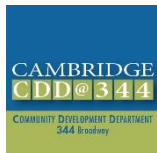
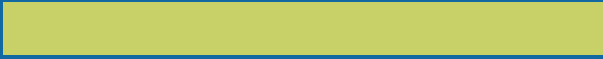


City of Cambridge  
Community Development Department  
Single-Family, Two-Family,  
Multifamily Zoning Districts

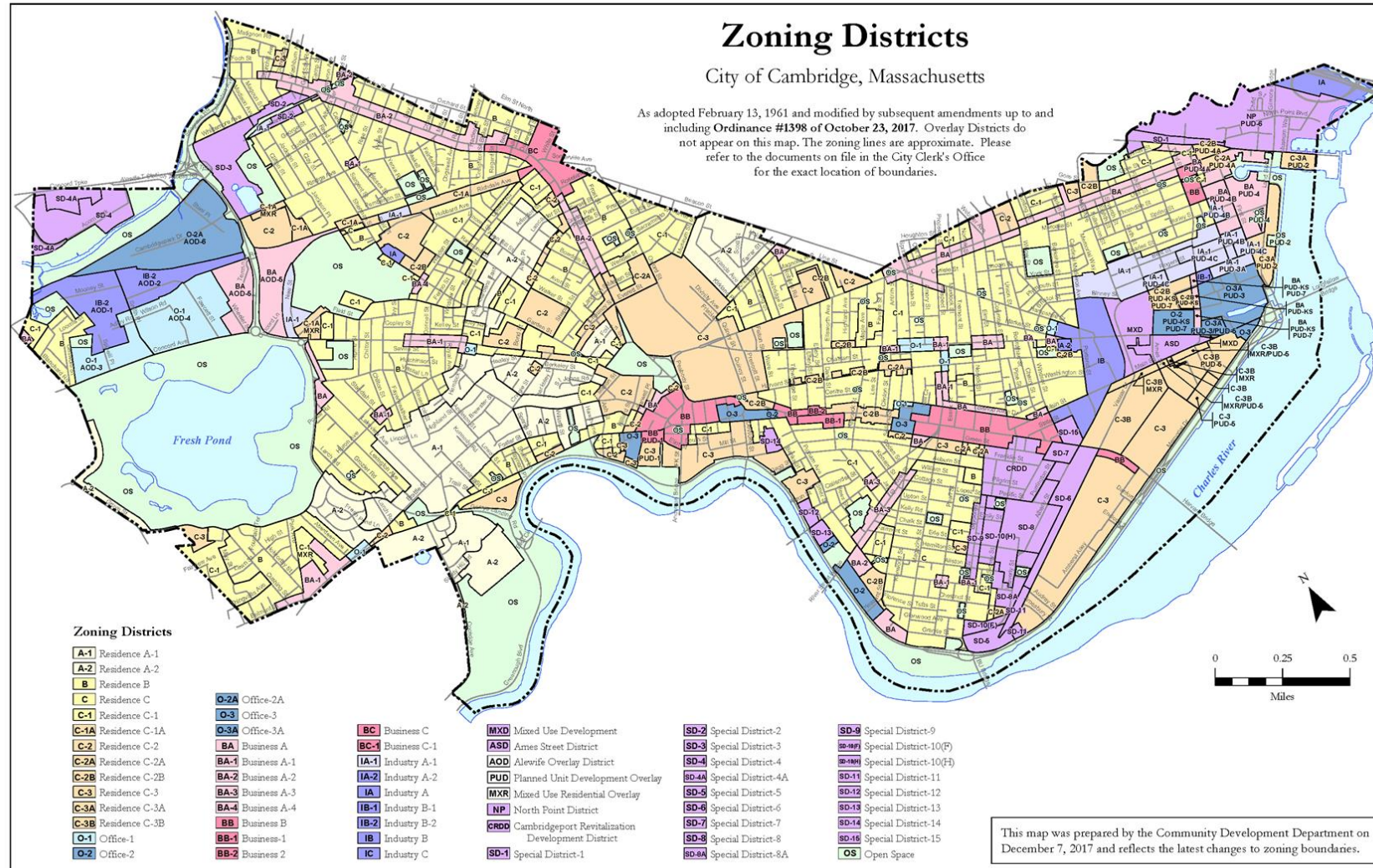
Planning Board Presentation  
January 4, 2022





# Background: “Neighborhood Zoning”

# Zoning Districts



- Residence A-1, A-2, B, C, C-1
- Height Limit of 35'
- Yellow on the map
- Also “Hybrid” districts: Office-1, Business A-1, A-3, Special Districts SD-2, SD-9, SD-10, SD-14



# Neighborhood Development Patterns

- Mix of single-family, two-family, three-deckers, apartments, townhouses
- 2½-3 stories typical
- Small-sized lots (+/- 50' width, +/- 100' depth)
- Wood-frame buildings (mostly)
- Varied styles

