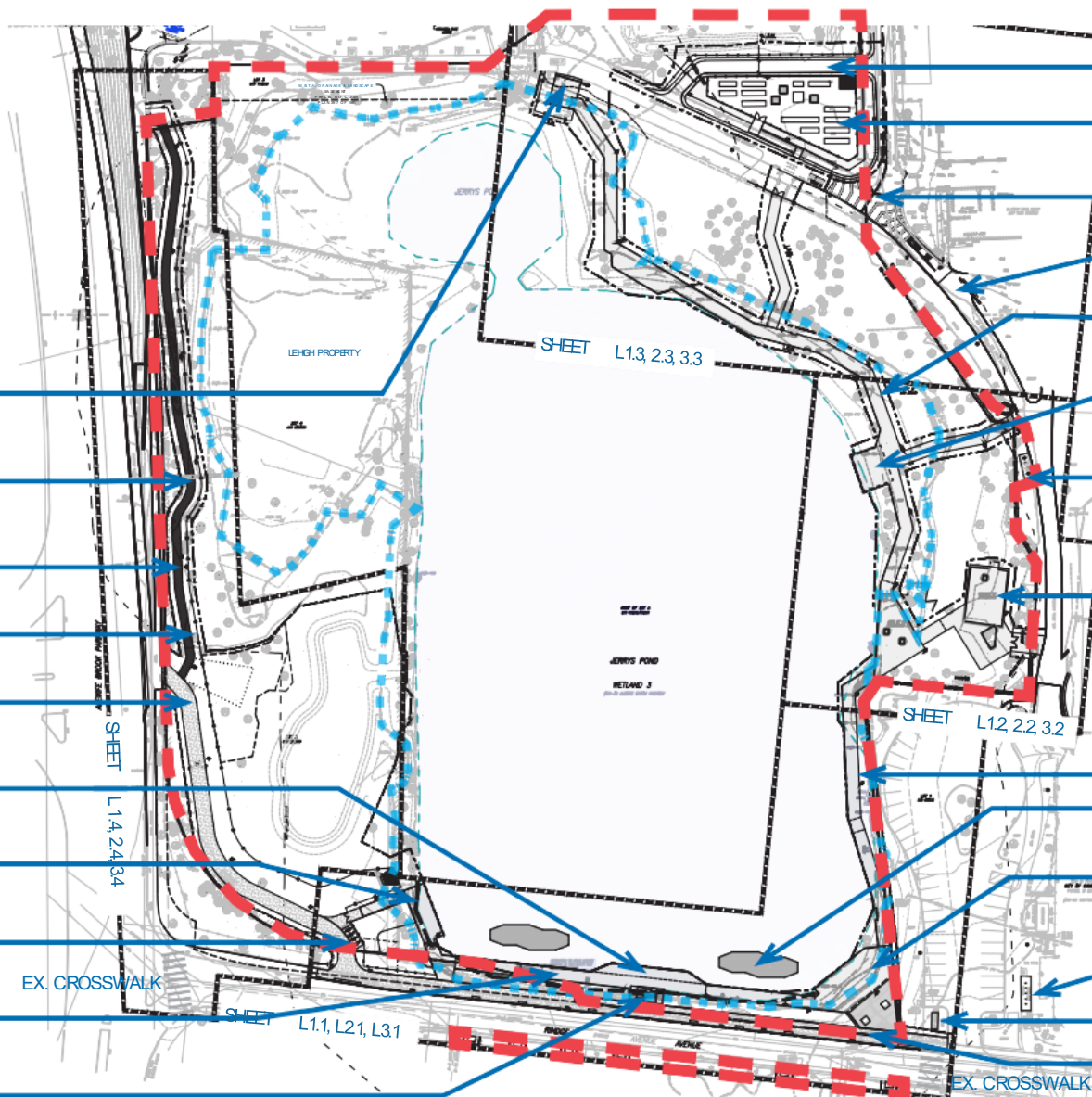
8-FOOT WIDE RINDGE  
AVENUE OVERLOOK

OVERLOOK WITH  
SEATING

BIKE RACKS (4) ON  
CONCRETE PAD

10-FOOT RINDGE AVENUE  
BOARDWALK

ADA ACCESS RAMP TO  
BOARDWALK



9'-6"-WIDE BITUMINOUS  
LINEAR PATH SPUR

COMMUNAL GARDEN

RECONFIGURED  
INTERSECTION (BY CITY)

