



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Community Development Department

To: Planning Board

From: Community Development Department (CDD) Staff

Date: September 19, 2019

Re: **CambridgeSide Galleria Associates Trust Zoning Petition**

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Overview

New England Development and CambridgeSide Galleria Associates Trust have filed a revised version of their zoning petition to establish a new Planned Unit Development district (PUD-8) in East Cambridge, with development controls contained in a new Section 13.100. The petitioner seeks to amend the Zoning Ordinance to allow for the redevelopment of the CambridgeSide mall into a mixed-use center by maintaining a core of retail use and adding commercial and residential uses. The Planning Board first heard a version of this zoning proposal on March 19, 2019 and continued the hearing so that the petitioner could respond to a set of issues raised at the meeting. Subsequent hearings were held on May 14, 2019 and May 28, 2019, but the Planning Board did not issue a final report and the petition expired with no action by the City Council.

The petition continues to propose creating a new PUD district (PUD-8) that would exist separately from the existing PUD-4 District and would allow additional Gross Floor Area (GFA), height, and uses beyond what is currently allowed in PUD-4. The area of rezoning includes a portion of the PUD approved by the Planning Board in 1987 (PB-66), which authorized the creation of the CambridgeSide retail mall (formerly known as Galleria at Riverside Place and CambridgeSide Galleria), an office building to the south (now attached to the One Charles Park building, which was separately permitted as PB-65), and a residential building to the east (later amended to a hotel use and now the Hotel Marlowe). The PB-66 development contains a mix of uses, but is dominated by retail activities in the mall building, with the hotel and offices being secondary uses. The proposed zoning would allow the addition of new commercial (office, laboratory, and/or retail) and residential development to the mall site.

While the overall concept of the new petition remains consistent with the last iteration of the original petition (dating to May 2019), there are a few substantive changes. Mostly notably, the maximum square feet of Net New Gross Floor Area (GFA) is reduced from 625,000 to 575,000 square feet and the share of residential development increased from 20% to 30%. In addition, the allowed heights have been substantially revised to reflect the new height program. The design guidelines have also been applied more broadly across the entire district (not just First Street) and include additional step-back standards. The current petition also eliminates minimum parking ratios, adds a requirement for a utilities plan, and replaces the word "project" with "development" throughout the text. The recent submittal also outlines more clearly what public benefits would be included in a letter of commitment.

The purpose of this memo is to summarize the changes made by the applicant since the original petition and other outstanding issues from the review of the previous petition. Attached to this memo are the three previous staff memos from the original petition, which contains relevant background information related to the proposal.

Planning Board Comments on the Original Petition

Although Planning Board members generally expressed support for allowing additional development on this site, the members expressed some concerns about the proposal put forth in the original petition. The following summarizes some of the outstanding comments made by the Planning Board that were unresolved by the final hearing on the original petition:

- Total square footage of development;
- Percentage of residential use and provisions for affordable housing;
- Allowed height and FAR;
- Location of uses on the site and within buildings;
- Capacity of energy infrastructure to meet development needs;
- Amount of public benefits relative to project value;
- Legality of overlapping PUDs;
- Removal of conflict and consistency language;
- Inclusion of conditions in zoning text v. commitment letter.

Comments on Revised Petition

The following is an overview of the revised petition, focusing on the changes that have been made as they relate to issues that were discussed in the prior Planning Board discussions. At the end of this document is a chart summarizing major changes and maps illustrating the new proposal.

Total Development

The current petition proposes a maximum square footage of Net New GFA of 575,000 square feet, which represents a 50,000 square-foot reduction from the original petition proposal of 625,000 square feet.

Because the PUD-8 zoning would be based entirely on “Net New GFA,” it remains somewhat difficult to assess what the total amount of development will be on the site. At the May 28, 2019 Planning Board meeting, the Chair suggested that the petitioner prepare a chart that specifies the amount of square footage included in the project, including existing GFA, existing GFA that will be unchanged, existing GFA that will be reallocated (e.g., retail stores to be replaced with new buildings), and net new GFA. Planning Board members indicated that having a better understanding of these numbers would allow them to more accurately analyze the project overall and the timing of requiring residential development within the context of the overall development project.

One specific issue that arose in past discussion is whether the existing above-grade portion of the parking garage, which is anticipated to be demolished, would count as “Existing GFA.” The petition text counts existing GFA “excluding exemptions under Section 5.25.3 pursuant to subsection (g) of such definition,” referring to a section of the Zoning Ordinance stating that above-grade parking structures in existence on or before September 15, 2000 are not counted as GFA but that above-grade parking structures built after that date are counted as GFA. The language of the petition seems to suggest that the existing above-grade parking on the CambridgeSide site, which was built before 2000, would not be counted as existing GFA per normal standards. However, it has not been clear in past discussions whether the above-grade parking is intended to be counted or not counted within existing GFA.

Housing

The current petition requires that 30% of the Net New GFA be used for residential development. This was increased from the 20% required in the original petition. Given the changes in total allowed development, this means that the minimum residential GFA (assuming full buildout) would increase from 125,000 square feet to 172,500 square feet, and the maximum additional non-residential GFA would decrease from 500,000 square feet to 402,500 square feet.

The current petition limits the amount of non-residential Net New GFA that can be developed prior to the development of residential units. This “trigger” is tied to a certificate of occupancy for more than 325,000 square feet or the issuance of a building permit for the second new building. This is a lower threshold than the 400,000-square-foot trigger proposed in May. The intention of this type of threshold is to set a general expectation for how the residential development will be phased relative to other portions of the development, which is then further detailed in the phasing plan to be approved by the Planning Board. This proposal suggests that a non-residential building could proceed in the first phase of development, but residential development would need to occur before or concurrently with a second non-residential building.

In addition, the current petition requires 50% of the Dwelling Unit Net Floor Area to be affordable, with half of those (25% of all Dwelling Unit Net Floor Area) dedicated to low-moderate income households pursuant to Inclusionary Housing requirements and the other half (an additional 25% of all Dwelling Unit Net Floor Area) dedicated to middle-income households. Again, with the changes to overall GFA and affordable housing percentages, this would mean the GFA dedicated to affordable housing would increase from 25,000 square feet (for low-moderate income) to 43,125 square feet for low-moderate income plus 43,125 square feet for middle-income.

The petition was also revised to contain provisions for affordable Family-Sized Dwelling Units. However, this language is complicated because it refers to the requirements contained in the Inclusionary Housing requirements in Section 11.200, which require a certain minimum square footage of residential unit space to be allocated to Affordable Units. For any Inclusionary Housing project above a certain size threshold, at least one-fifth of the square footage allocated to Affordable Units must be “Family-Sized Dwelling Units,” defined as units with at least three bedrooms and 1,100 square feet of space. But in general, the zoning allows and encourages as much of the required square footage for Affordable Units to be allocated to Family-Sized Units. It is unclear whether the petition is intended to increase the

required allocation of Family-Sized Units above what is normally required, or to simply affirm that as much of the required floor area for Affordable Units and Middle-Income Units will be allocated to Family-Sized Units as is practicable given the ultimate design of the project.

These changes demonstrate a significantly increased commitment to housing and affordable housing, which responds to comments made by the Board. However, the following are some potential concerns:

- Middle-Income Units. Although the need for middle-income housing has been articulated by members of the Planning Board and others, the actual demand for income-restricted middle-income units has been shown to significantly lag behind the demand for other affordable units. Currently, there are nearly 3,500 applicants on the City's wait list for low/moderate-income rental units; in contrast, there are fewer than 75 applicants on the wait list for middle-income rental units. This is partly because rents for middle-income units begin to approach market-rate rents for units in older housing stock or in other communities, and therefore there are more options for middle-income renters that do not require annual recertification for eligibility. There are currently 15 middle-income rental units available to renters, but the City has had a difficult time filling them with tenants. It is worth considering whether the proposed even mix of low/moderate-income units and middle-income units is the right mix given the variation in demand.
- Standards for Eligibility. The petition sets standards for eligibility and rent of Middle-Income Units, but leaves out many of the detailed provisions in Section 11.200 that deal with those topics as well as implementation and enforcement. It would be preferable for the Middle-Income Units to be subject to the other standards for Affordable Units set forth in Sections 11.203.3 and 11.203.4, but adjusted to conform to the intended income range of 80%-120% of area median income (AMI).
- Phasing Threshold. The language in the petition is somewhat different from other triggers for residential development within large, mixed-use projects and could be made more specific. For example, in the Alexandria PUD (section 13.59.4), the construction of a specific amount of residential GFA had to commence prior to the issuance of a building permit for an amount of GFA for non-residential development. The current petition refers to residential "development," and it would be clearer if the word "construction" were used.
- Incentive Zoning. Although the language has not changed from the original petition, it should be noted that the current petition states that only "Net New GFA" would be subject to Incentive Zoning contributions per Section 11.200 of the Zoning Ordinance. However, Article 2.000 of the Zoning Ordinance defines an Incentive Project as any new development that includes construction of new buildings or additions to existing buildings to accommodate identified uses; substantial rehabilitation of buildings to accommodate identified uses for which the buildings were not originally used; or GFA whose use is changed from a use not included in the list of identified uses to an identified use. The proposed language could create ambiguity within the ordinance, and it is recommended that the petition be amended so that Incentive Zoning would

be applied in a manner consistent with the definition of Incentive Project and with other development throughout the city.

Commercial Uses

In hearings on the previous petition, the Planning Board had some concerns about the siting of different uses on the site, particularly regarding the proximity of laboratory uses and residential space. Planning Board members preferred having residential use in the tallest building and discouraged combining laboratory and residential use in the same building. Some members also indicated that their willingness to accept proposed building heights would be based on the total amount of housing and its location within the development project. The current petition, as with the previous petition, does not specify where particular uses will be located, though the housing component has been increased, the commercial component is decreased, and the height limits are decreased overall (as discussed below).

Allowed Height

Following suggestions made by Planning Board members, the revised petition describes the range of allowances in a more simplified way and includes a map that depicts the different height zones. CDD has also prepared a map of height limitations based on the proposed text, so that it can be compared more easily to maps that were prepared for the original petition (see attachments).

The current petition allows a range of building heights for a PUD-8 development, with a maximum allowed height of 155 feet. This is lower than the originally-proposed maximum height of 185 feet as well as the 165-foot height limit proposed in May. Like the original petition, the current petition retains the baseline height of 85 feet allowed under the PUD-4 standards, with zones allowing greater heights that increase with increasing distance from the Lechmere Canal. One key difference in the revised proposal is that the taller height zones are only along First Street and Land Boulevard, leaving the central part of the site at the present 85-foot height limit.

In the revised proposal, the height limit of 85 feet is retained immediately adjacent to the Lechmere Canal, similar to the original proposal. Along First Street, the height limits range from 95 feet to 145 feet to 155 feet, from north to south; in the original proposal, they ranged from 135 feet to 185 feet. Along Land Boulevard, there is a 155-foot height zone at the corner with CambridgeSide Place, while the original proposal allowed up to 185 feet at that location.

In concept, the height scheme is similar to what was discussed in previous hearings, but provides greater clarity regarding the location and height of intended new buildings. Overall, the new height limits are lower than what was discussed in the previous proposal. The new proposal does not distinguish between residential and non-residential heights, as was suggested by some Planning Board members in the prior set of hearings.

One additional issue that was raised is that although the current zoning allows heights up to 85 feet, most of the existing mall building is closer to 60 feet in height, and staff believes that there are key locations (such as the Lechmere Canal frontage and existing central atrium) where it would be preferable to maintain the existing building heights if taller buildings are added elsewhere on the site. Although the Petitioner has not proposed new development in key areas such as the Lechmere Canal

frontage or the central mall atrium, it would be helpful if the height regime or guidelines provided clarity about how the Planning Board should evaluate proposals that might increase existing building heights within the 85-foot height limit zone.

Parking

The current version of the petition follows the language in the most recent prior update from May, which would establish maximum parking ratios for new uses but would not impose minimum parking requirements for those uses. This development scenario is different from many others because there is an existing below-grade parking garage, which operates mainly as a principal use garage (with a Commercial Parking Permit) and is underutilized in terms of its capacity despite serving the retail uses on the site and some other uses in the area. Therefore, staff has recommended an approach that would place minimal zoning restrictions on parking and allow the existing spaces to be used in the most efficient way, subject to conditions that would be established during the special permit process and other regulations applicable to commercial parking.

The following is a summary of staff comments related to the current proposal:

- Minimum Residential Parking. Staff is generally supportive of removing minimum parking requirements for non-residential uses, but there may be some concern that there is no provision for parking that would be available for residents of the new development. A minimum residential parking ratio could be established in the PUD zoning, or the zoning text could clarify more explicitly that the Planning Board shall establish requirements to govern the provision of parking for residential uses in approving a PUD Final Development Plan.
- Maximum Retail Parking. The proposed maximum parking ratio for retail, consumer services, and restaurant use is 5 spaces/1,000 square feet, which is significantly higher than what has been recommended for other recently-approved zoning changes in Cambridge. A more standard maximum ratio is approximately 1 space/1,000 square feet or slightly higher, based on demand. However, as noted further below, retail uses are more likely to rely on the available commercial parking facilities rather than relying on accessory parking. The proposed maximum parking ratios for other non-residential uses seem consistent with the limits that have been recommended in comparable areas.
- Shared Parking. The Traffic, Parking, and Transportation Department has some suggestions for improving the requirements for a “shared parking” analysis as discussed in Section 13.106.5:
 - It should be clarified that the purpose of a shared parking plan is to consider parking demands for different land uses that have peak parking demands at different times of a day, thus enabling parking facilities to be used more efficiently.
 - The shared parking analysis should be approved by the Planning Board, with guidance from City staff.
 - The shared parking analysis may be approved as a working plan that can be adjusted over time, as dictated by changes in parking demands that may occur in the future, with approval by City staff.