# Neighborhood Development Patterns



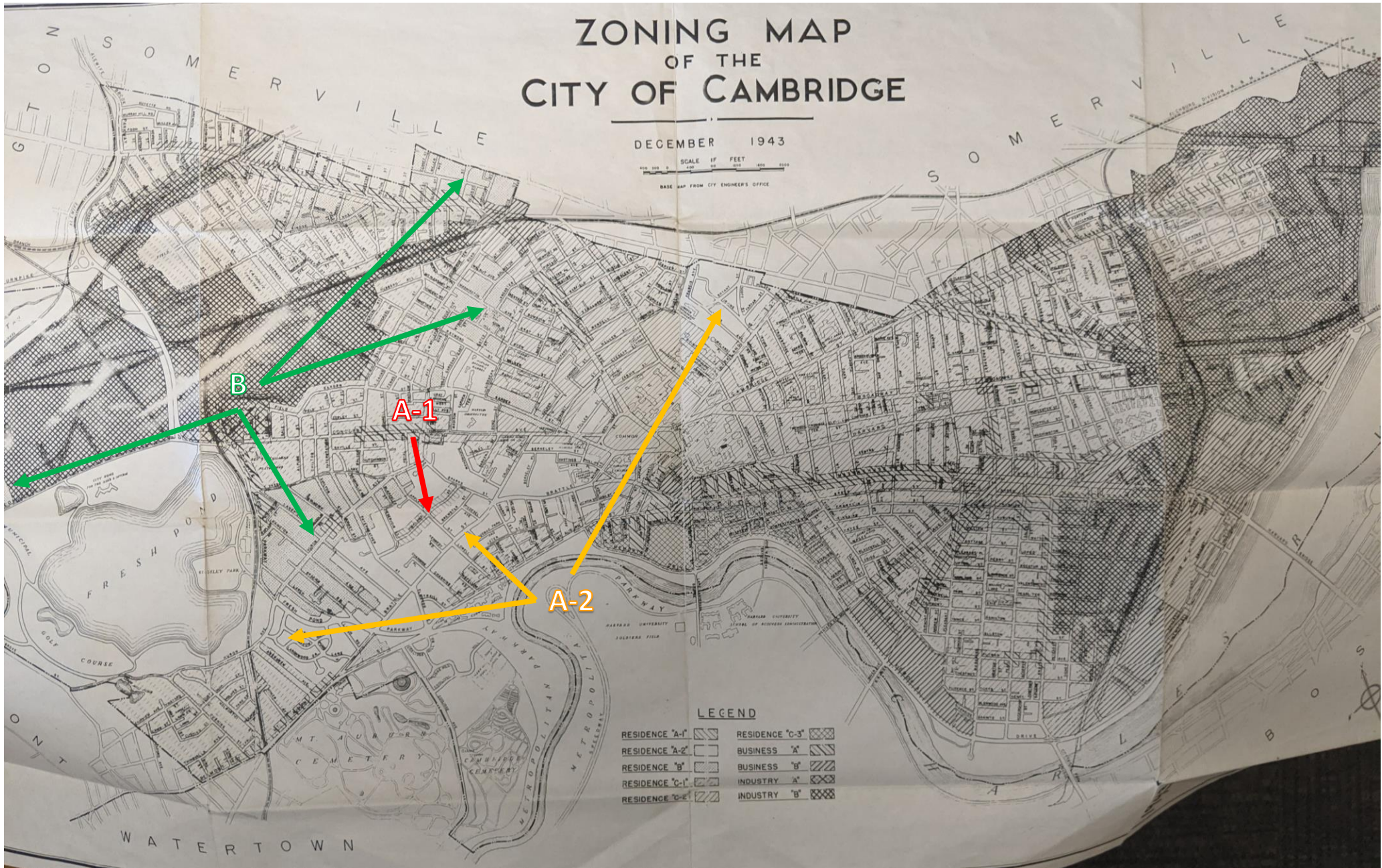
# Allowed Development Types

Map Code	District	Allows
A-1	Residence A-1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Single-family (detached) dwellings</li> </ul>
A-2	Residence A-2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One principal structure on a lot</li> </ul>
B	Residence B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Single-family and two-family dwellings</li> <li>• Semi-detached townhouse/rowhouse dwellings</li> <li>• Multiple principal structures w/75' of street (or by SP)</li> </ul>
C	Residence C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Single-family and two-family dwellings</li> <li>• Semi-detached townhouse/rowhouse dwellings</li> <li>• Multifamily dwellings</li> </ul>
C-1	Residence C-1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lodging houses and group homes</li> <li>• Multiple principal structures</li> </ul>



# Brief History

- Most neighborhoods developed ca. 1850s-1930s (some exceptions – e.g., Cambridge Highlands, Linden Park)
- Zoning enacted in 1924
- 1943 Zoning Ordinance established A-1, A-2, B, C-1, C-2, C-3
- Some areas “downzoned” by petition over time
  - E.g., North Cambridge (B), West Cambridge (A-1,A-2,B), Cambridgeport (C), parts of Baldwin (B); small parts of Mid-Cambridge (B), The Port (B)
- Few major changes, many adaptations (rehabilitation, alteration, addition, reconfiguration, condo conversion)
- Economic changes: “downs and ups”