LINEAR PATH

10-FOOT BOARDWALK

ECO-CENTER PAVILION  
WITH GRILLS, STORAGE &  
OVERHEAD STRUCTURE

BIKE RACKS (5) ON  
CONCRETE PAD

JERRY'S DECK AREA  
WITH SEATING

10-FOOT BOARDWALK

FLOATING WETLAND

RINDGE AVENUE  
GATEWAY WITH SEATING,  
OVERLOOK & TREES

EXISTING BIKE RACKS

EXISTING BUS STOP

10-FOOT SIDEWALK  
WITH 2-FOOT UTILITY  
CORRIDOR

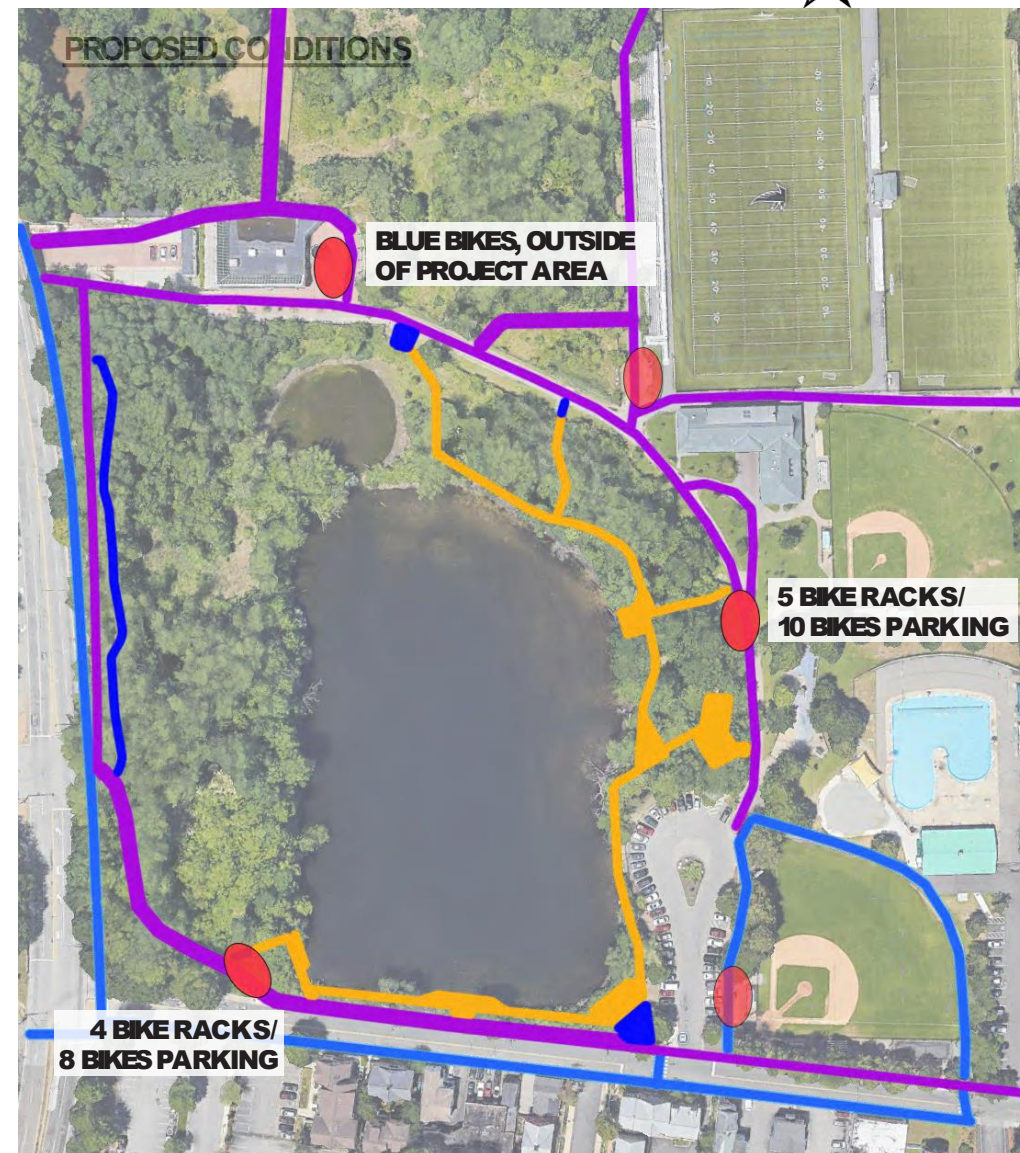
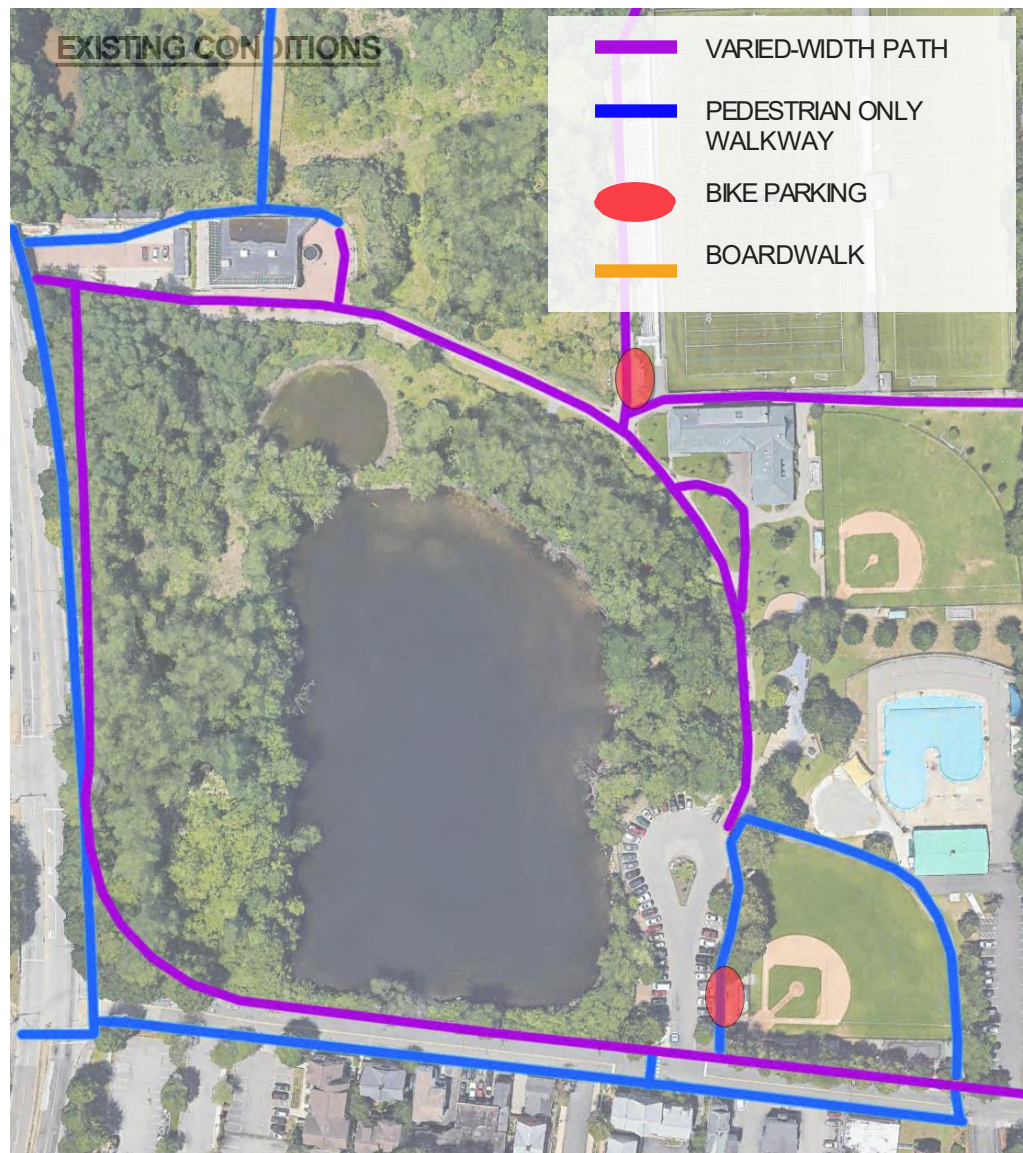


# CIRCULATION & BIKE PARKING

N.T.S.