- Interaction with Existing Commercial Parking. It is unclear how the proposed parking requirements for PUD-8 development will co-exist with the parking requirements for existing PUD-4 development, the existing PUD Special Permit (PB-66), and the existing CambridgeSide Galleria Commercial Parking Facility Permit (most recently amended in May, 2000). Before new zoning is enacted, it would be helpful to understand how the new zoning will affect the Commercial Parking Permit and how it might need to be amended. The current parking facility permit is for 2,538 parking spaces, largely for retail patrons and others to use on an hourly basis, some of which are restricted to hotel use and some of which are time-restricted. Residents and nearby employees are also allowed to purchase monthly parking passes. It is unclear how this development would impact these existing commercial parking uses.
- Innovative Parking/Bicycle Parking Solutions. Given the scale and nature of the existing facility, the redevelopment could provide an opportunity to advance City goals such as adding a significant number of electric vehicle charging stations. It may also provide an opportunity for more holistic bicycle parking solutions, such as installing and maintaining a greater number of Bluebikes stations to meet some of the bicycle parking requirements. No specific standards are recommended, but these ideas could be noted in the zoning as ideas to be studied during the PUD development review process.

Urban Design

As in most PUD zoning, the approach of this proposal is not to specify strict setbacks or other dimensional limitations in zoning, and to leave discretion to the Planning Board to approve specific development standards through the PUD development review process. However, this zoning proposal establishes a set of design guidelines with explicit standards to guide the Planning Board's review and approval – although the Board could approve a Final Development Plan with variations or modifications, it would have to make an overall finding that the Development Plan meets these criteria.

Urban design staff have the following comments on the design guidelines proposed in the current petition, some of which have been discussed in prior sections:

- Setbacks. The current petition sets a standard for new buildings on First Street to have a 10-foot setback from the sidewalk. This was not included in the original petition but was incorporated into the May revisions. The importance of these setbacks is to create an improved environment for pedestrians, with street furniture, bicycle parking, tree plantings, and other features. At a minimum, there should be at least four to five feet of clearance for pedestrian access in addition to any spaces used for these features. While staff have not reviewed this as a detailed design proposal, studies undertaken so far suggest that below the 65-foot datum, the streetwall facades for new buildings should be set back 12 feet, and the ground floors (or ground and second floors) should not be recessed more than five feet back from the streetwall façade. Between the ground floor and the 65-foot datum, facades of new buildings should be aligned as much as possible to create a consistent streetwall.
- Stepbacks. The current petition specifies, for new or renovated buildings that exceed 85 feet, a 10-foot stepback at 65 feet in height and an additional 10-foot stepback at 135 feet in height (if

applicable), which is a change from the original petition, as well as a 15-foot stepback of rooftop mechanical penthouses. It also encourages new or renovated buildings that are lower than 85 feet to incorporate a non-stepback horizontal articulation at 65 feet (which is the base height limit in the BA district). The major change from the original petition is that this standard would be specified for new buildings along all streets, not just along First Street.

- Building Spacing. The Summary of Zoning Changes in the new petition states that there is a requirement to space the buildings to provide adequate light, air, and views. However, building separation (like setbacks) is not strictly required, but recommended in design guidelines that would be applied during the Planning Board’s review. Consistent with the illustrations the petitioner has shown at prior hearings, staff believes it is important for new buildings to be separated by courtyards or other significant breaks to avoid long lengths of unbroken building mass. Also, an effort should be made to align these breaks along First Street with Spring and Hurley Streets.
- Open Space and Connectivity. The current petition expands the PUD-8 Special Permit Criteria in Section 13.102.4(c) to maintain the existing ground-level pedestrian connection between Charles Park and Lechmere Canal Park (the current mall atrium), which has always been regarded as part of the “public space” component of the project. It would be helpful to provide a summary and map detailing what areas are included to meet the current (and proposed) open space requirement. It would also be helpful if there was some indication of whether the mall atrium would be preserved as a skylit public space or whether it might be further enclosed or altered. This section could also be improved by recommending the creation of one or more pedestrian connections between First Street and the atrium (as suggested in some prior presentations), preferably aligned with Spring Street or Hurley Street.
- Active Uses and Ground Floor Design. The current petition expands the applicability of Section 13.107.1 Active Uses to new buildings immediately fronting on First Street, CambridgeSide Place, and Lechmere Canal Park. In the original petition, this provision only applied to new buildings immediately fronting on First Street. The current petition does not provide for active ground floor uses in existing buildings that will be retained and renovated or in new buildings along Land Boulevard, which was a topic of discussion at prior hearings and could be discussed further. Another consideration for ground floor uses is that some activation could come from non-retail uses, such as instructional/educational uses or institutional uses such as museums and galleries.
- Design Review. The current petition includes a new section, 13.102.11 Design Review that gives the Planning Board discretion to “incorporate criteria and additional guidelines for future design review of individual building sites and open spaces in support of its findings.” This provision was not included in the original petition but is consistent with the way in which the Planning Board normally conducts PUD review for large, phased, multi-site projects. In addition to the topics listed in the petition, design review should consider sidewalk widths and features, the continuity of the streetwall, the height and façade expression of ground floors, and window to wall ratios.

- Review Materials. The Development Proposal submission should include ground level views from significant vantage points, photometric studies, wind studies, glare studies, shadow studies, and an assessment of projected future heat impacts.

Environmental Impact Review

The current petition includes several requirements to report on sustainable characteristics of a project, including a “Net Zero Plan” describing how the proposed development will evaluate the feasibility of achieving the goals of the Net Zero Action Plan, a greenhouse gas emissions analysis for each new building, an evaluation of the potential for on-site energy generation within the PUD-8 district, and a Sustainability and Resiliency Plan.

In general, projects that are enabled through new zoning are expected to commit to high levels of sustainability. However, it is important to be clear that the baseline minimum standards for all new development will still apply, and that new buildings created through a long-term phased development plan will be subject to the most current standards applicable at the time they are designed. The proposed zoning should not be interpreted to conflict with the updated Green Building Requirements that have recently been proposed for discussion, or the Building Energy Use Disclosure Ordinance (BEUDO), which will also be updated in accordance with the Net Zero Action Plan. For a long-range plan, it should be noted that the Net Zero Action Plan anticipates designing all new commercial and multifamily residential buildings to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2025, and new laboratory buildings to do the same by 2030.

It should also be clear that new development will follow the latest standards recommended through the Climate Change Preparedness and Resilience (CCPR) planning effort and the related Climate Resilience Zoning Task Force (CRZTF), which will consider measures to mitigate the impacts of increased heat and flooding over time. Understanding of sustainable design practice is evolving, and as the petition suggests, the development review process should rely on the latest knowledge and best practices to enable a highly sustainable development.

Noise and Light Mitigation Measures

The current petition expands the requirements for rooftop mechanical equipment noise mitigation to include a specific component related to new or substantially altered buildings that contain laboratory use. It requires Best Available Noise Control Technology and provides an option for the Planning Board to issue conditions with a Special Permit. The current petition also requires the same type of building to install a Building Automation System that would reduce light pollution after 9:30 p.m. As recommended in the prior version of the petition, it allows the Planning Board to issue conditions with a Special Permit regarding light mitigation for buildings containing laboratory uses.

Capacity of Energy Infrastructure to Meet Development Needs

The current petition contains a new provision requiring Development Proposals and Final Development Plans to include a Utilities Plan. This requirement asks the applicant to demonstrate that the capacity of existing water, sewer, gas, and electric infrastructure is adequate to serve individual building sites at the

time of their development. If the capacity is not adequate, the requirement asks applicants to describe appropriate infrastructure capacity improvements.

This addition seems to address the same issue that was the motivation for a City Council zoning petition heard at the last Planning Board meeting. Issues regarding the degree to which the Planning Board can influence state-regulated public utilities were raised by CDD and DPW staff in a prior communication and discussed by Board members. The Board concluded that it may be helpful for developments to provide information about their projected energy demands, but that it would be outside the Board's scope to make findings regarding utility infrastructure over which neither the City nor the developer have control.

Other Zoning Language Issues

As recommended in prior hearings by the Planning Board, the current petition has eliminated Section 13.102.10 "Conflict" that appeared in the original petition. The petition does still contain language in Section 13.102.8 regarding building permit lapse, which was raised as a concern by Board members at previous hearings.

Given the nature of the proposed zoning, it is still not fully clear how the PUD-8 requirements would interact with the PUD-4 requirements, given that they would both be applied to development occurring on the same site. However, because both are PUD districts that allow the Planning Board latitude to approve and amend development plans, there is a mechanism for ambiguities to be resolved through the review process and clarified in granting a PUD special permit and/or amendment.

Letter of Commitment

In the previous hearings on this petition, as well as other zoning petitions, the Planning Board discussed its own role in reviewing zoning proposals that are intended to enable development on a particular site. For such petitions, it is important for the petitioner to affirmatively state what benefits are being offered in exchange for the enabling zoning amendment, in order to establish an enforceable contract that is binding on the property owner. This statement of benefits is usually included in a letter of commitment.

Because a letter of commitment is negotiated with the City Council, it was not part of the original petition when it was first heard by the Planning Board. Some Board members expressed discomfort with reviewing and making a recommendation on such a proposal without fully understanding and being able to evaluate the benefits. Board members expressed a desire to better understand these benefits, and for the petitioner to provide an economic rationale for the size and scale of the proposal, to better assess whether the benefits to the City are balanced with the benefits that the petitioner would gain. The current petition adds a new section that would bind the property owner to a Letter of Commitment, and the petition cover letter outlines what would be included in that letter, though a letter itself is not provided.

It is important to note that although the petitioner refers to these commitments as "mitigation," the City would not view them as replacing the project mitigation that would be required of any development project that is not seeking a zoning change, such as transportation impact mitigation (through the Article 19.000 Project Review process) and required City infrastructure improvements.

According to the petition cover letter, the letter of commitment would address the following:

- Contributions to the City’s Tree Replacement Fund, East Cambridge Scholarship Fund, and Cambridge Arts Initiative;
- Increased affordable housing;
- Reconstruction of the DCR boathouse to host a public dock (subject to approval);
- Improvements to and extension of the Canal Park pathway to allow pedestrians to access the boathouse property under the Land Boulevard Bridge;
- Community meeting space for local groups, residents, and small business to use free of charge;
- Community gathering space through events;
- Formation of an advisory committee on open space and retail;
- Development of a curriculum-based program with the School Department;
- Parking for East Cambridge residents during snow emergencies;
- Incubator space for small businesses and non-profits;
- Reduced rental rate for a daycare facility;
- Reduced rental rate for local retailers;
- Initiative to close First Street between Cambridgeside Place and Thorndike Way to vehicular traffic on Sunday afternoons between Memorial Day and Labor Day to facilitate pedestrian access as well as activities and programming.

Staff have not studied these commitments in detail, but on an initial read, CDD staff (in consultation with other departments) had the following comments for future refinement:

- While staff is supportive of the commitment to bringing the DCR boathouse back into productive use, the word “reconstruct” should be replaced with “renovate” or “rehabilitate,” since “reconstruct” typically indicates that a building will be demolished and rebuilt with new materials. The City may want to require that the applicant submits periodic documentation of the review process to the Cambridge Historical Commission to ensure that work is in accordance with appropriate Federal, Commonwealth, and City regulations for historic properties.
- It would be helpful to clarify certain aspects of the retail provisions. For instance, staff recommends specifying that the open space and retail committee should meet at least bi-annually, and that each meeting should have a quorum of committee members. In addition, a representative from the East Cambridge business community should be included as a member of the committee. There should also be clarification on how “reduced rental rates” would be determined, as well as clear definitions for “small business” and “local retail.”

