

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

Public Information Session  
October 24, 2024



**CITY OF CAMBRIDGE**  
Community Development  
Department



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# Meeting Purpose

- Explain the multifamily housing zoning petition
- Outline the zoning amendment process
- Answer questions about the proposal and process
- Hear your comments, and forward them to the Planning Board and City Council

# Participation

## Q&A

- Use the Q&A tool in Zoom to ask questions about the proposal
- Q&A will be open throughout the meeting
- Staff will answer questions during the meeting and release responses to FAQ after the meeting

## Comments

- Online Feedback Form at: [www.cambridgema.gov/MultifamilyZoning](http://www.cambridgema.gov/MultifamilyZoning)
- Breakout rooms to collect feedback and comments
- Staff will send comments to Planning Board and City Council

For more information [www.cambridgema.gov/MultifamilyZoning](http://www.cambridgema.gov/MultifamilyZoning)

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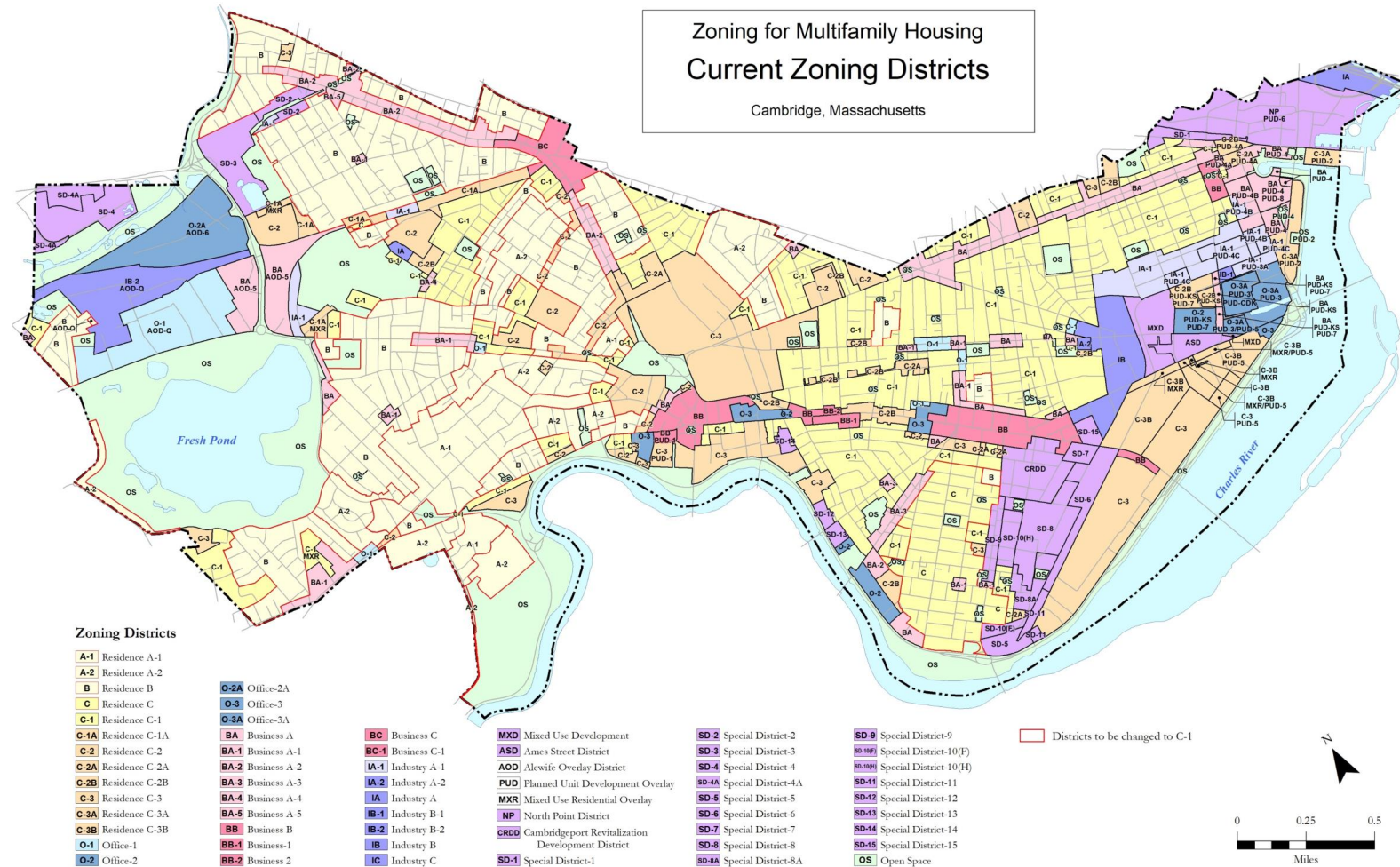
# Meeting Agenda

1. Presentation
  - What is Multifamily Housing and Why Do We Want More?
  - Process So Far
  - Proposed Zoning Changes
  - Future Process
2. Q&A
3. Comments in Breakout Rooms
4. Wrap Up and Next Steps



**What's Happening?**

# What is zoning?



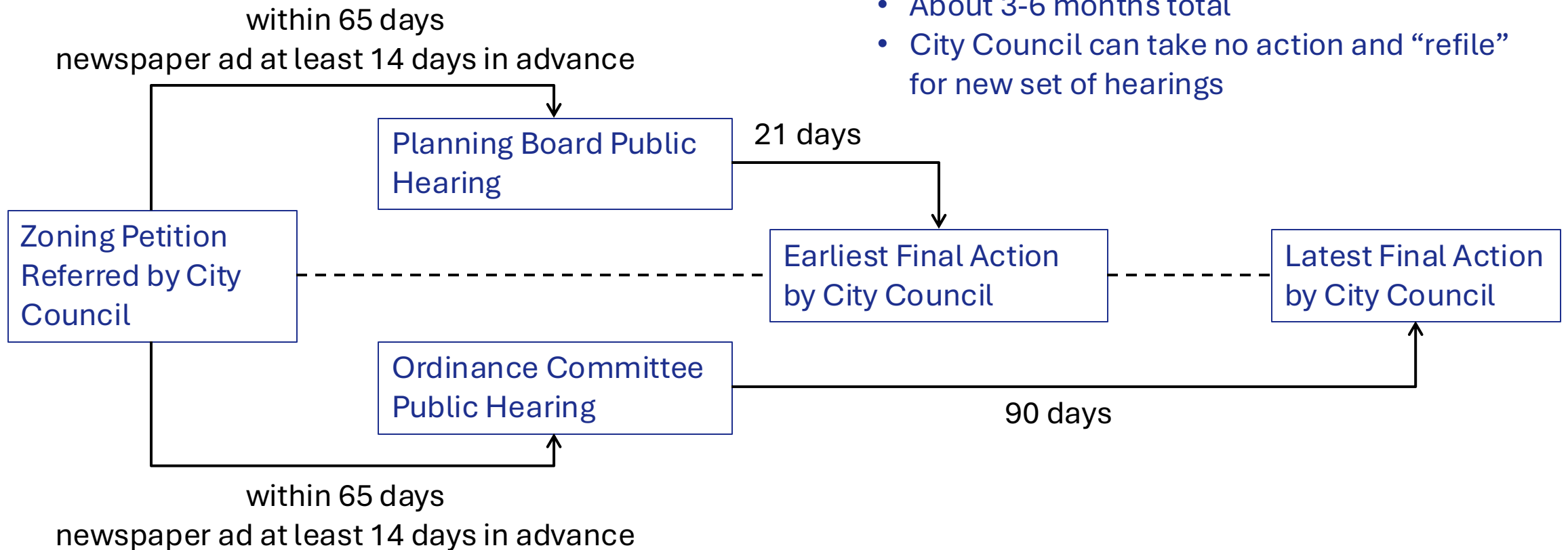
Local set of rules for what's **allowed** to be built in different parts of the city

# How does zoning get changed?

- Only City Council can amend zoning
- State law sets some rules
- Community Development Department (CDD) role:
  - Advice to Council
  - Technical support – e.g., drafting, analysis
  - Information to the public

# Zoning Amendment Process

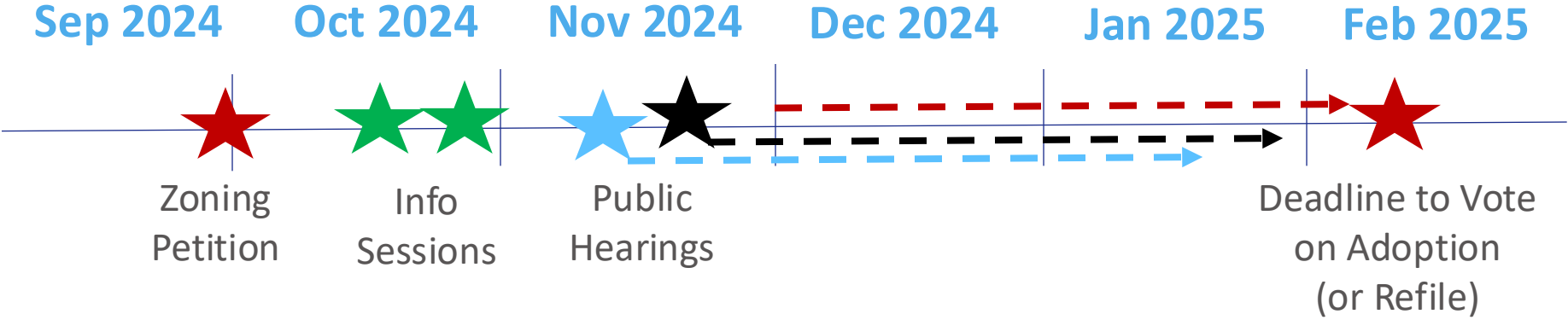
- About 3-6 months total
- City Council can take no action and “refile” for new set of hearings



- Requirements in state law (M.G.L. Chapter 40A, Section 5)
- City Council can amend the petition throughout the hearing process, but cannot change the “fundamental character”



# Process Timeline



HOUSING COMMITTEE	CITY COUNCIL	ORDINANCE COMMITTEE & PLANNING BOARD	CITY COUNCIL
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- City Council Committee Hearing
- Planning Board Hearing
- Community Meeting
- City Council Meeting



# Multifamily Housing

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# Regional Housing Challenges

“Three persistent challenges have faced the region for decades: insufficient housing supply, lack of housing affordability, and inequity in access to housing. These interrelated issues call for a variety of policy solutions, offering several areas of opportunity for improving the region’s housing market.”

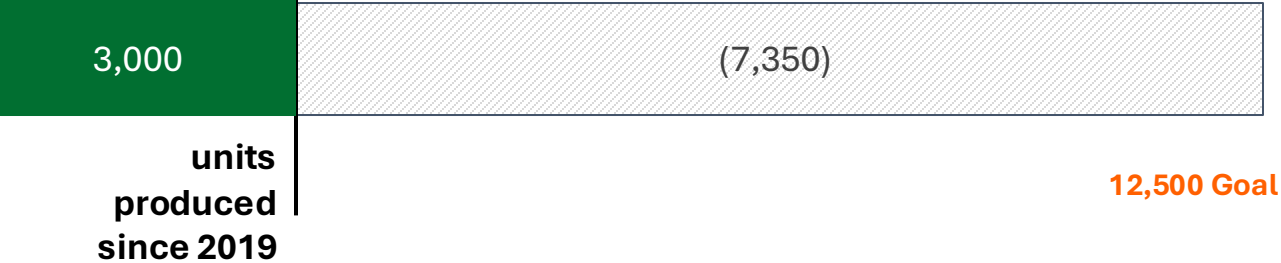
- Dukakis Center, *2019 Greater Boston Housing Report Card*

# Envision Cambridge set aggressive housing targets

**+12,500**  
units by 2030

**+3,175**  
affordable units

## What has been built since Envision?



The proposed multifamily zoning is projected to add 1,630 units by 2030.