# Neighborhood Zoning in 2021

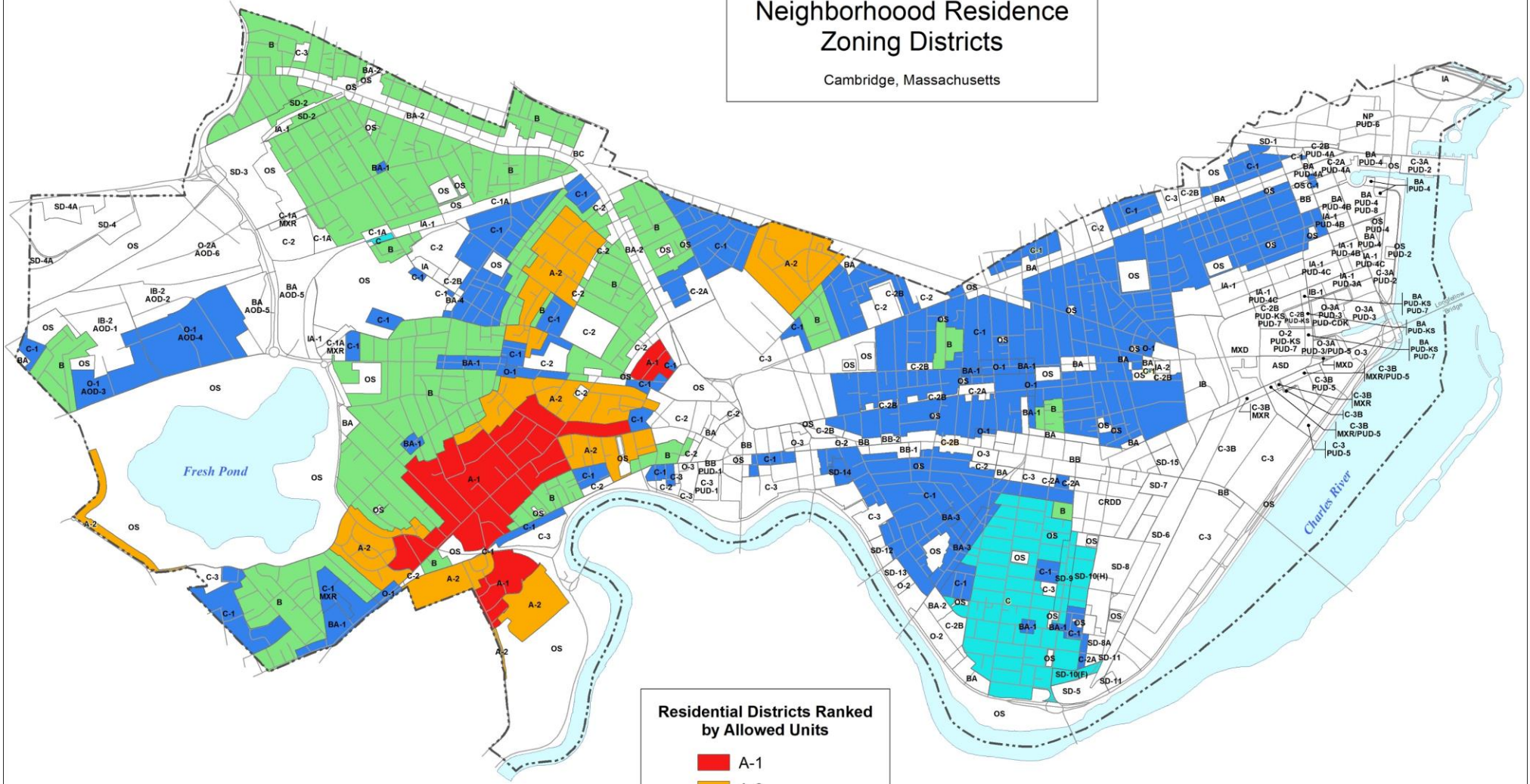
- About 10,000 lots
- About half of Cambridge's total housing units

Map Code	District	% Land Area	% Parcels	% Dwelling Units
A-1	Residence A-1	3.4 %	2.6 %	0.7 %
A-2	Residence A-2	5.4 %	1.8 %	0.5 %
B	Residence B	15.2 %	29.9 %	15.9 %
C	Residence C	2.9 %	6.3 %	4.3 %
C-1	Residence C-1	17.1 %	36.1 %	28.9 %

Data source: Cambridge GIS. ALL FIGURES APPROXIMATE.

# Neighborhood Residence Zoning Districts

Cambridge, Massachusetts



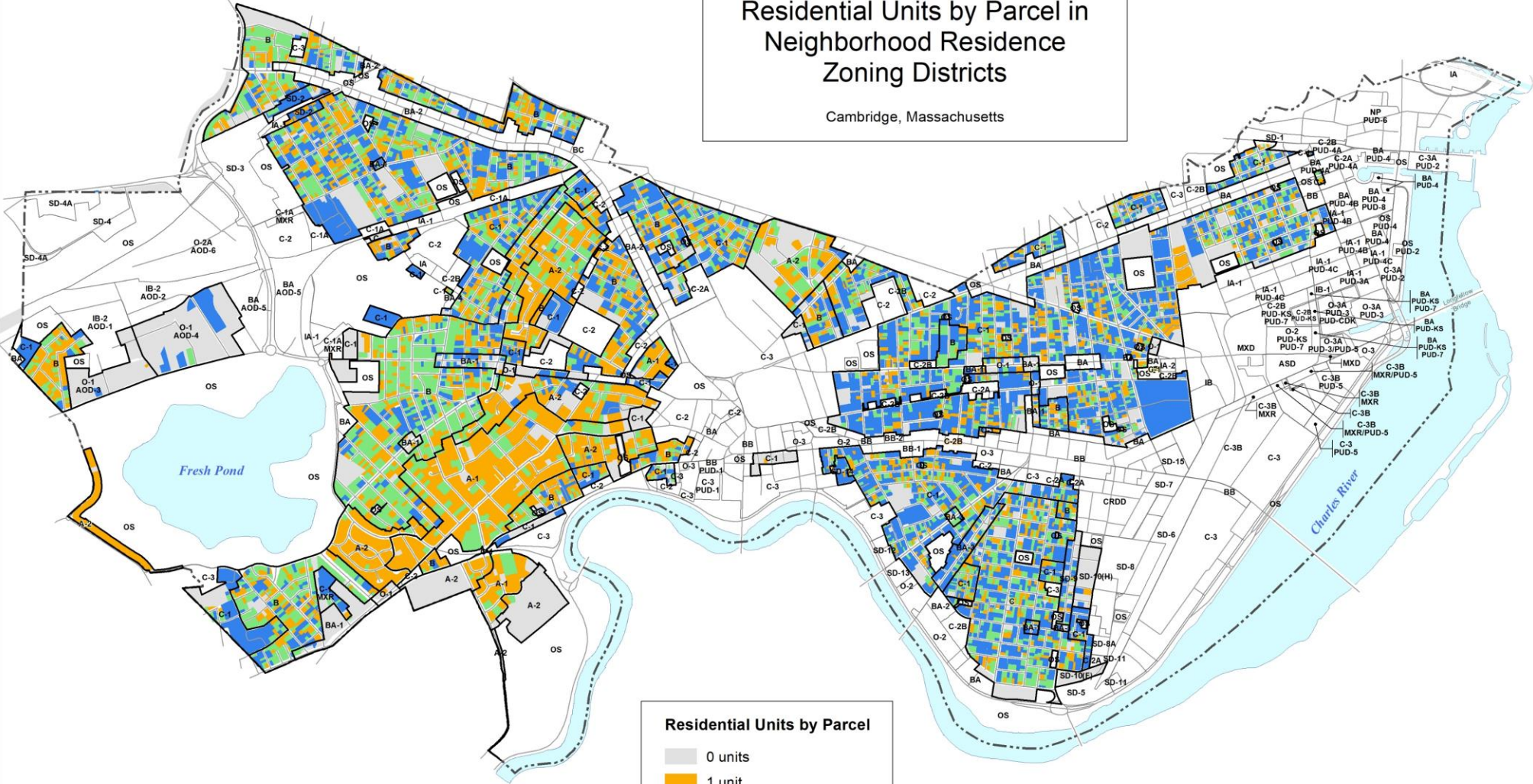
**Residential Districts Ranked by Allowed Units**

- A-1
- A-2
- B or similar
- C or similar
- C-1 or similar

Includes Office, Business, and Special Districts in which residential uses follow the regulations of Neighborhood Residence Zoning Districts.

