

City of Cambridge
Community Development Department
**Citywide Multifamily Housing
Zoning Petition**

Ordinance Committee Hearing
January 16, 2025



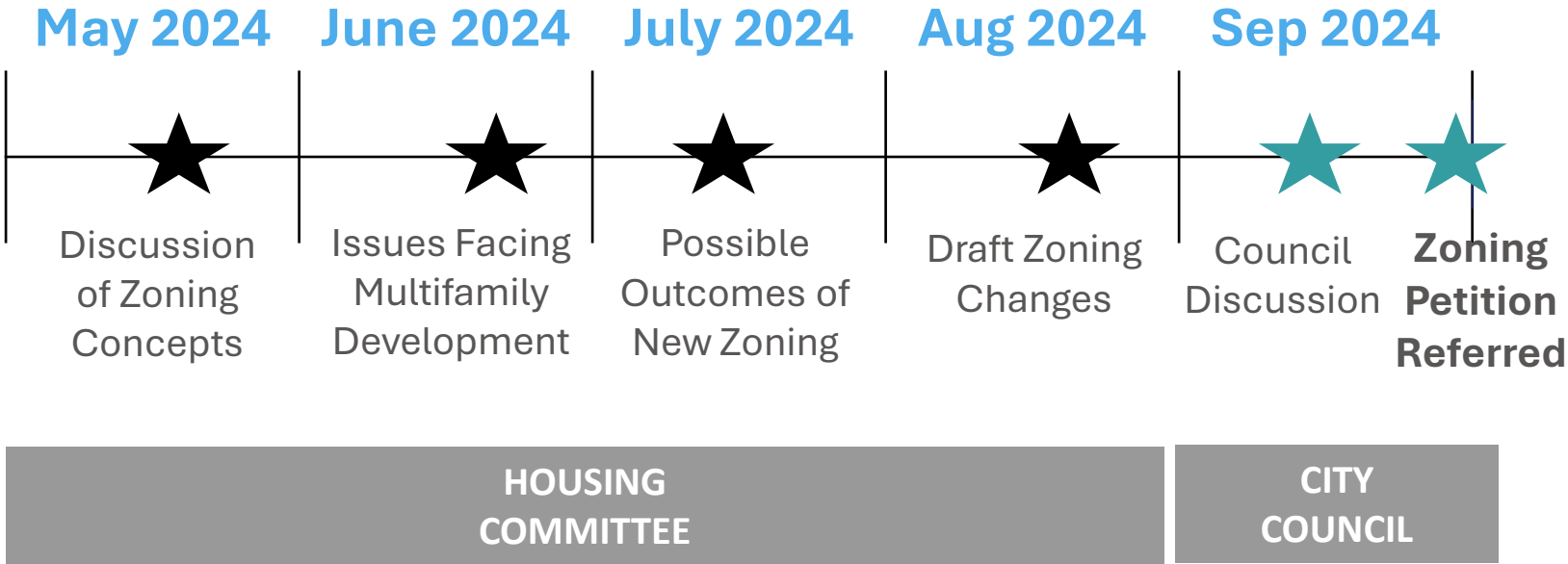
CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
Community Development
Department





Process So Far

Housing Committee Process

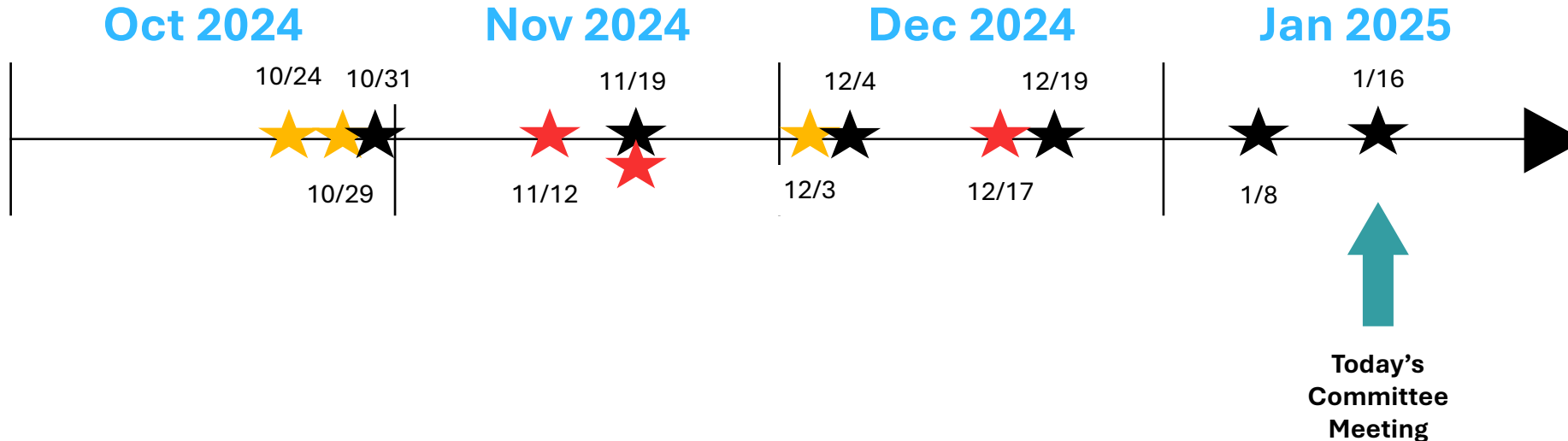


Referring a Zoning Petition starts a process to talk about a proposed zoning change and get public input before the City Council can consider adopting the change.

★ City Council Committee Hearing

★ City Council Meeting

City Council & Planning Board Process



State law requires that the City Council must act on the petition on or before **February 17, 2025**. If no action is taken by then, the petition can be refiled.

★ City Council Committee Hearing

★ Planning Board Hearing

★ Community Meeting

City Council Goals

Issues in Policy Order (May, 2024):

- End “exclusionary zoning” in Cambridge
- Promote more multi-family housing, including income-restricted affordable housing (through inclusionary program), throughout the city
- Make multifamily housing more conforming and easier to build by removing barriers that add cost



What's Not Changing?

Requirement	What it does
Inclusionary Housing	10+ housing units or 10,000+ square feet requires 20% affordable to low-moderate income households
Climate Resilience	All new buildings must protect to future long-term flooding and mitigate heat through trees, plantings, and site design
Green Building Requirements	25,000+ square feet (all uses) must be designed to Green Building standards and install Green Roof
Historic Regulations	Rules for historic districts and buildings (Demolition Delay, Conservation District Commission review) are separate from zoning and don't change
Building Codes, Other Requirements	Fire safety codes, state sanitary code, stretch energy code, fossil-fuel-free pilot, tree protection ordinance, &c., are separate from zoning and don't change

Development Review for Housing

Project Size	Res. C-1		Other Districts*	
	Current Zng	Proposed Zng	Current Zng	Proposed Zng
< 12 units	None	None	None	None
12 units- 25,000 SF	Townhouse/ multi-family SP	None	None**	None
25,000- 50,000 SF	Townhouse/ multi-family SP	Site Plan Review (admin.)	Site Plan Review (admin.)**	Site Plan Review (admin.)
50,000- 75,000 SF	Townhouse/ multi-family SP	PB Advisory Review	Project Review SP	PB Advisory Review
75,000+ SF	Townhouse/ multi-family SP	Project Review SP	Project Review SP	Project Review SP

