AGASSIZ

NEIGHBORHOOD STUDY

A Joint Report of the

Agassiz Neighborhood Study Committee and

the Cambridge Community Development Department

▪ ▪ A G A S S I Z ▪ ▪

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The Agassiz Neighborhood Study Committee and the Community Development Department would like to thank all the Agassiz residents who participated in the public forums and committee meetings.

We would like to thank the Cambridge School Department for allowing us to hold meetings at the Baldwin School (formerly the Agassiz School) and also Terry Delancey and the Agassiz Neighborhood Council for their helpful cooperation.

Cover Photo: Sacramento Field

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Executive Summary

The Agassiz Neighborhood Study Committee met between April of 2000 and December 2001. During that time, the Study Committee heard presentations from City staff, discussed issues, and held public forums. Topics under consideration included housing, land use and zoning, urban design, transportation, open space, institutional uses, and economic development. Through this process of learning, discussing, gathering feedback from the neighborhood, and working toward consensus, the Committee developed recommendations to better the neighborhood.

The recommendations put forth by the Committee are as follows:

AGASSIZ STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS

Housing Recommendations

1. In order to maintain a diverse community, the City of Cambridge should explore affordable housing opportunities in the Agassiz neighborhood as they may arise.
2. The City should explore the possibility of allowing single room occupancy buildings in more residential districts and acquiring land or structures for this use.
3. 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.
4. The City of Cambridge should pursue the affordable housing funds available through the Community Preservation Act.

Land Use and Zoning Recommendations

1. Harvard University should implement the recommendations of the Hammond/ Gorham edge committee, in order to create a more friendly campus edge with open quadrangles.
2. 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.
3. The Agassiz neighborhood should consider establishing a neighborhood conservation district.
4. A transition buffer zone should be created where the C2-A District abuts the C-1 District (where Lesley University abuts the neighborhood).

Urban Design Recommendations

1. New buildings should be harmonious with existing neighborhood residential aesthetics.
2. Pedestrian rights-of-way in the neighborhood should be preserved and maintained. Example: Francis Avenue to Museum Street.
3. Utility companies should be encouraged to place utilities underground whenever feasible.
4. The City should plant and maintain street trees.

Transportation Recommendations

1. Encourage non-automobile travel.
2. Encourage Harvard and Lesley Universities to implement intra-city transportation options for their communities.
3. 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.
4. Support efforts to promote system-wide improvements in MBTA bus service. Example: Harvard Square to Coolidge Corner.
5. Encourage alternative fuel transportation.
6. Support efforts to implement urban ring transit system.
7. Implement traffic calming as neighborhood streets are resurfaced.
8. Promote safer pedestrian crossings at:
   a. Massachusetts Avenue at Garfield Street.
   b. Oxford Street at Kirkland Street. The Committee supports Harvard's relocation of the shuttle stop to the Memorial Hall circular driveway.
   c. The exit from the Science Center on Oxford Street.
   d. Kirkland Street at Irving Street. The existing crosswalk does not correspond to the one at Cambridge Street and Irving Street, disrupting a logical pedestrian route. Crosswalks should be on both sides of the street.
   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.
   f. The end of Holden Street to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences park entrances.
9. Make resident only parking at night on Oxford Street from Everett to Wendell.
10. Provide Zipcar spaces in Harvard and/ or Lesley parking lots.

Open Space Recommendations

1. 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.
2. The City of Cambridge should pursue the open space preservation funds available through the Community Preservation Act.
3. The Committee recommends enhancing the recreational use, especially the passive recreational use, of Sacramento Field.
   - The City of Cambridge should consider renaming Sacramento Field to Sacramento Park.
   - New signage should be placed at the main entrance to Sacramento Field on Sacramento Street.
   - The recently re-opened second public access route to Sacramento Field/Park should be maintained.
4. Encourage the closing of Oxford Street for community celebrations.
5. Encourage prompt removal of all graffiti by property owners - including City street signs and U.S. mailboxes.
6. Encourage the Agassiz Neighborhood Council to continue its tree-sponsorship program.
7. Encourage residents to take advantage of the City's sidewalk tree program.

Institutional Recommendations

1. In conjunction with their residential projects, Harvard and Lesley should consider including housing for their hourly-wage employees.

2. Harvard and Lesley should inform Cambridge residents of upcoming events open to the public.

Lesley University

1. The University should improve the landscaping at the Oxford Street side of 47 Oxford Street.
2. Lesley should work with a neighborhood committee to discuss development issues with Agassiz.

Harvard University

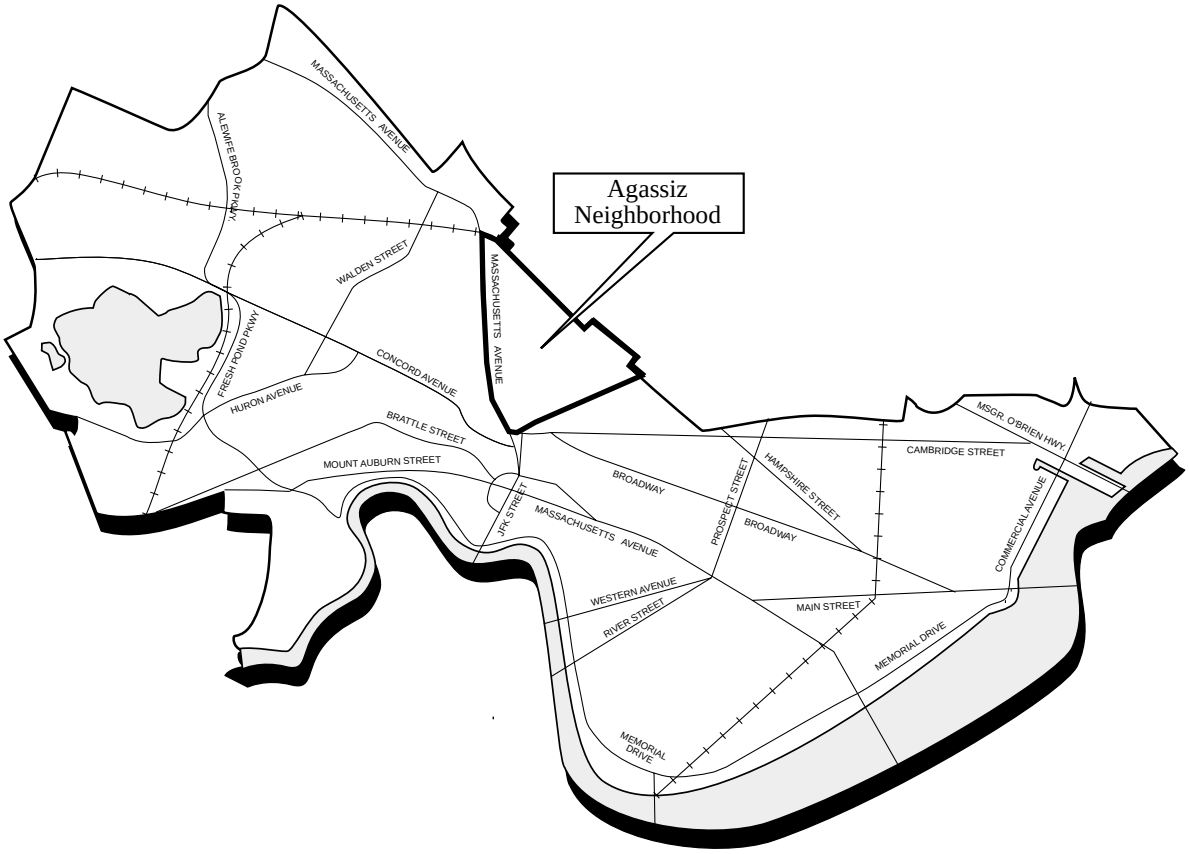
Note that Harvard University's proposals for the North Yard area were made public after the neighborhood study process for the Agassiz neighborhood was nearly complete. While this report recognizes the North Yard proposals, and provides recommendations regarding Harvard University, it does not offer an exhaustive review and analysis of the proposals or their effects on the neighborhood.

1. As the University considers the development of the North Yard, the Committee recommends the formation of a committee to work with Harvard on the issues of:
   - Density, height and open space of proposed development;
   - Construction impacts;
   - Cumulative impact of traffic;
   - Preserving neighborhood character and scale;
   - Preserving as much public use and space open to public use as possible;
   - Exploring options to reduce the traffic from the proposed new Harvard garage exiting onto Oxford Street, including:
     a) Making Everett two-way to accommodate ingress and egress.
     b) Making Divinity Way an entrance or exit for garage traffic.
     c) Using Francis/Bryant Street as entrance or exit for garage traffic.
     d) Restricting parking on Oxford Street between Everett and Wendell at peak vehicle hours.
2. The local Harvard museums should be requested to offer free admission to Cambridge residents and school groups.
3. The Committee supports Harvard's objective to extend the pattern of publicly accessible quadrangles to the neighborhood boundaries.
4. The City of Cambridge should encourage Harvard University to incorporate publicly accessible open space on Oxford Street/ Divinity school property.
5. The Committee requests that Harvard University landscape the existing parking lot on Oxford Street once underground parking is constructed.
6. The Committee recommends that Harvard move the existing shuttle bus location, as both shuttle buses and tour buses clog the Oxford and Kirkland Streets intersection.
7. All of the gates at the Academy of Arts and Sciences should remain open during posted hours.
8. Harvard Law School should involve the neighborhood early in its planning process.

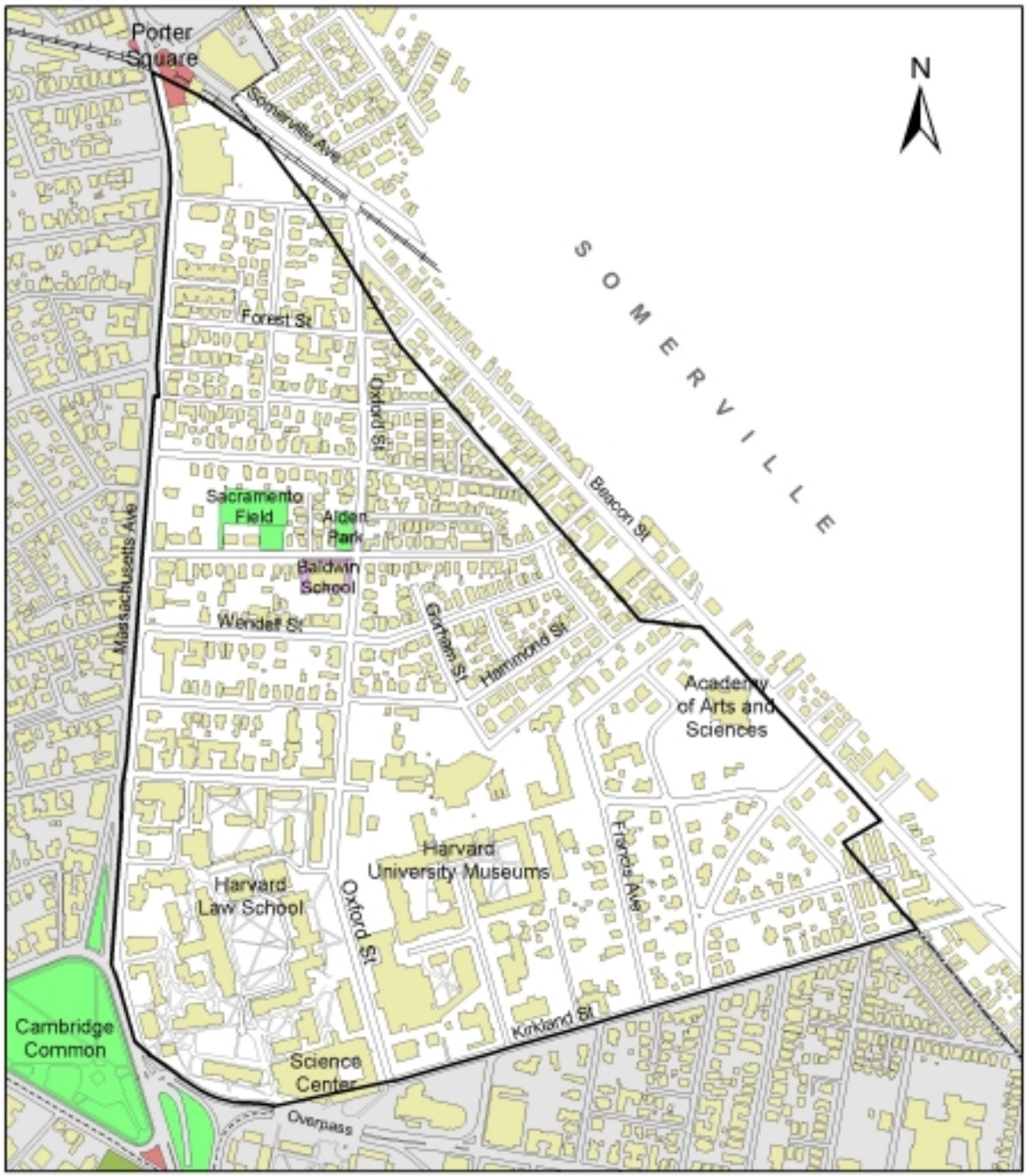
Economic Development Recommendations

1. The Committee encourages the creation of pedestrian-friendly, neighborhood-oriented uses of commercial spaces along Massachusetts Avenue and throughout the Agassiz neighborhood.
2. 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.
3. The Committee supports Harvard's established practice of reduced rents to diverse retail tenants.

