



City of Cambridge

Executive Department

YI-AN HUANG
City Manager

CMA 2025 #234
IN CITY COUNCIL
September 15, 2025

To the Honorable, the City Council:

Please find attached from Melissa Peters, Assistant City Manager for Community Development, regarding the transmission of the Cambridge Street Zoning Petition.

Yi-An Huang
City Manager





To: Yi-An Huang, City Manager

From: Melissa Peters, Assistant City Manager for Community Development

Date: September 11, 2025

Re: **Cambridge Street and Massachusetts Avenue Zoning Petitions**

We are pleased to transmit the attached Cambridge Street and Massachusetts Avenue Zoning Petitions for the Council's consideration. These zoning petitions are based on the recommendations of the Our Cambridge Street Study and the Mass Ave Planning Study, which were developed with extensive community input and discussed previously with the Planning Board and City Council. CDD staff have worked with the Law Department, Inspectional Services Department, the Department of Transportation, and others to transform the initial zoning concepts into the attached zoning text.

To move these proposals to the public hearing phase that must occur before the Council can vote on possible ordination, we recommend that the City Council take separate votes to adopt each of the two proposed rezoning amendments as zoning petitions and refer each of them to the Planning Board and Ordinance Committee for hearing and report. They can be considered as separate zoning petitions but follow the same public hearing schedule.

Background

Cambridge Street and Mass Ave were identified in [Envision Cambridge](#) as major mixed use corridors, which have the potential to help the city achieve its planning goals related to small businesses, housing, mobility, and public space. As significant mixed-use main streets, Cambridge Street and Mass Ave are areas where sustainable growth could provide opportunities for additional housing; support local retail and service providers; enhance opportunities for walking and bicycling; and improve the public realm, among other community interests and benefits.

From October 2021 to January 2023, Community Development Department (CDD) staff conducted [Our Cambridge Street](#), a planning study for the communities along Cambridge Street between Inman Square and Lechmere Station. CDD staff then conducted the [Mass Ave Planning Study](#), which was developed over the course of 18 months from November 2023 to May 2025, and focused on the area between Cambridge Common and the Arlington border.

In both plans, CDD worked with the community to craft a shared vision for each corridor based on an inclusive and transparent engagement process and developed goals and strategies to achieve

those visions. These two zoning petitions are based on the recommendations established in each planning study, many of which are shared across the two corridors. Those goals include:

- More housing development through increased height and density;
- Encouraging active ground floor uses that contribute to a vibrant streetscape; and
- Enhancing the public realm through good building and site design.

On June 17, 2025, CDD staff presented our preliminary zoning concept to members of the City Council’s Housing and Neighborhood and Long Term Planning Committees. Members of both Committees expressed support for the initial concept and suggested a few changes that we have incorporated into these zoning petitions.

Major Updates to Zoning Proposals

On Cambridge Street, residential heights are generally allowed up to 8 stories for projects with ground story active uses. As requested by City Council members, we have also identified three areas along the corridor that can accommodate additional height. Parts of Inman Square will have a height limit of 10 stories, the Webster Street/Windsor Street area is increased to 12 stories, and Lechmere will have a residential height limit of 15 stories.

Residential heights throughout Mass Ave are allowed up to 12 stories with active ground floor uses. This is an increase from 11 stories as presented to the Neighborhood and Long Term Planning Committee. Up to 18 stories of residential development is allowed in Porter Square through a Planned Unit Development (PUD) process, which will include public open space and a minimum amount of retail uses to ensure Porter Square remains a retail destination.

We want to thank all members of the public who participated in the Our Cambridge Street and Mass Ave Planning Studies, the MAPS Working Group, and other critical stakeholders who made this vision come to life. We look forward to continuing the conversation with the public, the Planning Board, and the City Council through the hearing process.

Petition: To amend the Zoning Map and Articles 3.000, 17.000, and 19.000 of the Cambridge Zoning Ordinance as follows with the intent of establishing four new zoning districts for the Cambridge Street corridor.

Amendments to the Zoning Map.

See attached Zoning Map and descriptive text.

Amendments to Article 3.000.