Summary of Proposed Changes

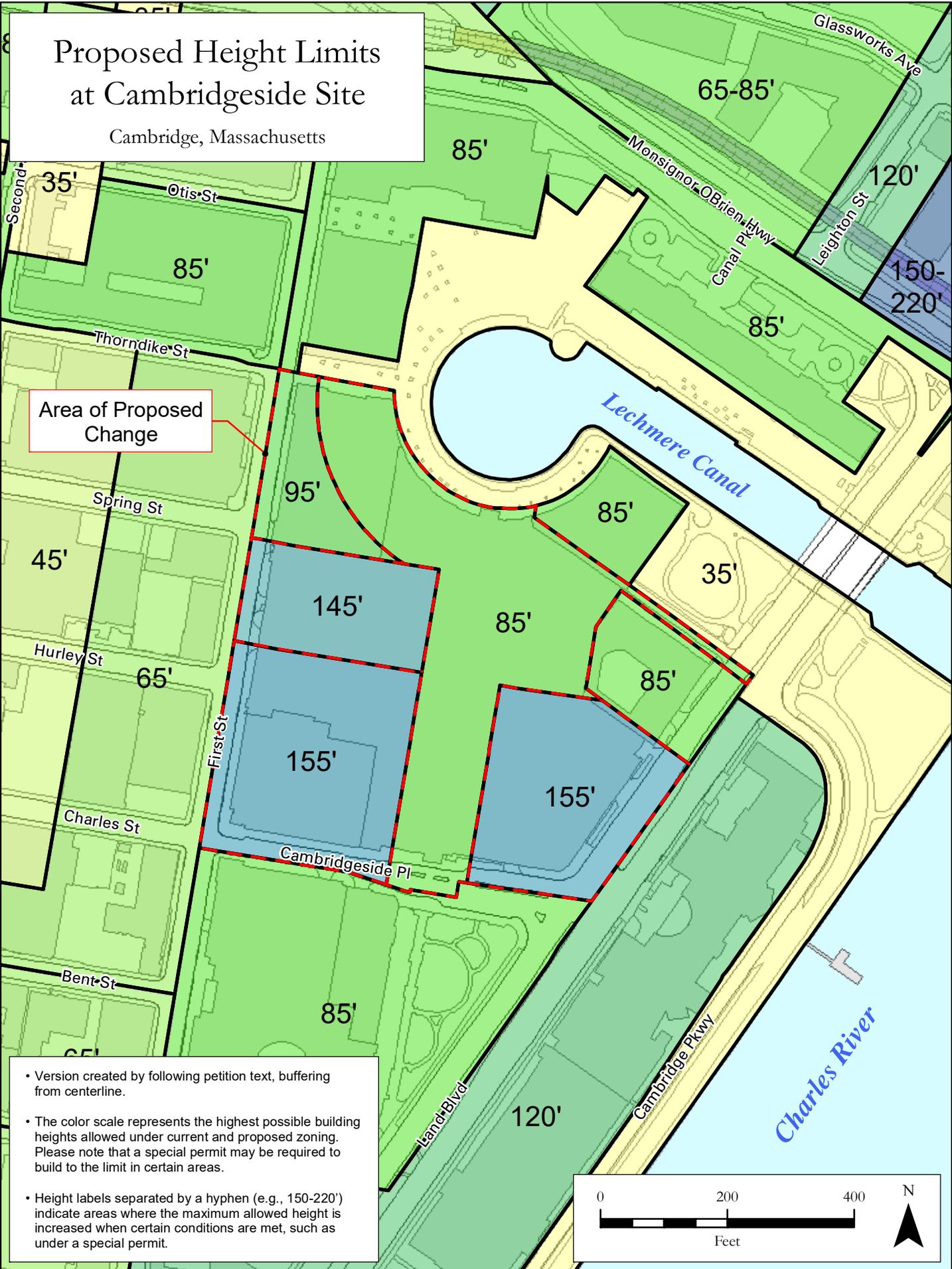
The table below compares the requirements for development allowed under the PUD-4 zoning with the requirements for the additional “net new” development allowed by the proposed PUD-8 zoning in the original and current zoning petitions.

Zoning Limitations	Current PUD-4 Zoning	Original Proposed PUD-8 Zoning	Current Proposed PUD-8 Zoning
Allowed Uses	residential, institutional, offices and laboratories, retail, and other uses with written determination by Planning Board	residential, institutional, offices and laboratories, retail, light industry and other uses with written determination by Planning Board	residential, institutional, offices and laboratories, retail, light industry and other uses with written determination by Planning Board
Max. Gross Floor Area (GFA)	766,000* SF (existing)	625,000 SF (additional net new)	575,000 SF (additional net new)
Min. Residential Use	No minimum	20% of net new development	30% of net new development
Min. Lot Area per Dwelling Unit	450 sq.ft.	No minimum	No minimum
Max. Height	85'	85' / 135' / 185'	85' / 95' / 145' / 155'
Required Setbacks	As approved by Planning Board in a PUD Final Development Plan	As approved by Planning Board in a PUD Final Development Plan, subject to design guidelines	As approved by Planning Board in a PUD Final Development Plan, subject to design guidelines
Min. Open Space	20% (may be met on adjacent sites)	20% (not additional to PUD-4)	20% (not additional to PUD-4)

** Includes development approved by PB-66 only within the boundaries of the proposed PUD-8 district.*

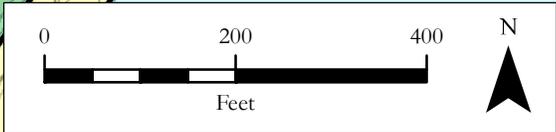
Proposed Height Limits at Cambridgeside Site

Cambridge, Massachusetts



Area of Proposed Change

- Version created by following petition text, buffering from centerline.
- The color scale represents the highest possible building heights allowed under current and proposed zoning. Please note that a special permit may be required to build to the limit in certain areas.
- Height labels separated by a hyphen (e.g., 150-220') indicate areas where the maximum allowed height is increased when certain conditions are met, such as under a special permit.





CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Community Development Department

To: Planning Board
From: Jeff Roberts, Director of Zoning and Development
Swaathi Joseph, Zoning Associate Planner
Date: March 13, 2019
Re: **CambridgeSide PUD-8 Zoning Petition**

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Overview

New England Development and Cambridgeside Galleria Associates Trust have proposed amending the provisions of the Zoning Ordinance to establish a new Planned Unit Development district (PUD-8) in East Cambridge, with development controls contained in a new Section 13.100. The district would encompass a single contiguous area along First Street and cover parts of the existing PUD-4 District. *See attached maps.*

In concept, the petition would allow additional mixed-use development in addition to any rights previously granted under PUD-4 development controls in the areas where the PUD-8 District overlaps the PUD-4 District. The proposed PUD-8 development rights are not intended to merge with the existing PUD-4 development rights.

The area of rezoning includes a portion of the PUD approved by the Planning Board in 1987 (PB-66), authorizing the creation of the CambridgeSide retail mall (formerly known as Galleria at Riverside Place and CambridgeSide Galleria), an office building to the south (now attached to the One Charles Park building, which was separately permitted as PB-65), and a residential building to the east (later amended to a hotel use and now the Hotel Marlowe). The PB-66 development contains a mix of uses, but is dominated by retail activities in the mall building, with the hotel and offices being secondary uses. The proposed zoning would allow the addition of new commercial (office, laboratory, and/or retail) and residential development to the mall site.

The purpose of this memo is to provide background information on various topics related to this petition. It includes three major parts:

- A summary of the current and proposed zoning (supplemented by attached maps).
- A summary of past planning work that is relevant to this area.
- An overview of planning topics that are addressed in some form in the petition.

Staff will be available to discuss this information and respond to questions at the hearings.

Current and Proposed Zoning

The following is a summary of the specific changes proposed. Please refer to the attached maps for reference.

Area of Proposed Rezoning

The proposal is to establish the PUD-8 overlay zoning district over an area of nearly 7.5 acres. The area is currently zoned Business A (BA) and is already modified by the PUD-4 overlay district. The area of rezoning covers the “CambridgeSide” shopping mall site, which is on a portion of a PUD development parcel (PB-66) approved in 1987 and amended many times, most recently in 2019. However, some of the sites and development authorized by PB-66 – including the Hotel Marlowe and a portion of the One Charles Park office building – are outside of the proposed PUD-8 area.

The intent of the proposed district is to allow and regulate additional development beyond the limitations of the base zoning and the PUD-4 zoning. Existing development permitted by PUD-66 would continue to be regulated under the PUD-4 zoning, with additional development regulated by the PUD-8 zoning. This approach has similarities to prior cases where zoning was amended to specifically regulate new “infill” development, including the MIT Kendall Square zoning (PUD-5) and MXD “Infill Development” zoning. This proposal is somewhat different in that the existing development is already subject to PUD requirements and the conditions of a Planning Board special permit.

The Petitioner, as the owner of CambridgeSide, presently controls most of the area of rezoning, though some portions (including the former Sears building) are under separate ownership. The petition would explicitly allow development under a “condominium property regime” by which development may be assigned to different owners.

Current Zoning Requirements

The table below summarizes the current use and dimensional limitations in the existing base and overlay zoning districts.

Zoning Requirements	BA (base)	PUD-4 (overlay)
General range of allowed uses	residential, institutional, offices and laboratories, retail	residential, institutional, offices and laboratories, retail, and other uses with written determination by Planning Board
Max. Floor Area Ratio (FAR)	1.00 non-residential 1.75 residential	2.0 non-residential 2.0 residential
Min. Lot Area per Dwelling Unit	600 sq.ft.	450 sq.ft.
Max. Height	35’ non-residential 45’ residential	85’ non-residential 85’ residential
Required Yards (Setbacks)	Non-residential: No front or side; rear yard by formula, at least 20’ Residential: Formula; at least 10’ front, 5’ sides, 20’ rear	As approved by Planning Board in a PUD Final Development Plan
Min. Open Space Ratio	Non-residential: None Residential: 15% (private)	Non-residential: 20% (all types) Residential: 20% (all types)

Proposed Changes

The table below compares the requirements for development allowed under the PUD-4 zoning with the requirements for the additional “net new” development allowed by the proposed PUD-8 zoning.

Zoning Limitations	Current PUD-4 Zoning	Proposed PUD-8 Zoning
Allowed Uses	residential, institutional, offices and laboratories, retail, and other uses with written determination by Planning Board	residential, institutional, offices and laboratories, retail, light industry and other uses with written determination by Planning Board
Max. Gross Floor Area (GFA)	766,000* SF (existing)	625,000 SF (additional net new)
Min. Residential Use	No minimum	20% of net new development
Min. Lot Area per Dwelling Unit	450 sq.ft.	No minimum
Max. Height	85’	85’ / 135’ /185’
Required Setbacks	As approved by Planning Board in a PUD Final Development Plan	As approved by Planning Board in a PUD Final Development Plan
Min. Open Space	20% (may be met on adjacent sites)	20% (not additional to PUD-4)

* Includes development approved by PB-66 only within the boundaries of the proposed PUD-8 district.

Effects on Existing PUD Development Plan

The proposed zoning would allow a change to the overall scale and use mix of development within the area of the previously approved PB-66 PUD Final Development Plan. The following table summarizes the potential aggregate change to the PB-66 development plan. Note that this summary includes all development authorized by PB-66, some of which is outside the proposed PUD-8 district, and incorporates the most recent major amendment authorizing the conversion of some or all of the third floor of the mall building (approximately 140,000 square feet) from retail to office.

Use Category	PB-66 Final Development Plan (including 2019 major amendment)	Potential Aggregate Development PB-66 + Proposed PUD-8 Zoning
Retail (square feet)	626,000-766,000	At least 626,000 (also see below)
Office (square feet)	115,675-255,675	Up to 755,675 (also see below)
Laboratories (square feet)	0	
Light Industry (square feet)	0	
Hotel (square feet)	152,877	152,877
Residential (square feet)	0	125,000
Total	1,034,522	1,659,522

The intersection of the current and proposed zoning leaves some flexibility with regard to future retail. The proposed PUD-8 zoning states that an “eligible site” for additional development must contain at least 100,000 square feet of ground-floor retail at the time of application, but does not require any existing retail to be maintained (nor does the current PUD-4 zoning). The proposed zoning also requires ground-floor retail use for new development fronting First Street, though it is not clear precisely how much floor area that would entail. Through the major amendment process, space within the mall could

be converted to other types of allowed uses over time, similar to the recent major amendment authorizing office use on the third floor.

Height and Setbacks

As seen in the attached maps, the current height limit for the mall site and the immediate vicinity is 85 feet, scaling up to 120 feet for areas along the riverfront and scaling down to 65 feet on the opposite side of First Street. The existing mall building was built under the 85-foot height limit (per the zoning definition of building height), though the tallest point of the structure is approximately 105 feet (as determined by the City's aerial survey).

The proposed zoning would retain the 85-foot limit in areas adjacent to Lechmere Canal Park, scaling up to a maximum of 185 feet for areas along Cambridgeside Place. This height would be taller than the adjacent Royal Sonesta building, but shorter than the high-rise residential developments in the North Point area and the former Sullivan Courthouse building, which are currently the tallest buildings in the vicinity of the mall site.

Setback requirements would be determined through the Planning Board's review and approval of a PUD Final Development Plan, which is typical of other PUD zoning districts (including the current PUD-4 zoning). Streets, sidewalks, and landscaped areas are important elements of PUD review, which is usually informed by design guidelines. While the guidelines for development along First Street have encouraged a pattern of development where buildings meet the sidewalk with active retail frontage, recent developments have revealed some issues regarding the adequacy of sidewalk width to support pedestrian activity, plantings, and street furniture when buildings are built to the lot line. If setback requirements are left flexible, it will be important to establish expectations (possibly through review criteria and guidelines) for a functional and well-designed public realm.

Open Space

The proposed open space requirement mirrors the current zoning by requiring 20% open space, satisfied by adjacent public open space off-site, which would not change the current condition. This provision in the current and proposed zoning reflects the original development plan for the area, where the City (with Federal grant funding) developed the area's major public open spaces, including the adjacent Lechmere Canal Park and Charles Park. These open spaces are publicly owned but maintained through a collective private funding agreement with abutting landowners. In order to meet the open space requirement in this manner, the proposed zoning requires a finding that "the developer has historically contributed to, or is committed to contributing to, the creation of such Open Space (e.g., through a financial contribution to, or development of, such Open Space)."

Parking

The proposed PUD-8 parking requirements are summarized below in relation to the current PUD-4 parking requirements. The new requirements are similar to parking requirements in other recently zoned development areas in that they establish maximum limitations, although they also maintain minimum parking requirements that are similar to those in the current zoning.

Use	PUD-4 Parking Requirement (min-max)	Proposed PUD-8 Parking Requirement (min-max)
Ground Floor Retail/Office	0.89 space/1,000 SF (no max.)*	0.89-5.00 space/1,000 SF
Retail (other floors)	0.56 space/1,000 SF (no max.)	0.56-5.00 space/1,000 SF
Office (other floors)	0.56 space/1,000 SF (no max.)	0.50-0.90 space/1,000 SF
Laboratory	N/A	0.40-0.80 space/1,000 SF
Residence	1.00-1.50 space/unit	0.25-1.00 space/unit
Institutional	0.56 space/1,000 SF (no max.)	N/A
Public Assembly	1 space/15 seats	N/A

* Not required for establishments of 10,000 SF or less with entrance on First Street.