# What is “multifamily housing”?

- 3 or more units in a building
- Many different sizes, types, styles, ages
- Historically, provides diverse housing options in an urban environment



# Cambridge has many different types of housing



*“Detached” (Single-Family)*



*Two-family*



*Townhouses/Rowhous*



*3 units*



*6 units*



*12+ units*



*50+ units*

***Multifamily***

# Most Cambridge residents live in multifamily homes

- 35% of residential buildings, 80% of housing units

## INVENTORY: STRUCTURES & UNITS

**TABLE 1.01:**  
Housing Stock  
Inventory: 2016

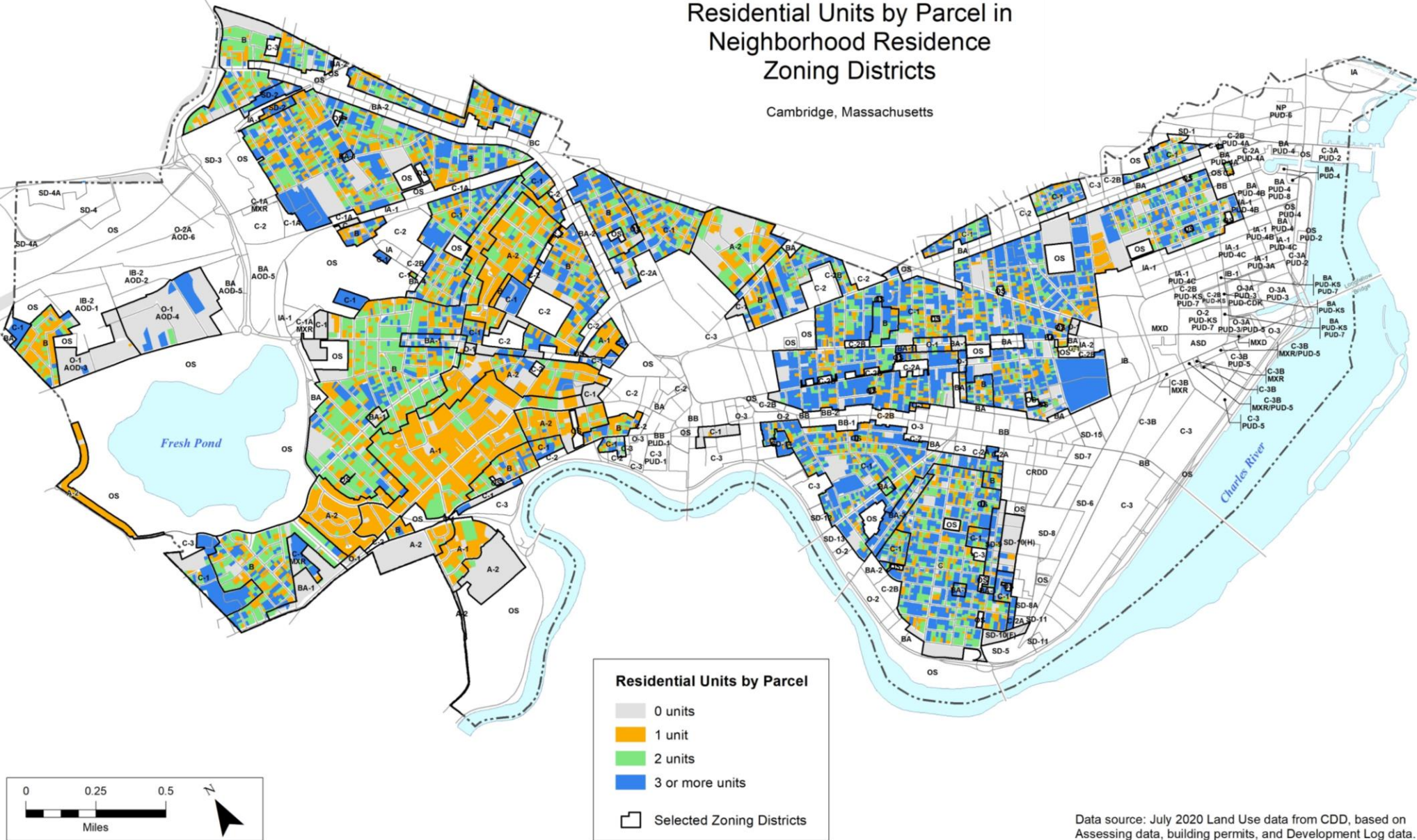
Type of Housing <sup>1</sup>	ALL UNITS		ALL PROPERTIES	
	Count	Percent of Total	Count	Percent of Total
Single Family	3,780	7.2%	3,780	34.0%
Two Family	6,976	13.2%	3,488	31.3%
Three Family	6,216	11.8%	2,072	18.6%
4 to 6 Units	5,019	9.5%	1,014	9.1%
7 to 25 Units	6,259	11.8%	513	4.6%
26 to 50 Units	3,995	7.6%	114	1.0%
51 to 100 Units	5,659	10.7%	83	0.7%
Over 100 Units	14,918	28.2%	69	0.6%
<b>Total Units</b>	<b>52,822</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>11,133</b>	<b>100%</b>
<i>Mixed Use</i> <sup>2</sup>	6,219	11.8%	369	3.3%

Source: CDD, Cambridge Housing Profile 2016

# Multifamily housing exists across all neighborhoods

## Residential Units by Parcel in Neighborhood Residence Zoning Districts

Cambridge, Massachusetts

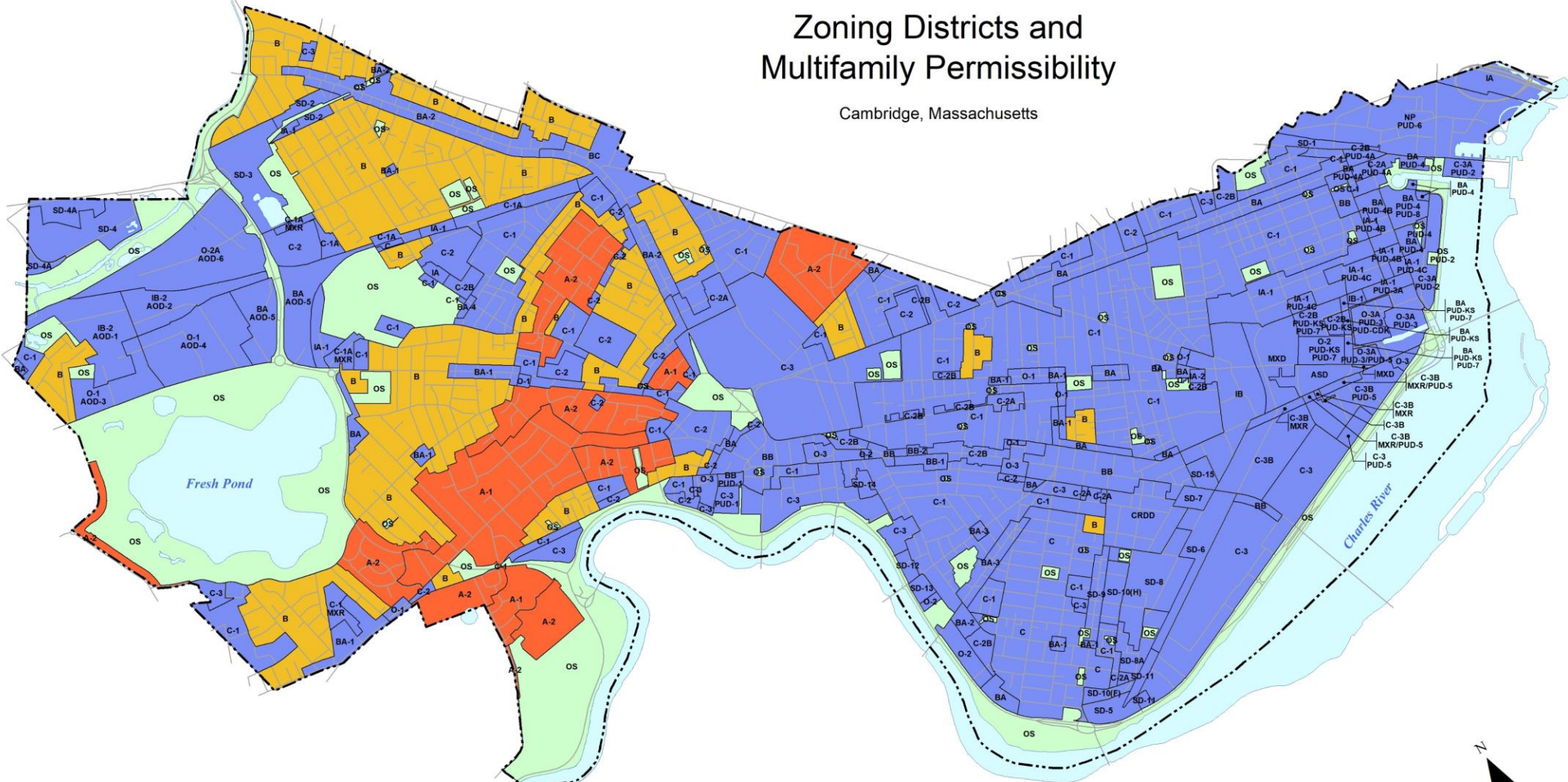




# Multifamily housing is not allowed everywhere by zoning

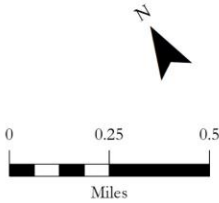
## Zoning Districts and Multifamily Permissibility

Cambridge, Massachusetts



Zoning Districts by Multifamily Permissibility

- Only single-family allowed
- Only single-family, two-family, and townhouse allowed
- Multifamily allowed
- Open Space zoning districts



# Multifamily Zoning Reform

- Minneapolis became the first city to allow multifamily citywide in 2019
- State-level zoning reform initiatives to promote multifamily housing have been adopted in states such as California, Oregon, and Montana
- Massachusetts' "MBTA Communities" Law (2021) requires cities with transit access to zone for multifamily housing

## In Cambridge

- City Council discussed in 2021
- Several community-led zoning petitions, none adopted
- Planning Board discussed in 2022 and made a report to City Council
- City Council passed Policy Order in 2024 for Housing Committee and staff to create a zoning proposal