City of Cambridge
Agassiz Neighborhood



City of Cambridge
Agassiz Neighborhood



Introduction

Neighborhood Study Process

During the 1980s, the City of Cambridge (along with the surrounding region), witnessed a wave of commercial growth and economic development. This growth expanded the City's tax base and created new jobs and opportunities for residents. While many residents welcomed this prosperity, it also brought about an increasing awareness of issues that are of concern to neighborhood residents: increased building density, traffic congestion and parking problems, the rising cost of housing, inadequate open space, and the threat to neighborhood character and quality of life.

Since 1988, the Community Development Department (CDD), through its neighborhood planning program, has conducted comprehensive studies in ten of the city's neighborhoods. The purpose of the neighborhood studies is to identify major planning opportunities through a joint effort between CDD and a citizen committee appointed by the City Manager. Through this collaborative effort, the goal is to analyze the present situation in the neighborhood and make recommendations for a course of action. Recommendations address such issues as traffic and parking, housing affordability and homeownership, neighborhood commercial areas and employment, park maintenance, and rezoning for areas that are inappropriately zoned. As part of each neighborhood study, CDD collects data on demographic changes since 1980, as well as changes in housing markets, land use, and development potential in each neighborhood.

For each study, the City Manager appoints a committee of neighborhood residents, small business owners, institutional representatives, and civic leaders, as well as staff from CDD, to review the data, identify problems that exist in the neighborhood, and make recommendations as to how to resolve these problems. The recommendations are presented to the City Council and, where appropriate, are incorporated into the work programs of City departments for implementation; in some cases, this implementation takes place over a short period of time, in others it is part of longer-term planning.

Agassiz Neighborhood Study

The Agassiz Neighborhood Study Committee met between April of 2000 and December 2001. The Committee was composed of 8 appointed neighborhood residents, as well as one representative of Harvard University and one representative of Lesley University who attended meetings. During that time, the Study Committee heard presentations from city staff, discussed issues, and held public forums. Topics considered included housing, land use and zoning, urban design, transportation, open space, institutional uses and economic development. Through this process of learning, discussing, gathering feedback from the community, and working toward consensus, the committee developed recommendations to better the neighborhood.

Growth Policy Document

The neighborhood study process is an extension of the City's growth policy document, "Towards a Sustainable Cambridge," which outlines the City's planning assumptions and policies in the areas of land use, housing, transportation, economic development, open space, and urban design. CDD staff drafted this document in 1992 and 1993 after a series of workshops with citizen, business, and institutional representatives. It recognizes that Cambridge's diversity of land uses, densities, and population groups should be retained and strengthened. The document also calls for careful development of the city's evolving industrial districts, such as Alewife and lower Cambridgeport.

While the Growth Policy Document is comprehensive, it does not prescribe land uses or designs for specific sites. Each of the City's thirteen neighborhoods has distinctive needs and resources that can be identified and addressed through neighborhood studies and the City's planning policies. The Growth Policy Document and neighborhood studies complement each other by informing the community of important issues, recommending a plan of action to address the concerns, and utilizing current policies to implement change.

Methodology

The Agassiz Neighborhood Study Committee produced its recommendations through an extended process of issue identification, data collection and analysis, and further review and discussion. Community Development Department staff supported this process by gathering and presenting data from a number of sources, chief among them the U. S. Census, the Cambridge Assessing Department, the Cambridge Zoning Ordinance, and the City's Geographic Information System mapping database.

US Census: 1980 and 1990

The U. S. Census Bureau conducts a survey of every resident in the United States every ten years as mandated by the Federal Constitution. The Census collects demographic information on age distribution, household composition, racial makeup, income, length of residency, employment, and other socioeconomic categories. The decennial Census provides us with the most complete profile of the City and its residents.

During the period that the Study Committee met, 2000 Census data was not yet available. However, this recent Census data has begun to become available as this report went into production. Wherever possible, the most updated Census data is included here.

Cambridge Assessor's Data

The Study Committee used data from the Assessing Department to analyze the nature and quality of the neighborhood's housing stock, understand the market for renting or buying housing in Agassiz, and examine the remaining build-out potential in the neighborhood. Housing data examined includes the number of buildings, the number of dwelling units, and the number of housing sales in each property class (1, 2, or 3 family, etc), as well as their sales prices. This analysis forms the basis for evaluating housing availability and affordability in the neighborhood. Property data such as building and lot size, were gathered for all commercially zoned areas and higher density residential zoning districts, and the information used to calculate the amount of additional building allowable in the neighborhood under current zoning.

The Cambridge Zoning Ordinance

The Zoning Ordinance, in conjunction with Assessing data, was used to determine the remaining build-out potential in Agassiz. The Zoning Ordinance is the part of the municipal code that governs how land and buildings in the City may be used. For each zoning district, the ordinance lays out three types of general regulations:

1) Use: what activities or mix of activities may or may not take place;
2) Dimensional requirements: what floor-area-ratio, density, height, or setback restrictions apply to any one building in and given zoning district; and,
3) Parking requirements: how many spaces, if any, must be included with a building.

Geographic Information System Maps

The Cambridge Management Information Systems Department, working closely with the Community Development Department, has created an information base of geographic data. This data can be used to create maps with many levels of data. These maps can be used to conduct planning analysis.

Neighborhood Overview

HISTORY

Before European settlement, the core of Agassiz was an area named Pine Swamp, located between Oxford and Kirkland Streets. The infill of this historically low-lying area with residential and institutional development has continued to impact present-day Agassiz residents, resulting in basement flooding and delaying construction of the Red Line subway extension for almost a year due to the need to pump water from the tunnel as it was dug.

Harvard College was the center of life in Cambridge at the beginning of European settlement there. During the 17th and 18th centuries, most settlement in what is now Agassiz was on Massachusetts Avenue, a pre-existing Native American path. This development took the form of houses facing the avenue with farms in the back. Massachusetts Avenue was laid out 33 yards wide all the way to Arlington (which was then part of Cambridge), because space was needed to circumnavigate bogs, boulders, and depressions in the roadway.

In 1660, Massachusetts Avenue became the way to connect with the only land route to Boston. The route was north and west of a bridge built at the foot of present-day JFK Street, making Porter Square a strategic location. This bridge was supplemented in 1793 by the construction of the West Boston (now Longfellow) Bridge, and in 1809 by a bridge in East Cambridge where the Charles River Dam is today. Following the development of the railroads, Massachusetts Avenue became one of the most prestigious suburban streets in the Boston area, lined with large, single-family houses. Due to deed restrictions, no stores or apartment houses were permitted on Massachusetts Avenue until 1911. However, by the 1930s, Massachusetts Avenue had become the mixed-use street it is today.

Development gradually moved from Massachusetts Avenue to what are now the surrounding neighborhoods. Within Agassiz, Harvard College played in important role in leading to settlement, as professors were given opportunities for loans to build housing along Kirkland and lower Oxford Streets. The College itself continued to expand, and was joined in 1909 by Lesley College.

In 1960, the neighborhood was zoned to residence C-3. In the post-war period, the University purchased all the houses around Sacramento Field, and most of the houses on Garfield Street, the south side of Sacramento Street and a number of houses between Sacramento and Everett Street. Development discussions in the late 1960's/early 70's resulted in the publication of the Harvard plan in 1974/5. Gradually, in the 1980's, Harvard began selling the houses it had accumulated; some multi-family buildings became affordable housing.

Apartment house construction in the neighborhood continued throughout the 1950's and in the 1960's and 70's townhouses were built. The City implemented a townhouse ordinance, which encouraged construction that was meant to replace the Arlington pillbox style of apartment house that filled the zoning envelope of a site. The ordinance has been revised several times to produce more attractive townhouses.

Neighborhood Name

The neighborhood was originally named for the neighborhood school, which was named for Professor Louis Agassiz, a Swiss-American naturalist who first lived on Oxford Street. Agassiz came to Cambridge to assume the professorship of natural history in the Lawrence Scientific School of Harvard University. He was instrumental in helping Harvard grow from a small college that trained clergymen to a full-fledged university. In 1860, Agassiz founded the Museum of Comparative Zoology at Harvard. He and his wife established a private school for girls (called the Agassiz School) in their home on Quincy Street in 1855, which closed during the Civil War. In 1882, Mrs. Agassiz was involved in the establishment of the Society for the Collegiate Instruction of Women, which later became Radcliffe College.

On May 21, 2002 the Cambridge School Committee voted unanimously to accept the recommendation to change the name of the Agassiz School to the Maria L. Baldwin School. Maria L. Baldwin, an African-American Cantabrigian, served as principal and later master of the school from 1889 until her death in 1922. Under Baldwin's leadership, the school's student body grew until in 1915, the decision was made, with Baldwin's prompting, to build a new school. The present school, which incorporates some elements of Baldwin's school of 1916, was completed in 1995.

While the elementary school has changed its name, at present the title of Agassiz Neighborhood has remained in use by other community organizations.

Agassiz Today: A Demographic Profile

The City uses a variety of sources to obtain and evaluate information about demographics on the citywide and neighborhood level. Several of the most important include the decennial U.S. Census, the Assessing Department's database, and Massachusetts Division of Employment and Training's employment and wages statistics. In order to fill in gaps in this information, projections derived from statistical models employed by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) and the Massachusetts Institute of Social and Economic Research (MISER) supplement these sources. In addition, each year the City receives a Town-Gown Report from each of the major educational institutions within the city, which includes statistics about the institution's activities during the previous school year.

At the beginning of the Agassiz Study process, the results of the 2000 U.S. Census had not yet been released. By publication, citywide information was available as well as limited neighborhood-level information. The table below provides some recent Census information for Agassiz and the City.

Population

	Agassiz Neighborhood			*City of Cambridge*		
	1990	*2000*	*(%) Change*	*1990*	*2000*	*(%) Change*
Total Population	5,100	5,241	3%	95,802	101,355	6%
Age (years)						
0 – 4	141	120	-15%	4,644	4,125	-11%
5 – 17	258	277	7%	7,075	9,322	32%
18 – 24	1,453	1,527	5%	18,778	21,472	14%
25 – 29	1,021	1,106	8%	13,129	14,721	12%
30 – 34	538	568	6%	10,918	10,481	-4%
35 – 44	780	552	-29%	15,325	13,942	-9%
45 – 64	636	873	37%	14,158	18,010	27%
65 and over	273	218	-20%	9,941	9,282	-7%
Persons per Acre	27	28	4%	23	24	4%
Group Quarters Population	1,684	1,572	-7%	14,033	14,663	4%

Total Households

	Agassiz Neighborhood			City of Cambridge		
	1990	2000	(%) Change	1990	2000	(%) Change
Total Households	1,891	1,980	5%	39,337	42,615	8%
Family Households	651	676	4%	17,648	17,595	<1%
Non-Family Households	1,240	1,304	5%	21,689	25,020	15%
Persons per Household	1.81	1.85	2%	2.08	2.03	-2%

Family Households

	Agassiz Neighborhood			City of Cambridge		
	1990	2000	(%) Change	1990	2000	(%) Change
Family Households	651	676	4%	17,648	17,595	<1%
w/ Own Children under 18 Yrs.	262	258	-2%	7,617	7,503	-1%
Married Couple Families	538	535	-1%	12,685	12,408	-2%
w/ Own Children under 18 Yrs.	223	185	-17%	5,139	4,835	-6%
Unmarried Householder	113	141	25%	4,963	5,187	5%
w/ Own Children under 18 Yrs.	39	73	87%	2,478	2,668	8%

Housing Units

	Agassiz Neighborhood			City of Cambridge		
	1990	2000	(%) Change	1990	2000	(%) Change
Housing Units	1,988	2,060	4%	41,979	44,725	7%
Owner-occupied	513	597	16%	11,959	13,760	15%
Renter-occupied	1,390	1,383	-1%	27,446	28,855	5%
Vacant	85	80	-6%	2,574	2,110	-18%
Housing Units per Acre	10.2	10.6	4%	10.2	10.9	7%

Source: 1990 and 2000 U.S. Decennial Census

Population

Between 1990 and 2000, the population of Cambridge increased from 95,802 to 101,355 residents. Only a small fraction of that growth occurred in Agassiz, which saw its population increase from 5,100 to 5,241 persons. Roughly 5% of the city's population lives within the Agassiz neighborhood. Compared to the other thirteen neighborhoods within the city, Agassiz is smaller than many in terms of both land area and population. A significant portion of land in the neighborhood is devoted to institutional uses.