Also similar to other recently rezoned areas, the PUD plan review process would include the requirement for a shared parking study to determine if overall parking can be reduced by allowing it to serve different uses at different times. One complication with this proposal, compared to zoning for other development areas, is that there is a large amount of existing parking that has a commercial parking permit, meaning that it can be used by the general public at any time for a fee, subject to City Ordinance Chapter 10.16. Using existing parking to serve new development, while minimizing the production of new parking, has advantages in terms of meeting the City’s overall planning goals of minimizing new auto trips. However, it is difficult to assess the effects of the proposed zoning if existing uses and parking are regulated by the current PUD-4 zoning while new uses and parking are regulated by another set of requirements.

The proposed zoning would also allow the Planning Board to approve waivers of minimum and maximum parking limitations, which is generally allowed by a special permit under Article 6.000 of the Zoning Ordinance. The general expectation in redevelopment areas has been that reducing the amount of parking for commercial uses is encouraged to the extent feasible, but exceeding the maximum limitations would not ordinarily be supported.

Other Zoning Provisions

The proposed PUD-8 zoning incorporates many plan requirements, review criteria, guidelines, and procedures that would be applied through the Planning Board’s PUD review and approval process. These elements of the zoning cover topics such as transportation impacts, sustainability and resiliency, open space and connections, ground-floor activation, site design, architectural materials, housing, and project phasing. Many of these zoning elements are derived from the provisions of PUD zoning districts that were recently created for Kendall Square, particularly the zoning provisions recently adopted for the Volpe Site. Some of these issues are discussed further in the following sections on planning and zoning for the area.

Planning for Development in Eastern Cambridge

This area of Cambridge has been the subject of multiple planning efforts over many decades, which inform the review of this petition in various ways. Some of the past planning efforts for the area are summarized below.

East Cambridge Riverfront Plan

The [East Cambridge Riverfront Plan](#) (1978) was one of the city's earliest plans for redevelopment following the end of the "urban renewal era." The plan was undertaken to coordinate the redevelopment of former industrial sites within the "Lechmere Triangle" area and to advance the goals of increasing employment opportunities, expanding the city's tax base, enhancing the physical environment, conserving the neighborhood's social and economic diversity, and exploiting the environmental, recreational, and economic potential offered by the Charles Riverfront. The result was a plan to enable contemporary commercial and residential redevelopment within an urbanistic pattern of streets and public open spaces that prioritized the pedestrian experience, contrasting with past plans that focused more on automobiles.

Following this plan, the zoning of the area was changed to establish residential and commercial base zoning districts with Planned Unit Development (PUD) overlays, allowing greater development potential balanced with more rigorous design review, public benefits, and mitigation for project impacts. An "East Cambridge Development Review Process and Guidelines" document was published in 1985 to establish principles for the Planning Board's review and approval of new development proposals. These design principles guide use, scale, density, setbacks, bulk, height, and landscaping of developments proposed in the area so that they complement each other while improving connections to and from the adjacent East Cambridge community.

Many private development projects were permitted and developed under the new PUD zoning districts created for the area, including Thomas Graves Landing (PB-17, permitted 1981), Ten Canal Park (PB-35, 1983), One Canal Park (PB-38, 1984), Royal Sonesta Hotel (PB-52, 1985), Esplanade residences (PB-53, 1986), River Court residences (PB-55, 1986), 55 Cambridge Parkway office building (PB-65, 1987, also known as "Lotus Building" or "One Charles Park"), the CambridgeSide site (PB-66, 1987), and Two Canal Park (PB-125, 1997). Nearly all of these plans have evolved and have been amended over time. For example, the original plans for many of these sites required retail uses fronting the Lechmere Canal and First Street, but in most cases these requirements were modified or waived as property owners contended that it was difficult to secure viable retail tenants for those sites. Only in more recent years has there been new ground-floor retail along First Street.

An important objective of the East Cambridge Riverfront Plan was to enable a mix of new private development with public open space and connections. Unlike later development plans that required private property to incorporate publicly beneficial open space into their sites, the City undertook the acquisition, design and development of parks and other public amenities using Federal grant funding. This investment provided public benefits while also stimulating private investment in an area that had deteriorated from neglect. As adjacent areas were redeveloped, the City engaged with landowners to secure agreements to fund the ongoing maintenance of these public spaces.

ECaPS

In 2001, directly following the Citywide Rezoning, the City conducted the [Eastern Cambridge Planning Study \(ECaPS\)](#) that focused on the future of East Cambridge as a major gateway from Boston into Cambridge. The area of the current rezoning proposal is immediately outside the formal boundaries of the ECaPS study area, which included the “transition zone” between First and Second Streets along with redevelopment areas in North Point and Kendall Square. However, some of the planning objectives resulting from this process, particularly those articulated in the [Eastern Cambridge Design Guidelines](#), are relevant to this area. For example, the plan aims to improve pedestrian, and bicycle connections to the Charles River, and the guidelines specifically encourage building designs that create street-level activity and a more pedestrian and bicycle friendly public realm along major streets such as First Street.

One of the key ECaPS objectives was to encourage more residential development to complement the commercial uses that tend to predominate. The zoning that resulted from this study created the PUD-4A and PUD-4B districts west of First Street. The PUD-4B district, which is directly opposite First Street from the mall site, lowered the height limit to 65 feet and adopted a density control that maintains the same maximum FAR of 2.0 but only for mixed-use development that is at least 50% housing. The adopted zoning also introduced transfer of development rights (TDR) provisions, particularly to facilitate the creation of public open space and housing in the “transition area” by allowing development rights to be transferred closer to Kendall Square.

Cambridge Riverfront Plan

The 2011 [Cambridge Riverfront Plan: Reconnecting People to the Water](#), which focused more on public use and activity than on new development, explored the challenges and opportunities of the riverfront and sought to create stronger physical design relationships between the river and the rest of the city through a focused plan for improvement. The plan explored the riverfront section-by-section, and the area of the current rezoning proposal is within “Area B – Charles River Dam/Msgr. O’Brien Highway to Longfellow Bridge,” which is identified as the closest location providing the potential for the most direct connections between the East Cambridge neighborhood and the waterfront. The plan identifies the importance of safe and convenient crossings of First Street and Land Boulevard to enable access, and highlights the potential of First Street to be a walkable retail corridor with growth in residential population to support retail activity.

K2 Study

In 2011-2013, the City conducted the [“K2C2” Planning Study](#) for Kendall Square and Central Square, producing separate plans and design guidelines for each area. Although the area of the current rezoning proposal is not within the “K2” study area, the proposal itself makes reference to many issues that were considered in the K2 plan, including housing, transportation options, ground floor activity, open space connections, sustainability, and urban design. Much of the proposed zoning language is derived from zoning that was recently adopted for areas in Kendall Square, particularly the Volpe site, and many of the topics addressed in the K2 study are incorporated into the petition. Some other topics, such as innovation space and workforce development programs, are not addressed in this current petition.

The K2 study also led to some topic-specific studies that are relevant to the area. The [Connect Kendall Square](#) process, completed in 2015, developed a framework plan for a future integrated network of open spaces, developed through a competition process among planning and design firms. The [Kendall Square Mobility Task Force](#), which brought together the City, MassDOT, MBTA, and other stakeholders, looked comprehensively at future mobility needs in the area and released a report in 2017 outlining policy and project recommendations, which focused primarily on public transit and shuttles.

Envision Cambridge

As the City's most recent comprehensive planning effort, [Envision Cambridge](#) does not establish planning objectives specific to this area but provides a set of overarching goals and strategies to inform future planning processes and decision-making. The Envision Cambridge process has been completed and an Executive Summary was published in 2018, with a final report forthcoming.

The Envision goals and strategies are organized into a set of topic areas. The following is a list of topic areas along with a summary of major goals, focusing on those that are most relevant to this proposal.

- **Growth Management:** “Evolving Mixed-Use Districts” (including the petition area) should continue to accommodate the bulk of the city’s growth and change, taking advantage of transit proximity, and positively transforming areas characterized by surface parking lots, automobile-oriented uses, and obsolete commercial buildings.
- **Climate and Environment:** Achieve carbon neutrality by 2050; prepare for impacts of climate change; promote ecological protection, water quality, waste management, and environmental justice.
- **Community Wellbeing:** Promote equal access to opportunity, racial justice, civic engagement, health and wellness, art and culture, and sense of belonging.
- **Economy:** Ensure shared access to job opportunities, living wages, robust education, training, and support services; eliminate racial, gender, and other disparities in economic opportunity; maintain centrality in the global knowledge economy; diversify employment opportunities beyond high-skill work; support local businesses of different types, sizes, and growth stages; preserve and enhance the distinctive character of Cambridge’s commercial districts.
- **Housing:** Maintain and expand deed-restricted affordable housing; provide a variety of housing options for individuals and families of different socioeconomic levels, life stages, and physical needs; support high-quality housing that is healthy, climate-resilient, and energy-efficient; support the ability of Cambridge residents to remain in Cambridge; support overall market affordability; provide housing in diverse neighborhoods that are close to public transit, places of employment, and social services.
- **Mobility:** Meet the access and mobility needs of people of all ages, abilities, and incomes; ensure reliability and efficiency; encourage space-efficient transportation choices like walking, biking, transit, and carpooling; eliminate traffic fatalities and serious injuries; encourage active living; create an easy-to-understand, integrated, continuous, and comfortable transportation

network; support shared community spaces and enhance neighborhood streets; achieve a carbon-neutral transportation system; adapt to climate change.

- **Urban Form:** Promote mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented, sustainable redevelopment; shape new development to complement the prevailing pattern of adjacent districts, accommodate variations in use and scale, and add greater density to areas well-served by public transit; create a connected network of high-quality open spaces that links all residents to local and regional natural assets, provides a range of activities and experiences, is inclusive of all people, and encourages social connections; support an active public realm; strive for design excellence through a clear and efficient public review process.

These topic areas each have an associated set of strategies and action items. In considering redevelopment proposals, the urban form strategies are particularly relevant:

1. Increase density near transit nodes while accommodating the unique character of our squares and areas along the corridors.
2. Preserve the historical integrity and diversity of Cambridge's neighborhoods, including buildings and the public realm.
3. Encourage activity on the ground floors of new buildings, particularly along mixed-use corridors.
4. Proactively guide development in areas with a strong potential for change through area-specific planning and development review.
5. Revise the development review process to be more transparent to developers and the public while striving for high-quality design.
6. Leverage private development to create and maintain high-quality public open spaces and to provide dynamic programming.
7. Expand the public open space network through new open spaces, new programming, and improved local and regional connections.
8. Improve the public open space network by preserving, maintaining, and enhancing existing open spaces to serve a diverse population.
9. For Cambridge's institutions, including university and hospital campuses, support growth within existing campus boundaries and adjacent evolving mixed-use areas, and discourage intrusion into residential neighborhoods.

Planning Topics Addressed in Zoning Petition

The following is a summary of the planning considerations that are addressed in the petition language and how they relate to the city's broader planning efforts for this area and for redevelopment within the city in general.

Housing

Like many other mixed-use development proposals, this proposal would require a minimum ratio of housing to commercial development. The proposed 20% residential ratio falls within a range of other approved development plans. To provide some examples (in all cases calculated on the basis of residential to residential+commercial Gross Floor Area): the Alexandria Binney Street PUD is approximately 12% housing (with a higher affordability requirement); MIT Kendall Square development (NoMa/SoMa) is approximately 20% housing; the MXD Infill Development Concept Plan and the zoning for the MIT Volpe Site redevelopment are both approximately 40% housing; First Street PUD is approximately 50% housing, and North Point (Cambridge Crossing) is approximately 60% housing.

The petition also notes that development would be subject to inclusionary housing and incentive zoning requirements, which both result in contributions to promote affordable housing. As reflected in the Envision Cambridge goals, creating residential communities that are inclusive to individuals and families of different socioeconomic levels, life stages, and physical needs are particularly important in areas where new housing is being created.

Transportation

Similar to other larger-scale mixed-use projects, development under the proposed petition would require a robust transportation plan including a traffic study, transit study, parking analysis, and transportation demand management (TDM) program, similar to other major redevelopments.

Managing parking supply is one of the City's key strategies for mitigating traffic impacts, since one of the most effective ways to limit growth in auto trips is to limit available parking, particularly for peak-hour commuters. While the petition addresses this in concept with maximum parking ratios, it is not clear what parking ratios would be most appropriate for this area. The proposed maximum ratios for office and laboratory uses are consistent with the ratios recommended by the K2 study and adopted for Kendall Square, but the proposed maximum of 5 spaces per 1,000 square feet of retail is much higher than recommended retail parking ratios elsewhere in the City. Greater amounts of retail parking might be necessary for a regional shopping center, but it might be difficult to ensure that unused retail spaces do not become an alternative for commuters. Moreover, given the significant amount of parking currently on-site, it is not clear how new parking requirements will interact with existing supply, and whether this proposal would result in new parking spaces or a more efficient use of existing parking spaces, which would be the preferred outcome.

TDM programs are also critical to discourage auto trips and incentivize more sustainable modes. Given the scale and location of the project, a significant TDM program would be expected, including measures such as transit pass subsidies, charging market-rate parking fees directly to employees and residents, and providing frequent bus/shuttle access to key transportation hubs such as North Station, Kendall

Square, Lechmere Station, Sullivan Station, and other areas. Along with programmatic interventions, improvements to the transit and bicycle network and infrastructure might be necessary, such as dedicated bus lanes, protected bicycle lanes, and bicycle sharing (Bluebikes). Some of these measures are cited in the petition. In areas such as Kendall Square and in the study recommendations for the Alewife area, a transportation funding contribution is proposed so that property owners can collectively contribute to future improvements.