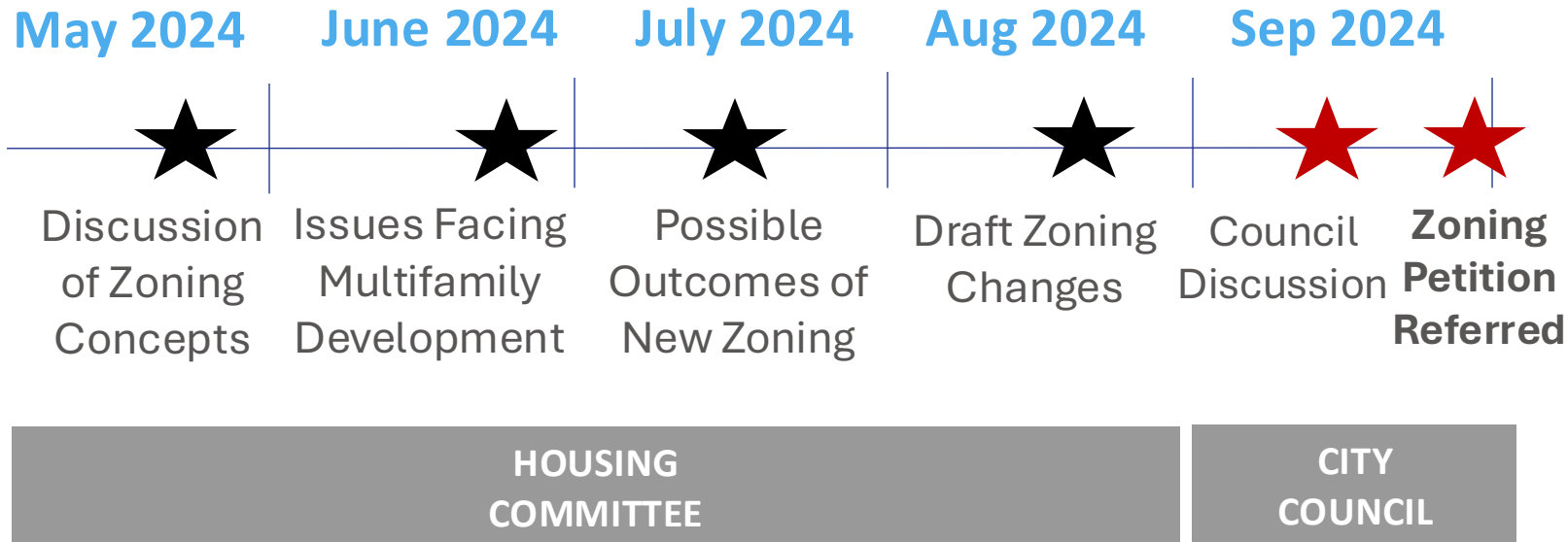
# City Council Goals

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



# 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

# Proposed Zoning Concept

- Allow all residential use types everywhere
- Remove minimum lot sizes
- Regulate based on “stories above grade” and open space, remove density limits for residential use (FAR, lot area per dwelling unit)
- Allow up to 6 stories as the lowest residential height limit citywide
- Reduce/remove setback requirements
- Reduce/remove special permit requirements
- Continue to support all-affordable development





# Proposed Zoning Changes

# What's Not Changing?

Requirement	What it does
<b>Inclusionary Housing</b>	10+ housing units or 10,000+ square feet requires 20% affordable to low-moderate income households
<b>Climate Resilience</b>	All new buildings must protect to future long-term flooding and mitigate heat through trees, plantings, and site design
<b>Green Building Requirements</b>	25,000+ square feet (all uses) must be designed to Green Building standards and install Green Roof
<b>Historic Regulations</b>	Rules for historic districts and buildings (Demolition Delay, Conservation District Commission review) are separate from zoning and don't change
<b>Building Codes, Other Requirements</b>	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

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# Main Zoning Changes

1. Map/district changes (Article 3.000 and throughout)
2. Deletion of lot size and residential density standards (Article 5.000 and throughout)
3. Residential height limits (Article 5.000 and throughout)
4. Setbacks and open space (Article 5.000 and throughout)
5. Special permits / project review (Articles 10.000 and 19.000)
6. Special cases – nonconformance (Article 8.000), split lots (Article 3.000)
7. Consistency updates to Affordable Housing Overlay (11.207)



# Changes to Zoning Map

## Current Zoning

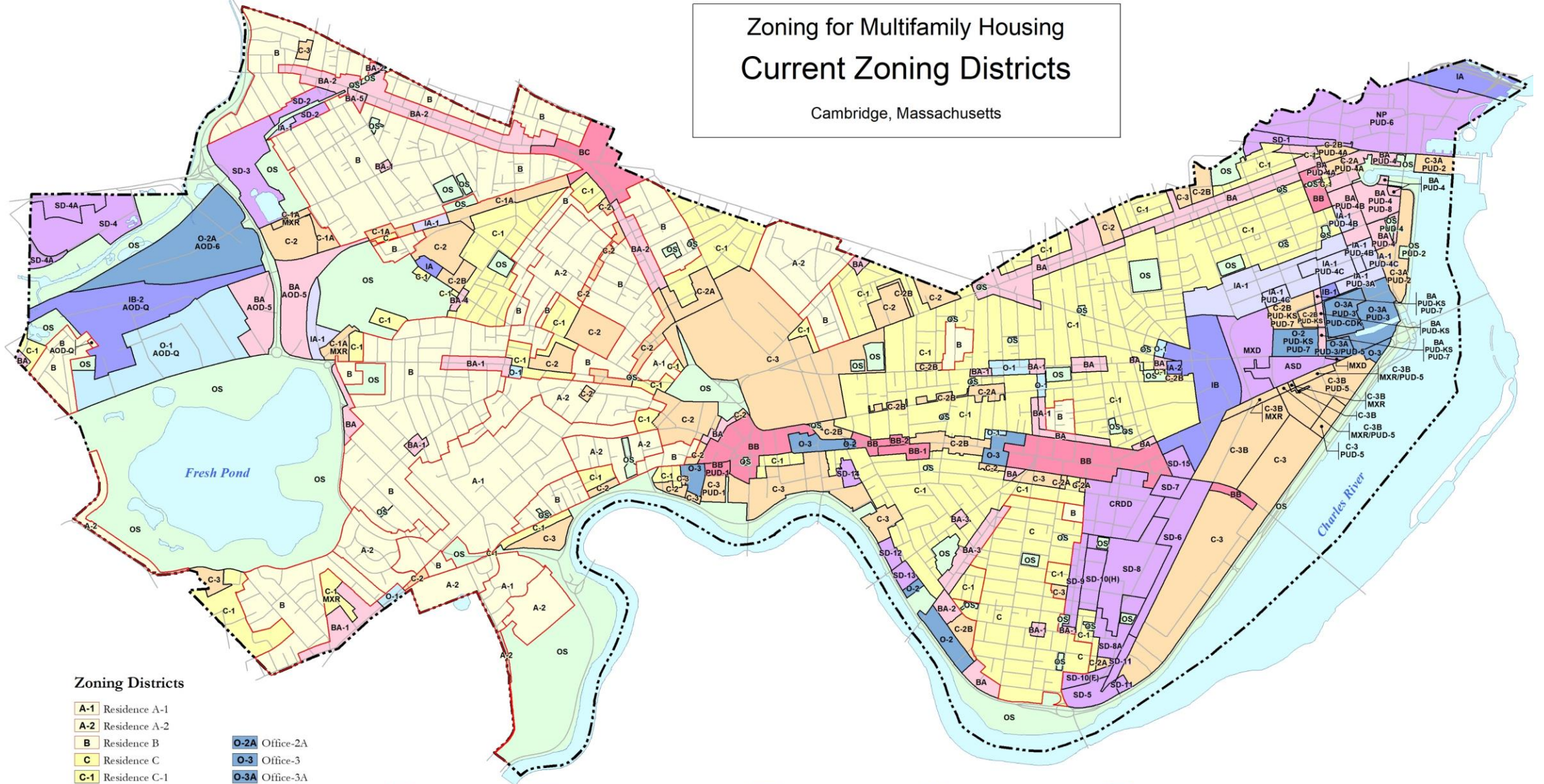
- Res. A-1 and A-2 districts intended for “Single-family dwellings”
- Res. B districts intended for “Two-family and semi-detached dwellings”
- All other districts allow multifamily housing (Res. C and C-1 are the most limiting)

## Proposed Zoning

- Delete Res. A-1, A-2, B, and C
- All of the above are changed to Res. C-1

# Zoning for Multifamily Housing Current Zoning Districts

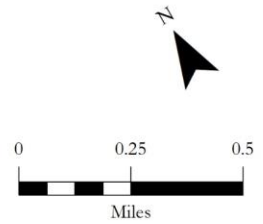
Cambridge, Massachusetts



## Zoning Districts

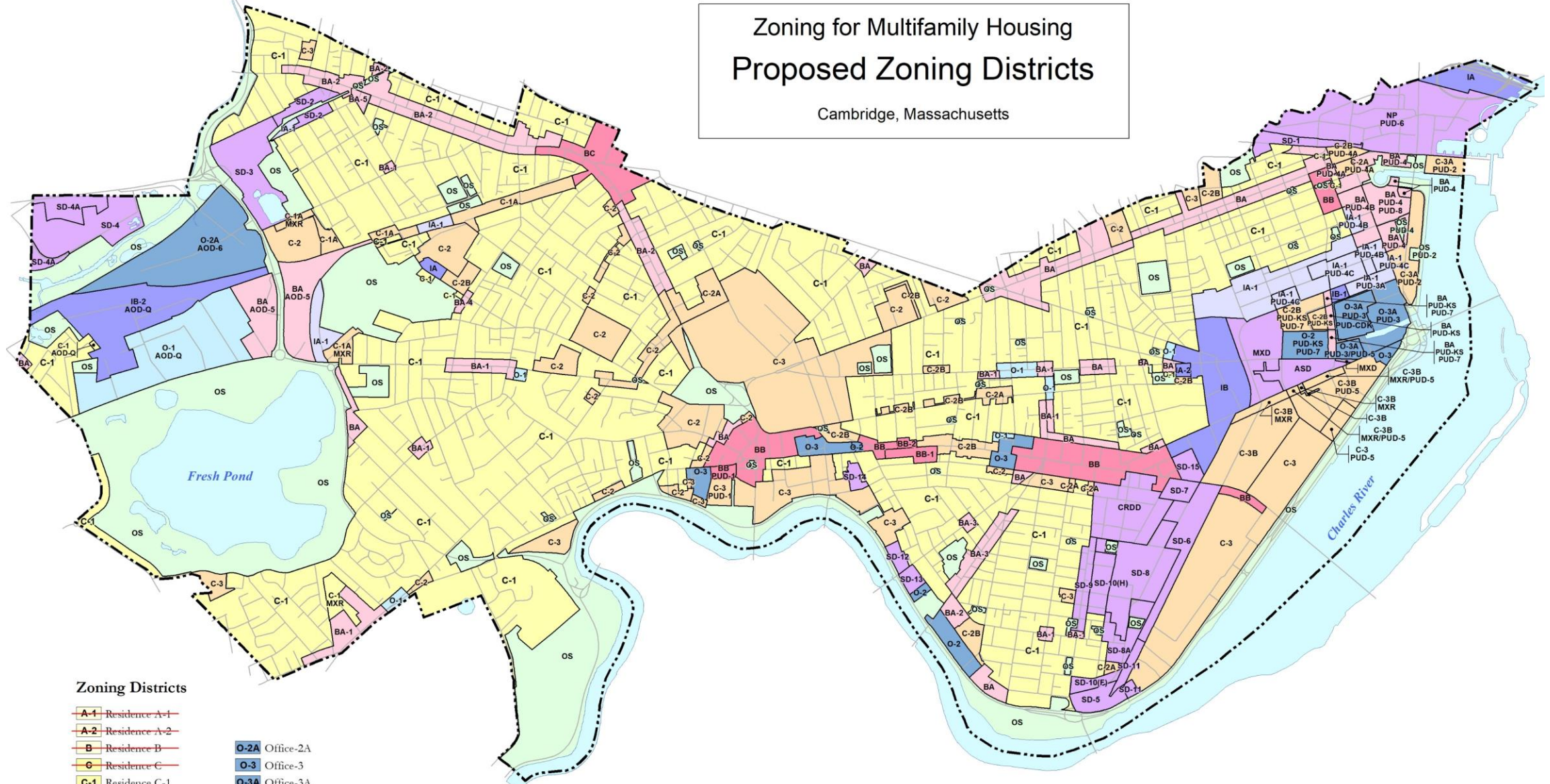
- |                            |                          |   |                                  |  |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|---|----------------------------------|--|
| <b>A-1</b> Residence A-1   | <b>O-2A</b> Office-2A    | <b>MXD</b> Mixed Use Development        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