Amend Section 3.11 to read as follows:

3.11 For the purpose of this Ordinance, the City of Cambridge is hereby divided into fifty-~~four~~ **four** classes of districts listed below in order of decreasing restrictiveness as follows:

1.	Open Space District	Public parks and recreation facilities and other public facilities
2.	Residence C-1 District	Multifamily dwellings
3.	Residence C-1A District	Multifamily dwellings
4.	Residence C-2 District	Multifamily dwellings
5.	Residence C-2B District	Multifamily dwellings
6.	Residence C-2A District	Multifamily dwellings
7.	Residence C-3A District	Multifamily dwellings and limited office
8.	Residence C-3 District	Multifamily dwellings
9.	Residence C-3B District	Multifamily dwellings
10.	Office 1 District	Business and professional office and multifamily dwellings (Apartment house, hotel, dormitory)
11.	Office 2A District	Business, research and professional offices, limited research oriented manufacturing
12.	Office 2 District	Business, research and professional offices, limited research oriented manufacturing
13.	Office 3A District	Business and professional offices and multifamily dwellings
14.	Office 3 District	Business and professional offices and multifamily dwellings
15.	Business A-3 District	Neighborhood business
16.	Business A-1 District	Local business
17.	Business A-2 District	Local business
18.	Business A District	Local and drive in retail business offices and multifamily dwellings
19.	Business A-4 District	Local business
20.	Business A-5 District	Local business and multifamily dwellings
21.	Business C District	General business, professional offices, multifamily dwellings.
22.	Business B-1 District	General business, business and professional offices, and multifamily dwellings
23.	Business B-2 District	General business, business and professional offices and multifamily dwellings
24.	Business B District	General business
25.	Industry B-2 District	Office, warehouse and light manufacturing
26.	Industry A-1 District	Limited impact business and industry

27.	Industry B-1 District	Heavy manufacturing, warehouses, and offices
28.	Industry A-2 District	Limited impact business and industry
29.	Industry A District	Warehouse, storage and light manufacturing
30.	Special Business, Office and Industrial District 1	Various Uses governed by the requirements of Article 17.000
31.	Special Business, Office and Industrial District 2	Various Uses governed by the requirements of Article 17.000
32.	Special Business, Office and Industrial District 3	Various Uses governed by the requirements of Article 17.000
33.	Special Business, Office and Industrial District 4 and 4A	Various Uses governed by the requirements of Article 17.000
34.	Special Business, Office and Industrial District 5	Various Uses governed by the requirements of Article 17.000
35.	Special Business, Office and Industrial District 6	Various Uses governed by the requirements of Article 17.000
36.	Special Business, Office and Industrial District 7	Various Uses governed by the requirements of Article 17.000
37.	Special Business, Office and Industrial District 8	Various Uses governed by the requirements of Article 17.000
38.	Special Business, Office and Industrial District 8A	Various Uses governed by the requirements of Article 17.000
39.	Special Business, Office and Industrial District 9	Various Uses governed by the requirements of Article 17.000
40.	Special Business, Office and Industrial District 10(F)	Various Uses governed by the requirements of Article 17.000
41.	Special Business, Office and Industrial District 10(H)	Various Uses governed by the requirements of Article 17.000
42.	Special Business, Office and Industrial District 11	Various Uses governed by the requirements of Article 17.000
43.	Special Business, Office and Industrial District 12	Various Uses governed by the requirements of Article 17.000
44.	Special Business, Office and Industrial District 13	Various Uses governed by the requirements of Article 17.000
45.	Special Business, Office and Industrial District 14	Various Uses governed by the requirements of Article 17.000
46.	Special Business, Office and Industrial District 15	Various Uses governed by the requirements of Article 17.000
47.	Cambridge Street-8	Various Uses governed by the requirements of Article 17.000
48.	Cambridge Street-10	Various Uses governed by the requirements of Article 17.000
49.	Cambridge Street-12	Various Uses governed by the requirements of Article 17.000
50.	Cambridge Street-15	Various Uses governed by the requirements of Article 17.000
51 47.	Mixed Use Development (MXD) District: Kendall Center	Various uses governed by the requirements of Article 14.000
52 48.	Cambridgeport Revitalization Development District	Various uses governed by the requirements of Article 15.000
53 49.	North Point Residence, Office and Business District	Various uses governed by the requirements of Article 16.000
54 50	Industry B District	Heavy Industry

Amendments to Article 17.000.

Create a new Section 17.700 to read as follows:

17.700 Cambridge Street Districts

17.701 Scope. This Section 17.700 regulates development within the Cambridge Street Districts (CAM-8, CAM-10, CAM-12, and CAM-15) as shown on the Zoning Map of the City of Cambridge, as amended. The regulations of this Section shall apply equally to all Cambridge Street Districts except where otherwise specified.

