

# Action Plan for MBTA Communities

<b>Description Area</b>	Please read the Section 3A Guidelines before attempting to complete this form. Please note: Action Plan Forms must be submitted by a municipal official with authority to act on behalf of the municipality on matters of zoning, such as the municipal CEO or planning director.
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## Section 1: Identification

<b>Description Area</b>	The Section 3A Guidelines establish zoning metrics that apply uniquely to each MBTA community based on its local transit stations, existing housing stock, population, and developable land. This section of the Action Plan helps to identify the transit stations that determined each community's category. Appendix 1 of the Section 3A Guidelines lists each community's category and minimum multi-family unit capacity requirement.
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<b>1.1 MBTA Community Name</b>	Cambridge
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<b>1.2. Community Category</b>	Rapid transit community
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<b>1.3. Multifamily Unit Capacity Requirement</b>	13477
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<b>1.4. Does this municipality have any MBTA rapid transit stations within its boundaries?</b>	Yes
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<b>1.4a. Please list MBTA rapid transit stations that are located within this municipality's boundaries</b>	Lechmere, Kendall/MIT, Central, Harvard, Porter, Alewife
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<b>1.5. Does this municipality have any MBTA commuter rail stations within its boundaries?</b>	Yes
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<b>Description Area</b>	Although there is an MBTA commuter rail station within its municipal boundaries, this municipality's community category is Rapid Transit. This is because a community's category is determined by the transit station with the highest level of transit service. If there are 100 or more acres of rapid transit stations' developable station area within municipal boundaries, then the community category is Rapid Transit regardless of whether the community is also served by the commuter rail. Section 1 of the Guidelines provides definitions of "transit station area", "developable station area" and "developable land" to explain how this determination was made.
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<b>1.5a. Please list MBTA commuter rail stations that are located within the municipal boundaries</b>	Porter
<b>1.6. Does this municipality have any other MBTA transit stations that are located outside of its municipal boundaries that may have "developable station area" within them?</b>	Yes
<b>Description Area</b>	Stations that are located outside of municipal boundaries but that have "developable station area" within the boundaries might affect district location criteria, as further described in Section 8 of the Guidelines. Please refer to Section 1 of the Guidelines for definitions of "transit station area", "developable station area", and "developable land".
<b>1.6a. Please list the MBTA transit stations that are located outside of the municipal boundaries but might have developable station area within them.</b>	Davis, Community College, Union Square, B.U. West, B.U. Central
<b>1.7. Please provide the name of the person filling out this form</b>	Iram Farooq
<b>1.7a. Title</b>	Assistant City Manager for Community Development
<b>1.7b. Email Address</b>	ifarooq@cambridgema.gov
<b>1.7c. Phone Number</b>	(617) 349-4606
<b>1.8 Please provide the name of the municipal CEO</b>	Yi-An Huang
<b>1.8b Mailing address of municipal CEO</b>	795 Massachusetts Avenue 1st Floor Cambridge, MA 02139
<b>1.8c Email address of municipal CEO</b>	citymanager@cambridgema.gov
<b>1.9. Please briefly describe other members of the core team developing the multi-family zoning district.</b>	City of Cambridge staff from the Community Development Department's Zoning Division, Housing Division, and Community Planning Division, and the Law Department. This project is coordinated by Jeff Roberts, Director of Zoning and Development (jroberts@cambridgema.gov), and Mason Wells, Associate Zoning Planner (mwells@cambridgema.gov). Additional support for mapping and data analysis is being provided by Cliff Cook, Senior Planning Information Manager, Brendan Monroe, GIS Planner, and Scott Walker, Planning Data Analyst.

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## Section 2: Housing Overview

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**2.1. Does this municipality have any established housing related goals or strategies from municipal planning documents, such as a Housing Production Plan, Master Plan, or Economic Development Plan?**

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Yes

**2.1a. Please briefly describe any relevant strategies, goals, or objectives, and the work that has been done to date.**

In 2019, the city published a comprehensive plan entitled "Envision Cambridge." The extensive planning process affirmed our community's commitment to safe, affordable, and life-enriching housing. The "Housing Plan" section is found on pages 137 to 155 of "Envision Cambridge." Below are several relevant strategies and actions from this plan:

Strategy 1 - Increase overall housing production.

