

Burks, Sarah

From: Patrick W Barrett III <jbrealtyllc@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, August 18, 2025 5:39 PM
To: Sullivan, Charles M.; Burks, Sarah
Cc: Janet Jiang
Subject: Zoning Narrative
Attachments: 17 Story Zoning Narrative HCH.docx

Charlie,

Thank you for meeting with me today. I've attached our narrative which ISD has. I'll follow up once the Cambridge Seven has the diagram. I want to make it clear that we offer this in good faith and this is not something the Board has any purview over.

Patrick W. Barrett III
617 778 3521

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Narrative

The locus contains two parcels built between 1900 – 1930¹. The “Harriet Jacob’s House” located at 17 Story St and 127 Mt. Auburn Street are both considered historically significant under the Cambridge guidelines and both parcels are within the Harvard Square Conservation District² and Harvard Square Overlay Map³.

Zoning

Use Type:

The total land area of the locus is 13,967 sqft (per City of Cambridge) and located predominantly (95.40%) in a C-2 zone with a small section running parallel to Story Street that is and abuts a C-1 residential multifamily zone. C-2 and C-1 Multifamily zone. The locus is also within the Harvard Square Historic Conservation District. The current use is Gen-Office and is considered a non-conforming use for the district. The desired development pattern is mixed use with a hotel/lodging house, multifamily residential, and small “accessory” use café. See Table 1 for use compliance:

Use Type	Compliance
4.31(g)	Y
4.31 (i)	Y
4.31.1 (b)	Y ⁴
4.35	SP/Y ⁵

Table 1

Height and Dimensional Requirements:

The C-2 district has a height limitation of 85’ or 7 Stories but is augmented by the Harvard Square Overlay with a reduction to 60’ for commercial uses and the elimination of the story limitation by sections 20.54 and 5.23.3. Thus, the height within the C-2 portion of the project is 85’ for residential and 60’ for commercial uses which could be further augmented by SP under section 20.54.2 (2) to increase commercial height to 80’. Current development scheme shows hotel rooms on 7th and 8th floor which would need a special permit to receive a building permit or can be converted to residential with no further relief needed. Setbacks for the commercial component are calculated using only the floor plate of the commercial cross sections of the building as is

¹ [127 Mt Auburn Street and 17 Story Street](#)

² [Harvard Square Conservation District Overlay Map](#)

³ [Harvard Square Overlay Map](#)

⁴ **(b)Hotels and motels shall be permitted as of right in Residence C-3A districts and in Residence C-2, 2A, 2B, and 3 districts where at least fifty (50) percent of the area of the lot upon which the hotel or motel is located,** and the point of entry from a street for all vehicular access to the hotel or motel, is located within the Harvard Square Overlay District the Central Square Overlay District or the Massachusetts Avenue Overlay District.

⁵ Typically N in a C-2 district but for 4.21(e) In multifamily dwellings containing twenty-five or more dwelling units, hospitals or **hotels with more than fifty sleeping rooms**, a newsstand or other retail shop, a barber shop or similar service establishment, a dining room or **other eating establishment** shall be considered as an accessory use provided that (1) the establishment is primarily intended for occupants of the building, hotel or hospital; (2) the establishment is conducted entirely within and only entered from the interior of the dwelling, hospital or hotel; and (3) no signs or other advertising is visible from outside the building. See also: 20.54.3

common practice and part of development discussions with the CDD. Setbacks for this lot are governed by 5.24.3⁶.

Dimensional Table

	Front Setback	Rear Setback	Side Setback	Open Space	Height	Compliance
Residential C-1	10' ⁷	N/A	5'	30% ⁸	74' ⁹	Y
Residential C-2	10	N/A	5'	15%	85'	Y
Commercial C-2	H+L/4	N/A	H+L/5	15%	60'/80' ¹⁰	SP/Y ¹¹

Loading and Parking Requirements:

The residential component of the development scheme does not require parking per 6.36.1. Any transient component also does not require parking per 6.36.1.1. Loading requirements are governed by section 6.80 and falls under category “E” using the table at 6.83. The current design provides a loading area compliant with this section. Section 6.100 “Bicycle Parking” the development will have to be compliant with this section and we have allocated spaces for both short term and long term parking that will go through further design once we have established a dwelling unit and sleeping rooms count.

