

# Agassiz Neighborhood Study

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*Summary, Recommendations and Action Plan*





# Agassiz Neighborhood Study

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### **Summary, Recommendations and Action Plan ■ 2008**

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## **Summary, Recommendations and Action Plan ■ 2008**

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# Agassiz Neighborhood Study

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## *Introduction*





The Community Development Department (CDD), through its neighborhood planning program, has conducted comprehensive studies in each of Cambridge's neighborhoods since 1989. In conducting a neighborhood study, CDD prepares information on demographic changes, as well as changes in housing markets, land use and development potential in the neighborhood. Then staff members work collaboratively with a committee of neighborhood residents to identify planning opportunities and make recommendations for future action. Recommendations address a broad range of issues, covering the topics of land use and zoning, transportation, housing, economic development in commercial areas, parks and open space, and sometimes other special topics unique to that neighborhood. Recommendations range from specific items that can be addressed in the short term to broad issues that require ongoing attention or coordinated, long-term strategic planning. These recommendations help to guide the future work programs of city departments, and where appropriate are incorporated into the departmental planning and budgeting process. The neighborhood studies, taken along with the city's growth policy document, *Towards a Sustainable Cambridge*, work to create an overall vision for the future of growth and development in Cambridge.

### **Neighborhood Study Updates**

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To ensure that neighborhood studies remain current, CDD periodically conducts study update processes in different neighborhoods. The update process involves a series of public discussions to which all community members are invited. CDD staff members working in a range of different topic areas attend these meetings to give presentations and answer questions about the planning work being done in the city. Community members are invited to comment on the original study recommendations, suggest new recommendations, and prioritize issues that are of current concern. The result of the update process is a "Summary, Recommendations, and Action Plan" document that is made available to the public, City Council, and staff from many city departments.

### **Goal and Objectives**

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The underlying goal of the neighborhood study and update process is to enhance and inform municipal planning through discussion and collaboration between community members and city staff.

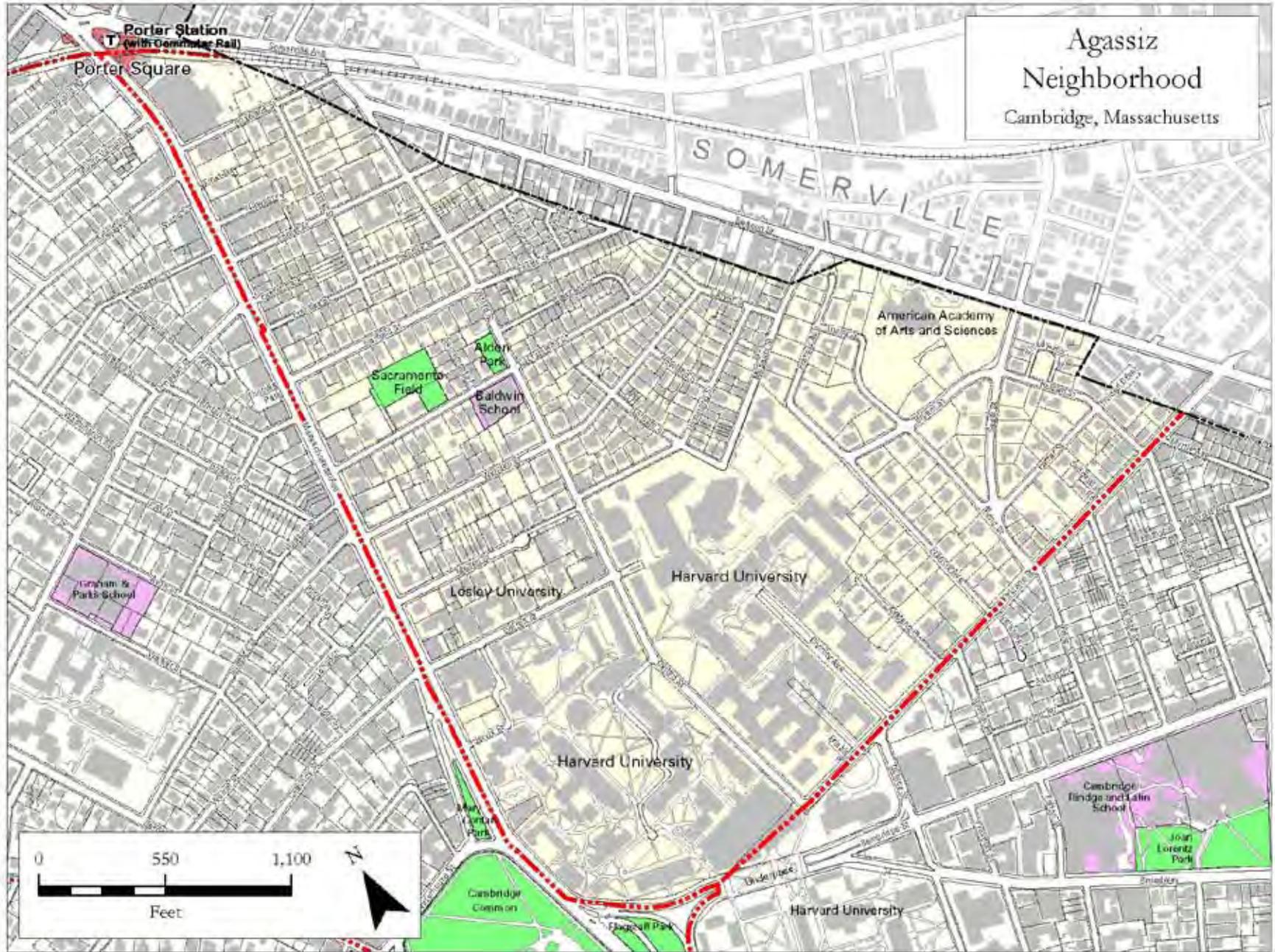
The neighborhood study and update process helps to advance the following specific objectives:

- To incorporate input from community members into municipal planning.
- To inform community members of planning issues and initiatives through public discussion, and by making neighborhood study and update reports available to the public in print and online.
- To provide information to department heads and other city staff about community needs and priorities.
- To help guide the budget and management process for city departments.
- To formulate long-term plans for neighborhood improvement.
- To conduct ongoing planning on a neighborhood level that reflects and complements Cambridge's citywide growth policy as well as planning initiatives that focus on more specific topics at a citywide level.

### **Implementation**

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Neighborhood studies and updates provide a link between community process and the everyday work done by city departments. It is important that these studies remain an integral part of the strategic management and budgeting process of city departments. For this reason, CDD maintains outreach to other departments while conducting studies and updates, and once they are completed, recommendations and action items are communicated to relevant departments to ensure that they are incorporated into future work plans. Neighborhood planning staff meet with the heads and managers of several departments twice each year to review the status of neighborhood action items.



Map prepared by Brendan Monroe on September 5, 2008. CDD GIS C:\Projects\Neighborhood\_Studies\Agassiz\BaseMap8x11.mxd

# Agassiz Neighborhood Study

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## *Summary*



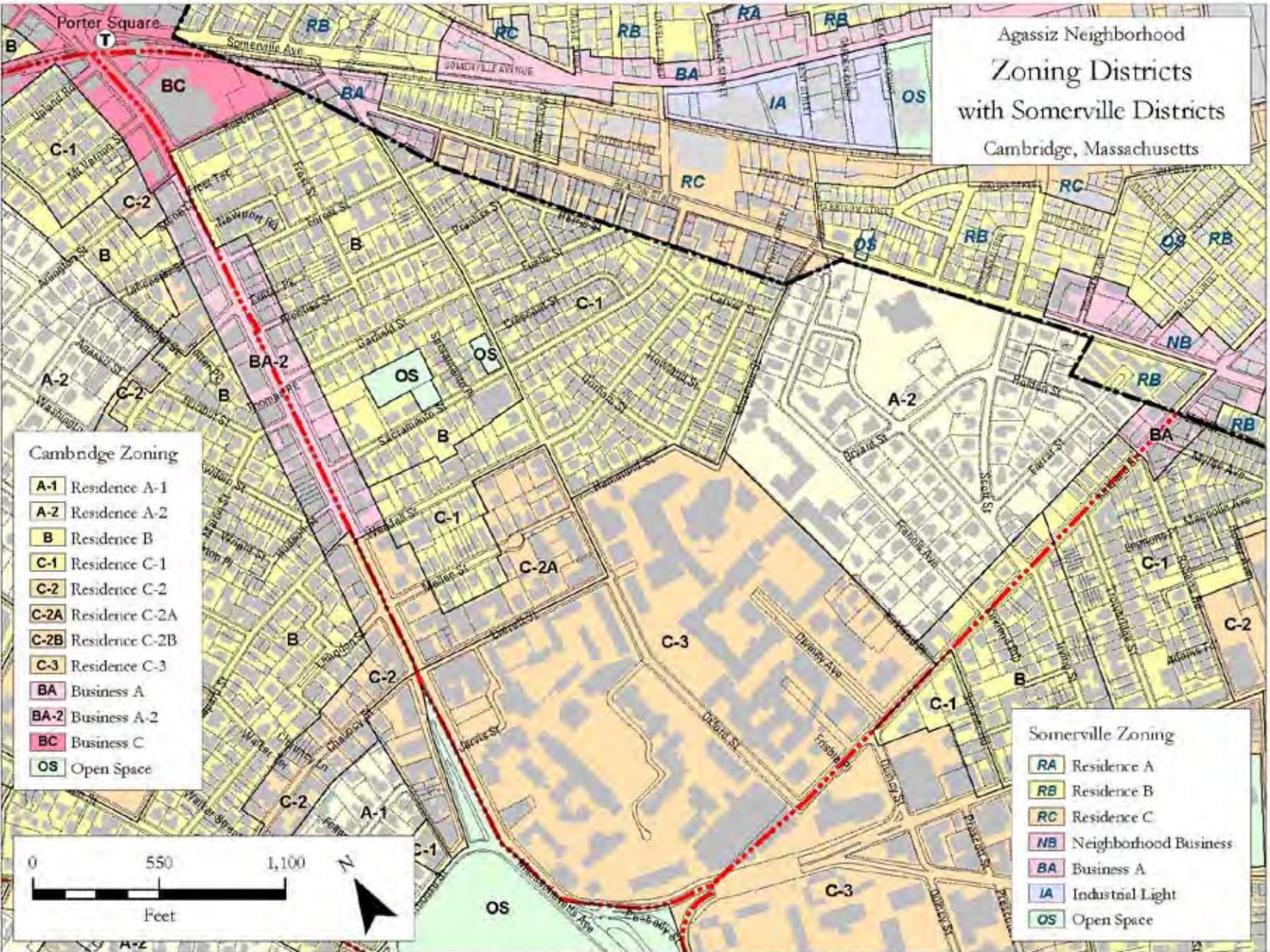


***2003 Agassiz Neighborhood Study***

The original Agassiz Neighborhood Study took place during 2000-2001 and was published in 2003. A study committee of seven community members, working with Community Development Department staff, discussed planning issues relating to the future of the neighborhood. Using information on demographics, housing, land use, and zoning, the study committee established a set of recommendations for future neighborhood growth and improvement. The recommendations were published in the Agassiz Neighborhood Study, and are included in this document (starting on page 45), along with reports on the progress that has been made in addressing the recommendations between 2003 and the present.

***Agassiz Neighborhood Study Update Process***

The Community Development Department held a public meeting on November 17, 2007, to discuss progress that has been made on the recommendations of the Agassiz Neighborhood Study and discuss neighborhood residents' current planning concerns. A new set of neighborhood study recommendations was drafted in response to the discussion at this meeting, and a follow-up public meeting was held on May 1, 2008 to review and discuss the new draft recommendations along with some other planning information requested at the first meeting. The new recommendations are included in the "Recommendations and Action Plan" section of this report (starting on page 29).



## SUMMARY

### Land Use Update

#### BASE ZONING

Zoning is the primary way in which the City regulates the use and development of land throughout Cambridge. The base zoning districts establish what types of land uses are allowed in different areas, along with other standards such as the maximum density of development, the maximum height of buildings, requirements for open space around buildings, and provisions for off-street parking.

Agassiz is predominantly zoned for residential use. The Shady Hill area on the east side of the neighborhood is zoned for low-density housing such as single-family homes (Residence A-2), while the northern part of the neighborhood is zoned for more moderate-density housing including townhouses, two-family and three-family homes (Residence B and C-1). The area that includes parts of the Harvard University and Lesley University campuses is zoned for higher density housing as well as institutional uses such as college and university buildings (Residence C-2A and C-3). The areas in the neighborhood that are zoned for business use include Porter Square and the Massachusetts Avenue corridor, which allow moderate-density business uses such as retail and office (Business C and A-2). There is also a small, lower-density neighborhood-oriented business zone on Kirkland Street near the Somerville border (Business A).

The base zoning in Agassiz has not changed significantly in recent years. A series of changes have taken place affecting business and residential districts throughout the city, culminating in the Citywide Rezoning of 2001. In 1995, a citizen rezoning petition lowered the allowed density in the Residence B district for lots greater than 5,000 square feet. In 1999, Cambridge adopted a rezoning petition intending to discourage the development of additional housing units into the small “backyards” of existing lots in low to moderate density residential districts, including the Residence B and C-1 districts. The Citywide Rezoning made housing an allowed use in business districts such as the Porter Square and Massachusetts Avenue areas, and established a higher allowed density for residential uses than for commercial uses, to encourage housing development and to account for commercial uses having a generally greater traffic impact than residential uses. The Citywide Rezoning also established a new set of project review requirements in commercial and higher-density residential districts. Typically, projects of at least 25,000 square feet are required to undergo a staff review and projects of at

least 50,000 square feet are required to receive a special permit from the Planning Board, which conducts a review to consider urban design and traffic and parking issues.