# Residential Units by Parcel in Neighborhood Residence Zoning Districts

Cambridge, Massachusetts



### Residential Units by Parcel

- 0 units
- 1 unit
- 2 units
- 3 or more units
- Selected Zoning Districts



Data source: July 2020 Land Use data from CDD, based on Assessing data, building permits, and Development Log data.



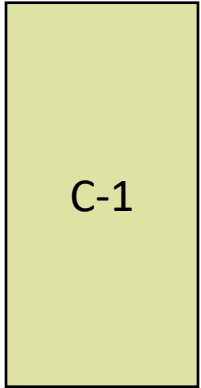
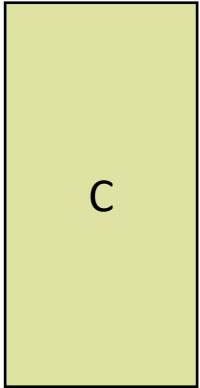
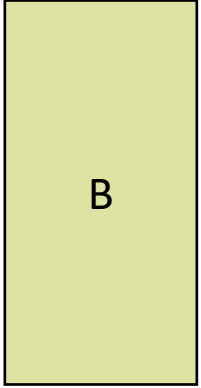
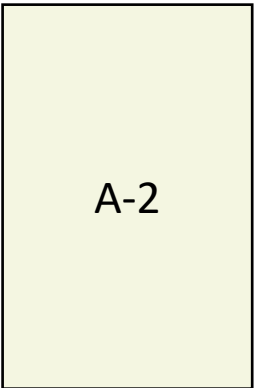
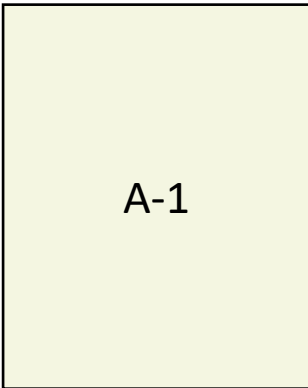
# Neighborhood Zoning Development Standards

# Development Standards

Standard	History in A-1, A-2, B, C, C-1 Districts
Lot size and width	Introduced in 1943, few changes
Housing density (lot area per dwelling unit)	Introduced in 1961, increased in 1990s *Accessory apartments 1981, 2016, 2019
Building size and scale (height, FAR)	Height – 1943, few changes FAR – 1961, *basement exemption 2016
Site layout (yards/setbacks, open space)	Yards – 1943, amended 1961 Open Space – 1978, amended 1990s
Parking and bicycle parking	Parking – 1961, many amendments Bicycle Parking – 1981, amended 2012

# Lot size and width

District	A-1	A-2	B	C	C-1
Min. Lot Size	8,000 SF	6,500 SF	5,000 SF	5,000 SF	5,000 SF
Min. Lot Width	80'	60'	50'	50'	50'
"Standard" Lot Dimensions	80'x100'	65'x100'	50'x100'	50'x100'	50'x100'



# Building Scale + Density

District	Max. Height	Min. Lot Area/Unit	Max. FAR	On a “District Standard” lot:
A-1	35 feet	6,000 SF	0.50	1-3 stories, 1 unit, 4,000 SF
A-2	35 feet	4,500 SF	0.50	1-3 stories, 1 unit, 3,250 SF
B	35 feet	2,500(+) SF*	0.50(-)*	1-3 stories, 2 units, 2,500 SF
C	35 feet	1,800 SF	0.60	1-3 stories, 2 units, 3,000 SF
C-1	35 feet	1,500 SF	0.75	1-3 stories, 3 units, 3,750 SF

