

## **Project Review Special Permit – Traffic Impact Findings**

**19.25.1** Traffic Impact Findings. Where a Traffic Study is required as set forth in Section 19.24 (3) above the Planning Board shall grant the special permit only if it finds that the project will have no substantial adverse impact on city traffic within the study area as analyzed in the Traffic Study. Substantial adverse impact on city traffic shall be measured by reference to the traffic impact indicators set forth in Section 19.25.11 below.

In areas where the Planning Board determines that area-specific traffic guidelines have been established in the Ordinance, the Board recognizes written agreements between project proponents and the City dealing with transportation mitigation strategies.

**19.25.11** Traffic Impact Indicators. In determining whether a proposal has substantial adverse impacts on city traffic the Planning Board shall apply the following indicators. When one or more of the indicators is exceeded, it will be indicative of potentially substantial adverse impact on city traffic. In making its findings, however, the Planning Board shall consider the mitigation efforts proposed, their anticipated effectiveness, and other supplemental information that identifies circumstances or actions that will result in a reduction in adverse traffic impacts. Such efforts and actions may include, but are not limited to, transportation demand management plans; roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities improvements; measures to reduce traffic on residential streets; and measures undertaken to improve safety for pedestrians and vehicles, particularly at intersections identified in the Traffic Study as having a history of high crash rates.

The indicators are: (1) Project vehicle trip generation weekdays and weekends for a twenty-four hour period and A. M. and P.M. peak vehicle trips generated; (2) Change in level of service at identified signalized intersections; (3) Increased volume of trips on residential streets; (4) Increase of length of vehicle queues at identified signalized intersections; and (5) Lack of sufficient pedestrian and bicycle facilities. The precise numerical values that will be deemed to indicate potentially substantial adverse impact for each of these indicators shall be adopted from time to time by the Planning Board in consultation with the TPTD, published and made available to all applicants.

## Project Review Special Permit – Urban Design Findings

**19.25.2 Urban Design Findings.** The Planning Board shall grant the special permit only if it finds that the project is consistent with the urban design objectives of the city as set forth in Section 19.30. In making that determination the Board may be guided by or make reference to urban design guidelines or planning reports that may have been developed for specific areas of the city and shall apply the standards herein contained in a reasonable manner to nonprofit religious and educational organizations in light of the special circumstances applicable to nonprofit religious and educational activities.

### **19.30 Citywide Urban Design Objectives**

The following urban design objectives are intended to provide guidance to property owners and the general public as to the city's policies with regard to the form and character desirable for new development in the city. It is understood that application of these principles can vary with the context of specific building proposals in ways that, nevertheless, fully respect the policies' intent. It is intended that proponents of projects, and city staff, the Planning Board and the general public, where public review or approval is required, should be open to creative variations from the detailed provisions presented in this Section as long as the core values expressed are being served. A project need not meet all the objectives of this Section 19.30 where this Section serves as the basis for issuance of a special permit. Rather the permit granting authority shall find that on balance the objectives of the city are being served. Nor shall a project subject to special permit review be required to conform to the Required Building and Site Plan Requirements set forth in Section 19.50.

Further indicators of conformance with these policy objectives shall be found in planning documents and plans developed for specific areas of the city or the city as a whole, to the extent that they are not inconsistent with the objectives set forth in this Section 19.30. These documents include the *Harvard Square Development Guidelines*, the *Central Square Action Plan*, the *Central Square Development Guidelines*, the *North Massachusetts Avenue Urban Design Guidelines Handbook*, the *University Park at MIT Urban Design Guidelines*, the *North Point Policy Plan and Design Guidelines*, the *Cambridge Institutional Growth Management Plan*, the *East Cambridge Riverfront Plan*, the *Eastern Cambridge Plan*, the *Eastern Cambridge Design Guidelines*, the *Alewife Revitalization, Alewife Urban Design Study Phase II* and its Draft update of 1991, and *Toward a Sustainable Future: Cambridge Growth Policy Document*.