Within Agassiz, the number of persons per household declined between 1980 and 1990 from 1.91 to 1.81, but increased to 1.85 by 2000. While Cambridge tends to have smaller household sizes than the US average, it should be noted that Agassiz has a small average household size compared to other neighborhoods within the city (citywide, the average number of person per household was 2.03 in 2000). However, within the residential portions of Agassiz, the population is fairly dense.

Educational Achievement

The demographics of the neighborhood reflect the physical presence of educational institutions within the neighborhood, most notably in the high level of education among the population and the industry in which they are employed. In 1990, only Area 2 (mostly MIT) reported comparable levels of higher education. At that time, the typical resident of Agassiz over the age of 25 was much more likely to have a college degree than other residents of Cambridge or the United States. At the same time, far fewer residents were found at lower levels of education; for example, only 2.4% of Agassiz residents had less than a high

school diploma or GED, compared with 15.6% of Cambridge residents. More detailed information about education levels in the Agassiz neighborhood appears in the economic development section of this study, which begins on page 37.

Population Density

Density within the Agassiz neighborhood is comparable to that of the city as a whole, at 10.6 versus 10.9 housing units per acre. Overall, Cambridge is the 10th densest city with a population of 50,000 or more in the country. While there are some high-rise buildings within the city, the housing stock generally consists of 2, 3, and 4-story buildings, both single and multi-family.

Diversity

According to the 2000 Census, Agassiz is roughly 80% White, a figure largely unchanged since the 1990 Census. Five percent of residents are Black, 11% are Asian/ Pacific Islander, and 3% are Two or More Races. Native Americans and Other Races compose a very small percentage of the population. Cambridge as a whole is 68% White, 12% Black, 12% Asian/ Pacific Islander, and 5% Two or More Races. In 2000, approximately 6% of the Agassiz population indicated that they were of Hispanic origin. This is fairly similar to the city as a whole.

Housing Tenure

While Cambridge has had, and continues to have, a large renter population, there has been an increase in homeownership in recent years. Agassiz's location near the retail, educational, employment, and transportation amenities of Harvard Square continues to make it a popular location for renters. In 2000, out of 2,060 total housing units, 597 were Owner-Occupied and 1,383 were Renter-Occupied.

Age Distribution

Compared to the rest of Cambridge, Agassiz has relatively few children. However, its proximity to Harvard and Lesley Universities increase its population of those of traditional college age, thus decreasing overall median age. In 1990, the median age among Agassiz residents was 28.4 years, versus 31.1 years for the city at large.

Place of Residence Five Years Earlier

According to the 1990 Census, about two-thirds of the population had moved to the neighborhood within the last five years. However, considering that approximately one-third of residents at any given time live in dormitories, and that there are others within the neighborhood who are students, the neighborhood does have a stable, long-term population of approximately 30%.

Income

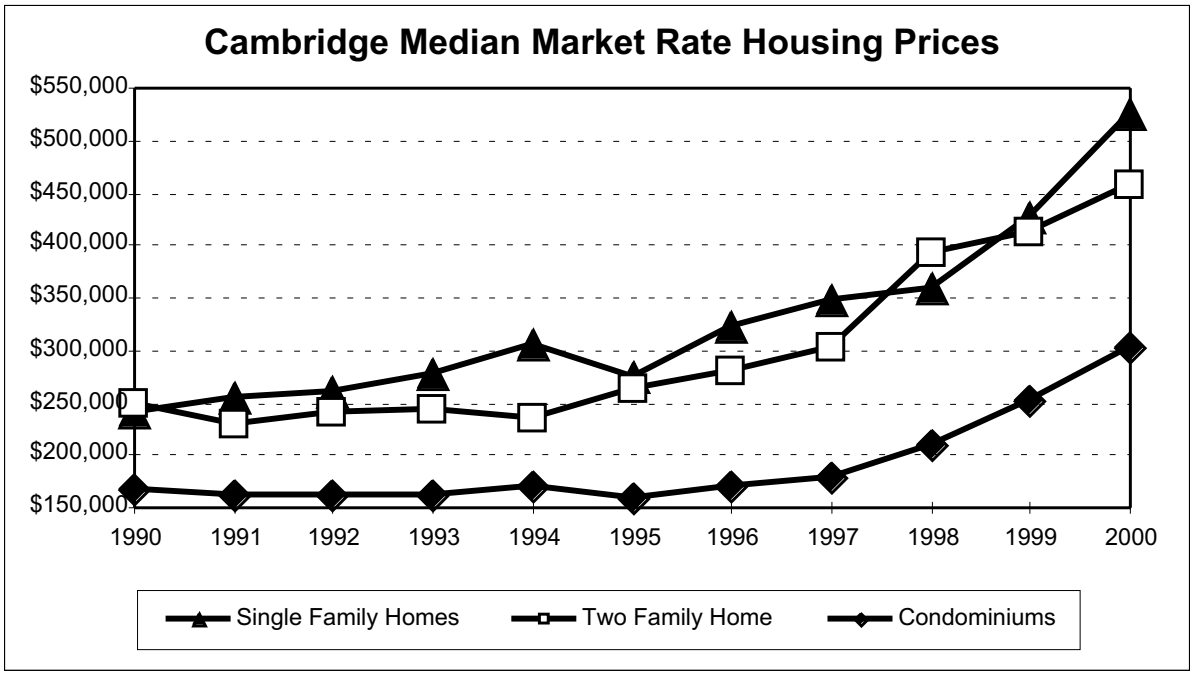
In real terms, residents of Cambridge and Agassiz increased their income between 1979 and 1989. Agassiz is very near the top of Cambridge neighborhoods in terms of household and family income.

ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

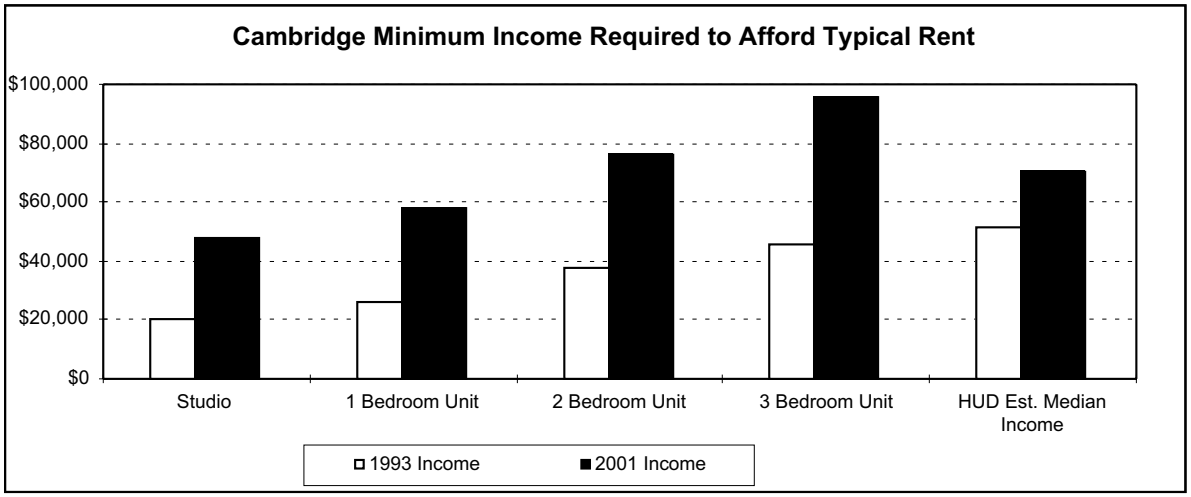
Baldwin School, 28 Sacramento Street

Housing

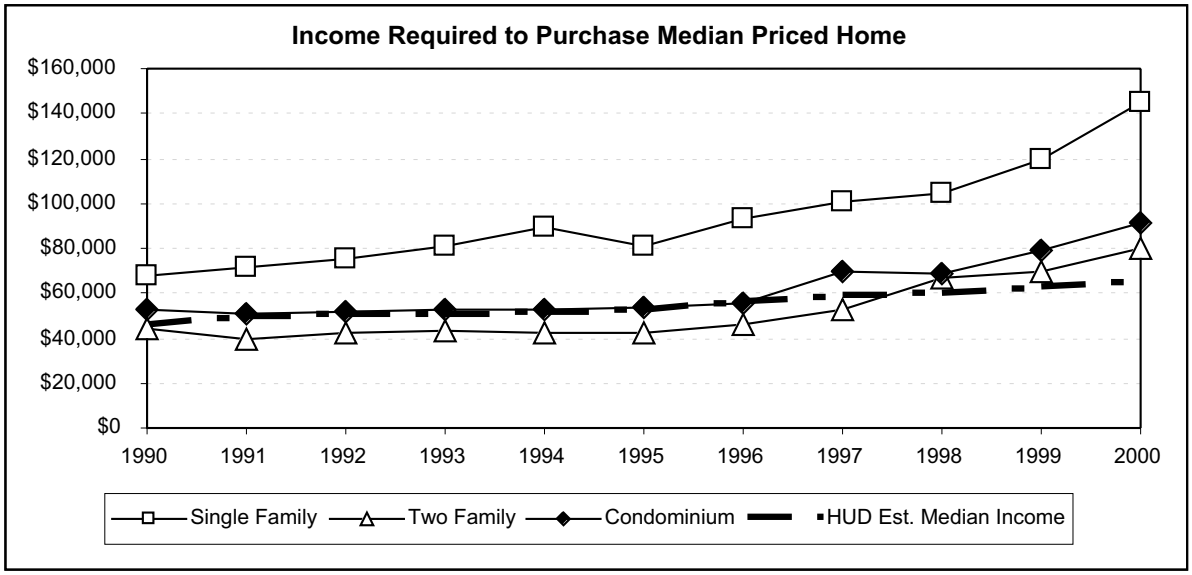
Over the last couple of decades, the availability and affordability of housing has become an extraordinarily important issue for Cambridge residents. Housing prices in the city have risen dramatically in recent years for a variety of reasons, including the end of rent control in 1994. The increased demand for housing in recent years resulted in higher prices to rent or purchase a residence in Cambridge. Although new industries in the city have attracted a significant number of higher skilled workers that are able to afford higher housing costs, the cost of housing has, for the most part, outpaced the income of many long time residents resulting in a desire for more affordable units.



N.B.: Note that all cost figures are unadjusted for inflation
Sources: Cambridge Revaluation Office, 2001; Cambridge Community Development Dept., 2001.



Minimum incomes based on payment of 30% of pre-tax income for housing expenses. In the table above HUD estimated median income indicates level of rent affordable to a family of four with median income. Sources: Cambridge Community Development Department, 2001; HUD, 2001.



Minimum incomes based on payment of 30% of pre-tax income for housing expenses. In the table above HUD estimated median income indicates mortgage affordable to a family of four with median income. Sources: Cambridge Community Development Department, 2001; HUD, 2001.

The City of Cambridge seeks to preserve the existing housing stock and explore new opportunities to provide housing for residents at all socioeconomic levels. There are a number of affordable housing programs that currently exist in the city. Cambridge has an Affordable Housing Trust, which is a City Manager appointed board that grants deferred loans, makes funding decisions, and helps guide the City's housing policy. In 1998, the City adopted an inclusionary zoning ordinance, which sets aside 15% of units as affordable in new residential developments of 10 or more housing units. There are also a number of nonprofit housing developers active in the city including: Homeowners Rehab. Inc. (HRI); Just A Start Corporation (JAS); Cambridge Neighborhood Housing Apartment Services (CNAHS); and CASCAP. The City also offers a First Time Homebuyer Class and provides home-buying counseling services.

The Agassiz neighborhood has some of the most expensive housing in the city. The median sale prices for different housing types within the neighborhood in 2000 are listed below.

Median Housing Sale Prices in the Agassiz Neighborhood, 2000

	Number of Sales	Median Price
Single Family	5	$675,000
Two Family	3	$972,000
Three Family	1	$1,735,000
1-3 Family	9	$972,000
Condominium	17	$331,000

Source: Cambridge Revaluation Office, 2001; Cambridge Community Development Department, 2001.

Currently, due to a very limited amount of available land, there do not appear to be many immediate prospects for new affordable housing in the neighborhood. However, opportunities may arise in the future as parcels are sold or redeveloped. Funds, such as those available through the Community Preservation Act may be helpful in capitalizing on any future opportunities.

The housing stock in the Agassiz neighborhood did not change much between 1980 and 2000, although there have been a significant number of conversions of rental units into condominiums in the neighborhood. Between 1970 and 2000 there were 298 units and 59 buildings converted into condominium use. Corresponding to these conversions, the number of owner occupied units increased between 1980 and 2000. The Agassiz neighborhood lost a considerable portion of the renter occupied units in comparison to those lost throughout the entire city. The number of renter occupied units in Agassiz decreased by 11.6% between 1980 and 2000 compared to a decrease of 3.6% for the City of Cambridge during the same time period.