\*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

# Housing Unit Size/Density

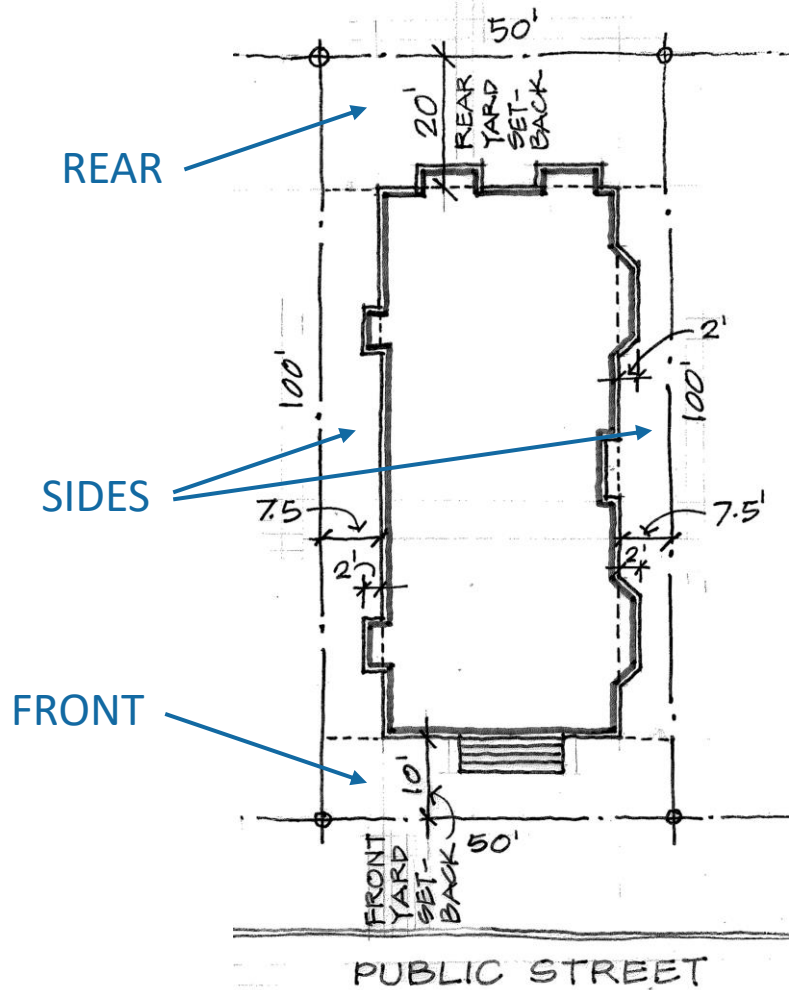
District	4,000 SF lot	5,000 SF lot	6,000 SF lot	9,000 SF lot
<b>A-1</b>	0 units 2,000 SF floor area [no units]	0 units 2,500 SF floor area [no units]	1 unit 3,000 SF floor area Avg. 3,000 SF unit size	1 unit 4,500 SF floor area Avg. 4,500 SF unit size
<b>A-2</b>	0 units 2,000 SF floor area [no units]	1 unit 2,500 SF floor area Avg. 2,500 SF unit size	1 unit 3,000 SF floor area Avg. 3,000 SF unit size	2 units 4,500 SF floor area Avg. 2,250 SF unit size
<b>B</b>	1 unit 2,000 SF floor area Avg. 2,000 SF unit size	2 units 2,500 SF floor area Avg. 1,250 SF unit size	2 units 2,800 SF floor area Avg. 1,400 SF unit size	3 units 3,900 SF floor area Avg. 1,300 SF unit size
<b>C</b>	2 units 2,400 SF floor area Avg. 1,200 SF unit size	2 units 3,000 SF floor area Avg. 1,500 SF unit size	3 units 3,600 SF floor area Avg. 1,200 SF unit size	5 units 5,400 SF floor area Avg. 1,080 SF unit size
<b>C-1</b>	2 units 3,000 SF floor area Avg. 1,500 SF unit size	3 units 3,750 SF floor area Avg. 1,250 SF unit size	4 units 4,500 SF floor area Avg. 1,125 SF unit size	6 units 6,750 SF floor area Avg. 1,125 SF unit size



# Housing Unit Size/Density

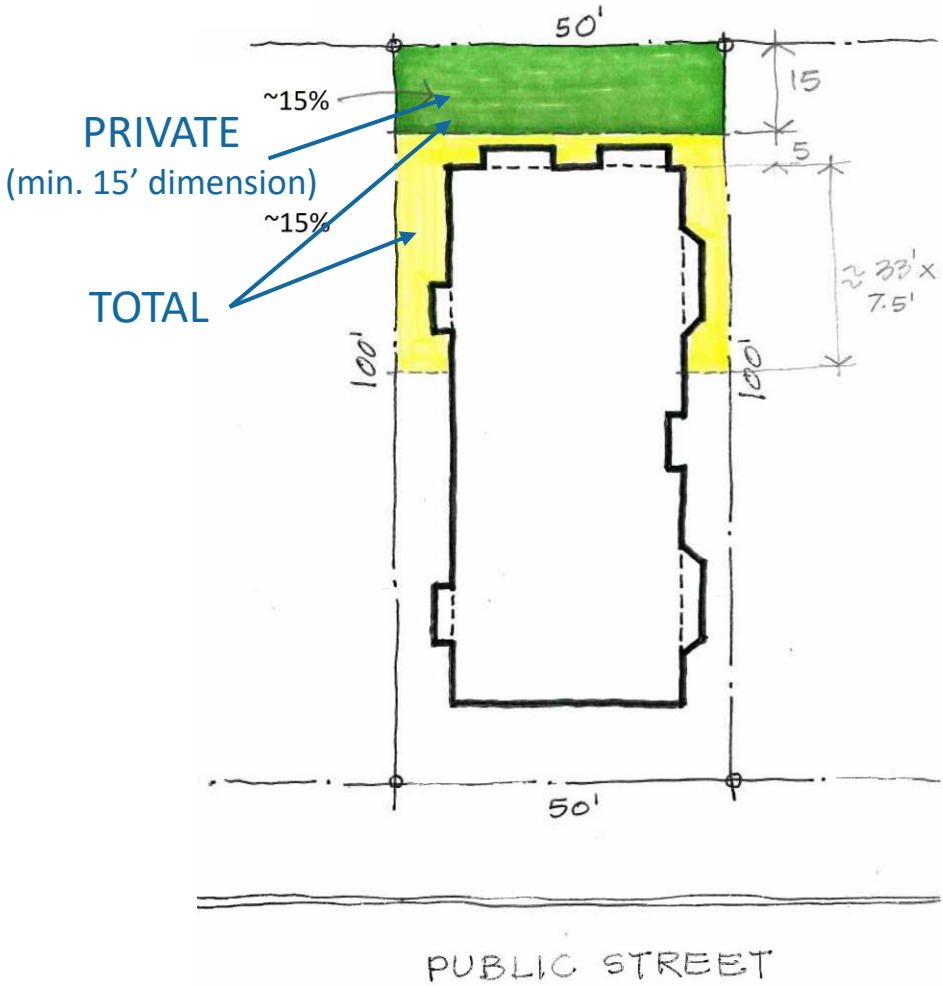
District	3,999 SF lot	4,999 SF lot	5,999 SF lot	8,999 SF lot
<b>A-1</b>	0 units 1,999 SF floor area [no units]	0 units 2,499 SF floor area [no units]	0 units 2,999 SF floor area [no units]	1 unit 4,499 SF floor area Avg. 4,499 SF unit size
<b>A-2</b>	0 units 1,999 SF floor area [no units]	1 unit 2,499 SF floor area Avg. 2,499 SF unit size	1 unit 2,999 SF floor area Avg. 2,299 SF unit size	1 unit 4,499 SF floor area Avg. 4,499 SF unit size
<b>B</b>	1 unit 1,999 SF floor area Avg. 1,999 SF unit size	1 unit 2,499 SF floor area Avg. 2,499 SF unit size	2 units 2,799 SF floor area Avg. 1,399 SF unit size	2 units 3,899 SF floor area Avg. 1,949 SF unit size
<b>C</b>	2 units 2,399 SF floor area Avg. 1,199 SF unit size	2 units 2,999 SF floor area Avg. 1,499 SF unit size	3 units 3,599 SF floor area Avg. 1,199 SF unit size	4 units 5,399 SF floor area Avg. 1,349 SF unit size
<b>C-1</b>	2 units 2,999 SF floor area Avg. 1,499 SF unit size	3 units 3,749 SF floor area Avg. 1,249 SF unit size	3 units 4,499 SF floor area Avg. 1,499 SF unit size	5 units 6,749 SF floor area Avg. 1,349 SF unit size