⁶ 5.24.3 On lots abutting streets on more than one side, the front yard requirements of each of the abutting streets shall apply regardless of designated front lot lines. Any remaining sides shall be subject to side yard requirements.

⁷ (3) A dwelling need not be set back from the street line, or building line where such may have been established on the lot, more than the average of the setbacks of the buildings, other than accessory buildings, on the lots adjacent thereto on either side.

⁸ (1) At least fifty percent (50%) of the required Open Space in a Residence C-1 district shall meet all of the requirements of Private Open Space in Section 5.22.1. At least fifty percent (50%) of the required Open Space shall meet the definition of Permeable Open Space and shall not be subject to the dimensional limitations of Section 5.22.1 as applied to Private Open Space.

⁹ (2) The height of buildings or portions of buildings used as Residences may exceed the base height limit, up to a maximum of 6 stories above grade and 74 feet above grade, if all of the following criteria are met:

(a) The building complies with the Inclusionary Housing Requirements in Section 11.203 of this Zoning Ordinance, regardless of whether it exceeds the size threshold requiring compliance; and
(b) The area of the lot on which the building is located is not less than 5,000 square feet.

¹⁰ 20.54.2 (2) Special Permit for Additional Height. The maximum allowable height in the Harvard Square Overlay District may be increased up to eighty (80) feet upon issuance of a Special Permit by the Planning Board. If a Special Permit is issued portions of the building may extend to eighty (80) feet in height provided that those portions in excess of sixty (60) feet are set back from the street line at least ten (10) feet, and that those portions are also set back from one or more forty-five (45) degree sky exposure planes, unless otherwise permitted by the Planning Board. A forty-five (45) degree sky exposure plane shall be an imaginary inclined plane beginning fifty-five (55) feet above any streetline in the districts and rising over one or more lots at a forty-five (45) degree angle.

¹¹ The dimensional out envelope is compliant as presented with the exception of floors 7 and 8 for hotel rooms only. Upon issuance of a special permit from the planning board these can be made compliant or we can adjust the development to have only residential units on this level and there is no need for further relief.

Approval Process:

There are several layers of review for this project:

- 1) Cambridge Historical Approval (cert of appropriateness)
- 2) Harvard Square Advisory Committee
- 3) CDD Article 19.50 Design Review
 - a. Article 22 Compliance
 - b. Traffic and Parking
 - c. DPW
 - d. Arborist
- 4) ISD

17 Story

Burks, Sarah

From: Patrick W Barrett III <jbrealtyllc@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, August 29, 2025 7:18 PM
To: Sullivan, Charles M.; Burks, Sarah
Cc: Janet Jiang; Timothy Mansfield
Subject: 17 Story HJH Feasibility Letter
Attachments: Feasibility letter.pdf (house moving)

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Charlie/Sarah,

We have had a few groups come out and assess the feasibility of moving the HJH to its proposed new location. I've attached a letter from [Wolfe House and Building Movers](#) while not definitive, if you click on the link and look at their work the move we propose is clearly not an issue of feasibility. Please include this email in the record along with the corresponding letter.

[Wolfe House and Building Movers](#)

Regards,

Patrick W. Barrett III
617 778 3521

www.linkedin.com/in/pwbarrett/

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(610) 488-1020

Mr. Aran Byrnes
Nauset Construction Corporation
10 Kearney Rd,
Needham, MA 02494
abyrnes@nauset.com

8/29/2025

RE: 17 Story St. Cambridge, MA

Mr. Byrnes,

In regard to your request for a letter of feasibility for moving the above referenced house, I conducted a site visit to this building on 8/27/2025 which included complete measuring and a review of the basement area.

The targeted relocation to Mt. Auburn St. is approximately 90 feet to the southwest with approximately a counterclockwise 45 degree rotation. The house would initially be set over a partially poured and backfilled foundation and held at an elevation above the final finished height, while the foundation is built up, at which time, the house it will be lowered and set onto the new foundation.

The house will be moved on the same site and not traverse the roadways, which makes for a much less complicated move in the sense of traffic control, road closures, tree trimming and utility line removals, etc. The move route from start to finish will be unencumbered once the site is prepared for the move.

