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**CITYWIDE GROWTH  
MANAGEMENT  
CITY OF CAMBRIDGE**

*City Council Roundtable  
March 27, 2000*

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# GROWTH MANAGEMENT BACKGROUND

■ Growth Policy Document 1992

■ CRGM Petition 1997

*Chief Concerns:*

*Density*

*Heights/Setbacks*

*Transitions*

*Public Notice/Review*

# GROWTH MANAGEMENT BACKGROUND

- Council Action on CRGM Petition:
  - *Limited Heights*
  - *Open Space Zoning*
  - *Permit Notices*
- Further Study Recommended
- City Manager Appointed CGMAC in Fall 1997

# A PARTICIPATORY PROCESS

## Public Workshops & Outreach

- Backyards June, 1998
- Transitions October, 1998
- Goals & Vision February, 1999
- Scenarios March, 1999
- Policy Background April, 1999
- Zoning Proposals January, 2000

## Citywide Growth Management Advisory Committee

## City Council Roundtables

## Planning Board Discussions

3/27/00

### THE CITY WIDE REZONING BULLETIN

PUBLIC MEETING: June 9th - 7pm, Senior Center

Cambridge Community Development working jointly with the City-Wide Growth Management Advisory Committee June 1998

#### Are You Concerned About the Loss of Backyard Open Space?



The connecting backyards of our residential areas provide significant shared benefits of green space and light. Please let us know what concerns you have about preserving this valuable resource.

In 1997 a group of citizens petitioned the City Council to make many substantial changes to the zoning regulations of Cambridge to guide the future development of the city. The City Council adopted several of these proposed changes.

The Planning Board recommended further study of the issues that were not resolved by the Council's vote and the Community Development Department proposed a two to three-year process to study and act on them. The City Council requested and the City Manager appointed a Citywide Growth Management Advisory Committee (see page

four for membership) composed of community residents and business people to advise the Department on the process and information needed for the rezoning study. This "City Wide Rezoning Bulletin" on backyard development and residential open space is being published as the recommendation of the Committee.

The major issues to be addressed to the Citywide Growth Management Process are:

- (1) Inclusionary zoning to create affordable housing. This provision which requires residential developers to include 15% affordable units in their projects was adopted by City Council in March.
- (2) Limits on in-fill development and loss of open space in residential areas. This issue, which is illustrated in this Bulletin, is currently being examined and will be considered by the Planning Board during the summer.
- (3) Transition "buffers" where high-density zones meet residential areas. The committee will take up this issue next and will involve the public in discussions about transition buffers and appropriate zoning over the next year.
- (4) Reduction in development allowed in commercial districts to control growth of traffic. The committee will begin to discuss this issue in late 1999.

#### Residential District Open Space and Backyard Development

Current Cambridge zoning in residential districts permits three possible changes to residential backyards that can alter the character of neighborhoods:

1. Over-paving of back yards, usually for parking.
2. The expansion of dwellings into previously green yards.
3. The addition of dwellings units, attached or separate from existing buildings.

The Growth Management Advisory Committee has taken this issue as its first item, focusing on the lower-density residential zones - Residence A, B, C and C-1.

Although the "backyard development" of a hundred years ago is often regarded as today's charming cottage, many Cambridge residents are concerned that residential expansion is filling those blocks, as zoning often permits, distributes the pattern of green back yards that contributes to the livability of the City.

The paving of backyards with asphalt to create additional parking results from the scarcity of on-street parking in many neighborhoods, from requirements in the zoning code (one parking space per unit for new dwelling units) and from the expectation of many residents, especially those purchasing new units, to have on-site parking for each unit. The added paving of large areas in time means fewer trees and other plantings, increases storm water runoff, increases nearby temperatures in the summer, and is unappealing to many, often nearby neighbors who have enjoyed the combined effect of adjacent backyards.

Possible tools to address these concerns range from retaining current regulation and improving enforcement, and offering education and incentives to retain green and permeable backyards, to instituting changes in the zoning code that would significantly reduce further backyard development, or to rules directly limiting additional paving.



The addition of a housing unit to a backyard changes the sense of openness and privacy for all neighbors of the site.

# EMERGING VISION

- Visioning Workshops  
Spring 1999
- Residents Rated  
Community Goals
- Responses Received by  
mail, e-mail, and drop-  
off

3/27/00

Please help us review the Growth Policy Goals taken from the 1993 Growth Policy Document, "Towards a Sustainable Future." Which goals are most important to you? We want your opinion. Please rate the goals below and bring them with you to the meeting. If you can not attend, mail to: Cambridge Community Development, 57 Inman St., Cambridge, MA 02139



## How Do You Rate These Goals?

Goals taken from the Growth Policy Document, "Towards A Sustainable Future"	Low	Med	High
1. A vibrant, stable population of diverse races, cultures and viewpoints. New cultures continue to arrive; some rise to positions of public prominence.			
2. An environment where families with children can thrive. Parks, housing, schools and child care and other supports make the city a good place to raise families.			
3. Good housing available to a wide spectrum of income levels and households (singles, families with children, older people, etc.) Hundreds of units are renovated yearly by neighborhood-based organizations. More residents are experimenting with cooperatives, co-housing and other forms of ownership which share costs, community services and benefits.			
4. Significantly reduced automobile traffic. Walking, carpooling, public transit, bicycling and jitney trips are the norm. Employers and families compete annually to reduce single occupant car trips by the greatest percentage. All corners of the city (and adjoining cities) are stitched together by bicycle lanes and paths.			
5. A national model for community energy production, pollution prevention, and recycling. Grassroots organizations and the universities, churches, and other institutions cooperate on sustainable forms of transportation, heating, waste reduction and food production and distribution.			
6. A system of beautiful, well-maintained and accessible parks and open spaces. Landscaped pedestrian parkways knit the park system together in the style of Frederick Law Olmsted. Every neighborhood has volunteer groups pitching in to ensure clean and safe parks.			
7. A renowned system for training and retraining workers for emerging industries and successful careers. Youth combine courses, work apprenticeships and community placements; older workers learn new skills and act as mentors to youth.			
8. A thriving economic base, anchored by new health, environment and communications-based industries, home-based and storefront businesses, and the academic institutions. Cambridge continues to attract national attention for its climate of innovation and entrepreneurship.			
9. Vital and distinctive retail centers serving neighbors, students and regional customers seeking an ethnic meal, a rare paperback or fresh fish and produce. Local retailers, hurt by higher rents in the 80s and early 90s, make a comeback and thrive.			
10. Strengthened and stabilized neighborhoods which retain their distinctive flavor. Connections between neighborhoods are improved by open space and transit improvements, as well as by increased cooperation on a variety of issues.			
11. A model for effective citywide design review. Widespread design review of new projects occurs in both traditional districts and in the former industrial areas, such as Alewife.			
12. A system of comprehensive, high quality city services. New revenue sources and forms of service delivery lessen the city's dependence on property taxes and physical development to fund services.			
13. An ongoing, successful process for addressing growth and development concerns. Local government expands shared responsibility for growth with the nonprofit and private sectors. All interested parties engage in continued debate about the appropriate pace and quality of development in the evolving industrial districts, and their impact on nearby residential areas.			