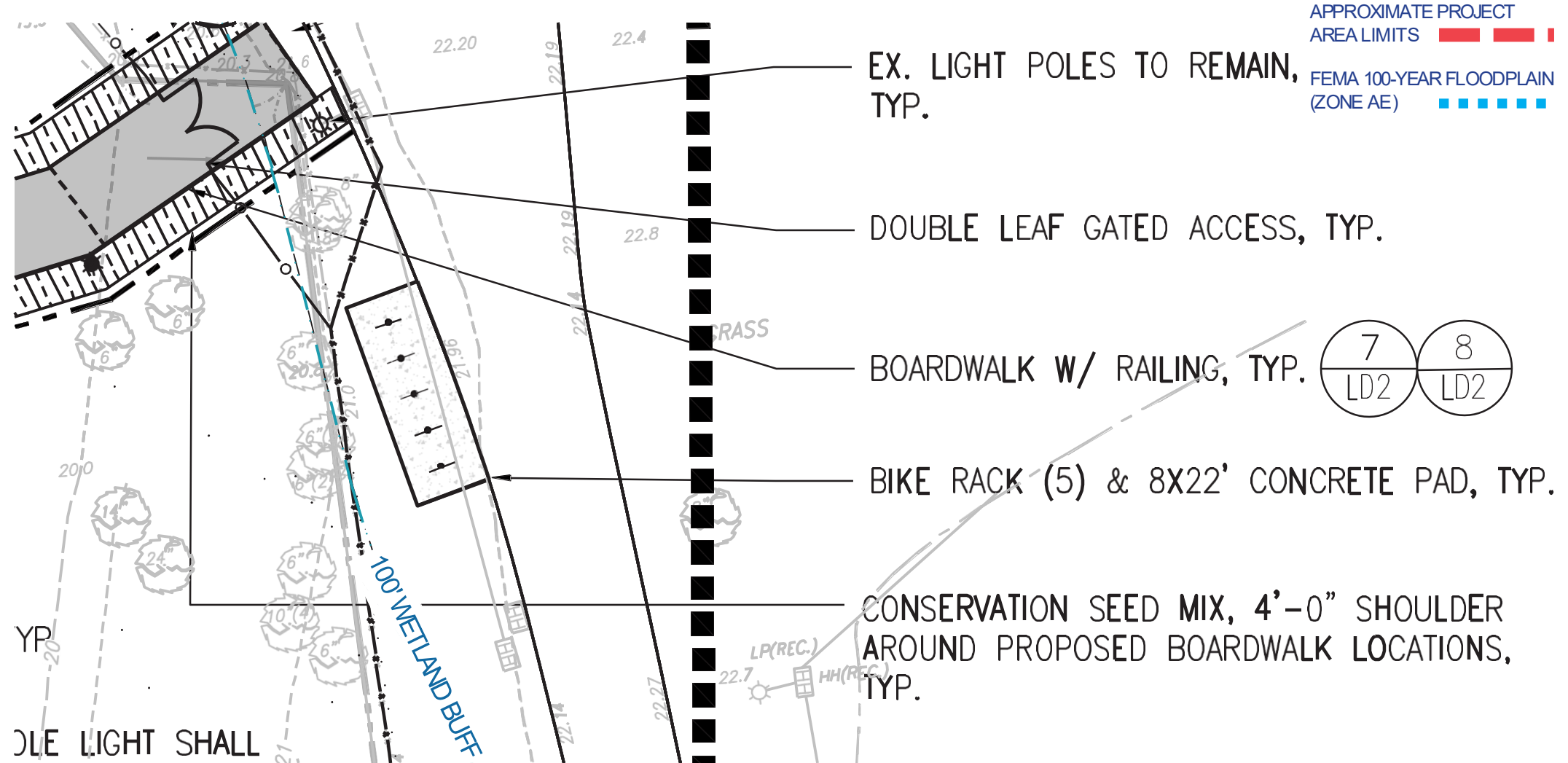
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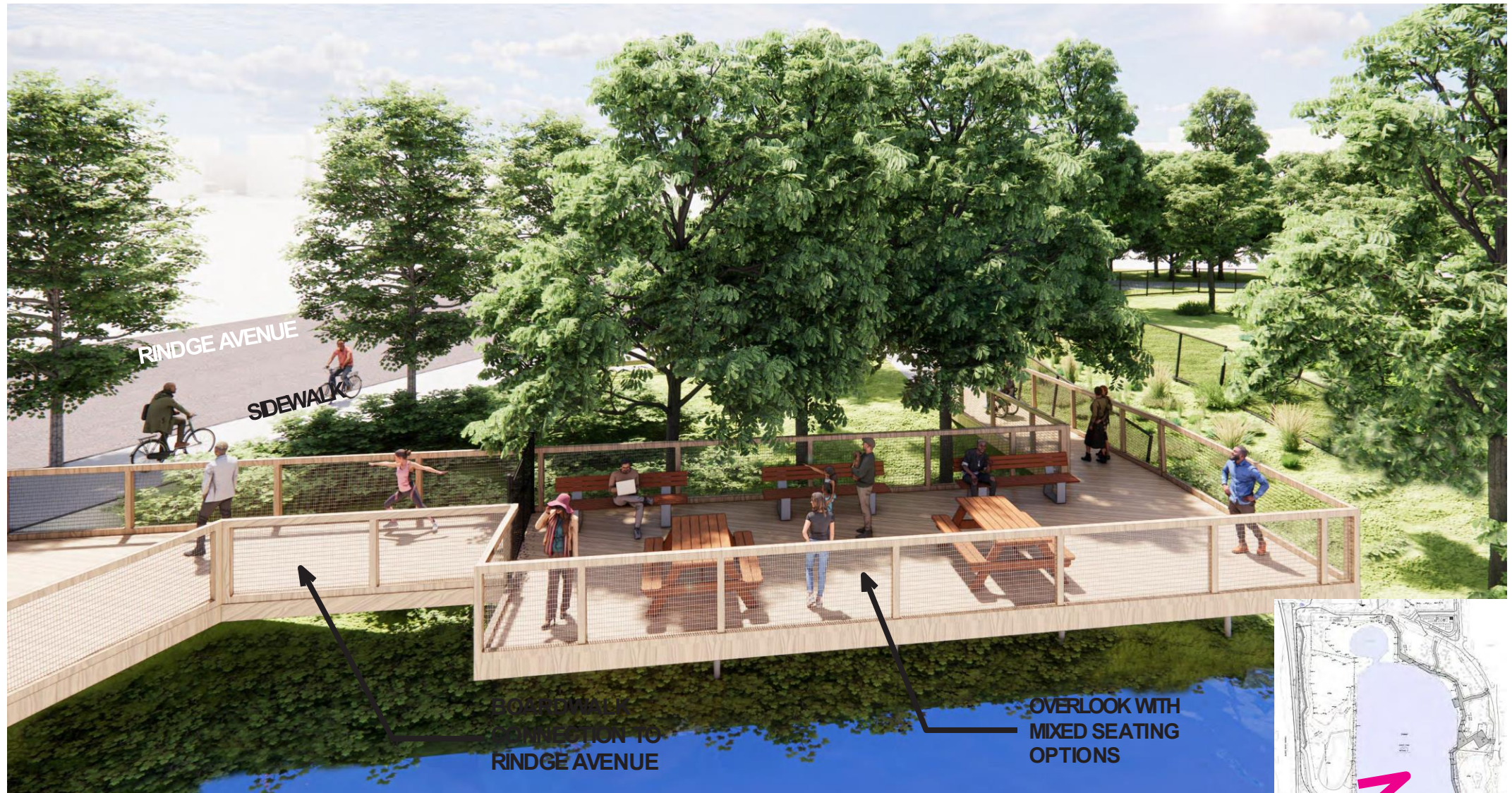
# CIRCULATION & BIKE PARKING cont.



NOTE: ALL BIKE RACKS ARE SPACED 4'-0" O.C. WITH 3'-0" CONCRETE AT EACH END OF CONCRETE PAD



# COMMUNITY GATHERING SPACE AT WEST END OF RINDGE AVENUE <sup>8</sup><sub>7</sub>





### Added floating wetland

### Added ADA Access ramp

- **33'-6" Feet of new public access & vegetation from Rindge Avenue curblin towards Jerry's Pond**
- **300 Feet of universally accessible boardwalk (10 feet wide) paralleling Rindge Avenue**
- **Boardwalk is set low with vegetated buffer to provide separation from Rindge Avenue**