The basement is currently finished and does not afford any degree of visual inspection of the structure itself. This area will all be exposed with all furnishings and finishes other than structural members being removed by the contractor as part of the moving preparation. To the extent of what can be observed of the building itself, both inside and out, this appears to be a feasible and viable move, consistent with many others that we have performed. We have successfully carried out many moves for historic preservation, including one from Selma, AL to Dearborn MI.

There are many areas of the house that are not readily observable and even those that are, it would be advisable to have a professional engineer provide an analysis of the structural integrity of the building prior to the move.

Thank you for the opportunity to review and bid this project. If you have any further questions, please let me know. We look forward to contracting and performing this move with you.

Sincerely,
Keith D. Burton

Wolfe House & Building Movers

Burks, Sarah

From: Patrick W Barrett III <jbrealtyllc@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, August 18, 2025 5:50 PM
To: Sullivan, Charles M.; Burks, Sarah
Cc: Janet Jiang
Subject: Economic Narrative
Attachments: 17 Story Economic Narrative.docx; FINAL_DevCosts_Presentation_Apr2023 (1).pdf

Charlie,

Again, thank you for your time. Attached, for the Board, is our economic narrative which was requested by the board members. I highlight again that this is in no way a requirement or anything our project should be judged by. I wish to include as a companion to this memo the CDD report referenced and incorporated herein as part of our submission.

Regards,

Patrick W. Barrett III
617 778 3521

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To: Cambridge Historical Commission

From: Patrick W. Barrett III, Esq.

Date: August 18, 2025

Subject: Economic Narrative for 17 Story Street Development

The finances of 17 Story Street are a difficult balancing act. For the purposes of this high level analysis and narrative I will not include land basis as 1) we have been accused of “paying too much” for the parcel and thus maximizing build and 2) Cambridge land has become increasingly more expensive and even if I include half of the average cost no residential project “pencils” let alone one that must include the restoration and reuse of a historic property.

Base construction costs for mid-rise construction can vary wildy and unfortunately must also account for tariffs which currently apply to steel and aluminum at roughly 25%, lumber currently at 14.5% with “plans” to raise to 34.5% concrete and gypsum at 25% and so on. Typically, in any contract we see a 5-10% “tariff contingency” that on some projects will be used and others less so but the number is a new addition in a whole new cohort of costs.

For a project like 17 Story the development cost (sans land) will range from \$500-900/sqft including some (2-3%) for contingencies etc. Then our team has to factor in Cambridge specific costs outlined very neatly in the City of Cambridge Community Development Standards and Cost Study April 4. 2023(attached). This exhaustive list includes:

inclusionary zoning, linkage, environmental performance standards, sustainable design standards, climate resilience standards, green roofs, emissions accounting, stretch energy code, building energy use (BUEDO), stormwater requirements, sewer inflow mitigations, combined sewer overflow tank standards, tree protection, transportation mitigation and management, transportation impact review and mitigation, parking and transportation demand management, bicycle parking requirements, Major and Minor development review, and at times advisory review (HSAC).

The cost of inclusionary zoning alone based on the scale of the project and roughly 9,000 square feet of net residential space provided to the City of Cambridge is approximately \$8,775,000, using a very conservative market rate price per square foot of \$1250 against the income restricted sale price CDD demands of \$275/sqft. I could tally the other costs of the required mitigations Cambridge has piled on but the result is really death by 1000 cuts. So the question we ask is; How do we revitalize the Harriet Jacobs House (Historical Goal), How do we create a viable and necessary public good in this case

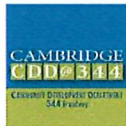
housing (Cambridge Goal), and how to we create a economic engine to pay for it all? The answer is the development pattern we have created by adding a hotel component and for sale condominium component. Thus, there is a symbiotic relationship between each element of this project. Without the revenue generated by the condominium sales this project would not be able to achieve the debt service coverage ratios required by conventional lenders to justify financing the remaining debt on the hotel which, overtime, pays for restoration of the Harriet Jacobs House and creates a positive return for the investor though in this model I am not carrying land basis which only means the margins are that much tighter. The point is show even without the baseless commentary about original purchase price ANY development on this site would have to balance uses in a similar manner to meet all of the goals we are being asked to achieve.