Tenure of Housing Units 1980 - 2000

	1980	1990	2000	Change 1980-2000 (Net)	Change 1980-2000 (%)
City of Cambridge	41,300	41,979	44,725	3,425	8.3%
Owner-Occupied	8,889	11,959	13,760	4,871	54.8%
Renter-Occupied	29,947	27,446	28,855	(1,092)	-3.6%
Vacant	2,464	2,574	2,110	(354)	-14.4%
Agassiz/Area 8	2,021	1,988	2,060	39	1.9%
Owner-Occupied	373	513	597	224	60.1%
Renter-Occupied	1,565	1,390	1,383	(182)	-11.6%
Vacant	83	85	80	(3)	-3.6%

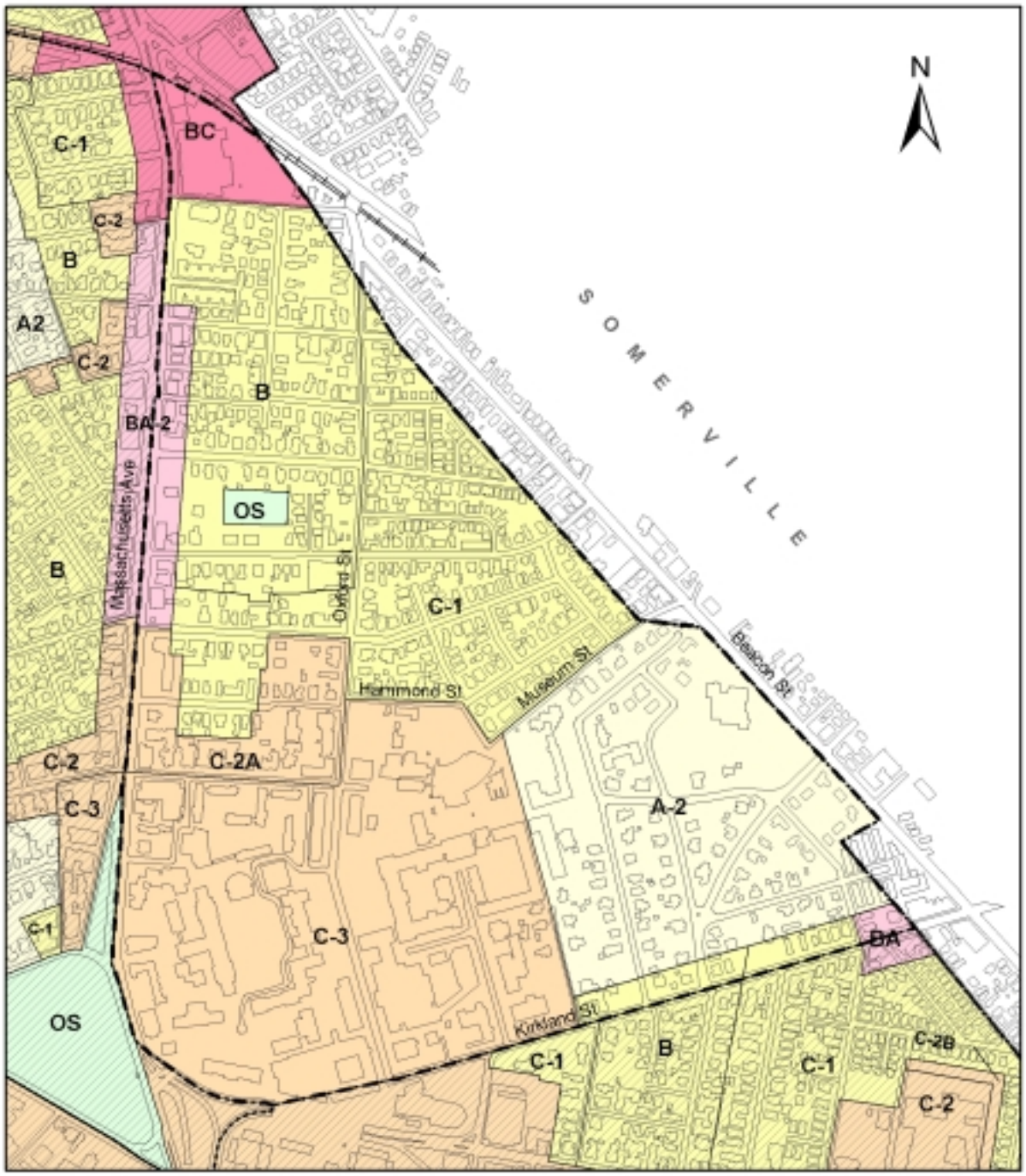
Source: U. S. Decennial Census; 1980 Cambridge, Mass. Neighborhood Statistics; 1990 User Defined Areas Program analysis of Cambridge, Massachusetts Neighborhoods; 2000 SF1 Data File analyzed by Cambridge Community Development Department.

There were 1,988 housing units in Agassiz in 1990; this number increased to 2,060 in 2000. Over half of the households in Agassiz consisted of a single person in 1990, compared to 42% citywide. With 1.85 persons per household in 2000, the Agassiz neighborhood has fewer persons per household than any other neighborhood in the city. The significant number of households with only one or a few persons residing in them is most likely due to the educational institutions present in the neighborhood and their associated dormitories. In 2000, there were 1,572 Agassiz residents, or 30% of the neighborhood population, that lived in group quarters (mostly in dormitories). Only two other neighborhoods MIT (neighborhood 2), and Riverside (neighborhood 7), had a higher percentage of residents living in group quarters.

Housing Recommendations

1. In order to maintain a diverse community, the City of Cambridge should explore affordable housing opportunities in the Agassiz neighborhood as they may arise.
2. The City should explore the possibility of allowing single room occupancy buildings in more residential districts and acquiring land or structures for this use.
3. 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 in keeping with the existing scale and character of the neighborhood.
4. The City of Cambridge should pursue the affordable housing funds available through the Community Preservation Act.

Agassiz Neighborhood Zoning Map



Land Use and Zoning

Communities employ a variety of techniques to regulate land use patterns, physical growth, and the built environment. The principal tool used by the City of Cambridge is zoning; in addition, some small pockets in the city are regulated by specific design and development standards. Cambridge is currently divided into approximately 51 zoning districts, which regulate land use, building setbacks, height, and density, the amount of open space on the parcel(s), parking quantity, and signage.

In the early 1960s, there was a large amount of development taking place in the Agassiz neighborhood. Zoning districts in the neighborhood at this time permitted higher densities including no restrictions on the heights of buildings. Much of the property owned by Harvard University had no height limit. Land in the Porter Square area was zoned Business B which allowed a 4.0 floor area ratio (FAR).

In the late 1970's, more restrictive zoning was adopted in Agassiz. During this time, 40-45% of the neighborhood was rezoned including Porter Square, which was rezoned to a 2.0 FAR with a 50-foot height limit. A subsequent rezoning in the 1980s lowered the residential density requirement from C-1 to Residence B with a 0.5 FAR and a 35-foot height limit. A city ordinance in 1995 (Ordinance 1170) also reduced the development allowed in the Residence B district.

Excluding open space, the Agassiz neighborhood has 7 zoning districts:

- Residence A-2: Single family dwellings with a 35-foot (3 residential story) height limit and 0.5 FAR.
- Residence B: Single and 2-family dwellings; townhouse dwellings with 35 foot height limit and 0.5 FAR for the first 5,000 square feet of a lot; 0.35 for any portion of the lot greater than 5,000 square feet.
- Residence C-1: Single and 2-family dwellings; townhouse dwellings; multi-family dwellings with a 35 foot height limit and 0.75 FAR.
- Residence C-2A: (At Lesley College Campus) Single and 2-family dwellings, townhouse dwellings, multifamily dwellings, institutional use, hotels. A 60 foot height limit and 2.5 FAR
- Residence C-3: (at Harvard University Campus) Single and 2-family dwellings, townhouse dwellings, multifamily dwellings, institutional use, hotels. 120-foot height limit (12 residential stories, 8 or 9 Research and Development stories) with a 3.0 FAR.
- Business A-2: (along Massachusetts Avenue) General office and retail uses, housing. 45-foot height limit with setbacks above 35 feet (3 office stories, 4 residential stories).
- Business C: (at Porter Square) General office and retail uses, housing. 55-foot height limit but 35 foot within 50 feet of residential districts with a 2.0 FAR.

Zoning in the Agassiz Neighborhood

Most of the Agassiz neighborhood is zoned residential, with the C-3 district allowing significantly higher densities as well as institutional uses. For this reason, transitional zoning between districts of contrasting allowed heights and densities has become an important issue in the

Agassiz neighborhood. In order to address these issues Harvard University recently completed a study process with Agassiz neighbors, which resulted in the rezoning of the Hammond Street and Gorham Street edges to provide a better physical transition with the neighborhood. The zoning change adopted by the City Council in Spring 2002 created a 100 foot transition overlay zone in which building heights were reduced (generally to 35 feet), minimum setbacks were increased, and breaks in building massing were required to create a more neighborhood "feel" at the edge.

The City of Cambridge adopted a Citywide Rezoning Ordinance on February 12, 2001, in order to address issues of: future density and traffic growth; the need for more housing, including affordable units; and better opportunities for public review of large projects. Significant changes to the Zoning Ordinance are outlined below:

- The addition of new residential districts (through rezoning of former commercial districts) in order to encourage new housing.
- Increased number of housing units allowed in certain areas to reflect existing conditions as well as help facilitate the conversion of industrial and commercial buildings to housing.
- Adjustment of allowed floor area ratios (FAR) to encourage housing over other uses.
- Reduced FARs for commercial, industrial, and non-residential districts.
- Inclusion of aboveground parking structures in FAR, to make it easier to reasonably anticipate the actual bulk of a building.
- Citywide project review process establishing traffic and urban design standards for development projects likely to have significant impact on abutting properties and the surrounding environment.
- Revised parking requirements for general office and research and development uses.

Land Use and Zoning Recommendations

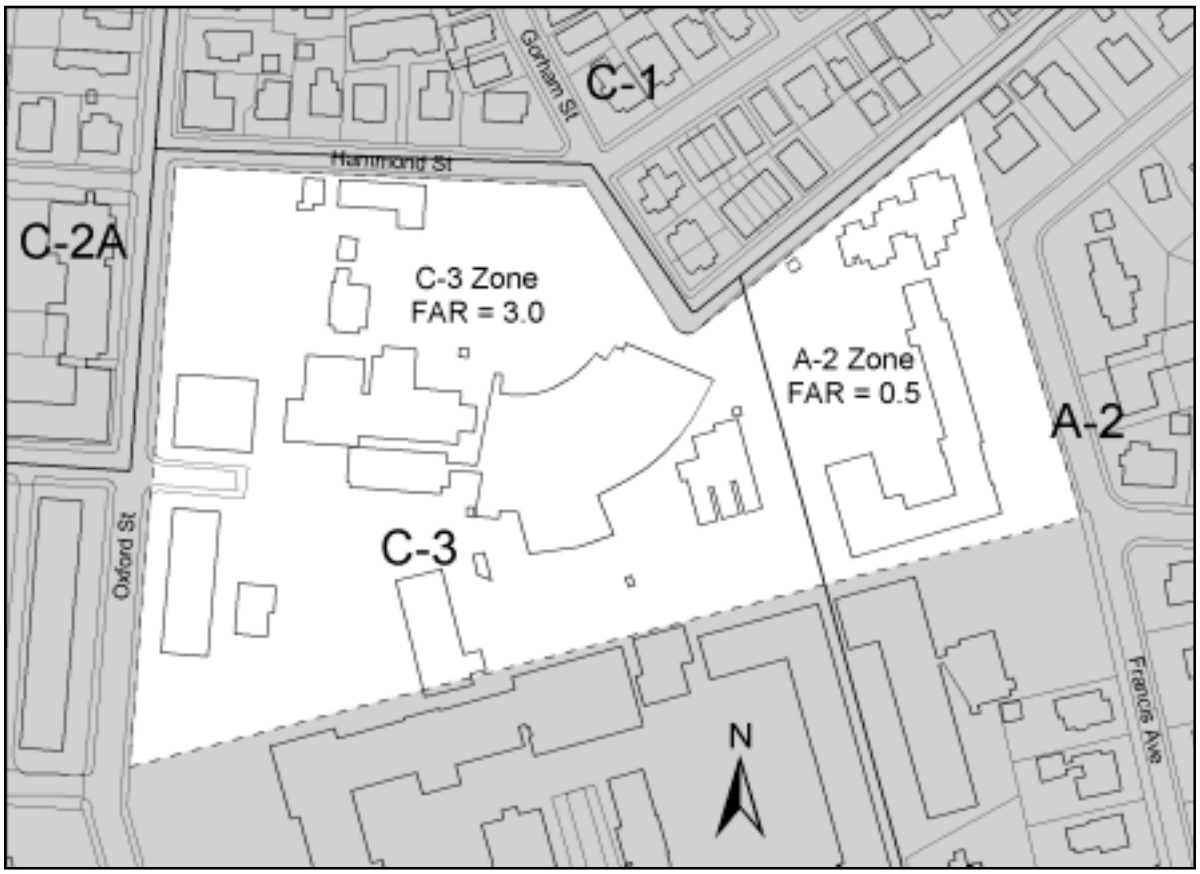
1. Harvard University should implement the recommendations of the Hammond/ Gorham edge committee, in order to create a more friendly campus edge with open quadrangles. (*See also Harvard University recommendations in the Institutions Section*)
2. The City's Community Development Department (CDD) should 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.
3. The Agassiz neighborhood should consider establishing a neighborhood conservation district.
4. A transition buffer zone should be created where the C2-A District abuts the C-1 District (where Lesley University abuts the neighborhood).