#### OVERLAY ZONING

The base zoning in Agassiz is complemented by several overlay districts. These overlay districts add to or change the zoning requirements of the base districts for specific purposes. One of the most significant overlay districts in the neighborhood is the Harvard, Radcliffe, and Lesley Institutional Use Overlay. Generally speaking, this overlay makes it easier to establish university uses within the existing campus boundaries, and conversely makes it more difficult to establish university uses in moderate-density residential areas that are outside the existing campus boundaries. In Agassiz, the effect of the Institutional Use Overlay is to restrict new institutional uses from being developed in the Residence B or C-1 zoning districts.

The Hammond and Gorham Streets Transition Overlay District was created in 2002, during the original Agassiz Neighborhood Study process. Anticipating Harvard development in the area, the purpose of this overlay district was to ensure an appropriate transition between the university district to the south and the residential neighborhood to the north. The overlay district regulates the size, orientation, and design of buildings, and includes provisions for public pedestrian access and underground parking. Harvard University is currently developing in this area, and their permitted development plan maintains this transition area as a landscaped open space. In addition, the Kirkland Place Transition Overlay District was similarly created to ensure a transition between the university campus and the low-density A-2 district to the east. No development has yet occurred under the provisions of this overlay district.

Additionally, there is a Massachusetts Avenue Overlay District that applies to the Mass Ave corridor starting at Everett Street and ending near the Arlington border, including the entire Porter Square business district. This overlay district establishes urban design standards to ensure that new development fits within the existing context, including requirements that windows and entrances be provided facing the street, and that parking is not to be provided in front of buildings facing Mass Ave. Also, projects above a certain size are required to undergo a public advisory review conducted by Community Development Department staff. From 2003 to

2005, a series of discussions were held to discuss the portion of the Massachusetts Avenue Overlay District in Agassiz. These discussions were motivated by concerns in the neighborhood that existing small businesses on Mass Ave might be replaced by residential or institutional uses in the future. Possible zoning changes were discussed and recommended, but ultimately no new zoning was adopted, except that the threshold for a public advisory review was lowered from 6,000 square feet to 2,000 square feet.

**SOMERVILLE ZONING**

At the neighborhood study update meetings, participants were interested in understanding future development trends for the Beacon Street corridor, most of which is within the City of Somerville. Residents' concerns included the density of future development, the provision of open space, and the preservation of neighborhood-serving businesses such as the existing supermarket. Community Development Department

staff prepared a summary of the zoning regulations affecting the Beacon Street corridor, with the caveat that neither the City of Cambridge nor the residents of the Agassiz neighborhood have jurisdiction over zoning regulations in Somerville.

Most of the Beacon Street corridor is zoned for residential use, with some small business zoning districts at the intersections with Oxford Street and Washington Street (which changes to Kirkland Street in Cambridge). This implies that many of the businesses along Beacon Street are non-conforming uses, similar to the small businesses in many Cambridge neighborhoods. Additionally, the residential zoning districts along Beacon Street tend to allow higher development densities than the adjacent residential districts in Cambridge, while only allowing slightly higher building heights, smaller required yard setbacks, and lower open space requirements. The map of Agassiz neighborhood zoning on page 14 also shows the adjacent Somerville zoning districts.

**SUMMARY - Land Use Update - continued**

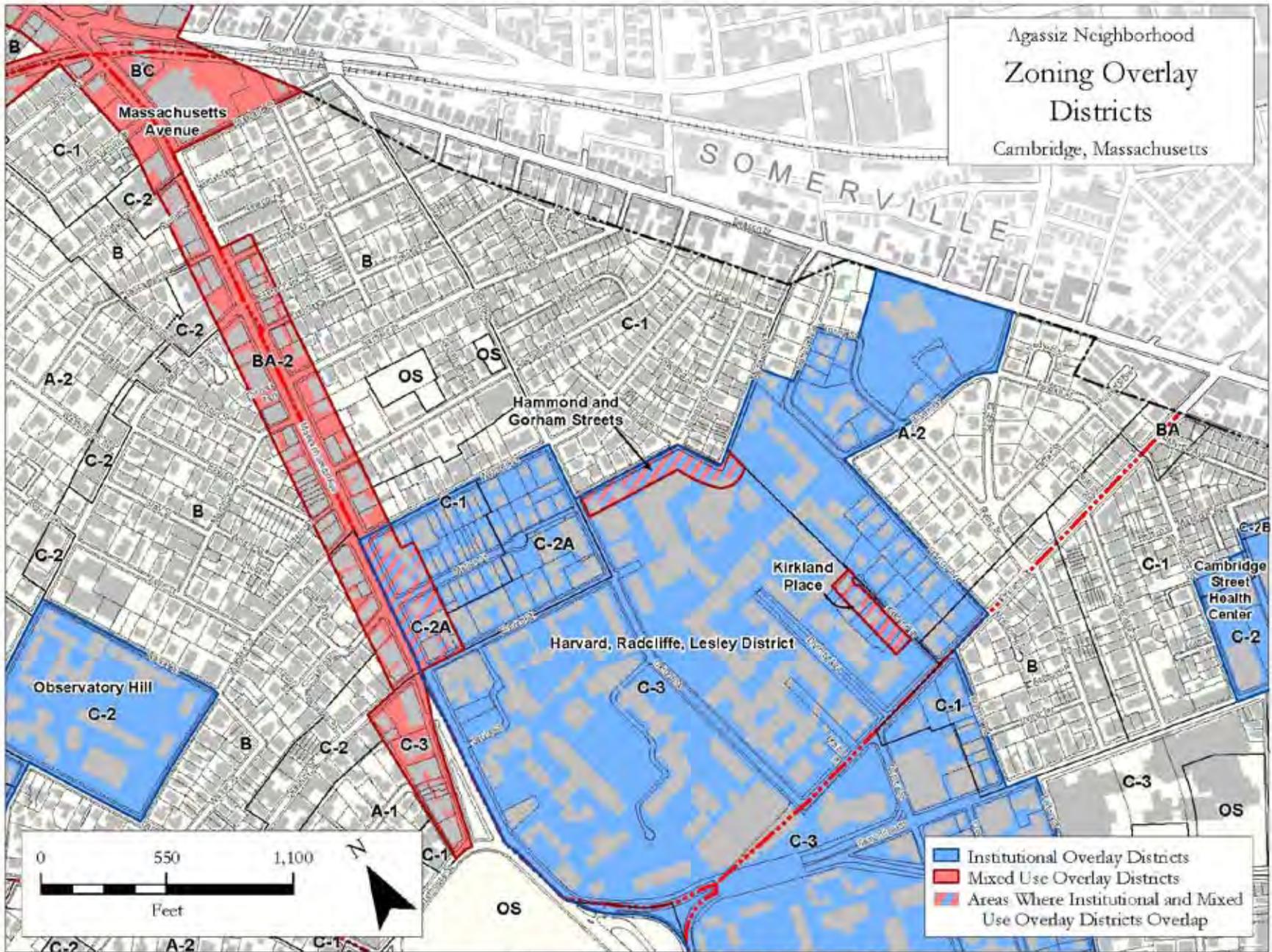
**Agassiz Base Zoning District Regulations**

District	Maximum floor area ratio(non-res/res)	Minimum lot area per dwelling unit (sqft)	Minimum front yard setback (ft)	Minimum side yard setback (ft)	Minimum rear yard setback (ft)	Maximum height (ft)	Minimum open space ratio (% of lot area)	General range of allowed uses
A-1	0.50	6,000	25	15 sum to 35	25	35	50%	single-family dwellings
A-2	0.50	4,500	20	10 sum to 25	25	35	50%	
B	0.50	2,500	15	7.5 sum to 20	25	35	40%	single- and two-family dwellings townhouse dwellings
C-1	0.75	1,500	(H+L) ÷ 4 at least 10	(H+L)/5	(H+L) ÷ 4 at least 20	35	30%	single- and two-family dwellings townhouse dwellings multifamily dwellings (apartments, condos) some institutional uses (limited by Institutional Use Regulations)
C-2	1.75	600	(H+L) ÷ 4 at least 10	(H+L) ÷ 5	(H+L) ÷ 4 at least 20	85	15%	
C-2A	2.50	300	(H+L) ÷ 5 at least 5	(H+L) ÷ 6	(H+L) ÷ 5 at least 20	60	10%	
C-2B	1.75	600	(H+L) ÷ 4 at least 10	(H+L) ÷ 5	(H+L) ÷ 4 at least 20	45	15%	
C-3	3.00	300	(H+L) ÷ 5 at least 5	(H+L) ÷ 6	(H+L) ÷ 5 at least 20	120	10%	
BA	1.00/1.75	600	no min	no min	(H+L) ÷ 5 at least 20	35/45	no min	most types of residential dwellings most institutional uses offices and laboratories most retail uses
BA-2	1.00/1.75	600	5	10	20	45	no min	
BC	1.25/2.00	500	no min	no min	20	55	no min	
OS	0.25	N/A	25	15	25	35	60%	open space, religious, or civic uses

**Somerville Base Zoning District Regulations for Districts Bordering Agassiz**

District	Maximum floor area ratio(non-res/res)	Minimum lot area per dwelling unit (sqft)	Minimum front yard setback (ft)	Minimum side yard setback (ft)	Minimum rear yard setback (ft)	Maximum height (ft)	Minimum open space ratio (% of lot area)	General range of allowed uses
RB	1.0	1,500	15	6+	20	40	25%	residential, institutional
RC	2.0	875/1,000	15	6+	20	40	25%	residential, institutional some businesses < 5,000 sq. ft.
NB	2.0	875/1,000	None	None	10+	40	10%	residential, institutional
BA	2.0	875/1,000	None	None *	10+	50	10%	office, retail
OS	0.3	NOT APP.	None	6+	15	35	5%	open space, religious, or civic uses

Source: City of Somerville's Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development, [www.somervillema.gov](http://www.somervillema.gov)



Map prepared by Brendan Monroe on September 5, 2008. CDD GIS C:\Projects\Neighborhood\_Studies\Agassiz\ZoningOverlay8x11.mxd

**INSTITUTIONAL PLANNING**

University campus planning is a significant issue in the Agassiz neighborhood, which is home to large portions of the Harvard University and Lesley University campuses. In recent years, residents, university representatives, and the City have worked to create opportunities for communication and collaboration on institutional planning initiatives, to help universities accommodate their campus growth in a way that contributes positively to the neighborhood community and has minimal negative impacts on residents. From 2002-2006, the Agassiz Working Group made up of residents, Harvard University representatives, and city officials met to discuss planning for Harvard's "North Yard" development as well as its expansion of the Harvard Law School campus. These development projects have been permitted and are currently under construction. Currently, a similarly comprised Lesley Working Group is meeting to discuss Lesley's plans for expansion within the Porter Square area and along Massachusetts Avenue. In 2008, Lesley received zoning relief to construct a new dormitory on Mass Ave at Wendell Street, with support from neighborhood residents. The group is also discussing Lesley's plans for relocating the recently-acquired Art Institute of Boston to Porter Square, for which Lesley is expected to submit a development proposal later this year.

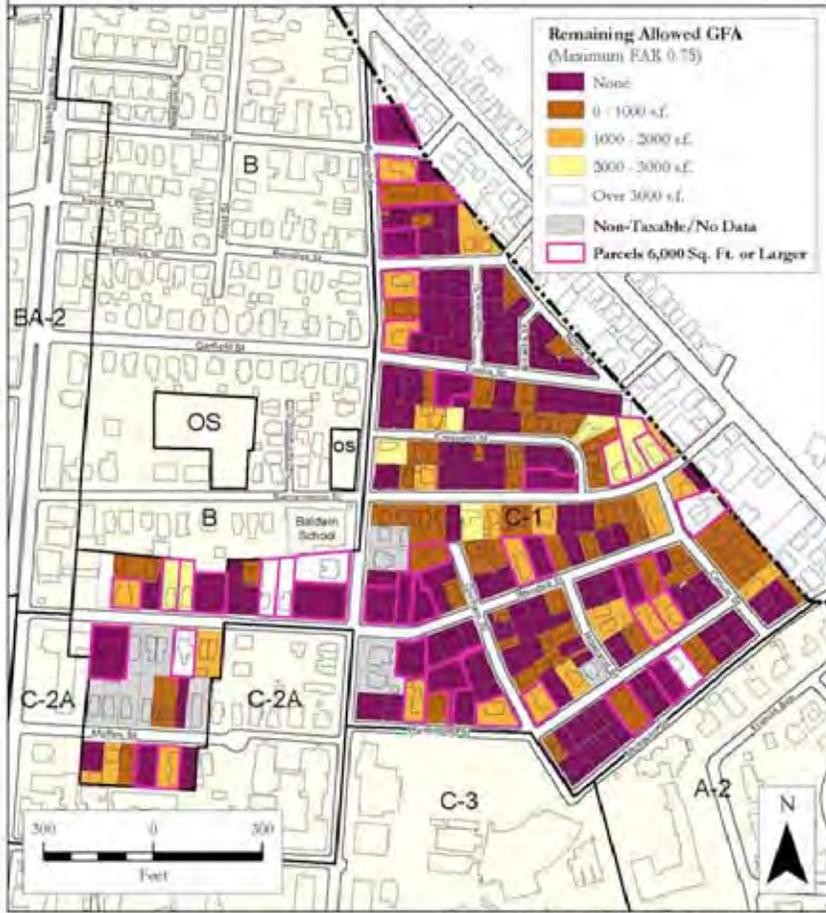
**RESIDENCE C-1 ZONING ANALYSIS**

In the original Agassiz Neighborhood Study of 2003, the study committee recommended that the Community Development Department conduct an analysis of development potential on parcels in the Residence C-1 district of the neighborhood. This analysis was prepared and presented to the Agassiz Neighborhood Council in 2005, and was discussed at the neighborhood study update meeting held in May, 2008.

