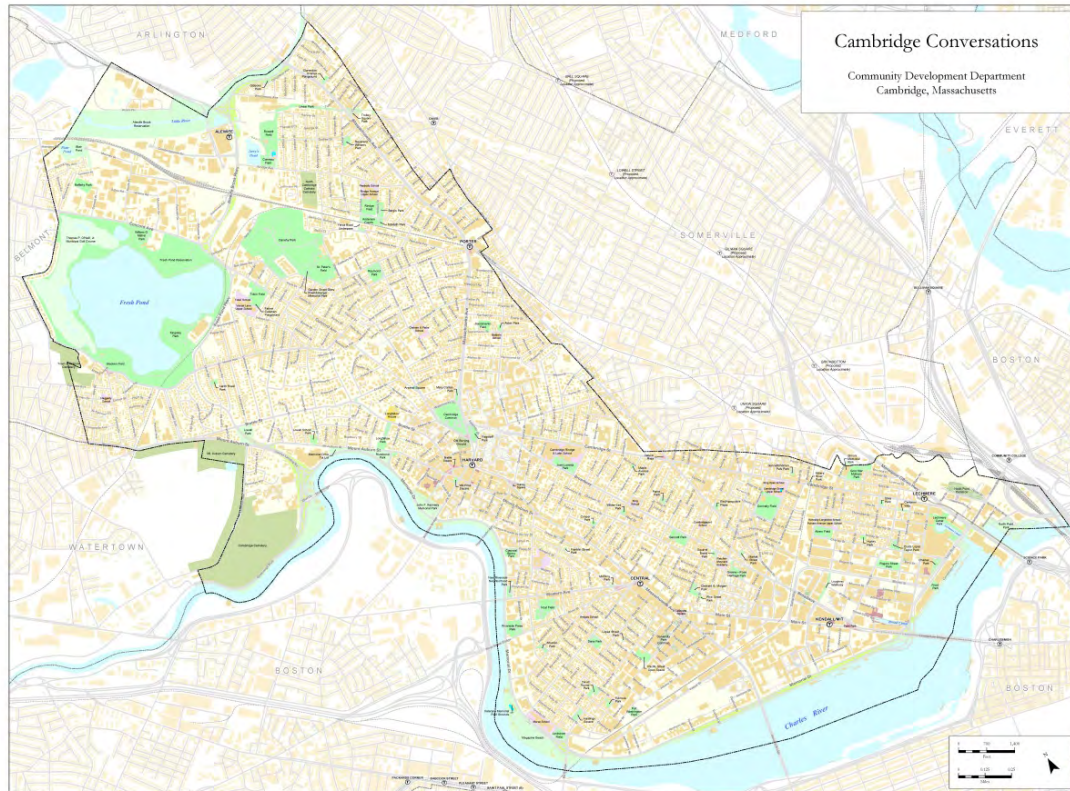


Cambridge Conversations

Preliminary Summary of Process and Input



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

Compiled by Madden Planning Group
July 23, 2014

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Cambridge Conversations: Preliminary Summary of Process and Input

July 23, 2014

INTRODUCTION

The Cambridge Conversations outreach effort responds to City Council Policy Order Resolution O-30, April 28, 2014. This order required that an outreach process be held to solicit community input around planning, urban design, and zoning issues, in order to report back to the Council by July 31, 2014. The purpose of this work is to provide “recommendations and a strategy for moving forward on short and long range planning/urban design work based on previous studies and recommendations done by the Community Development” (Council Order). The current document is a preliminary report that summarizes the outreach process and input. A follow-up memo will summarize the context and strategy for a citywide plan.

A citywide plan is a significant endeavor, often taking two to three years and involving a significant commitment of staff time as well as a budget to engage an outside team of consultants. If a decision is made to move forward with a citywide plan, the Cambridge Conversations findings will help frame the scope for that work. This scope would be refined in late fall/winter 2014 to become the basis for a consultant Request for Proposal (RFP), which might be issued in early 2015. Data and research could begin in the fall based on input from the Cambridge Conversations process. Community engagement and active participation is essential for a successful plan and would be an integral part of the process throughout.

Process

To launch Cambridge Conversations, the City outlined a process for open-ended discussions to hear concerns, thoughts, and ideas about a citywide plan and process, working in collaboration with an outside consultant, Kathryn Madden, Madden Planning Group. The process was designed to achieve the following objectives:

1. Hear issues and concerns on the mind of residents and businesses in the city
2. Develop themes that can frame the upcoming citywide plan
3. Establish some common understandings about municipal roles and activities.

The intent was to reach as many people as possible in a short time frame by holding meetings in different parts of the city and scheduling both community meetings and drop-in sessions. To date, this six-week long process reached hundreds of residents, with a total participation of over 500 at the different events and online media. While this process was able to reach many people and many who might not otherwise have been involved, there are many important constituencies that have not yet been reached. Cambridge Conversations holds valuable lessons, but also recognizes that it takes time to design and execute a more inclusive and broad outreach process.

To engage the community, three community meetings and 18 drop-in sessions were held in different parts of the city during the month of June. The three community meetings were designed for listening and sharing ideas as a group, with an informal open house, brief presentation, and breakout discussions. The drop-in sessions were set up at different times and locations across the city to facilitate access for those who preferred to drop by briefly for informal conversations with staff and/or casual discussion with others who happen to stop in at the same time. The City team also made itself available to meet with neighborhood associations and other groups; two of these meetings were held and others are scheduled for the summer and fall. Residents and others were

WHAT'S SPECIAL ABOUT CAMBRIDGE?