Some broader city-wide and regional planning issues are also relevant to a project at this location. For example, the longstanding “Urban Ring” concept of circumferential transit at one time contemplated dedicated bus rapid transit lanes along First Street to connect the Kendall Square Red Line MBTA station to the Lechmere Green Line station. While this plan is not currently being advanced by the MBTA, there remains a need for improved connections. More recently, the Kendall Square Mobility Task Force studied bus priority treatments between Lechmere and Kendall Square, and recommended a new “CT4” bus route using part of the First Street corridor to connect Sullivan and Kenmore squares via Lechmere and Kendall. Other relevant citywide planning documents include the [Bicycle Plan](#), [Transit Plan](#), [Pedestrian Plan](#), and [Vision Zero Action Plan](#).

Transportation issues will also need to be reviewed at a site planning level, such as well-designed and maintained bus/shuttle stops, excellent and accessible bicycle parking, space for loading/deliveries, drop-off/pick-up activities for services such as buses, shuttles, taxis and transportation network companies (TNCs), bicycle sharing (Bluebikes), wayfinding signage, and real-time transit information.

Active Ground Floors

As noted above, planning for this area has long focused on trying to encourage retail activity along First Street. The prior phase of riverfront development was not very successful in this regard, with the presence of the interior mall often cited as an issue that made it difficult to secure tenants for street-facing spaces. However, while some of the retail activity in the mall has scaled back, more street-level retail activity has emerged through new development and modifications to existing buildings. The petition embraces this trend by requiring ground-floor portions of new buildings facing First Street to be designed for retail and other active uses.

Open Space

Past open space planning for this area has relied on public acquisition and development of open spaces and private contributions to ongoing maintenance. Because a comprehensive open space plan is already executed, it is difficult to imagine how new open space would be created through this type of development proposal. However, this proposal may provide opportunities to think more broadly about how existing open spaces can better meet the needs of the community.

One provision in the proposed zoning references past or future commitment to contributing to open space through funding as a way of fulfilling open space requirements. It is unclear whether the intent is to deem the requirement satisfied based on past funding, or to demonstrate a commitment to future funding. Some of the city’s recent planning work, including the Cambridge Riverfront Plan, K2 study, and Envision Cambridge, have noted the importance of operation and programming of open spaces in order to create places that are vibrant and attractive to different groups of users. Programming is mentioned

prominently in the preamble to the zoning petition but not specifically referenced in the petition text itself, except by reference to other plans and guidelines.

Another potential issue to consider is connectivity among open spaces within an area, which has been a longstanding planning consideration. Most notably in the K2 study and the subsequent “Connect Kendall Square” planning process, the importance of treating open space not as a collection of parks but as an integrated system has been increasingly recognized. The Cambridge Riverfront Plan, referenced in the petition, recommends specific connections within this area. The petition includes criteria for open space connectivity as an element of development plan review.

Noise Mitigation

The petition contains procedural requirements mirroring those of other areas in Kendall Square to ensure that rooftop mechanical equipment is selected, located, and screened to meet the City’s noise control standards. This will be important given that the proposal would allow laboratory uses at a potentially taller height than surrounding buildings, and there are some residential buildings in the vicinity. Additionally, noise generation from ground-level or façade mechanicals has been an issue in recent developments, given the ventilation needs of below-grade parking structures.

Sustainability

The petition contains requirements similar to those adopted in parts of Kendall Square, primarily requiring design of new buildings to a standard of LEED Gold or better “to the maximum extent practicable,” and evaluation of on-site renewable energy or co-generation.

The City’s current sustainable design standards are driven primarily by the [Net Zero Action Plan](#), which sets a target of neutralizing citywide greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. For new buildings, this plan recommends a current minimum standard of LEED Gold for new construction, but encourages greater efforts toward maximizing energy efficiency, incorporating renewable energy systems, and designing systems to be convertible to renewable energy sources as they become more economical in the future. The plan also recommends incentives for new buildings to be designed to “net zero” standards, with the expectation for all new commercial lab buildings to be net zero by 2030, and recommends pursuing district-wide shared energy initiatives.

Another major sustainability initiative is the ongoing [Climate Change Preparedness and Resilience \(CCPR\)](#) plan, which is developing recommendations for how the community can respond to the anticipated impacts of climate change. For new buildings, these include protecting buildings against higher predicted flood elevations and designing sites to mitigate urban heat island effects with cooling features such as vegetation and low-albedo materials. It also incorporates strategies for neighborhood resilience such as locations where residents can seek shelter during extreme weather events. This concept is referenced in the petition as part of the Planning Board’s review criteria.

Urban Design

The petition references the main sets of plans and design guidelines that have been established for the area, including the Eastern Cambridge Design Guidelines and Cambridge Riverfront Plan. The petition also incorporates some guidelines specific to this proposal that modify or supplement other guidelines,

such as specific design objectives for First Street, treatment of the tops of buildings, and encouragement of features such as bays, balconies, setbacks, tapers, cornices, and façade materials. As noted above, since there are no specific setback requirements and a desire to create an active streetwall along First Street, and given the narrow existing sidewalk conditions in some areas, it may be important to provide more clarity regarding the desired street and sidewalk design along First Street to ensure an appropriate balance between building and streetscape.

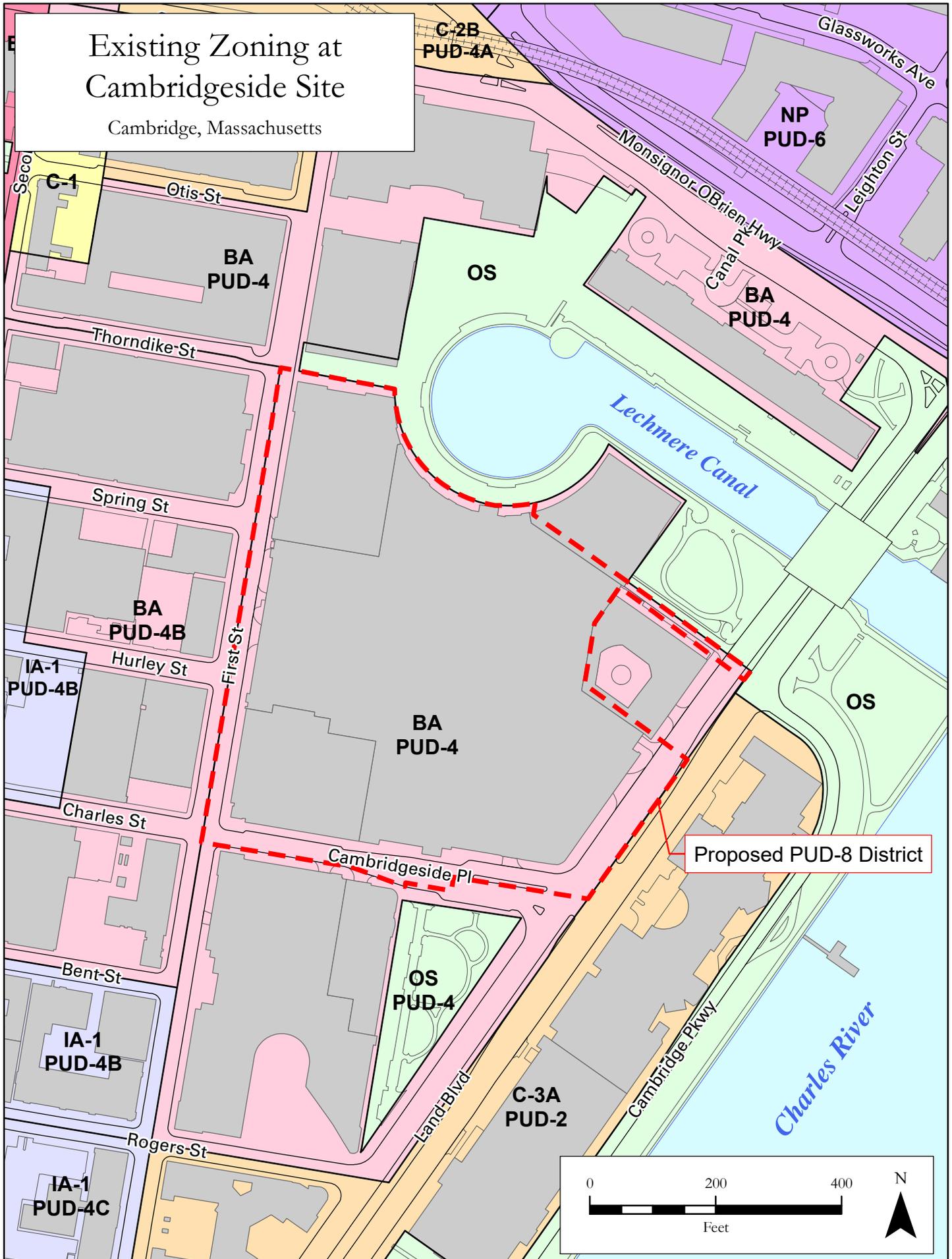
As with all PUD zoning, a future project would be subject to a development review process requiring special permit approval by the Planning Board. The petition explicitly notes that a pre-application conference would be required, and a formal development proposal would need to be provided in master plan format, which allows the opportunity to consider alternatives early in the design process. Therefore, it is important that the zoning contains enough clarity to guide the review process toward the desired outcomes, while also allowing some flexibility for alternatives to be considered.

Given the location, scale, and use mix of the proposed zoning, the following urban design considerations will be especially important to address through guidelines and the review process:

- The location (in terms of setback/build-to lines), form, and façade treatment of “streetwall” development, to encourage a comfortable and lively urban presence along the sidewalk.
- The location, form, and façade treatment of towers and other tall building masses in relation to streetwalls and view corridors.
- The expression of retail façades, notably the two-story expression suggested by the petition’s “Proposed First Street” rendering.
- Connectivity among the various streets and open spaces in the area, as recommended in the East Cambridge Riverfront Plan and the Cambridge Riverfront Plan, by enhancing connections to the neighborhood and the river as well as engaging the east/west axes of Spring Street and Hurley Street where they intersect First Street.
- The design of the public realm along the adjoining streets to enhance connectivity and create a better pedestrian experience, including consideration of façade design, retail storefronts, overall sidewalk width, street trees and other vegetation, street furniture, and spill-out activity.
- Sustainable design strategies to minimize energy use, enable renewable energy, promote resilience to future flooding, and mitigate increased heat impacts through efficient building orientation, appropriate building and landscape materials, and green infrastructure.