As part of this analysis, the use, density, height and open space characteristics of parcels across the entire district were compared with the current Residence C-1 zoning regulations. The analysis also includes a series of maps illustrating the remaining development potential, in terms of gross floor area and dwelling units, allowed on each parcel. The analysis shows that in general, the existing development on parcels in this district closely match what is allowed by zoning, and that there not many parcels with the potential to add a significant number of dwelling units. It should be noted that the analysis was not meant to predict or propose any future development, but only to indicate where development might be possible based on the densities allowed by zoning in the district. This analysis also relies on information from the Assessing Department and is not guaranteed to be accurate for any individual parcel; however it is assumed to be accurate enough to illustrate general development characteristics across the entire district. The analysis chart and maps are shown on pages 20-21

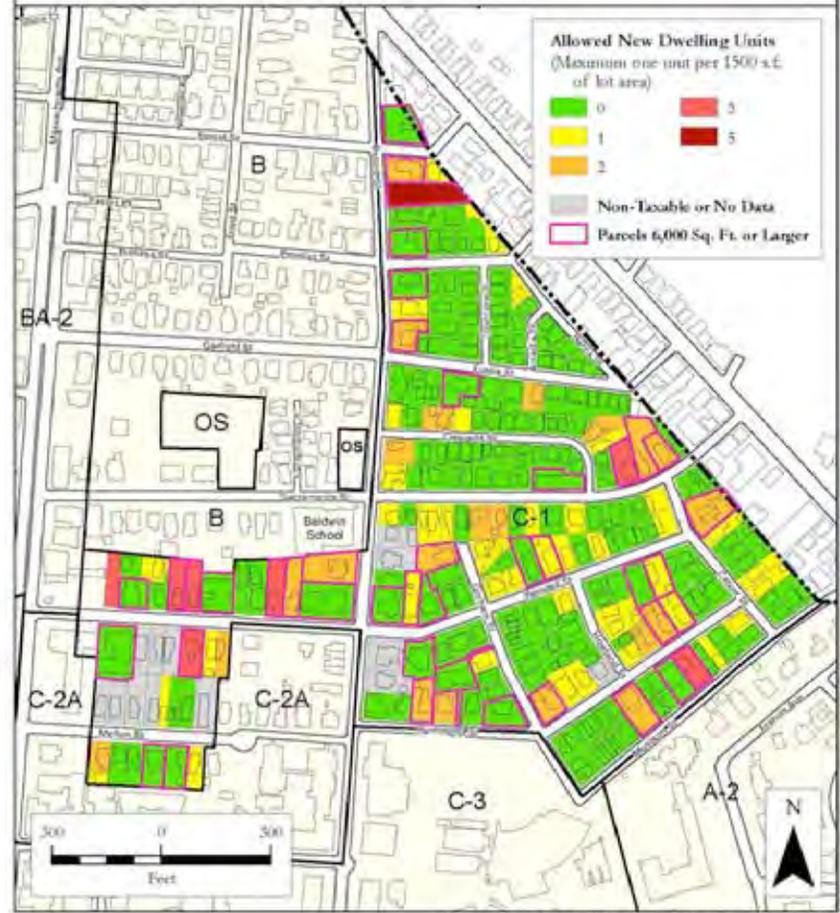
Agassiz Residence C-1 District

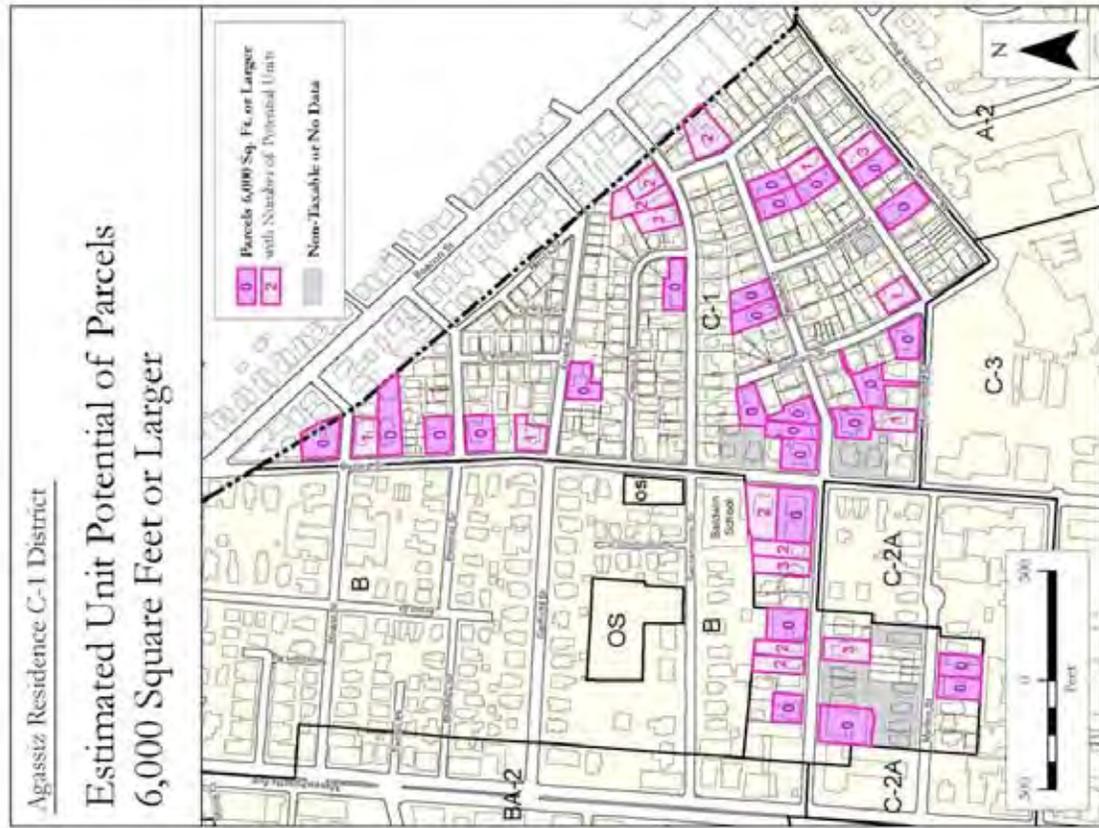
Remaining Allowed Gross Floor Area



Agassiz Residence C-1 District

Allowed New Dwelling Units





ZONING CATEGORY	C-1 REQUIREMENTS	AGASSIZ C-1 (294 parcels)
<b>USE</b>	<p>Single family houses</p> <p>Two family houses</p> <p>Townhouse residential</p> <p>Multifamily residential</p> <p>Limited institutional uses</p>	<p>31% – Single family houses</p> <p>23% – Two family houses</p> <p>16% – Condo buildings</p> <p>11% – Three family houses</p> <p>11% – 4+ unit apartments</p> <p>4% – University uses</p>
<b>DENSITY</b>		
Floor Area Ratio (FAR) (Floor Area / Lot Area)	0.75 maximum	0.80 median
Lot Area per Dwelling Unit (Unit Density)	1,500 minimum	1,565 median
<b>DIMENSIONAL</b>		
Height	35 feet maximum	37 feet median
Front Yard Setback	10 feet or more minimum	
Side Yard Setbacks	Formula	
Rear Yard Setback	20 feet or more minimum	
<b>OPEN SPACE</b>		
As % of Lot Area	30% minimum	51% median
Usable	15% minimum	
Permeable	15% minimum	
<b>PARKING</b>		
Off-street parking spaces	1 per dwelling unit minimum	

SOURCES: Cambridge Zoning Ordinance, Cambridge Assessing Department  
City of Cambridge – Community Development Department

**COMMERCIAL DISTRICT DENSITY**

The Porter Square commercial district has been the focus of several recent discussions and proposals related to the appropriate type and scale of development, as a result of both recently completed projects and anticipated projects in the area. As one of Cambridge's major commercial squares and home to a major transit station, Porter Square is zoned for moderately high density mixed-use development. Unlike most other commercial squares in Cambridge, there may be potential for significant future development in Porter Square because a number of existing parcels are not developed to their maximum allowed density. Along with the previously mentioned Lesley University plans to relocate the Art Institute of Boston, a private owner has proposed to build a moderate-scale hotel in the area. The City Council recently approved a rezoning proposal that would facilitate the creation of such a hotel by raising the allowed density for hotel uses and removing the impediments to building on lots that are partially within residential zoning districts. The proposal would also encourage locating parking underground and providing open space as a buffer between a hotel use and adjacent residential uses.

The issue of increased development has been an ongoing topic of discussion for neighborhood residents and was raised by participants at the neighborhood study update meetings. Concerns expressed by neighbors have included protecting the character of the neighborhood, preserving neighborhood-oriented retail, limiting the impacts of development such as traffic, parking, and shadows cast by tall buildings, avoiding new development with a visual character that conflicts with the existing character of the area, enhancing the pedestrian environment, improving the feeling of safety for pedestrians in the area at night, encouraging use of public transportation, and creating new opportunities for public open space. While many residents are concerned about potential impacts of development, some residents feel that if the negative effects can be managed, Porter Square would be an appropriate location for growth and urban density since it has good access to public transportation and a number of existing businesses and services.



## **SUMMARY**

### ***Transportation Update***

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Transportation planning in Cambridge is complex because of the many ways in which people travel. While car traffic may seem to have the greatest impacts on transportation in the city, in many Cambridge neighborhoods, including Agassiz, walking is the primary mode of transportation. According to Journey-to-Work information from the 2000 U.S. Census, about 40% of commuting Agassiz residents walk to work, while about 30% drive alone, about 20% use public transportation, and the rest bicycle, carpool, or use other modes of transportation. Transportation planning must also take into consideration people who work in Cambridge. More people are employed in Cambridge than live in Cambridge, and in Agassiz there are over twice as many employees as there are residents in the workforce. About 40% of employees working in the Agassiz area live in Cambridge. The tables on page 24, which were presented at the neighborhood study update meeting, summarize Journey-to-Work information for residents and employees in the Agassiz neighborhood and citywide.

A major component of transportation planning in Cambridge includes initiatives to reduce automobile traffic throughout the city while promoting alternatives such as walking, bicycling and the use of public transportation. These initiatives aim to reduce traffic congestion, help protect air quality and reduce adverse impacts on the climate, and promote healthier lifestyles for all community members.

#### ***PARKING AND TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT***

The Parking and Transportation Demand Management (PTDM) Ordinance is a policy that works to reduce traffic impacts by directly addressing the number of car trips taken into Cambridge. Businesses and commercial developers who create new parking spaces in the city are required to submit a plan for how the percentage of their commuters who drive alone will fall below a certain threshold. In order to reach this goal, a PTDM plan might include subsidized T-passes, shuttle services, incentives for carpooling, facilities for bike users or flexible work hours. The business or commercial developer must demonstrate regular progress towards meeting its single-occupancy vehicle trip reduction goals over time.

#### ***LARGE PROJECT REVIEW***

The Project Review Special Permit that was established in the Citywide Rezoning (described in the “Land Use and Zoning Update” section) includes a required traffic

impact study to be conducted for large projects, typically projects of 50,000 square feet or more, but including some other projects that exceed parking thresholds specified in the zoning ordinance. The Planning Board reviews these projects to determine whether they might cause an adverse impact on traffic, and can include transportation mitigation measures as conditions of a special permit. For instance, a project may be required to include sidewalk improvements, traffic calming measures, parking spaces for car sharing services (such as Zipcar), or transportation demand management programs like those described above.

#### ***INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS***

The City’s general practice is to improve roads and sidewalks in such a way as to make pedestrian and bicycle travel safer, more convenient, and more attractive. Such improvements may include narrowing vehicular travel lanes to their minimum safe width, widening sidewalks where possible and installing features to improve pedestrian safety such as curb extensions and raised crossings, and in some cases adding bicycle travel lanes along major roads. Often, roadway and sidewalk improvements occur when a roadway has to be reconstructed following major underground utility work, such as the ongoing sewer/stormwater separation projects being undertaken by the Department of Public Works. The City also has an ongoing program to install traffic calming improvements along selected neighborhood streets with the goal of reducing vehicular speeds to safer levels and improving safety for pedestrians, bicyclists and drivers. Traffic calming measures may include curb extensions and raised crossings, as described above.

Improvements planned for Agassiz in the short term include sewer work and associated road and sidewalk improvements on Forest, Prentiss, Frost, Newport and Exeter Streets. Road and sidewalk improvements are also planned for Roseland Street. In the long term, sewer work is planned to occur on Oxford Street, followed by a full reconstruction of the roadway. This reconstruction will also include traffic calming measures. As a temporary measure, Harvard University has funded the installation of “raised tables” at the intersections with Wendell Street and Garfield Street.