Urban Design

Many of the structures, streets, and districts in the Agassiz neighborhood have a very historic character and feel; therefore it is important for the neighborhood to plan for existing and anticipated development. Of particular concern in the Agassiz neighborhood are the protection of historically significant areas and buildings, adequate buffer zones between areas of different allowed densities, and enhancement of the existing streetscape through tree plantings, as well as pedestrian friendly street designs.

A large portion of the Agassiz neighborhood is comprised of the campuses of Harvard and Lesley Universities. As these institutions expand it will be important to ensure that adjacent areas of the neighborhood are not overwhelmed by new

Hammond and Gorham Streets in Agassiz



buildings and structures associated with the schools. An important area in the Agassiz neighborhood where the potential for high-density development next to much smaller structures exists is in the vicinity of Hammond and Gorham Streets. The campus of Harvard University in this area is zoned C-3 residential (120 foot height limit) while parcels across the street are zoned C-1 (35 foot height limit) and typified by a mix of 2 and 3-family wood frame structures.

Harvard University recently completed a study process with Agassiz neighbors, which resulted in the rezoning of the Hammond Street and Gorham Street edges (see map above) to provide a better physical transition with the neighborhood. The zoning change adopted by the City Council in Spring 2002 created a 100 foot transition overlay zone in which building heights were reduced (generally to 35 feet), minimum setbacks were increased, and breaks in building massing were required to create a more neighborhood "feel" at the edge.

The City's growth policy document, Towards a Sustainable Future, created in 1993, attempts to address similar issues.

Growth Policy #61 states that urban design standards should reflect the historic context in which change will occur while permitting design that is responsive to contemporary circumstances. For a neighborhood like Agassiz, which has a strong historic pattern, this is something that needs to be considered.

Growth Policy #62 describes the need to make better transitions across streets or property line to property line where there is a very high-density district next to a very low district.

During the study process the Agassiz Neighborhood Study Committee identified important urban design features present in the neighborhood. Features include transportation corridors, special points or nodes, landmarks, and neighborhood edges. These features are an important part of neighborhood identity and attractiveness. In the Agassiz neighborhood these features should be enhanced or protected as in the case of certain historically significant landmarks. Where feasible, the urban design recommendations developed by the Study Committee should be applied to the specific features listed by the Study Committee. The features identified by the Study Committee in Agassiz include:

Transportation Corridors:

- Parking lots on Oxford Street
- Academy of Arts and Sciences
- Massachusetts Avenue to Oxford Street
- Lesley University Campus
- Behind Perkins Street on Harvard University campus to behind 29 Everett Street
- Parking lot of 28 Wendell Street to Massachusetts Avenue
- Star Market to Porter Square
- Somerville Avenue to Oxford Street and Massachusetts Avenue

Landmarks:

- Starbucks
- The Porter Exchange Building
- Palfrey House
- Baldwin School (formerly Agassiz School)

Nodes:

- Baldwin School
- Sacramento field
- Star Market

Neighborhood edges:

- Hammond Street
- Gorham Street
- Museum Street

Urban Design Recommendations

1. New buildings should be harmonious with existing neighborhood residential aesthetics.
2. Pedestrian rights-of-way in the neighborhood should be preserved and maintained. Example: Francis Avenue to Museum Street.
3. Utility companies should be encouraged to place utilities underground whenever feasible.
4. The City should plant and maintain street trees.

Transportation

BACKGROUND

Increasingly, the impact of automobile traffic has become a pivotal planning issue, particularly in dense city neighborhoods such as Agassiz. Traffic volumes, parking availability, and travel mode of choice all affect the quality of life in the city. The key challenge is to enhance mobility while at the same time limiting the reliance on automobiles and their negative effect on quality of life in Cambridge. How can mobility needs be met without diminishing the essential qualities of Cambridge and its neighborhoods?

Auto traffic continues to increase, both from regional commuters traveling through Cambridge and from greater auto use within the city by both residents and employers. In the past two decades, Cambridge has become a regional employment center. Whereas in 1970 residents of Cambridge or abutting towns filled over 70% of local jobs, by 2000 that figure had fallen to 46%. More Cambridge residents, in turn, commute greater distances to jobs outside Cambridge.

It should also be noted that work trips are only 20% of all trips. According to the U.S. Census, the proportion of Cambridge employees driving alone– who may live in Cambridge or elsewhere—increased, from 43% in 1980 to 52% in 1990, while the percentage using car or van pools or transit declined. Meanwhile, Cambridge residents—who may work here or elsewhere—are more likely to use single occupancy vehicles: their number grew from 32% to 37% of the resident labor force between 1980 and 1990 and down to 35% in 2000.

Citywide Efforts to Address Parking, Traffic, and Transportation Concerns

The City of Cambridge has tried to be proactive in addressing transportation through its planning efforts. The City's Growth Policy Document assumes that any improvements to the roadway network should be aimed at redirecting traffic away from and reducing traffic speed on neighborhood streets. The City's Vehicle Trip Reduction Ordinance also directs the City to reduce the number of single occupant vehicle trips, expand non-automobile forms of transportation, and encourage new development near public transit nodes.

In November 1998, the City passed the Parking and Transportation Demand Management Ordinance (PTDM), which requires non-residential development that seeks to build parking to commit to a maximum percentage of employees, customers, and visitors that will arrive via single occupant vehicle. Developers must have plans for meeting these aggressive targets prior to obtaining a building permit and are required to monitor and report their performance annually. These plans are helping to reverse commuting trends in Cambridge by providing options to employees and customers and holding property owners responsible for the success of these measures.

One of the emerging processes that will affect not only transportation, but also buildings, land use, and waste management in the city is the Climate Protection Plan. This plan was adopted in December 2002 by the City Council. The plan

maps out options and a process to reduce Cambridge's contribution of greenhouse gases that cause climate change, or global warming. The City Council adopted a target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 20 percent below 1990 levels by the year 2010. In order to reach this target, various actions will be required that make our buildings and transportation more energy efficient, increase the use of renewable energy such as solar, encourage non-automobile modes of transportation, increase tree canopy cover, and reducing waste generation. In addition to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, these actions will also reduce conventional air pollution, reduce stormwater runoff, and improve the livability of the community.

One way of reducing reliance on automobiles is to make alternative forms of transportation safer, more accessible, and more enjoyable. Such is the goal of the City's ongoing Pedestrian and Bicycle Committees, which address a wide variety of projects and policies affecting those using Cambridge city streets.

Major Transportation Issues in Agassiz

Like many urban neighborhoods, Agassiz faces both negative and positive consequences in terms of transportation because of its location. Harvard and Lesley University draw commuters to the area, many of whom drive to get to work or class. These individuals can create increased through traffic on neighborhood streets, and can lead to non-residents parking on neighborhood streets. This pressure continues into the evening, as both Porter and Harvard Squares contain popular shops, restaurants, and bars.

However, Agassiz's location between Porter Square and Harvard Square gives it the advantage of a diversity of transit options. Both places have Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) Red Line subway stops, as well as many bus stops. Porter also has commuter line access. This rich transportation network gives residents access to a variety of transportation choices, while helping to encourage alternatives to single occupancy vehicle use within the City. Significant planning projects are underway to improve both Harvard and Porter Square (described under "Completed and Ongoing Transportation Actions in Agassiz").

Completed and Ongoing Transportation Actions in Agassiz

During recent years, the City conducted major stormwater/ sewer separation work in Agassiz. While this construction project temporarily disrupted life in the neighborhood, it also provided a unique opportunity for roadway improvements. The majority of these improvements took place in the residential area east of Oxford Street. After receiving feedback at two meetings with the Agassiz Neighborhood Council, the City decided upon and completed the following actions:

- Repaved streets;
- Installed handicapped ramps;
- Improved crosswalk markings;
- Installed all-way stops;
- Added a contra-flow bicycle lane on Scott Street;
- Added a sidewalk on one side of Scott Street; and,
- Constructed curb extensions at the intersection of Scott and Beacon Street, as well as the intersection of Scott, Bryant, and Holden Street;

Additionally, smaller scale improvements have been completed at the request of residents. The City has:

- Moved the loading zone on North Oxford Street away from the intersection and closer to the retail establishment it serves;
- Installed playground warning signs at Sacramento Field; and,
- Replaced Resident Permit Parking and Street Cleaning signs throughout the neighborhood.

The City is also continuing to work with Harvard University to re-align the path through the Divinity School parking lot to better align with the intersection of Gorham and Museum Streets.

In April 2002, a committee of residents and business owners began meeting to discuss the Harvard Square Redesign Process. This Committee is charged with evaluating improvements for pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists. This includes a comprehensive evaluation of traffic, lighting, landscaping, signage, and plazas. The resulting improvements stand to benefit Agassiz by enhancing transportation and pedestrian experience at one of its major transit hubs.

A similar effort has begun in Porter Square. Funds were set-aside in the FY03 budget to complete design plans for the reconstruction of Porter Square. The City has re-convened a citizen advisory committee that last met in 1998 to meet over the next six months to consider final design details. The new design will focus on improving pedestrian and bicycle safety in the square, while also creating a new left turn from the Porter Square Shopping Center to Massachusetts Avenue southbound. The project also includes new sidewalks, a new plaza, landscaping and street furniture in many places. Construction is scheduled to begin in the summer of 2003, along with sewer separation work.

Study Committee Transportation Discussion

An area of primary concern among Committee members is the experience of pedestrians. The neighborhood has many pedestrians, both residents and visitors. Pedestrians enjoy the varied complex of streets, the permeable campuses, the various commercial activities situated on larger streets, and the ability to walk to Harvard and Porter Squares in minutes. The Committee believes these attributes of the neighborhood must be preserved and strengthened. Pedestrian activity fosters the interaction between neighbors, makes the neighborhood safer, is good for health and environment, yet has only a light impact on physical infrastructure. The Committee encourages actions that improve the pedestrian experience, especially pedestrian safety. The committee's pedestrian recommendations (some detailed in other sections) include aspects of traffic calming (see Transportation), permeability of university campuses (see Institutions), care and maintenance of sidewalks, and preservation of alternative paths (see Open Space).

The Committee encourages property owners, residents, university maintenance, and the City's Department of PublicWorks to care for and maintain sidewalks. These are citywide concerns as well as Agassiz neighborhood concerns. Sidewalks should be safe and inviting to all pedestrians, including parents pushing a stroller, an individual in a wheelchair, persons with impaired vision, and all others. To achieve these goals, sidewalks should be level, of sufficient width, in good repair, and unobstructed. The Committee recommends that the pothole hotline be extended to include unsafe sidewalk conditions. Obstructions include snow and ice, vegetation, and personal belongings.

Intersection of Cambridge and Quincy Streets, looking toward Agassiz

Transportation Recommendations

The Committee recommends that the City or the MBTA undertake the following actions to improve transportation in the Agassiz neighborhood. Any progress made to date on these recommendations is noted in *italicized* text.

Transportation Recommendations

1. Encourage non-automobile travel.
2. Encourage Harvard and Lesley Universities to implement intra-city transportation options for their communities.
3. 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.
4. Support efforts to promote system-wide improvements in MBTA bus service. Example: Harvard Square to Coolidge Corner.
5. Encourage alternative fuel transportation.
6. Support efforts to implement urban ring transit system.
7. Implement traffic calming as neighborhood streets are resurfaced.
8. Promote safer pedestrian crossings at:
   a. Massachusetts Avenue at Garfield Street. *The Traffic Department has installed "Yield to Pedestrian" signs and has upgraded the crosswalk to a 24-inch wide international/ zebra, Thermoplastic-type. This location will be examined as a potential location for curb extensions during future roadway construction activity in this area.*
   b. Oxford Street at Kirkland Street. The Committee supports Harvard's relocation of the shuttle stop to the Memorial Hall circular driveway.
   c. The exit to the Science Center on Oxford Street. *Long-term plans for traffic calming include crosswalk improvements in this location.*
   d. Kirkland Street at Irving Street. The existing crosswalk does not correspond to the one at Cambridge Street and Irving Street, disrupting a logical pedestrian route. Crosswalks should be on both sides of the street.
   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.
   f. The end of Holden Street to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences park entrances. *During a previous traffic calming project in this area, neighborhood residents determined that a crosswalk would not be appropriate at this location. However, the City will continue to evaluate methods for improving safety at this intersection.*
9. Make resident only parking at night on Oxford Street from Everett to Wendell.
10. Provide Zipcar spaces in Harvard and/ or Lesley parking lots.