Regards,

Patrick Barrett

City of Cambridge Community Development Department Development Standards and Costs

April 4, 2023



- Response to POR 2022 #267

- Requested a comprehensive list of Cambridge policies that impact the cost of commercial and residential development
- Requested comparing whether similar policies exist in Somerville and Boston

- Presentation Overview

- Discussion of how development standards can impact cost (and value)
- List of Cambridge development standards (both zoning and non-zoning) and comparison to Somerville and Boston
- Initial conclusions and additional thoughts for consideration.

- Introduction of Staff Team

- CDD – Housing, E&T, Zoning, and Economic Opportunity and Development
- DPW
- Finance & Assessing



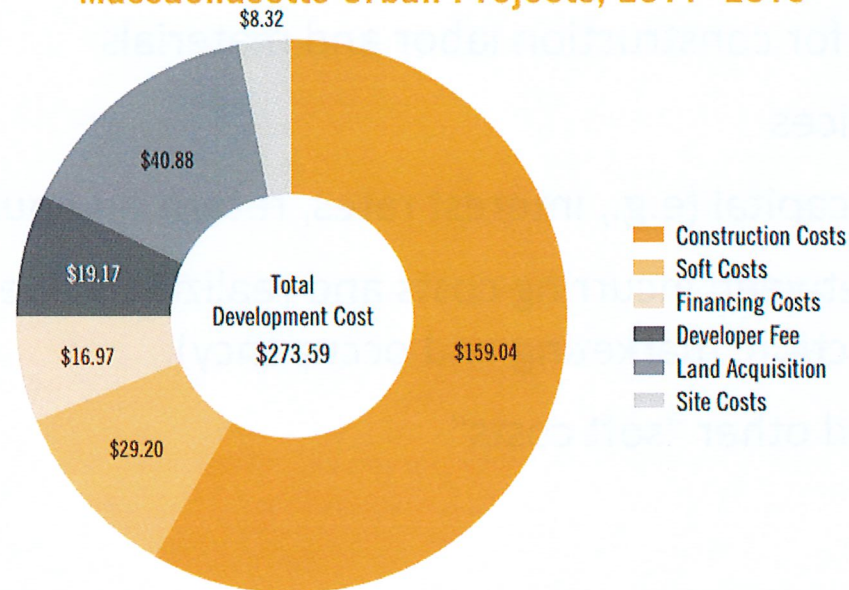
How Do Development Standards Affect Costs?

- Developers are concerned about both cost and value
- Value can mean different things to different developers
 - Market developers: value = future rent stream, future sale of asset for profit
 - Institutional developers: value = support for long-term mission
- Costs come before project completion (mostly), value comes after project completion
- Sometimes higher costs lead to greater value
- Aim is to optimize value over costs – “Highest and Best Use”

FIGURE 4.2

- Construction is the largest cost component
- Specific costs vary project-by-project due to many factors