# BOARDWALK & OVERLOOK ALONG RINDGE AVENUE





# BOARDWALK LOOKING TOWARDS RINDGE AVENUE ENTRY<sup>11</sup>





# RINDGE AVENUE ENTRY (SOUTHEAST CORNER)



10-FOOT WIDE SIDEWALK  
+ 2' UTILITY CORRIDOR

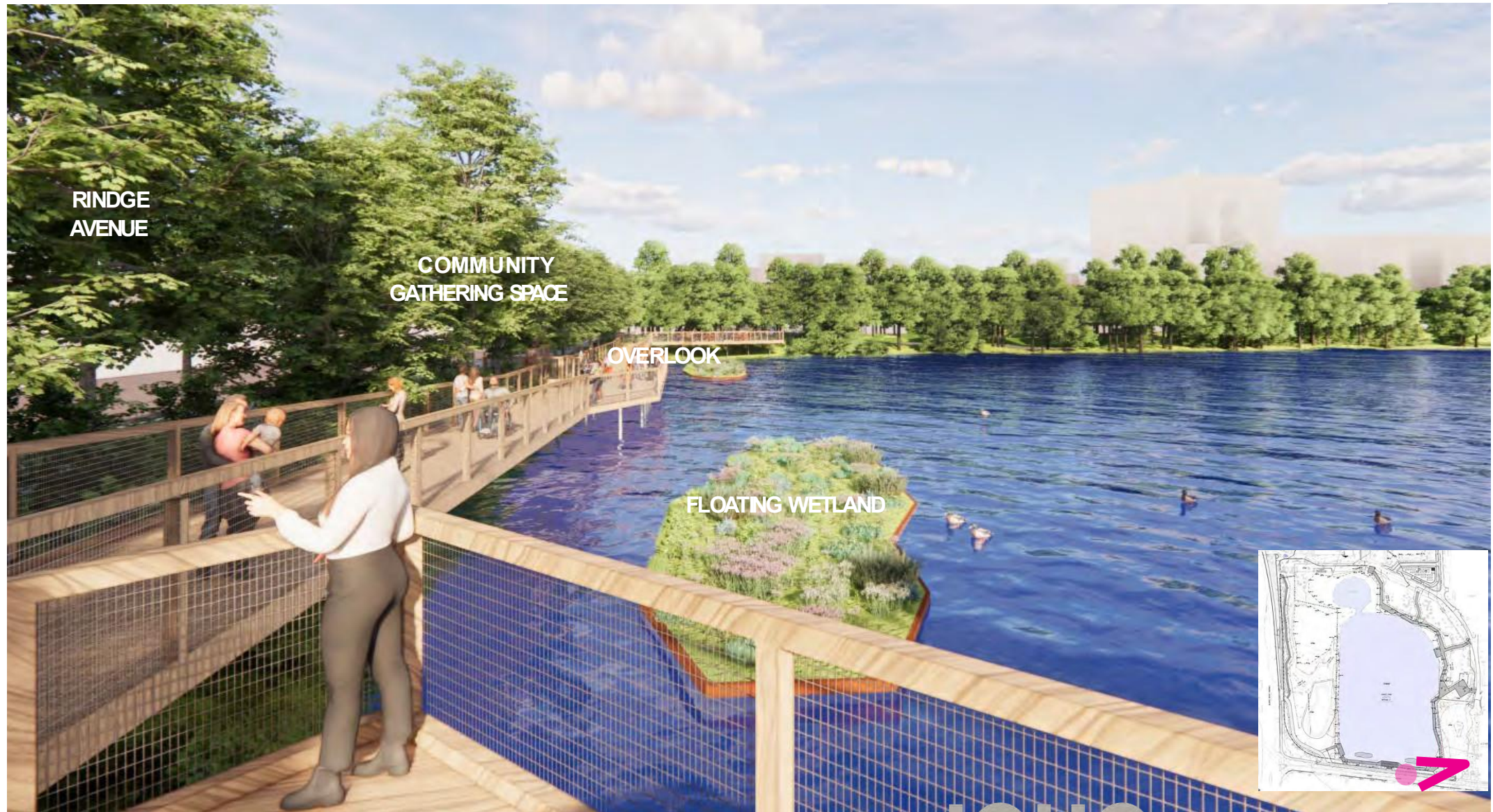
RINDGE AVENUE  
GATEWAY





# BOARDWALK & FLOATING ISLAND FROM RINDGE AVENUE ENTRY

13  
12



IQHQ

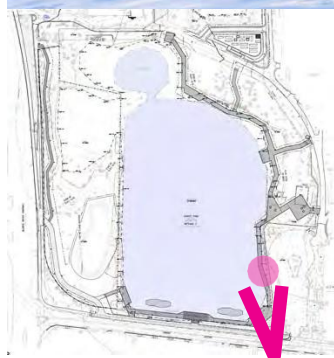
kzla



# BOARDWALK ALONG EAST SIDE OF POND ON THE WAY TO JERRY'S DECK <sup>14</sup>



UNIVERSALLY ACCESSIBLE  
10-FOOT WIDE  
BOARDWALK



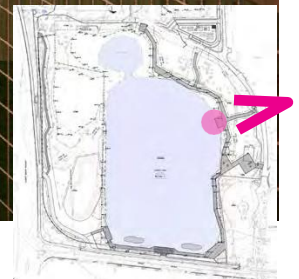


# JERRY'S DECK ENTRANCE





# JERRY'S DECK & ECO-PAVILION



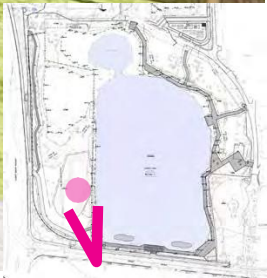


# COMPENSATORY FLOOD STORAGE FROM THE SOUTHEAST CORNER 17



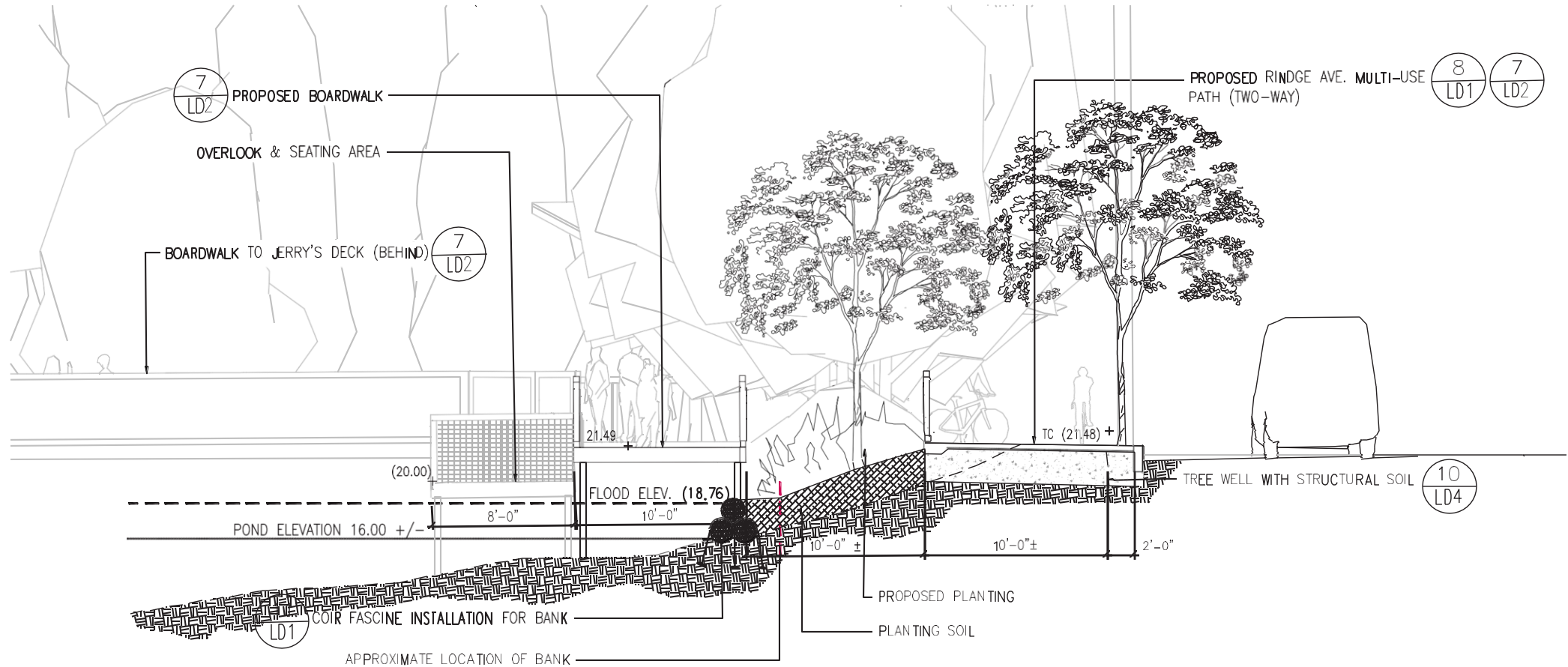
COMPENSATORY FLOOD  
STORAGE

ACCESS TO SOUTHWEST  
OVERLOOK &  
GATHERING SPACE



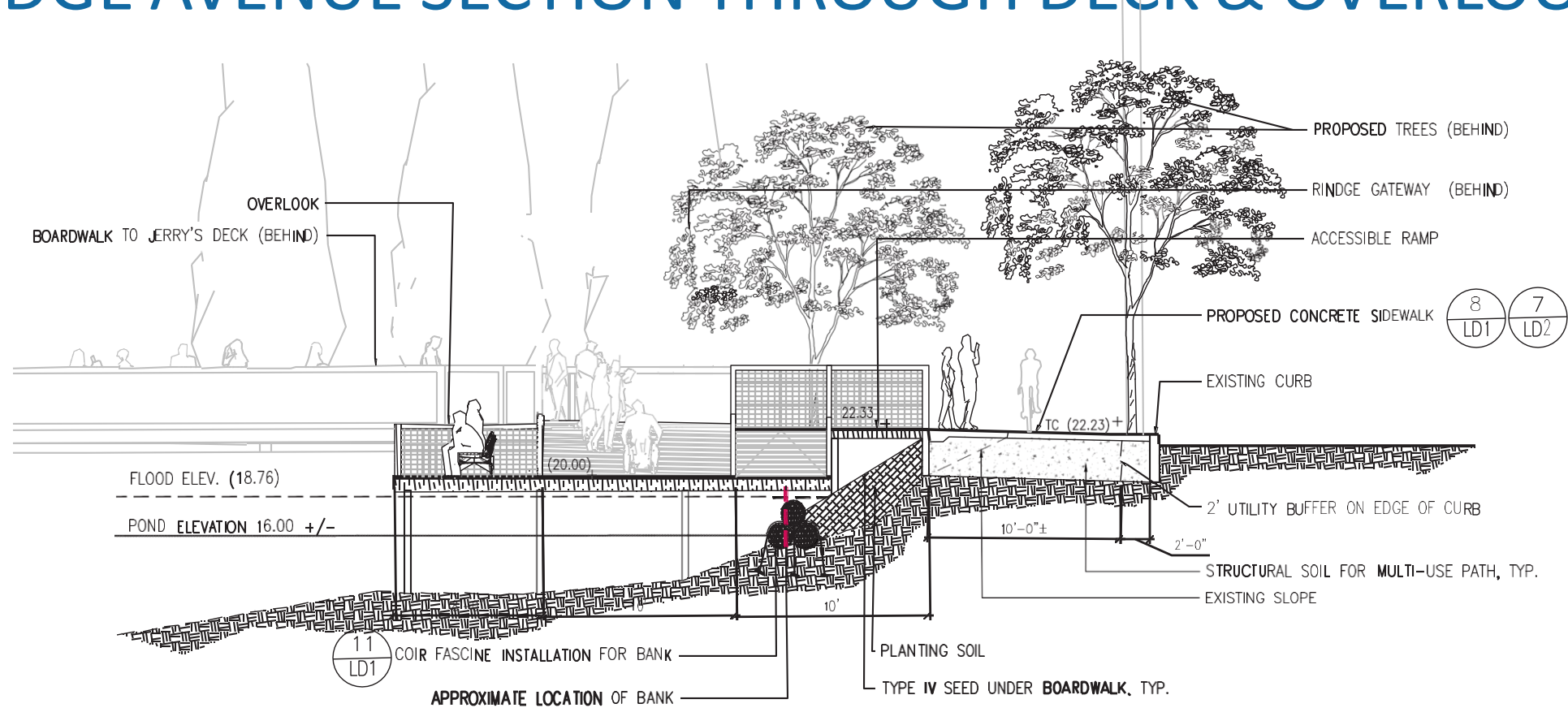


# RINDGE AVENUE SECTION THROUGH BANK & DECK<sup>18</sup>



01 A-AA' SECTION

# RINDGE AVENUE SECTION THROUGH DECK & OVERLOOK



02 B-BB' SECTION



## Previous presentations to the Joint Meeting

The Committees have received presentations from IQHQ a couple of times since 2021:

- June 2021
- November 2023

Looking forward to updates from IQHQ about their proposals for Jerry's Pond Improvements



# Zoning 101

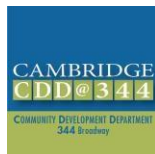
Evan Spetrini, Community Development Department

# Zoning 101:

## A Primer on the Cambridge Zoning Ordinance

Presentation to the Cambridge Transportation Committees

April 24, 2025





# Meeting Outline



# Meeting Topic Outline

**Zoning Basics**

**Development Project Review**

**Planning Board Process**



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# Zoning Basics



# What is Zoning?

- Zoning is the City's rulebook regulating the use of land
- Rules are intended to advance the community's goals while allowing owners to use their private property in a reasonable way