* More advisory review in Areas of Special Planning Concern

** Project Review SP at 20,000 SF in BA, BA-1, BA-2

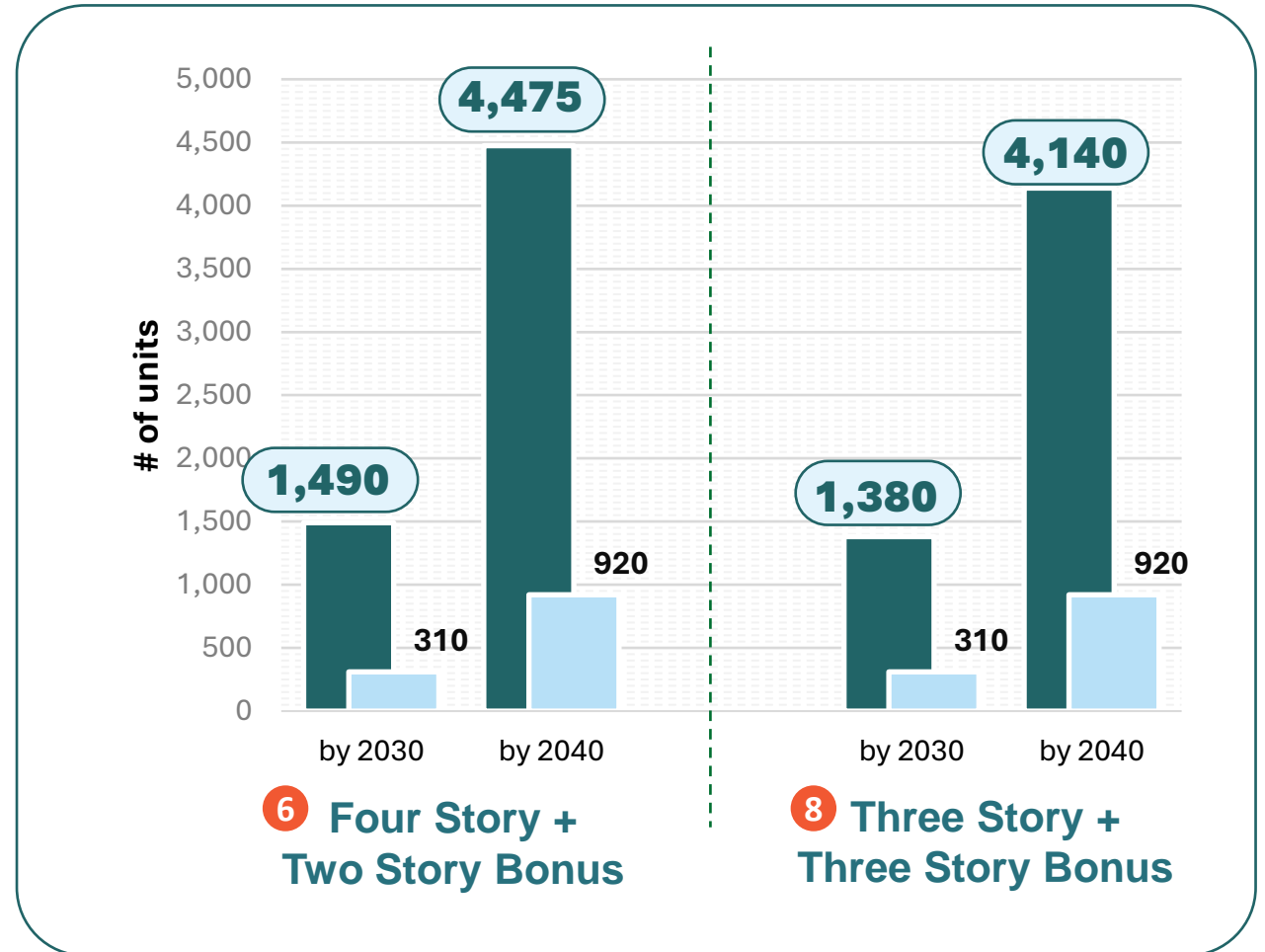
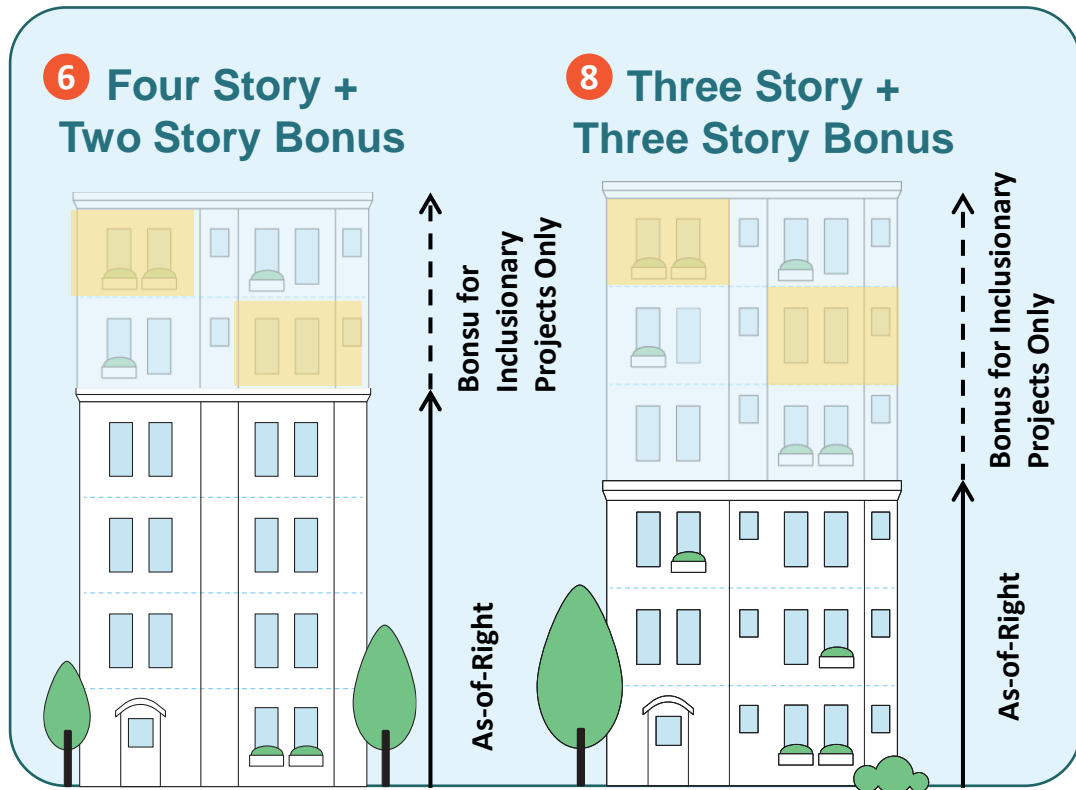