  Districts to be changed to C-1



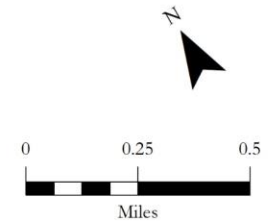
# Zoning for Multifamily Housing Proposed Zoning Districts

Cambridge, Massachusetts

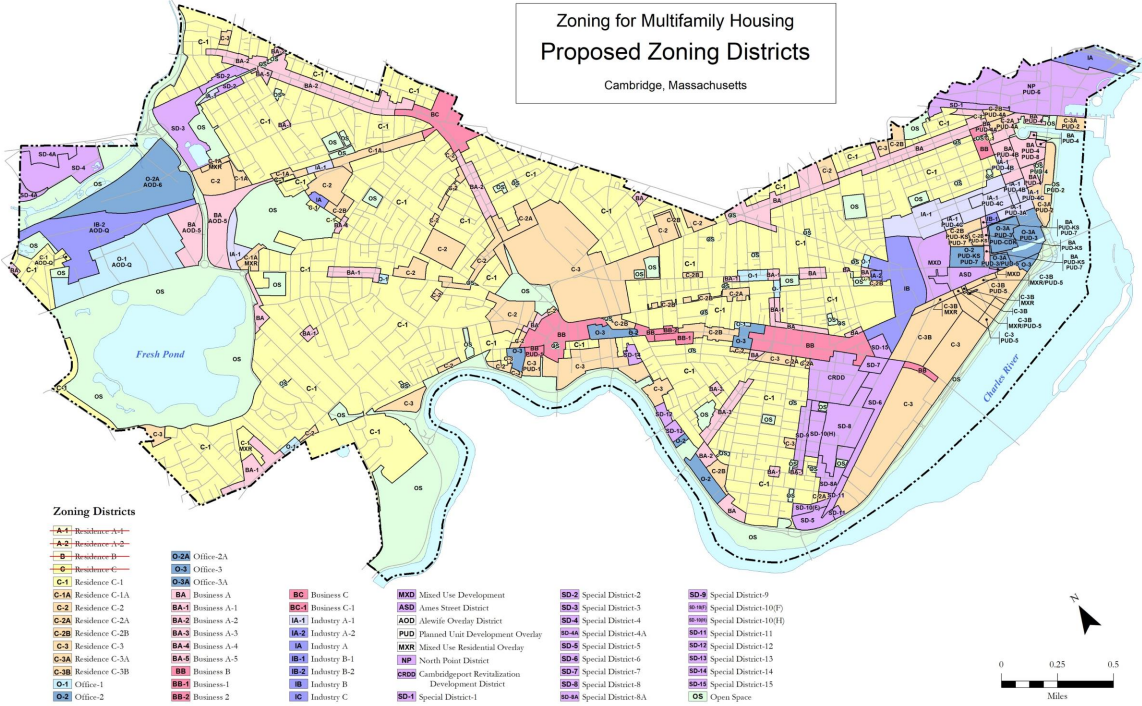
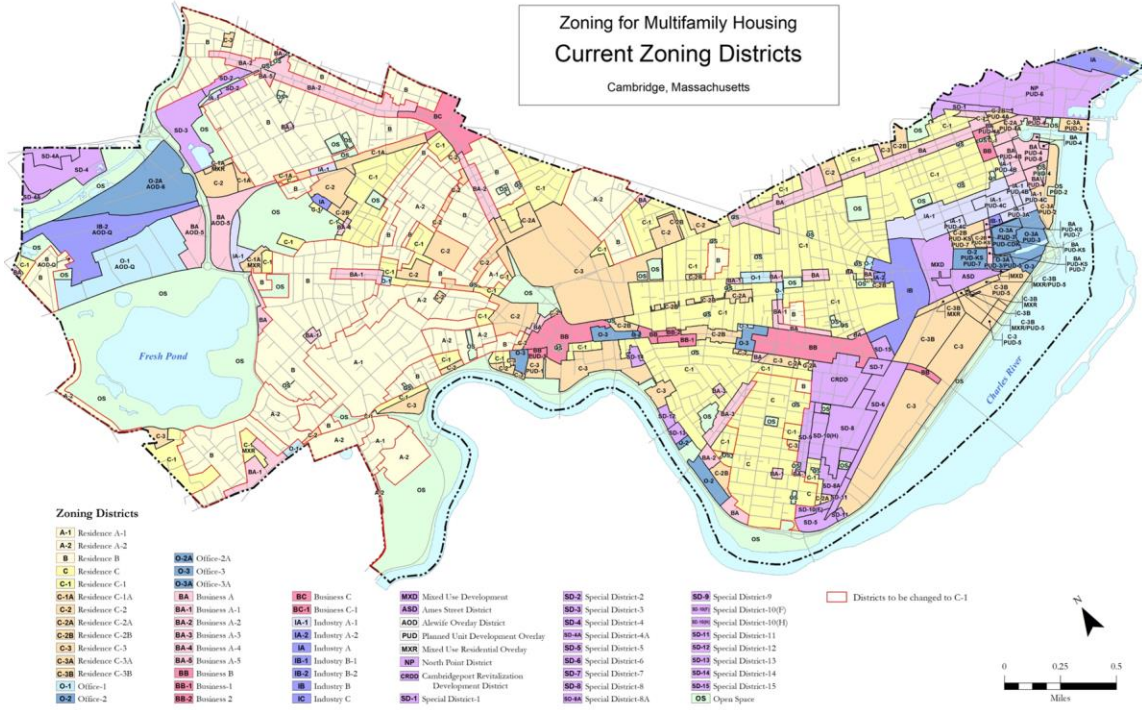


### Zoning Districts

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



# Map Changes



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# What does this change do?

- Make multifamily housing an allowed use citywide
- Promote equity and consistency by applying the same zoning rules to residential neighborhoods in all parts of the city
- Reduce the number of zoning districts to simplify the code

# Deletion of Lot Size and Res. Density Standards

## Current Zoning

- Min. lot area 5,000-8,000 square feet, min. lot width 50-80 feet
- Many commercial districts have no minimum lot size
- Min. “lot area per dwelling unit” limits number of homes on a lot
- Max. “floor area ratio” (FAR) limits total floor area on a lot

## Proposed Zoning

- No min. lot area or width
- All buildable lots must have min. 20 feet of street frontage (current)
- No min. lot area per dwelling unit
- No max. FAR for residential use
- Non-residential use still subject to current FAR limits

# Current Density Limits

District	A-1	A-2	B	C	C-1
Min. Lot Area/Width	8,000 SF/80'	6,000 SF/65'	5,000 SF/50'	5,000 SF/50'	5,000 SF/50'
Min. Lot Area/ Unit	6,000 SF	4,500 SF	2,500 SF*	1,800 SF	1,500 SF
Max. FAR	0.50	0.50	0.50*	0.60	0.75



\*2,500 SF lot area /unit and 0.50 FAR for the first 5,000 SF of lot area, 4,000 SF lot area/unit and 0.35 FAR for lot area over 5,000 SF



1 unit allowed  
4,000 SF GFA



1 unit allowed  
3,000 SF GFA



2 units allowed  
2,500 SF GFA



2 units allowed  
3,000 SF GFA



3 units allowed  
3,750 SF GFA

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# In Cambridge Neighborhoods

- Most lots **don't conform** to minimum lot size
  - Citywide median roughly 4,000 SF
- Most lots in Res. B, C, and C-1 districts **don't conform** to minimum lot area per dwelling unit
- Most lots in Res. B, C, and C-1 districts **don't conform** to maximum FAR limitations
- When a lot is rebuilt, in most cases no increase in units would be allowed; in some cases fewer units can be built than what exists



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# What does this change do?

- Make more existing housing conforming to zoning
- Allow for more units when sites are redeveloped
- Remove standards that can be “exclusionary” because they limit development to fewer, larger, more expensive homes
- Shift focus away from limits on housing density and towards dimensional standards like height and open space
- Retain limits on non-residential floor area

# Changes to Residential Height Limits

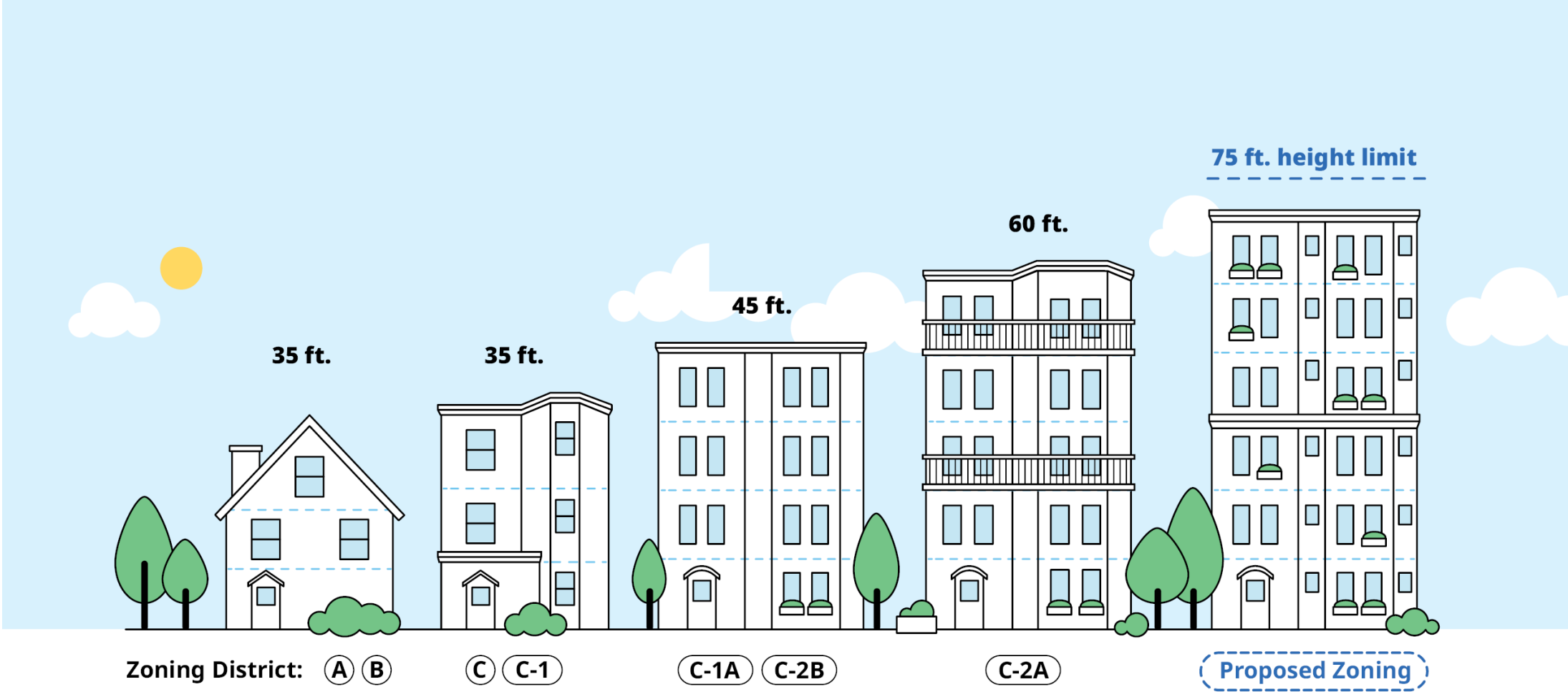
## Current Zoning

- Res. height limits range 35-60 feet in most Res. districts
- Some districts allow 70+-foot res. heights
- Mixed-use districts often allow taller residential than non-residential