- o Action - Change zoning to enable more housing, including affordable housing, to be built along major corridors, squares, and in other areas that have the capacity to accommodate growth and are well served by transit
- o Action - Require the creation of significant new housing in areas that are being rezoned.

Strategy 2 - Encourage affordable housing production for low-, moderate-, and middle-income households through regulatory and zoning incentives.

- o Action - Offer density bonuses and relief from other dimensional regulations for fully affordable housing developments through a citywide affordable housing overlay.

Strategy 3 - Expand resources for affordable housing production and preservation

Strategy 4 - Maintain a range of housing options to enable households to transition to units best suited to them as their needs change.

Strategy 5 - Expand tools and resources to prevent displacement and housing insecurity, and address homelessness.

Strategy 6 - Develop a broader coalition of public and private entities to support housing production, especially affordable housing, in Cambridge and the region.

Cambridge also has many longstanding policies related to housing production and affordability. These initiatives are reviewed and updated on an ongoing basis:

- Incentive Zoning (linkage) Ordinance adopted in 1989 to generate funds for affordable housing. More than \$55 million has been raised to-date.
- Affordable Housing Trust created in 1989. The Trust has supported more than 4,000 affordable units and more than \$317 million in City funds have been provided to-date.
- Inclusionary Housing Ordinance adopted in 1998 to create affordable units in new market-rate housing. 1,500 affordable units have been created to-date under this ordinance, along with market-rate units. The ordinance was last amended in 2017 following a study that assessed financial feasibility.
- Community Preservation Act adopted in 2001. 80% of CPA funds have been used to fund affordable housing.
- Short-Term Rentals are regulated to minimize housing units lost as permanent housing.
- In redeveloping areas of the City, such as Kendall Square and North Point, new housing is required as a component of mixed-use development.
- The City offers several programs supporting homeownership, including education and funding assistance for first-time homebuyers, and funding for

homeowners to complete needed home repairs and improvements.

- Housing is recognized as a critical pillar of public health in the City's Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP).
- Cambridge is part of the Metro Mayors Coalition, a group of regional municipal city leaders, who set a goal to produce 185,000 new housing units across fifteen towns and cities in the region by 2030.

**2.2. Is this municipality currently working on any other planning for housing?**

Yes

**2.2a. Please briefly describe the housing work underway.**

The following zoning initiatives are completed or underway based on the Housing Plan section of Envision Cambridge:

- 2020 adoption of Affordable Housing Overlay Zoning - relaxed zoning requirements and established as-of-right approvals for affordable housing. The City has permitted ~500 new units of affordable housing through this zoning. City Council discussing revisions to increase allowable housing in some areas.
- 2022 Zoning Amendment - eliminated minimum parking requirements for new housing.
- 2022 Cambridge Street Planning Study - recommends increased height and density for housing along a major mixed-use corridor.
- Alewife Zoning Working Group - in progress, discussions have included increasing allowed residential heights and densities and requiring housing as part of mixed-use development in an area expected to have major redevelopment.
- Allowing multifamily housing citywide - City Council discussing zoning changes to allow multifamily in districts that allow only single-family, two-family, or townhouse development, which cover about ¼ of the city and tend to be farther from transit.
- North Massachusetts Avenue Planning Study - City is planning to start a study process that will consider zoning changes along this major mixed-use corridor.
- The City will continue its periodic studies of Incentive Zoning and Inclusionary Housing policies.

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### **Section 3: Preliminary Zoning Strategies**

**3.1. To the best of your knowledge, which of the following zoning strategies is this community most likely to use for compliance? (Select all that apply)**

a. An existing zoning district or districts that might already comply with the Section 3A Guidelines

**3.1a. Please identify and briefly describe the possibly-compliant district(s), including any characteristics of existing development or transit options that make it suitable for use as this community's 3A-compliant district. Optional: Attach any supporting documents.**

Cambridge is a dense urban community with approximately 6.4 square miles of land area, 117,000 residents, and 6 MBTA rapid transit stations. Most of Cambridge is zoned to allow multifamily housing as-of-right. The districts that allow the highest residential densities tend to be directly next to MBTA rapid transit stations. The districts that do not allow multifamily housing are Open Space districts and Residence A and B districts, which cover about one quarter of the total land area of the city and tend to be further from rapid transit.