- Zoning sets the rules, but property owners ultimately decide what to do with their land



# What is Zoning? Cont.

## Zoning regulates...

- How land can be used (residential, commercial, etc.)
- Building size and shape
- Where buildings are located on a lot
- Other site or building characteristics (open space, parking, etc.)

## Zoning does NOT regulate...

- Who can own land
- How businesses operate
- How buildings are constructed and what materials they use
- Matters subject to other state or federal regulation (e.g., building codes, licensing, taxation)

# Two Parts to Zoning

Cambridge, Massachusetts

Search or jump to

NOTIFICATIONS SIGN IN HELP Select Language

Cambridge, Massachusetts - Zoning Ordinance / ZONING ORDINANCE CITY OF CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

SHOW CHANGES MORE

VERSION: OCT 22, 2021 (CURRENT)

ZONING ORDINANCE CITY OF CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

- ARTICLE 1.000 - PREAMBLE
- ARTICLE 2.000 - DEFINITIONS **modified**
- ARTICLE 3.000 - ZONING DISTRICTS
- ARTICLE 4.000 - USE REGULATIONS
- ARTICLE 5.000 - DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS
- ARTICLE 6.000 - OFF STREET PARKING AND LOADING REQUIREMENTS AND NIGHTTIME CURFEW ON LARGE COMMERCIAL THROUGH TRUCKS
- ARTICLE 7.000 - SIGNS AND ILLUMINATION
- ARTICLE 8.000 - NONCONFORMITY
- ARTICLE 9.000 - PROCEDURES AND ADMINISTRATION
- ARTICLE 10.000 - APPEALS, VARIANCES, AND SPECIAL PERMITS
- ARTICLE 11.000 - SPECIAL REGULATIONS
- ARTICLE 12.000 - PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT
- ARTICLE 13.000 - PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT DISTRICTS

ZONING ORDINANCE CITY OF CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

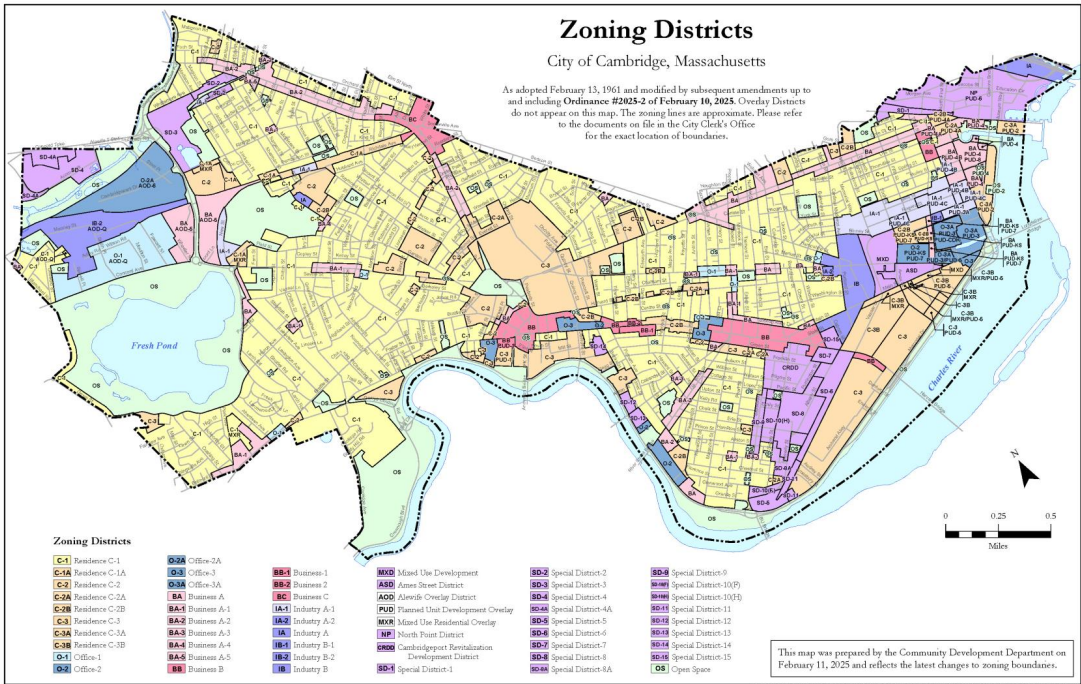
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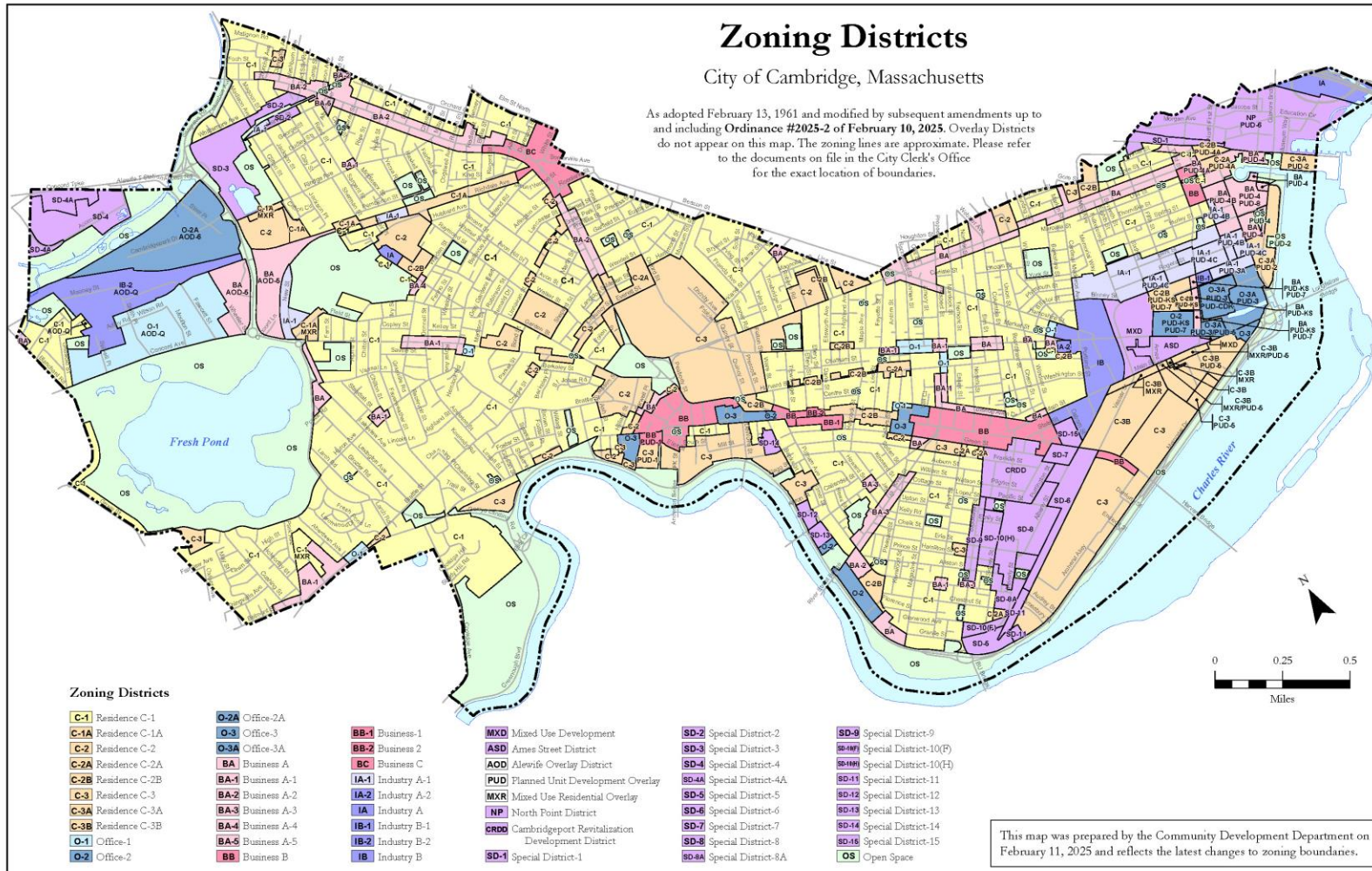
ZONING ORDINANCE CITY OF CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