**SUMMARY**

**Transportation Update - Journey-to-Work Information**

*Agassiz Neighborhood – Journey-to-Work Information*

Persons Working In Agassiz/Cambridge

	Workers in CT-3536 *		Workers in Cambridge	
	1990	2000	1990	2000
Workers	4,247	5,452	109,248	114,113

	Workers in CT-3536 *		Workers in Cambridge	
	1990	2000	1990	2000
Place of Residence	36 %	39 %	23 %	22 %
Live in Cambridge	34 %	31 %	35 %	32 %
Live in Abutting Towns **	30 %	30 %	42 %	46 %

	Workers in CT-3536 *		Workers in Cambridge	
	1990	2000	1990	2000
Mode of Travel	33 %	32 %	13 %	13 %
Walk	4 %	5 %	2 %	2 %
Bike	13 %	18 %	21 %	23 %
Public Transit	39 %	35 %	51 %	51 %
Drive Alone	8 %	7 %	11 %	9 %
Rideshare	< 1 %	< 1 %	2 %	1 %
Other	2 %	3 %	N/A	3 %



\* Note: Information is only available at the Census Tract level. "Census Tract 3536" closely approximates the Agassiz Neighborhood, as shown.

\*\* Abutting towns include Arlington, Belmont, Boston, Somerville, and Watertown.

SOURCE: US Census, 2000  
City of Cambridge – Community Development Department

*Agassiz Neighborhood – Journey-to-Work Information*

Persons Living in Agassiz/Cambridge

	CT-3536* Residents in Workforce		Cambridge Residents in Workforce	
	1990	2000	1990	2000
Resident Workforce	2,343	2,433	52,355	54,979

	CT-3536* Residents in Workforce		Cambridge Residents in Workforce	
	1990	2000	1990	2000
Place of Work	57 %	56 %	49 %	46 %
Work in Cambridge	27 %	26 %	33 %	32 %
Work in Abutting Towns **	16 %	18 %	18 %	22 %

	CT-3536* Residents in Workforce		Cambridge Residents in Workforce	
	1990	2000	1990	2000
Mode of Travel	33 %	37 %	24 %	24 %
Walk	3 %	1 %	3 %	4 %
Bike	21 %	21 %	23 %	25 %
Public Transit	31 %	30 %	38 %	35 %
Drive Alone	8 %	3 %	8 %	5 %
Rideshare	< 1 %	1 %	4 %	1 %
Other	4 %	6 %	N/A	5 %



\* Note: Information is only available at the Census Tract level. "Census Tract 3536" closely approximates the Agassiz Neighborhood, as shown.

\*\* Abutting towns include Arlington, Belmont, Boston, Somerville, and Watertown.

SOURCE: US Census, 2000  
City of Cambridge – Community Development Department

## SUMMARY

### Housing Update

As is the case with many Cambridge neighborhoods, Agassiz contains a mixture of owner-occupied and rental housing units. According to information from the 2000 U.S. Census, of the approximately 2,000 housing units in the neighborhood, about 30% are owner-occupied and about 70% are renter occupied.

Participants at the neighborhood study update meetings were interested in knowing the impact of students on housing in the neighborhood. The tables on page 26 provide some information addressing this issue. Agassiz does have a large student population; according to the 2000 U.S. Census, about 45% of the Agassiz population is enrolled in college or graduate school. However, Census information also indicates that about 30% of the Agassiz population lives in “group quarters,” which includes dormitories, instead of typical housing units. Assuming that nearly all of the group housing in Agassiz consists of dormitories or other student housing, that leaves approximately 15% of the neighborhood population, or about 800 people, who are students living in owner-occupied or rented housing units.

#### **AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

It is the City’s policy to create and preserve housing units that are affordable to low- and moderate-income residents. The Community Development Department

supports several different efforts that work towards this goal. In 1995, the City established the Cambridge Affordable Housing Trust, an organization that supports the development and preservation of permanently affordable housing units. This organization receives funding from a variety of public and private sources, including Community Preservation Act funds and required fees from private commercial developers. Using this funding, Community Development Department staff work with non-profit community development organizations to identify opportunities for new affordable housing through acquisition of existing multifamily buildings, renovation of existing units, conversion of non-residential buildings to housing, and new construction. Since 1995, over 2,800 units of affordable housing have been created or preserved throughout the city due to these efforts.

The City and its non-profit partners also offer direct assistance programs to residential property owners, with the goal of revitalizing the housing stock, preserving affordability, and stabilizing income-eligible owner-occupants in their homes. Homeowner’s Rehab, Inc. offers a Home Improvement Program in Agassiz, which provides technical assistance and low-interest loans to income-eligible homeowners for home improvements

or repairs to one-to-four-unit homes. Cambridge Neighborhood Affordable Housing Services provides financing to owners of rental units to help rehabilitate apartment buildings if the rents are kept affordable. The Cambridge Lead-Safe program, offered by the Community Development Department, conducts educational outreach about the risks of lead paint, provides technical assistance, and offers no-interest, forgivable loans for owners to de-lead their units.

The Community Development Department offers a monthly First-Time Homebuyers



**SUMMARY - Housing Update - continued**

Class, which is free and open to all Cambridge residents, although pre-registration is required because space is limited. The City also offers up to \$130,000 in downpayment and closing cost funding and financial assistance to assist income-eligible residents purchase their first home.

In addition, the Cambridge Zoning Ordinance has an Inclusionary Housing provision, which requires new private housing projects of 10 units or more to set-aside 15% of the units to be affordable to low- and moderate-income residents. Inclusionary projects receive a density bonus in the form of a 30% increase in FAR and an additional “bonus” market unit for each required af-

fordable unit. If the inclusionary project is for rental housing, then the affordable units will be apartments with affordable rents, and if the project is condominiums, the affordable units will be condominiums sold to first-time homebuyers with re-sale restrictions that will keep the units affordable over time. Inclusionary Housing projects are not common in Agassiz, since there are few sites available for the construction of large housing projects.

Information about all of these programs is available by calling the Housing Information Line at 617-349-4622, or on the Community Development Department website at [www.cambridgema.gov/cdd/hsg](http://www.cambridgema.gov/cdd/hsg).

**Persons Living in Households/Group Quarters**

	Agassiz	% of N'hood	Cambridge	% of City
Persons Residing in Households	3,669	70 %	86,692	85 %
Persons Residing in Group Quarters	1,572	30 %	14,663	15 %
Total Population	5,241	100 %	101,355	100 %

**Persons Attending School, Age 3 or Older**

	Agassiz	% of N'hood	Cambridge	% of City
Attending Nursery or Preschool	26	< 1 %	2,045	2 %
Attending Elementary to High School	297	6 %	9,065	9 %
Attending College or Graduate School	2,374	45 %	26,613	26 %
Total Population	5,241	100 %	101,355	100 %

**Tenure of Housing Units**

	Agassiz	% of N'hood	Cambridge	% of City
Owner-Occupied Units	597	29 %	13,760	31 %
Renter-Occupied Units	1,383	67 %	28,855	65 %
Vacant Units	80	4 %	2,110	5 %
Total Housing Units	2,060	100 %	44,725	100 %

SOURCE: U.S. Census, 2000

## SUMMARY

### *Economic Development Update*

Businesses in the Agassiz neighborhood are primarily oriented towards retail or small offices. The primary commercial areas in the neighborhood are around Porter Square and along Massachusetts Avenue, which is home to one of the more unique collections of local, independent retail in Cambridge. According to a survey conducted by the Community Development Department, there are about 180 different retail, consumer service, or professional office establishments in the Porter Square and Massachusetts Avenue districts. About 70% of these businesses are independent or part of small local chains, and most are in small storefront spaces. While business spaces continue to turn over periodically, the area has retained its independent character.

The Economic Development staff in the Community Development Department offer a variety of services to support the ongoing health and operation of local, independent businesses. The Façade, Signage and Lighting Improvement Program offers design assistance and matching grants of up to \$35,000 for businesses to improve their exteriors, helping to support businesses as well as improve the look of entire commercial districts. The Best Retail Practices Program offers workshops, consultations, and grants to business owners for a range of different improvements including interior upgrades and repair, mechanical system upgrades, and marketing assistance.

For people looking to start a small business in Cambridge, a SiteFinder Database is available to help match prospective business owners with available commercial property. Economic Development staff are also available to meet and talk with neighborhood groups or area



business associations to assess what types of businesses are needed in the area, and can communicate with prospective business owners who may wish to locate in the area. For example, this type of communication helped facilitate Rosie's Bakery deciding to open a location on Massachusetts Avenue, after neighbors indicated that a bakery would be desirable.

One-on-one consulting from the Economic Development staff is available to current or prospective business owners, and through a partnership with the Center for Women and Enterprise, the City offers a set of classes on topics related to starting new businesses, maintaining and expanding existing businesses, financial literacy, and obtaining loans.

Information about all of these programs, along with business directories and information about business associations, is available by calling 617-349-4637 or on the web at [www.cambridgema.gov/cdd/ed](http://www.cambridgema.gov/cdd/ed).

## SUMMARY

### Open Space Update

Through its open space planning, the City works to maintain a high quality system of parks, playgrounds, reservations and other outdoor spaces throughout Cambridge. Open space in Cambridge provides a variety of recreational opportunities for children and adults of all ages and abilities, helps to improve and beautify the environment throughout the city's neighborhoods, and provides spaces where residents can come together and build a stronger sense of community.

Agassiz is a relatively small neighborhood with few public-owned open spaces within the neighborhood boundaries. Those spaces include Sacramento Field, which was acquired by the City from Harvard in 1980, and Alden Park, which serves the neighborhood as well as the Baldwin School, and which was renovated in 2007. The Cambridge Common, one of the city's largest and most visited open spaces, is located just at the edge of the neighborhood. The neighborhood also includes large sections of the Harvard campus, which contains interior courtyard spaces that are generally accessible to the public. As part of the Hammond and Gorham Streets transition district, described in the "Land Use and Zoning Update" section, public pedestrian access is required by zoning through the northern part of the Harvard campus. Also, the campus of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in the Shady Hill portion of the neighborhood includes one of the few remaining wooded areas in the city, and while this space is privately owned, it is accessible to the public during daytime hours.

Cambridge's long-range plan for open space development was established in the Green Ribbon Open Space Study completed in 2000. This study analyzed the open space currently provided in the city along with demo-



graphic information and resource needs, and used this information to identify priority areas for the creation of new open spaces and recreational resources. One of the top priority areas identified for new parks and playgrounds was the Porter Square area. Because there is little land readily available for purchase, the prices tend to be high, and the real estate market is competitive, increasing open space will require creative solutions and the ability to capitalize on opportunities as they arise. The Green Ribbon Study recommended a variety of approaches, such as improving existing open spaces by expanding their size or the variety of uses within them, improving access to existing open spaces, creating small, passive-use open spaces where small pieces of public land become available, or partnering with private developers or institutions to provide open space that is accessible to the public as part of large development projects.

Sacramento Field is on the City's medium-range open space plan for future renovations. In keeping with the City's practice regarding renovations of this type, the renovations to Sacramento Field would likely include new varieties of play equipment, new sitting areas, improved entrances and pathways, and overall improvements to accessibility. Future renovations will occur after a public design review process that will seek input from all community members. In addition, future renovations are planned to occur on Cambridge Common. Renovation of the playground area will be in construction by late 2008 or early 2009, and renovations to the pathways, furniture, and plantings throughout the park are currently in the design process.



# Agassiz Neighborhood Study

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## *2008 Recommendations and Action Plan*



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### **Recommendation Types:**

- LU - Land Use and Zoning
- T - Transportation
- H - Housing
- ED - Economic Development
- OS - Open Space

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Action Items - Issues expected to be added to work plan in the future.

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## 2008 RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTION PLAN

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The following tables list the recommendations produced from community discussion in the 2007-2008 Agassiz Neighborhood Study Update process. The rightmost "Current Status and Action Plan" column provides a brief description of what actions the City has taken or plans to take in order to address the recommendation, or how the recommendation may be addressed through ongoing City programs or long-term strategic planning. Items that are on the City's future action plan are denoted as FUTURE ACTION, UNDER CONSIDERATION, or PLANNING IN PROGRESS, and the timeframe is noted

where available. Recommendations from the 2003 Agassiz Neighborhood Study, with their current status, are also listed beginning on page 45.

Neighborhood study recommendations become an integral part of the City's work plan in a variety of ways. They may highlight specific issues to be addressed through the future work of City departments, suggest planning topics that may need to be studied in more detail, and help to inform planning initiatives that are being pursued on a citywide basis.