"Cambridge is awesome" "This is one great city!" "Cambridge does a lot right"
"Good to great." "Mix of best city and small town aspects" "It's a pleasant place to live."
"Nice to get away from urban megalopolis – sit in park" "Let it be a city."
"Love the people; neighborhoods different; import stuff to do round the clock, fabulous food."
"Kendall Square is like the Emerald City in the Wizard of Oz – love it; parks, trees, benches, lots of people; it feels safe."

Character

City: appreciate vibrancy of Cambridge, of the city; has a city feel; maintain overall character; clean, quiet; love it, energy great; "don't turn into Vail, Colorado in effort to protect character"; architecture; vibrant life with young people; benefits of being in city – green, walkable; pedestrians + cyclists + cars; low crime, clean; nice green space; working and playing; nice houses;

Neighborhoods and Squares: maintain character of individual neighborhoods; very residential, don't want to lose the community feel; small livable with low income housing to live in; can see the sky; preserve sightlines /views, Low scale – children play in streets; intimate quality, small scale, livable; safe neighborhoods

Parks and Open Space: green space, parks, playgrounds, pretty gardens, garden plots, water parks; walking by the river, green trees, birds; clean air, water, public amenities, Fresh Pond Reservation, Mt. Auburn Cemetery, Danahy Park, park system; farmer's markets; able to run; we have great public places

Architecture and Scale: Old housing stock with great density, Victorian housing; traditional architecture, brick buildings, like scale, open space, community and heritage

Mobility: walkable and bicycle friendly; good transit, able to get downtown easily, close to Red Line; commute by bike; walk to work; can walk everywhere, don't need a car; able to drive everywhere; bike paths and lanes, bikeway signs, good sidewalks, bicycle investment; good to have more bike lanes in Porter Square; becoming better bike city; Broadway at Sennott Park – like the counter flow bike lane; good to see sidewalks fixed (bump outs); whole bike riding initiative is great! Love the cycle tracks and bike culture; bus routes are convenient (#83, #69)

Resources and Amenities

Retail and Business: Love small local stores, good restaurants, close to restaurants, convenient; restaurant sidewalk dining awareness; like small businesses, local businesses – hope they stay; like food trucks – creates outdoor gathering areas, draws people on foot; good food; opportunities available; essential services like grocery store are accessible on foot; Kendall Square development – new development brings more workers

Institutions and Culture: like universities; appreciate birthing center at Cambridge Hospital; good schools; the school system is great; thrilled with schools; main library is amazing, close, walkable, and easy to park; lots of different people there; great place for teens and others; third floor is awesome; like being close to theaters, cultural resources, other; Montessori School, Walden Care Center

City Government: Financially good shape; municipal water tastes great; access to policy makers; city manager system; government doing a good job; like current council and school committee; Councilors are responsive; it's easy to be heard; City is doing well on recycling, sustainability, water management; good outreach with community, lot of movement in transportation, parking – transportation mode shifts, land use – good

Community

Diversity: a welcoming city, cultural diversity; tolerant, values, intelligent city, people, culture, place where information is available; diversity of people and mix of housing with institutions and businesses; feel of a town, family oriented; older/younger generation working together; lots of school students, it's safe; safety, healthy and sustainable, values; like having students – brings variety; "The melting pot, yay!"

People: I like the people; easy to talk to; love the people, love the culture; like people that work for Cambridge; "relatively rich – therefore we can share the wealth; highly educated – therefore we can set an example, come up with new approaches"; self-important (good and bad); like food, intellectual community, bike culture; culture and enthusiasm; great outreach and community; I love the vibrancy and youth feel of Cambridge

Regional Setting

Location: Being so close to downtown, well connected; accessible; feeling of geographic connectivity is good due to transit connectivity

WHAT COULD BE WORKING BETTER?

"Need to make it a warmer place to match people." "If I wanted to live in Manhattan I'd move there"

"Getting rid of poverty!" "New people for city – very different from when I grew up; am trying to get used to it."

"Wish there were fewer cars and more bikes" "Don't like bike lanes; bikers ridiculous – cause accidents." "...yes to all this and help get cars, bikes, people to all work together"

Built Environment

Development: Miss view of river because of development; not interested in tall buildings or density; Cambridge was a "town" now a "city"; moratorium on development – new development is deliberately setting itself apart from the community, no sidewalks or other support infrastructure; net zero emissions for large building/new buildings; don't want citywide plan process to stop all development for two years; "no tall building for Cambridge, please!"; responsible density near transit, less surface parking, more housing and business! Think there is already enough luxury housing; small amount of middle income housing is not worth the incentives we need to provide; DESIGN is important and fitting into the context; concern we're asking for too many concessions from developer (e.g. more affordable and middle income housing, etc.) because City will have to pay in greater density and worse design; high housing demand; too much pressure - where is it coming from? "Stop letting developers from foreign countries buy our land. If they own our land, they own us."