Housing Projections

Residential Scenarios Overview

- 1 Six Story As-of-Right:** Six story multifamily housing allowed in all Residential Districts
- 2 Four Story in A & B and 6 Story in C:** Four story multifamily housing allowed in Residential Districts A and B, six stories allowed in Residential District C
- 3 Six Story for Inclusionary Zoning Projects Only:** Six story multifamily housing allowed in all Residential Districts only if development includes affordable housing consistent with the Inclusionary Zoning Ordinance. Zoning for projects without Inclusionary Zoning remain unchanged.
- 4 Four Story As-of-Right + Up to Eight Stories on Select Neighborhood Streets:** Four story multifamily housing allowed in all Residential Districts, and six or eight stories allowed along select neighborhood streets (Broadway, Prospect St, Huron Ave, Concord Ave)
- 5 Four Story As-of-Right:** Four story multifamily housing allowed in all Residential Districts
- 6 Four Story + Two Story Bonus Only for Inclusionary Zoning Projects:** Four story multifamily housing allowed in all Residential Districts, with an additional two stories for projects that include affordable housing consistent with the Inclusionary Zoning Ordinance.
- 7 Four Story + Two Story Bonus Only for Inclusionary Zoning Projects on 5,000+ sq ft lots:** Four story multifamily housing allowed in all Residential Districts, with an additional two stories for projects on lots **5,000 square feet or larger** that include affordable housing consistent with the Inclusionary Zoning Ordinance.
- 8 Three + Three Story Bonus Only for Inclusionary Zoning Projects:** Four story multifamily housing allowed in all Residential Districts, with an additional two stories for projects that include affordable housing consistent with the Inclusionary Zoning Ordinance.
- 9 Three Story + Three Story Bonus Only for Inclusionary Zoning Projects on 5,000+ sq ft lots:** Four story multifamily housing allowed in all Residential Districts, with an additional two stories for projects on lots **5,000 square feet or larger** that include affordable housing consistent with the Inclusionary Zoning Ordinance.

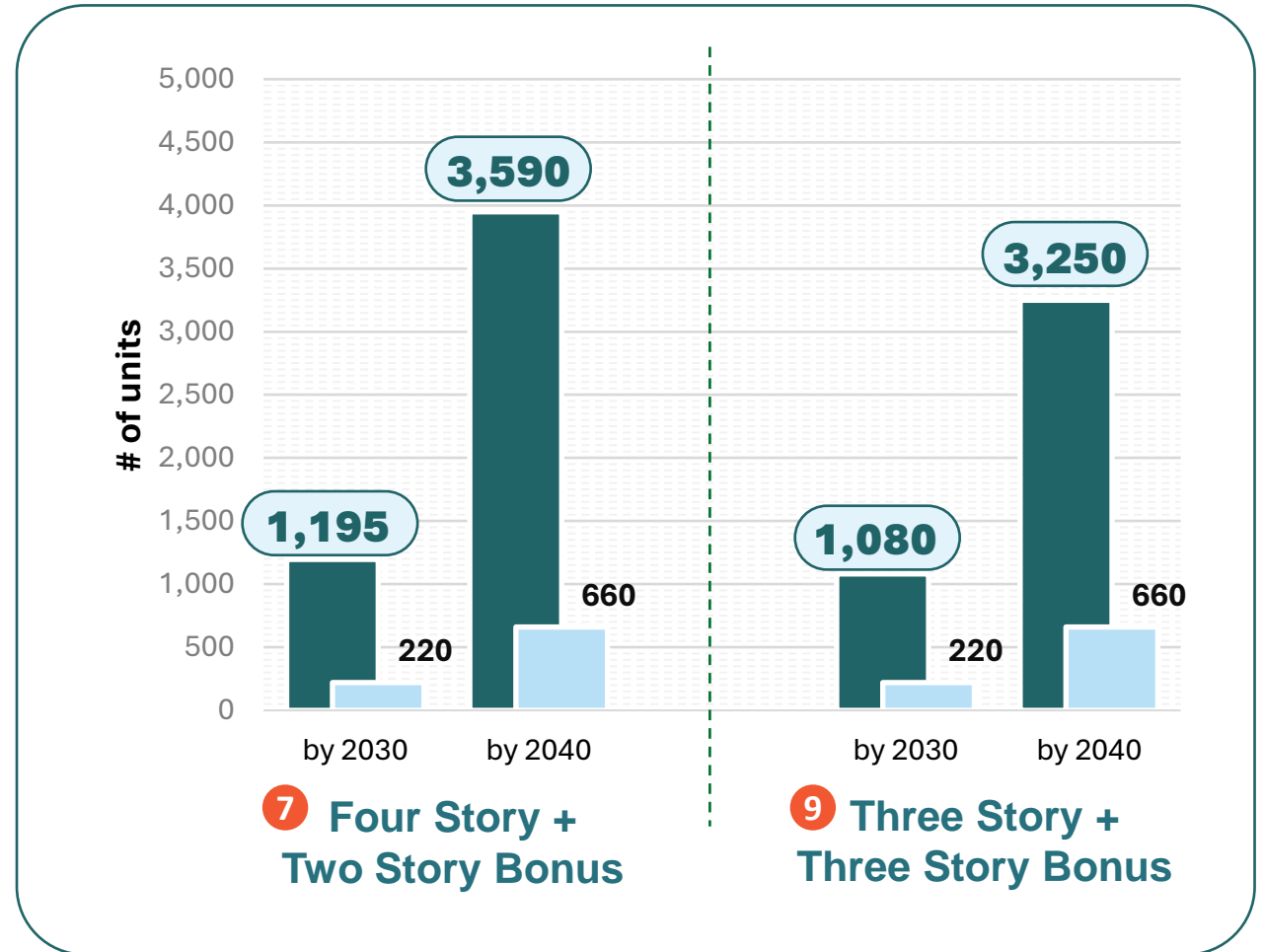
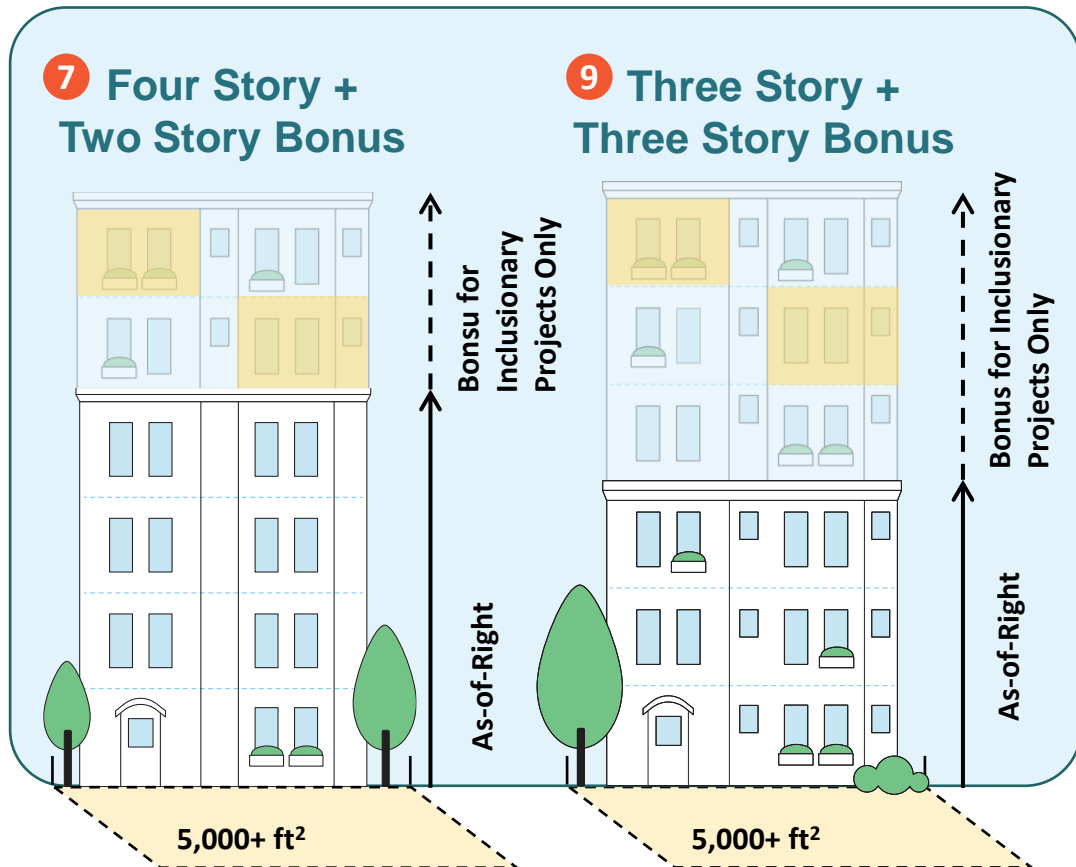
4 + 2 vs. 3 + 3 (no lot size constraints)