**19.30 Citywide Urban Design Objectives [SUMMARIZED]**

Objective	Indicators
New projects should be responsive to the existing or anticipated pattern of development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transition to lower-scale neighborhoods</li> <li>• Consistency with established streetscape</li> <li>• Compatibility with adjacent uses</li> <li>• Consideration of nearby historic buildings</li> </ul>
Development should be pedestrian and bicycle-friendly, with a positive relationship to its surroundings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inhabited ground floor spaces</li> <li>• Discouraged ground-floor parking</li> <li>• Windows on ground floor</li> <li>• Orienting entries to pedestrian pathways</li> <li>• Safe and convenient bicycle and pedestrian access</li> </ul>
The building and site design should mitigate adverse environmental impacts of a development upon its neighbors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Location/impact of mechanical equipment</li> <li>• Location/impact of loading and trash handling</li> <li>• Stormwater management</li> <li>• Shadow impacts</li> <li>• Retaining walls, if provided</li> <li>• Building scale and wall treatment</li> <li>• Outdoor lighting</li> <li>• Tree protection (requires plan approved by City Arborist)</li> </ul>
Projects should not overburden the City infrastructure services, including neighborhood roads, city water supply system, and sewer system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water-conserving plumbing, stormwater management</li> <li>• Capacity/condition of water and wastewater service</li> <li>• Efficient design (LEED standards)</li> </ul>
New construction should reinforce and enhance the complex urban aspects of Cambridge as it has developed historically.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institutional use focused on existing campuses</li> <li>• Mixed-use development (including retail) encouraged where allowed</li> <li>• Preservation of historic structures and environment</li> <li>• Provision of space for start-up companies, manufacturing activities</li> </ul>
Expansion of the inventory of housing in the city is encouraged.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing as a component of large, multi-building development</li> <li>• Affordable units exceeding zoning requirements, targeting units for middle-income families</li> </ul>
Enhancement and expansion of open space amenities in the city should be incorporated into new development in the city.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publicly beneficial open space provided in large-parcel commercial development</li> <li>• Enhance/expand existing open space, complement existing pedestrian/bicycle networks</li> <li>• Provide wider range of activities</li> </ul>

## Reduction of Side and Rear Yard Requirements

**Table 5-4 Table of Dimensional Requirements - Industrial Districts**

District	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)			(6)	(7)
	Max. Ratio of Floor Area to Lot Area	Minimum Lot Size in Sq. Ft.	Min. Lot Area for Each D.U. in Sq. Ft.	Minimum Lot Width in Feet	Front	Side	Rear	Maximum Height in Feet	Min. Ratio of Private Op. Sp. to Lot Area
Ind. A-1	1.25/1.50	5,000	700	50	0	0 <sup>(b)</sup>	0 <sup>(b)</sup>	45	none
Ind. A-2	2.75/4.0	5,000	none	50	0	0 <sup>(b)</sup>	0 <sup>(b)</sup>	70	none
Ind. A	1.25/1.50	none	none	none	none	none	none	45 <sup>(d)</sup>	none
Ind. B-1	1.5/3.0	5,000	none	50	0	0	0	60/70	none
Ind. B-2	0.75	5,000	1,200	50	15	0 <sup>(b)</sup>	0 <sup>(b)</sup>	35	none
Ind. B	2.75/4.0 <sup>(e)</sup>	none	none	none	none	none	none	120	none
Ind. C	1.0	20,000	none	100	0	0 <sup>(b)</sup>	0 <sup>(b)</sup>	45	none

### 2. Footnotes

(a) deleted.

(b) A side yard setback of  $\frac{H+L}{7}$  and a rear yard setback of  $\frac{H+L}{5}$  shall be required only for residential uses in new structures and for nonresidential uses abutting residences, residential or open space districts or public parks and recreation areas. **These requirements may be reduced to a minimum required setback of ten (10) feet on special permit, provided that the yard is suitably landscaped to effectively buffer building walls from abutting lots.**

## Modification of Setbacks for Open On-Grade Parking Facilities

6.44.1 Setbacks for on grade open parking facilities shall be provided as follows:

- (a) No on grade open parking space shall be located within ten (10) feet of that portion of a building wall containing windows of habitable or occupiable rooms at basement or first story. However, on grade open parking spaces serving one, two, or three family dwellings may be located within five (5) feet of that portion of such building wall.
- (b) Except for one, two, or three family dwellings existing at the time of the effective date of this Ordinance or amendment thereto, no on grade open parking space or driveway shall be located within five (5) feet of any side or rear property line.
- (c) No on grade open parking space shall be located within a required front yard setback
- (d) The area between the required parking setback line and the building or lot line shall be landscaped and maintained in accordance with the requirements of Subsection 6.48.
- (e) No on grade open parking shall be allowed in a Residence C-2A district within one hundred and twenty five (125) feet of a Residence A-1, A-2, B, C, C-1, C-2, or C-2B District.
- (f) In an Industry C district, no parking lot shall be located within fifty (50) feet of a residential district or within twenty five (25) feet of an open space district, a park or public recreation area or the right of way of a designated parkway.
- (g) The Board of Zoning Appeal may grant a special permit to allow for modification of the requirements in 6.44.1 (a) or (b) if site specific factors favor such modification.