## Zoning Ordinance



## Zoning Map

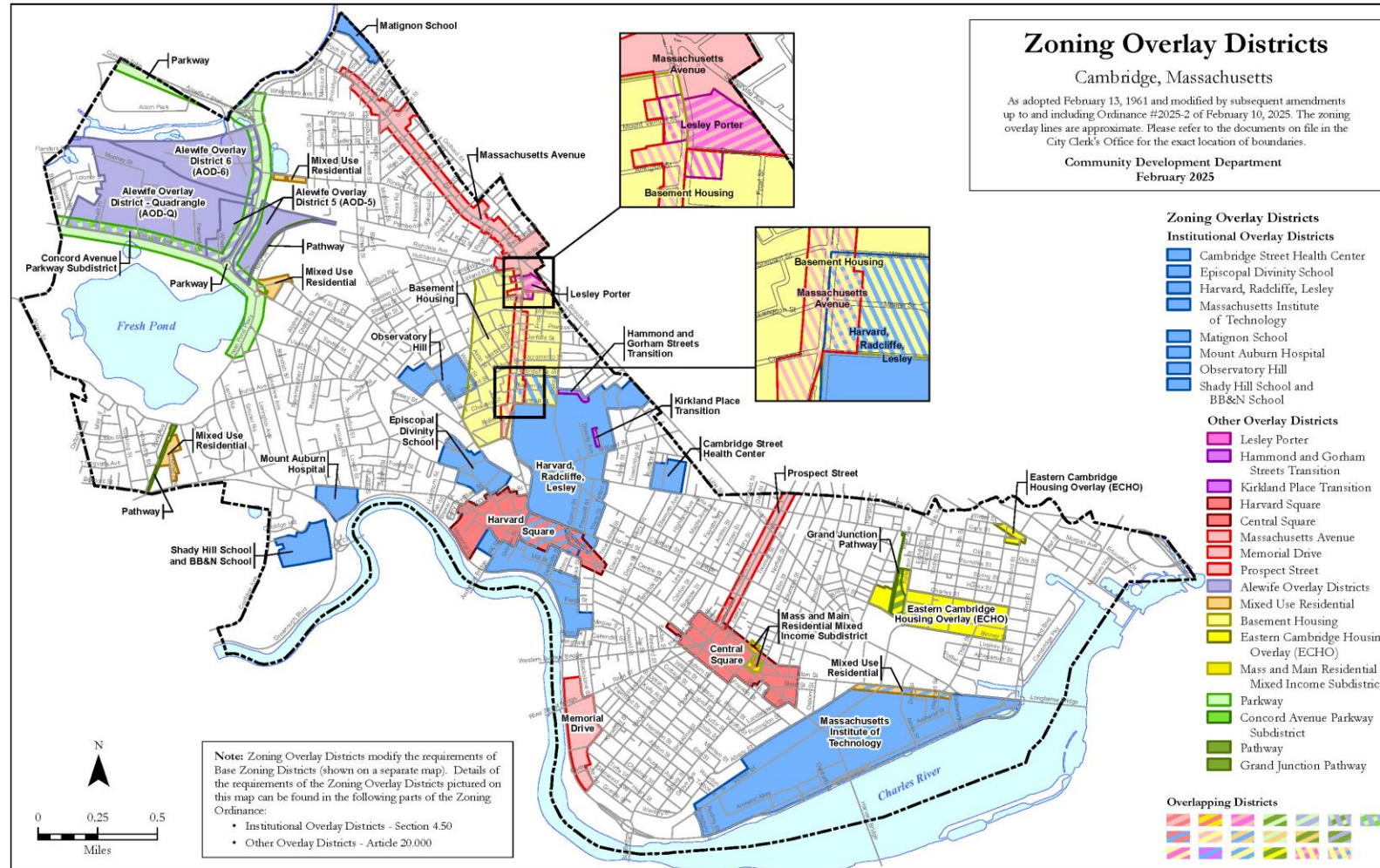
# Base Zoning Districts



- Every part of the city is in a district
- Districts defined by their land use character –use, scale, intensity
- Range from more restrictive to more permissive
- Rules are uniform across a district