Net new units
 Affordable units*

*does not include units developed under AHO and/or funded by Affordable Housing Trust

4 + 2 vs. 3 + 3 (5,000ft² Minimum Lot Requirement)



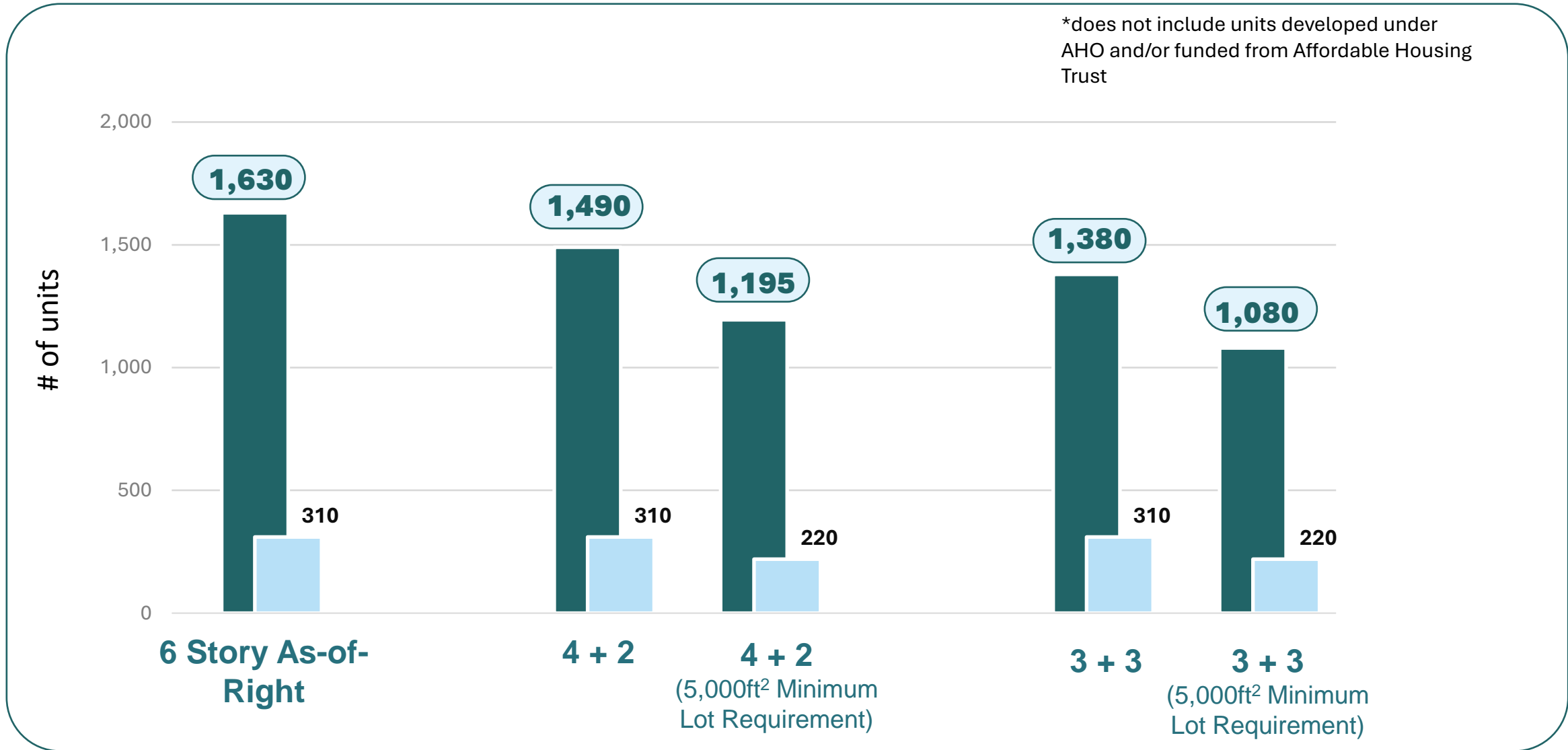
Net new units
 Affordable units*

*does not include units developed under AHO and/or funded from Affordable Housing Trust

Comparing Residential Scenarios by 2030

■ Net new units
■ Affordable units*

*does not include units developed under AHO and/or funded from Affordable Housing Trust



1

6

7

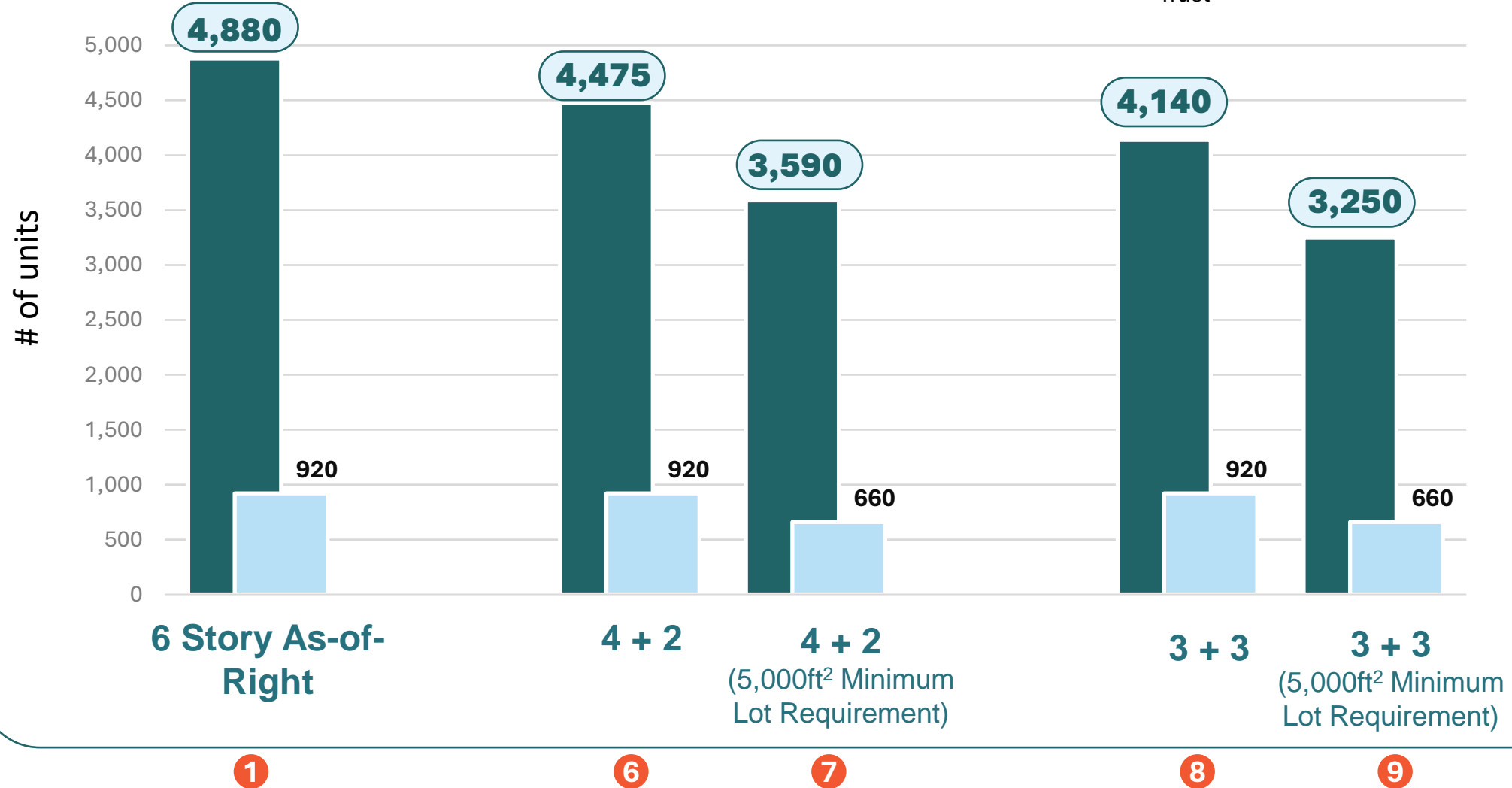
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Comparing Residential Scenarios by 2040