# Yards (AKA “Setbacks”)



District	Min. Front Yard (building to street)	Min. Side Yards (building to abutting lot, adjacent to street)	Min. Rear Yard (building to abutting lot, opposite street)
<b>A-1</b>	25' -context	15' +sum to 35'	25'-35' (based on depth)
<b>A-2</b>	20' -context	10' +sum to 25'	25'-35' (based on depth)
<b>B</b>	15' -context	7.5' +sum to 20'	25'-35' (based on depth)
<b>C</b>	10' +formula (H+L)/4 (from centerline)	7.5' +formula (H+L)/5	20'-30' (based on depth) +formula (H+L)/4
<b>C-1</b>	10' +formula (H+L)/4 (from centerline)	7.5' +formula (H+L)/5	20'-30' (based on depth) +formula (H+L)/4

# Private Open Space



District	Min. Total OS (% of lot area)	Min. Private (15' dimension)	Min. Permeable (vegetation or porous)
<b>A-1</b>	50%	25%	25%
<b>A-2</b>	50%	25%	25%
<b>B</b>	40%	20%	20%
<b>C</b>	36%	18%	18%
<b>C-1</b>	30%	15%	15%

Note: Auto parking and driveways are **NOT** open space.

# Parking and Bicycle Parking

Same for all districts:

## Parking Requirements

- One off-street space per unit
- Only required for new units – i.e., if a two-unit building with no off-street parking adds a unit, one new parking space is required
- If parking is provided and required, it must be maintained
- Can be reduced/waived by special permit

## Bicycle Parking

- One long-term space per unit (e.g., locker, bike shed, bike room)
- One short-term space per 10 units (e.g., outdoor rack)
- Not required for buildings with 3 units or fewer
- Not required for changes that do not increase the requirement from existing conditions
- When bicycle parking is required, the full number of required spaces must be provided



# How does zoning affect existing lots?

- Many lots meet some standards, not all
- Lots must meet all development standards to “conform”
- What if a lot is nonconforming?
  - As-of-right: Maintenance, some minor alterations
  - Special permit: Enlarge structure up to 25%, if it doesn’t further violate any use, dimensional, or parking requirements
  - (NEW) For a single-family or two-family dwelling only, special permit to increase a preexisting dimensional nonconformity without creating a new nonconformity
- Variance requests are common

# C-1 District

Standard	Required	Existing (appx.)
Units	N/A	3
Building footprint	N/A	25'x55'
Lot dimensions	5,000 SF min.	4,000 SF (40'x100')
Lot area per unit	1,500 SF min.	1,350 SF
FAR	0.75 max.	0.90 (3,600 SF +/-)
Height	35' max.	35' (+/-)
Front yard	10' min	17' (+/-)
Rear yard	20' min	30' (+/-)
Side yards	formula: 13' each	About 7'-8' each

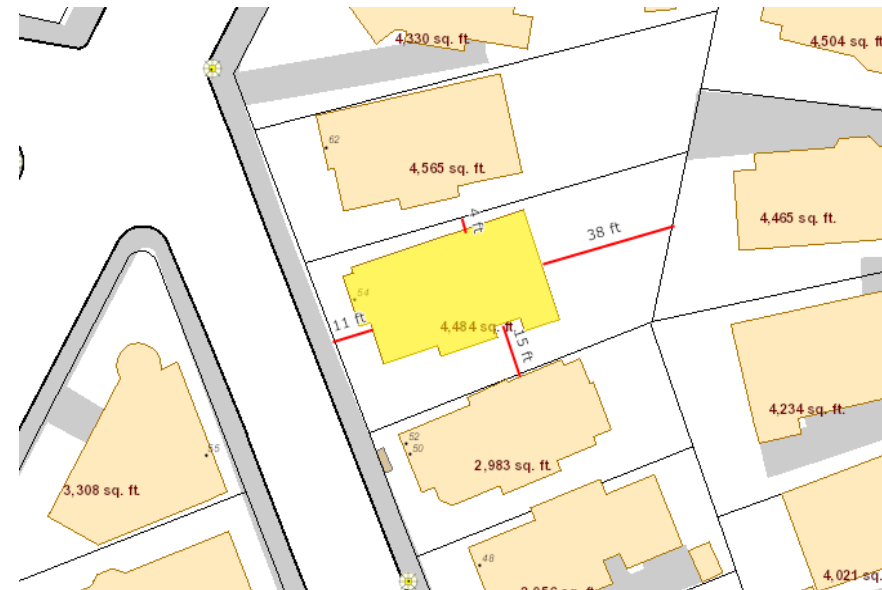
**Note: For discussion purposes only. ALL FIGURES APPROXIMATE.**