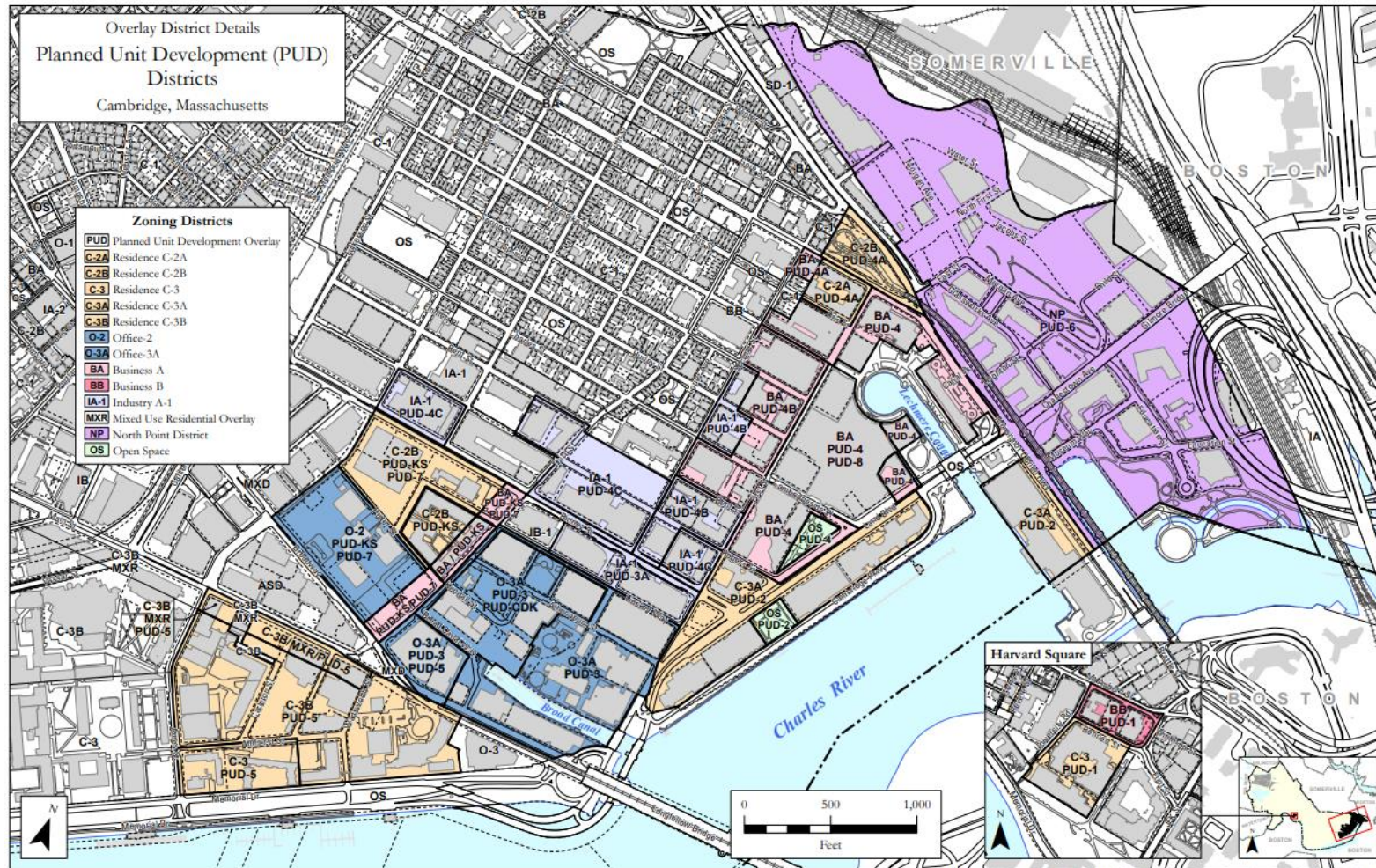
# Overlay Zoning Districts



- Modify base zoning in a *specific area*
- New boundaries established for a particular use or purpose (e.g., institutional districts)



# Planned Unit Development (PUD) Districts



- Separate from base zoning and overlay zoning
- New boundaries established for the district
- Typically used for large properties with multiple buildings

# Allowed Uses

## Section 4.30, Table of Use Regulations

		Open Space	Res C-1, C-1A, 2, 2A, 2B, 3, 3A, 3B	Off 1, 2A, 2, 3, 3A	Bus A-1, A-2, A-3 <sup>1</sup> , A-5	Bus A, A-4	Bus B, B-1, B-2	Bus C	Ind A-1, A-2	Ind A	Ind B-1, B-2	Ind B
<b>4.31</b>	<b>Residences</b>											
	a. Dwelling, single-family	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	b. Dwelling, two-family	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	c. [Deleted]											
	d. Townhouse development or semi-detached dwelling	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	<u>Yes</u>	Yes	Yes
	e. Elderly oriented congregate housing	<u>No</u>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	f. [Deleted]											
	g. Dwelling, multifamily	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	h. [Deleted]											
	i. Lodging House	No	Yes <sup>7</sup>	Yes <sup>6</sup>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	SP	<u>PB</u>	No	SP
	j. Trailer Park or mobile home park	No	No	No	SP	<u>SP</u>	No	No	No	No	No	No

“Yes” = allowed as-of-right

“SP” = special permit (BZA)

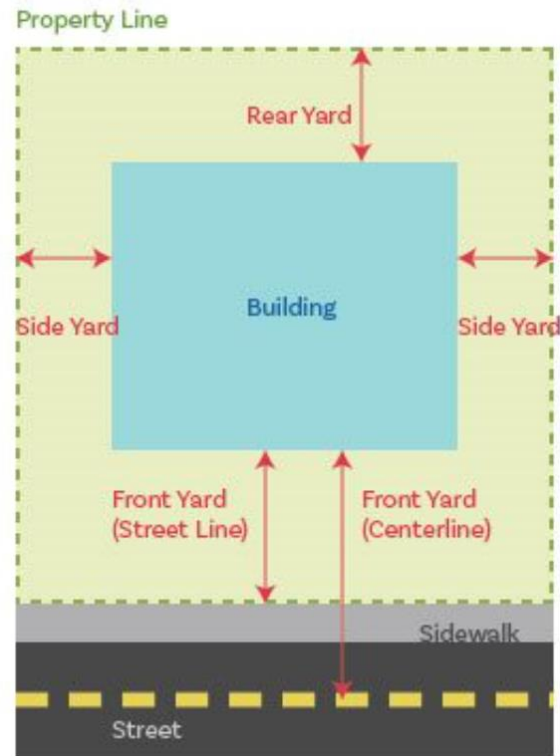
“No” = prohibited use

“PB” = Planning Board special permit

***Be sure to check any footnotes (Section 4.40) for details!***

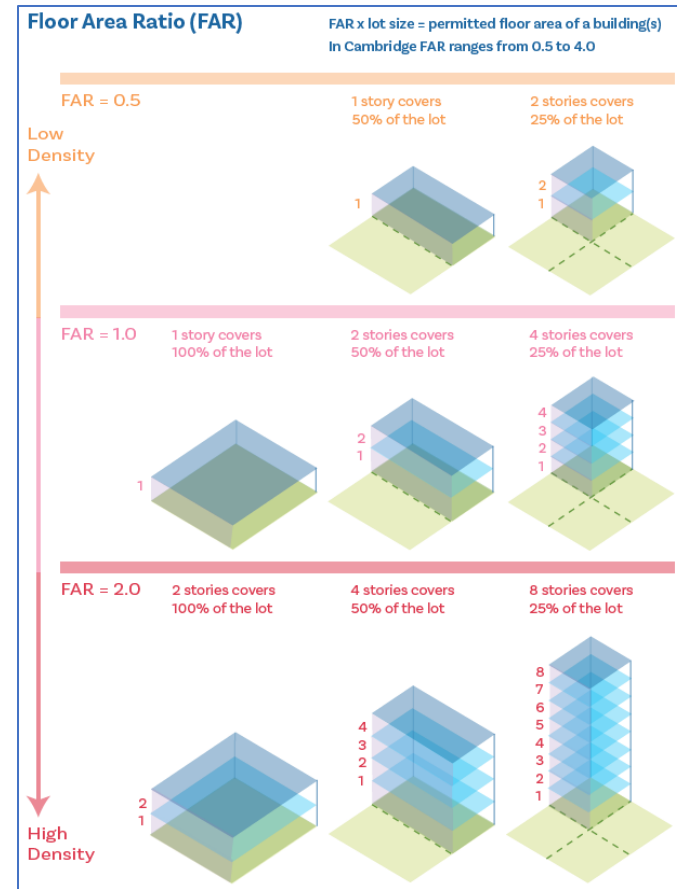


# Development Controls



## Development Standards

e.g., open space, yards ("setbacks"), parking



## Use Type and Intensity

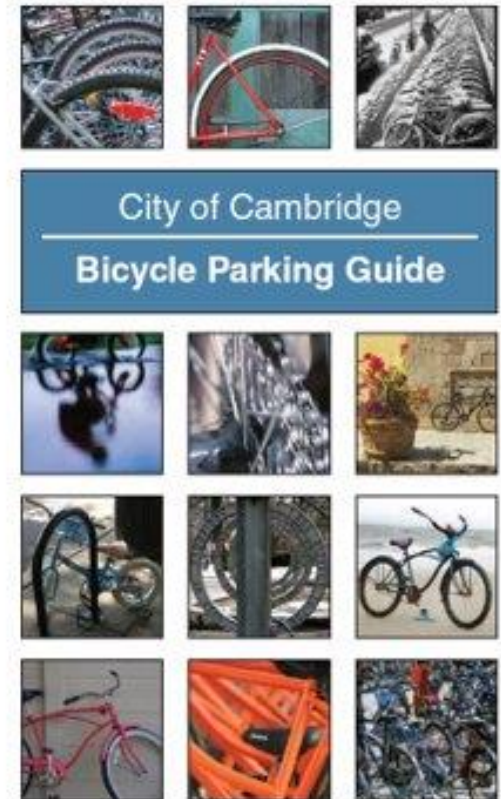
e.g., height, floor area, housing unit density