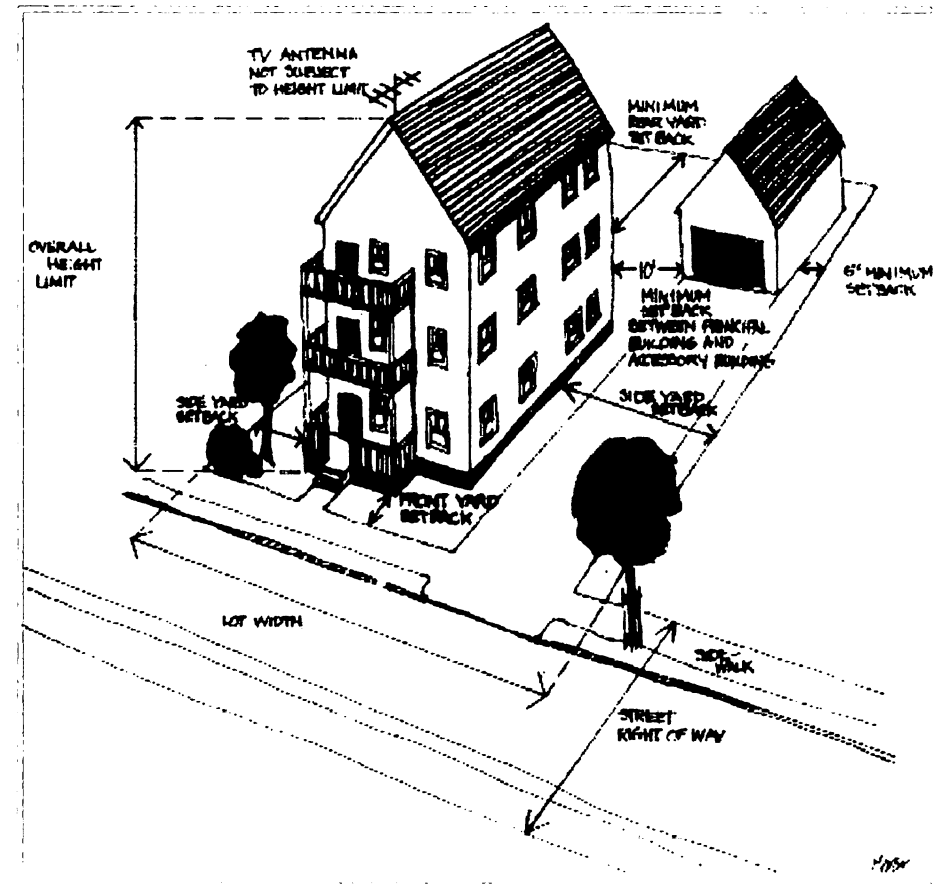
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# EMERGING VISION

- A richly diverse population
- Intermixture of living and work
- Encouraging non-auto travel
- Appropriate economic development
- On-going public input on development

# EARLY ACTION AREAS

- Inclusionary Zoning
  - Adopted March 1998
- Backyard Zoning
  - Adopted July 1999
- Transitions to Residential Districts
  - Hammond Street
  - Banks Street
  - Mahoney's Site



# CURRENT ACTION AREAS

- Density "FAR" Adjustments
- Project Review
- Parking Revisions
- Housing Opportunities

# DENSITY "FAR" ADJUSTMENTS

*What can FAR adjustments accomplish?*

- Reduce overall density
- Reduce cumulative traffic impacts
- Encourage housing
- Encourage development near transit