17.702 Purpose. The Cambridge Street Districts are meant to encourage patterns of development consistent with the vision of the *Our Cambridge Street Planning Study* (2023). This Section establishes the following goals for the Cambridge Street corridor:

- (a) Maintain established patterns of land use while allowing new infill development that complements existing buildings;
- (b) Encourage residential and mixed-use development while incentivizing additional density for development that includes active ground floor retail uses;
- (c) Promote a dynamic urban streetscape and an accessible public realm through building and site design, and;
- (d) Allow the production of a diverse mix of economically viable ground floor retail uses.

17.703 Use Regulations.

17.703.1 Permitted Uses. The following uses, as they are listed in Article 4.000 and otherwise defined in this Zoning Ordinance, shall be permitted as-of-right:

- (a) Residential Uses: All uses in Section 4.31.a through 4.31.i.
- (b) Transient accommodations: All uses in Section 4.31.1.
- (c) Radio and television studio, Section 4.32.f.
- (d) Transportation Uses: Bus or railroad passenger station, Section 4.32.a, all uses in Section 4.32.k through 4.32.n.
- (e) Institutional Uses: All uses in Section 4.33 except Municipal service facility (Section 4.33.f.4) and Institutional use not listed in any other category (Section 4.33.h.4).
- (f) Office and Laboratory Uses: All uses in Section 4.34.
- (g) Retail or Consumer Service Establishments: All uses in Section 4.35 except Animal Services Facility (4.35.l) and Retail or Consumer Service Establishment not otherwise defined. A Craft Retail and Production Shop (4.35.b.) shall be permitted as-of-right if it occupies no more than 2,500 square feet of Gross Floor Area, including storage areas, and does not involve the use of equipment that produces dust, fumes, odors, smoke, vapors, noise, vibration, flashing, light trespass, or glare outside of the premises.

- (h) Outdoor Retail or Consumer Service Establishments: Open-Lot Retail Sales Establishment (Section 4.36.a) and Temporary Outdoor Retail or Consumer Service Use (Section 4.36.j).
- (i) Cannabis Delivery Operator Establishment (Section 4.37.o).

17.703.2 Special Permit Uses. The following additional uses, as they are listed in Article 4.000 and otherwise defined in this Zoning Ordinance, shall only be permitted upon the issuance of a special permit by the Planning Board:

- (a) Trailer Park or mobile home park, Section 4.31.j.
- (b) Transportation Uses: Automobile parking lot or parking garage for private passenger cars, Section 4.32.b – so long as not an accessory use, and no repairs, servicing, or sale of gasoline allowed, provided that the Building and Site Planning Standards of Section 17.705 below are met and that all other state and local laws applicable to parking facilities are met.
- (c) Utility Uses: All uses in Section 4.32.g.1 through 4.32.g.2.
- (d) Wind turbine Installation, Section 4.32.j.
- (e) Institutional Uses: Municipal service facility, Section 4.33.f.4, and Institutional use not listed in any other category, Section 4.33.h.4.
- (f) Retail or Consumer Service Establishments (Section 4.35), not otherwise permitted.
- (g) Outdoor Entertainment and Recreation Facility, Section 4.36.d.
- (h) Any other use permitted as-of-right or by special permit in a Business B zoning district, if the Planning Board finds that the use is compatible with permitted uses and supports the purpose of the Cambridge Street Districts.

17.703.3 Ground Story Active Uses. The following uses, as they are listed in Article 4.000 and otherwise defined in this Zoning Ordinance, shall be considered Active Uses for the purposes of this Section 17.700.

- (a) Institutional Uses: All uses in Section 4.33.
- (b) Office Uses: All uses in Sections 4.34.a through 4.34.c.
- (c) Retail or Consumer Service Establishments: All uses in Section 4.35.
- (d) Radio and television studio, Section 4.32.f.
- (e) Other uses upon the issuance of a special permit by the Planning Board if the Planning Board finds that the use serves the purpose of providing services to the general public and promoting pedestrian activity along Cambridge Street, with necessary conditions to ensure those objectives are met.

17.704 Development Standards.

17.704.1 FAR Limitations. The maximum FAR devoted to non-residential uses shall be 1.0. There shall be no maximum FAR for residential uses. FAR limits shall be applied in accordance with Section 5.25.4.

(a) **Ground Story GFA Exemption.** Portions of the Ground Story of a building that are devoted to one or more of the following active non-residential uses, as they are listed in Article 4.000 and otherwise defined in this Zoning Ordinance, shall be exempted from FAR limitations upon granting of a special permit by the Planning Board:

- (a) Social or recreation center, Section 4.33.a.4.
- (b) Community Center, Section 4.33.e.2.
- (c) Public park, playground, or public recreation building, Section 4.33.f.5.
- (d) Municipal Library, 4.33.f.6.
- (e) Private library, museum, or noncommercial gallery, Section 4.33.h.2.
- (f) All Retail or Consumer Service Establishments listed in Section 4.35.