■ Net new units
■ Affordable units

*does not include units developed under AHO and/or funded from Affordable Housing Trust



Lot Size in Residential A, B, and C Zones

- Approximately 35.5% of lots in the A, B, and C zones are larger than 5,000 ft²
- Lot size varies across zoning districts. The median residential lot size in the A districts is more than 2x larger than the median residential lot size in the B or C districts

*lots were included if the centroid falls within the A, B, or C zones

**lots were included if they are completely within the zones

Residential Lot Size Breakdown*

Lot Size	Count	Percentage
Smaller than 4,000 ft ²	5387	48.8%
Larger than 4,000 ft ²	5647	51.2%
Larger than 5,000 ft ²	3918	35.5%
Larger than 8,000 ft ²	1621	14.7%
Larger than 10,000 ft ²	1148	89.6%

Median Lot Size By Zone**

Zoning District	Count	Median Lot Size (sq ft)
A	799	8,846
B	3,483	4,317
C	5,370	3,247



The Housing Development Log

Housing Development Log

- The *Development Log*, published quarterly, tracks larger-scale residential and commercial development projects currently in permitting or construction phases
- Between the quarterly reports CDD staff are regularly updating the *Development Log* to have data that is as accurate as possible
- Housing projections use data from the *2024 Q1 Development Log* published in May 2024

Residential Projects in the Upcoming 2024 Q4 Development Log

All Residential Projects (Market and AHO)

Category	Project Count	Residential Units	Affordable Units
Zoning Permit Granted or As-of-Right	15	950	357
Expected Development Remaining for Approved PUD Projects	2	2,400	TBD
Building Permit Granted	12	1,349	560
TOTAL	29	4,699	917+PUD

- The unit counts include replacement units, so the net new units will be lower than what is shown
- Zoning Permit Granted includes 4 AHO projects (87-101 Blanchard Rd, 4 Mellen St, 430 Rindge Ave, Walden Sq II, and 49 Sixth St)
- Building Permit Granted includes 3 AHO projects (Jefferson Park, 52 New St, and 116 Norfolk St)

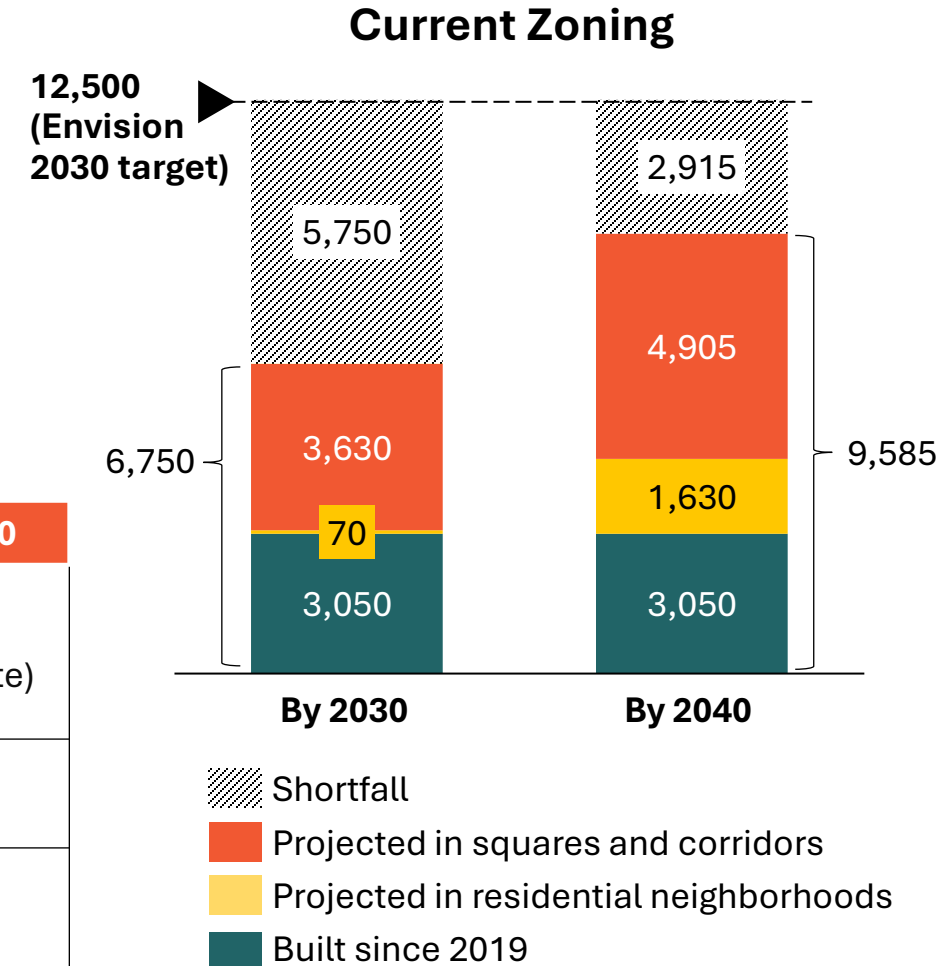
How the Development Log was Used in Projections

Built Since 2019

Category	Source	Count
Units Built Since Envision	Envision Cambridge 5-Year Progress Report	3,050 units