*Current proposals affect commercial and high-density residential districts*

# DENSITY "FAR" ADJUSTMENTS

*We are studying impacts on:*

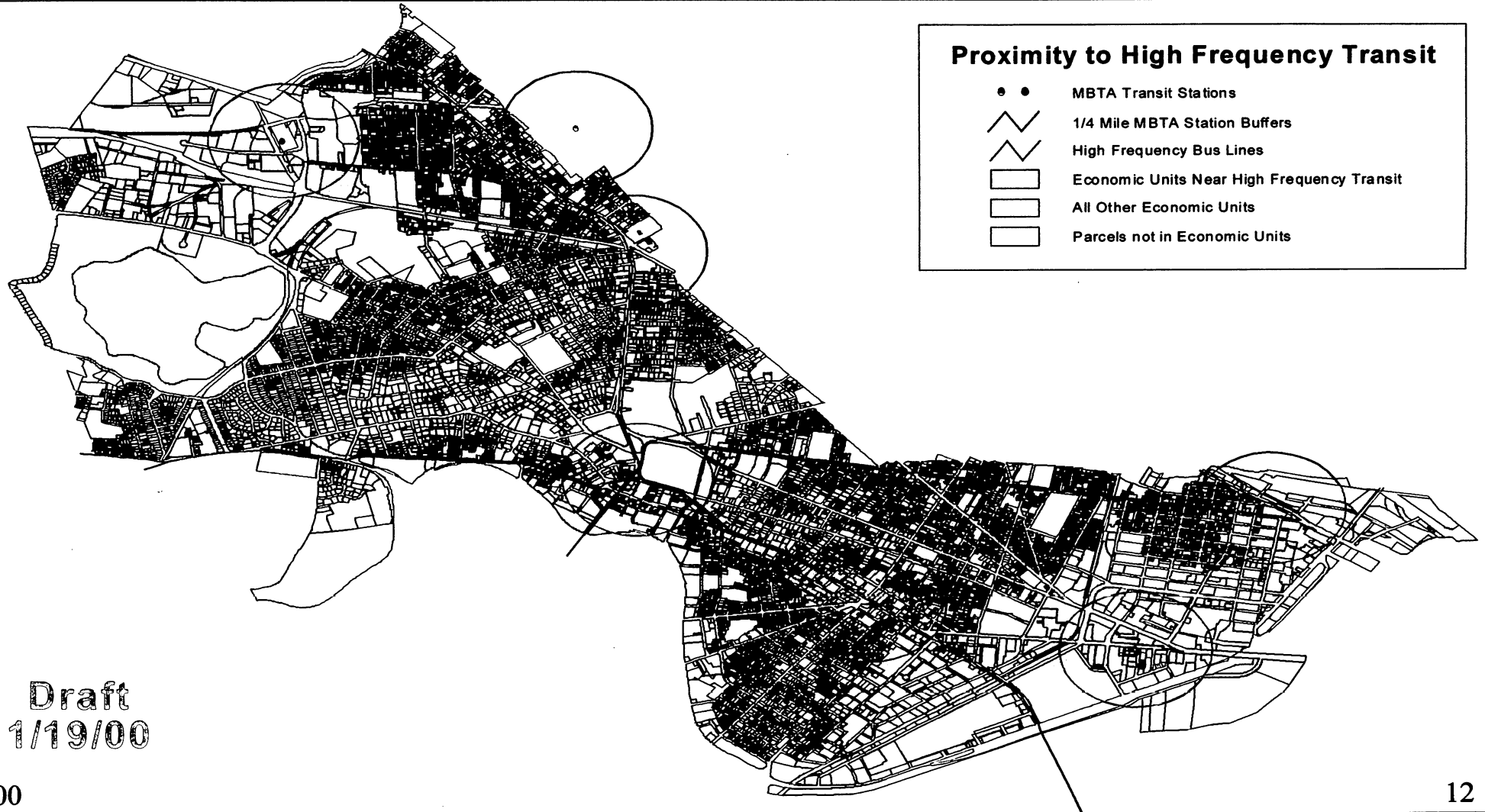
- Traffic
- Jobs
- Housing
- Taxes

# DENSITY "FAR" ADJUSTMENTS

## *Alternative approaches to FAR reduction:*

- **Status Quo** - illustrates build-out expected over 20 years without any FAR adjustments.
- **Across-the-Board** - reduces FAR uniformly.
- **Transit and Use Sensitive** - adjusts FAR based on proximity to transit and type of use.
- **Housing Incentive** - reduces FAR for retail and office.
- **District-by-District Revisions** - adjusts FAR based on transit proximity and housing, addressing district-specific considerations.

# DENSITY "FAR" ADJUSTMENTS



Draft  
1/19/00

3/24/00

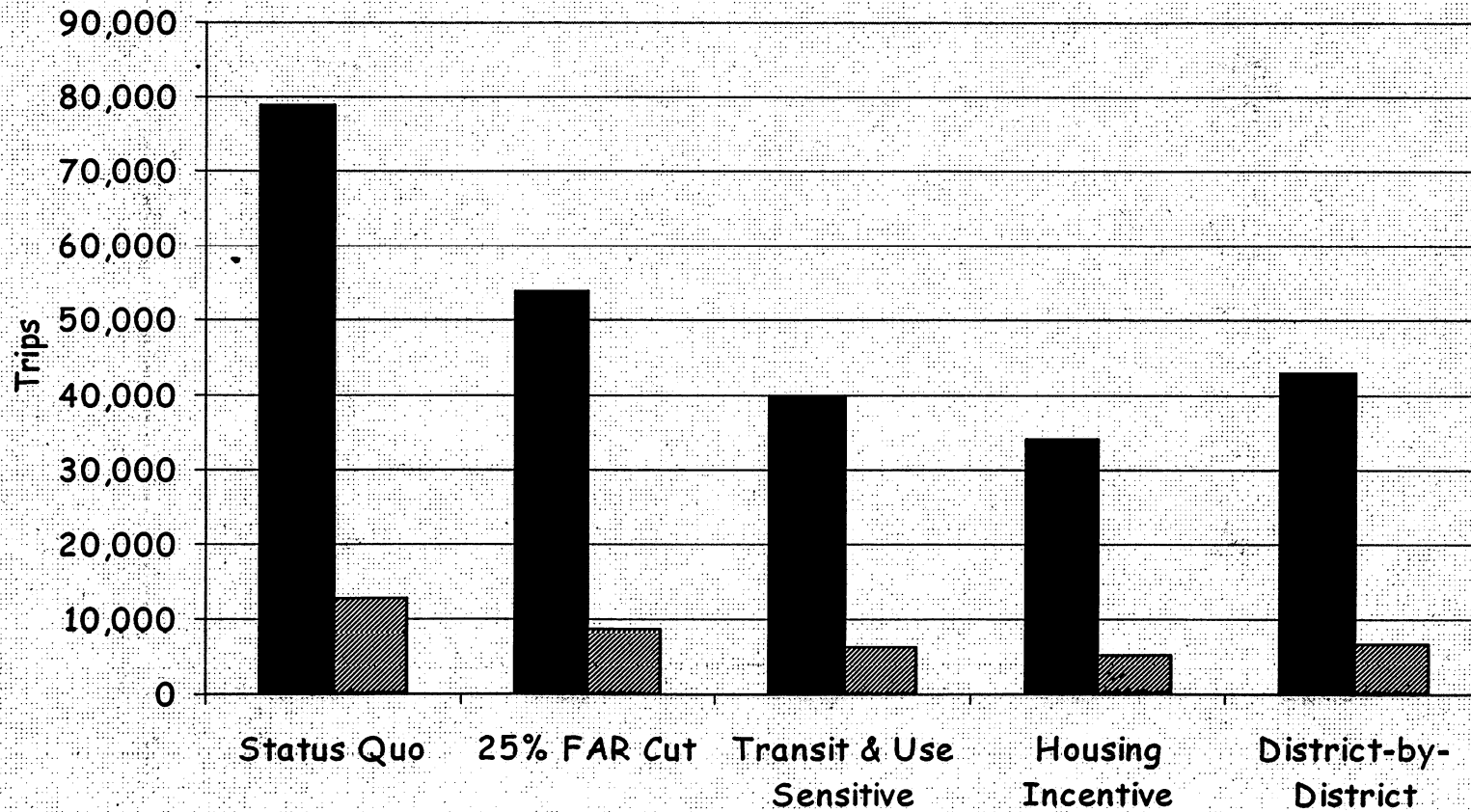
# DENSITY "FAR" ADJUSTMENTS

## *Preliminary Findings on Traffic Impacts:*

- If no FAR reductions (Status Quo), traffic conditions become significantly worse at many intersections.
- All other FAR scenarios are measurably better than Status Quo.
- Three scenarios cut traffic growth approximately in half.