**Total Housing Development Costs
Per Square Foot by Cost Component,
Massachusetts Urban Projects, 2011–2015**

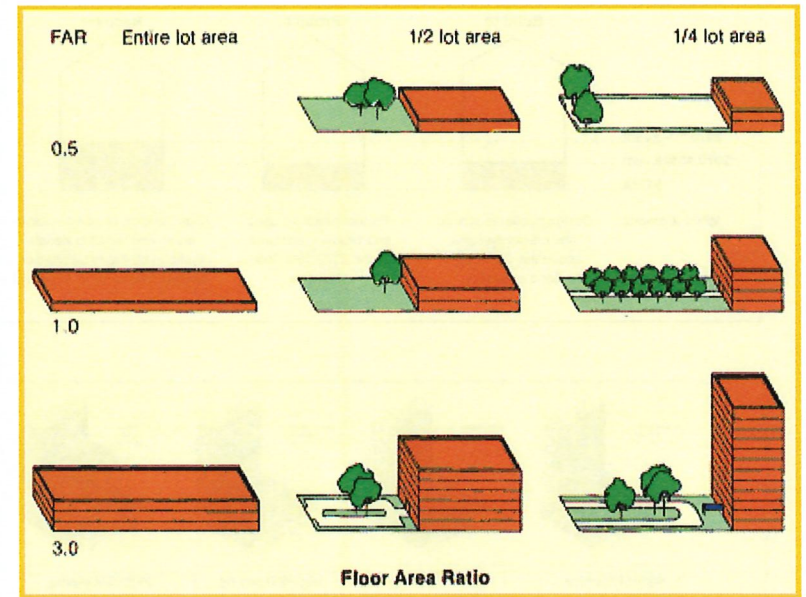


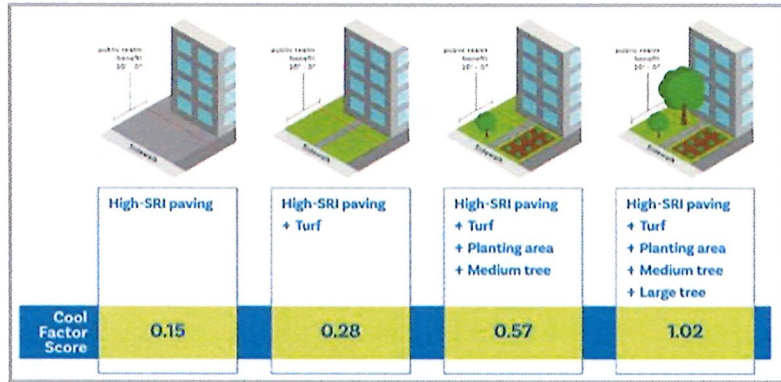
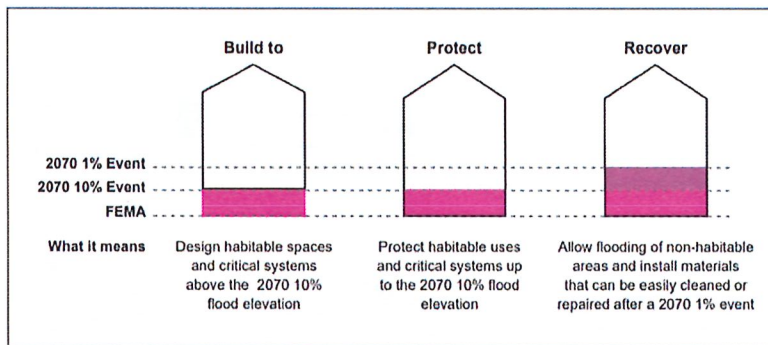
2015 Greater Boston Housing Report Card

Source: Dukakis Center Housing Cost Analysis

- Building use (e.g., commercial, residential) and market served (e.g., Class A, B)
- Building size and design features
- Market for construction labor and materials
- Land prices
- Cost of capital (e.g., interest rates, return on equity)
- Time between incurring costs and realizing value (e.g., design, permitting, construction, marketing and occupancy)
- Fees and other “soft costs”

- Primarily: Sets controls for what **type** and **intensity** of land use is allowed
 - E.g., residential vs. institutional vs. commercial use
 - E.g., small buildings vs. larger buildings, allowed height and density
- Affects both value (e.g., bigger building = more rental income) and costs (e.g., bigger building = more expensive to build)
- Often, greater height and density means better value-to-cost margin due to economies of scale – but not always the case for every development





- **Secondarily: Sets Development Standards** that affect project design and permitting
 - E.g., setbacks and dimensional limitations
 - E.g., environmental performance
 - E.g., affordable housing or other public contributions for increased development
 - E.g., review procedures
- Standards can add design constraints that affect costs in project-specific ways
- Public contributions can be easy or hard to quantify
- Some standards are not in zoning

- Base building codes (incl. health, fire, energy) – standardized statewide, based on international models
- Property taxes – applies to all land, not just development, but can affect land costs and future rents (depending on whether building owner or tenants pay taxes)
- Public amenities and services (e.g., parks, schools) – contribute to residential values in particular



Comparison of Development Standards

- Inclusionary Housing and Linkage (Incentive Zoning) are the most common types of required contributions
- Inclusionary Housing obligation is met on an ongoing basis as units are kept affordable over time, typically subsidized by revenue from additional market units. Effects on total revenue are difficult to predict because they depend on future market conditions.
- Cambridge's policy is based on a feasibility analysis (2017) and includes an allowed 30% increase in development density.
- Costs of linkage contributions are easier to predict because they are usually a fixed one-time payment made at project permitting or completion.

Set-aside of housing in market development that is affordable to households at a specified area median income (AMI) range.