Projected in Squares, Corridors, and Neighborhoods

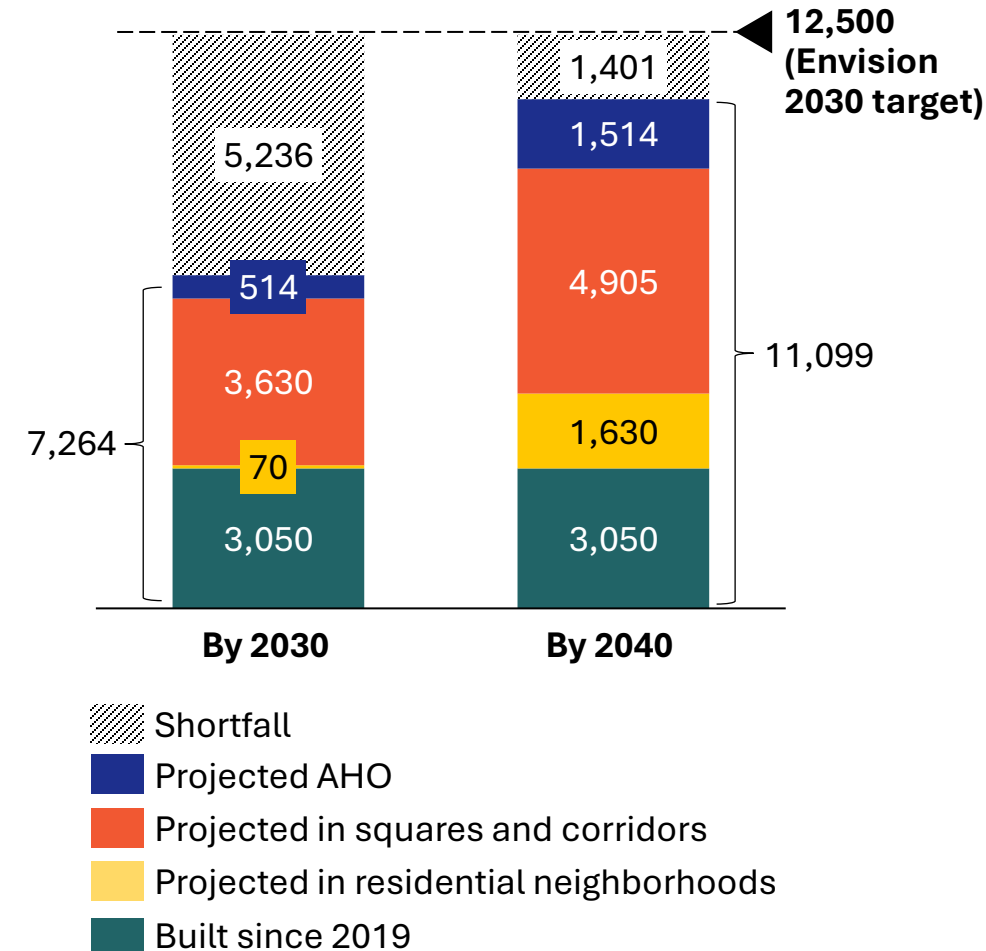
Category	Source	Count by 2030	Count by 2040
Expected Development Remaining for Approved PUD Projects	2024 Q1 Development Log	800 (33% complete)	2,400 (100% complete)
Building Permit Granted	2024 Q1 Development Log	1,349	1,349
Housing Projections (planned areas + softsite analysis)	CDD Planning-level Analysis	1,551	2,786



Affordable Housing Overlay in the Projections

- AHO projects were not included in the initial analysis to avoid double-counting; we expect AHO units will be built on sites included in both corridor and residential area projections
- ~514 net new units in 7 AHO projects that have completed the AHO permitting process, and are expected to be built by 2030
- Seven projects are in or are about to start the permitting process. The number of units and timeline are TBD
- If we estimate 100 AHO units could be added per year (based on Housing Trust funding and AHO amendments) we would still only expect a total of 11,009 new market-rate and affordable units by 2040

Current Zoning + AHO



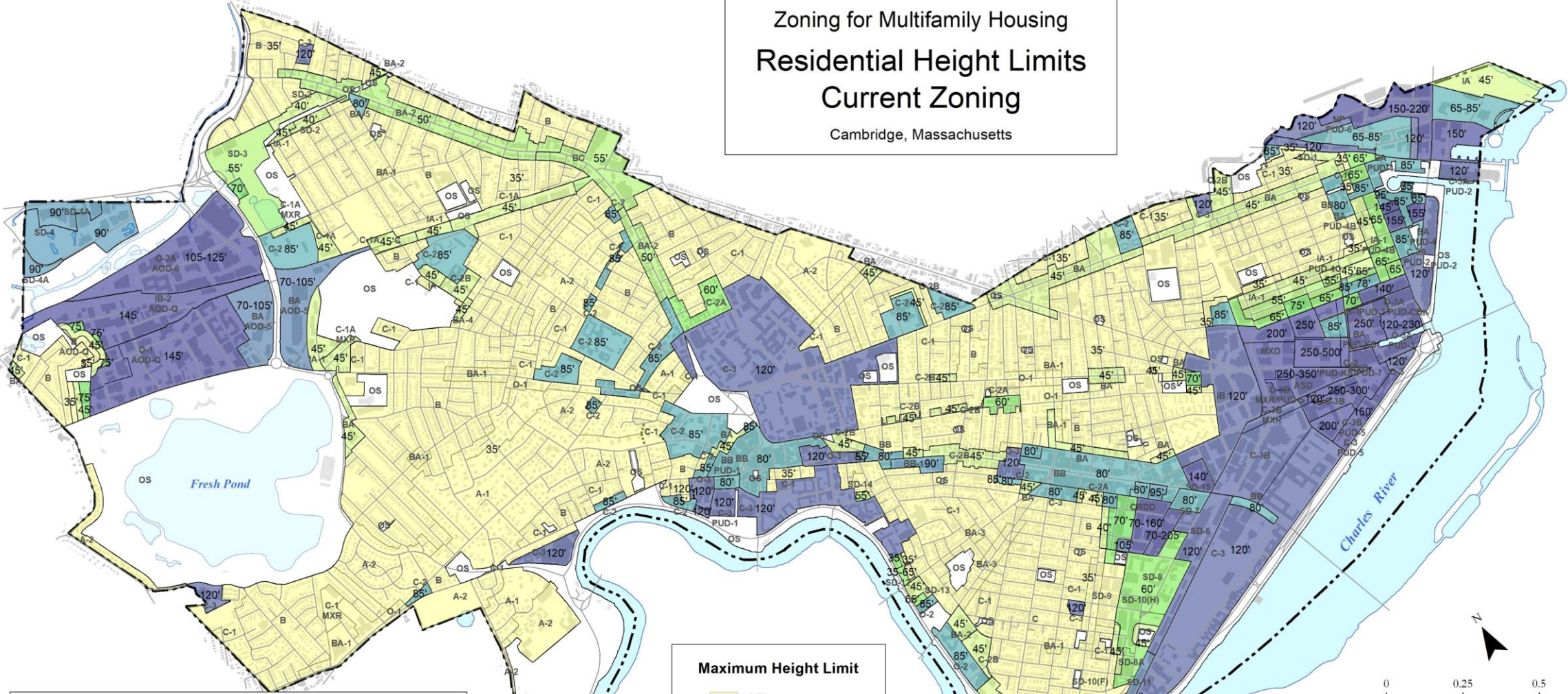
Thank You



Latest Amendments

Zoning for Multifamily Housing Residential Height Limits Current Zoning

Cambridge, Massachusetts



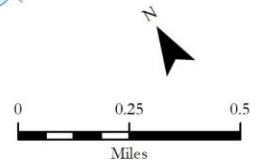
Zoning Districts: City of Cambridge, Massachusetts

As adopted February 13, 1961 and modified by subsequent amendments up to and including Ordinance #2023-7 of October 16, 2023. Overlay Districts do not appear on this map. The zoning lines are approximate. Please refer to the documents on file in the City Clerk's Office for the exact location of boundaries.