Open Space: need open space; more benches scattered throughout city in good places to rest and shade trees – helpful to seniors; nowhere to stop in lots of pedestrian areas; need more picnic tables; losing streetscape and sustainability; more parks, community gardens; sidewalks - do not use asphalt, it looks cheap; need skateboard park in Miller's River area; dog park - I don't want dogs in playgrounds; grass playgrounds, more trash cans

Retail and Businesses: more coffee shops, retail, restaurant; too many banks; wish stores and bars were open later and train would run late; liked it when there were more bookstores; Cambridge some good restaurants, too many pubs; don't want fast food franchises; "there are places where franchises are good/needed/okay, but not here, they drive small business out"; why does city of Cambridge allow any business to take up half a sidewalk with tables; sidewalk dining not good for pedestrians; Push for development threatens small businesses; need a great simple grocery store – all are niche and higher

Mobility Systems: "How can I get around town affordably and safely?"; traffic issues, hate traffic, dislike drivers, trip traffic is a concern; public transportation; commute can be improved – express train to Cambridge without stops in Boston; need more buses on Broadway; Memorial Drive at JFK Park: dangerous and illegal parking; need bus shelters (Millers River Park, Jefferson Park); MBTA capacity a problem; Cambridge step up to help support and build capacity – "urban ring" metro area more accessible; T-Station has narrow stairs for access; need bus from Alewife T down Fresh Pond Parkway to Mount Auburn Street; more frequent buses or a subway on Concord Avenue; need overpass at Fresh Pond Parkway; need a connection between Jefferson Park and Danehy Park

Parking: Enforce parking; parking is a hassle, not as bad as other places – Inman Square is tough if drive for dinner; don't like lack of parking; no parking on Cambridge side but yes on Somerville side; don't want car sharing taking on-street parking spaces; want more car sharing even if using parking spaces; parking – issues in neighborhood with workers coming in; church parking on Sunday, many churches in same area, parking crunch on Sunday mornings, connect businesses with community for shared use parking; cars park far from curb, dangerous for cyclists; "stop subsidizing upper class drivers - thirty dollar parking permits; lease plots of land at a fraction of market value."

Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety: bike lanes ending abruptly; could be more bike friendly in some spots, "you want to feel safe"; more bike lanes and paths, more protected bike lanes and tracks, especially on busier streets; awareness for bikers; "Bikers need to follow rules." Bicycles obey traffic laws for safety; there should be a walking sidewalk and bike sidewalk; crack down on cars in bike lanes; more bike lanes, enough parking; no bicycles on street – not safe – dangerous for kids – bike lanes put kids into street for riding; more traffic enforcement for cars and bikes; bikes don't follow traffic rules – almost hit every day; pedestrian safety from bicyclists – Alewife Parkway, bike road rage; crack down on speeding cyclists; institute bike safety classes for kids; more bike parking; more police enforcement of bike light law – yes, agree, I don't agree; pedestrians, bikes, cars – but ideally use carrot (safety culture model) not just stick; aggression between people using different modes; not enough bike lanes, bicycles versus automobiles, bikes should have their own tracks, make it easier to bike, more Hubway – game changer; more bike arterials for safer travel; speeding cars through the housing development; loud music at night; Cambridge drivers need education especially at crosswalk intersections

Bike Infrastructure Recommendations: connect Minuteman trail to river; need overpass/underpass at Huron Avenue/Fresh Pond intersection for bikes and walkers; bike path along rail between Alewife, Porter Square and Union Square; bike lanes on Concord Avenue and Garden Street; buffered bike lanes needed on Massachusetts Avenue north of Harvard Square;

Dana Park – Hubway placement! Bike lanes need improving on Broadway; fix grills near curb; Alewife Brook Parkway – bike path not lit at night and no connection between bike path and Alewife/Fresh Pond; “car lights are right in my face, blinding me and sidewalk has curbs and is lousy to ride on.” There is no good bike connection between bike path and Fresh Pond; Ware Street and Harvard Street – light doesn’t change for bikes; cycle track on Vassar is too short, confusing; Concord Avenue cycle track is confusing – agreed; Massachusetts Avenue at Albany Street – dangerous, turning traffic; Beacon Street – potholes especially in bike lanes; put in a cycle track to match Somerville’s; Massachusetts Avenue between Harvard Square and Central Square – fill bike gap; Land Boulevard – make a complete street; Broadway at Ames – improve merge and bike safety; connect rail to trail from Watertown through Fresh Pond to Minuteman

Places

Fresh Pond/Alewife Area: “North Cambridge/Alewife turning into a canyon- less tall condos, more green space”; environmental issues related to Alewife area development; traffic concerns, congestion, potholes; too much development around Fresh Pond without plans for cars/pedestrians and a nice outdoor café; a nicer way to walk from Russell Field to Fresh Pond Reservation; better walking connections from Jefferson Park to schools and other amenities in Fresh Pond area; need connection across tracks from Jefferson Park to Danehy Park; “Is Alewife in Cambridge?”; need overpass/underpass to cross busy streets e.g. at Alewife Brook Parkway; address traffic gridlock near Fresh Pond and access to T; Concord Avenue apartments and New Street area a mess; traffic impossible at Concord and Fresh Pond; important to plan and consider existing uses and business in Quadrangle; City shouldn’t pay to create sidewalk for developer; leave on-street parking/resident-only sticker only on New Street; protect local businesses in Quadrangle as pharmaceuticals and condos move in; Quadrangle needs pocket parks; swimming pool

Central Square: Central Square is supposed to be cultural district but artists can’t afford to be there; like changes in Central Square cultural district – restaurants; Central Square used to be the hub; now dirty benches and streets, filthy, dangerous, heavy drug use, trash; drinking, panhandling; need public bathrooms; clean the square; problem with public drinking and trash; make it more attractive; “Central Square – you want to feel safe but don’t want it gentrified”; gentrified somewhat but has not lost itself; parking lots okay as is; homeless in Central Square should be addressed; clean up Central Square; Central Square is a mess; people drunk and panhandling; worry about kids; concern about effect of building and development effect (i.e. wind tunnel); on surface parking lots, prefer to wait rather than sub-optimal as of right now; Central Square needs affordable groceries and stores, a theater, more housing; too many nightclubs near residential areas; homeless in Central Square a disaster – in parks and plazas, sad; food in Central Square but not appealing to those who live here; no family-style restaurants; no stores to buy a present or clothes (Target, Gap); grocery stores are expensive; no physical space for community events; parking is too difficult; “Concerned about using parking lots; want to keep Handicap parking lot especially; no public land given or sold to developers; if used – should be used for permanent affordable housing.”