17.704.2 Building Height. Building height in feet above grade and Stories Above Grade shall be limited by the Table of Height Limitations below. The provisions of Section 5.23 shall govern the application of height limits.

17.704.2.1 Additional Height for Ground Story Active Uses. As set forth in the Table of Height Limitations, greater height shall be permitted for portions of buildings containing Residential Uses if the Ground Story is occupied by one or more Active Uses, as defined in Section 17.703.3, comprising at least sixty percent (60%) of the interior portion of the Ground Story that is within 50 feet of a Primary Street.

17.704.3 Table of Height Limitations.

	CAM-8	CAM-10	CAM-12	CAM-15
Non-Residential Uses (Section 4.30 except 4.31 a-j. & 4.33.a)	35 feet and 3 stories above grade	35 feet and 3 stories above grade	35 feet and 3 stories above grade	35 feet and 3 stories above grade
Residential Uses (Section 4.31 a-j.) & Religious Purposes Uses (Section 4.33.a)	75 feet and 6 stories above grade	75 feet and 6 stories above grade	75 feet and 6 stories above grade	75 feet and 6 stories above grade
Residential Uses with Ground Story Active Uses (Section 17.703.3)	100 feet and 8 stories above grade	120 feet and 10 stories above grade	145 feet and 12 stories above grade	175 feet and 15 stories above grade

17.705 Building and Site Plan Standards.

17.705.1 General Provisions.

17.705.1.1 Applicability. The standards of this Section 17.705 shall apply to new construction,

including buildings and additions to buildings. Buildings in existence before the adoption of this Section do not need to be modified to meet the standards of this Section, but shall not be modified in a way that further violates the standards of this Section unless approved by special permit from the Planning Board.

17.705.1.2 Other Standards. The general development standards of Article 5.000 shall apply except as otherwise set forth in this Section 17.705. The applicable Sustainable Development standards in Article 22.000 shall be met. The standards of Section 19.50 shall generally not apply except as set forth in this Section.

17.705.1.3 Modifications. The Planning Board may approve modifications to the standards of this Section 17.705 by special permit upon finding that: (i) the criteria in Section 17.707.2 are met and (ii) such modifications respond to unique site-specific conditions that result in a design that is equally supportive of the purpose of the Cambridge Street Districts. Approved modifications shall be specifically enumerated in the special permit decision.

17.705.2 Site Plan Standards.

17.705.2.1 Street Types. For the purposes of this Section 17.700, there shall be Primary Streets and Secondary Streets as defined below:

- (a) Primary Streets shall include Cambridge Street, North First Street, Hampshire Street, Monsignor O'Brien Highway, and Prospect Street.
- (b) Secondary Streets shall include all streets not identified as Primary Streets.

17.705.2.2 Open Space. Lots shall be subject to a minimum ratio of total open space to lot area as set forth in the table below. The application of open space requirements shall be governed by Section 5.22. Some lots shall have a minimum requirement for Publicly Beneficial Open Space or Public Open Space as set forth in the table below, expressed as a minimum ratio of open space to lot area but included within the total open space requirement.

17.705.2.3 Front Yards. Minimum required front yard setback distances are set forth in the table below. Such setback distances shall be measured in feet from front lot lines (or street lines). Different standards may apply based on the street type from which the setback is measured.

17.705.2.4 Side and Rear Yards. Minimum required side and rear yard setback distances are set forth in the table below. Such setback distances shall be measured in feet from side or rear lot lines. Different standards may apply based on whether or not the portion of the lot line from which the setback is measured is located within 85 feet of a front lot line abutting a Primary Street, measured perpendicularly from the front lot line.

17.705.2.5 Upper Story Setbacks. Minimum setback distances are set forth in the table below that apply to portions of buildings above a specified height above grade. Such setback distances shall be measured in feet horizontally from either the front lot

line, varying by street type, or from a zoning district boundary adjoining a Residence district. Where development is impacted by the Flood Resilience Standards in Section 22.80, the heights at which upper story setbacks are required shall be adjusted according to the provisions of Section 5.23.2.