	Cambridge	Boston	Somerville
Applicability	10+ units	10+ units	4+ units
Standard	20% of unit floor area at 50-80% AMI or with voucher (rental) or up to 100% AMI and priced to be affordable at 90% AMI (homeowner)	Proposed: 20% of unit floor area at avg. 60% AMI or with voucher (rental) or avg. 90% AMI (homeowner) Current: 13% of units up to 70% AMI, for projects needing relief	20% of units at three different price tiers based on AMI

Other: Also required in many other cities and towns throughout the region, typically 10-20%.

Required contributions to public funds to offset impacts of non-residential development, including demand for affordable housing and workforce development programs.

	Cambridge	Boston	Somerville
Applicability	30,000+ SF	Proposed: 50,000+ SF Current: 100,000+ SF	30,000+ SF
Standard	\$33.34/net new SF for aff. hsg. (reduced for 30-60 KSF)	Proposed: \$25.86/SF (lab) or \$19.40/SF for aff. hsg. \$4.92/SF (lab) or \$3.69/SF other for workforce Current: \$13.00/SF for aff. hsg., \$2.39/SF for workforce	\$11.23/SF for aff. hsg. \$2.75/SF for workforce (over 15,000 SF) Under review

Other: **Everett** has a linkage contribution of \$2 to \$4 per square foot or \$1000 per residential unit.
Watertown considering a linkage contribution of \$11.12/SF for affordable housing.

- Typical focus on sustainability, environmental impacts
- Based on public planning efforts – e.g., climate change, public infrastructure
- Often “performance-based,” meaning standards can be met in different ways – good design approaches can meet multiple standards at once
- Effects on development costs are variable and project-specific – need to assume what a developer would do without a standard in place
- Sometimes needs a specialized consultant and/or time for staff review
- Short-term development costs can be offset by increased value or other long-term benefit
- *Note: Some relevant non-zoning standards are included.*

Holistic performance-based standards for sustainable building and site design that must be met in new development.

	Cambridge	Boston	Somerville
Applicability	25,000+ SF	50,000+ SF	25,000+ SF
Standard	Design to LEED Gold (50+ SF) or Silver (25-50 KSF), Passive House, or Enterprise Green Communities; include a “Net Zero Narrative”	Design to LEED Certifiable; include a “Carbon Neutral Building Assessment”	Design to LEED Platinum (50+ SF) or Gold (25-50 KSF), Passive House, or Enterprise Green Communities

	Cambridge	Boston	Somerville
Applicability	25,000+ SF development and all other new buildings (not minor renovations)	20,000+ SF or 15+ unit development in “Coastal Flood Resilience Zoning Overlay District”	General development standards
Flood Resilience Standard	Design to projected 2070 10% and 1% annual probability precipitation, sea level rise, storm surge flooding	Design to projected 2070 10% and 1% annual probability sea level rise flooding	Compensatory flood storage in FEMA zones A-AE
Heat Resilience Standard	Minimum “Cool Score” in site and landscape design	N/A	Minimum “Green Score” in site and landscape design

	Cambridge	Boston	Somerville
Applicability	25,000+ SF new buildings	N/A	N/A
Standard	Green (planted) or solar roof required for 80% of available area (green required for commercial); reduction by special permit with offsetting payment	No requirement; solar requirement under consideration as part of Carbon Free Zoning package	Encouraged in Sustainable Design but not required

Other: **Watertown** has a solar roofs requirement.

	Cambridge	Boston	Somerville
Applicability	50,000+ SF non-residential	N/A	N/A
Standard	A whole building lifecycle analysis of the estimated emissions generated by the construction of a Green Building Project.	Not required	Not required

Communities can opt into a Specialized State Energy Code. To meet code, new buildings and major renovations must be fossil fuel-free or fully wired for future electrification and with solar installed if using fossil fuels. The state is also allowing some communities to opt into a fossil fuel free demonstration program that would prohibit the use of fossil fuels in newly constructed buildings (research labs and medical facilities exempt).