Kendall Square: Traffic; lack of housing, loss of community; “used to hear a pin drop – now it’s noisy in Kendall Square and Central Square”; has more traffic; need a food store and pharmacy in Kendall Square; leave Rogers Street Park as big open field; need more parking in Kendall; need public open space on Volpe; parking lot along Third Street; use open space to guide movement; pocket parks on the site; lots more green space in Kendall Square; “K2 – did it get lost?”; Volpe could become “Kendall Common”, with room for wildlife, open space

East Cambridge: concerned about tall buildings, especially courthouse; frustration that 15-year old East Cambridge plan wasn't listened to and Alexandria built instead; Lechmere Station doesn't connect to Cambridge; Monsignor O'Brien Highway (Sav-mor liquors, car wash, McDonalds, Shaws); Northpoint is exciting and interesting and different;

Porter Square: Love Porter Square area – transit, don't need car – but needs to be beautified; development without green not good; ugly Mass Avenue median; congested in Porter – how to maintain quality of life; St. James plans too ambitious; Lesley College development taking away open space; trucks try to cut through streets around Porter Square - don't fit

Agassiz Area: Traffic and parking, people on the roads, no place to go, construction problems, blocking open space, outside developers maximizing development; repurpose buildings

Other Areas: Magazine beach is underutilized; snack shop; Concord Avenue is split between neighborhoods; safety issues in Cambridgeport; name change from Area IV to the Port – get process started; Area IV has enough housing – affordable housing; within Jefferson Park – need a place for kids to play that is visible with eyes on the park, and managed spaces, and need basketball courts; Harvard taking over mid-Cambridge; need more open space in Area Two – flexible; need a sidewalk on Huron Avenue on the Fresh Pond side of the road;

Economy

Jobs and Affordability: Industry and jobs were basis for diversity; affordability for artists, cultural district; Kendall Square; restaurants getting pricier, more amenities, and more traffic; “cost of living very high!” “More affordable than Boston”; MIT and Harvard not held accountable, should pay taxes

Community/Equity

People: Need to improve social connectivity; people are not friendly; hate not friendly enough; younger are forced out; “would love to buy but can't afford, middle class”; “Cambridge is too left, pacifist city.”

Housing: new housing built for certain tech social strata; losing neighborhood diversity; need more affordable + middle income housing (inclusionary zoning? 100% affordable on city owned property?); affordable housing part of community 30%; need larger units; loss of rent control; rents are too high – losing racial/ethnic diversity; rent control hard for owners; what are the rules for affordable units (e.g. neighborhood preference) to maintain the population IN the neighborhood? Bring back rent control and increase minimum wage; Need higher cut of affordable from the for-profit market units; home ownership – seems minimal recently; Public housing-density pressure – push for \$\$; Section 8 disabled needs housing

Inequality: Discrimination; inequality; becoming less diverse, richer, denser; diversity – economic diversity most in danger; Good services but unaffordable, we're less diverse, less middle class, fewer renters; too bad, we might want more taxes and less high rise development

Cleanliness and Safety: need to have an issue meeting about the recent shootings; “feeling unsafe on streets around people not behaving well”; keeping city clean so when people litter and are sick

it doesn't stay there; safety concern at HMART and Essex Street; remove derelict bikes; no high school kids at Baldwin School playground at midnight – drunk; people sit outside (loiter) in front of the Cambridge Street church by the tracks, causing personal safety issues; more violence now between neighborhoods (gangs);

Schools: Cambridge Public Schools (CPS) took turn for worse in last few years; Trepidation about the schools, based on what you hear; dislike schools; need neighborhood schools; don't want kids on buses; teachers need to be attentive about what students bring to school to ensure a safe environment

Government Processes

"Listen!"

Governance: New York City has a system of community-based boards with power; there is no model like that in Cambridge; Neighborhood groups in Cambridge are uneven in their organization, power, and financial resources. Provide funds for neighborhood organizations; wants more "bottom-up flow"—what the community thinks is what the City should be looking at; City should look at different models for neighborhood-based decision making; bring in BZA on citywide plan; expertise on and more turnover on City Committees and Boards; minimize developer representation on City committee; how to have a planning process comfortable for all, each neighborhood to get to each neighborhood issues; groups trying to deal with issues; City Council should not be the Special Permit Granting Authority (SPGA); Importance of BZA—they are amending zoning on project-by-project basis; must be reined while conducting the citywide plan; compliance with planning process statutes; what is the Planning Board role? City Departments more fiscally responsible

