



CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL

To: Cambridge City Council
From: Councillor Patricia Nolan and Mayor Sumbul Siddiqui
Date: January 22, 2026
Subject: Proposed Amendments to Cambridge Street Zoning Petition

To the Honorable, the City Council:

As we approach the deadline to ordain the Cambridge Street zoning petition, we want to offer an opportunity to pass comprehensive zoning through a compromise and a commitment to making additional changes in short order.

From fall 2021 through fall 2022, the City led *Our Cambridge Street*, a planning study for Cambridge Street between Inman Square and Lechmere Station, with the goal of providing comprehensive planning and zoning recommendations along the street which respond to neighborhood needs. The petition, which we have discussed in detail since June and over the course of numerous public meetings, has a number of benefits for the streetscape in line with and responsive to the *Our Cambridge St.* planning study and would be an improvement over current zoning with respect to the inclusion of setbacks, design standards, open space, and ground floor active space as requirements for taller heights.

There are concerns about heights, which were increased beyond what was discussed in *Our Cambridge Street*. That process recommended six stories along much of the corridor, with greater heights allowed in the Webster/Windsor and Lechmere areas due to their strong transit connections.

In the spirit of compromise and in keeping with the *Our Cambridge Street* community process, we intend to move to make the following amendments on the floor Monday night:

That the proposed zoning be amended to:

- Reduce height of CAM-8 in Section 17.704.3 from 8 stories above grade for residential uses with ground story active uses to 6 stories
- Reduce height of CAM-15 in Section 17.704.3 (Lechmere parcel) from 15 stories above grade for residential uses with ground story active uses to 10 stories

We have provided this amendment ahead of Monday night to give City staff an opportunity to prepare clean language for a Council vote and to give the City Council an opportunity to consider the amendments.

If these changes are passed we hope that we can pass the entire zoning petition, while continuing to reform Cambridge Street zoning through CDD's response to existing Policy Order ([POR 2025 #164](#)) requesting CDD to require active ground floor at 6 stories for the entire corridor to reflect the community

vision from the *Our Cambridge Street* planning study. We hope that response will lead to a new zoning petition that we can work to pass.

We look forward to discussing the proposed amendments with you all at the City Council meeting on Monday, January 26, 2026.

Sincerely,

Patricia Nolan
Sumbul Siddiqui