### **LAND USE AND ZONING Recommendations and Action Plan**

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<b>Rec. Type &amp; Number</b>	<b>2008 Update Recommendations</b>	<b>Current Status and Planned Action</b>
<b>LU1</b>	Neighbors prefer new housing development in the residential neighborhood to be of low density, with open space required on private lots. Allow interested neighbors to review the study performed in 2005 on allowed density in the Agassiz Residence C-1 zoning district.	<p>The Cambridge Growth Policy, outlined in <i>Towards a Sustainable Future</i> (updated 2007), specifies, "Existing residential neighborhoods, or any portions of a neighborhood having an identifiable and consistent built character, should be maintained at their prevailing pattern of development and building density and scale." The Citywide Rezoning process of 2001 decreased the allowed density in the C-1 District from one dwelling unit for every 1,200 square feet of land area to one dwelling unit for every 1,500 square feet of land area, and increased the required provision of open space from 15% of the lot area to 30% of the lot area.</p> <p>In 2005, the Community Development Department prepared an analysis of existing development in the Agassiz Residence C-1 zoning district for the Agassiz Neighborhood Council. The results of this study were presented to neighborhood residents for review and discussion on May 1, 2008 and a summary is provided on pages 19-21 of this report. The study indicated that existing development in the C-1 portion of the neighborhood largely meets or exceeds the limitations imposed by zoning. While some individual lots show the potential to add dwelling units, major increases in development density are not likely to occur in the future.</p>

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## LAND USE AND ZONING Recommendations and Action Plan

<i>Rec. Type &amp; Number</i>	<i>2008 Update Recommendations</i>	<i>Current Status and Planned Action</i>
<b>LU2</b>	Encourage small businesses in the neighborhood, especially retail serving neighborhood residents. Encourage the provision of small retail spaces as part of new development in commercial districts, especially if an existing retail site is redeveloped. The amount of commercial space on ground floors along Massachusetts Avenue should be maintained or increased to support local businesses, accessibility of neighborhood services, and the City's tax base. Also encourage the preservation of non-conforming retail in residential districts, such as along Oxford Street and in the section of Massachusetts Avenue between and Everett and Wendell Streets.	In a series of discussions focusing on the "Lower Massachusetts Avenue" retail area from 2003-2005, Community Development Department staff and community members explored various zoning possibilities to support small retail in existing commercial areas. As review proceeded, it was noted that new zoning requirements or incentives to encourage small retail in commercial or residential districts might have unintended consequences such as encouraging redevelopment of existing sites. No new zoning was enacted.  The City continues to provide active support to local businesses through its Economic Development programs, including grants and design assistance for upgrading storefront exteriors and interiors, workshops and classes on small business management, and "site-finder" services to match appropriate small businesses to available commercial spaces that would serve their needs.
<b>LU3</b>	In planning for future development in the commercial areas of Porter Square and the Massachusetts Avenue corridor, ensure that consideration is given to the potential negative impacts of higher density development on traffic, parking, the quality of the physical environment, and the availability of neighborhood businesses and services. These concerns should be balanced with the interest in supporting responsible and sustainable development by encouraging higher density development in transit-accessible areas.	The Cambridge Growth Policy states, "The availability of transit services should be a major determinant of the scale of development and the mix of uses encouraged and permitted in the predominantly nonresidential districts of the city." Porter Square, with a Business C designation, is zoned to one of the higher allowed densities in the city. To encourage housing and mixed-use in this district, as in most business districts, the Citywide Rezoning of 2001 established a higher allowed density for housing than for commercial development. The Community Development Department will continue to consider the various issues related to density of development in this area.
<b>LU4</b>	Coordinate with Somerville on plans and development regulations for Beacon Street.	On May 1, 2008, Community Development Department staff presented information about current zoning regulations along Beacon Street in Somerville for review and discussion. A summary is provided on page 16 of this report. The City of Cambridge has no jurisdiction over zoning or development regulations in Somerville.
<b>LU5</b>	Community Development Department staff should work to improve communication with neighborhood residents on key resident-initiated planning issues, to promote a better understanding of community vision and goals through meaningful conversation, and to provide better information and guidance on the processes related to zoning and development in Cambridge.	The Community Development Department will continue to communicate with neighborhood residents on planning and development issues. Staff will seek ways to identify key concerns of importance to community members, to address conflicting views, to discuss potential zoning options, and to provide guidance to neighborhood residents in advancing initiatives as appropriate. Staff members are always available and willing to talk with residents or meet with neighborhood groups on request.

### ■ ACTION ITEM - Timeframe

Short Range - less than 2 years; Medium Range - 2-6 years;

Long Range - 6-10 years

**LAND USE AND ZONING Recommendations and Action Plan**

<b>Rec. Type &amp; Number</b>	<b>2008 Update Recommendations</b>	<b>Current Status and Planned Action</b>
<b>LU6</b>	Discourage surface parking lots on Massachusetts Avenue and establish regulations to improve their appearance where possible. Encourage landscaping and trees.	Article 6 of the Zoning Ordinance requires that surface parking lots be lighted, landscaped, and appropriately screened from abutting roads and sidewalks. These regulations apply to surface parking lots included in any new development, but existing parking lots are not required by zoning to undergo improvements. In addition, if a project requires review by the Traffic, Parking and Transportation Department, landscape improvements to surface parking are often recommended.
<b>LU7</b>	Require off-street parking spaces to be provided in new housing development.	Off-street parking is required for all new housing development, with a typical requirement of one space per housing unit. In 2005, the zoning was modified to require one space per unit for conversions of non-residential buildings to housing. The required amount of parking may be reduced by special permit only if existing off-street parking near the site can be used, or if there is a reason to assume that the project will not generate significant parking demand due to availability of public transportation or other factors.
<b>LU8</b>	Consider a zoning change that would allow more types of group housing in the Residence C-1 District.	<p>■ <b>PLANNING IN PROGRESS – SHORT RANGE:</b> Zoning issues related to the provision of group housing in the city are being explored in a “Planning for Aging” study being undertaken by the Community Development Department. While the zoning ordinance does not allow lodging or boarding houses in the Residence C-1 district, certain types of group housing such as senior housing, housing for persons with disabilities, and in some cases university-affiliated housing can be allowed as-of-right or by special permit.</p>
<b>LU9</b>	Support new regulations pertaining to the design and placement of fences on private lots.	In 2007, the City’s Pedestrian Committee recommended a set of changes to the Zoning Ordinance dealing with fences. The proposal was intended to maintain safety and visibility for pedestrians on city sidewalks. A petition was submitted to the City Council, where some property owners raised concerns about possible impacts on security and objected to what they saw as overregulation of private property. No Council action was taken.
<b>LU10</b>	Improve regulation and enforcement of window signage for businesses.	Article 7 of the Zoning Ordinance contains regulations for all signage in Cambridge, including signs in the windows of businesses. The regulations specify the allowed sizes and general characteristics for signs. Enforcement of the ordinance is in the purview of the Inspectional Services Department, which primarily enforces signage issues on a complaint-driven basis. Report potential zoning violations to Inspectional Services at 617-349-6100 or by fax at 617-349-6132.
<b>LU11</b>	Consider zoning provisions that would support “green building” in new development.	<p>■ <b>PLANNING IN PROGRESS – SHORT RANGE:</b> A Task Force has been assembled by the City to discuss green building issues and possibly recommend new zoning measures in early 2009. Issues discussed will include energy conservation, sustainable design and construction practices, and green roofs.</p>

<p>■ <b>ACTION ITEM - Timeframe</b></p> <p>Short Range - less than 2 years; Medium Range - 2-6 years; Long Range - 6-10 years</p>
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**TRANSPORTATION Recommendations and Action Plan**

<i>Rec. Type &amp; Number</i>	<i>2008 Update Recommendations</i>	<i>Current Status and Planned Action</i>
T1	Address the issue of cars not yielding at pedestrian crossings on Oxford Street.	<p>■ <b>UNDER CONSIDERATION – SHORT RANGE:</b> In fall 2007, the Traffic, Parking and Transportation Department installed 12” lines at the top of the raised intersections on Oxford Street to delineate the pedestrian crossing area. In the future, the Community Development Department will perform a study of driver yielding patterns on Oxford Street and will consider additional options to improve yielding. The Traffic, Parking and Transportation Department and the Community Development Department will continue to address this issue.</p>
T2	Support having more Zipcars in Cambridge, and consider implementing a bike-sharing service, similar to the one recently established in Paris.	<p>■ <b>UNDER CONSIDERATION – SHORT RANGE:</b> The City Council has requested that the Community Development Department draft zoning language that, if adopted, would allow vehicle-sharing services to operate in residential zoning districts. The language is currently in the process of being drafted but a formal rezoning petition has not yet been filed.</p> <p>The City actively works with Zipcar to ensure that spaces are made available wherever possible. Bicycle-sharing programs are appealing but are expensive and difficult to implement, often relying on substantial revenue from advertising. The City will monitor the success of a pilot program being implemented in Washington, DC.</p>
T3	Consider “Yield to Pedestrian” stanchions to improve safety at pedestrian crossings.	<p>Stanchions have been used at some crosswalks in Cambridge. City staff have found that they may not be the best option, because they may often be hit by cars or otherwise moved, creating a potential safety hazard for drivers, cyclists and pedestrians. The Community Development Department and Traffic, Parking and Transportation Department continue to explore alternative ways to improve safety at pedestrian crossings.</p>
T4	<p>Consider pedestrian improvements at the following locations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crosswalks along Bryant, Scott and Irving Streets to provide access to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences campus</li> <li>• A sidewalk on Beacon Street adjacent to the American Academy of Arts and sciences</li> <li>• Improved crosswalks and markings at the corner of Irving and Kirkland Streets</li> <li>• A crosswalk at the northern side of the intersection of Massachusetts Avenue and Waterhouse Street</li> </ul>	<p>Crosswalk markings could be installed along these streets following future road resurfacing work and the installation of disability access ramps on the sidewalks. No work is planned for this area in the short term. In the past, residents have expressed opposition to the installation of additional crosswalks in this area.</p> <p>Somerville is planning a full reconstruction of Beacon Street. Current reconstruction plans include a continuous sidewalk alongside the American Academy of Arts and Sciences campus. New crosswalk markings were painted at all Kirkland Street crossings in 2003. For additional crosswalks to be installed, sidewalks would need to be reconstructed and disability access ramps added. No sidewalk work is planned to occur on Kirkland in the short term.</p> <p>New crosswalks, which would also require the installation of disability access ramps, are not planned at this location in the short term. Repainting of existing crosswalks is planned for 2008. When roadway reconstruction occurs in this area at a future time, staff will analyze desired pedestrian crossing routes and install new crossings where appropriate.</p>

## TRANSPORTATION Recommendations and Action Plan

<i>Rec. Type &amp; Number</i>	<i>2008 Update Recommendations</i>	<i>Current Status and Planned Action</i>
<b>T5</b>	At signalized crossings, continue to have concurrent pedestrian walk signals and prohibit right on red at more intersections.	<p>It is the policy of the Traffic, Parking and Transportation Department to make walk cycles concurrent with vehicular traffic cycles at nearly all signalized four-way intersections. This avoids pedestrians having to wait an unreasonably long time for a safe walk signal. The walk signal typically has some lead time, so pedestrians can cross before vehicles are allowed to begin turning. In Agassiz, most four-way signalized intersections have concurrent walk cycles, and concurrent signals are planned to be added at the Oxford/Everett, Mass/Shepard, Mass/Linnean, and Mass/Everett intersections. The Traffic, Parking and Transportation Department also plans to install “No Turn On Red” signs at most intersections that do not already have them.</p> <p>For questions about traffic signals, call the Traffic Engineering division at 617-349-4715. The City’s signal policy along with an online form to report signal issues is available at <a href="http://www.cambridgema.gov/traffic">www.cambridgema.gov/traffic</a>.</p>
<b>T6</b>	Consider bicycle safety as the amount of biking in the city increases. Also coordinate with Somerville on connecting bike lanes.	<p>The City encourages bicycling by providing facilities such as bike lanes and bike racks as well as through public outreach programs. Safety is a major goal of these programs, since bicycling safety increases as more people bicycle and public awareness of bicycling increases. Part of Cambridge’s public outreach program includes posters on bus shelters along public streets that educate bicyclists and drivers about bicycling laws and bicycling safety. There is also a set of detailed information about bicycling on the web at <a href="http://www.cambridgema.gov/cdd/et/bike">www.cambridgema.gov/cdd/et/bike</a>.</p> <p>Somerville’s plan for the reconstruction of Somerville Avenue includes new bicycle lanes that will connect with Cambridge’s bicycle lanes in Porter Square. Somerville has also recently included bicycle lanes on Beacon Street.</p>
<b>T7</b>	Improve pedestrian crossing signage and enforcement at Massachusetts Avenue and Garfield Street.	<p>■ <b>UNDERWAY – SHORT RANGE:</b> The Mass/Garfield intersection will be part of a study of “advance yield markings,” which are pavement markings painted about 20 feet in advance of a crosswalk. Prior studies have shown that such markings may result in greater yielding at unsignalized pedestrian crossings. Markings were painted in 2008, and Traffic Department staff are conducting before-and-after studies of yielding patterns.</p>
<b>T8</b>	Improve traffic enforcement for bikes and vehicles.	<p>Traffic enforcement is under the purview of the Cambridge Police Department. The police issue citations to both motorists and bicyclists who violate traffic laws. Neighborhood-specific issues can be discussed with the Neighborhood Sergeant at 617-349-3322.</p>

■ **ACTION ITEM - Timeframe**

Short Range - less than 2 years; Medium Range - 2-6 years;  
 Long Range - 6-10 years

## **TRANSPORTATION Recommendations and Action Plan**

<b>Rec. Type &amp; Number</b>	<b>2008 Update Recommendations</b>	<b>Current Status and Planned Action</b>
<b>T9</b>	Address traffic and parking issues that result from parents dropping off students at the Baldwin School, and school buses parking on Oxford Street.	Drop-off space is very limited at schools throughout the city. For the Baldwin School, providing designated drop-off space would require using resident permit parking spaces for certain hours of the day. Currently, there are designated bus drop-off areas in front of the school and adjacent to Alden Park on Oxford Street; however, buses should not be parking on Oxford for extended periods of time. The City encourages children living near their schools to walk to school when possible.
<b>T10</b>	Encourage improved coordination of shuttle buses between institutions. Lesley University should focus on shuttle service between the Cambridge and Boston parts of campus.	The Community Development Department and the Traffic, Parking and Transportation Department review plans for institutional shuttle routes. The City encourages universities to collaborate to provide more efficient shuttle service and also encourages them to support the use of existing public transportation systems by members of their communities where possible.
<b>T11</b>	Address visibility issues turning from Mellen Street to Massachusetts Avenue, where shuttle buses can block views.	In order to provide visibility for turning cars, parking is not allowed within 20 feet of the Massachusetts Avenue / Mellen Street intersection. If violations occur regularly, contact the Traffic, Parking and Transportation Department at 617-349-4700 with a specific request for enforcement at that corner.
<b>T12</b>	Work to improve the condition of sidewalks and streets in the neighborhood. The roadway and sidewalks along the northern section of Oxford Street are in poor repair. Potholes are a problem on Oxford Street and in other parts of the neighborhood. Brick sidewalks are also in need of maintenance.	<p>The Department of Public Works maintains a five-year plan for future street and sidewalk improvements. This plan, along with general information about street and sidewalk repair, can be found online at:</p> <p><a href="http://www.cambridgema.gov/theworks/news/streets_sidewalks.htm">www.cambridgema.gov/theworks/news/streets_sidewalks.htm</a></p> <p>Potholes and other street or sidewalk defects should be reported to the Department of Public Works at 617-349-4854 or <a href="mailto:theworks@cambridgema.gov">theworks@cambridgema.gov</a>. Give a detailed description of the problem, the location (including the address) and the date and time of the call. The Street Maintenance Division will review and inspect the location, usually within 24 hours; in most cases the location will be patched within 48 hours, weather permitting. Permanent repair will take longer, depending on the cause and extent of the defect.</p> <p>In general, the City avoids the use of brick sidewalks because of issues with wheelchair accessibility, pedestrian trip hazards, and maintenance costs. However, the City will repair and maintain existing brick sidewalks.</p>
<b>T13</b>	Promote the creation of a bus route from Porter Square to Kendall Square.	This route is currently served by other MBTA lines. The Red Line subway connects Porter Square to Kendall Square, and the 83 bus route connects Porter Square through Inman Square to Central Square, where there is also a Red Line connection.