Development Review and Decision-Making: How to protect and shape process, e.g. moratorium; who reviews? Concern that development is not regulated; regulation of developers for the greater good of Cambridge; we need better guidelines; zoning should reflect what's being built, not what the zone is i.e. a residential house in a business zone doesn't have to meet residential type zoning standards; expressed concern about decision-making process, specifically noting Hubway (felt rules were changed to minimize input into locating stations and to allow advertising, which is intrusive) and bus shelters; developers give back; City relies too much on zoning; needs more innovation on implementation tools; important to note the history embedded in the existing zoning—stories of the individual decisions; development pause/moratorium? If people can move ahead while the citywide planning process is going on, it makes this process meaningless; a lot of what's going on is by variances; limit variances; accountability: What is proposed is followed through on, by Council, Community Development, and Planning Board; Zoning incentives don't work; Special permit process overhaul; Developer give-back requirement should include an outreach plan, for which there should be "enforceability"

Communication, City/Resident Dialogue: staff responsive to community needs; people will get involved if they feel the City is paying attention; people need to feel they have a voice; City needs to remember neighborhood groups do not speak for whole neighborhood; experience on the ground is often very different than City staff perception; city needs to do something that is a show of good faith, like a moratorium on development, win back trust of the people, maybe taxes should be withheld until that happens; change CDD to community preservation and development department; CDD needs to earn back the public's trust; there are many things going on and people can't be at every meeting, so how best to keep people updated/engaged? High sense of militancy

and anger; need skillful facilitation, trust; sewer separation communication was an example of excellent notification/communication; recognize other languages; City responsible for overarching theme for communication outreach; Regarding Cambridge conversations, please follow up with attendees to let us know where we can access all the compiled input and what will be done with it; Public dialogue vs. privatized; why isn't CDD representing the neighborhood view at the Planning Board – only the developer's view? Not a lot of places people can go to find what's going on – wall for flyers; residents need to have a response from city offices; better inter-department coordination to implement plan; more inter-neighborhood coordination; have neighborhoods more united; web improved but need map with click on development, series, all on one map – need to be easy to read; meetings not always on calendar; not updated when changed; who is notified when zoning is changed; everyone should be notified, not just adjacent neighbors; mechanisms for resident input on zoning matters don't work; planning board is not responsive, doesn't interact well with residents, makes changes last minute without notification; notification process for permits is old, archaic; No accessible input on zoning exemptions and government regulations; should be no input into development other than through city council hearings; feels developers have been calling the shots with respect to planning. How can citywide planning incorporate input from those left out of the process? City needs to do better with communication and getting information out in a timely manner; people impacted by decisions often don't know about the issue or project until it's too late;

WHAT SHOULD THE CITY'S PRIORITIES BE?

"Vision to have Cambridge feel like one city – now it feels like multiple cities"

"Can't isolate parts"

"Citywide Plan isn't just one thing it's all things interconnected: loving city, green, good balance of density, affordability, transportation, community"

"Prepare for change"

"Need to design for population that's not in the room including future population"

"City Government provides:

1. *Services*
2. *Infrastructure*
3. *Regulation"*

"Priorities for the citywide plan should include:

- *Regional thinking (relating to neighbors; what role do we play regarding growth)*
- *Education: system to serve diversity of people we want to accommodate in city*
- *Accessibility: mobility. Cars & Parking have big impact—how to get ahead of curve*
- *Diversity (not reflected by attendance at this meeting)"*

"Explain better the planning concept especially parking link to driving, housing market to density and affordable housing; seven to eight stories not really a feasible building height because of construction type and costs; also include tradeoffs with cars and parking"

Built Environment

Development Patterns: Balance growth and liability; balance development with green space; higher density on Mass Avenue; no more infill; development needed, affordable housing needed; integrated Central Square planning for community on all sides of Massachusetts avenue; focus on

street level in Central Square; pressure for development will be greatest in some places; need design guidelines; change development and impact on nature of place (character); Why increase the density (office buildings) when current transportation can't handle what we currently have? Put density around squares and corridors; car free development if infrastructure is in place; design not to need automobiles; density already – need to assure variety of architecture; address abandoned properties (Intercontinental); institute an annual architectural award; “use hot real estate market to leverage benefits and urban design”; Fresh Pond Shopping site could be a center like other parts of town have; need density of population for community and community support of retail, structures, and organizations; smaller families/households, fewer people in existing neighborhoods

Civic Realm: Emerald necklace in Cambridge; save open space; plant 1,000 more trees; would like to see Grand Junction; enhance the riverfront – plantings and recreation; public spaces-multi-usage and for all ages; develop full neighborhoods; walkable parks and shops; address streetscape; green paths; physical connections/links between neighborhoods; more open space in Porter Square; traffic calming and repaving and bike lanes; raised crosswalks on Broadway are great for some; others think they are terrible idea; traffic calming island on Broadway by library is great; Pedestrian safety – “complete streets”; signage and wayfinding; pocket parks; low maintenance open space for free form kids play – to be more inventive; creative designs - different types of activity in open spaces and in between

Mix of Uses: Support retail; open air markets, ground floor retail w/ no cars, something like downtown crossing; could have more mix of uses; preserve strengthen, income, density, affordable; How many units do we need? Who best to judge? Housing; housing for MIT and Harvard students; how to factor in universities – housing, density of multiple students in homes

Mobility: more public transportation in all neighborhoods; mobility, walkability, access to T; small buses (easy); more frequent buses that go more places; pedestrian/Bike safety separate lanes; bus depot at Green Street Garage; better Red Line service; need pedestrian connections between Concord/Alewife Quadrangle and Alewife T Station; improved traffic at Route 2/Alewife Brook Parkway/Fresh Pond Parkway; “I hope the plan will make Cambridge a safe place to cycle”; “one aspect of promoting sustainability is to improve bus transport inside city for those of us who can't do the bicycle thing”; better commuter rail from Route 128/suburbs, reduce cut through traffic; spend city dollars on Red Line