## Proposed Zoning

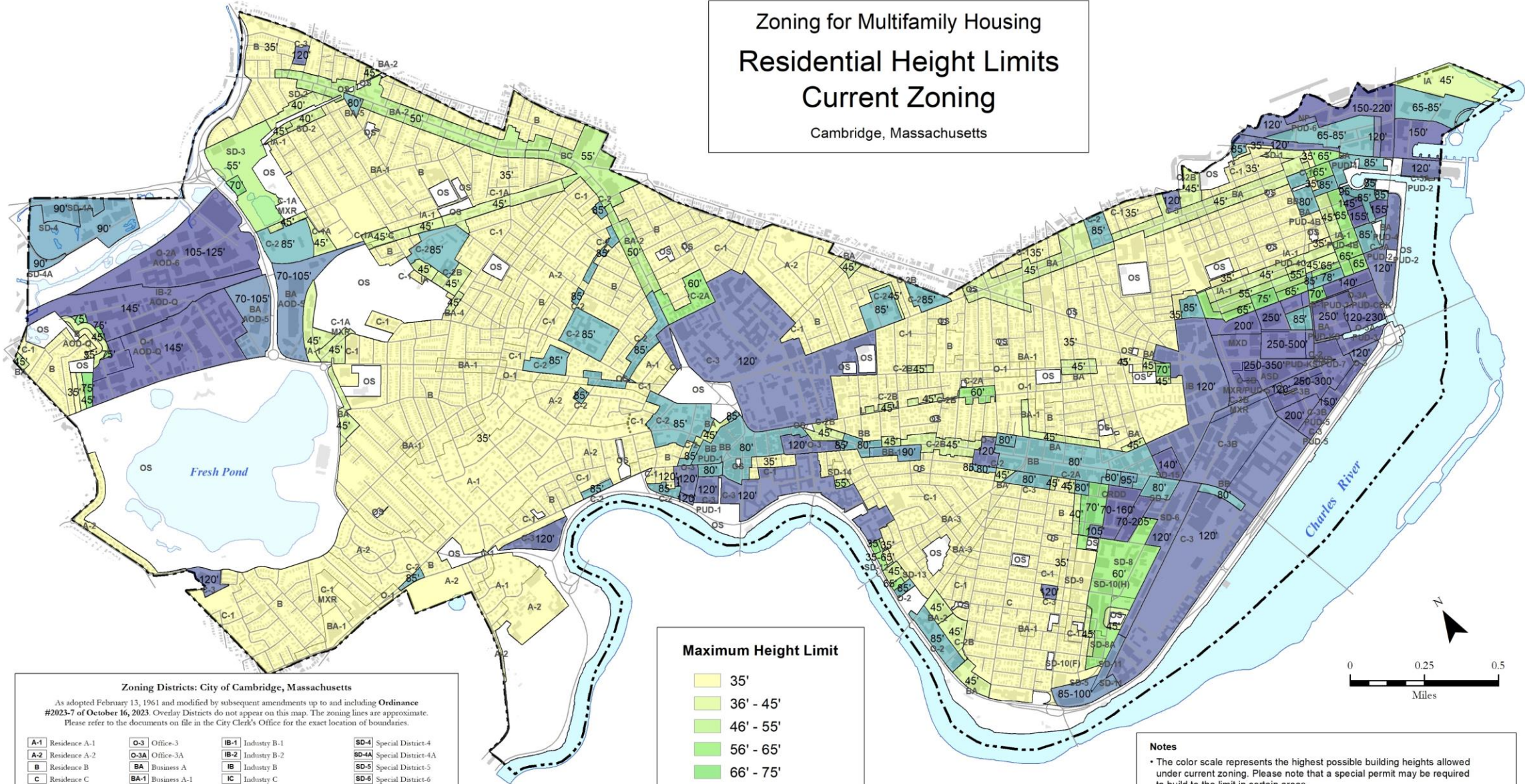
- Res. height limits based primarily on **number of stories above grade**
- Also height limit in feet to accommodate that number of stories without excessive height
- Up to six stories above grade allowed where currently <75' res. limit
- Stories match current height limits in taller districts
- Non-res. height limits unchanged

# Changes to Residential Height Limits



# 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.

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

**Maximum Height Limit**

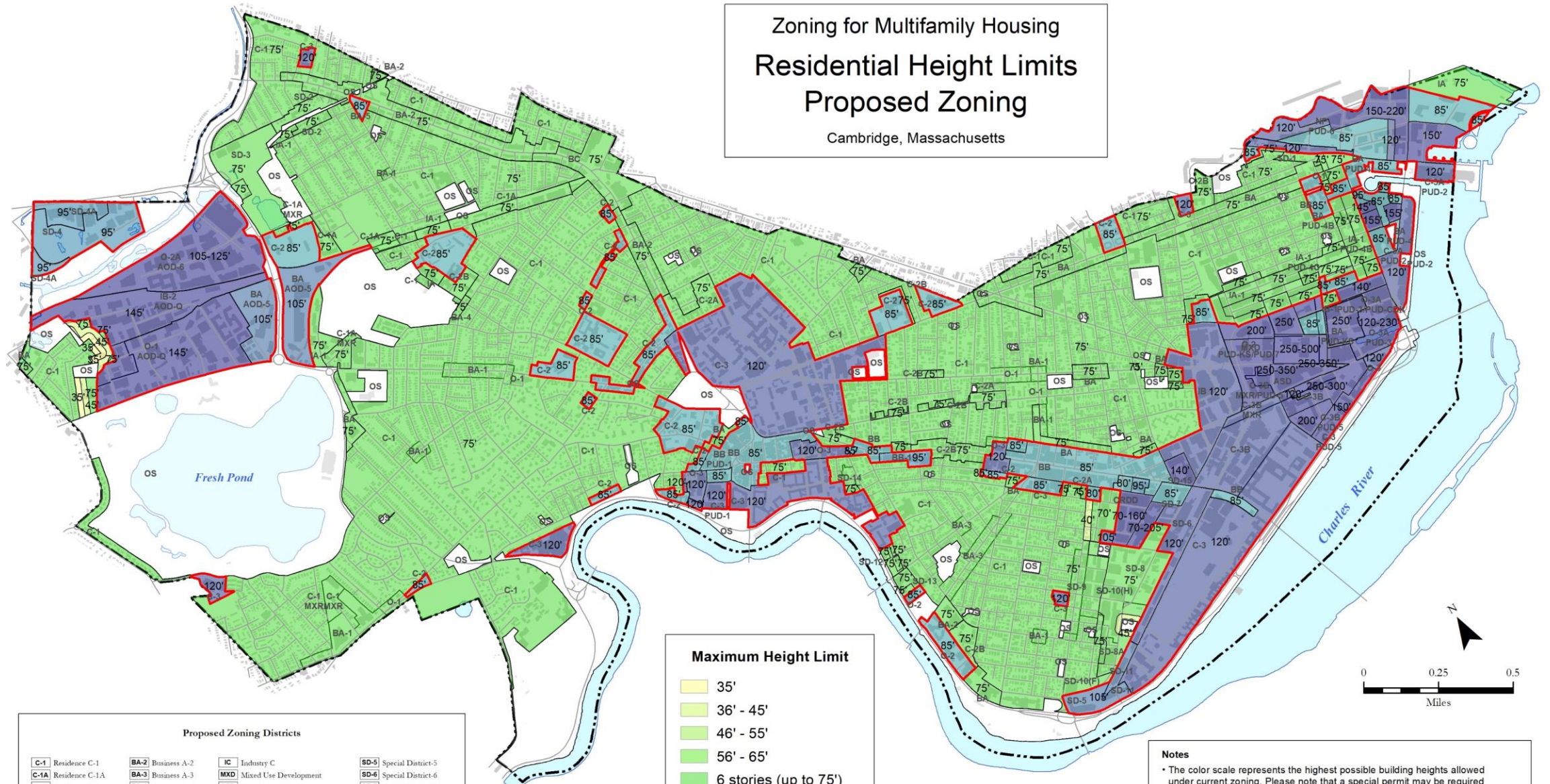
<span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #ffff00; border: 1px solid black;"></span> 35'
<span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #90ee90; border: 1px solid black;"></span> 36' - 45'
<span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #32cd32; border: 1px solid black;"></span> 46' - 55'
<span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #3cb371; border: 1px solid black;"></span> 56' - 65'
<span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #4db6ac; border: 1px solid black;"></span> 66' - 75'
<span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #4fc3f7; border: 1px solid black;"></span> 76' - 85'
<span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #42a5f5; border: 1px solid black;"></span> 86' - 95'
<span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #3949ab; border: 1px solid black;"></span> 96' - 105'
<span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #2e3192; border: 1px solid black;"></span> 106' - 120'
<span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #e0e0e0; border: 1px solid black;"></span> More than 120'
<span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #e0e0e0; border: 1px solid black;"></span> 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

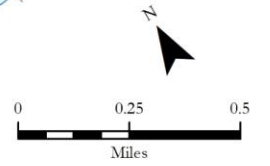


Proposed Zoning Districts			
<b>C-1</b> Residence C-1	<b>BA-2</b> Business A-2	<b>IC</b> Industry C	<b>SD-5</b> Special District-5
<b>C-1A</b> Residence C-1A	<b>BA-3</b> Business A-3	<b>MXD</b> Mixed Use Development	<b>SD-6</b> Special District-6
<b>C-2</b> Residence C-2	<b>BA-4</b> Business A-4	<b>ASD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