# Off-street Parking and Bicycle Parking

Cambridge has no minimum parking requirements throughout the city

Section 6.100 has minimum requirements for:

- Number of short-term bicycle parking spaces
- Number of long-term bicycle parking spaces
- Bicycle parking design
- Bicycle parking location
- Bicycle parking access





# Development Project Review



# As-Of-Right

If a development complies with all the zoning standards, and does not need a special permit, then it is considered to be "as-of-right."

In this case, a developer can simply apply for a building permit from the Inspectional Services Department (ISD) without needing additional approvals.





# Discretionary Approvals

Special Permit	Variance
<b>Allowed</b> by Zoning Ordinance	<b>Not allowed</b> by Zoning Ordinance
Requires public hearing, notification, decision	Requires public hearing, notification, decision
Subject to legal appeal	Subject to legal appeal
Normally granted if zoning requirements are met, except if not found to be in the public interest due to unique circumstances of the site	Normally not granted unless there is a hardship that justifies special consideration due to unique circumstances of the site



# Zoning Review Boards

## Planning Board

- Grants specific special permits ("PB").
- Can also grant special permits (but not variances) otherwise in BZA purview ("SP").
- Mostly responsible for “Bonus” and “Review” types of special permits (bicycle parking modification is an exception).

## Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA)

- Grants specific special permits ("SP").
- Grants all variances.
- Mostly responsible for “Relief” types of special permits.



# Zoning Advisory Committees

## Central Square Advisory Committee (CSAC)

- Reviews and comments on land use & development proposals in the Central Square Overlay District per the Cambridge Zoning Ordinance (Section 20.300)
- Focuses on special permit and variance applications

## Harvard Square Advisory Committee (HSAC)

- Reviews and comments on land use & development proposals in the Harvard Square Overlay District per the Cambridge Zoning Ordinance (Section 20.50).
- Focuses on special permit and variance applications

# General Types of Special Permits

Type	Purpose	Approved if...	Examples
<b>"Bonus"</b>	Allow additional development (e.g., density, height, use) above standard	Meets specific planning objectives and/or provides public benefits	PUD, AOD zoning
<b>"Review"</b>	Assess impacts of development exceeding a certain threshold	Meets general planning objectives and mitigates impacts (e.g., transportation, urban design, environment)	Project Review Special Permit (19.20)
<b>"Relief"</b>	Waive or modify specific standards	Site-specific factors are a constraint and impacts are mitigated	Reducing certain setback requirements





# Project Review Special Permit (19.20)

In most cases, non-residential development above 50,000 square feet or residential development above 75,000 sf will require a special permit from the Planning Board.

Two components of review: transportation impacts and urban design

- "Transportation" includes pedestrian, bicycle, and transit travel
- Transportation impacts require mitigation based on TIS
- Urban design review based on Section 19.30 Citywide Urban Design Objectives
- Pedestrian and bicycle friendly design is one of the major objectives

# Are TIS and PTDM in Zoning?



## Transportation Impact Study (TIS)

- TIS is required for projects above certain size threshold (e.g., gross floor area, parking spaces).
- Required by zoning but reviewed and certified by the Department of Transportation.
- Not just car traffic! Also studies pedestrian, bicycle, and transit travel.



## Parking and Transportation Demand Management (PTDM)

- PTDM is a separate municipal ordinance.
- However, TDM measures can be included as mitigation for impacts identified in the TIS.
- Special Permits cannot be granted before a required PTDM plan is approved.



# Citywide Urban Design Objectives

Provides guidance to property owners, staff, and public on form and character of development

Encourages a holistic approach to review – projects are not required to meet all objectives

Finding: on balance the objectives of the City are being served by the proposed development



# Urban Design Objectives

**Section 19.32:** "Development should be pedestrian and bicycle-friendly, with a positive relationship to its surroundings" such as:

- Active uses on the ground level
- No parking facing public streets or walkways
- Ground floors with 25-50% transparency
- Building entry siting (e.g., close to crosswalks, pedestrian paths, transit stops)
- Safe and convenient access for pedestrians and bicyclists





# Advisory Reviews

## Planning Board Advisory Consultation

- **Reviewer:** Planning Board
- **Review Description:** Residential development between 50,000-75,000 square feet if a special permit is not required and Affordable Housing Overlay (AHO) Projects. Required to hold community outreach meetings before Planning Board review.
- **Review Criteria:** Area plans and guidelines, Citywide Urban Design Objectives (19.30), AHO design guidelines

## Public Advisory Consultation

- **Reviewer:** Staff and public
- **Review Description:** Proposals in Areas of Special Planning Concern, if a special permit is not already required.
- **Review Criteria:** Area plans and guidelines, Citywide Urban Design Objectives (19.30)



# Planning Board Process



# Pre-Application Process

## Community Engagement

- Outreach to abutters, neighbors, community groups
- At least one community meeting
- Other outreach tools encouraged

## Consultation with City Staff

- Community Development
- Transportation
- Public Works
- Other Departments





# Planning Board Review

## Public Hearing

- Applicant presents their project to the Planning Board for review
- Public may attend and/or comment
  - Written comments submitted by 5 p.m. the day before the hearing
  - Comment in real-time during the hearing (currently by computer/phone)
- Final application materials are posted on City's special permits web page

## Planning Board Action

- Planning Board votes to approve or deny a special permit
- Conditions are typically attached to a special permit, must be satisfied by building permit and/or certificate of occupancy approval



# Committees' Participation

- Review of development projects is not mandatory so Committees can choose how/when to participate
- Typically review the largest, most significant projects, including PUDs and larger special permit projects
- Projects may be reviewed separately or jointly by the three transportation committees
- Provide feedback based on the City's broad planning objectives (e.g., Pedestrian Plan, Bicycle Plan)
- Provide input directly to developer (by inviting to meetings), and/or directly to the Planning Board (written comment, public hearings)
- Planning Board values thoughtful input on the factors they can influence (e.g., urban design, impact mitigation)



# Questions?





**Thank You!**



# Useful Planning Board Links

Planning Board special permit applications:  
<https://www.cambridgema.gov/specialpermits>.

Interactive map of special permits:  
<https://www.cambridgema.gov/CDD/zoninganddevelopment/developmentreview/specialpermits/specialpermitsmap>.

Planning Board meetings:  
<https://www.cambridgema.gov/CDD/zoninganddevelopment/planningboard/planningboardmeetings>.

The [Pre-Application Community Meetings webpage](#) shows projects that have not submitted a final special permit application yet.



## Other Useful Links

Board of Zoning Appeal (BZA) special permits and variances: <https://www.cambridgema.gov/inspection/Zoning>.

Affordable Housing Overlay (AHO) projects: <https://www.cambridgema.gov/CDD/housing/housingdevelopment/aho.aspx>.

Zoning Ordinance in Municode:  
[https://library.municode.com/ma/cambridge/codes/zoning\\_ordinance](https://library.municode.com/ma/cambridge/codes/zoning_ordinance).

General information about zoning:  
<https://www.cambridgema.gov/CDD/zoninganddevelopment>.



# Contact Information

**Jeff Roberts, Director of Zoning and Development**

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**Evan Spetrini, Senior Manager for Zoning and Development**

[espetrini@cambridgema.gov](mailto:espetrini@cambridgema.gov)





**Public Comment**

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**Thank You**