Bike routes and Infrastructure - bike lanes and alternative commuting; bike facilities throughout the city; cycle tracks wherever possible; more biking and walking opportunities and facilities, lighting, improved new landscaping, bike racks, skate and bike parking; bike rental, separate bike lane from street, make room for bikes; ban cars

Harmony with Nature

Climate change and Flooding: Climate issues; Alewife flood plan; water table rising; flood insurance; concerned about flood plain area in emergency disaster – between Fresh Pond and Huron Village

Energy: account for energy; net zero for new construction; more solar

Sustainability and Environment: environmental protection; City is losing trees – aging out, please replant; Silver maple forest should not be used for development; recycling, composting - need

better way to recycle stuff; ban plastic bags; new composting is great; get rid of leaf blowers permanently and forever – noise, dust, dehydrating plants - rake instead

Resilient Economy

“Lowest tax rates and why? Cambridge is a city, an economic driver”

Workforce Development: Help youth get more vocational skills and jobs; teens need college preparation and job training; Workforce; education – capitalize on universities; more schools;

Jobs: More jobs to make things – Cambridge manufacturing; economic diversity; Innovation lab – private retail space train kids to innovation/entrepreneurship;

Live/Work: Commercial on two floors with residential above; space for start-ups/local businesses; high density housing – living near work, also green with less driving; balance jobs/housing opportunities type/diversity?

Infrastructure: Need infrastructure to build community e.g. schools, open space, libraries; we need minor infrastructure development adjacent to transit hubs (eg Alewife), but where is the City's priority list for that? How much dollars can it spend? E.g. New Street sidewalks, path to the T station, etc.; alternatives to transportation,

Other: Keep city very sophisticated in terms of technology; services: Want basic services – trash and street gets swept; don't want local retail in Harvard Square to change to all chains; need more Trader Joes

Equity

“Worried about climate vulnerability vs. social vulnerability”

Housing: More affordable housing – should be easier to get housing that meets your needs – too much paperwork – should not just have generic rules for housing; affordable housing for middle-income people and families; housing affordable to middle income everywhere; middle income housing especially families; more affordable housing for section 8 residents; More affordable housing to make it possible to move up in market when possible; what are the most creative ways to retain affordability? Adopt new approaches/models; spaces and places for seniors – cohousing, intentional shared housing, keeping seniors out of institutional housing

Social: Integrating long term and new residents; long-time residents vs arrival of younger professionals is changing diversity; Income and racial diversity; cultural diversity; income equity “I hope the plan includes more input about what makes for healthy fatherhood and parenthood”; aging; need a senior center in East Cambridge; need to have ability to age in place; development important - but human needs more important; poverty in the shadow of developments; more help for at-risk to avoid terrible pattern; need a citizen advisory committee on poverty – income inequality, voice for poor; strengthen neighborhoods i.e.: create more versions of the Agassiz-Baldwin Neighborhood House in each of the ten neighborhoods - the meeting regularity and not the building is what is key so we should use Youth Centers, Libraries, even churches; immigrant services so ESOL training is available; expand CE work (Cambridge Employment); want foundry to

be used for art for all ages – preschool to older adults; “would like to see more outreach, social groups to older folks (like me, I’m 60)”; programs and housing for LGBT Seniors; “Address two Cambridges: those who will take advantage of education and family interest in STEAM subjects and those who let their kids drift. Best long-term solution is to start 4 year olds pre-school and bring elementary teachers with math & science “love”; a good start building on curiosity and creativity means all kids will have the opportunity to take advantage of Cambridge’s superb public schools; ultimately this will lead to job access, higher wages, and a healthy middle class;” unusual to freeze the area and not change physical fabric, historically, found a way to let new people come, climb economic ladder; “Develop the Foundry Building as the center of creativity (e.g. The Cambridge Creativity Commons lead by Lesley-Cambridge Community Foundation – Cambridge Public Schools – and Cambridge Arts Council) The building must be shared and sustainable but should address high need issues=arts, STEAM, Pre-School, Senior Day Care, Youth and mixed age discussion groups.”

Healthy Communities

“Health in all policy – how can healthy food and physical activity systems become a unifying factor that bridges other actions?”

Healthy Living: Ability to bike and walk to school; more activities for kids; teen activities; need affordable dance space for teaching and classes (Somerville is eclipsing Cambridge); exercise, healthy city, friendship; walking tours, Walk Boston and other themes; Multiuse indoor/outdoor space to bring together segments of community; give young people challenges; keeping the city clean, less rats/pet cleaning; outdoor community activities, fitness opportunities; more parks not just for younger kids; outside activities – basketball courts, volleyball; more kid/family activities – e.g. movies; adult exercise opportunities/affordability in the winter

Health Care: more accessible high quality psychiatric care for all ages; more mental health assistance

Food: Better food pantry (quality); EBT at all farmers markets; need healthy food/lunch delivery at work

Safety: Safe routes for all Cambridge public schools since lottery makes for eight-hour day for kindergarten students

Regionalism

“Huge issues perhaps beyond municipal control” “What about the region?”

Coordination: Work with neighborhoods and cities; how we integrate with neighboring communities (Somerville and Boston) is important; communicate with other cities; bigger than Cambridge; what is the growth limit of City? Not the center of universe – look beyond local/regional/country; regional multi-community effort/MAPC

Regional Transportation: transit planning; City does not have an independent transportation system; Include MBTA and Somerville in process; extend Green Line; How is public transportation in Cambridge going to be improved?