# C-1 District

Standard	Required	Existing (appx.)
Units	N/A	3
Building footprint	N/A	30'x50'
Lot dimensions	5,000 SF min.	4,500 SF (45'x100')
Lot area per unit	1,500 SF min.	1,500 SF
FAR (GFA)	0.75 max.	0.78 (3,500 SF +/-)
Height	35' max.	35' (+/-)
Front yard	10' min	11' (+/-)
Rear yard	20' min	38' (+/-)
Side yards	formula: 12' each	3'-5', 14'-15'

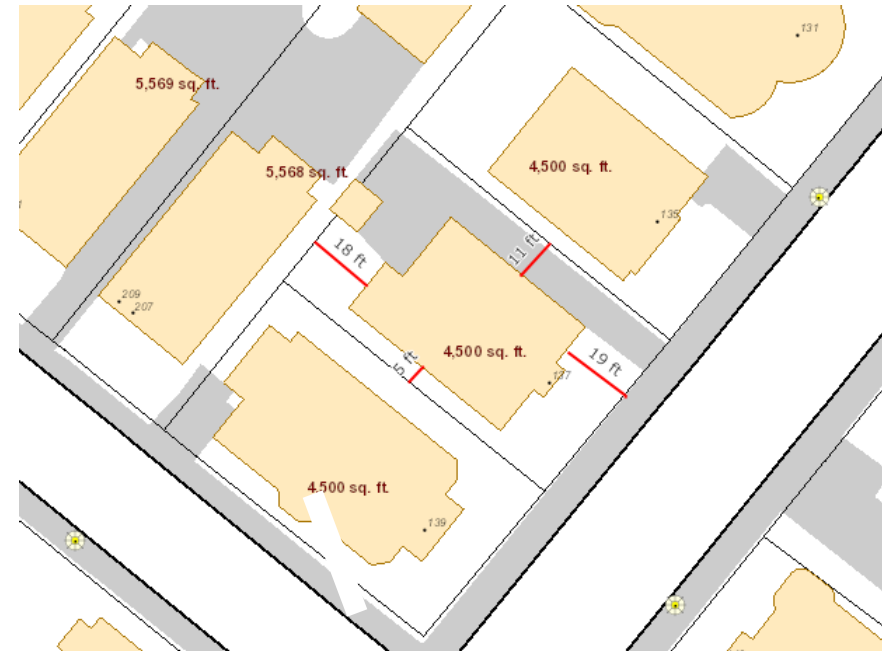
**Note: For discussion purposes only. ALL FIGURES APPROXIMATE.**



# C District

Standard	Required	Existing (appx.)
Units	N/A	2
Building footprint	N/A	35'x55'
Lot dimensions	5,000 SF min.	4,500 SF (50'x90')
Lot area per unit	1,800 SF min.	2,250 SF
FAR (GFA)	0.60 max.	0.69 (3,100 SF +/-)
Height	35' max.	33' (+/-)
Front yard	10' min	19' (+/-)
Rear yard	20' min	18' (+/-)
Side yards	formula: 13' each	5', 11' (+/-)

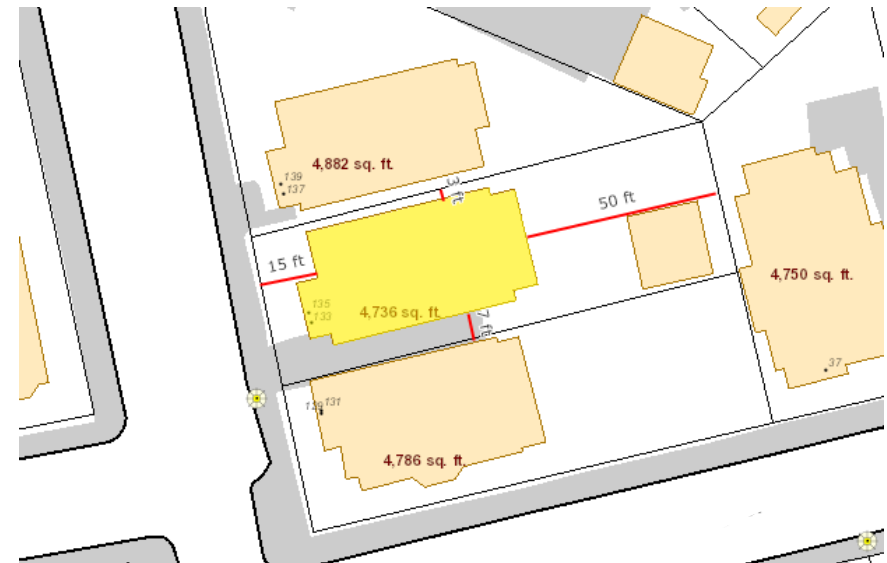
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# B District

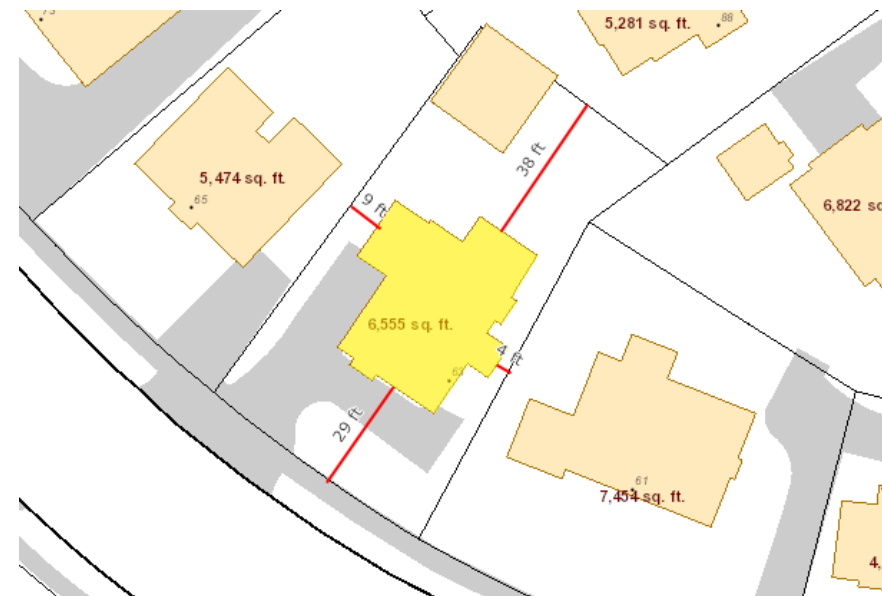
Standard	Required	Existing (appx.)
Units	N/A	2
Building footprint	N/A	30'x55'
Lot dimensions	5,000 SF min.	4,800 SF (40'x120')
Lot area per unit	2,500 SF min.	2,400 SF
FAR (GFA)	0.50 max.	0.67 (3,200 SF +/-)
Height	35' max.	32' (+/-)
Front yard	15' min	15'
Rear yard	30' min	50' (+/-)
Side yards	7.5' ea., sum to 20'	3', 7'