# DENSITY "FAR" ADJUSTMENTS

*Preliminary Findings: New Trips by Scenario*



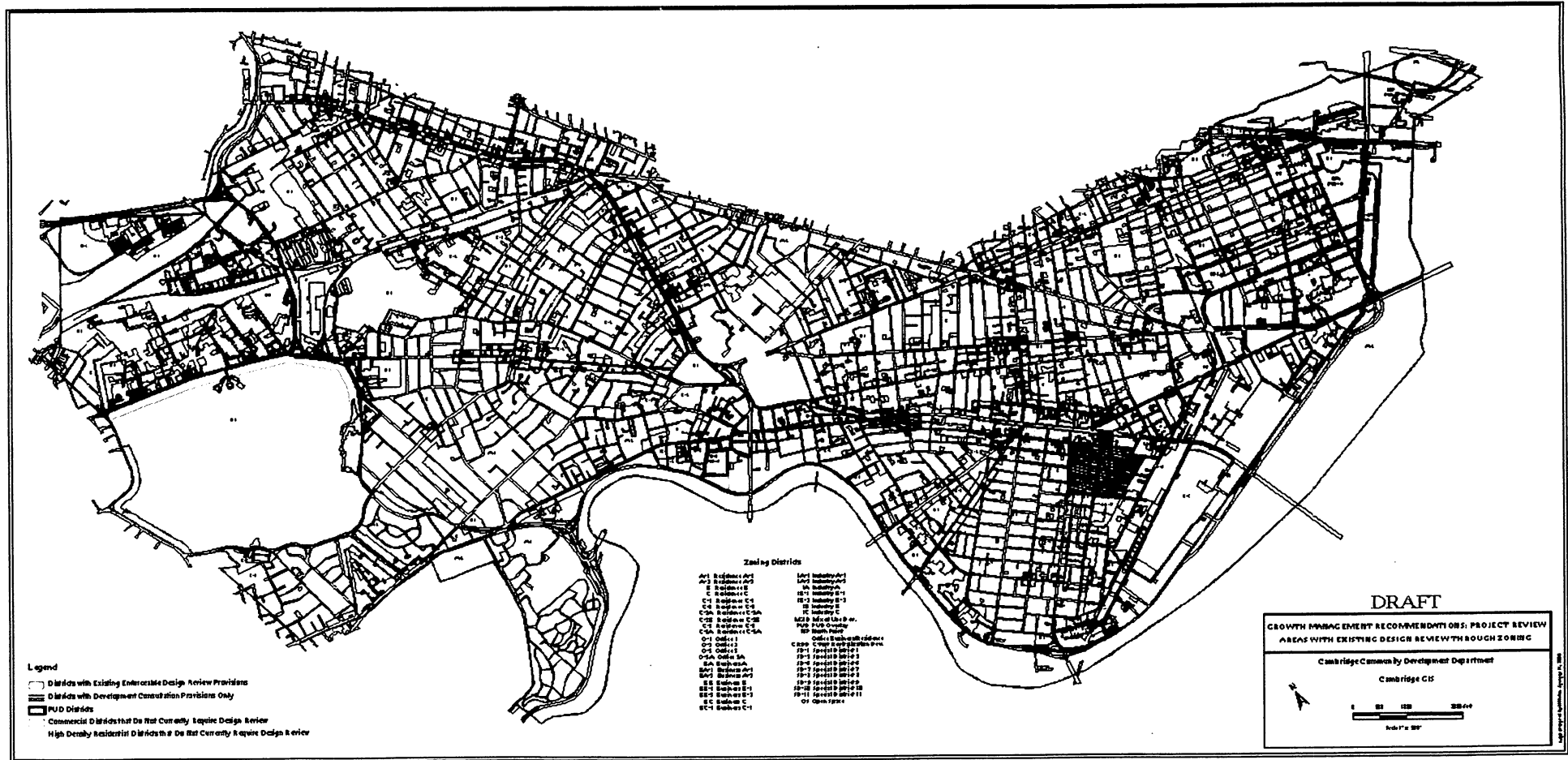
■ New Daily Trips    ▨ New Peak Hour Trips

# PROJECT REVIEW

## *What Project Review Accomplishes:*

- Involves public in review of large projects
- Addresses local traffic impacts
- Clarifies city's design objectives
- Establishes citywide review