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

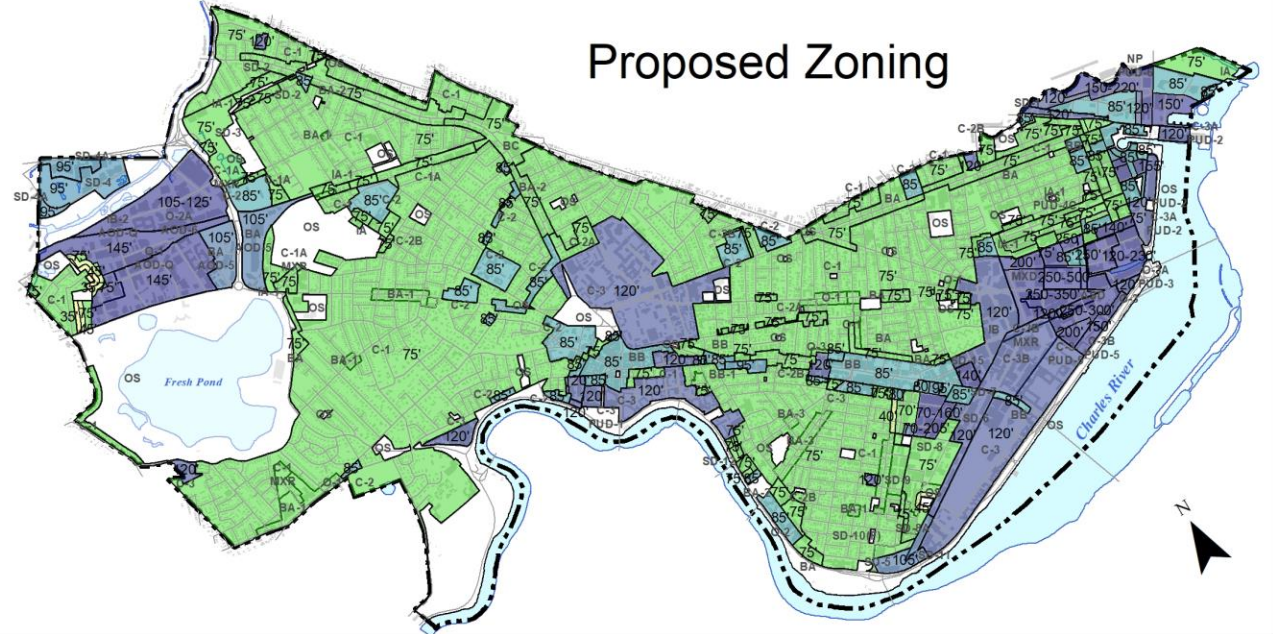
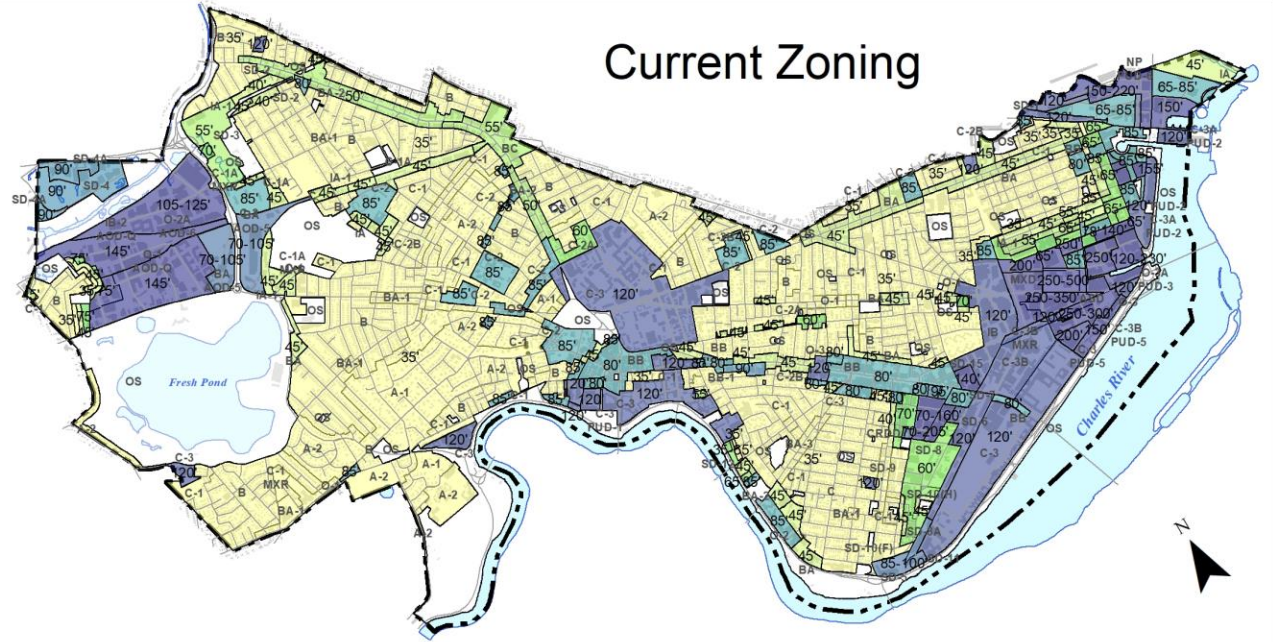
**Notes**

- 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

	Current Maximum Height Limit	Proposed Maximum Height Limit
	35'	35'
	36' - 45'	36' - 45'
	46' - 55'	46' - 55'
	56' - 65'	56' - 65'
	66' - 75'	6 stories (up to 75')
	76' - 85'	7 stories (up to 85')
	86' - 95'	8 stories (up to 95')
	96' - 105'	9 stories (up to 105')
	105' - 120'	10 stories (up to 120')
	More than 120'	More than 120'
	Not applicable	Not applicable



# Examples of Mid-Rise Buildings



Putnam Ave



Massachusetts Ave



Everett St



Chauncy St

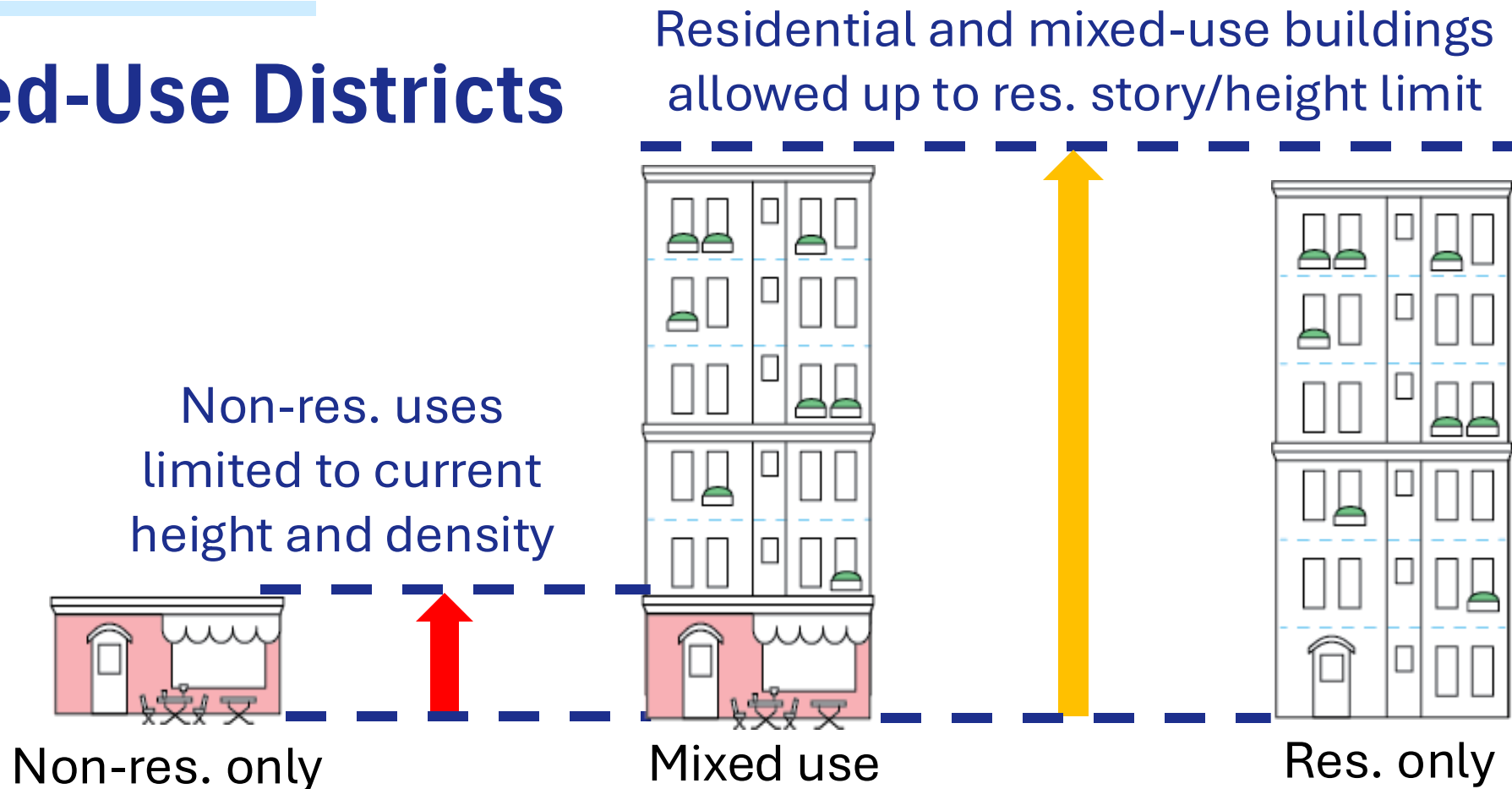


Rogers St



Hancock St

# Mixed-Use Districts



- Proposed standards only apply to residential uses
- Non-residential uses stay within current height and FAR limits
- Remove “mixed-use formula” that discourages mixed-use development



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# Affordable Housing Overlay Comparison

- Based on current AHO text (11.207.5.2.1), all districts would permit **AHO projects of at least 13 stories**
- Up to 15 stories would be permitted for AHO projects in “AHO Squares” (Harvard, Central, Porter, Cambridge/Webster)

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# What does this change do?

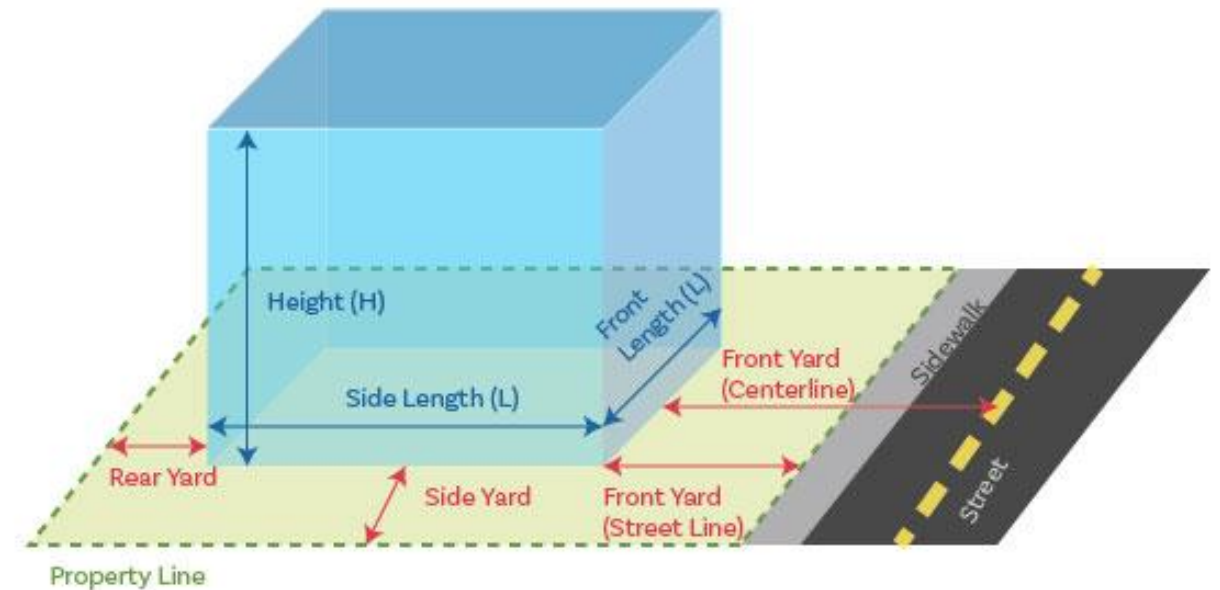
- Create a more predictable limit on stories above grade, with flexibility in exact height to account for different construction types
- Allow a range of “mid-rise” housing throughout the city
- Make mixed-use development easier where commercial use is allowed
- Where 6-story development is proposed (likely not every site), it will allow for more units and more likely have affordable units through inclusionary
- Continue to allow all-affordable development at taller heights

# Changes to Setback and Open Space Standards

Current Zoning	Proposed Zoning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Varied front, side, rear yard setbacks for res. buildings (often “height-plus-length” formula)</li><li>• 10%-50% “private open space” requirements for res. buildings</li><li>• Non-res. buildings tend to have little to no setback or open space requirements</li><li>• “Green Factor” requires a minimum score based on trees, plantings, and other site design features (no change)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 10’ min. front yard setback in most res. districts, 5’ where currently allowed</li><li>• Side or rear setbacks not required</li><li>• Open space includes “permeable” and “publicly beneficial” as well as “private”</li><li>• 30% min. open space in most res. districts, 10-15% where currently allowed</li><li>• Same requirements for res. and non-res. (i.e., no min. setback or open space in most mixed-use districts)</li></ul>