17.705.2.6 Yard Exceptions and Projections. In general, the yard provisions of Section 5.24 shall apply to yard setbacks but not to upper story setbacks. However, portions of buildings may project into a required front setback or upper story setback from a Primary Street, notwithstanding Paragraph 5.24.1(f), if the following limitations are met:

- (a) Projections shall not be allowed at or below the ground story.
- (b) Projections shall not extend more than four (4) feet into the required setback.
- (c) Projections shall not occur over more than fifty percent (50%) of the total area of the façade facing a Primary Street.
- (d) In a CAM-10, CAM-12, or CAM-15 district, the Planning Board may approve additional, limited projections into a yard setback or upper story setback upon granting a special permit if it is found to provide spatial definition of larger or broader streets, parks, or squares or to emphasize significant locations such as major street intersections, prominent bends in streets, and termina of major view corridors.

17.705.2.7 Upper Story Floorplates. Portions of buildings above a specified height shall have a maximum floorplate area in square feet as set forth in the table below. For the purpose of this Section, the floorplate above a specified height shall mean the Gross Floor Area of any contiguous story of the building located partially or completely above the specified height. A building may have multiple non-contiguous stories above the specified height so long as each contiguous story does not exceed the maximum floorplate area. Where development is impacted by the Flood Resilience Standards in Section 22.80, the heights at which floorplates are limited shall be adjusted according to the provisions of Section 5.23.2.

17.705.3 Table of Site Plan Standards.

	CAM-8	CAM-10	CAM-12	CAM-15
Minimum Open Space as a percentage of lot area				
Lots with no buildings more than 6 stories above grade	none	none	none	none
Lots with a building 7 or more stories above grade	15% total	15% total	15% total	15% total

	CAM-8	CAM-10	CAM-12	CAM-15
Lots with a building 9 or more stories above grade	N/A	15% total 5% public or publicly beneficial	15% total 10% public or publicly beneficial	15% total 10% public or publicly beneficial
Minimum Yard Setbacks in feet				
Front, Primary Streets	4'	4'	4'	4'
Front, Secondary Streets	2'	2'	2'	none
Side or Rear, within 85 feet of a Primary Street	none	none	none	none
Side or Rear, not within 85 feet of a Primary Street	5'	5'	5'	none
Minimum Upper Story Setbacks in feet				
Setback from Primary Street – Cambridge St, Hampshire St or Prospect St	14' above 75'	14' above 75' 34' above 100'	14' above 75' 44' above 100'	14' above 75' 44' above 100'
Setback from Primary Street – Monsignor O'Brien Highway or North First St	none	14' above 100'	14' above 100'	14' above 100'
Setback from Secondary Street	12' above 75'	12' above 75'	12' above 75' 32' above 100'	10' above 100'
Setback from Residence District Boundary	15' above 75'	15' above 75'	15' above 75'	none
Maximum Upper Story Floorplates in square feet				
Maximum floorplate	No maximum	15,000 sf. above 100'	15,000 sf. above 100'	15,000 sf. above 100'

17.705.4 Building and Site Design Standards.

17.705.4.1 Location of Uses. The standards for location of uses set forth in Section 19.53 of this Zoning Ordinance shall be met.

17.705.4.2 Maximum Building Length. A building footprint exceeding two hundred (200) feet in length, measured parallel to a street line, shall contain a massing recess extending back at least fifteen (15) feet in depth measured from and perpendicular to the front

lot line and at least fifteen (15) feet in width measured parallel to the front lot line so that the maximum length of unbroken façade is two hundred (200) feet.

17.705.4.3 Front Yard Design.

- (a) The area directly between a front lot line and the principal wall plane of the building nearest to that front lot line shall consist of any combination of hardscaped walkways, landscaped areas, and usable spaces such as seating, benches, canopies, awnings, porches, patios accessible to pedestrians, or bicycle parking, and may contain elevated porches, walkways, stairs, and/or ramps to provide a transition from the sidewalk Grade to portions of the Ground Story that are elevated above grade.
- (b) Parking and circulation for automobiles shall not be permitted in a front yard with the exception of access drives to parking facilities located elsewhere on the lot, which shall be limited to a total of thirty (30) feet of width for each one hundred (100) feet of lot frontage.

17.705.4.4 Overall Façade Transparency. At least twenty percent (20%) of the total area of building façades facing a public street or public open space shall consist of clear glass windows. This figure shall be increased to thirty percent (30%) for non-residential portions of the building, if any. No minimum requirement shall be imposed for portions of buildings containing uses identified in Paragraph 19.50(2)(c).

17.705.4.5 Ground Story Façade Transparency. For the portion of the Ground Story façade facing a Primary Street, the following additional standards shall apply:

- (a) Where the Ground Story contains non-residential uses, the portion of the façade between two (2) feet and ten (10) feet above the finished floor shall consist of at least fifty percent (50%) transparent glass windows.
- (b) There shall be no section of the façade more than twenty-five (25) feet in length, measured parallel to the street, that does not contain at least one transparent window or pedestrian entryway.