Open Space

Open space and recreational opportunities are becoming increasingly important for Cambridge residents. The amount, availability and accessibility of open space and recreational activities are significant factors in the quality of life of the City. The City is constantly exploring new ways of acquiring, creating and preserving open space in all of its neighborhoods. The city's urban, built-out character and density, along with a profitable real estate market and development pressure have made meeting open space demands challenging. This situation is especially evident in the Agassiz neighborhood. The Agassiz neighborhood's dense nature and small amount of land dedicated to public open space puts a relatively large amount of pressure on parks in the neighborhood. Based on the density and demographics of the neighborhood, the location of schools and existing open space, the Agassiz neighborhood was identified as one of the areas most in need of open space in the Report of the Green Ribbon Open Space Committee, March 2000.

Tot lot at Sacramento Field

Parts of the Agassiz neighborhood are also in need of specific types of open space and parks. Porter Square is an area especially in need of more open space, having been identified in the Green Ribbon Report as needing tot lots, neighborhood parks, and community parks. Northern Agassiz was also identified as needing a community park. While tot lots and neighborhood parks are smaller and serve those living within walking distance, community parks in Cambridge range in size from 2.6 to 15 acres and serve more than one neighborhood. These parks have the capacity to sustain activities such as organized sports leagues and active recreation. Currently, Sacramento Field is the only park in the neighborhood able to support these activities.

Of the 492 acres of public open space in the city, the Agassiz neighborhood has only two facilities totaling 1.3 acres. The Agassiz neighborhood currently has only 0.25 acres of public open space available for every 1,000 residents. This is the lowest rate of open space in the city when compared to the other neighborhoods. The rate of open space per 1,000 residents age 14 and under and per 1,000 families below the poverty level are both below citywide averages but not as dramatically.

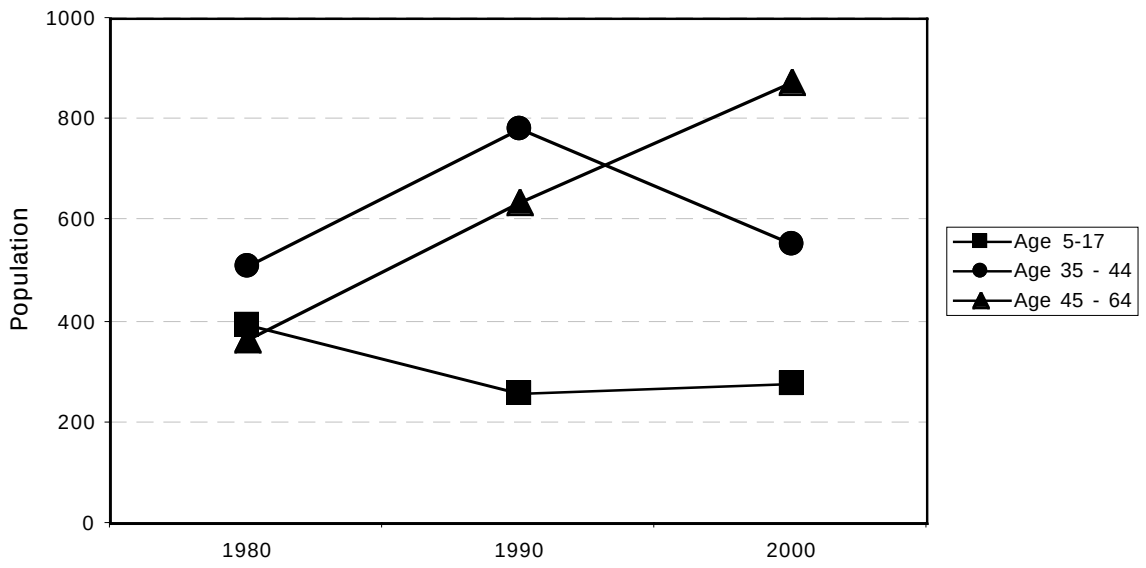
Open Space in the City of Cambridge and the Agassiz Neighborhood

	Total Population	Public Open Space (acres)	Public Open Space Per 1000 Total Population	Population 0-14 Years Old	Public Open Space Per 1000 Population 0-14 Years Old	Families Below Poverty Level	Public Open Space Per 1000 Families Below Poverty Level
Cambridge	95,802	492.8	5.13	11,512	42.18	1,273	387.12
Agassiz	5,100	1.3	0.25	347	3.75	7	185.71

Source: 1990 U.S. Census, Cambridge Open Space Plan, Revised 1999

Adult populations generally desire different types of open space and recreational uses and activities than school aged children. School aged and younger children use tot lots, playgrounds, and playing fields. Older residents are more likely to desire green space and other places to walk, sit, relax, and meet. The population of school-aged children (aged 5-17) in the Agassiz neighborhood has decreased over the last 3 decades by 29.39%, while the adult population (aged 35 - 64) has increased in the neighborhood by 63% since 1980. In the Agassiz neighborhood the shift in population may result in increased demand for more passive open space and a wider variety of recreational uses.

Agassiz Population Shift by Age Group 1980 - 2000



Source: U.S. Census 2000

The two parks located in the Agassiz neighborhood are the Alden Park (0.1 acres) and Sacramento Field (1.2 acres).

Alden Park is a small park located across the street from the Maria Baldwin Elementary School (formerly the Agassiz School). The park consists of a playground and an adjacent small paved play area. Parks of this type are generally smaller in nature and intended to serve children under 12. Because it is directly across the street from the Baldwin School, the park must meet the needs of the student population during school hours.

Sacramento Field is located off of Sacramento Street and consists of a small soccer/ softball field, a play structure, and basketball court. The City identifies this park as a neighborhood park. These types of parks generally provide opportunities for both passive and active recreation for a variety of age groups. Because Sacramento Field is the only park of its type in the neighborhood it is a very valuable resource to residents.

Harvard University and Leslie University also own a large portion of land in the Agassiz neighborhood. Some of this land is green and/or open space. However, these areas are owned by the respective institutions and are not necessarily accessible to the public or protected from other future uses. As these institutions expand, the Study Committee felt that the possibly of creating new publicly accessible open space should be explored.

Due to the developed character of the Agassiz neighborhood there appear at this time to be few opportunities to acquire new land for public open space. The Study Committee felt that as existing parcels in the neighborhood are redeveloped, the City of Cambridge should seek ways to encourage the creation of new open space. Existing open space facilities in the Agassiz neighborhood should be enhanced and maintained in order to meet the needs associated with increased use by residents. Furthermore, the city should explore new ways of working with the institutions in the neighborhood to create new open space.

Basketball courts at Sacramento Field

Open Space Recommendations

1. The City of Cambridge should work with the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority 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 one of our most significant recommendations.
2. The City of Cambridge should pursue the open space preservation funds available through the Community Preservation Act.
3. The Committee recommends enhancing the recreational use, especially the passive recreational use, of Sacramento Field.
   - The City of Cambridge should consider renaming Sacramento Field to Sacramento Park.
   - New signage should be placed at the main entrance to Sacramento Field on Sacramento Street.
   - The recently re-opened second public access route to Sacramento Field/Park should be maintained.
4. The City of Cambridge should encourage Harvard University to incorporate publicly accessible open space on Oxford Street/Divinity school property.
5. The Committee requests that Harvard University landscape the existing parking lot on Oxford Street once underground parking is constructed.
6. Encourage the closing of Oxford Street for community celebrations.
7. Encourage prompt removal of all graffiti by property owners - including City street signs and U.S. mailboxes.
8. Encourage the Agassiz Neighborhood Council to continue its tree-sponsorship program.
9. Encourage residents to take advantage of the City's sidewalk tree program.

Institutional

Institutional uses in the Agassiz neighborhood are likely to have a significant effect on future development. Currently, there are two institutions of higher education located in the neighborhood, Harvard University, and Lesley University. These institutions comprise a substantial portion of the land in Agassiz. The buildings and land affiliated with the universities are privately owned and controlled. However, much of the open space is accessible to the public and the schools provide a number of cultural and recreational amenities to the neighborhood. The universities occasionally sponsor events that are open to the general public.

Harvard University

Historically, institutions have had a noticeable impact on the development of the Agassiz neighborhood. In 1817, the main development in the Agassiz neighborhood was Harvard University's Professors Row. This was a series of houses built by senior professors starting at the location of the current Science Center to Kirkland Street and out to Irving Street. Harvard University's North Yard (area north of Harvard Yard) is located in the Agassiz neighborhood. The North Yard area consists of a number of university-affiliated buildings as well as surface parking lots. The Harvard Peabody Museum and Natural History Museum are located in the North Yard and are visited frequently by elementary schools in Cambridge.

Based on the existing zoning in the area there is the potential for a significant amount of new development, specifically along Hammond Street and in the existing parking lots located on Harvard University's land. This area is zoned C-3 residential, which allows single and two-family dwellings, townhouse dwellings, multifamily dwellings, institutional uses, hotels, a 120 foot height limit, (12 residential stories, or 8 to 9 research and development stories) and a floor to area ratio (FAR) of 3.0.

Recently, Harvard University initiated a study process with Agassiz neighbors, which resulted in the rezoning of the Hammond Street edge. The zoning change, adopted by the City Council in Spring 2002, created a 100 foot transition overlay zone in which building heights were reduced (generally to 35 feet), minimum setbacks were increased, and breaks in building massing were required to help protect the character of the neighborhood in the area.

Lesley University

Lesley University's Cambridge campus is located almost entirely in the Agassiz neighborhood. The school was first located at the corner of Everett and Oxford streets in the neighborhood in 1909, and was known as the Lesley Normal School. Today, Lesley University has about 8,000 students, however, most of the student body is located on campuses outside of Cambridge. The Lesley University campus in Cambridge consists of a number of Victorian Houses, as well as larger buildings for classrooms, offices, and dormitories. Most of the University's main campus is located on Everett, Mellen, Sacramento, and Wendell

Streets. In 1994, the university acquired the Porter Exchange building on Massachusetts Avenue, which features retail, administrative offices, and classrooms.

Study Committee Discussion

The Agassiz neighborhood has one of the highest percentages of residents living in group quarters. According to 2000 U.S. Census data the Agassiz neighborhood consisted of 1,572 residents in group quarters or 30% of the neighborhood population. This is virtually all (98.7%) due to dormitories and apartments associated with Harvard and Lesley Universities.

The Study Committee sought to address a number of issues regarding the institutions located in Agassiz. Of particular concern were the future development plans of both universities. The Committee also discussed housing for university employees, landscaping on the campuses and along campus edges, and community involvement in university events and programs.

Lesley University, 63-69 Oxford Street

Institutional Recommendations

1. In conjunction with their residential projects, Harvard and Lesley should consider including housing for their hourly-wage employees.
2. Harvard and Lesley should inform Cambridge residents of upcoming events open to the public.

Lesley University

1. The University should improve the landscaping at the Oxford Street side of 47 Oxford Street.
2. Lesley should work with a neighborhood committee to discuss development issues with Agassiz.

Harvard University

Note that Harvard University's proposals for the North Yard area, including the rezoning of the Hammond Street edge, were made public after the neighborhood study process for the Agassiz neighborhood was nearly complete. While this report recognizes the North Yard proposals, and provides recommendations regarding Harvard University, it does not offer an exhaustive review and analysis of the proposals or their effects on the neighborhood.

1. As the University considers the development of the North Yard, the Committee recommends the formation of a committee to work with Harvard on the issues of:
   - Density, height and open space of proposed development;
   - Construction impacts;
   - Cumulative impact of traffic;
   - Preserving neighborhood character and scale;
   - Preserving as much public use and space open to public use as possible;
   - Exploring options to reduce the traffic from the proposed new Harvard garage exiting onto Oxford Street, including:
     1. Making Everett two-way to accommodate ingress and egress
     2. Making Divinity Way an entrance or exit for garage traffic
     3. Using Francis/Bryant Street as entrance or exit for garage traffic
     4. Restricting parking on Oxford St between Everett and Wendell at peak vehicle hours.
2. The local Harvard museums should be requested to offer free admission to Cambridge residents and school groups.
3. The Committee supports Harvard's objective to extend the pattern of publicly accessible quadrangles to the neighborhood boundaries.
4. The City of Cambridge should encourage Harvard University to incorporate publicly accessible open space on Oxford Street/Divinity school property.
5. The Committee requests that Harvard University landscape the existing parking lot on Oxford Street once underground parking is constructed.
6. The Committee recommends that Harvard move the existing shuttle bus location, as both shuttle buses and tour buses clog the Oxford and Kirkland Streets intersection.

7. All the gates at the Academy of Arts and Sciences should remain open during posted hours.

8. Harvard Law School should involve the neighborhood early in its planning process.

Harvard University, Kirkland and Quincy Streets

Economic Development

The City of Cambridge works to promote and maintain a healthy economic environment, through business support and job creation. A supportive business climate is essential to maintaining high employment levels in the city as well as attracting new companies. The City of Cambridge is a regional employment center with approximately 4,000 businesses (excluding self-employed persons with no employees) and over 100,000 jobs. Local businesses provide many goods and services desired by residents. The tax revenue generated by companies enables the City to provide municipal services to residents that enhance the overall quality of life. Furthermore, because two thirds of the city's property taxes are paid by businesses, the tax burden placed on residents is eased.