The attached map identifies zoning districts that are (90% by area) within a half-mile of at least one rapid transit station and allow multi-family housing as-of-right at a density that could potentially meet the Section 3A criteria. Because Cambridge's zoning districts are small and fine-grained, compliant zoning districts that are geographically contiguous will need to be combined to meet all of the DHCD guidelines, particularly the guidelines for minimum unit capacity. Our initial review suggests that a subset of these existing districts can constitute a "compliant district" meeting all of the DHCD guidelines.

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**File** <https://www.formstack.com/admin/download/file/14094589834>

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**3.2. What non-housing characteristics are important for this community to consider in its 3A zoning district?**

Our ongoing zoning and planning work is guided by the "Envision Cambridge" plan. Important non-housing characteristics identified in this plan include: livability, diversity and equity, economic opportunity, sustainability and resilience, community health and wellbeing, and learning. Envision Cambridge describes a set of policies and actions that are part of an integrated planning strategy for the entire city.

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## Section 4: Action Plan Timeline

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**Description Area**

This section creates a framework to input preliminary plans for a zoning adoption process. On the table below, please use Column 1 (from the left) to describe a task, Column 2 to input a start date, and Column 3 to input a finish date. Every community must provide a timeline for the below-listed tasks. &nbsp;Additional space is provided for any other tasks that a community wishes to list. DHCD will review proposed timelines for feasibility before approving an Action Plan.&nbsp;Public outreach  
Developing zoning&nbsp;Applying DHCD's compliance model to test for density and unit capacity  
Holding planning board hearings&nbsp;Holding legislative sessions and adopt compliant zoning&nbsp;Submit District Compliance application to DHCD

