

July 6, 2011

Central and Kendall Square planning study
Kendall Square Public Workshop, June 21, 2011
Summary of public/stakeholder comments

Major topic areas (*addressed below in further detail*)

- Enhancing neighborhood **identity and sense of place**
- Creating a more active and extensive **public realm**
- Attaining the right **mix of land use/activities**
- Sustaining Kendall's **innovation culture**
- Expanding the amount and range of **housing**
- **Expanding retail choices**
- Making Kendall a **global leader in sustainability** innovation and practice
- Improving **transportation choices**
- Ensuring plan implementation delivers **effective results**

*Within each of these topic areas, predominant messages are indicated in **boldface text**.*

Neighborhood Identity and Sense of Place

1. Communicate better the many assets Kendall already has

- Better wayfinding signage needed
- Decent existing selection of restaurants and other amenities is not apparent because they are dispersed, not conveying critical mass

2. Convey a stronger, more memorable sense of place

- Create a recognized heart of the neighborhood through...
 - Public spaces animated with programmed arts and civic events
 - Critical mass of retail
 - Mix of housing and jobs
 - Attention to sense of arrival
- Need better sense of both the whole of Kendall Square, and the different areas within it
- Address the distinction of MIT and the larger Kendall Square. Should a plaza at MIT be the center of Kendall or one piece of it?
- Emphasize *local* character unique to the area
- Use electronic apps to enhance experience of Kendall

3. Let innovation take a central role in identity

- Cambridge is a living laboratory for MIT; thus innovation should be transparent in the lives of people in Cambridge and the region
- Bring work out of the lab and into the streets to share within and beyond the Kendall Square community
- Integrate corporate and university innovations

4. Identity should also include other aspects

- An integrated, lively district
- Increased social diversity in terms of age, economic status etc.
- The fun and excitement of whimsy, randomness, chance
- Leadership in sustainability

Public Realm

1. Emphasize human scale at the street

- Buildings should meet the street and enliven sidewalks

2. Create/improve *gathering* spaces

- Some more public/social, others more natural in character
- Enhance and make more useable the ice rink, Cambridge Center roof garden etc.
- Take this last opportunity to expand amount of public space. Existing public spaces are already heavily used; need more space to serve more people
- Incorporate interpretive, interactive display/communication of Kendall's innovation culture and accomplishments
- Welcome the whole East Cambridge community

3. Improve connections to Charles River

- Wayfinding, walkability, view corridors

4. Blur the boundaries between public and private space

- Connect private courtyards, lobbies etc. with streets and parks as part of a larger integrated pedestrian network of access routes and gathering spaces

Land use and activities

1. Land use should be mixed and diverse

2. High density is important

3. Emphasize amenities for people who work, study and live in/near Kendall

4. Continue to add/improve choices in use/activity categories that already exist

- i.e. retail, housing, jobs, transportation

5. Create more hang-out opportunities for people working nearby

- i.e. more beer taps welcomed

6. Designate an organization with primary responsibility for cultural programming in Kendall

- Business Improvement District or other entity

- World-class and “cool” cultural programming
- Constellation Center is welcomed but nearer-term actions are needed

Innovation culture

- 1. Maintain Kendall’s momentum as a globally significant innovation center**
- 2. Create an “innovation ecosystem” enabling small and large companies to thrive together**

Housing

- 1. Expand range of available housing choices**
 - Unit price, size, style etc.
 - Geared to Kendall’s target workforce
 - Both family and non-family households
 - Greater quantity
 - Both within Kendall Square and beyond but within convenient travel distance
 - Use market-rate housing to subsidize below-market-rate housing
 - Enable more housing by changing zoning to accommodate more density and fewer cars
- 2. Locate housing to discourage driving**
 - Convenient to walking, biking and/or transit access
 - Make coordinated transit service improvements
- 3. Design housing so that the presence of its inhabitants is felt on the street**
 - Residential unit entrances, stoops, gardens etc.
 - Ground-floor retail supported in part by added residents
- 4. Design housing to be sensitive in scale/character to traditional neighborhood housing**

Retail

- 1. Develop more economic diversity in the points of retail, dining**
 - Including grocery, drugstore items
- 2. Attract more retail serving day-to-day needs, i.e. supermarket, drugstore**

Sustainability

- 1. Kendall Square should be a model of sustainability innovation and practice**
 - MIT is an innovation leader in this area – make it apparent to give MIT credit and share the ideas
 - Utilize visible evidence of sustainable strategies in practice, such as photovoltaics, wind turbines, green roofs
 - Set standards through ordinances; Chicago’s green roof policy can be a model

Transportation

- 1. Improve access to/from adjacent neighborhoods**

Planning and Implementation processes

- 1. Support plan concepts and their implementation with sound demographics and economics**