Throughout the 1990s the economy of Cambridge continued to shift from a former manufacturing base to high tech, institutional, research, and service based industries. In addition, the presence of a relatively large number of top institutions in the region, including Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, has helped to create an entrepreneurial environment for start-up firms and ventures. This atmosphere is favorable to businesses of all sizes associated with high tech research and products, including software, medical, and biotech companies.

Other factors that enhance the overall business climate and attractiveness of Cambridge include the availability of capital from numerous banks, investors, and venture capitalists; the quality of life in the city; a pedestrian scale; a diverse population; relatively low crime; and entertainment, cultural and recreational opportunities.

Porter Square is located on Massachusetts Avenue on the borders of the Agassiz neighborhood, Neighborhood 9, and North Cambridge and is the primary commercial district in the Agassiz neighborhood. Within Porter Square are a number of retail, commercial, and educational establishments. There are several types of commercial uses of varying size and specialty in an outdoor shopping center; a medium sized mixed-use commercial and educational center; and a relatively small indoor shopping center. In addition, there are various retail, restaurant, and office uses along Massachusetts Avenue in the area. In addition to being a source of jobs, the businesses present in Porter Square provide goods and services to the Agassiz neighborhood as well as other areas of Cambridge, and to some extent the region.

There appear to be very limited opportunities for the addition or expansion of commercial uses in the Agassiz neighborhood. Much like the rest of the city, the Agassiz neighborhood has a small supply of available commercial real estate. Any new commercial development will most likely occur as a result of redevelopment or new establishments replacing existing ones, rather than any extensive new construction.

Educational institutions in the neighborhood are also a significant source of employment for Agassiz residents. Harvard University and Lesley University are located within the neighborhood

and almost 40% of the workforce in the Agassiz neighborhood is employed in education.

The education and skill levels of the labor force in the Agassiz neighborhood appear to be suited to meet the demands of new industries in Cambridge. Residents in the Agassiz neighborhood over the age of 25 have a higher level of education than the city as a whole. The percentage of residents in the Agassiz neighborhood with a college degree is 83.4% while the percentage of city residents with a college degree is 54.2%.

Education Level of Cambridge Residents 1980 and 1990

	1980	1990	Change	(%) Change	(%) of 1980 City Population	(%) of 1990 City Population
Cambridge (25yrs and older)	**58,013**	**63,471**	**5458**	**9.4%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**
Less than 9th grade	8,393	4,501	-3892	-46.4%	14.5%	7.1%
Some high school	5,428	5,430	2	0.0%	9.4%	8.6%
High school graduate or equivalent	12,280	10,057	-2223	-18.1%	21.2%	15.8%
Some college, or Associate Degree	6,911	9,098	2187	31.6%	11.9%	14.3%
Bachelor Degree or Graduate/Professional Degree	25,001	34,385	9384	37.5%	43.1%	54.2%

Source: U. S. Census Bureau, UDAP Analysis of Cambridge Neighborhoods, 1990

Education Level of Agassiz Neighborhood Residents 1980 and 1990

	1980	1990	Total Change	(%) Change	As (%) of 1980 Neighborhood Population	As (%) of 1990 Neighborhood Population
Agassiz (25yrs and older)	**3,063**	**3,248**	**185**	**6.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**
Less than 9th grade	63	26	-37	-58.7%	2.1%	0.8%
Some high school	83	52	-31	-37.3%	2.7%	1.6%
High School graduate or equivalent	273	181	-92	-33.7%	8.9%	5.6%
Some college, or Associate Degree	282	279	-3	-1.1%	9.2%	8.6%
Bachelor Degree or Graduate/Professional Degree	2,362	2,710	348	14.7%	77.1%	83.4%

Source: U. S. Census Bureau, UDAP Analysis of Cambridge Neighborhoods, 1990

Agassiz Neighborhood Employment by Occupation 1980 and 1990 (top categories)

	1980	1990	Total Change	(%) Change	As (%) of 1980 Neighborhood Population	As (%) of 1990 Neighborhood Population
Total Employees	**2,697**	**2,665**	**-32**	**-1.2%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**
Exec/Admin/Managerial	366	446	80	21.9%	13.6%	16.7%
Professional/Specialty	1,312	1,217	-95	-7.2%	48.6%	45.7%
Technical/Tech. Support	156	267	111	71.2%	5.8%	10.0%
Sales	163	170	7	4.3%	6.0%	6.4%
Admin. Support/Clerical	298	261	-37	-12.4%	11.0%	9.8%

Source: 1990 U. S. Census Bureau, UDAP Analysis of Cambridge Neighborhoods, 1990.

Agassiz Neighborhood Employment by Industry 1980 and 1990 (top categories)

	1980	1990	Total Change	(%) Change	As (%) of 1980 Neighborhood Population	As (%) of 1990 Neighborhood Population
Total Employees	**2,697**	**2,665**	**-32**	**-1.2%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**
Wholesale/Retail Trade	292	233	-59	-20.2%	10.8%	8.7%
Person/Enter't/Rec.Services	98	151	53	54.1%	3.6%	5.7%
Health Services	264	222	-42	-15.9%	9.8%	8.3%
Education	1,080	1,006	-74	-6.9%	40.0%	37.7%
Other Prof/Related Services	347	439	92	26.5%	12.9%	16.5%

Source: 1990 U. S. Census Bureau, UDAP Analysis of Cambridge Neighborhoods, 1990.

According to the 1990 US Census, Agassiz ranks second in the City in terms of median family income ($55,407 versus $39,990 for the City as a whole). Only 4.0% of the Agassiz civillian workforce was unemployed in 1990 (compared to 5.2% of the City as a whole). As the above tables indicate most residents in the Agassiz neighborhood are employed in professional and specialty occupations (46%) compared to 31% for the City of Cambridge (U.S. Census 1990). In 1990 the industry that employed the largest number of Agassiz residents was education (37.7%), which in contrast employed 26.2% of all city residents.

City of Cambridge Labor Force 1980 and 1990

	1980	1990	Total Change	(%) Change	As (%) of Total 1980 Neighborhood Population	As (%) of Total 1990 Neighborhood Population
Cambridge (16 yrs. or older)	**82,461**	**83,720**	**1259**	**1.5%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**
Civilian Labor Force	52,014	57,038	5024	9.7%	63.1%	68.1%
Unemployed	2,332	2,941	609	26.1%	4.5%	5.2%

Source: 1990 U. S. Census Bureau, UDAP Analysis of Cambridge Neighborhoods, 1990.

Agassiz Neighborhood Labor Force 1980 and 1990

	1980	1990	Total Change	(%) Change	As (%) of Total 1980 Neighborhood Population	As (%) of Total 1990 Neighborhood Population
Agassiz (16 yrs. or older)	**4,884**	**4,715**	**-169**	**-3.5pop%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**
Civilian Labor Force	2,760	2,776	16	0.6%	56.5%	58.9%
Unemployed	63	111	48	76.2%	2.3%	4.0%

Source: 1990 U. S. Census Bureau, UDAP Analysis of Cambridge Neighborhoods, 1990.

The Agassiz Study Committee felt that diverse types of businesses should be encouraged in the neighborhood, especially establishments for which there are a need in the neighborhood.

Economic Development Recommendations

1. The Committee encourages the creation of pedestrian-friendly, neighborhood-oriented uses of commercial spaces along Massachusetts Avenue and throughout the Agassiz neighborhood.
2. 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.
3. The Committee supports Harvard's established practice of reduced rents to diverse retail tenants.

Porter Exchange Building, 1815 Massachusetts Avenue

Conclusion

The goal of the Agassiz Neighborhood Study is consistent which that of all neighborhood studies: to provide a framework for incorporating local knowledge and concerns into the decision-making process of City officials, staff, and boards charged with long-term planning. While these decision-makers must balance a wide variety of interests, considerations, and constraints, it is hoped that the preceding study can provide clear guidance for the issues of concern in the Agassiz neighborhood.

In many ways, the concerns reflected in the recommendations of the Agassiz Study Committee are similar to those of Cambridge residents generally. Both within the Agassiz neighborhood and throughout the city, people have indicated the need for greater availability and affordability of housing, effective regulation of development, management of traffic and parking pressures, improvement and expansion of open spaces, and strengthening neighborhood businesses. However, by looking at these issues of broader concern on the neighborhood level, the Agassiz Study Committee has developed detailed descriptions, recommendations, and proposed actions to help inform specific responses to complicated issues affecting quality of life.

In keeping with the spirit of the recently developed policy of updating neighborhood studies, this report should be viewed as a living document that will evolve as the result of both intentional actions and unexpected circumstances. Specifically, it is anticipated that the recommendations and proposed actions of the Agassiz Neighborhood Study will be reviewed and updated periodically.

Agassiz Neighborhood Study

▪ ▪ A D D E N D U M ▪ ▪

Recommendations and Action Plan

City of Cambridge ▪ Community Development Department

Summer 2004

Introduction

This document is an addendum to the Agassiz Neighborhood Study (2003), a joint report of the Agassiz Neighborhood Study Committee and the Cambridge Community Development Department. The purpose of this addendum is to serve as a guide to the implementation of the recommendations, providing a list of all recommendations from the study along with an implementation status and progress-to-date summary for each.

The Agassiz Neighborhood Study Committee met between April 2000 and December 2001, during which time it heard presentations from City staff, discussed issues, and held public forums. The topics addressed by the committee included housing, land use and zoning, urban design, transportation, open space, institutional uses, and economic development. Through this process of learning, discussing, gathering feedback from the community, and working towards consensus, the committee developed a set of recommendations to guide future improvements in the neighborhood. This set of recommendations was published as part of the Agassiz Neighborhood Study in April 2003.

Some of the recommendations from this study are being addressed through the ongoing programs of city departments. Other recommendations will be addressed through future action items, which could take place within a short-range, medium-range, or long-range timeframe. In some cases, recommendations are being addressed through actions taking place on a citywide scale.

In the following "Recommendations and Action Plan" table, items that are part of the city's present or future action plan are denoted by a ■ symbol. An estimated timeframe is also provided for each action item, describing whether it is expected to occur within a short-range (less than 2 years), medium-range (2-6 years), or long-range (6-10 years) period.

HOUSING RECOMMENDATIONS

Rec. Type & Number	Recommendation	Status and Progress to Date
H1	In order to maintain a diverse community, the City of Cambridge should explore affordable housing opportunities in the Agassiz neighborhood as they may arise.	***Affordable Housing Programs Ongoing*** The Housing Division of the Community Development Department actively pursues opportunities to develop affordable housing throughout the city, including in Agassiz. Through prior budget allocations to the Affordable Housing Trust, current allocations through the Community Preservation Fund, and other means, the City has helped to create approximately 2600 units of affordable housing across the city since 1995. For example, in 1995 the City worked with Harvard University to transfer ownership of about 100 Harvard-owned, previously rent-controlled units to Homeowners Rehab, Inc., which maintains the units as affordable housing for the community. About 50-60 of these units are located in Agassiz.
H2	The City should explore the possibility of allowing single room occupancy buildings in more residential districts and acquiring land or structures for this use.	Lodging houses, a type of single room occupancy housing, are not allowed in Residence B districts, which are characteristic of Agassiz. However, lodging houses are allowed in other zoning districts, such as Residence C-1, Residence C-2A, and Business A-2 districts. In addition, these latter districts allow studio apartment units without any minimum restrictions on size, though there are limits on the number of units that can be built on a particular lot. The Housing Division pursues opportunities to create affordable housing throughout the city, and will consider opportunities to create single room occupancy housing as they arise.
H3	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.	***Policies and Zoning Regulations in Effect*** The City's Growth Policy explicitly encourages universities to provide housing to its students, and also asserts that the existing scale and character of residential neighborhoods should be preserved. Zoning regulations in Agassiz are intended to regulate the scale and character of institutional development in order to be compatible with the surrounding neighborhood. In addition, all projects larger than 50,000 square feet and other development meeting certain criteria are required to undergo a special permit project review by the Cambridge Planning Board (Article 19 of the Cambridge Zoning Ordinance). The Planning Board considers the Cambridge Growth Policy, and the effect of a project on the character of a neighborhood, when it reviews a development proposal.

HOUSING RECOMMENDATIONS - (cont.)

Rec. Type & Number	*Recommendation*	*Status and Progress to Date*
H4	The City of Cambridge should pursue the affordable housing funds available through the Community Preservation Act.	***CPA Funding in Use*** In Fiscal Year 2004, $8.4 million in Community Preservation Act (CPA) funding were allocated to housing. This represents 80% of the total CPA funding allotted to Cambridge for this year. The Housing Division will continue to work with the Community Preservation Fund Committee to highlight the need for funds to continue to create affordable housing.

