



# City of Cambridge

O-10  
FIRST IN COUNCIL  
September 12, 2022

COUNCILLOR ZONDERVAN  
COUNCILLOR MCGOVERN

- WHEREAS: Cambridge is proud to be the innovation capital of the East Coast but a discussion is needed about where future lab growth is appropriate and where it could significantly impede other priorities, including the emergency need for more housing and the desire to have vibrant, active business districts and squares; and
- WHEREAS: The attached zoning amendments propose a technical definition of the lab use that is aligned with how other cities in the region have defined the use, allowing the use to be separately regulated from the general office use; and
- WHEREAS: The attached zoning amendments propose a restriction on new instances of the lab use in fragile districts including Central Square, Harvard Square, and Cambridge Street; and
- WHEREAS: The attached zoning amendments propose explicitly allowing any and all existing lab uses to continue in all districts without any barriers; and
- WHEREAS: There is plenty of room for discussion around which districts should and should not be included, but without a proactive conversation and something on the table it is conceivable that the lab use could take over in areas where it is unwanted; now therefore be it
- ORDERED: That the City Council refer the attached zoning petition to the Ordinance Committee and Planning Board for a hearing and report.

1. Define Lab use  
Insert into [Article 2.000 - Definitions](#) the following language:

## ARTICLE 2.000 - DEFINITIONS

...

**Technical office for research and development, laboratory & research facility.** Any laboratory engaged in research, experimental and testing, including but not limited to the fields of biology, chemistry, electronics, engineering, geology, medicine, and physics, including activities that requires additional air exchanges over and above a regular office use, or requires the use of chemical hoods, biosafety cabinets, regulated chemicals, or dangerous substances. This definition does not include innovation spaces, maker spaces, or other similar uses, or any purely software based activities.

2. Restrict the lab use in the following districts  
Amend the table of uses in [Section 4.30](#) as follows:

## 4.30 - TABLE OF USE REGULATION

	Open Space	Res A 1& 2	Res B	Res C, C-1, C-1A, 2, 2A, 2B, 3, 3A, 3B	Off 1, 2A, 2, 3, 3A	Bus A-1, A-2, A-3 1	Bus A, A-4	Bus B, B-1, B-2	Bus C	Ind A-1, A-2	Ind A	Ind B-1, B-2	Ind B
...													
4.34			Office and Laboratory Use										
...													
f. Technical office for research and development, laboratory & research facility, subject to the restrictions in Section 4.21m	No	No	No	No <sup>9</sup>	<u>No<sup>62,63</sup></u> <u>Yes</u>	<u>No<sup>62,63</sup></u> <u>Yes</u>	<u>No<sup>62,63</sup></u> <u>Yes</u>	<u>No<sup>62,63</sup></u> <u>Yes 10</u>	<u>No<sup>62,63</sup></u> <u>Yes</u>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

3. Explicitly allow existing lab use to continue in all districts  
Insert footnotes 62 and 63 into [Section 4.40](#) as follows:

#### 4.40 - FOOTNOTES TO THE TABLE OF USE REGULATIONS

...

62. Any pre-existing technical office for research and development, laboratory & research facility permitted prior to January 1, 2023 in a Business or Office District shall be considered a conforming use for the purposes of making modifications to the building, until January 1, 2050.

63. The technical office for research and development, laboratory & research facility use shall be allowed in any PUD, AOD, SD, MXD or other special zoning district that already effectively allowed this use prior to January 1, 2023, notwithstanding the base zoning restrictions. Specifically, this base zoning restriction shall not apply to any existing PUD, AOD, SD, MXD or other existing special zoning districts in or near Kendall Square, Alewife or Cambridge Port, but will apply in regular overlay districts including Harvard Square and Central Square.