# PROJECT REVIEW

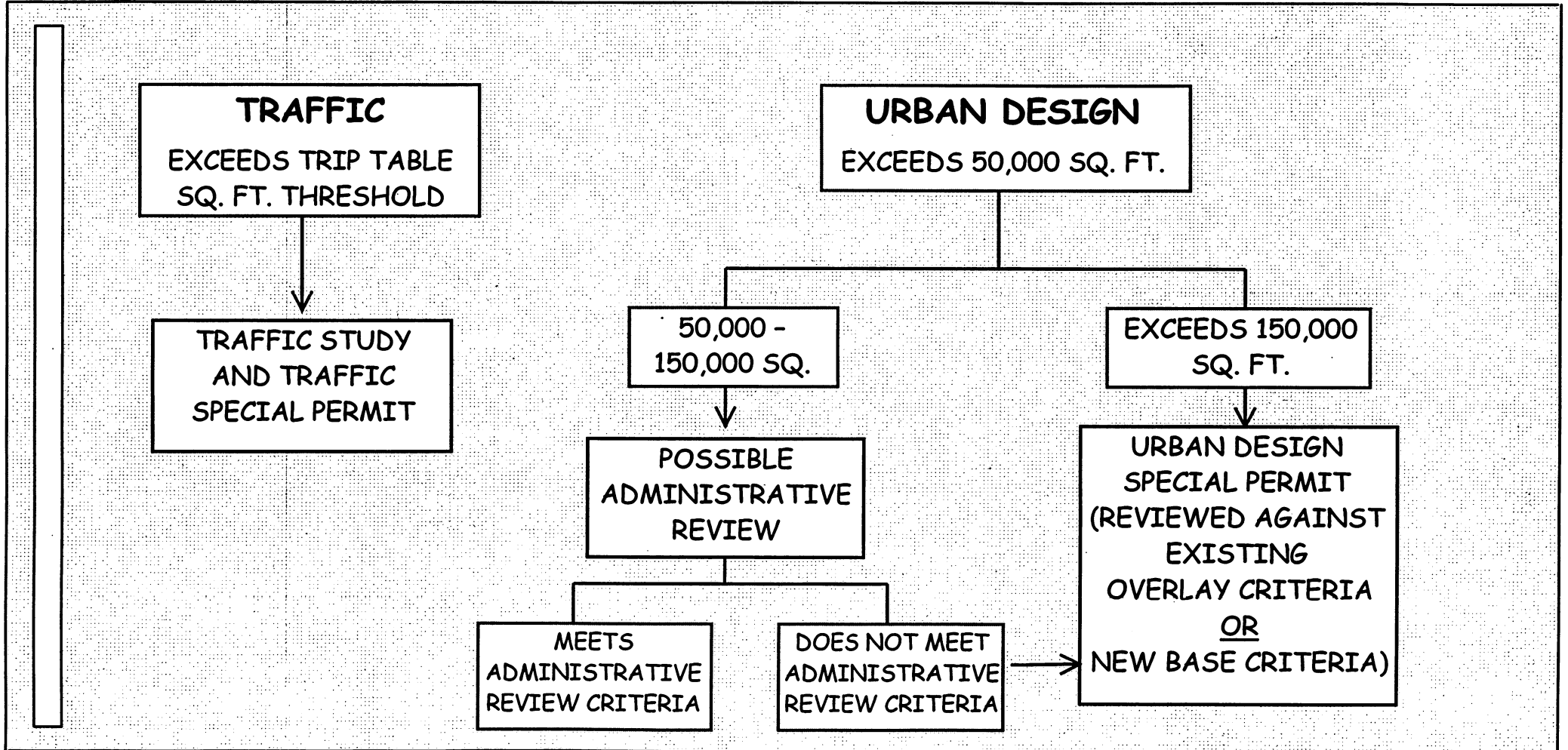


# PROJECT REVIEW

## *Summary of Changes*

- Traffic study required for high impact proposals
- Urban design special permit if over 50,000 s.f.
  - Possible Administrative Review if meeting specific design standards 50,000 to 150,000 s.f.

# PROJECT REVIEW



# PARKING REVISIONS

## *What Parking Revisions Accomplish:*

- Encourage non-auto travel
- Reduce traffic impacts

## *Summary of Changes:*

- Revisions to maximum and minimum parking space requirements for office and R&D uses.
- Special Permit required to exceed maximum parking.

# HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES

## *What They Accomplish:*

- Support a richly diverse population
- Provide intermixture of living and work space
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## *Summary of Changes*

- Submitted to City Council February 2000
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- To Be Submitted
  - Zoning revision that eases rules for conversions of industrial/commercial buildings to housing by:
    - allowing more units
    - allowing open space to reflect existing conditions
    - establishing criteria for impacts on neighbors and parking for the required special permit