17.705.4.6 Ground Story Finished Floor Grade. Ground Stories shall not have a finished floor below the mean Grade of the adjacent sidewalk on a Primary Street. Ground Stories containing only residential uses may be elevated no more than four (4) feet above the mean Grade of the adjacent sidewalk or to the 1%-LTFE as described in the Flood Resilience Standards in Section 22.80 of this Zoning Ordinance, whichever is greater. Ground Stories containing non-residential uses may be elevated above the sidewalk grade no higher than the 1%-LTFE, where applicable.

17.705.4.7 Ground Story Height. The minimum height of a Ground Story shall be fifteen (15) feet, measured from the Grade of the adjacent sidewalk on a Primary Street to the finished floor of the second Story Above Grade.

17.705.4.8 Ground Story Entrances. Each use at the Ground Story shall have a pedestrian

entrance directly from the public sidewalk of a Primary Street, or of a Secondary Street where the use does not have direct frontage onto a Primary Street. All pedestrian entrances shall be accessible by way of routes that are separated from parking areas or motor vehicle access drives. Where the Ground Story is elevated above the Grade of the existing sidewalk, access to Ground Story uses shall be provided from the sidewalk using exterior or interior ramps, stairs, lifts, or other means that meet accessibility standards.

17.705.4.9 Structured Parking Restrictions.

- (a) Structured parking in Stories Above Grade, whether as a principal or accessory use, shall not be permitted to have direct frontage on a Primary Street but shall be permitted if it is shielded from a Primary Street by a building or portion of a building containing principal non-residential or residential uses, pedestrian lobbies and common areas, or other areas devoted to non-vehicular use with a depth of at least 20 feet measured from the building façade to the above-grade parking facility in a direction perpendicular to the Primary Street. Driveway access shall be permitted as allowed in Section 17.704.4.3.
- (b) Structured parking in Stories Below Grade shall be permitted but must be fully screened from a Primary Street by an exterior wall wherever the story extends above the sidewalk grade.
- (c) All permitted structured parking, where not fully enclosed within a building, shall be screened from view from adjacent public streets by fences, plantings, fabric, or similar decorative elements that are at least fifty percent (50%) opaque across the visible portion of the structured parking with the exception of vehicular entrances and exits.

17.705.4.10 Fences. Fences within a front, side, or rear yard shall meet the following standards:

- (a) No fence shall be made primarily of chain-link or wire.
- (b) Fences may be provided for the purpose of screening parking areas, driveways, or on-grade mechanical or electrical equipment but shall be less than seven (7) feet in height above grade and may be partially or fully opaque. Any opaque fence shall be reviewed by the Cambridge Department of Transportation to ensure that it does not compromise safety by impeding views for motor vehicle drivers.
- (c) Fences may be provided for the purpose of containing or protecting planted areas, including trees, as well as for delineating Private Open Space for the use of occupants of the lot, but may be no more than thirty percent (30%) opaque and may be no more than four (4) feet in height above grade if located in a front yard and no more than six (6) feet above grade if located in a side or rear yard.
- (d) Fences not meeting the standards or serving the purposes described in Paragraphs (a) through (c) above shall require a special permit from the Planning Board.

17.705.4.11 Street Tree Planting. New buildings containing 25,000 square feet of Gross Floor Area or more shall incorporate tree plantings on public sidewalks directly adjacent to the lot or otherwise needing to be rebuilt as part of the development to the extent

feasible, subject to approval by the Department of Public Works in accordance with the Cambridge Urban Forest Master Plan.

17.705.4.12 Mechanical Equipment, Refuse Storage, and Loading Areas. The standards for location and screening set forth in Section 19.58 of this Zoning Ordinance shall be met. Electrical equipment whose location is mandated by a public utility is strongly discouraged from being located on a Primary Street; however, where it is necessary, it shall be screened from public view by fences, plantings, or similar materials to the greatest extent allowable by the utility's standards.

17.706 Transportation.

17.706.1 Off-Street Parking, Bicycle Parking, and Loading. The off-street parking, bicycle parking, and loading requirements of the Business A district as set forth in Article 6.000 of the Zoning Ordinance shall apply equally to the Cambridge Street Districts, except as set forth below.