	Cambridge	Boston	Somerville
Applicability	All development subject to energy code	All development subject to energy code	All development subject to energy code
Stretch Code	Opted in effective July 1, 2023	Considering opt-in	Considering opt-in
Fossil Fuel Free Demonstration	Can apply to program by Sep. 2023	Petitioning to participate in program	Petitioning to participate in program

Other: **Brookline** and **Watertown** have also voted to opt into the Specialized Energy Code. Many others are considering adoption this year. **Arlington, Lexington, Brookline, Newton, West Tisbury, Lincoln, Aquinnah, Acton,** and **Concord** are also eligible to apply to fossil fuel free demonstration. **Boston** is seeking permission to apply, if not all of the initial 10 apply.

	Cambridge	Boston	Somerville
Applicability	25,000+ SF or 50+ units	20,000+ SF or 15+ units	N/A
Standard	Current: disclose annual greenhouse gas emissions Proposed: phased reduction of greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2035 or 2050 (based on building size and use)	Meet GHG/sf emission reduction thresholds in 5-year trajectories beginning in 2025 – net zero in 2050	No requirement

Other: Newton, Lexington, and other communities considering energy use disclosure requirements. State-wide energy use disclosure requirements in development for large buildings.

Infrastructure standards to manage the discharge of stormwater from private lots into the public storm drainage system.

	Cambridge	Boston	Somerville
Applicability	All Projects	All projects	All projects
Standard	50,000+ SF, 10+ parking spaces, or special permit must mitigate peak discharge from post development 25-year storm to pre-development 2-year storm; Same standard also recommended/ advised for all smaller projects	< 100,000 SF must infiltrate 1" of runoff prior to discharge; 100,000+ SF must infiltrate 1.25" prior to discharge	< 10,000 SF GFA must recharge 0.75-1.5" of runoff onsite; 10,000+ SF must mitigate peak discharge from post development 10-year storm to pre-development 2-year storm

State requirements for the MWRA system to mitigate impacts of additional sewer flow from new developments on already taxed infrastructure. State requires mitigation at a rate of 4:1 of the net increase of sewer flow.

	Cambridge	Boston	Somerville
Applicability	15,000+ gallons per day sewer flow increase	15,000+ gallons per day sewer flow increase	15,000+ gallons per day sewer flow increase
Standard	Complete work to remove required I/I from Sewer System; City actively working on establishing a bank to collect mitigation funds to support larger more complex I/I removal projects	Pay \$9.64 per gallon of mitigation to city-managed bank	Pay \$14.35 per gallon of mitigation to city-managed bank

Note that this is based on state requirements for sewer connections to the MWRA system.

Requirements to provide on-site sewer volume storage in areas of combined drainage and sewer systems to protect from CSO events.

	Cambridge	Boston	Somerville
Applicability	Development in areas of known combined sewer system surcharges	N/A	N/A
Standard	Storage on site for 8 hours of peak sewer flow from the site (recommended)	N/A	N/A

	Cambridge	Boston	Somerville
Applicability	Removal of significant trees	N/A	Removal of significant trees
Requirement	Permit required; mitigation by tree replacement and/or payment	N/A	Permit required; mitigation by tree replacement and/or payment (1-, 2-, or 3-family property exempt)

Other: Some other Massachusetts cities and towns have tree ordinances.

- Typically requires a transportation impact study (TIS) that informs a negotiated mitigation package specific to the site and project
- TIS alone can be costly and time-consuming, usually needing a paid consultant and time to conduct traffic counts
- Traffic mitigation usually negotiated on a case-by-case basis
- Programs like PTDM can have substantial benefit for low cost, but need ongoing commitment (costs add up over time); conversely, can also increase value for larger projects because it helps reduce traffic impacts
- Parking requirements can have high costs because auto parking is costly to build, especially in structures – but can add value to projects
- Bicycle parking requirements add cost but less than auto parking, because they require less space and fewer structural/mechanical needs

	Cambridge	Boston	Somerville
Applicability	Typically 50,000+ SF, some smaller projects	50,000+ SF	Unspecified
Requirement	TIS scoped, conducted, and submitted for Planning Board review; mitigation included in special permit conditions	Transportation Access Plan as part of BPDA approval	Planning Board must make transportation impact findings for some special permits

Requirements to implement programs that support sustainable modes of transportation and reduce demand for auto travel.