## **TRANSPORTATION Recommendations and Action Plan**

<b>Rec. Type &amp; Number</b>	<b>2008 Update Recommendations</b>	<b>Current Status and Planned Action</b>
<b>T14</b>	Ensure the provision of pedestrian access through institutional campuses.	The City, through the Planning Board and through neighborhood working groups, engages in ongoing dialogues with universities and encourages campus development that supports pedestrian travel. In some cases pedestrian access is required, for instance, the zoning for the Hammond and Gorham Streets Transition Overlay District requires that at least two pedestrian pathways be provided through the campus area.
<b>T15</b>	Encourage the MBTA to fix the escalators at Porter Square Station.	The MBTA is undertaking projects to improve accessibility across the system, including at Porter and Harvard stations. Construction of an additional elevator at Harvard station is expected to begin this year and to be completed in 2009. Replacement of existing elevators and the addition of a new elevator at Porter Square are expected to begin in 2009. Elevators and escalators are maintained through a service contract with KONE, Inc. Information is available at <a href="http://www.mbta.com/about_the_mbta/accessibility">www.mbta.com/about_the_mbta/accessibility</a> .
<b>T16</b>	Investigate the perceived increase in cut-through traffic on neighborhood streets, including Museum, Carver, and Wendell, over the past two to three years. Explore the possibility that GPS navigation systems or online wayfinding systems might be identifying these neighborhood streets as desired routes from Beacon Street in Somerville to parts of Massachusetts Avenue or Harvard University.	It is difficult to determine whether the increasing use of GPS navigation or wayfinding systems are having a significant impact on traffic patterns in Cambridge. Further, the City is not able to influence the design and route choices of these systems. The current pattern of one way streets and the traffic calming in the neighborhood was developed to deter cut through traffic and to keep speeds of vehicles using the streets low. It is not possible to eliminate cut through traffic, but the City works to keep speeds low by implementing traffic calming measures. Any specific issues related to traffic on neighborhood streets can be reported to the Traffic, Parking and Transportation Department at 617-349-4700.

### ■ **ACTION ITEM - Timeframe**

Short Range - less than 2 years; Medium Range - 2-6 years;  
Long Range - 6-10 years

## **HOUSING Recommendations and Action Plan**

<b>Rec. Type &amp; Number</b>	<b>2008 Update Recommendations</b>	<b>Current Status and Planned Action</b>
<b>H1</b>	Explore opportunities for smaller-scale affordable housing that is appropriate to the neighborhood character. The [Cambridge Housing Authority] building at Massachusetts Avenue and Garfield Street is a good example of a well-designed affordable housing project.	<p>The City and its non-profit development partners work actively to develop affordable housing throughout Cambridge. Projects have to follow zoning and permitting procedures, and are carefully designed to fit with the character of the existing neighborhood. Often they involve the reuse of existing buildings, as with the conversion of the former Squirrel Brand candy factory to 18 affordable units, and the creation of 9 affordable units in the VFW building on Massachusetts Avenue near Russell Street. New affordable housing tends not to take the form of single-family homes because such development is not cost-feasible, but Home Improvement Programs are offered to support renovations to existing 1-to-4 unit houses where the units are kept affordable.</p> <p>Information is available at <a href="http://www.cambridgema.gov/cdd/hsg">www.cambridgema.gov/cdd/hsg</a>.</p>
<b>H2</b>	Promote incentives for private owners of small residences to sell or rent their units at affordable costs.	<p>The City and its non-profit development partners offer programs to assist residential property owners who keep their rents affordable. Homeowner's Rehab, Inc.'s Home Improvement Program (HIP) and the Cambridge Neighborhood Affordable Housing Services (CNAHS) program offer zero-interest or low-interest loans to renovate housing units if rents are kept affordable. The Cambridge Lead-Safe program also offers no-interest, forgivable loans to remove lead from housing units occupied by low- to moderate-income households.</p> <p>The City also offers a free First Time Homebuyer Class open to all Cambridge residents. Upon completion of this class, income-eligible homebuyers may receive financial assistance from the City. Homebuyers receiving assistance must agree to restrictions on resale price, thus keeping those homes affordable into the future.</p>
<b>H3</b>	Universities should play a role in the provision of affordable housing. They should do this by providing student housing that is an attractive and affordable alternative to living off campus, should consider providing housing for their larger communities of faculty, staff, and alumni, and should provide property or other resources to create affordable community housing where possible.	<p>The Cambridge Growth Policy (#52) states, "The city's major educational institutions should be encouraged to provide housing for their respective faculties, students and staff through additions to the city's inventory of housing units." Universities report on their plans for housing students and other members of their communities through the annual Town-Gown process and discussions with the Planning Board and community members. Currently, Lesley University is constructing new undergraduate housing on Massachusetts Ave at Wendell Street, and has purchased some dormitory buildings from the Episcopal Divinity School on Brattle Street to house its growing student population. Universities are also encouraged to participate in the development of community housing and the provision of affordable housing units in the city, and both Harvard and MIT have been involved in various such projects over time.</p>
<b>H4</b>	Encourage the provision of housing that is suitable for families with children.	<p>It is a priority of the City Council and the Cambridge Affordable Housing Trust to provide affordable units that are designed and sized appropriately for families with children. Some recent examples of projects include Columbia Court in Area Four, which contains thirteen affordable two-bedroom and three-bedroom condos, and 2495 Massachusetts Avenue in North Cambridge, which contains fourteen affordable condos, thirteen of which are three-bedroom units.</p>

## HOUSING Recommendations and Action Plan

<i>Rec. Type &amp; Number</i>	<i>2008 Update Recommendations</i>	<i>Current Status and Planned Action</i>
<b>H5</b>	Encourage "aging in place" by providing housing and services that are appropriate for seniors.	<p>■ <b>PLANNING IN PROGRESS – SHORT RANGE:</b> In response to public interest in elderly living in Cambridge, the Community Development Department is undertaking a "Planning for Aging" study exploring planning issues that affect safety, health, mobility and independent living for Cambridge residents throughout the life cycle. Planning may involve research, public discussion and formulation of recommendations, and will involve coordination with other City programs including the Council on Aging.</p>
<b>H6</b>	Conduct outreach and provide information to the public about affordable housing opportunities.	<p>The City's Housing Division actively promotes affordable housing opportunities and programs to Cambridge residents in a variety of ways. The Housing Division maintains a database of households that are interested in affordable units, and contacts those households selectively when opportunities arise that would be appropriate for them. In addition, when units become available, the Housing Division advertises to community organizations and service providers, and sends flyers to elementary schools for schoolchildren to bring home. Opportunities are also advertised on the City's website, through e-mail, and in newspapers including the Cambridge Chronicle and Tab. Contact the Housing Division at 617-346-4622 if you or your organization would like to be added to the outreach list.</p>
<b>H7</b>	<p>Provide the following information about housing in Cambridge:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the current income guidelines for affordable housing?</li> <li>• What are the limitations on how many individuals you can rent a unit to?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Income guidelines for affordable housing programs are set by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development and are updated annually. While income limits vary by program, most housing programs limit eligibility to households earning less than 80% of the area median income. Current information is available on the web at: <a href="http://www.cambridgema.gov/cdd/hsg/hsg_inclimits.html">www.cambridgema.gov/cdd/hsg/hsg_inclimits.html</a></li> <li>• As defined in the Cambridge Zoning Ordinance, the occupancy limit for a dwelling unit is one family, which can contain no more than three unrelated persons. However, certain protected groups such as persons with disabilities may be defined as a "family" for housing occupancy purposes regardless of whether they are actually related.</li> </ul>

■ **ACTION ITEM - Timeframe**

Short Range - less than 2 years; Medium Range - 2-6 years;  
Long Range - 6-10 years

## **HOUSING Recommendations and Action Plan**

<b>Rec. Type &amp; Number</b>	<b>2008 Update Recommendations</b>	<b>Current Status and Planned Action</b>
<b>H8</b>	<p>Provide the following information about the neighborhood and city:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What is the mix of rental vs. ownership housing in the neighborhood? What mix is considered appropriate?</li><li>• What part of the workforce lives and works in Cambridge?</li><li>• What is the mix of students vs. non-students in rental housing?</li></ul>	<p>The Community Development Department makes a range of information from the Census and other sources available on its web page. See <a href="http://www.cambridgema.gov/cdd/data">www.cambridgema.gov/cdd/data</a> for a complete summary of information.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• According to information from the 2000 US Census, 29% of the housing units in the Agassiz neighborhood are owner-occupied, 67% are rented, and 4% are considered vacant. Citywide, 31% of units are owner-occupied, 64% are rented, and 5% are vacant. Census information shows that the proportion of owner-occupied units has been slowly increasing, both in Agassiz and citywide.</li><li>• According to the 2000 Census, about 22% of the Cambridge workforce lives in Cambridge while about 32% lives in the abutting towns of Arlington, Belmont, Boston, Brookline, Somerville, and Watertown. Both of these proportions have been decreasing over past decades, while the number of people working in Cambridge has increased significantly.</li><li>• According to the 2000 Census, 2,374 Agassiz residents are currently enrolled in college or graduate school out of a total neighborhood population of 5,241. However, most of these students – close to 1,500 – live in on-campus dormitories or other university-affiliated group housing. Therefore, an estimated 800 to 900 students are living in non-institutional neighborhood housing, making up about 22% to 25% of the Agassiz residents who live in typical apartment or condo units. These residents are most likely to be graduate students, since Cambridge universities house nearly all of their undergraduates on campus. These figures have not changed significantly between 1980 and 2000.</li></ul>



## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT Recommendations and Action Plan**

<b>Rec. Type &amp; Number</b>	<b>2008 Update Recommendations</b>	<b>Current Status and Planned Action</b>
<b>ED4</b>	Assist in promoting and advertising small, local, independent businesses to neighborhood residents. The "Shop and Eat on Mass Ave" map is a good example of a way to promote local business.	The City has provided information from its business database as well as technical expertise to help in creating materials such as the "Shop and Eat on Mass Ave" map. However, the City does not provide direct funding to support private advertising ventures.
<b>ED5</b>	Work to expedite the filling of vacant retail spaces with new businesses. If storefronts stay vacant for long, consider alternative temporary uses such as art displays.	The City's Economic Development staff work with landlords and prospective business owners to help match businesses to available commercial spaces. Generally, empty spaces do not remain vacant for long enough to make temporary uses worthwhile; however, such uses can be explored in situations where they are amenable to landlords.
<b>ED6</b>	Encourage the preservation of retail in the area of Massachusetts Avenue between Everett and Wendell Streets. Address the potential impacts of the new Harvard Law School development.	This area was discussed in the series of "Lower Mass Ave" planning meetings in 2003-2005; however, no zoning change was enacted. Though the area is zoned for residential use, there is no indication that the existing retail spaces in that section of Mass Ave will be converted to other uses in the near future. Harvard Law School's approved development plan shows new development occurring only on existing campus sites and not displacing existing retail sites. The Law School's new building on Mass Ave is planned to include a campus bookstore.
<b>ED7</b>	<p>Communicate with neighbors on what kinds of businesses they would like to have serving the neighborhood. For example, neighborhood residents are interested in having:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More establishments like bakeries and coffee shops where community members can meet.</li> <li>• An ice cream store.</li> </ul>	Staff from the Economic Development division meet regularly with the Porter Square Neighbors Association to help address business-related issues where appropriate. Staff can work with the PSNA to identify types of new businesses that may be desirable for the neighborhood, and can contact existing or prospective business owners to let them know about opportunities for locating in the area. Individuals with questions or suggestions should contact the Economic Development Division at 617-349-4637.