17.706.2 Waiver of Off-Street Loading Requirements. The Planning Board may, upon issuing a special permit, waive any requirements for the amount, location, and design of loading facilities, and may permit loading facilities to be shared across various uses and lots within the Cambridge Street Districts, upon finding that such waiver would reduce the negative impacts of loading activities on pedestrian access to the public sidewalk. The special permit may include conditions to ensure this criterion is met.

17.707 Development Review.

17.707.1 Review Procedures. The Cambridge Street Districts shall be considered Areas of Special Planning Concern. The development review procedures shall apply as set forth in Article 19.000 of the Zoning Ordinance.

17.707.2 Special Permit Criteria. In granting a special permit under this Section or any other special permit granted by the Planning Board, the Planning Board shall find that the following criteria are met in addition to the criteria in Section 10.43 of the Zoning Ordinance and other criteria specific to the special permit being sought:

- (a) The proposal supports the purpose of the Cambridge Street Districts as described in Section 17.702.
- (b) Development plans are in general conformance with the vision and goals of the *Our Cambridge Street Planning Study (2023)* and the Citywide Urban Design Objectives in Section 19.30 of this Zoning Ordinance and are consistent with the *Citywide Urban Design Guidelines (2025)* and *Design Guidelines for Multifamily Housing (2025)* as applicable. The Planning Board may grant special permits for development that deviates from specific design guidelines if the Board finds that the proposal, on the whole, advances the intent of those guidelines.

Amendments to Article 19.000.

Amend the first paragraph Section 19.23 to read as follows (with no changes to subsequent paragraphs):

19.23 Special Permit Threshold. In all applicable zoning districts, a Project Review Special Permit shall be required for new building construction or change of use (pursuant to Subsection 19.23.1 below) where a Table I threshold has been met, on a lot or combination of contiguous lots held in common ownership at any time after September 15, 2000. In a Business A, Business A-1, or Business A-2 district, or a Cambridge Street District (CAM-8, CAM-10, CAM-12, or CAM-15), a Project Review Special Permit shall also be required for new building construction of 20,000 square feet or more of non-residential Gross Floor Area (GFA), though a Traffic Study shall not be required if a Table I threshold is not met. Where a mix of uses is proposed the threshold shall be determined by the application of the Mixed Use Formula set forth in Table 1.

Amend Section 19.46 to read as follows:

19.46 Areas of Special Planning Concern. The following zoning districts shall be considered Areas of Special Planning Concern:

- (a) Business A-1 and Business A-2 and Business A-4 Districts
- (b) Parkway Overlay District
- (c) Kirkland Place Overlay District
- (d) Harvard Square Overlay District
- (e) Central Square Overlay District
- (f) Cambridgeport Revitalization Development District
- (g) Massachusetts Avenue Overlay District
- (h) Special District 12
- (i) Special District 13
- (j) Special District 14
- (k) Memorial Drive Overlay District
- (l) Prospect Street Overlay District
- (m) Alewife Overlay Districts
- (n) Cambridge Street Districts (CAM-8, CAM-10, CAM-12, and CAM-15).

Description of proposed district boundaries based on the maps submitted with the petition:

Cambridge Street Corridor

CAM-15 District – Legal Description

Create a new district on the Zoning Map of the City of Cambridge, MA entitled “Cambridge Street District 15 (CAM-15)” with the following boundaries:

Beginning at the easternmost point of the existing C-2B District where it meets the boundaries of the NP/PUD-6 District and the BA/PUD-4 District, and proceeding along the BA/PUD-4 District boundary westerly; thence continuing in a westerly direction along the boundary of the C-2A District to the south to the intersection of the extension of a line described as follows: measured perpendicular to, and offset to the east by 130 feet from, the boundary of the right-of-way of Second Street between Cambridge Street and Gore Street; thence turning in a northerly direction to follow this described line to the southern boundary of the SD-1 District; thence turning in a southeasterly direction along the boundary of the SD-1 District ; thence continuing in a southeasterly direction along the southern boundary of the NP/PUD-6 District to the point of beginning.

CAM-12 District – Legal Description

Create a new district on the Zoning Map of the City of Cambridge, MA entitled “Cambridge Street District 12 (CAM-12)” with the following boundaries:

Beginning at the northernmost point of the existing BA District where it meets the boundaries of the existing C-1 District and the Cambridge/Somerville Municipal Boundary within the Webster Avenue right-of-way, proceed along the Cambridge/Somerville Municipal Boundary easterly; thence turning in a southerly direction along the boundary of the C-2 District to the east to the intersection of the street centerline of Cambridge Street; thence turning in a westerly direction along the street centerline of Cambridge Street to the intersection of the street centerlines of Cambridge Street and Columbia Street; thence turning in northerly direction along the street centerline of Columbia Street to the intersection of the street centerlines of Columbia Street and Webster Avenue; thence continuing in a northwesterly direction along the street centerline of Webster Avenue to the intersection with the C-1 District; thence turning in a northeasterly direction along the boundary of the C-1 District to the northeast to the point of beginning.