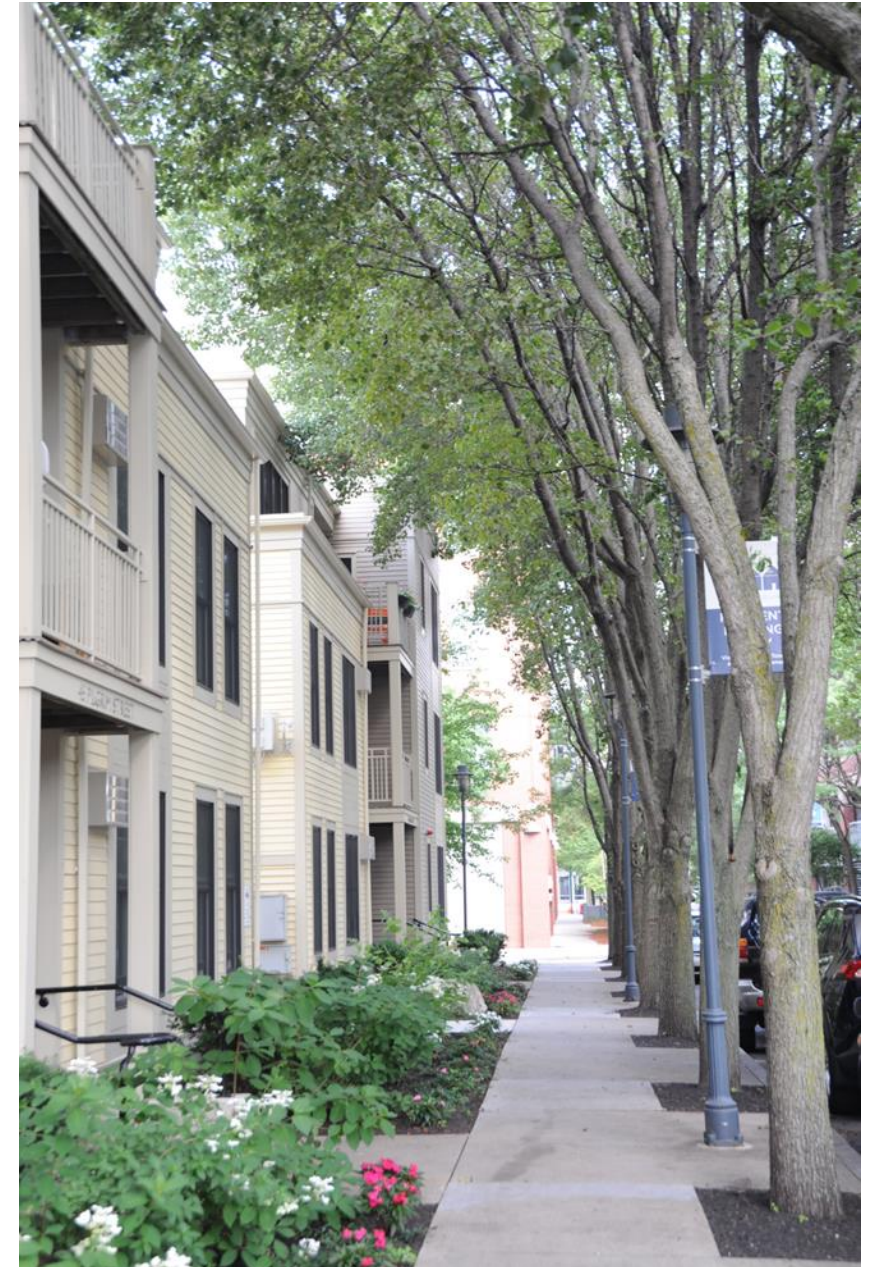
# Current Setback Standards

- “Formula” setback regulations introduced in 1960s when the goal was to encourage tall buildings isolated in space
- Very difficult and unpredictable to apply, especially to pre-existing buildings and smaller sites
- Frequently requires variances for multifamily buildings (even if they otherwise conform)

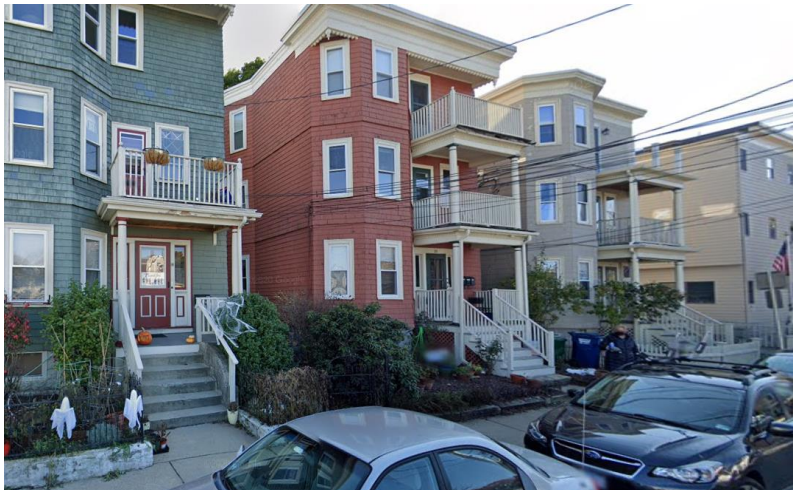


# Front Yards

- Space that provides public benefit
- Trees (including street tree root systems), other plantings, and shade
- More sidewalk/usable space
- Elevated stairs/ramps and porches promote flood resilience
- Allowing projections into the front setback avoids flat façades
- Setbacks may be reduced to align with existing street pattern



# Side/Rear Yards



- Without zoning requirements, building and fire codes would control – e.g., separation between residential walls with windows
- Flexibility can allow for more side-by-side “rowhouse” style development
- Open space standards can be a more flexible way to require usable open space
- Vast majority of residential buildings have non-conforming side or rear setbacks

# Total Open Space

- Loss of open space is a frequent concern
- Min. open space ratios don't change, but combine Permeable, Private, and Publicly Beneficial Open Space
- In C-1, half of required open space is permeable and half is private (retained in proposed zoning)
- New “Green Factor” standard requires trees, landscaping, other site design features
- Parking is NOT open space



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

**1.02**

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# What does this change do?

- Provide more design flexibility while keeping front yard and open space standards, which align with planning goals
- Apply the same rules for residential and non-residential buildings in mixed-use areas
- Simplify complicated requirements based on different types of open space in favor of a broader concept more consistent with planning goals



# Changes to Special Permit/Project Review Requirements

## Current Zoning

- Special permit required for many multifamily or townhouse projects (6+/12+ units) in Res. B, C, C-1, C-1A
- Special permit required for 20,000+ square feet in some mixed-use districts, 50,000+ square feet in others
- Affordable Housing Overlay projects and smaller projects in “special” areas only need advisory review

## Proposed Zoning

- Special permit review for housing only required at 75,000+ square feet
- Advisory review required for 50,000+ square feet and others per current zoning
- Special permit thresholds for non-residential use remain unchanged

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# Project Review Changes

## Special Permits

- Normally granted if requirements are met, but risk of appeal
- Time, cost, unpredictability are burdens on medium-scale housing
- Conditions are key to mitigate impacts of larger-scale development
- Proposal: Citywide threshold of 75,000+ square feet with Transportation Impact Study (TIS)

## Design Review

- Prescriptive standards for 25,000+ square feet (Section 19.50)
- Proposal: Design review for smaller projects through advisory process

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# Planning Board Advisory Consultation

Like AHO advisory review, intent is to apply City's design objectives holistically through a public process, but without the legal burden of a special permit and risk of appeal.

- Developer does community outreach before submitting plans
- Conceptual plans reviewed by Planning Board, with public comment
- Second meeting to review more detailed design and respond to comments from the first review

# Housing Review – Current Zoning

Project Size	All Housing	AHO
<b>&lt; 25,000 SF</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small/Large Project Advisory Consultation (special districts)</li> <li>• Planning Board special permit (some districts)</li> </ul>	
<b>25,000-50,000 SF</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design standards applied (19.50)</li> <li>• Planning Board special permit (some districts)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design standards applied (11.207.7)</li> </ul>
<b>50,000-75,000 SF</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning Board special permit (w/TIS)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public/Planning Board advisory review (at least 2 community meetings, at least 2 Planning Board reviews)</li> </ul>
<b>75,000+ SF</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning Board special permit (w/TIS)</li> </ul>	

# Housing Review – Proposed Zoning

Project Size	All Housing	AHO
< 25,000 SF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small/Large Project Advisory Consultation (special districts)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small/Large Project Advisory Consultation (special districts)</li> <li>• <i>Planning Board Advisory Consultation if above base zoning (1 meeting)</i></li> </ul>
25,000-50,000 SF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design standards applied (19.50)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design standards applied (11.207.7)</li> <li>• <i>Planning Board Advisory Consultation if above base zoning (1 meeting)</i></li> </ul>
50,000-75,000 SF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design standards applied (19.50)</li> <li>• Planning Board Advisory Consultation (2 meetings)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design standards applied (11.207.7)</li> <li>• Planning Board Advisory Consultation (2 meetings)</li> </ul>
75,000+ SF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning Board special permit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design standards applied (11.207.7)</li> <li>• Planning Board Advisory Consultation (2 meetings)</li> </ul>

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# What does this change do?

- Remove special permit for smaller residential developments, which adds to time and cost and carries a risk of appeal which can delay a project for years
- Rely more on prescriptive design standards and advisory review procedures to guide the design of smaller residential projects
- Retain special permit requirement for larger residential development, which provides a greater opportunity for review of impacts (including transportation impact) and mitigation through special permit conditions

# Other Changes – Non-Conformance

Current Zoning	Proposed Zoning
<p><b>Section 8.22:</b> Conforming additions to non-conforming buildings are allowed if they don't exceed the existing by 10% (or 25% by special permit) in area or volume</p>	<p>Conforming residential additions are allowed as-of-right without limits on area or volume</p>
<p><b>Section 5.28.2:</b> Conversion of a non-residential structure to residential use is allowed by Planning Board special permit (in place of any other use or dimensional relief that is needed)</p>	<p>A Planning Board special permit is only needed if it increases an existing non-conforming condition – e.g., a decrease in non-conforming open space or increase in stories above grade beyond what is allowed</p>

# Other Changes – Split Lots

Current Zoning	Proposed Zoning
<p><b>Section 3.32:</b> On a lot in two or more districts, the dimensional requirements of the less restrictive district can extend 25 feet into the more restrictive district by BZA special permit</p>	<p>For residential uses, the extension of the less restrictive requirement 25 feet into the more restrictive district is allowed as-of-right</p>
<p><b>Section 5.27:</b> On a lot in two or more districts, allowable units and floor area can be transferred from the portion in one district to another, with limitations</p>	<p>This now only applies to allowable non-residential FAR, because there are no limits on dwelling units or residential FAR</p>



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# Why such a long petition?

- Main changes (esp. Articles 3 and 5) affect districts and standards that are referenced throughout the Zoning Ordinance (such as special districts and overlay districts), which needs changes for consistency
- Some long sections are proposed to be wholly or partly deleted – MARKUP version shows all these deletions to be transparent

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# Why two petitions?