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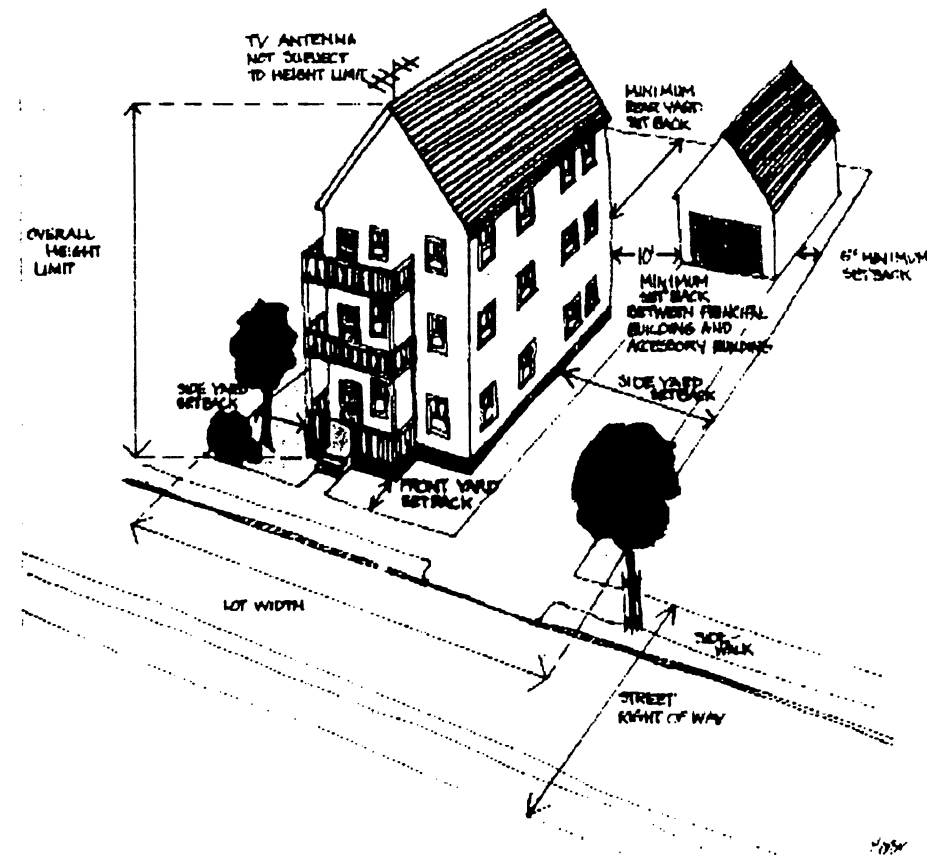
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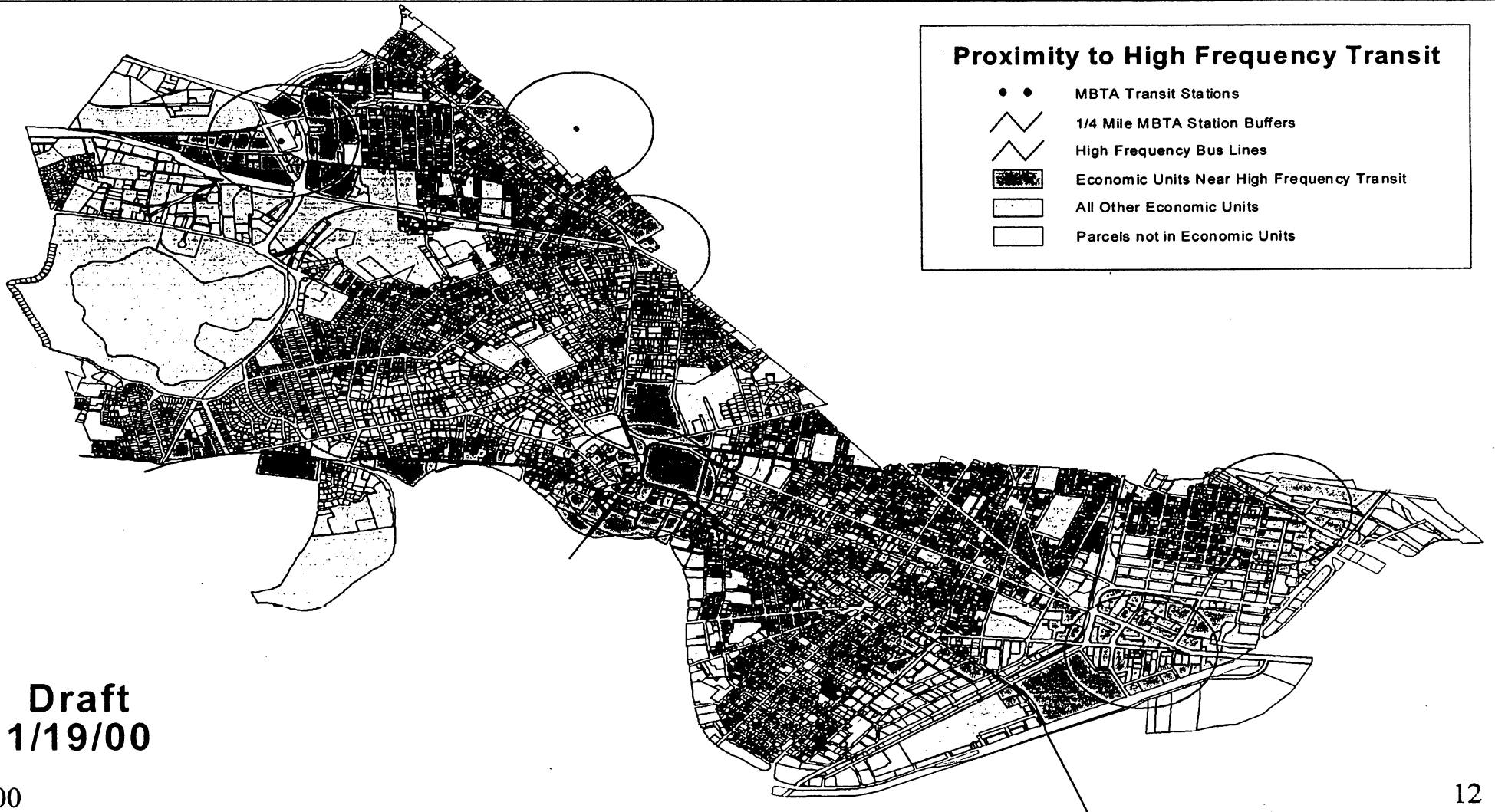
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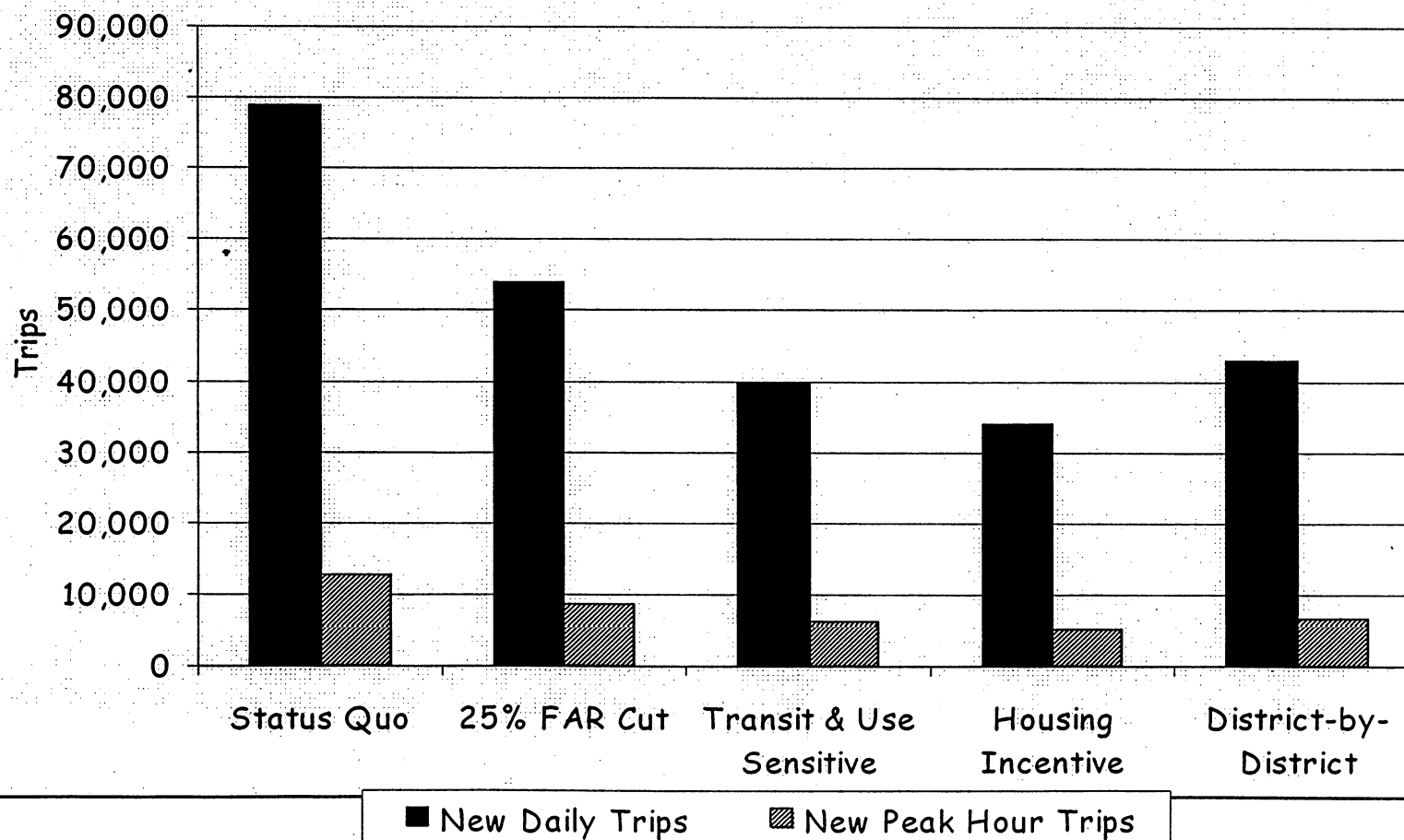
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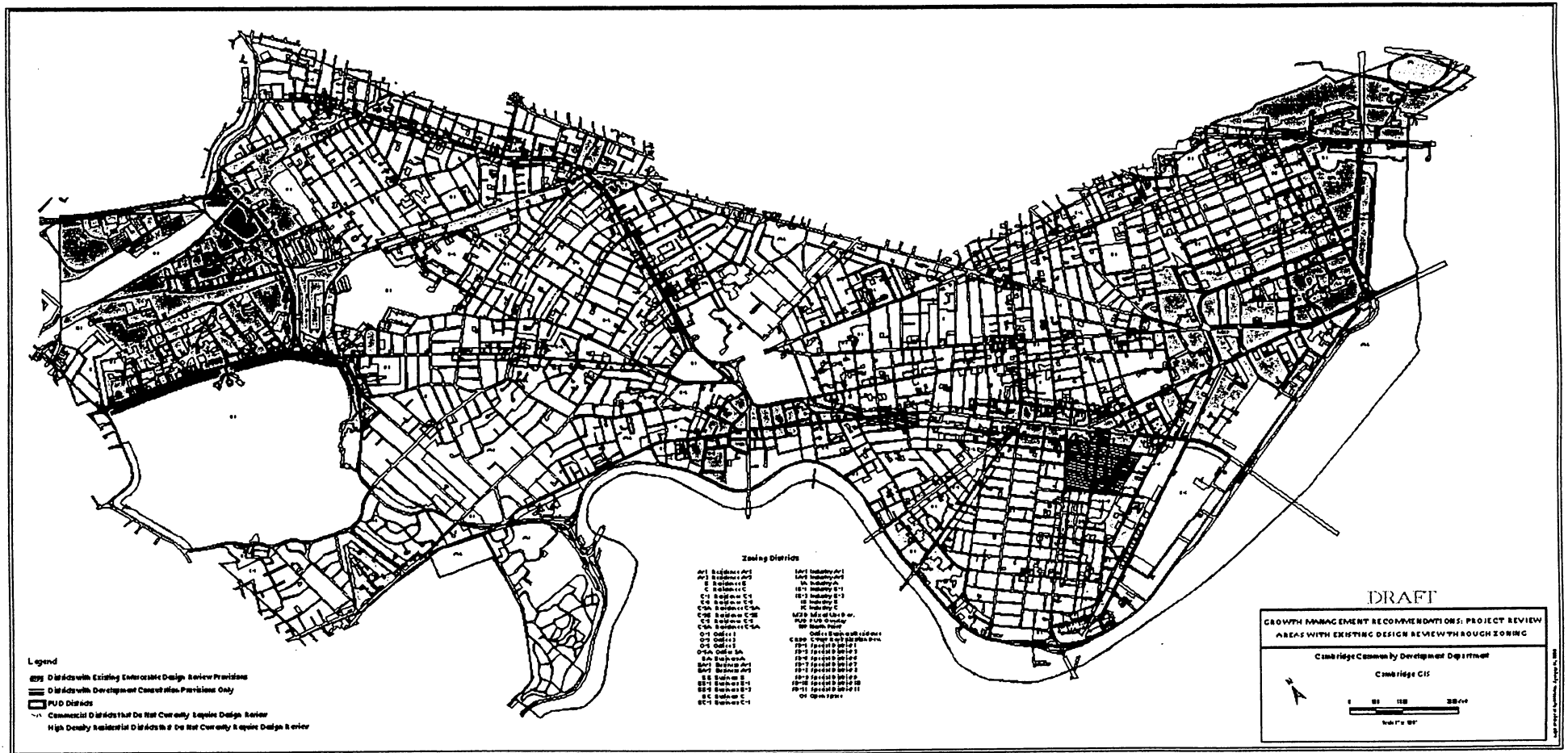