### **■ ACTION ITEM - Timeframe**

Short Range - less than 2 years; Medium Range - 2-6 years;  
Long Range - 6-10 years

## OPEN SPACE Recommendations and Action Plan

<i>Rec. Type &amp; Number</i>	<i>2008 Update Recommendations</i>	<i>Current Status and Planned Action</i>
<b>OS1</b>	Explore ways to increase the amount of public open space in the neighborhood.	<p>One of the City's primary open space planning goals is to increase the amount of open space in the city, especially in underserved residential areas such as the neighborhoods around Porter Square. The City pursues opportunities to acquire open space as they arise, but acquisition can be challenging given the small amount of available land, high land prices, and a competitive real estate market.</p> <p>Another strategy the City utilizes to expand open space is to require large development projects to set aside some open space for public use as part of the project. This is often required by zoning in Planned Unit Developments and other Overlay Districts. While there are no such zoning requirements in Agassiz, a large project might be required to provide some open space as part of its Project Review Special Permit provisions, where that would mitigate some of the potential impacts of the proposed development.</p>
<b>OS2</b>	Explore ways to improve open space that is privately-owned but usable by the public. Some possibilities include making these spaces more physically accessible by improving public pathways and crosswalks, increasing awareness of these areas among neighborhood residents, and encouraging institutions to use these spaces for community events. Examples include the space surrounding the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the open space in the new Harvard North Yard development area.	The Community Development Department explores ways to enhance the public enjoyment of private but accessible open spaces. This might be accomplished by improving public awareness of such open spaces or by making improvements to the public realm around them. In some areas in Cambridge, special permits for large development projects have included requirements that some open space be open to the public. In Agassiz, recently approved Harvard University development will provide public access through open spaces, in accordance with City development goals. In some cases, public access might be secured through the negotiation of public easements.
<b>OS3</b>	Encourage new development to include small open spaces that may or may not necessarily be public. Possibilities include open space above underground parking, rooftop open spaces, open "vistas" through developed areas, and open space created by allowing the shifting of development rights onto adjacent lots.	<p>The Zoning Ordinance requires a minimum amount of private open space be provided for most types of new development. Many large projects must undergo review by the Planning Board, which will offer guidance on the quality of the open space provided. Issues such as public accessibility, landscape design, and view corridors are considered in the Planning Board's review, and requirements are noted in the special permits granted for these projects.</p> <p>■ <b>UNDER CONSIDERATION – SHORT RANGE:</b> As part of a "green zoning" initiative, the Community Development Department is considering ways to provide incentives for environmentally-sensitive design features in new development.</p>
<b>OS4</b>	Trees are important to the neighborhood. Explore ways to improve the planting and maintenance of public street trees. Possibilities include an "Adopt a Tree" program or increased information to residents and property owners about tree planting and maintenance.	<p>Tree planting and maintenance are coordinated by the Parks and Urban Forestry division of the Department of Public Works. Residents can assist with the planting of street trees through the Client Tree Program, in which the resident pays a portion of the cost of planting a tree and agrees to assist with watering and maintenance during the first few years of planting. Information is available by calling 617-349-6433.</p> <p>The City is also actively working to fund tree planting and maintenance through other means, such as development requirements, grant funding from institutions and other government programs.</p>

## OPEN SPACE Recommendations and Action Plan

<i>Rec. Type &amp; Number</i>	<i>2008 Update Recommendations</i>	<i>Current Status and Planned Action</i>
<b>OS5</b>	Sacramento Field is important to the neighborhood as its primary large public park. Work to improve the space by clarifying and beautifying the entrance and by adding benches and other seating.	<p>■ <b>FUTURE ACTION – MEDIUM RANGE:</b> Improvements to Sacramento Field are included in Cambridge's Open Space Plan to occur within the next 4-7 years. Park improvements undertaken by the City aim to upgrade the recreational facilities in an area, such as playground equipment and athletic fields, as well as improving the attractiveness of an area for passive uses such as walking, relaxing, and enjoying fresh air. Recent park projects have typically involved improvements to park entrances and pathways as well as the inclusion of benches and small areas with table seating in appropriate locations.</p>
<b>OS6</b>	Explore possibilities for new open space in the Porter Square area. Possibilities may include open space in future plans for the Porter Square Station air rights, or as part of Lesley University's plans for the North Prospect Church site (which currently includes private open space that is used by neighbors).	The City will continue to explore possibilities for new open space as Lesley University plans for its future use of the area. Discussion among neighbors, Lesley representatives, and City officials will occur through meetings of the Lesley Working Group. The City will also continue to explore opportunities when the MBTA proceeds with plans for development of the air rights above Porter Station.
<b>OS7</b>	Work with the MBTA to improve the Porter Square Station plaza by making it feel safer, discouraging sleeping in the plaza, and moving trash receptacles away from benches.	In 2004, the City submitted a set of recommendations to the MBTA for improving the Porter Square plaza area. The MBTA performed some work in accordance with these recommendations in 2005. The most recent Request for Proposals issued by the MBTA for development of the air rights above Porter Station suggested that oversight and maintenance of the plaza would become the responsibility of the air rights lessee. This issue may be clarified when the MBTA announces its future plan regarding the air rights.
<b>OS8</b>	Explore whether there is demand for additional community gardening space in the neighborhood and whether there might be opportunities to provide more.	The Sacramento community garden is a well-utilized space, with most garden plots assigned to community members and an annual turnover of plots allowing people to be taken off of a short waiting list. The amount of gardening space seems to satisfy the neighborhood demand, given the short waiting list and healthy turnover rate. The addition of a raised bed has also made gardening more accessible to elderly people and people with disabilities. For information about the City's community gardening program contact the Conservation Commission at 617-349-4680.
<b>OS9</b>	Explore the possibility of a farmers' market for the Porter Square area.	Most farmers markets in the area are members of the Federation of Massachusetts Farmers Markets. If community members want to pursue the idea of a farmers market in Porter Square, FMFM staff should be consulted for their advice and expertise in coordinating local markets. More information at <a href="http://www.massfarmersmarkets.org">www.massfarmersmarkets.org</a> .

■ **ACTION ITEM - Timeframe**

Short Range - less than 2 years; Medium Range - 2-6 years;  
Long Range - 6-10 years

**OPEN SPACE Recommendations and Action Plan**

<b>Rec. Type &amp; Number</b>	<b>2008 Update Recommendations</b>	<b>Current Status and Planned Action</b>
<b>OS10</b>	Address the issue of groups loitering in Alden Park at night.	Alden Park has official signage indicating that the hours of operation are dawn to dusk. Individuals should not be using the playground after dark, and any violations should be reported to the Cambridge Police at 617-349-3301.
<b>OS11</b>	Describe the planned improvements to Cambridge Common.	<p>■ <b>FUTURE ACTION – SHORT RANGE:</b> Improvements to Cambridge Common are planned to occur in two different projects. In one project, the playground area will be upgraded with all new play equipment, water play, surfacing and other features. The playground will be designed to accommodate children of all abilities, and to encourage interactive, creative play. Separately, the pathways, lighting, furniture and landscaping around the entire Common will be improved. The playground will be in construction in early 2009, and preliminary planning and design work for the pathways project is ongoing.</p>

■ **ACTION ITEM - Timeframe**  
 Short Range - less than 2 years; Medium Range - 2-6 years;  
 Long Range - 6-10 years

# Agassiz Neighborhood Study

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### **APPENDIX:**

#### *Recommendations from 2003 Agassiz Neighborhood Study*



**APPENDIX: RECOMMENDATIONS FROM 2003 AGASSIZ NEIGHBORHOOD STUDY**

The following set of recommendations from the 2003 Agassiz Neighborhood Study and the progress reports for each were presented for review and discussion at the first Agassiz Neighborhood Study Update meeting in November, 2007.

**Appendix:**

**LAND USE AND URBAN DESIGN Recommendations from 2003 Original Neighborhood Study**

<b>Rec. Type &amp; Number</b>	<b>2003 Study Recommendations</b>	<b>Progress and Status to-Date</b>
<b>LU1</b>	Harvard University should implement the recommendations of the Hammond/Gorham edge committee, in order to create a more friendly campus edge with open quadrangles.	Harvard University submitted zoning recommendations to the Cambridge Planning Board, which were adopted by the City Council as the Hammond and Gorham Streets Transition Overlay District (Section 20.11) in 2002. In 2005, Harvard University received a special permit for development of a laboratory and classroom building adjacent to this transition area, deciding to retain most of the neighborhood edge as a landscaped green open space. Construction is underway.
<b>LU2</b>	The City's Community Development Department (CDD) should prepare an inventory of lots by size in the C-1 district showing the potential build out of lots over 6,000 square feet. This inventory should be presented to the Agassiz Neighborhood Council.	<b>■ COMPLETED:</b> An analysis of the remaining development potential of parcels in the Residence C-1 district was presented to the Agassiz Neighborhood Council in June 2005. A summary of this analysis is provided on pages 19-21 of this report.
<b>LU3</b>	The Agassiz neighborhood should consider establishing a neighborhood conservation district.	Ten registered voters may petition to begin the process of designating a Neighborhood Conservation District. The process involves a year-long study of the area by a Study Committee, a review and recommendation by the Cambridge Historical Commission, and final approval by the City Council. No such process has been initiated in Agassiz within the past four years. Information at <a href="http://www.cambridgema.gov/historic">www.cambridgema.gov/historic</a> .
<b>LU4</b>	A transition buffer zone should be created where the C-2A District abuts the C-1 District (where Lesley University abuts the neighborhood).	Discussions regarding Lesley University's campus planning efforts are being held through the Lesley Working Group, with representatives from neighborhood residents, Lesley, and the City. Currently, the regulations in Section 5.31.1(g) of the zoning ordinance require that buildings in the Residence C-2A district abutting the Residence C-1 district must follow the same minimum yard setback formula that applies in the Residence C-1 district, within 125 feet of the district edge.

**■ ACTION ITEM - Timeframe**  
 Short Range - less than 2 years; Medium Range - 2-6 years;  
 Long Range - 6-10 years

**Appendix:**

**LAND USE AND URBAN DESIGN Recommendations from 2003 Original Neighborhood Study**

<b>Rec. Type &amp; Number</b>	<b>2003 Study Recommendations</b>	<b>Progress and Status to-Date</b>
<b>UD1</b>	New buildings should be harmonious with existing neighborhood residential aesthetics.	Many new development projects, including most developments of 50,000 square feet of floor area or more in commercial and high-density residential districts, are required to undergo review and permitting by the Planning Board. The Planning Board reviews the urban design and transportation features of a proposed development to ensure that they are appropriate to the existing neighborhood context. In addition, certain areas have specific design guidelines, such as the North Massachusetts Avenue Design Guidelines, which are intended to ensure that future development is compatible with the existing context.
<b>UD2</b>	Pedestrian rights-of-way in the neighborhood should be preserved and maintained. Example: Francis Avenue to Museum Street.	Pedestrian access is one of the criteria addressed by the Planning Board in granting special permits for large projects. In addition, the Zoning Ordinance or a specific special permit may require that certain pedestrian routes within a project area remain open to the public. The Hammond and Gorham Streets Transition Overlay District, adopted into the zoning ordinance in 2002, specifies that at least three pedestrian points of access should be provided to allow residents to pass through that area.
<b>UD3</b>	Utility companies should be encouraged to place utilities underground whenever feasible.	The City encourages the placement of cables underground where practical, especially communications cables leading to major points of access and private commercial establishments. Utility lines are regulated through the Pole and Conduit Commission, and are reviewed by the Planning Board during special permit project review. However, placing existing utilities underground is not always feasible due to logistic difficulties and higher costs.
<b>UD4</b>	The City should plant and maintain street trees.	The City has an arborist and urban forestry staff that is responsible for the planting and maintenance of trees on public property. About 150-300 new public trees are planted annually across the city, and each tree is pruned once every four to five years, in addition to other maintenance that may be required in the interim. The next tree pruning cycle for Agassiz is scheduled for 2009. For information, contact the Parks and Forestry Division of the Department of Public Works at 617-349-4880.

**Appendix:**

**INSTITUTIONAL PLANNING Recommendations from 2003 Original Neighborhood Study**

<b>Rec. Type &amp; Number</b>	<b>2003 Study Recommendations</b>	<b>Progress and Status to-Date</b>
<b>I1</b>	In conjunction with their residential projects, Harvard and Lesley should consider including housing for their hourly-wage employees.	Universities are encouraged by the City to provide housing for their own populations as well as affordable housing for the larger community where appropriate. In conjunction with its development of graduate student housing in the Riverside neighborhood, Harvard is developing 33 units of affordable housing in the former "Switch House" building on Blackstone Street.
<b>I2</b>	Harvard and Lesley should inform Cambridge residents of upcoming events open to the public.	Harvard and Lesley both post event listings on the web and in campus publications. See: <a href="http://www.news.harvard.edu/calendar/gazette">www.news.harvard.edu/calendar/gazette</a> and <a href="http://events.lesley.edu">events.lesley.edu</a> .
<b>LES1</b>	The University should improve the landscaping at the Oxford Street side of 47 Oxford Street.	To direct comments and questions to Lesley University officials, contact the Public Affairs office at 617-349-8525 or <a href="mailto:publicaffairs@lesley.edu">publicaffairs@lesley.edu</a> .
<b>LES2</b>	Lesley should work with a neighborhood committee to discuss development issues with Agassiz.	In 2006, the City established the Lesley Working Group as a forum for neighbors, university representatives, and City officials to discuss issues related to current campus development.