A-1 Residence A-1	O-3 Office-3	IB-1 Industry B-1	SD-4 Special District-4
A-2 Residence A-2	O-3A Office-3A	IB-2 Industry B-2	SD-4A Special District-4A
B Residence B	BA Business A	IB Industry B	SD-5 Special District-5
C Residence C	BA-1 Business A-1	IC Industry C	SD-6 Special District-6
C-1 Residence C-1	BA-2 Business A-2	MXD Mixed Use Development	SD-7 Special District-7
C-1A Residence C-1A	BA-3 Business A-3	ASD Ames Street District	SD-8 Special District-8
C-2 Residence C-2	BA-4 Business A-4	AOD Alewife Overlay District	SD-8A Special District-8A
C-2A Residence C-2A	BA-5 Business A-5	PUD Planned Unit Development Overlay	SD-9 Special District-9
C-2B Residence C-2B	BB Business B	BB Business B	SD-10(F) Special District-10(F)
C-3 Residence C-3	BB-1 Business-1	MXR Mixed Use Residential Overlay	SD-10(H) Special District-10(H)
C-3A Residence C-3A	BB-2 Business-2	NP North Point District	SD-11 Special District-11
C-3B Residence C-3B	BC Business C	CRDD Cambridgeport Revitalization Development District	SD-12 Special District-12
O-1 Office-1	BC-1 Business C-1		SD-13 Special District-13
O-2 Office-2	IA-1 Industry A-1		SD-14 Special District-14
O-2A Office-2A	IA-2 Industry A-2		SD-15 Special District-15
	IA-2A Industry A-2A		OS Open Space

Maximum Height Limit

35'
36' - 45'
46' - 55'
56' - 65'
66' - 75'
76' - 85'
86' - 95'
96' - 105'
106' - 120'
More than 120'
Not applicable



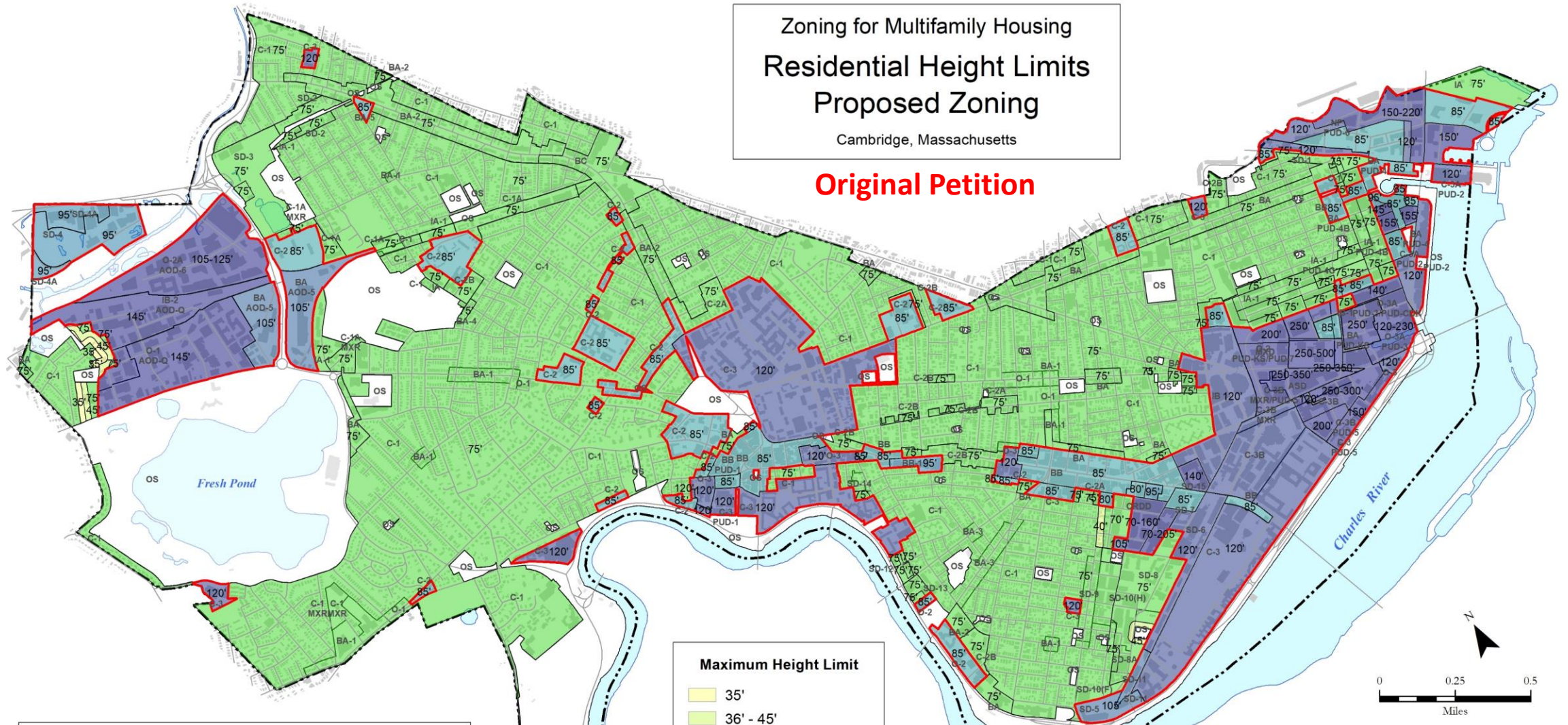
Notes

- 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 limits that vary by type of use are labeled with a slash. For example, 35/45' indicates a 35-foot limit for non-residential buildings, and a 45-foot limit for residential buildings.
- Height labels separated by a hyphen (e.g., 120-230') indicate areas where the maximum allowed height is increased when certain conditions are met, such as under a special permit.
- This map represents a broad summary of detailed zoning requirements. Please refer to the Zoning Ordinance for full information on the types and sizes of buildings allowed, and for the exact locations of height limit boundaries.

Zoning for Multifamily Housing Residential Height Limits Proposed Zoning

Cambridge, Massachusetts

Original Petition



Maximum Height Limit

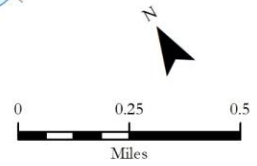
- 35'
- 36' - 45'
- 46' - 55'
- 56' - 65'
- 6 stories (up to 75')
- 7 stories (up to 85')
- 8 stories (up to 95')
- 9 stories (up to 105')
- 10 stories (up to 120')
- More than 120'
- Not applicable

Proposed Zoning Districts

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> C-1 Residence C-1 C-1A Residence C-1A C-2 Residence C-2 C-2A Residence C-2A C-2B Residence C-2B C-3 Residence C-3 C-3A Residence C-3A C-3B Residence C-3B O-1 Office-1 O-2 Office-2 O-2A Office-2A O-3 Office-3 O-3A Office-3A BA Business A BA-1 Business A-1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BA-2 Business A-2 BA-3 Business A-3 BA-4 Business A-4 BA-5 Business A-5 BB Business B BB-1 Business-1 BB-2 Business-2 BC Business C BC-1 Business C-1 IA-1 Industry A-1 IA-2 Industry A-2 IA Industry A IB-1 Industry B-1 IB-2 Industry B-2 IB Industry B 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IC Industry C MXD Mixed Use Development ASD Ames Street District AOD Alewife Overlay District PUD Planned Unit Development Overlay MXR Mixed Use Residential Overlay NP North Point District CRDD Cambridgeport Revitalization Development District SD-1 Special District-1 SD-2 Special District-2 SD-3 Special District-3 SD-4 Special District-4 SD-4A Special District-4A SD-5 Special District-5 SD-6 Special District-6 SD-7 Special District-7 SD-8 Special District-8 SD-8A Special District-8A SD-9 Special District-9 SD-10(F) Special District-10(F) SD-10(H) Special District-10(H) SD-11 Special District-11 SD-12 Special District-12 SD-13 Special District-13 SD-14 Special District-14 SD-15 Special District-15 OS Open Space
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Notes