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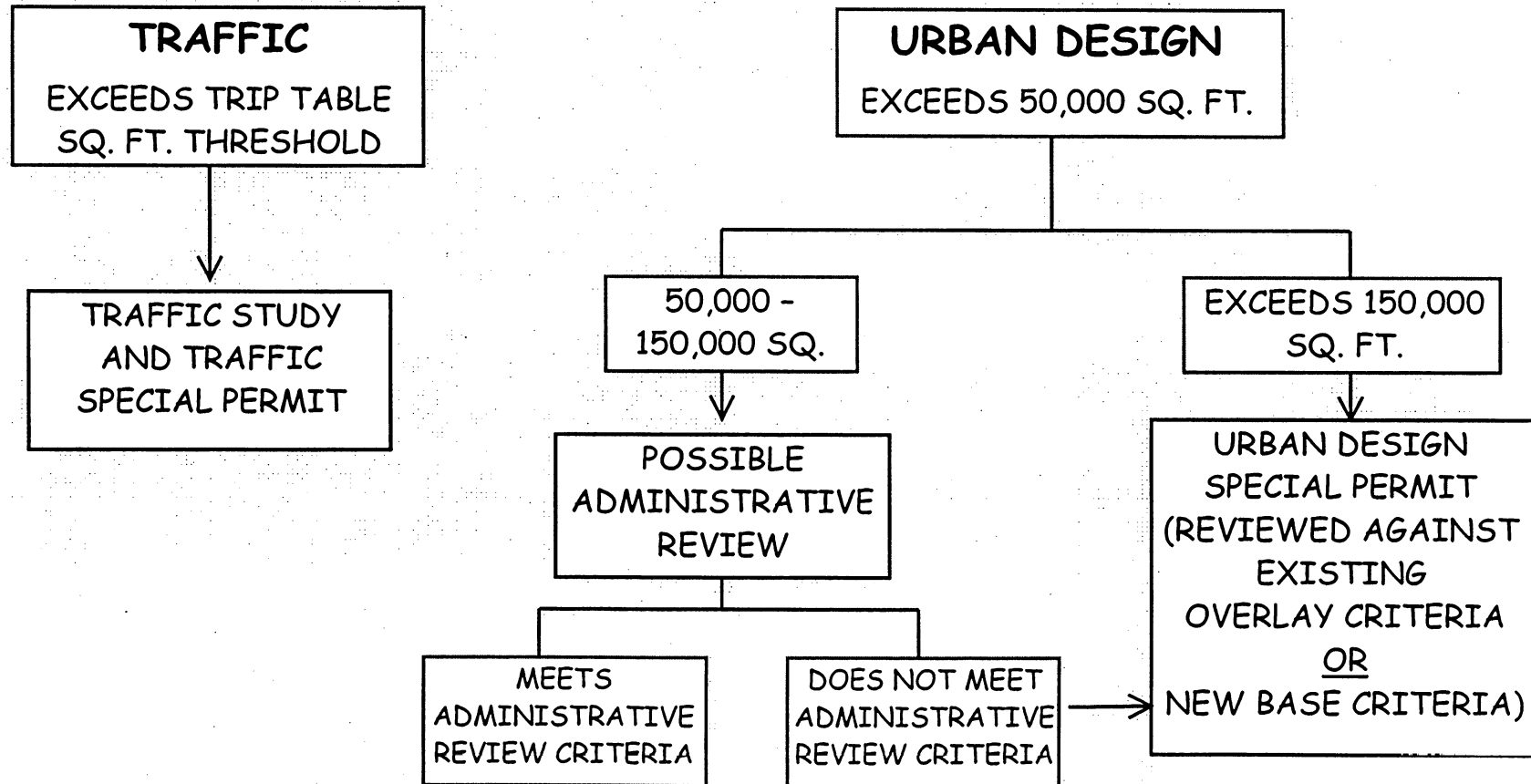