**Appendix:****TRANSPORTATION Recommendations from 2003 Original Neighborhood Study**

<b>Rec. Type &amp; Number</b>	<b>2003 Study Recommendations</b>	<b>Progress and Status to-Date</b>
<b>T1</b>	Encourage non-automobile travel.	The City has adopted a number of policies and measures to encourage non-automobile travel in Cambridge and continues to address the issue on an ongoing basis. Businesses and property developers that generate new parking demand must adhere to the Parking and Transportation Demand Management Ordinance (adopted in 1998), which requires ongoing reductions of commuter car trips into the city. Large projects that undergo review by the City's Planning Board are often required to mitigate traffic and parking impacts by, among other measures, including facilities and programs to support walking, bicycling, and public transportation. The Environmental and Transportation Planning Division of the Community Development Department works to improve public facilities for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users throughout the city, with the input of the citizen Pedestrian Committee and Bicycle Committee. The City also supports the EZRide shuttle service and raises awareness of alternative transportation options through publicity and special events, particularly during annual "GoGreen Month" activities.
<b>T2</b>	Encourage Harvard and Lesley Universities to implement intra-city transportation options for their communities.	Both Harvard and Lesley operate shuttle services connecting the various parts of their campuses. In addition, the "m2" shuttle connecting Harvard's main campus to the Longwood Medical Area and other locations is available to the general public for a \$2.30 per ride fare.
<b>T3</b>	Encourage the MBTA to institute a bus route from Porter Square to Kendall Square along Beacon St and Hampshire St. Although this is a natural transportation corridor, no public transport goes along the length of this route.	The City works actively with the MBTA on issues related to bus and other transit service in Cambridge. Currently, Porter and Kendall Squares are connected by the Red Line, and the #83 bus connects North Cambridge to Porter, Inman, and Central Squares via Beacon, Hampshire and Prospect Streets.
<b>T4</b>	Support efforts to promote system-wide improvements in MBTA bus service. Example: Harvard Square to Coolidge Corner.	The City meets regularly with MBTA staff to discuss bus service-related issues and improvements in Cambridge, and is represented on the MBTA Advisory Board. In addition, the City undertakes some infrastructure improvements, including the recent installation of 33 new Cemusa shelters at many bus stops throughout Cambridge and the posting of schedules along some bus routes.
<b>T5</b>	Encourage alternative fuel transportation.	The 2003 Cambridge Climate Protection Plan outlines an overall strategy for reducing greenhouse gases throughout the city. Encouraging alternative fuel use, such as biodiesel, as well as hybrid electric vehicles, is a part of this overall strategy. As of 2005, the Cambridge Department of Public Works has the capacity to run most of its truck fleet on "B20" (a 20% biodiesel blend) and purchases biodiesel fuel when it is cost-feasible. Harvard University Transportation Services has also converted its shuttle fleet to biodiesel.

**Appendix:**

**TRANSPORTATION Recommendations from 2003 Original Neighborhood Study**

<b>Rec. Type &amp; Number</b>	<b>2003 Study Recommendations</b>	<b>Progress and Status to-Date</b>
<b>T6</b>	Support efforts to implement urban ring transit system.	Planning for future phases of the Urban Ring transit system is now being coordinated by the state Executive Office of Transportation (EOT). The City has staff representatives on its Citizens Advisory Committee and advises on other issues specific to Cambridge. The EOT is currently in the process of conducting public meetings and developing a Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the project, after which it can apply for funding assistance through the Federal "New Starts" transit program. Information at <a href="http://www.theurbanring.com">www.theurbanring.com</a> .
<b>T7</b>	Implement traffic calming as neighborhood streets are resurfaced.	Traffic calming projects are implemented at strategic locations along streets that are being resurfaced or reconstructed as part of the City's overall infrastructure improvement program. About three or four traffic calming projects are undertaken annually throughout the city. For information, contact the Traffic Calming program manager at 617-349-4655.
<b>T8</b>	Promote safer pedestrian crossings at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Massachusetts Avenue at Garfield Street.</li> <li>b. Oxford Street at Kirkland Street. The Committee supports Harvard's relocation of the shuttle stop to the Memorial Hall circular driveway.</li> <li>c. The exit from the Science Center on Oxford Street.</li> <li>d. Kirkland Street at Irving Street. The existing crosswalk does not correspond to the one at Cambridge and Irving Street, disrupting a logical pedestrian route. Crosswalks should be on both sides of the street.</li> <li>e. Kirkland Street at Holden Street. At present there is only a crosswalk on the west side of the street, not the east side. Crosswalks should be on both sides of the street.</li> <li>f. The end of Holden Street to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences park entrances.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The signage and crosswalk striping were upgraded in 2003. This will be a potential location for curb bump-outs if roadway construction occurs in the future.</li> <li>b. Harvard's shuttle stop is currently located at the Memorial Hall driveway. Traffic calming is planned as a future long-range improvement following the planned reconstruction of Oxford Street.</li> <li>c. A marked crosswalk exists at this location.</li> <li>d. A crosswalk is not planned for the east side of the intersection because there is currently no sidewalk ramp, and at least two parking spaces would need to be removed to provide adequate sight lines for a new crosswalk.</li> <li>e. The existing crosswalk was re-marked to current standards in 2003. A crosswalk is not currently planned for the east side because there is no sidewalk ramp.</li> <li>f. During discussion of a previous traffic calming project in this area, residents determined that a crosswalk would not be appropriate at this location.</li> </ul>
<b>T9</b>	Make resident only parking at night on Oxford Street from Everett to Wendell.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>COMPLETED:</b> In 2004, the parking signage was changed on the west side of Oxford from Everett to Wendell and the east side of Oxford from Everett to Hammond to allow two-hour parking 8am–6pm and resident permit parking 6pm–8am.</li> </ul>
<b>T10</b>	Provide Zipcar spaces in Harvard and/ or Lesley parking lots.	Currently, there is a Zipcar in the parking lot of Lesley University's Porter Exchange building, and car-sharing spaces will be required in new Harvard University projects in Agassiz. Parking spaces for car-sharing services are now often required as traffic mitigation measures for projects requiring a special permit.

**Appendix:**  
**HOUSING Recommendations from 2003 Original Neighborhood Study**

<b>Rec. Type &amp; Number</b>	<b>2003 Study Recommendations</b>	<b>Progress and Status to-Date</b>
<b>H1</b>	In order to maintain a diverse community, the City of Cambridge should explore affordable housing opportunities in the Agassiz neighborhood as they may arise.	Through the Housing Division of the Community Development Department, the City works with non-profit partners and the Cambridge Affordable Housing Trust to create and preserve affordable housing units throughout the city. Since 1995, more than 2,800 affordable units have been created or preserved across Cambridge due to these efforts. Residents are encouraged to notify the City of opportunities that may arise as properties are placed on the market. Contact the Housing Division at 617-349-4622.  Cambridge also adopted an Inclusionary Zoning ordinance in 1998, which requires housing developments of ten or more units to include a minimum percentage of affordable units for low- and moderate-income households.
<b>H2</b>	The City should explore the possibility of allowing single room occupancy buildings in more residential districts and acquiring land or structures for this use.	In moderate-to-high-density residential districts, including Residence C-1 and C-2A (but not including Residence B), some types of single room occupancy housing are allowed. There is also no required minimum size for a residential unit, however there is a maximum number of units that can be built on any given site.
<b>H3</b>	The Committee recognizes that, by developing dormitories, institutions help to reduce pressure on other renters in the neighborhood. However, any new student housing construction in the Agassiz neighborhood should be low-density and compatible with the existing scale and character of the neighborhood.	The City's Growth Policy encourages universities to provide housing for its students on their campuses, while it also encourages preservation of the scale and character of existing residential neighborhoods. The Zoning Ordinance requires that many large institutional projects, such as dormitories, receive a project review special permit from the Planning Board, which considers the potential impacts of a project on existing neighborhood character. The Institutional Use requirements in Article 4 of the Zoning Ordinance restrict dormitory uses in lower-density residential zoning districts.
<b>H4</b>	The City of Cambridge should pursue the affordable housing funds available through the Community Preservation Act.	Cambridge dedicates the majority of its Community Preservation Act (CPA) funding to the Cambridge Affordable Housing Trust, which, along with funding from a variety of other sources, funds the acquisition, development, and improvement of affordable housing units. In the first seven years of the City's implementation of the CPA program, Cambridge has dedicated over \$47 million in CPA funds to affordable housing.

<p><b>■ ACTION ITEM - Timeframe</b></p> <p>Short Range - less than 2 years; Medium Range - 2-6 years;          Long Range - 6-10 years</p>
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**Appendix:**

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT Recommendations from 2003 Original Neighborhood Study**

<b>Rec. Type &amp; Number</b>	<b>2003 Study Recommendations</b>	<b>Progress and Status to-Date</b>
<b>ED1</b>	The Committee encourages the creation of pedestrian-friendly, neighborhood-oriented uses of commercial spaces along Massachusetts Avenue and throughout the Agassiz neighborhood.	<p>■ <b>COMPLETED STUDY:</b> In 2003-2005, the Community Development Department held a series of community discussions about the future of ground-floor commercial spaces on Massachusetts Avenue. Some zoning modifications were suggested that might provide an incentive to retain small retail spaces if new residential or institutional development occurred along the avenue, but the City Council ultimately decided not to support this zoning proposal.</p> <p>Massachusetts Avenue in Agassiz continues to be a vibrant commercial area featuring many small, independent, neighborhood-oriented businesses. The Economic Development division of the Community Development Department supports local business through façade and signage improvement programs, retail workshops, small business classes, and one-on-one consulting. A few Massachusetts Avenue businesses have participated in the City's economic development programs. Information is available on the web at <a href="http://www.cambridgema.gov/cdd/ed">www.cambridgema.gov/cdd/ed</a> or by calling 617-349-4637.</p>
<b>ED2</b>	The City should develop a formalized plan to communicate with the Agassiz Neighborhood Council about types of new businesses that would be useful in the neighborhood. Example: Currently, a bakery is needed in the neighborhood.	Staff in the Economic Development division are available to discuss small business goals or needs with neighborhood residents on request. Following discussions between neighborhood residents and Economic Development staff, a new Rosie's Bakery location opened on Massachusetts Avenue in 2005.
<b>ED3</b>	The Committee supports Harvard's established practice of reduced rents to diverse retail tenants.	

■ **ACTION ITEM - Timeframe**  
Short Range - less than 2 years; Medium Range - 2-6 years;  
Long Range - 6-10 years

**Appendix:**  
**OPEN SPACE Recommendations from 2003 Original Neighborhood Study**

<b>Rec. Type &amp; Number</b>	<b>2003 Study Recommendations</b>	<b>Progress and Status to-Date</b>
<b>OS1</b>	The City of Cambridge should work with the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) to explore the feasibility of constructing a park over the commuter rail line adjacent to the Porter Square T stop. If that fails, we recommend putting one of the many parking lots in the square underground and using the above ground area for a park. Porter Square is the location in Cambridge that is furthest from any parks, and creating a park over one of these locations is our most visionary and most expensive recommendation.	The work of the Green Ribbon Open Space Committee in 2000 identified Porter Square as a top priority area for new parks. Open space will be a topic of future planning discussions with the MBTA and Lesley University, which own much of the land in the area. The MBTA is also planning to issue a new request for proposals for leasing the “air rights” space above the station.
<b>OS2</b>	The City of Cambridge should pursue the open space preservation funds available through the Community Preservation Act.	In the first seven years of receiving Community Preservation Act (CPA) funding, Cambridge has dedicated about \$7 million to open space preservation projects. These have included improvements to the Fresh Pond Reservation and protection of land within the watershed that contributes to the municipal water supply. The City also funds open space projects through its Public Investment Fund and free cash appropriations, and actively pursues outside grant funding for qualifying projects.
<b>OS3</b>	<p>The Committee recommends enhancing the recreational use, especially the passive recreational use, of Sacramento Field.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The City of Cambridge should consider renaming Sacramento Field to Sacramento Park.</li> <li>• New signage should be placed at the main entrance to Sacramento Field on Sacramento Street.</li> <li>• The recently re-opened second public access route to Sacramento Field/Park should be maintained.</li> </ul>	<p>■ <b>FUTURE ACTION – MEDIUM RANGE:</b> Sacramento Field has been identified in the City’s Open Space Plan as an area for future renovation and landscape improvement. In park renovation projects, the City works to maximize the space’s function a place for recreation, relaxation and community gathering, as well as a space that beautifies the surrounding area and improves the natural environment. In doing so, the City pays careful attention to entrances, fencing, signage, furniture and plantings, and uses high-quality materials and equipment.</p>
<b>OS4</b>	Encourage the closing of Oxford Street for community celebrations.	Community organizations are encouraged to hold outdoor events that are open to the general public. An event in a public space requires advance approval from the City’s Special Events Committee. For information about special events, call 617-349-4846. A Temporary Street Closing Permit would also be required for a celebration in the street, which requires an application and written approval from abutters. Call 617-349-4700 for information about temporary street closings.
<b>OS5</b>	Encourage prompt removal of all graffiti by property owners - including City street signs and U.S. mailboxes.	The Department of Public Works operates a graffiti hotline at 617-349-6955 to report vandalism of public property for prompt clean-up and for information about removing graffiti from private property.

**Appendix:**

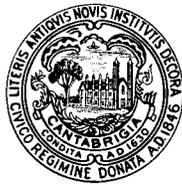
**OPEN SPACE Recommendations from 2003 Original Neighborhood Study**

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<b><i>Rec. Type &amp; Number</i></b>	<b><i>2003 Study Recommendations</i></b>	<b><i>Progress and Status to-Date</i></b>
<b>OS6</b>	Encourage the Agassiz Neighborhood Council to continue its tree-sponsorship program.	Residents, businesses and community groups are all encouraged to participate in the Client Tree Program and the Commemorative Tree Program. Residents may request that a new public tree be planted on the sidewalk or on their property within 20 feet of the sidewalk, with the resident or a neighborhood group paying a share of the cost to buy and plant the tree. If feasible, the City will also re-plant a tree in an existing sidewalk tree well at no cost to residents. For information, contact the Parks and Forestry Division of the Department of Public Works at 617-349-4880.
<b>OS7</b>	Encourage residents to take advantage of the City's sidewalk tree program.	See above.

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