*[Note: The Planning Board may grant this special permit per Section 10.45]*

## Multifamily Special Permit Criteria

- 10.47.3** Criteria for approval of Townhouses and Multifamily Dwellings. In reviewing applications for townhouse developments and multifamily dwelling, the special permit granting authority shall consider and address the following site plan criteria as applicable:
- (1) Key features of the natural landscape should be preserved to the maximum extent feasible. Tree removal should be minimized and other natural features of the site, such as slopes, should be maintained.
  - (2) New buildings should be related sensitively to the existing built environment. The location, orientation and massing of structures in the development should avoid overwhelming the existing buildings in the vicinity of the development. Visual and functional disruptions should be avoided.
  - (3) The location, arrangement, and landscaping of open space should provide some visual benefits to abutters and passersby as well as functional benefits to occupants of the development.
  - (4) Parking areas, internal roadways and access/egress points should be safe and convenient.
  - (5) Parking area landscaping should minimize the intrusion of onsite parking so that it does not substantially detract from the use and enjoyment of either the proposed development or neighboring properties.
  - (6) Service facilities such as trash collection apparatus and utility boxes should be located so that they are convenient for resident, yet unobtrusive.
- 10.47.41** Additional Criteria for Townhouses and Multifamily Dwellings in Industry A and A-2 districts, Industry B, B-1 and B-2 districts, and the Industry C district. In addition to the criteria set forth in Section 11.47.4 above, the following shall be considered by the Planning Board in these industrial districts:
- (1) On balance the location is appropriate for the proposed residential uses, because:
    - (a) Residential use at the proposed location will not preempt space particularly suitable for nonresidential uses; and
    - (b) Existing or anticipated uses on nearby premises will not make residential use inappropriate because of external impacts such as noise, glare, odors or safety concerns; and
    - (c) The proximity of the proposal to other residential development or reasonably anticipated residential development in the future, helps to establish an amount of housing sufficient to ensure a viable, supportive and healthy residential environment; or
    - (d) The proposal will act as a transition to neighboring residential districts and uses; or
    - (e) The proposal is of sufficient scale to create its own supportive residential environment.
  - (2) The proposed design includes amenities appropriate to provide a supportive service environment for the anticipated residential uses.
  - (3) Other potential benefits can be identified, including:
    - (a) The proposed residential use may make feasible the preservation of an historic structure;
    - (b) The proposed residential use and nearby commercial uses are linked through work/live arrangements or in other ways.

## Parking Screening Requirements

- 6.47** *Screening.* Off street parking facilities containing five or more spaces and not in a structure shall be effectively screened from abutting streets and lots. However, such screening shall not obstruct vehicle sight distances, entrances and exits.
- 6.47.1** Screening shall consist of one or a combination of the following:
- (a) A strip at least five (5) feet in width of densely planted shrubs or trees which are at least two (2) feet high at the time of planting and are of a type that may be expected to form, within three (3) years after time of planting, a continuous, unbroken, year round visual screen.
  - (b) A wall, barrier, or fence of uniform appearance. Such wall, barrier, or fence may be opaque or perforated provided that not more than fifty (50) percent of the face is open. The wall, barrier or fence shall be at least four (4) feet and not more than six (6) feet in height.
- 6.47.2** The screening as required in this Subsection 6.47 shall be located so as not to obstruct vehicle sight distances, entrances and exits. Such screening shall not be higher than two (2) feet within thirty (30) feet of an intersection or ten (10) feet of a driveway. In no case shall the screening of parking facilities from abutting streets exceed four (4) feet in height.
- 6.47.3** Every effort shall be made to retain existing trees. Removal of any tree exceeding six (6) inch caliper to accommodate construction of a parking facility is discouraged.
- 6.47.4** Perimeter landscaping required for screening may include any landscaped yard area otherwise required.
- 6.47.5** Screening shall be continuously maintained so as to effectively serve the purpose for which it is intended. No advertising devices of any kind shall be allowed on screening.
- 6.47.6** Screening shall be continuous except for required access.
- 6.47.7** In residential districts, any on grade, open parking area located in a front yard shall provide a visual definition of the front lot line and separation of public from private space in keeping with the appearance and character of the existing streetscape. Such definition shall be achieved by using a change of ground materials at the front lot line and by installing at least one of the following: fences, plantings, walls, or stone monuments which mark the transitions from street or sidewalk to residential lot.
- 6.47.8** Screening requirements may be waived in the following cases:
- (a) If said parking facility is already effectively screened by an existing building, wall, fence, or hedge on an adjoining lot and within five feet of the common property line, screening shall not be required so long as such adjoining screening is maintained.
  - (b) If said parking facility is already effectively screened by a natural terrain feature, railroad tracks, or change in grade.
  - (c) If said parking facility abuts another parking facility under different use or ownership, a landscaped planting strip at least five (5) feet in width may be used in lieu of screening along the common property line.