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# PROJECT REVIEW



# PARKING REVISIONS

## *What Parking Revisions Accomplish:*

- Encourage non-auto travel
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# HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES

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# HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES

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# PROJECTED SCHEDULE

■ Planning Board  
recommendations  
to City Council

July 2000

■ Ordinance Committee and  
and Planning Board review  
with public hearings

July - Fall  
2000

March 27, 2000 Roundtable  
Issues and Requests

1. City Manager Robert Healy introduced Beth Rubenstein, Assistant City Manager for Community Development to begin a brief presentation on the work of the Citizens Growth Management Advisory Committee, the Community Development Department Staff, and the Planning Board to develop recommended policies for growth management.
2. Stuart Dash, Director of Community and Neighborhood Planning at CDD then concluded the presentation with a description of the policies being considered. The presentation is summarized in Attachment A.
3. There was a question about whether, in addition to changing the zoning in industrial areas to allow housing, there could be additional incentives provided by the City to encourage the building of housing, especially affordable housing in these industrial areas. For example, if the industrial areas need soil cleanup to meet residential standards, could the City offer assistance as an incentive.
4. Information was requested as to whether other cities around the country have additional zoning or other related incentives for the production and maintenance of affordable housing.
5. There was a request for staff memos about how the criteria being recommended, for example, the recommendations about what types of projects should get administrative design review were chosen, with information about the criteria that were considered and not recommended, so that the Council doesn't try to "reinvent the wheel."
6. Some interest was expressed in providing zoning incentives for jobs for Cambridge residents and for open space. There was a question about whether a linkage program linked to jobs was feasible.
7. There was a question about the feasibility of raising the required percentage of affordable housing in the inclusionary zoning provisions from 15 to 20% and including some middle income people in the category of tenants who could occupy these units.
8. Interest was expressed in a "whole" planning process, not just zoning.
9. There was a request for some overview material that would include a visionary statement, the goals, where the City is now and what is being proposed.
10. There were suggestions that the maximum allowed parking be reduced as well as the minimum. However, concern was expressed about the increased spillover parking on neighborhood streets as a result of reducing the allowed parking for the development.

11. Several councillors expressed concern about finding a process that would allow the City Council to give thorough consideration to the proposals. Interest was expressed in having some communication with the Planning Board before a set of final proposals is sent to the Council, and getting regular updates on what the Planning Board is doing with the growth management proposals. There was a suggestion that staff meet one-on-one with councillors or with small groups of councillors.
12. It was noted that the City Council has a lot of work to do to educate the public about why affordable housing is so important to Cambridge, what that means in terms of issues like allowing more density around public transportation, dorms for MIT and Harvard graduate students, etc.
13. It was agreed that Ms. Rubenstein will confer the City Council's invitation to have the next roundtable (May 22) be a joint meeting with the Planning Board and the City Council.

MEETING

**MARCH 27, 2000  
ROUNDTABLE MEETING ON THE  
GROWTH MANAGEMENT POLICY**

TIME

5:59 P.M.

PRESIDING OFFICER

Mayor Anthony D. Galluccio

PRESENT

Mayor Galluccio, Vice Mayor Maher,  
Councillors Born, Braude, Davis, Decker,  
Sullivan and Toomey

Also present were:

Robert W. Healy, City Manager,  
Lisa Peterson, Assistant to the City  
Manager,  
James Maloney, Assistant City Manager  
for Fiscal Affairs,  
Jill Herold, Assistant City Manager for  
Human Services,  
Ellen Semonoff, Deputy Director of  
Human Services,  
Sue Clippinger, Traffic, Parking and  
Transportation Director,  
Beth Rubenstein, Assistant City Manager  
for Community Development,  
Malaina Bowker, Deputy Assistant for  
Community Development,  
Stuart Dash, Director of Community  
Planning, Community Development Dept.  
City-wide Growth Management Committee

SUBMISSION OF THE RECORD

None

**SEE SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION  
ISSUES ATTACHED**

**No votes were taken**

ADJOURNMENT

On motion of Councillor Braude at seven  
o'clock and fifty-eight minutes p. m. the  
meeting adjourned.

Citywide Growth Management  
Roundtable Meeting

65 S

March 27, 2000

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