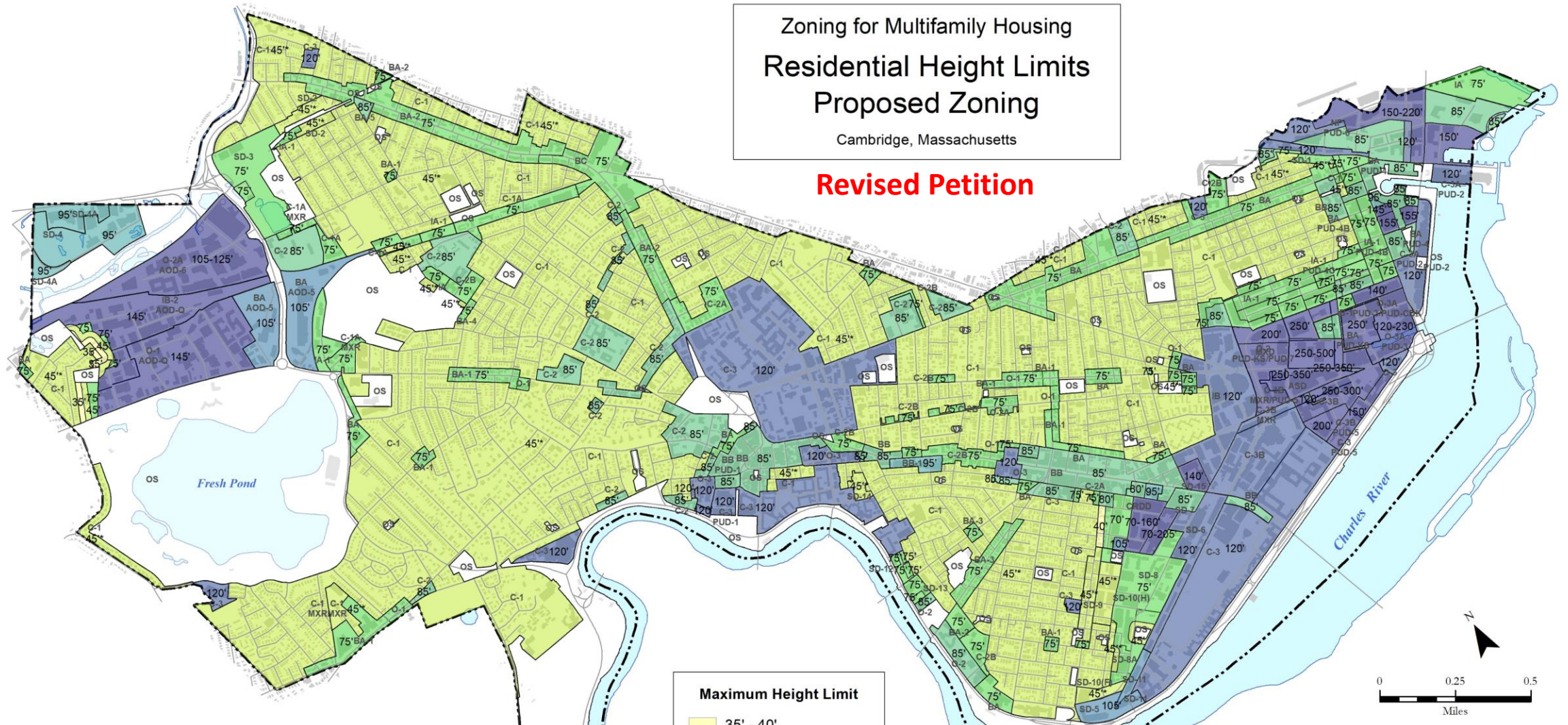
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Zoning for Multifamily Housing Residential Height Limits Proposed Zoning

Cambridge, Massachusetts

Revised Petition



Maximum Height Limit

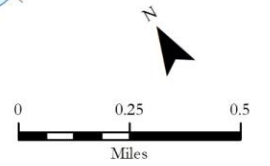
- 35' - 40'
- 45'
- 4 stories (up to 45')
- 6 stories (up to 75')
- 7 stories (up to 85')
- 8 stories (up to 95')
- 9 stories (up to 105')
- 10 stories (up to 120')
- More than 120'
- Not applicable

* 4 stories (up to 45')

These districts will have a 4 story/45-foot base height limitation, with an allowance to increase to 6 stories/70 feet for inclusionary housing projects that meet certain other criteria.

Proposed Zoning Districts

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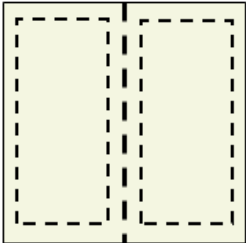
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Min. Residential Side/Rear Yard Setbacks

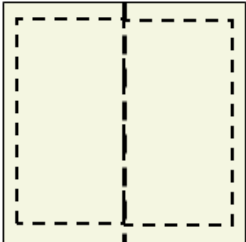
District Type	Current Zoning	Original Proposal	Amended Proposal
Residence Districts	7.5-25 feet and/or “H+L” formula	No min.	5 feet w/context exceptions
Office Districts	“H+L” formula	No min.	No min.
Business Districts	0-10 feet and/or “H+L” formula	No min.	No min.
Industry Districts	None or “H+L” formula	No min.	No min.

Min. Residential Side/Rear Yard Setbacks

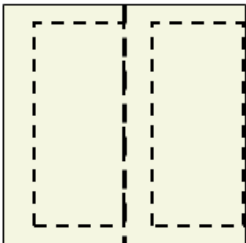
Illustration of “Contextual Side/Rear Setback” Provisions



Base standard:
10' front setback
5' side and rear setbacks



Townhouse context:
Side or rear setbacks waived where buildings directly abut or share a party wall on lot line



Shifted context:
One side yard may be reduced if opposite side yards sum to 10 feet and minimum distance is 10 feet from existing buildings

Open Space

Green Factor is required in all cases

District Type	Current Zoning	Original Proposal	Amended Proposal
Res. A-1, A-2, B, C	36-50% min. ≥ 50% permeable ≥ 50% private	30% min. ≥ 50% permeable ≥ 50% private	30% min. ≥ 50% permeable ≥ 50% private
Res. C-1	30% min. ≥ 50% permeable ≥ 50% private	30% min. ≥ 50% permeable ≥ 50% private	30% min. ≥ 50% permeable ≥ 50% private
Other Res. Districts	10-15% min.	10-15% min.	10-15% min.
Other Districts	Required for res. only	Not required	Not required



- High-SRI paving
 - +Turf
 - +Planting area
 - +Medium tree
 - +Large tree
- 1.02**

Housing Review

- Proposed to include in Article 1.000, tied to the purpose statement
- Annual report on supply/creation of market-rate and affordable housing
- 5-year review of longer-term trends and impacts