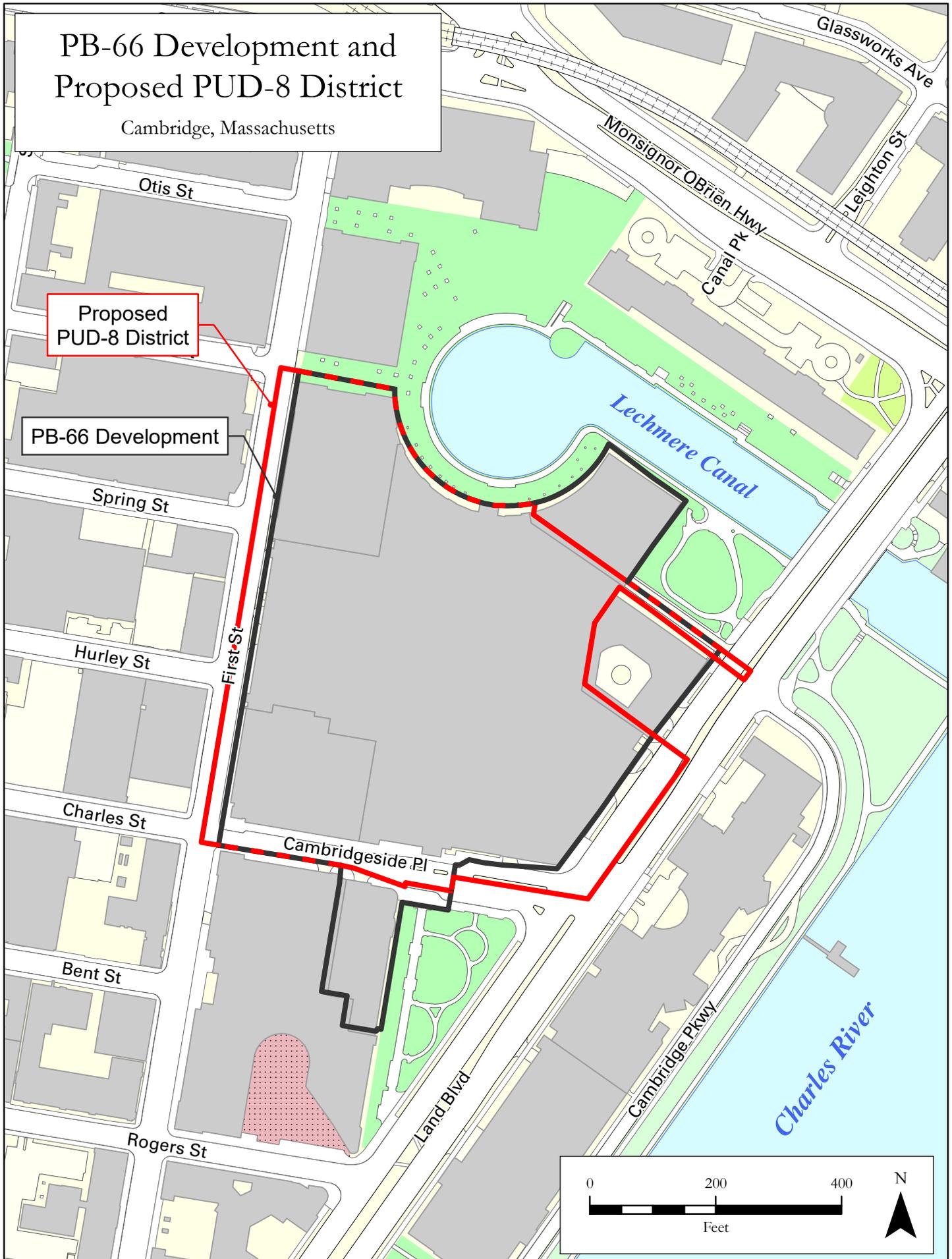
Existing Zoning at Cambridgeside Site

Cambridge, Massachusetts



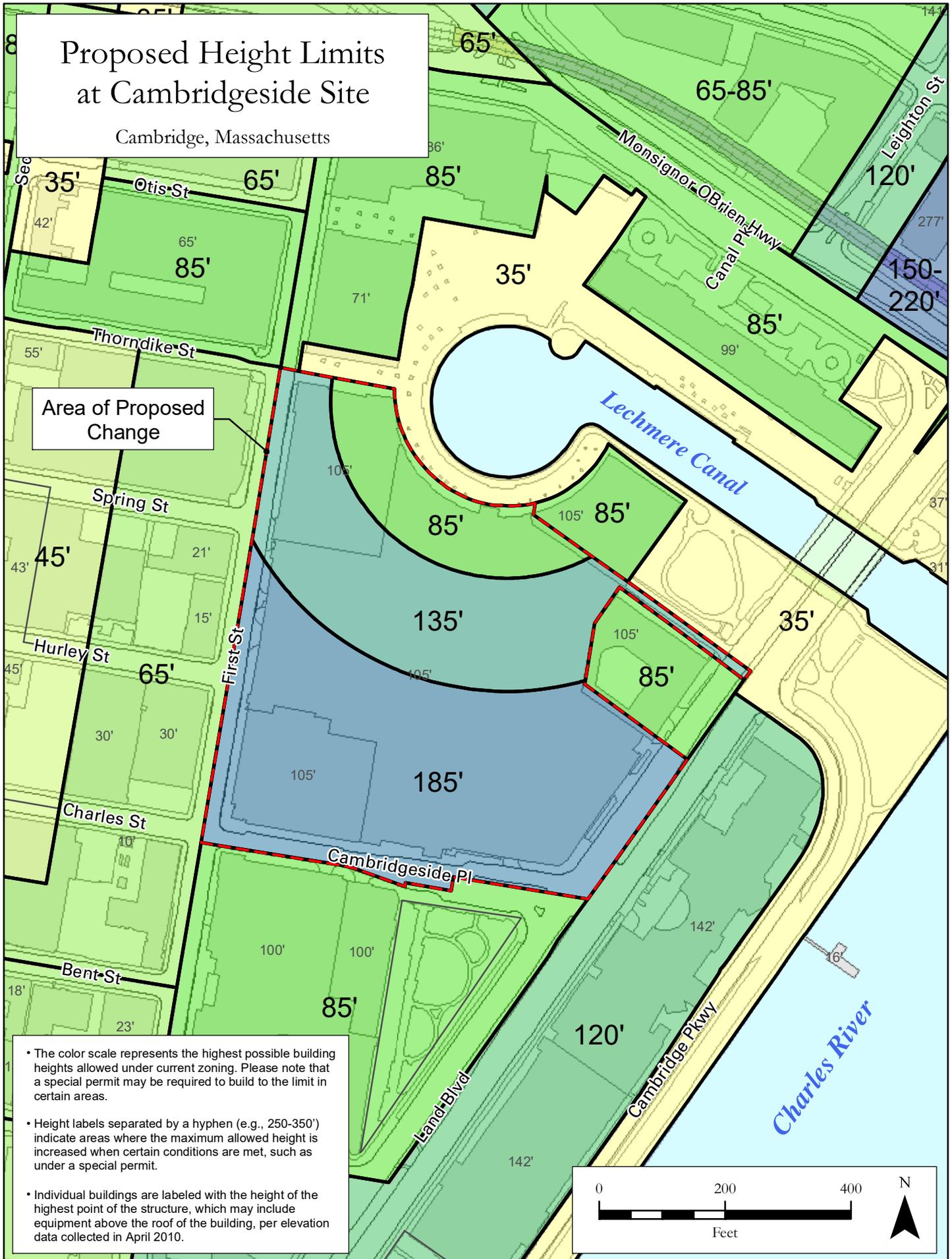
PB-66 Development and Proposed PUD-8 District

Cambridge, Massachusetts



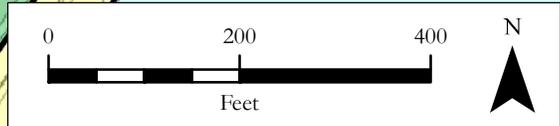
Proposed Height Limits at Cambridgeside Site

Cambridge, Massachusetts



Area of Proposed Change

- The color scale represents the highest possible building heights allowed under current zoning. Please note that a special permit may be required to build to the limit in certain areas.
- Height labels separated by a hyphen (e.g., 250-350') indicate areas where the maximum allowed height is increased when certain conditions are met, such as under a special permit.
- Individual buildings are labeled with the height of the highest point of the structure, which may include equipment above the roof of the building, per elevation data collected in April 2010.





CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Community Development Department

To: Planning Board

From: Jeff Roberts, Director of Zoning and Development
Swaathi Joseph, Zoning Associate Planner

Date: May 10, 2019

Re: **CambridgeSide PUD-8 Zoning Petition (second public hearing)**

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*Assistant City Manager for
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SANDRA CLARKE
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Overview

On March 19, 2019, the Planning Board held a hearing on the petition by New England Development and Cambridgeside Galleria Associates Trust to amend the provisions of the Zoning Ordinance to establish a new Planned Unit Development district (PUD-8) in East Cambridge, with development controls contained in a new Section 13.100.

Since the last Planning Board meeting, the Applicant has met with staff to develop responses to comments and questions raised in the initial review of the petition related to proposed density, height, uses, and residential allocation. This memo contains comments from the Board during the first public hearing and additional comments from staff on the following subjects:

- Urban design comments related to design objectives and guidelines
- First street improvements
- Transportation analysis
- Parking strategies that might be incorporated into zoning
- Retail strategies that might be incorporated into zoning
- Climate and resilience
- Zoning clarifications

The applicant also recently submitted a set of written material in response to comments from the Board, summarized in this memo.

Staff will be available to discuss this information and respond to questions at the upcoming hearing.

Planning Board Comments from the First Hearing

The following is a summary of issues discussed by the Planning Board at its March 19, 2019 hearing:

- Building height impacts
- Additional density in the area not substantiated with studies showing the demand
- TIS results needed to understand traffic impacts and how parking needs of existing and proposed uses will be met
- Impact of lab and light industry uses on the surrounding residential areas
- Consider more residential use allocation
- Residential phasing
- Affordable housing relative to current minimum requirements
- Opportunities for affordable retail to support local businesses
- Response to climate resilience and floodproofing garage
- Separate classification of public benefits associated with PUD-4 and PUD-8
- Possible upgrades to DCR building
- Additional details on open space connections
- Clarifications and corrections of proposed zoning language

The following is a summary of issues discussed by the Ordinance Committee at its April 3, 2019 hearing:

- Activation of First Street supporting the proposed setback
- Study traffic, pedestrian, bike, truck movements with emphasis on First Street and Land Blvd
- Greater housing/affordable housing component
- Concerns about height
- Concerns regarding lab space and proposed location for this use
- Provide economic rationale for size/scale of proposal
- Types of retail/commercial use:
 - Understand how much retail there is now, how much there will be
 - Appreciate the mall serving the neighborhood needs affordably
 - Storefronts that support minority/locally owned businesses
 - Affordable non-profit space, maybe shared workspace
 - Community space, conference space for groups
 - Affordable child care space
 - Entertainment as an attraction
- Open space:
 - Connection from Canal extending across MOS
 - Plant trees
 - More public access/activities at Gatehouse park
 - Passage from First Street to Charles River
 - Activating “dead zone” along river
 - Public dock across from Point Park
- Net zero buildings
- Reduced concerns about loss of parking and options to make parking work

Additional Materials Provided by Petitioner

The Petitioner recently submitted a revised draft of the zoning petition along with a narrative responding to several of the issues that were discussed. Except for clarifying some technical issues that were raised with the zoning language (which are commented on toward the end of this memo), the revised zoning draft does not reflect a substantive change from the original proposal, but the response narrative suggests that many of these issues will be addressed through a letter of commitment.

Suggested Letter of Commitment

Letters of commitment are typical for zoning petitions of this type as a way to incorporate public benefits. The revised zoning references a letter of commitment but a draft has not been provided thus far. According to the response narrative, the letter of commitment would address the following issues:

- Increased affordable housing
- A comprehensive arts program
- Community events
- Community space for local groups and residents
- Formation of an Open Space and Retail Advisory Committee
- Improvements to existing open spaces including Lechmere Canal Park, Charles Park and Gate House Park (subject to approval)
- Improvements to pedestrian access under the Land Boulevard Bridge (subject to approval)
- Reconstruction of the DCR boathouse to include a public dock (subject to approval)

Rationale for Proposed Density and Height

The narrative also provides an explanation of how the petitioner arrived at the proposed amount and mix of new uses and the proposed building heights. While staff has no comment on the specific rationale, it broadly reflects similar themes to other development proposals in this area by suggesting that the value of new “Class A” commercial office/laboratory development provides the necessary economic base to enable the other elements of the project, including maintenance of the existing retail atrium, new retail and improvements on First Street, new market-rate and affordable housing, open space improvements, and other public benefits that are not financially feasible on their own.

While much of the narrative focuses on the desire to support the economically struggling core retail and 200,000 square-foot public atrium of the existing site, the zoning does not articulate a clear and firm commitment to maintain that space. The zoning would apply to sites with 100,000 square feet of existing retail, and would require new ground floors along First Street to be designed for retail frontage, but the zoning for the existing mall (which, per this proposal, would continue to follow the PUD-4 development controls) would continue to allow a future change in use. This is potentially another issue that would be addressed in a letter of commitment.

Other Items in Response Narrative

The response narrative comments on some additional issues:

- Heights: The response matrix notes that “The petitioner is evaluating the 185-foot height band,” but specifics have not been provided thus far.
- Transportation and Parking: These issues are noted in the response matrix and discussed further below in this memo.
- Resiliency: This issue is also noted in the response matrix and discussed further below in this memo.
- Laboratory Buildings: The narrative discusses in detail ways in which the noise and lighting impacts of laboratory buildings can be mitigated. However, it is not clear how these measures are reflected in the proposed zoning requirements or guidelines, particularly with regard to lighting. While these are not issues that can be easily regulated through zoning, thought should be given to ways in which noise and lighting could be effectively assessed through the development review process to ensure that the practices described in the narrative would be utilized in a way that produces the desired outcome.

Additional Staff Comments

Urban Design

As a zoning petition, this proposal would enable a Planned Unit Development (PUD) that would be subject to future review and special permit approval by the Planning Board. As this petition is framed, the Board would approve a phased Final Development Plan at a “master plan” level when granting a special permit. Though it is not noted in the petition (but perhaps could be), a phased development plan is typically subject to an ongoing design review process for individual buildings and sites as set forth in the conditions of the special permit.

At the level of PUD zoning, the aim is to ensure that a good set of urban design criteria, objectives, and guidelines are established and/or referenced in the zoning to inform the future design review process. These objectives and guidelines would specify the intended outcomes of a development plan to the developer and the Board, and would form the basis for the Board’s eventual special permit decision, along with any ongoing conditions that might be attached to any approval.

With that in mind, the urban design team has reviewed the objectives and guidelines stated and referenced in the petition, along with the presentation materials made at the prior hearings and the additional materials provided, and has met with the petitioner’s team on a few occasions. The following comments are meant to inform the design objectives for this new PUD district if the petition is adopted.

Staff supports the urban design intentions of the petition. The petition would allow CambridgeSide to be transformed into a mixed-use retail/commercial/residential project. The way the proposed heights step down from south to north is a good response to the urban context, and the transformed development has the potential to improve the pedestrian experience on the adjoining city streets by increasing sidewalk width, adding amenities, activating the adjoining streets with ground floor retail, and giving building massing and façades a more pedestrian-friendly scale while still maintaining a sense of the urban streetwall.

Additional considerations. Staff recommends considering the following issues in the urban design objectives and guidelines for the proposed new district.

(1) Building Setbacks, Height, and Massing:

- (a) The adequacy of First Street’s sidewalk width to support pedestrian activity, plantings, and street furniture should be considered. It is important to establish expectations for a functional and well-designed public realm. Pending more detailed study, staff would suggest that the ground floors of new buildings along First Street be set back 12 feet or more from the existing building footprint location. Building stories above the ground floor could overhang, but not by more than 5 feet.
- (b) Given the proposed scale of buildings and the relatively narrow confines of First Street, staff recommends establishing a streetwall podium of about 65 feet above grade for new buildings along First Street and the majority of CambridgeSide Place and Land Boulevard. Above the podium, taller portions of new buildings should step back by 10 feet or more.
- (c) Mechanical penthouses should be set back 15 feet or more from building façades.
- (d) Since the current guidelines for this area do not contemplate taller buildings, the Kendall Square Design Guidelines (2013) should be consulted to establish guidelines for the massing of large buildings, the façade expression of towers, and the design of ground floors.
- (e) Consideration should be given to maintaining the portion of the building that faces Lechmere Canal’s round basin at its current height to limit shading impacts.