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**Description Area** Task

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**Description Area** Start

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**Description Area** Finish

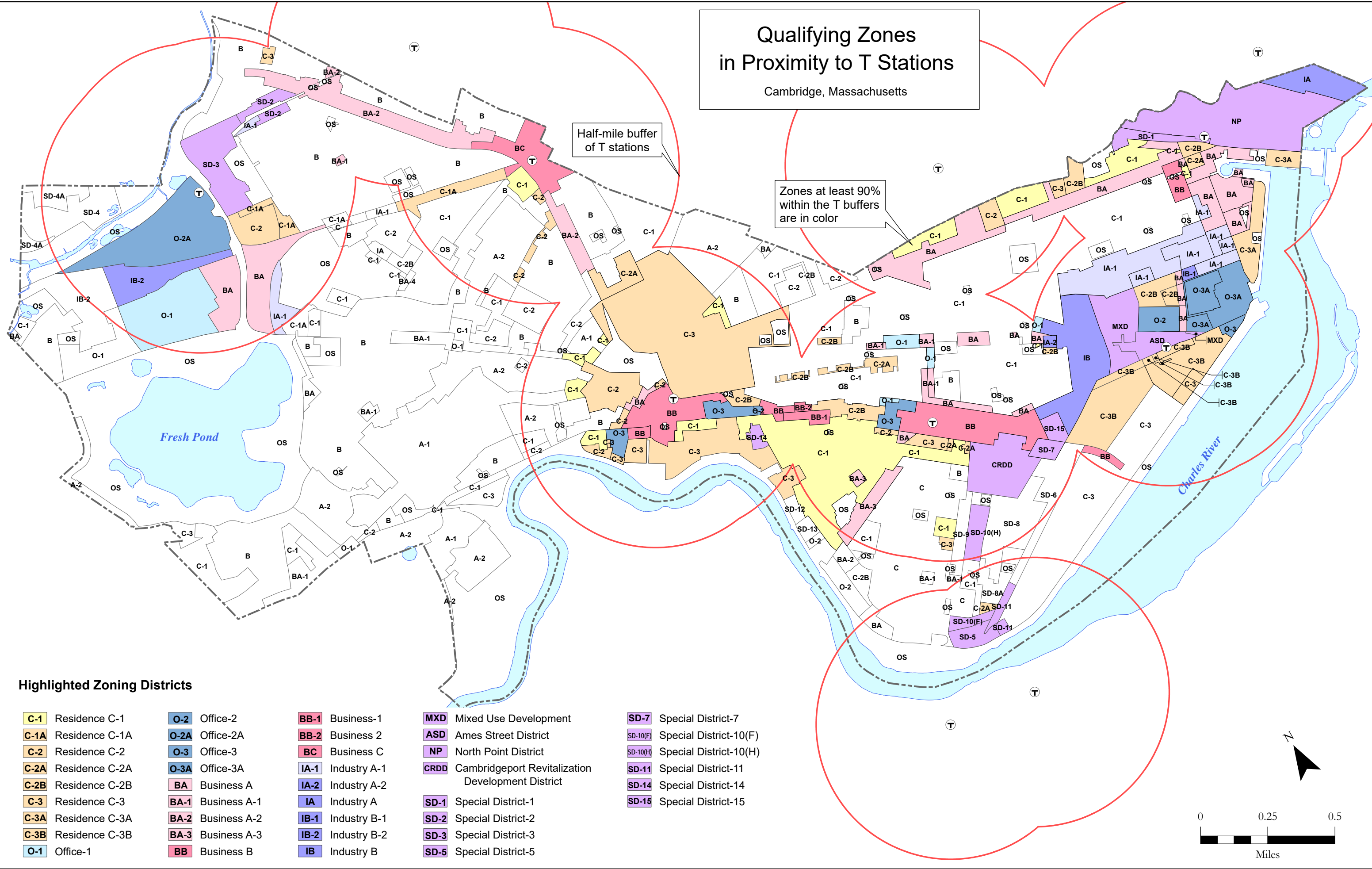
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<b>Short Answer</b>	Apply DHCD's compliance model to test current zoning for density and unit capacity.
	Dec 01, 2022
	Oct 31, 2023
<b>Short Answer</b>	Submit District Compliance application to DHCD
	Nov 01, 2023
	Dec 31, 2023
<b>Short Answer</b>	N/A - Cambridge expects to submit existing zoning for compliance. Therefore, no formal adoption process is anticipated.
	Jan 31, 2023
	Jan 31, 2023
<b>Short Answer</b>	N/A
	Jan 31, 2023
	Jan 31, 2023
<b>Short Answer</b>	N/A
	Jan 31, 2023
	Jan 31, 2023
<b>Short Answer</b>	N/A
	Jan 31, 2023
	Jan 31, 2023



# Qualifying Zones in Proximity to T Stations

Cambridge, Massachusetts



## Highlighted Zoning Districts

<b>C-1</b> Residence C-1	<b>O-2</b> Office-2	<b>BB-1</b> Business-1	<b>MXD</b> Mixed Use Development	<b>SD-7</b> Special District-7
<b>C-1A</b> Residence C-1A	<b>O-2A</b> Office-2A	<b>BB-2</b> Business 2	<b>ASD</b> Ames Street District	<b>SD-10(F)</b> Special District-10(F)
<b>C-2</b> Residence C-2	<b>O-3</b> Office-3	<b>BC</b> Business C	<b>NP</b> North Point District	<b>SD-10(H)</b> Special District-10(H)
<b>C-2A</b> Residence C-2A	<b>O-3A</b> Office-3A	<b>IA-1</b> Industry A-1	<b>CRDD</b> Cambridgeport Revitalization Development District	<b>SD-11</b> Special District-11
<b>C-2B</b> Residence C-2B	<b>BA</b> Business A	<b>IA-2</b> Industry A-2	<b>SD-1</b> Special District-1	<b>SD-14</b> Special District-14
<b>C-3</b> Residence C-3	<b>BA-1</b> Business A-1	<b>IA</b> Industry A	<b>SD-2</b> Special District-2	<b>SD-15</b> Special District-15
<b>C-3A</b> Residence C-3A	<b>BA-2</b> Business A-2	<b>IB-1</b> Industry B-1	<b>SD-3</b> Special District-3	
<b>C-3B</b> Residence C-3B	<b>BA-3</b> Business A-3	<b>IB-2</b> Industry B-2	<b>SD-5</b> Special District-5	
<b>O-1</b> Office-1	<b>BB</b> Business B	<b>IB</b> Industry B		

