



City of Cambridge Department of Public Works

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Summary of Draft Amendments to Land Use Regulations

The draft amendments update the Land Use Regulations under Cambridge Municipal Code Chapter 13.16 to clarify which project thresholds are required to apply for a Department of Public Works (DPW) Stormwater Control Permit. Changes to the Stormwater Management Standards (i.e., stormwater storage and water quality requirements) are *not proposed* as part of these amendments.

The draft amendments also update the Land Use Regulations to clarify which project thresholds require a Stormwater Site Plan Review by the DPW as part of a Building Permit. The purpose of these updates is to provide clearer, more predictable requirements for developers and property owners. Changes to what type of projects require Building Permits from Inspectional Services or what Building Permits trigger DPW Review are *not proposed* as part of these amendments. Rather, proposed amendments revise thresholds (e.g., project size) that determine what projects that already trigger DPW Review of a Building Permit must meet the Cambridge Stormwater Management Standards.

Updates to the project thresholds are proposed for several reasons:

- **To support the City's regulatory requirements for nutrient reduction as required by the City's MS4 (Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System) permit with EPA.** While the City incorporates stormwater controls into street and sidewalk, park, and other City projects, the City cannot meet required nutrient reductions goals through projects solely on municipally owned parcels and within the public right of way. Stormwater treatment on private property as part of redevelopment projects is a critical part of the City's stormwater program to meet federal requirements for stormwater improvements.
- **For consistency with current Cambridge zoning regulations.** Recent zoning changes, such as removal of the minimum parking requirements and adjustments of project sizes that trigger a Special Permit from the Planning Board, reduce the number of redevelopment projects that trigger Stormwater Control Permits under existing project thresholds. In addition to this allowing meaningful sized projects to avoid our Stormwater Control Permit requirements, it also created uncertainty for the project proponent on the specific requirements related to stormwater. The goal of the proposed amendments is to clarify City expectations for stormwater improvements on large and mid-sized projects (e.g., parcel size 20,000 sq ft and larger) with adequate space to make stormwater upgrades. As noted above, capturing redevelopment projects are a critical part of the

City's stormwater program to meet federal stormwater requirements. Developmental impacts of projects on City infrastructure, such as stormwater, are considered independent of land use.

- **To provide clarity on the DPW permitting process for smaller projects.** The proposed amendments clearly define projects by parcel size and other criteria to clarify when Stormwater Management Standards are and are not applicable. For smaller projects, this helps to provide clear guidance and results in expedited permitting by identifying projects where stormwater improvements are not required.

Under the current Land Use Regulations, projects meeting the specified criteria require a Stormwater Control Permit, and projects under the thresholds are evaluated by DPW for whether stormwater improvements are required as part of a Building Permit. The proposed amendments to the regulations clearly place all projects into one of three categories as outlined in the table on the following page.

Public Comment

The draft Land Use regulations will be available online on DPW's Stormwater Webpage for a 30-day public comment period. Comments may be submitted to stormwater@cambridgema.gov by September 12, 2026.



Modifications to Project Criteria Requiring Stormwater Management

Projects in Cambridge fall into one of three categories related to City requirements for stormwater management. Reference the most recent criteria below to determine project category and associated stormwater management requirements:

Stormwater Control Permit Projects in this category must apply for a Stormwater Control Permit from DPW.	
If a project meets <u>one or more</u> of the following criteria, a Stormwater Control Permit is required: • disturb one (1) or more acres of land • exceeds fifty thousand (50,000) square feet of Gross Floor Area • has project parcels(s) equal to or greater than 20,000 sq ft in size • require a New Construction Building Permit from the City of Cambridge on a project parcel(s) equal to or greater than 10,000 sq ft in size • provide or maintain parking for five (5) or more vehicles • require a Project Review Special Permit from the Planning Board • in the opinion of the City Engineer may result in an adverse impact of the municipal Sewer, Combined Sewer, Stormwater Drainage Systems or Water Resources.	<u>Stormwater Management Requirements:</u> Fully meet Cambridge Stormwater Management Standards for water quality, recharge and peak rate as outlined in the June 2021 Supplemental Directive
Stormwater Site Plan Review by DPW (as part of Building Permit) This category is applicable to projects that require a Building Permit from the City, and based on project scope, the building permit requires DPW Review*. If the following criteria are met, a Stormwater Site Plan review will be part of DPW's broader project review.	
If a project meets <u>one</u> of the following criteria, a Stormwater Site Plan Review by DPW is required as part of the Building Permit: • has a project parcel(s) equal to or greater than 5,000 sq ft in size, OR • increases impervious surface on the project parcel, including new building additions, by more than 1,000 square feet.	<u>Stormwater Management Requirements:</u> Meet Cambridge Stormwater Management Standards for water quality and peak rate as outlined in the June 2021 Supplemental Directive to the maximum extent practicable .
No Cambridge Stormwater Management Requirements This category is applicable to projects that require a Building Permit from the City, and based on project scope, the building permit requires DPW Review*. If the following criteria are met, a Stormwater Site Plan review is NOT part of DPW's broader project review.	
If a project meets <u>both</u> of the following criteria, no stormwater management requirements apply: • has a project parcel(s) less than 5,000 sq ft in size, AND • no increase in impervious surface greater than 1,000 square feet on the project parcel, including building additions.	No <i>requirements</i> under Cambridge regulations, but recommended stormwater improvements include rain gardens, pervious driveways and walkways, dry wells, rain gardens, disconnection of roof leaders etc.

*Examples of Building Permits that do not require DPW Review including projects limited to window and door replacement, interior renovations including kitchens and bathrooms, insulation / weather sealing, roofing, siding etc.