HOW WOULD YOU GET OTHERS INVOLVED?

"Need a set of principles to begin"

Process

Basis for Citywide Plan: Need more clarity on why there needs to be a citywide plan; how will the plan be used, what's the effectiveness of plan, how do you deviate from adopted plan, how does this happen, need to clarify that plan has no legal standing; must believe that what emerges is operational; believe in process; guarantee seeing results applied, enforceable citywide plan; what will citywide plan really achieve? How can we ensure buy in? How can we ensure that citywide plan reduces conflict regarding development projects? Why will this have more legitimacy than previous planning? Be humble about plan and what it'll accomplish- comprehensive plan, won't solve problems, will respond to issues rationally

Data and Research: Need facts, joint fact finding; need data to track controversial development and evaluate results (e.g. Trolley Square); collect data, share data with trusted neighborhood based organizations to get invited into communities; data on affordable housing and other city struggles and challenges; difficult to get data on number of units, cost, subsidized housing in past, Affordable Housing Trust but out-stripped by development; study infrastructure capacity; accurate snapshot of where we are – how much affordable housing? How much transit? How much traffic? Bike counts in summer AND winter etc.; traffic studies – use tech and apps from MIT transportation camp – algorithms that model traffic impact from development; Identify existing policies, what's in place; index existing plans; task those who dispute data with joining in data gathering

Planning Approach: Need to explain intent/motivations that drive policy decisions in citywide plan; citywide plan should be Living Document; bring consultants to engage specific communities? Tap into intellectual resources (MIT/Harvard); need to teach and people need to understand economics; educate on "public realm"; explain zoning: why K2? Why Alewife? Encourage conversation about tough subjects (e.g. affordable housing. Do we want it? And if we do, what is it worth giving up to have it? And affordable for whom?); go ahead and have the public debate; let the outcome drive decisions--don't make the decisions for us; now is time to make rules and negotiate; CDD provide models with alternatives to look at; Not top down, bottom up; convene and share best practices among non-profit organizations; consider metro/regional/state context; tradeoffs – explain at a large scale understanding; big ideas can get people out of small issues

Stakeholders: neighborhood organizations; reach smaller folks; need to involve low income residents; hear from Cambridge Rindge and Latin School; reach families at games; youth centers; people are busy, reach out to those who don't come to meetings; lost at the table is "the middle voice" in Cambridge; how to access those people and make it worth their while to participate; speaking out has to mean something in order to bring new voices into the process; not authentic if not all demographics; diversity in room, including low income; need local consultants to engage other community members: black, Latino, youth; outreach into smaller groups/diversity; include development community, small business, institutions; how to ensure enough weight to those who don't come to all meetings

Outreach Media/Techniques

"Outreach should avoid "meeting fatigue" for certain groups (e.g. public housing tenants)"

"You want our opinion after everything is said and done"

Leadership and Focus Groups: Identify community leaders; empowering communities long-term; push leadership out into communities; outreach should extend into much smaller groups to achieve racial/ethnic/class diversity input; talk to ministers; signs in churches and Health Center and mosque; be where people are: schools, supermarkets, etc. Outreach in systematic way and very broadly. Offer child care; entertainment, food and dinner; Importance of faith community as part of outreach strategy; bring in religious leaders; outreach through neighborhood groups; use community engagement team; residents can look at own convenience and self-organize – house parties; identify community leaders to bridge communication gap...prove to people it's worth their time to participate; how best to hear voice of the development community driving the change? People vary depending on topic, time of day; different languages is an issue

Direct outreach: getting people out on the streets; notice in the direct mail, Flyers door to door; City should flyer – use email more – advertise on buses; Old gumshoe canvassing; Engage people by going door to door;

Events: make theme for existing events “neighborhoods” to bring those people together to share ideas about their neighborhoods; Neighborhood picnics/block parties – make them easier to do; Picnics and block parties, other events; sports events; senior picnic, churches; use sports, games, community events, university-sponsored senior picnics, online games for younger people; more walking tours

Online: Online games; improve sign up on CDD website; take advantage of CDD email lists; not over reliance on internet; Look at Boston Program (“Apps”); use technology to engage community, Technology app; look at pro forma for each site and understand economics; format online like video/presentation

Telephone: Cell phone alerts for more things going on in the city (like Cambridge code red); telephone polling; Telephone polling is of limited use—doesn't get at representative population sample.

Partners: Outreach through partnering with other organizations--for instance, CEOC serves many Haitian clients. Use MIT Media Lab as resource: in order to do visioning/sensitivity testing of different ideas in advance of being built. Role of CCTV as outreach partner; Use MIT/Harvard as resources; pull in neighboring communities (Somerville, Watertown, ...) as development is occurring there that impacts us.