- Per Chapter 40A, Section 5 of Massachusetts General Laws, most zoning amendments need a two-thirds vote of City Council
- The “Housing Choice” legislation adopted by Massachusetts in 2021 provides that specific zoning amendments which allow or increase capacity for multifamily housing need a simple majority vote
- The proposed changes are separated into those that the City believes would require a simple majority vote and those that would require a two-thirds majority vote per Chapter 40A, Section 5



# General Q&A Session

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# **Breakout Rooms : Questions and Comments**

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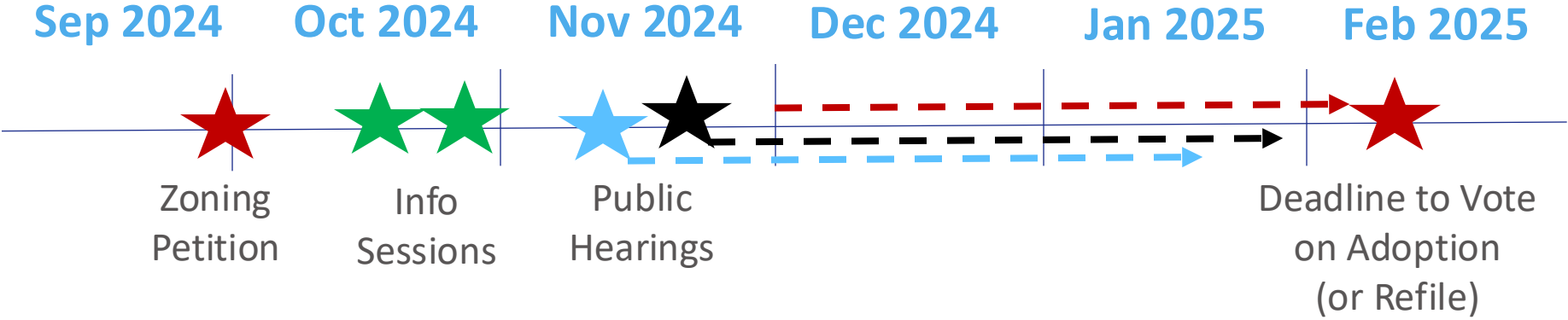
# Guidelines

- Questions and comments
- Keep comments brief so everyone has a chance to speak
- Be respectful and kind
- Avoid debates and interruptions, one person speaks at a time
- Embrace different opinions and points of view
- Listen to understand, not respond



**What's Happening Next?**

# Process Timeline



HOUSING COMMITTEE		CITY COUNCIL	ORDINANCE COMMITTEE & PLANNING BOARD	CITY COUNCIL
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- City Council Committee Hearing
- Planning Board Hearing
- Community Meeting
- City Council Meeting

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# Upcoming Events

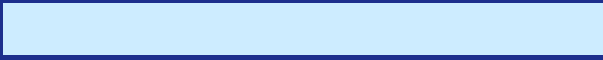
- Tuesday, October 29, 5:30-7:30 PM  
Information Open House – Citywide Senior Center  
806 Massachusetts Ave
- Tuesday, November 12, 6:30 PM  
Planning Board Hearing (Virtual)  
[www.cambridgema.gov/planningboard](http://www.cambridgema.gov/planningboard)
- Tuesday, November 19, 2:00 PM  
Ordinance Committee Hearing (Hybrid)  
City Hall, 795 Massachusetts Ave, Second Floor  
[www.cambridgema.gov/Departments/citycouncil](http://www.cambridgema.gov/Departments/citycouncil)



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# [www.cambridgema.gov/multifamilyzoning](http://www.cambridgema.gov/multifamilyzoning)

- Sign up for e-mails
- Ongoing updates on meetings/events
- Zoning text, maps, other materials
- Recording of today's presentation
- Give your questions and comments
- Will post more responses to questions



# APPENDIX

# New Table of Dimensional Requirements (DRAFT)

District	All Uses	Residential Uses				Non-Residential Uses				
	1. Min. Total Open Space Ratio (5.22)	2. Max. Stories Above Grade (5.23)	3. Max. Building Height in feet (5.23)	4. Min. Front Yard Setback (5.24)	5. Min. Side or Rear Yard Setback (5.24)	6. Max. Building Height in feet (5.23)	7. Min. Front Yard Setback (5.24)	8. Min. Side Yard Setback (5.24)	9. Min. Rear Yard Setback (5.24)	10. Max. FAR (5.25)
<b>5.31 Residence Districts</b>										
<b>Res. C-1</b>	30%*	6	<del>35</del> -75	10	none	35	Formula*	Formula*	Formula*	0.75
<b>Res. C-1A</b>	15%	6	<del>45</del> -75	10	none	45	10	Formula*	Formula*	1.25
<b>Res. C-2B</b>	15%	6	<del>45</del> -75	10	none	45	Formula*	Formula*	Formula*	1.75
<b>Res. C-2A</b>	10%*	6	<del>60</del> -75	5	none	60	Formula*	Formula*	Formula*	2.5
<b>Res. C-2</b>	15%	7	85	10	none	85	Formula*	Formula*	Formula*	1.75
<b>Res. C-3</b>	10%	10	120	5	none	120	Formula*	Formula*	Formula*	3.0
<b>Res. C-3A</b>	10%	10	120	5	none	120	Formula*	Formula*	Formula*	3.0*
<b>Res. C-3B</b>	10%	10	120	10	none	120	10	none	none	3.0*

\* With applicable footnotes

# New Table of Dimensional Requirements (DRAFT)

District	All Uses	Residential Uses				Non-Residential Uses				
	1. Min. Total Open Space Ratio (5.22)	2. Max. Stories Above Grade (5.23)	3. Max. Building Height in feet (5.23)	4. Min. Front Yard Setback (5.24)	5. Min. Side or Rear Yard Setback (5.24)	6. Max. Building Height in feet (5.23)	7. Min. Front Yard Setback (5.24)	8. Min. Side Yard Setback (5.24)	9. Min. Rear Yard Setback (5.24)	10. Max. FAR (5.25)
<b>5.32 Office Districts</b>										
<b>Office 1</b>	15%	<b>6</b>	<del>35</del> <b>75</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>none</b>	35	Formula*	Formula*	Formula*	0.75
<b>Office 2A</b>	15%	<b>6</b>	<del>70</del> <b>75</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>none</b>	60	Formula*	Formula*	Formula*	1.25
<b>Office 2</b>	15%	<b>7</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>none</b>	70*	Formula*	Formula*	Formula*	1.50
<b>Office 3</b>	10%	<b>10</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>none</b>	90	Formula*	Formula*	Formula*	2.0
<b>Office 3A</b>	10%	<b>10</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>none</b>	90	Formula*	Formula*	Formula*	2.0

\* With applicable footnotes

# New Table of Dimensional Requirements (DRAFT)

District	All Uses	Residential Uses				Non-Residential Uses				
	1. Min. Total Open Space Ratio (5.22)	2. Max. Stories Above Grade (5.23)	3. Max. Building Height in feet (5.23)	4. Min. Front Yard Setback (5.24)	5. Min. Side or Rear Yard Setback (5.24)	6. Max. Building Height in feet (5.23)	7. Min. Front Yard Setback (5.24)	8. Min. Side Yard Setback (5.24)	9. Min. Rear Yard Setback (5.24)	10. Max. FAR (5.25)
<b>5.33 Business Districts</b>										
<b>Bus. A</b>	none	6	<del>45</del> 75	none	none	35	none*	none*	Formula*	1.0
<b>Bus. A-1</b>	none	6	<del>35</del> 75	none	none	35	none*	none*	Formula*	1.0
<b>Bus. A-2</b>	none	6	<del>45</del> 75	5*	none	45*	5*	10*	20*	1.0
<b>Bus. A-3</b>	30%	6	<del>35</del> 75	10	none	35	Formula*	Formula*	Formula*	0.75*
<b>Bus. A-4</b>	none	6	<del>35-44</del> 75	10*	none	35*	Formula*	Formula*	Formula*	1.0*
<b>Bus. A-5</b>	none	7*	<del>80</del> 85*	none	none	80*	none*	none*	none*	1.0*
<b>Bus. B</b>	none	7	<del>80</del> 85	none	none	80	none*	none*	none*	2.75
<b>Bus. B-1</b>	See note*	8	<del>90</del> 95*	none	none	55*	none*	none*	none*	1.50
<b>Bus. B-2</b>	See note*	6	<del>45</del> 75	none	none	45	none*	none*	none*	1.50
<b>Bus. C</b>	none	6	<del>55</del> *75	none	none	55*	none*	none*	20*	1.25

\* With applicable footnotes

# New Table of Dimensional Requirements (DRAFT)

District	All Uses	Residential Uses				Non-Residential Uses				
	1. Min. Total Open Space Ratio (5.22)	2. Max. Stories Above Grade (5.23)	3. Max. Building Height in feet (5.23)	4. Min. Front Yard Setback (5.24)	5. Min. Side or Rear Yard Setback (5.24)	6. Max. Building Height in feet (5.23)	7. Min. Front Yard Setback (5.24)	8. Min. Side Yard Setback (5.24)	9. Min. Rear Yard Setback (5.24)	10. Max. FAR (5.25)
<b>5.34 Industrial Districts</b>										
<b>Ind. A-1</b>	none	6	<del>45</del> 75	none	none	45	none*	none*	none*	1.25
<b>Ind. A-2</b>	none	6	<del>70</del> 75	none	none	70	none*	none*	none*	2.75
<b>Ind. A</b>	none	6	<del>45</del> 75	none	none	45*	none*	none*	none*	1.25
<b>Ind. B-1</b>	none	6	<del>70</del> 75	none	none	60	none*	none*	none*	1.5
<b>Ind. B-2</b>	none	6	<del>35</del> 75	10	none	35	15*	none*	none*	0.75
<b>Ind. B</b>	none	10	120	none	none	120	none*	none*	none*	2.75*
<b>5.35 Open Space Districts</b>										
<b>OS</b>	60%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	35	25	15	25	0.25

\* With applicable footnotes

# Inclusionary Housing

## Inclusionary Rental Housing

- Eligible Applicants
  - earn between 50% and 80% AMI, or
  - have rental housing vouchers (for those earning less than 50% AMI)
- Residents
  - Annual income recertification
  - Incomes vary over time for residents with and without vouchers
  - Income eligibility limit for recertifying residents is 100% AMI

## 2024 Inclusionary Housing Program Income Limits

<u>Household Size</u>	<u>50% AMI</u>	<u>80% AMI</u>	<u>100% AMI</u>
One	\$52,100	\$91,200	\$104,200
Two	\$59,550	\$104,200	\$119,100
Three	\$67,000	\$117,250	\$134,000
Four	\$74,450	\$130,250	\$148,900

## Inclusionary Homeownership

- Eligible Applicants
  - earn less than 100% AMI
- Residents
  - No ongoing income review

# Inclusionary Housing

## Inclusionary Rental Housing

- Residents with Vouchers
  - ~42% of residents have a rental housing voucher in a recent snapshot of more than 1000 units
  - Vouchers from Public Housing Authorities (PHAs): Cambridge, Metro Boston, Boston, Somerville, Arlington, Quincy, Brockton, Sandwich, etc.
  - Ratio fluctuates
    - as residents move in and move out
    - as PHAs make available new vouchers

Household Size	50% AMI (2023)	'Minimum Housing Payment' (rent and utilities)
One	\$51,950	\$1,039
Two	\$59,400	\$1,188
Three	\$66,800	\$1,336
Four	\$74,200	\$1,484

## Residents earning less than 50% AMI

- More than 50% of residents have incomes less than 50% AMI (2023)
- Voucher holders: housing payment set by PHA for (typ. @ 30% of income)
- Non-voucher holders: housing payment for set at higher of 30% of income or Inclusionary Minimum Rent (Housing Payment) @ 30% of 40% AMI