**Note: For discussion purposes only. ALL FIGURES APPROXIMATE.**

# A-2 District

Standard	Required	Existing (appx.)
Units	N/A	1
Building footprint	N/A	30'x40' + additions
Lot dimensions	6,500 SF min.	6,555 SF (57'x115')
Lot area per unit	4,500 SF min.	6,555 SF
FAR (GFA)	0.50 max.	0.49 (3,200 SF +/-)
Height	35' max.	31' (+/-)
Front yard	20' min	29'
Rear yard	28.75' min	38' (+/-)
Side yards	10' ea., sum to 25'	4', 9'



**Note: For discussion purposes only. ALL FIGURES APPROXIMATE.**



# Rezoning Single/Two-Family Exclusive Districts

# Allowing Multifamily Citywide

City Council Neighborhood and Long-Term Planning Discussion (August, 2021)

- More inclusive zoning, dismantling systemic racism
- Fewer instances of people needing variances
- Not having to reduce units due to other requirements, e.g. parking
- More to encourage multifamily housing
- Preserving open space

City Council Policy Order (recommended 11/16):  
Work with the Planning Board to develop concepts and principles to eliminate single family and two family only zones



# What Makes Res. A-1, A-2, B “Exclusive”?

- Multifamily dwellings are a prohibited use
- Minimum lot area per dwelling unit is prohibitive
- Additional parking space required to add a unit
- Minimum lot size discourages subdivision
- Only one principal dwelling allowed on a lot (except Res. B, which sometimes requires SP)
- Setback requirements constrain infill/enlargement

# Possible Zoning Approaches

	Map Changes	Text Changes	Map and Text Changes
Minimal Study	Rezone all of A-1, A-2, B to another existing district (e.g., C, C-1)	Adjust current standards in A-1, A-2, B to remove obvious impediments	Rezone A-1, A-2, B to another district with new development standards
Some Study	Study conditions and propose area-specific district adjustments	Study conditions and propose changes based on desired outcomes	Study conditions, adjust district designations and development standards
Extensive Study	Study and redraw all Residence zoning districts	Complete overhaul of current development standards (citywide)	Redraw zoning map and overhaul development standards

# Map Changes – Considerations

Possible Approach	Considerations
Rezoning A-1, A-2, and B to C or C-1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Know how it works in other neighborhoods</li><li>• Higher density, still limited</li><li>• FAR increases by 20-50% (could result in larger single-family or two-family structures)</li><li>• Setback and open space requirements still limiting</li><li>• Very large lots in A-1, A-2 could be subdivided</li></ul>
Uniform zoning for all “Neighborhood Residence” districts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Equitable treatment across neighborhoods</li><li>• Different outcomes based on different physical and market conditions</li></ul>
Study and redraw district boundaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A lot of time and discussion</li><li>• Policy questions: What principles guide the drawing of boundaries? Preservation? New housing opportunities?</li></ul>

# Changing Standards – Considerations

Development Standards	Considerations
Use and lot area per dwelling unit	Changes necessary to enable multifamily dwellings
Parking requirements	Indirectly prohibitive, current relief by SP
FAR	Calibrate with lot area per dwelling unit to achieve desired housing types/unit sizes?
Lot size, setbacks	Allow subdivision and more compact development?
Limit on number of principal buildings on a lot	Allow or discourage multiple-building development?
Height limits, open space	Maintain current requirements?
Non-conforming buildings	Additional flexibility compared to new buildings?



# New Standards – Considerations

Ideas Discussed at Past Meetings	Considerations
Limits on total GFA based on number of units or use type	Discouraging “down-conversions” and oversized units
Unit size / bedroom count	Supporting creation/retention of units suitable for families with children
Affordability standards	Requires extensive legal and economic study, complicated to administer/enforce on smaller sites
Comprehensive overhaul of standards (e.g., form-based)	Requires extensive study of existing conditions, potential new standards, testing, and discussion

# What could be studied further?

Study Topic	Resources	Time + Effort
Existing conditions – lot area, unit density, FAR, height	Cambridge Assessing Dept., GIS	Low
Existing setbacks & open space	Cambridge GIS	Medium-low
Development trends/changes	Building Permits, Census Data	Medium-low
Economic effects of zoning changes	Market data, Development Economics Consultant	Medium-high
Impacts on citywide planning goals (Envision Cambridge)	Evaluation of livability, diversity & equity, economic opportunity, sustainability & resilience, community health & wellbeing, learning	Medium-high
Alternative zoning approaches (e.g., affordability, form-based standards)	Consultant support, legal review, extensive discussion	High

# Where to start?

	Map Changes	Text Changes	Map and Text Changes
Low Degree of Difficulty	Rezone all of A-1, A-2, B to another existing district (e.g., C, C-1)	Adjust current standards in A-1, A-2, B to remove obvious impediments	Rezone A-1, A-2, B to another district with new development standards
Medium Degree of Difficulty	Study conditions and propose area-specific district adjustments	Study conditions and propose changes based on desired outcomes	Study conditions, adjust district designations and development standards
High Degree of Difficulty	Study and redraw all Residence zoning districts	Complete overhaul of current development standards (citywide)	Redraw zoning map and overhaul development standards



# Discussion