Schools: Integrate planning into school curriculum (CRLS & middle schools)—year-long course or specific engagement. Cambridge Rindge and Latin School Assembly; How can different groups put forward models to make a particular thing happen, based on established/shared values (e.g. diversity); Participate in urban design exercise

IMMEDIATE CONCERNS

Parks and Streetscape: Still waiting for an update on the dog park at Sydney Street. Cambridgeport parks have a problem with balls breaking windows; what's happening with Magazine Beach; Riverbend Park is too narrow between Anderson Bridge and Elliot Bridge; riverfront paths from Watertown line to Western Avenue – surface in bad shape; riverfront trails – check condition of bike path and repair; widen with two directions and separate pedestrian/bicycles when possible; need map for orientation along new bicycle paths at

Concord/Alewife; trees on Fayette are suffering, winter – can try requesting ...tree roots on sidewalks hard for strollers; Keep trees on Fayette Street; need adequate trash cans; Need garbage cans at the riverfront

Infrastructure: Broadway and Hancock new brick sidewalk on concrete, so it's killing trees; need water; Need people to adopt trees and care for them; \$50 refundable if the tree survives for five years; no bus shelters at Lambert Street corner although they've asked for one for years; provided example of bench, which was added after installation of bus shelter in front of City Hall - those who sit on the bench cannot see if a bus is coming because shelter is in the way; sidewalk in bad condition at Gore Street by Twin City Mall; traffic on Lambert Street, ambulances can't get through; sidewalk too narrow on south side of Gore Street, add ramp in front of Millers River building, telephone pole in the way; Repair bike station at Library -it's awesome, saves lives; more Hubway racks around Kendall Square (just racks to return a bike); Want covered bike parking at library for students; MBTA commuter rail/freight train – loud horn, railroad tracks a problem to cross in winter; riverfront paths from River Street to Brookline/BU Bridge – upgrade paths, widen and add lighting; riverfront rotary at BU Bridge – fix this!

Traffic, Parking, and Enforcement: Enforce bike light law; would like more enforcement of bike lanes to make roads safe; would like to paint curb cut lines yellow so others don't park close to fire hydrant on Dana Street; I suggest drawing lines on residential streets to mark parking spaces so that people could park more efficiently and maximize parking in between driveways; pedestrian accidents in Inman Square; Western Avenue - Detours not handicap accessible; signage confusing; cars go through red light at Lambert and Cambridge Streets; make motorcycle parking easier; Near Putnam and Pleasant Street intersection: lights are confusing; Harvard Street at Prospect – make two way; too many one ways, can't do U-turns [in Porter Square area]; Traffic regulations re: trucks on third street – need enforcement; Upton Street too narrow for two-way traffic; Fairmont Street needs reopening; at lower entrance to Water Filtration Plant, need to work out a safe turn and pedestrian crossing; right on red during walk signal with electric box blacking views is dangerous at Aberdeen; Harvard Square horrible left turn at underpass, tough merge; hawk nest at Medford Street/Somerville Avenue; Lambert Street sidewalk too narrow; sidewalk at Gore Street in bad shape; minimize the no-turn on red signs.

Services: Why not open the library early Sunday for working people? The solar panel farm idea is great. Could a plan for renters be made to not have to pay lump sum of \$1,200 upfront? Hazardous recycling only on Saturdays, doesn't work for people who keep the Sabbath.

Bus Service: Don't shut down Bus Route #85; MBTA #68 bus service doesn't meet needs of local community; no weekend service and last bus on weekday stops before library closes. EZ Ride bus route in Cambridgeport goes through residential areas (Sydney Street, Erie, to reach Albany Street) – are there alternative routes? EZ Ride bus stop at Brookline and Erie is VERY LOUD; EZ bus at 95 decibels noise, which violates city ordinance; frequency an issue; strike balance – follow city ordinances, LNG fuel was a choice but vehicles are more noisy. How about the Honolulu Hybrid Bus – so quiet! EZ ride should avoid residential areas. Traffic should be calmed between Erie and Central Square on Brookline; speed used to be monitored on Brookline. MBTA bus #47 is also very noisy.

Communication: Need greater information regarding things to do (festivals, etc.); Community events in Harvard Square and Central Square; Porter Square doesn't have that; try to get more events in Porter Square here or Cambridge as a whole; more festivals, calendar of events

Cambridge Conversations

Cambridge is preparing for a city-wide master plan process! Cambridge Conversations is a series of listening sessions that will help shape this process.

Share your ideas about what our community priorities should be, and what kind of city we want - today and in the future. Look for a location and time that works for you.

Community Meetings:

June 10	6:30 pm - 8:30 pm	Tobin School Gym
June 11	6:30 pm - 8:30 pm	Kennedy School Cafeteria
June 14	10:00 am to noon	Cambridge College

Drop-In Sessions:

May 31	11:00 am - 3:00 pm	Fresh Pond Day
June 3	5:30 pm - 7:30 pm	Kendall Marriott (ECKOS Meeting)
June 9	11:00 am - 1:00 pm	Millers River Apartment
June 12	5:30 pm - 8:00 pm	Cambridge Main Library (Bike Planning Meeting)
June 14	8:00 am - 10:00 am	GLBT Brunch Event
June 14	1:00 pm - 3:00 pm	Hoops and Health Event at Hoyt Field
June 16	11:00 am - 1:00 pm	Windsor Street Health Lobby
June 17	6:00 pm - 8:00 pm	Jefferson Park Community Room/Lobby
June 18	11:00 am - 1:00 pm	Kendall Square Farmers Market
June 19	6:00 pm - 8:00 pm	Tobin School Lobby
June 23	6:00 pm - 8:00 pm	CHA (Old Police Station)
June 25	6:00 pm - 8:00 pm	Pisani Center
June 25	6:00 pm - 8:00 pm	Mid-Cambridge/Main Library
June 26	4:00 pm - 7:00 pm	Senior Center
June 30	6:00 pm - 8:00 pm	LBJ Apartments



More information coming soon:

www.cambridgema.gov/CDD

www.courbanize.com



Information Contact:

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Cambridge Conversations

Community Development Department
Cambridge, Massachusetts



■ Community Forum, scheduled

● Drop-In Session, scheduled

▲ Cambridge Public Library

○ Other Possible Locations