(2) Ground Floor Design:

- (a) The Kendall Square Design Guidelines (2013) provide a more up-to-date resource on designing for active ground floors, and should be consulted to inform the design of ground floors addressing all the adjoining streets and open spaces.
- (b) The PUD’s required Ground Floor Activation Plan should establish a minimum height of ground floors, both within the building and in terms of façade expression, to create an appropriate sense of pedestrian scale and ensure the flexibility of retail spaces for various types of businesses.

(3) First Street:

- (a) Proposed changes to First Street should be designed in coordination with CDD, the Traffic, Parking and Transportation Department (TP&T), and Department of Public Works (DPW).
- (b) Final plans for First Street should respond to future transit planning for the area. (See further discussion below.)

(4) Open Space and Pedestrian Connectivity:

- (a) The project and associated improvements should be designed in accord with the Cambridge Riverfront Plan’s “Planned Open Space System.”
- (b) The PUD’s required Open Space and Connectivity Plans should consider improvements to the streetscape of the adjoining portions of First Street, CambridgeSide Place, and Land Boulevard to increase connectivity between the East Cambridge residential neighborhood and the river, and to improve the pedestrian realm.

- (c) New buildings should be separated by courtyards and other significant breaks to avoid long lengths of unbroken building mass (as the petitioner has shown in the March 19 design documents presented to the Planning Board). An effort should be made to align the courtyards on First Street to the ends of Spring and Hurley Streets.

(5) Design Guidelines:

- (a) Because a PUD plan will be submitted at a master plan level, staff suggests that a consolidated set of design guidelines should be prepared and approved with any future PUD approval to inform the detailed design of individual buildings and sites.
- (b) The overall design objectives should be to complement the urban fabric of East Cambridge, create a rich, connective, and enjoyable pedestrian realm, maximize environmental benefits, minimize detrimental environmental impacts, minimize energy use, and help the city fulfill its goals for traffic and transportation.
- (c) Consolidated design guidelines would cover the following topics: streetscape amenities and dimensions, canopy street trees, ground floor design, entrances, building service, the location of the ground floor façade relative to the plane of the streetwall above, façade length, modulation of the streetwall façade, bay widths, the massing and façade expression of towers, mechanical penthouses, architectural details, building materials, incorporation of art, lighting design, screening of mechanical systems, sustainability and energy efficiency, on-site energy generation, urban heat island effect, universal access, and coordination with the City's plans for vehicular, pedestrian, and bicycle movement in East Cambridge.

- (6) Review Materials: The Development Proposal submission should include ground level views from significant vantage points, photometric studies, wind studies, glare studies, shadow studies, and an assessment of projected future heat impacts.

First Street Improvements

Staff appreciates the willingness of the petitioner to invest in improvements along First Street. While it is useful to see the petitioner's vision, the graphics in their initial presentations show changes within the public right-of-way that have not been reviewed and endorsed by City departments and will require further discussion. If the petition is adopted, staff would look forward to working with the developer and the Planning Board to establish both interim and future conditions for First Street, considering the City's future objectives along all of First Street when determining the best design approach for this section of the street.

First Street has been identified for at least 15 years as a priority corridor for carrying high-frequency bus service, in addition to high-quality bike and pedestrian accommodation. Already, the EZRide shuttle provides transit service along First Street with 8-minute headways, among the highest frequencies in Cambridge. As part of the Green Line Extension (GLX) project, currently scheduled to be complete in 2021, Lechmere Station will move to the far side of Monsignor O'Brien Highway and First Street will be extended to connect to the new Lechmere Station and the North Point / Cambridge Crossing area. Planning studies also contemplate a bridge connection for transit, pedestrians and cyclists from Cambridge Crossing to the Inner Belt/Sullivan Square areas in Somerville, a proposal strongly supported

by both Cambridge and Somerville. This more efficient connection enhances the immediate utility of the high-frequency bus connections to and from the Green Line and beyond. Planning studies also have contemplated creating a bridge connection for transit, pedestrians and cyclists between Cambridge Crossing and Inner Belt/Sullivan Square areas in Somerville.

In 2017, the Kendall Square Mobility Task Force built on past recommendations to designate First Street as a high-frequency bus corridor and advance bus priority on this corridor as a high priority. Bus priority in the near term would support current EZRide and other shuttle service, as well as supporting the longer-term improvements described above, which might include the expansion of MBTA bus service. Any design of First Street should support the vision of a First Street that provides high-frequency bus service, connections to Lechmere Station, and safe and comfortable facilities for people who walk and bike.

The graphics in the petitioner's initial presentation show a narrowing of the roadway that would hinder future plans for bus priority as described above. On the other hand, pending further design collaboration with staff, the proposal to set a portion of the building back could provide a welcome opportunity to enhance the public access and frontage, in order to provide space for people on foot or bicycle, which would enable further achievement of streetscape goals in this area.

Transportation Analysis

Discussion at the prior hearings raised two key transportation-related issues: Will the area be able to accommodate the level of additional traffic generated by the anticipated development under this proposal, and will the existing underground parking garage support the parking demand of the anticipated development. These issues are separate in some ways and intertwined in others. For example, a plan that ensures an ample supply of parking is likely to encourage more driving, leading to greater traffic impacts. A parking supply that is too constrained might limit traffic impacts, but might impact mall users or have spillover effects on parking availability in the nearby area.

Staff from the Traffic, Parking, and Transportation Department (TP&T) have been in communication with the petitioner and have met since the previous hearing to discuss ways to model transportation impacts. Since this is a zoning petition and not a development proposal, which if the zoning is adopted will require a comprehensive transportation impact study (TIS), TP&T recommended a higher-level analysis comparing trip generation across different development scenarios. TP&T also recommended analyzing future parking demands against the capacity of the underground garage.

The petitioner's traffic consultant has been working on these tasks and TP&T expects a presentation of some of their work at the May 14 Planning Board hearing. TP&T looks forward to seeing the results of their work and continuing to work with the petitioner on this project.

Parking Strategies in Zoning

Independent of the analysis of transportation impacts, there are strategic considerations for the treatment of parking requirements in zoning. Parking demand is constantly shifting and it is difficult to anticipate how needs will change in the future. Also, controlling parking supply is a key tool that the City uses to limit impacts from automobiles, including traffic and greenhouse gas emissions.

In recent years, Cambridge's zoning strategy for parking in mixed-use development areas has included strict maximum parking limits to avoid the creation of excess parking, flexibility in the use and management of the parking supply to support a mix of activities (office, residential, retail, and other uses) efficiently and dynamically, and removing zoning impediments so that parking can be reduced over time as the overall demand changes.

These zoning strategies work in tandem with transportation demand management (TDM) programs, enforced through the Parking and Transportation Demand Management (PTDM) Ordinance and through special permit conditions. TDM strategies include subsidies and amenities to encourage non-auto modes such as transit, bicycling, and walking, as well as charging the full cost of parking to users (as opposed to, for instance, companies purchasing parking to provide to employees at a subsidy) and giving users more flexible choices to reduce their own parking utilization (such as paying daily rates for a limited number of days instead of paying for a full month).

The CambridgeSide proposal is different from other recent development proposals because it would use existing underutilized parking on the site, rather than creating new accessory parking. Another unusual characteristic is that the existing garage has a commercial parking license, allowing it to operate essentially as a principal parking use with broad flexibility in how spaces can be allocated. There are limitations on its use imposed by past special permits and agreements with the City, which should be analyzed to determine how they might affect how that parking is used over time.

Figuring out the right set of specific parking allowances, limitations, and other requirements will be a component of PUD special permit review if the zoning is adopted, based on more detailed analysis. Regarding the overall zoning strategy, staff recommends considering the following approaches:

- Clarifying that new development will be supported by parking that exists on the site, and that new accessory parking will not be created (but existing parking may be reduced).
- Allowing the existing commercial parking supply to provide the necessary parking for new uses, rather than converting that parking to accessory parking, to the extent permitted by commercial parking permits that are in effect for the site.
- Removing minimum parking requirements, except possibly for residential uses (to prevent spillover effects in the adjacent neighborhood), with the expectation that new uses will be served by existing parking in accordance with applicable commercial parking permits and any conditions imposed by the Planning Board in granting a PUD special permit.

Retail Strategies

The mall currently provides a variety of retail uses at different price points serving people of diverse income levels throughout Cambridge and the region. As a result, efforts to support new local retail opportunities should not discourage the diverse mall tenants from moving to new spaces that might be created fronting First Street or, alternatively, staying inside the mall.

To ensure a mix of retailers along the new First Street retail, CDD encourages the developer to create a retail committee (including an area resident, East Cambridge Business Association representative, and EDD staff) to meet twice a year to discuss the first floor leasing and marketing efforts. This is a strategy

that has been utilized in other major development projects, including MIT's Kendall Square development and the Mass+Main project in Central Square.

Climate and Resilience

Regarding climate change resilience, the petitioner's team has reviewed the anticipated flood elevations and believes that adequate protection from projected 2070 flood elevations can be provided without substantially affecting the development proposal. The Department of Public Works (DPW) has also reviewed the proposal. The proposal acknowledges the City's resilience planning reports and efforts and the proposed zoning language is consistent with zoning for similar areas. DPW expects to apply the same development standards though the special permit process based on the precedents established in prior projects.

In response to questions raised by the Planning Board related to energy performance and greenhouse gas emissions, staff is currently working to advance an update to the "Green Building Requirements" that apply to development citywide. These changes are based on the recommendations of the Net Zero Action Plan and include the following:

- Increasing the minimum design standard to LEED Gold, or alternatively meeting PassiveHouse or Enterprise Green Community standards.
- Requiring an enhanced commissioning process for buildings subject to Green Building Requirements.
- Providing a "net zero narrative" with a development proposal, describing the building's envelope performance (including window to wall ratio), anticipated energy use and greenhouse gas emissions, a framework for how the project could be converted to net zero emissions in the future, and other information related to greenhouse gas emissions over time.

Provided these changes are adopted, they would apply to new development on this site along with comparable projects throughout the city.

Zoning Clarifications

On March 19, Board members made several drafting comments on the zoning petition. Some of the Board's general concerns were related to the core concept of a PUD-8 overlay district operating alongside the PUD-4 zoning, with the existing development on the CambridgeSide site controlled by PUD-4 and new development controlled by PUD-8. The petitioner has discussed these issues with staff and has responded by providing a set of proposed revisions for the Board's review and a memo explaining the overall approach and proposed changes. Still, it is difficult for staff to predict how this overall approach will work until a development plan is proposed that clearly defines and distinguishes "PUD-4 development" from "PUD-8 development."

Below is a summary of comments made by the Board on specific zoning sections, the petitioner's revisions, and comments from staff.

- Section 13.102.1: The Board found it difficult to understand the standards for development parcels, and asked whether it would be possible to have multiple development parcels in the PUD-8 District. Because the minimum development parcel size is 7.5 acres, which is the approximate area of the

entire district, it would seem impossible to have more than one development parcel. The revised text deletes some unnecessary language to make the standards clearer.

- Section 13.102.2: The Board raised a concern about wording of “shall” instead of “may,” which has been changed in the revised version. The Board also raised questions about the text relating to minor amendments. Generally, it is unusual for the zoning to pre-determine what changes to a Final Development Plan constitute a minor amendment. The Planning Board would make such a determination after reviewing a development plan and referring to the criteria in Section 12.37. When approving a Final Development Plan, the Board could specify in the conditions of the special permit what flexibility is allowed for aspects of the plan such as use allocation or phasing. While it is unusual to suggest additional types of changes to be considered as minor amendments, the last sentence has been revised to clarify that the Board “could” approve such changes rather than saying that they “shall” be approved.
- Section 13.102.5: The Board asked whether a lot within the district might be controlled by long-term lease in addition to fee rights or enforceable easements. The revised zoning text includes long-term lease interests.
- Section 13.102.8: The Board raised concerns about the language being overly broad in waiving lapses and potentially taking away appeal rights that are afforded by state law. The revised text deletes some of these provisions but retains others. Generally, project commencement and phasing for a PUD is governed by the general provisions in Section 12.40, set forth below. Staff’s general concern is whether the proposed new section may constrain or conflict with these general provisions:

12.40 ENFORCEMENT

12.41 *Commencement of Construction.* The developer shall begin construction of the PUD within twelve (12) months of the date of the granting of the Special Permit to construct a PUD. The Planning Board may grant in writing an extension of this time period of up to twelve (12) months upon determination of good cause by the developer. If the developer fails to commence construction of the PUD within the specified time, the Special Permit shall lapse.

12.41.1 If the PUD is to be developed in stages, then the developer must begin the construction of each stage within the time limits specified in the Final Development Plan. Construction in each phase shall include all the elements of that phase specified in the Final Development Plan.

12.42 The Planning Board, or its Designee, shall periodically monitor the construction of the PUD, with respect to start of construction and development phasing. If the Planning Board, or its designee, finds that either the developer has failed to begin development within the specified time period or that the developer is not proceeding in accordance with the approved development phasing, with respect to either timing or construction of an approved mix of project elements, then the Planning Board shall review the PUD and may extend the time for start of construction or the length of time needed to complete a phase, revoke the Special Permit, or recommend that the developer amend the Final Development Plan subject to procedures specified in Section 12.37.

If the Planning Board revokes the Special Permit for the PUD then the Final Development Plan shall be null and void.