CAM-10 District – Legal Description

Create a new district on the Zoning Map of the City of Cambridge, MA entitled “Cambridge Street District 10 (CAM-10)” with the following boundaries:

Beginning at the intersection of the street centerline of Hampshire Street and the street centerline of Cambridge Street, and proceeding along the street centerline of Cambridge Street easterly; thence continuing until intersecting with the street centerline of Prospect Street; thence continuing in a southerly direction along the street centerline of Prospect Street until intersecting with the street centerline of Hampshire Street; thence continuing in a northwesterly direction along the street centerline of Hampshire Street until intersecting with the street centerline of Cambridge Street at the point of beginning.

CAM-8 District – Legal Description

Create two new districts on the Zoning Map of the City of Cambridge, MA entitled “Cambridge Street District 8 (CAM-8)” with the following boundaries:

Beginning at the northwesternmost point of the existing Business A (BA) District at the intersection of the Cambridge/Somerville Municipal Boundary and the C-1 District boundary near Hampshire Street, and proceeding along the Cambridge/Somerville Municipal Boundary easterly; thence turning in a southerly direction and proceeding along the boundary of the C-1 District to the intersection of the street centerline of Webster Street and the C-1 District; thence turning in a southeasterly direction and proceeding along the street centerline of Webster Avenue to the intersection of the street centerlines of Webster Avenue and Columbia Street; thence turning in a southerly direction and proceeding along the street centerline of Columbia Street to the intersection with the street centerline of Cambridge Street; thence turning in an easterly direction and proceeding along the street centerline of Cambridge Street to the intersection of the street centerline of Windsor Street; thence continuing in an easterly direction and proceeding along the C-2 District boundary to the north to the intersection of the C-1 District to the southeast; thence turning in a southerly direction and proceeding along the C-1 District boundary to the intersection with the street centerline of Prospect Street; thence turning in northeasterly direction and proceeding along the street centerline of Prospect Street to the street centerline of Cambridge Street; thence turning in a westerly direction and proceeding along the street centerline of Cambridge Street to the street centerline of Hampshire Street; thence turning in a southeasterly direction and proceeding along the street centerline of Hampshire Street to the street centerline of Prospect Street; thence continuing in a southeasterly direction and proceeding along the boundary of the C-1 District to the beginning. Add a boundary that excludes the existing Open Space District on the property located on Map 111, Lot 30.

Beginning at the westernmost point of the existing BA District where it meets the boundaries of the C-2 District to the northwest and the existing C-1 District to the southeast near the intersection of Cambridge Street and Willow Street, and proceeding along the C-2 District boundary northerly; thence turning in an easterly direction and proceeding along the boundary of the C-1 District to the intersection of the Cambridge/Somerville Municipal Boundary and the street centerline of Warren Street; thence turning in a southeasterly direction and proceeding along the Cambridge/Somerville Municipal Boundary; thence turning in a southerly direction and proceeding along the C-3 District boundary to the southern boundary of the C-2B District; thence continuing in an easterly direction to the intersection of the boundaries of the C-2B District to the northwest and the C-1 District to the northeast; thence continuing in an easterly direction and proceeding along the C-1 District boundary to the southern boundary of the SD-1 District; thence turning southeasterly and proceeding along the SD-1 District boundary to the intersection of the extension of a line described as follows: measured perpendicular to, and offset to the east by 130 feet from, the boundary of the right-of-way of Second Street between Cambridge Street and Gore Street; thence turning in a southerly direction and proceeding along this described line to the northern boundary of the C-2A District; thence turning in a westerly direction and proceeding along the C-2A District boundary to the northern boundary of the BA/PUD-4A District; thence continuing in a westerly direction and proceeding along the BA/PUD-4A District boundary to the northern boundary of the BB District; thence continuing in a westerly direction and proceeding along the BB District boundary; thence turning westerly and proceeding along the C-1 District boundary to the eastern boundary of the OS District located on the property labeled Map 24, lot 94; thence turning in a northerly direction and proceeding along the OS District boundary to the northern boundary of the C-1 District; thence turning in a westerly direction and proceeding along the C-1 District boundary to the point of beginning.

Proposed Cambridge Street Districts

September 2025

Cambridge, Massachusetts