	Cambridge	Boston	Somerville
Applicability	Creation of 20+ new parking spaces*	50,000+ SF	50,000+ SF, 20+ unit, or 50+ hotel room
Requirement	PTDM/TDM plan with a demand reduction program and ongoing monitoring/reporting to the City	“TDM points system” target part of BPDA review	“Mobility Management Plan” approval

**5-19 spaces requires a small plan and no monitoring*

	Cambridge	Boston	Somerville
Applicability	General development standards	General development standards	General development standards
Auto Parking	No requirement citywide	Some requirements, lower near transit	Some requirements, lower near transit
Bicycle Parking	Citywide requirements for “short-term” and “long-term” for all uses	Citywide requirements for “visitor” and “employee/resident” for all uses	Citywide requirements for “short-term” and “long-term” for all uses

Other: Parking required in most other cities and towns throughout the region.

- Development often triggers a review process
- Often this involves a discretionary permit (e.g., special permit), but sometimes is advisory
- Review is guided by urban design objectives, compatibility with site-specific context, input from the community
- Review can add time, but can take less additional time if it runs concurrently with the design process
- Design changes can add to design and construction cost
- Discretionary permits can add both time and uncertainty as to whether a project will be approved, and could have the risk of appeal

	Cambridge	Boston	Somerville
Applicability	50,000+ SF (or 20,000+ SF in BA, BA-1, BA-2)	50,000+ SF	Varies by district
Requirement	Review and approval by Planning Board based on general conformance with citywide urban design objectives	Review and approval by BPDA Board	Design Review as a component of Master Plan Special Permit, Special Permit, and Site Plan Approval

	Cambridge	Boston	Somerville
Applicability	Examples of thresholds: Height over 4-5 stories in Harvard, Central Squares; 6+/12+ townhouse or multifamily units in some residential districts	20,000+ SF or 15+ units	Varies by district
Requirement	Review and approval by Planning Board based on site design criteria	May require review and approval by BPDA staff	Design Review as a component of Master Plan Special Permit, Special Permit, and Site Plan Approval

	Cambridge	Boston	Somerville
Applicability	Development in “Areas of Special Planning Concern”; Affordable Housing Overlay Projects	Unspecified	Unspecified
Requirement	Non-binding review by staff, public, advisory committee, or Planning Board	Unspecified	Unspecified

Development Scale	Standards that Apply
Any construction	Climate Resilience (new buildings only), Specialized Stretch Code (July 2023), Advisory Review (in Areas of Special Planning Concern, Affordable Housing Overlay)
6+ units	Townhouse Special Permit (Res. B only)
10,000+ SF/10+ units	Inclusionary Housing (residential only)
12+ units	Multifamily/Townhouse Special Permits (Res. C, C-1, C-1A Districts only)
20,000+ SF	Project Review Special Permit (BA, BA-1, BA-2 Districts only)
25,000+ SF	Green Building Requirements, Green Roof Requirement (new buildings only), Building and Site Plan Requirements
30,000+ SF	Incentive Zoning (non-residential only)
50,000+ SF	Project Review w/Transportation Impact Mitigation, Infrastructure Requirements, Emissions Accounting



1 Cedar Street

- 8 new residential units
- Advisory Review (Mass. Ave. Overlay)
- BZA setback relief



116 Norfolk Street

- 24 new residential units (affordable)
- Green Building Project
- Climate Resilience (advisory)
- Advisory Review (AHO)



585 Third Street

- 500,000 SF commercial
- Incentive Zoning Project
- Green Building Project
- Green Roof (reduced by SP)
- Climate Resilience (advisory)
- Transportation Impact Review
- Planning Board SP Approval (Project Review + PUD)

April 4, 2023

City of Cambridge - Community Development Department



Conclusions

- Standards overlap – the net increase in construction cost may be different than the sum of each individual requirement
- Some requirements affect revenue rather than costs – e.g., inclusionary
- Some standards can increase construction costs but reduce operating costs (e.g., green building standards can reduce future utility costs)
- Some standards can add value as well as costs – e.g., higher rent for LEED-rated or resilient buildings
- In the long run, higher development costs due to regulatory requirements might be offset by lower land costs – though it takes time to play out

- **Predictability** – knowing what the standards will be long before conceiving a development project (e.g., phase-in period)
- **Clarity** – avoiding standards that are open to broad interpretation
- **Flexibility** – standards that can be adapted to different types of scenarios and conditions, avoiding the need to seek relief
- **Consistency** – review process has a determinate length and avoids adding unexpected costs during the process