- Section 13.102.10: The Board also raised concerns about whether the language related to “Conflict” (amended to “Consistency” in the revised text) is overly broad in scope. The revised version deletes language related to conflict with “any other City of Cambridge ordinance or regulation” but retains other language pertaining to conflict with special permits, site plan approvals (which are not authorized in the Cambridge Zoning Ordinance), or variances. Such language is not typically included in PUD district development controls and it is difficult to anticipate how it might apply in practice.
- Section 13.104.1: As noted earlier, the Board expressed uncertainty about the potential for multiple development parcels, which might result in more gross floor area (GFA) than anticipated. The revised text specifies a limit on net new GFA within the PUD-8 district as a whole, which is consistent with language used in some other PUD districts, to avoid uncertainty over how much total GFA is authorized.
- Section 13.104.1: The Board also raised concerns about language pertaining to inclusionary housing, noting that the requirement is typically based on the citywide zoning requirements at the time the special permit is granted without specifying the requirement in the zoning for that district. No changes are made in the revised version.
- Section 13.105.1: A reference is corrected in the revised text.
- Section 13.106.6: No specific concerns were raised about the text, but the Board asked for additional information about what the loading requirements would be for the anticipated development, since the zoning authorizes the Board to waive such requirements.
- Section 13.107.2: The Board noted that screening of rooftop mechanicals is desirable but limited by code requirements, and suggested that buildings be required to screen mechanicals to the fullest extent allowed by law. The revised text adds a sentence to this effect.
- Section 13.107.3: The Board asked about this provision related to co-generation facilities, which mirrors language incorporated into PUD districts in Kendall Square. In those other districts, staff suggested that district energy production facilities might be incorporated into large development areas as a way to promote efficiency and resilience. It is not clear whether that would be the case for this proposal. This provision is deleted in the revised version.



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Community Development Department

To: Planning Board
From: Jeff Roberts, Director of Zoning and Development
Swaathi Joseph, Zoning Associate Planner
Date: May 22, 2019
Re: **CambridgeSide PUD-8 Zoning Petition (third public hearing)**

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Overview

This zoning petition, by New England Development and Cambridgeside Galleria Associates Trust, would establish a new Planned Unit Development district (PUD-8) in East Cambridge, with development controls contained in a new Section 13.100. The new district would allow up to 500,000 square feet of new commercial development and up to 125,000 square feet of residential development in addition to the existing development that was permitted and built under the PUD-4 district controls.

The Planning Board opened the public hearing on this petition on March 19, 2019, and continued that hearing on May 14, 2019. The hearing was further continued to May 28, 2019, so that the petitioner could respond to a set of issues raised at the prior meeting.

This memo provides background information in response to some of the key questions that were raised at the Board's prior hearing:

- What items belong in zoning, and what items belong in a letter of commitment?
- How should the appropriate height limits be determined?
- How does this proposal compare to what could be done under current zoning?
- How can the zoning help to mitigate traffic concerns?

The petitioner has met with staff in the interim and has provided written materials for review by staff and the Board, including proposed revisions to the zoning petition text and a chart summarizing the zoning changes and other commitments to be implemented through a letter of commitment. This memo references some of the information provided in the latest draft materials provided to staff.

Staff will be available to discuss this information and respond to questions at the upcoming hearing. **For reference, the previous staff memo dated May 10, 2019, is also attached.**

What items belong in zoning, and what items belong in a letter of commitment?

Zoning for a Planned Unit Development (PUD) district defines the overall controls, limitations, and requirements for a development plan, which is then subject to more detailed review and approval by the Planning Board through a special permit process. The special permit conditions then provide a more specific set of rules governing how the development will proceed over time. As a basic principle, any matter that will be relevant to Planning Board’s eventual review and approval of a development plan should be incorporated or explicitly referenced in the PUD zoning.

A letter of commitment typically deals with public benefits that are provided to offset the impacts of additional development but fall outside the scope of zoning, and might include funding for off-site public improvements or programmatic commitments to the local community. A letter of commitment is an agreement between the petitioner and the City Council, and while the Planning Board could review the potential terms of that agreement, they would be subject to change at any time up to adoption.

Housing

- Because it is a significant part of a Final Development Plan, the minimum amount of housing is usually expressed in zoning, either as a total amount or a percentage of the overall development. Zoning typically also sets phasing thresholds for when the housing must be completed, often expressed as a limit on the amount or percentage of non-residential development that can be completed prior to the required residential development. The specific phasing would be approved by the Planning Board in the PUD special permit conditions. **The latest revised petition text reviewed by staff maintains the requirement for at least 20% of the project to be residential and would require it to be completed before 400,000 square feet of non-residential development (about 80% of the expected non-residential component).**
- Affordable housing requirements are somewhat more complicated. Section 11.200 sets the minimum inclusionary housing requirements across the city. It establishes a requirement for low-to-moderate income housing as a percentage of overall housing, and also sets minimum standards for the inclusion of family-sized units (3+ bedrooms) within the affordable units. Committing to provide additional affordable housing – including middle-income units and additional family-sized units – does not necessarily conflict with the inclusionary housing requirements. In the past, commitments to additional affordable housing have often been included in zoning controls (see: Alexandria PUD zoning in Section 13.59.4, MXD zoning in Sections 14.35-14.36, Mass and Main zoning in Section 20.307.8), but sometimes have been included in letters of commitment (see: MIT Volpe Site Letter of Commitment). **Staff believes it is helpful to articulate these commitments in zoning to clarify how the additional commitments build on and modify the citywide requirements, and because the affordable component of the project could be relevant to the Planning Board’s review of a PUD proposal.**

Open Space/Public Space

- Requirements for public space within the development plan, which would be part of the Planning Board’s review at the special permit phase, should be referenced. In this case, the open space requirements mirror the current zoning and the petitioner has committed to maintain the public atrium space and create connections at the ground floor. Even if these are in a letter of

commitment, it would be appropriate to reference them in zoning because the public circulation around and within the project would be part of the Planning Board’s review of a development proposal. **The latest revised petition text reviewed by staff includes language in the special permit criteria, 13.102.4(c) for “maintaining ground-level pedestrian connections;” however, it is not clear if the intent is to maintain the existing atrium space that is open to the roof, or if a future pedestrian connection might be achieved in some other way.**

Active Uses

- Because ground-floor uses are important parts of the development plan and require review by the Planning Board, standards and criteria should be incorporated into zoning. The petition has included provisions for active uses along First Street, and at staff’s suggestion the latest revised version also calls for active uses along Cambridgeside Place and Lechmere Canal Park in 13.107.1 – **staff suggests also citing these locations in the special permit criteria, 13.102.4(j).** Staff also believes it is important for ground-floor activation along Land Boulevard to be a consideration in development review, although it might take a different form than continuous active use frontage.

Urban Design

- Criteria, objectives, and guidelines that inform the Planning Board’s review and approval of a PUD are normally incorporated into the zoning text or into a separate design guidelines document that is referenced in the zoning. In this case, the zoning references several plans and documents that provide guidance. **At staff’s suggestion, the 1978 Riverfront Plan has been added as a reference since the overall arrangement of buildings, connections, and open spaces are largely defined by that plan.**
- Zoning often references continuing design review of individual buildings. The revised zoning text reviewed by staff incorporates language (13.102.12) used in other PUD districts to this effect: “In approving a Final Development Plan, the Planning Board may incorporate criteria and additional guidelines for future design review of individual building sites and open spaces in support of its findings.” **Staff suggests adding some specificity to the topics that should be addressed in guidelines: streetscape activation, amenities, and dimensions; the provision of canopy street trees; coordination with the City’s plans for vehicular, pedestrian, and bicycle movement in East Cambridge ground floor design; the location of entrances and building services; the location of the ground floor façades relative to the plane of the streetwall above; façade length; modulation of the streetwall façade; bay widths; the massing and façade expression of towers, mechanical penthouses and their step-backs; screening of mechanical systems; architectural details; building materials; incorporation of art; lighting design, sustainability; and universal access.**
- The CDD memo dated May 10, 2019 (attached) also recommends items that could be incorporated into zoning or a separate design guidelines document to inform the Board’s future review. Many of these issues are addressed in the latest revised version of the text, but some could be considered further. **In particular, staff suggested a guideline of a 15-foot step-back for mechanical penthouses along First Street.**

Environmental Standards

- The latest presentation cites commitments to mitigate noise and light impacts from lab uses. While these are not traditionally part of zoning, if mitigation strategies are to be reviewed as part of the development plan and enforced as special permit conditions, the zoning should describe these strategies. **It is also helpful for the zoning to specify that the special permit may contain conditions necessary to ensure the ongoing mitigation of noise and lighting impacts.**
- Commitments to provide a net zero narrative and an ongoing commissioning plan would also normally be found in zoning and would be part of the Planning Board’s review of a development plan. It is helpful to reference these in the PUD zoning (as shown in the petitioner’s latest revision), but it should be noted that the City is working to advance citywide requirements in these areas, so any zoning for this district should not be so specific as to potentially conflict with future citywide standards.

How should the appropriate height limits be determined?

The latest revised petition text reviewed by staff lowers the maximum height from 185 feet to 165 feet and establishes a lower limit of 155 feet for buildings fronting First Street, responding to comments made at recent hearings. Additional images would help the Planning Board evaluate the proposed height limits, including ground level views from surrounding streets, and more distant ground level views showing the site in the context of recent and ongoing projects in East Cambridge.

Staff has provided responses to two additional issues raised by Board members at the last hearing:

The proposed 185-foot height limit might be more appropriate for residential uses than non-residential.

It is common in zoning to have different height limits for residential uses and non-residential uses. This is done in some respects to prioritize housing by creating a greater height envelope, and in some respects to acknowledge that residential buildings tend to be less visually bulky at taller heights. The latest revised petition text reviewed by staff lowers the overall height limit but does not differentiate between residential and non-residential.

The proposed taller height limits might be appropriate where new development is proposed at the edges of the site, but not in the center where the public atrium is proposed to be maintained.

Height zones are often defined relative to adjacent streets. In the images shown by the petitioner, it appears that most new construction is intended to take place within approximately 250 feet of the centerline of First Street and within approximately 200 feet of the centerline of Land Boulevard. A potential approach would be to further limit the additional height to areas within a defined distance of those streets. Different height limits could also be applied along different streets. It seemed to be the sense of the Board that the Land Boulevard side was the appropriate location for taller heights given the wider street and views toward the river.

The latest revised petition text reviewed by staff would allow 155 feet along First Street, with taller heights (165 feet) along Land Boulevard and CambridgeSide Place. The revised height guidelines in

13.107.5(a)(i) suggest that height would be encouraged along these streets, though the zoning would continue to allow taller heights (135' or 165') in the central portions of the site.

How does this proposal compare to what could be done under current zoning?

Although parts of the site are below the current 85-foot height limit, the site could not add square footage without exceeding the FAR limitations of current zoning. The zoning currently limits development to an FAR of “2.0 for all uses, or the Gross Floor Area of the buildings contained within the Development Parcel at the time of application for a PUD special permit, whichever is greater.” As stated by the petitioner’s team, the way that FAR is calculated in zoning has changed in several ways, resulting in more restrictive limitations than when the building was first built.

Current zoning would allow the conversion of part or all of the existing mall building to other allowed uses – as was recently approved for the third floor – or the demolition and reconstruction of part or all of the site up to its current square footage (roughly 766,000 square feet, with more detailed review needed to determine the exact amount). All uses proposed in PUD-8 are allowed in the existing PUD-4 zoning, except “technical office” (i.e., commercial labs), so the existing square footage could be reused or redeveloped as housing, office, or retail. The proposed zoning would allow approximately 500,000 square feet of additional commercial space (including lab) and 125,000 square feet of housing to the existing square footage, with some amount of the existing mall retail converted or rebuilt and some amount retained or replaced on the first and second floors.

Under current zoning, any proposed redevelopment would still require a special permit from the Planning Board. As an additional complication, the original PUD development parcel also includes some sites other than the mall, such as the hotel and a portion of the neighboring office building.

How can the zoning help to mitigate traffic concerns?

Traffic Mitigation

At the more recent meeting, the Director of Traffic, Parking and Transportation (TP&T) noted that a mode split goal or “trip cap” has been incorporated into some development projects as part of a transportation demand management (TDM) and mitigation program for a project. The current petition cites the creation and implementation of a TDM and mitigation program as part of the Planning Board’s special permit review. Other PUD districts have included language such as the following:

In approving a Final Development Plan, the Planning Board shall refer to Article 18.000 and Section 19.20 of this Zoning Ordinance, applicable guidelines and principles, and other City transportation planning efforts (including the Kendall Square Mobility Task Force), and may require measures to be linked to milestones, thresholds or performance standards connected to the scale and pace of development within the PUD.

Parking

The previous CDD memo (in consultation with TP&T) also noted some issues related to how parking is treated in zoning. To summarize, CDD suggested the following conceptual approaches:

- Allowing existing parking to serve new development on the site, but not allowing new accessory parking to be created.
- Specifying that existing parking on the site may continue to function as principal-use parking, and that the Planning Board may permit the parking needs of new development to be served by existing principal-use parking without converting it to accessory parking, to the extent permitted by commercial parking permits that are in effect for the site and by any conditions set forth in the PUD special permit.
- Eliminating minimum accessory parking requirements for new development, except possibly for residential uses (to prevent spillover effects in the adjacent neighborhood), while setting maximum parking limitations for office/lab uses in particular.

The latest revised petition text reviewed by staff takes a more simplified approach that eliminates minimum requirements, noting that requirements can be established during the PUD special permit approval process, and eliminates references to accessory parking while continuing to allow the existing parking supply to be utilized as efficiently as possible. Staff is supportive of the overall approach. More consideration might be given to whether some minimum parking requirement is appropriate for residential uses (for example, in parts of Kendall Square there is a minimum of 0.4-0.5 space per unit, though some spaces could be shared with non-residential uses), and whether the maximum limit on retail parking (5.0 spaces per 1,000 square feet) might be too high. As an alternative to putting requirements in zoning, limitations could be established during the special permit process following more detailed review by TP&T and the Planning Board. The latter approach has the advantage of greater flexibility, and the requirements could be adjusted over time as demands change.