■ ***ACTION ITEM* - Timeframe**

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

LAND USE RECOMMENDATIONS

Rec. Type & Number	Recommendation	Status and Progress to Date
LU1	Harvard University should implement the recommendations of the Hammond/ Gorham edge committee, in order to create a more friendly campus edge with open quadrangles.	***Overlay Zoning Regulations in Effect*** Harvard University submitted zoning recommendations to the Cambridge Planning Board, which were adopted into the Zoning Ordinance in 2002 as the Hammond and Gorham Streets Transition Overlay District (20.11). The text of the Zoning Ordinance is available at the Community Development Department website: http://www.cambridgema.gov/~CDD.
LU2	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.	■ ***FUTURE ACTION – Short Range*** The Community Development Department will perform such a study starting in Fiscal Year 2005 (July 1, 2004 – June 30, 2005).
LU3	The Agassiz neighborhood should consider establishing a neighborhood conservation district.	The formal process of establishing a neighborhood conservation district involves a few steps. First, a petition signed by at least ten neighborhood residents must be submitted to the Cambridge Historical Commission (CHC). If the CHC approves the petition, the City Manager appoints a Study Committee to undertake a one-year process of defining the purpose and scope of the neighborhood conservation district. The resulting study is presented in public hearings before the CHC, and is then forwarded to the City Council, which may establish the neighborhood conservation district by a majority vote. The City Manager then appoints a permanent Neighborhood Conservation District Commission. For more information, please contact the CHC at 617-349-4683. Also, the brochure "Neighborhood Conservation Districts in Cambridge" is available in PDF format on the CHC website: http://www.cambridgema.gov/~Historic/ncd_brochure.pdf.
LU4	A transition buffer zone should be created where the C-2A District abuts the C-1 District (where Lesley University abuts the neighborhood).	***Transition Zoning Regulations in Effect*** Current zoning regulations require that any new building in the C-2A district that is within 125 feet of the C-1 district must adhere to the same yard setback regulations as new buildings in the C-1 district. ■ ***CAMPUS MASTER PLANNING UNDERWAY – Short Range*** Lesley University is currently involved in a campus master planning process, and will present its plans to the Cambridge Planning Board when they are complete. Zoning changes may be discussed as an outcome of this master planning process.

URBAN DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS

Rec. Type & Number	*Recommendation*	*Status and Progress to Date*
UD1	New buildings should be harmonious with existing neighborhood residential aesthetics.	***Design Guidelines and Review Procedures Ongoing*** According to Article 19 of the Cambridge Zoning Ordinance, adopted in 2001, the Planning Board considers a set of design guidelines during the special permit review process, which is required for any development greater than 50,000 square feet as well as other developments meeting certain criteria. Design guidelines are intended in part to ensure that new development does not conflict with the existing aesthetics of a neighborhood. In addition, certain areas of the city have specific design guidelines, such as the North Massachusetts Avenue Design Guidelines, which are intended to ensure that future development in the Mass Ave corridor is compatible with existing commercial and residential uses.
UD2	Pedestrian rights-of-way in the neighborhood should be preserved and maintained. Example: Francis Avenue to Museum Street.	***Zoning Regulations in Effect*** Under Article 19 of the Cambridge Zoning Ordinance, large development projects are reviewed to ensure that pedestrian travel is encouraged. Special attention is paid to preserving existing and expected pedestrian rights-of-way through large development sites. Additionally, some special measures are taken to ensure that pedestrian connections be provided through large institutional campuses. For example, the provisions of the Hammond and Gorham Streets Transition Overlay District (Zoning Ordinance 20.11) specify that at least three pedestrian points of access must be provided in order to allow residents to pass through.
UD3	Utility companies should be encouraged to place utilities underground whenever feasible.	***Utility Placement Procedures Ongoing*** The City's Pole and Conduit Commission encourages the placement of cables underground where practical, especially communications cables leading to major points of access and to private commercial establishments. However, placing existing utilities underground is difficult, involves high infrastructure costs that would result in higher rates for consumers and property owners, and is not always feasible.

URBAN DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS - (cont.)

Rec. Type & Number	*Recommendation*	*Status and Progress to Date*
UD4	The City should plant and maintain street trees.	***Tree Planting and Maintenance Ongoing*** The City strives to plant 150-300 new trees each year. It is also dedicated to pruning every public tree, both on the street and in its parks and cemeteries, every four to five years. The Parks & Urban Forestry Division of the Cambridge Department of Public Works, which includes the City Arborist, Forestry Supervisor, and two forestry maintenance crews, is responsible for the planting and care of public trees, reviewing plans for tree planting and tree removal, and educational outreach. For information on Urban Forestry, call 617-349-6433 or visit the following web page: http://www.cambridgema.gov/theworks/departments/parks/forestry.html.

TRANSPORTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

Rec. Type & Number	Recommendation	Status and Progress to Date
T1	Encourage non-automobile travel.	***Programs Ongoing*** As recommended in the Cambridge Growth Policy, the City takes a number of measures to encourage non-automobile travel. Some policies that discourage automobile travel include the Vehicle Trip-Reduction Ordinance, the Parking and Transportation Demand Management Ordinance, and the Climate Protection Plan. The City's Environment and Transportation Division also offers services to support non-automobile travel, including staffing the Cambridge Pedestrian and Bicycle Committees, incorporating pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly measures into roadway improvements, sponsoring the annual "Go Green" Month, and supporting private transit systems such as the EZRide Shuttle.
T2	Encourage Harvard and Lesley Universities to implement intra-city transportation options for their communities.	Harvard University currently offers shuttle service within its Cambridge campus for members of the University community. The Harvard-supported "m2" bus, connecting Harvard Square to the Longwood Medical Area in Boston, can be used by the public as well. Lesley also runs shuttles, one from its main campus in Agassiz to Porter Square, and another from the main campus to the Art Institute of Boston buildings in Kenmore Square.
T3	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.	Porter Square and Kendall Square are connected by subway service via the MBTA Red Line. The #83 bus, providing service between Porter Square and Central Square every 20 minutes, follows Somerville Avenue, Park Street, and Beacon Street in Somerville, then Hampshire Street and Prospect Street in Cambridge. The #83 bus connects with the #64/68 bus, which connects Harvard Square with Kendall Square via Broadway.
T4	Support efforts to promote system-wide improvements in MBTA bus service. Example: Harvard Square to Coolidge Corner.	***Collaborative Efforts Ongoing*** The City works with the MBTA on a range of bus-related system improvements. City staff meet regularly with the MBTA to address timely issues, such as the temporary Green Line closure and #83 bus service during improvements to Russell Field. The City also supported the MBTA's contract change to manufacture new trackless trolleys with left side doors, and as a T Advisory Board member, Cambridge voted to fund the continuation of Night Owl service. Additionally, the City works on its own and with the MBTA to install bus shelters, benches, and improved signage.

■ ***ACTION ITEM*** **- Timeframe**

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

TRANSPORTATION RECOMMENDATIONS - (cont.)

Rec. Type & Number	Recommendation	Status and Progress to Date
T5	Encourage alternative fuel transportation.	■ ***ALTERNATIVE FUEL PROGRAMS UNDERWAY – Short Range*** Starting in fiscal year 2005 (July 1, 2004-June 30, 2005), the Department of Public Works will begin to use all biodiesel-fueled vehicles. Harvard University is also converting its diesel fleet to biodiesel. ***Climate Protection Measures in Effect*** In 2003, the citywide Climate Protection Task Force issued the Cambridge Climate Protection Plan, intended to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the city. The plan, which was adopted by the City Council, recommends a target of a twenty percent reduction from 1990 levels. To reach this goal, the City has worked to reduce single-occupancy vehicle commuting through Parking and Transportation Demand Management, to improve facilities for walking and biking, and to promote transit improvements.
T6	Support efforts to implement urban ring transit system.	***Efforts Ongoing*** The City continues to work with the MBTA and neighboring communities on plans for the Urban Ring.
T7	Implement traffic calming as neighborhood streets are resurfaced.	***Traffic Calming Program Ongoing*** The City maintains a list of traffic calming requests and looks for opportunities to coordinate these with roadway projects such as resurfacing. City departments work together to establish priorities, based on factors such as the severity of speeding problems, the ability to coordinate with other projects, and proximity to schools and playgrounds. City staff work with the neighborhoods in developing specific plans. For more information, contact the Traffic Calming Project Manager at 617-349-4655 or visit the Environmental and Transportation Planning webpage: http://www.cambridgema.gov/~CDD/envirotrans.

Rec. Type & Number	*Recommendation*	*Status and Progress to Date*
T8	Promote safer pedestrian crossings at:	
	a. Massachusetts Avenue at Garfield Street.	***Project Completed*** The Traffic, Parking, and Transportation Department has installed "Yield to Pedestrian" signs and has upgraded the crosswalk to a 24-inch wide zebra/international type. This will be examined as a potential location for curb extensions during future roadway construction in the area.
	b. Oxford Street at Kirkland Street. The Committee supports Harvard's relocation of the shuttle stop to the Memorial Hall circular driveway.	■ ***FUTURE ACTION – Long Range*** Future traffic calming plans for this location include a raised crosswalk. Also, Harvard has moved its shuttle stop, which has a new shelter.
	c. The exit from the Science Center on Oxford Street.	***No Planned Action*** A marked crosswalk currently exists at this location.
	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.	***No Planned Action*** The suggested location does not have a ramp down from the sidewalk, so a crosswalk at this location would not be wheelchair accessible. Additionally, at least two parking spaces would have to be removed to provide adequate sight lines for the suggested crosswalk. The existing crosswalk will be re-painted every season until the roadway is repaved.
	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.	***No Planned Action*** The suggested location does not have a ramp down from the sidewalk, so a crosswalk at this location would not be wheelchair accessible. The existing crosswalk was upgraded to a 24-inch zebra/international type in fall 2003.
	f. The end of Holden Street to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences park entrances.	***No Planned Action*** During a previous traffic calming project in this area, neighborhood residents determined that a crosswalk would not be appropriate at this location.
T9	Make resident only parking at night on Oxford Street from Everett to Wendell.	■ ***FUTURE ACTION – Short Range*** A work order has been issued to post "Two-Hour Parking 8AM-6PM" and "Resident Permit Parking 6PM-8AM" signs on the west side of Oxford Street from Everett Street to Wendell Street and on the east side of Oxford Street from Everett Street (extension) to Hammond Street. This work order should be completed by August, 2004.
T10	Provide Zipcar spaces in Harvard and/ or Lesley parking lots.	Harvard currently provides 5 Zipcar spaces in its parking lots. Lesley provides one space. More information about the Zipcar service, including the location of vehicles, can be found on the Zipcar website: www.zipcar.com.

■ ***ACTION ITEM*** **- Timeframe**

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

OPEN SPACE RECOMMENDATIONS

Rec. Type & Number	Recommendation	Status and Progress to Date
OS1	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.	***Open Space Study Completed*** The report of the Green Ribbon Open Space Committee (2000) recognizes Porter Square as a priority area for the establishment of open space. The City will continue to explore and pursue opportunities for the creation of open space in this area. ■ ***ISSUE UNDER DISCUSSION – Short Range*** The area above the commuter rail line is owned by the MBTA, which is currently seeking to lease development rights to a private developer. Community vision for the future use of this site is being discussed in a series of City-sponsored public meetings focusing on Porter Square and Lower Mass Ave, occurring in the winter and spring of 2004. Additionally, all of the parking lots in the Porter Square area are privately owned. Lesley University, which owns some of these parking lots, is currently involved in a campus master planning process. In its most recent Town-Gown presentation, Lesley indicated that it may move its parking underground and increase open space as part of its overall development in the Porter Square area.
OS2	The City of Cambridge should pursue the open space preservation funds available through the Community Preservation Act.	***CPA Funding in Use*** The Massachusetts Community Preservation Act (CPA) requires that a city or town spend at least 10% of its annual community preservation funds on community housing, at least 10% on historic preservation, and at least 10% on non-recreational open space. "Non-recreational open space" specifically excludes urban recreational parks, such as sitting areas, playgrounds, or athletics fields. Before a city or town can spend any CPA funds on urban recreational parks, it must first spend 10% of its community preservation funds for that year on natural resource areas such as watersheds, wetlands, forests, or other types of non-recreational open space. In past years as well as the present, Cambridge's Community Preservation Fund Committee has voted to allocate 80% of Cambridge's CPA funds to affordable housing, 10% to historic preservation, and 10% to non-recreational open space. For the current year, Cambridge's open space allotment is being dedicated to projects associated with Fresh Pond and the upland watershed area. In the long term, the use of CPA funds for non-recreational open space may free up alternate sources of funding for the creation and preservation of recreational parks.

Rec. Type & Number	*Recommendation*	*Status and Progress to Date*
OS3	The Committee recommends enhancing the recreational use, especially the passive recreational use, of Sacramento Field.	
	1. The City of Cambridge should consider renaming Sacramento Field to Sacramento Park.	■ ***FUTURE ACTION – Medium Range*** Whenever future renovations occur at Sacramento Field, the Community Development Department will discuss with the neighborhood changing the signage to read "Sacramento Park".
	2. New signage should be placed at the main entrance to Sacramento Field on Sacramento Street.	***Project Completed*** New signage was put in place by the Department of Public Works in 2003, as requested.
	3. The recently re-opened second public access route to Sacramento Field/Park should be maintained	***Maintenance Ongoing*** Maintenance of this access route by the Department of Public Works is periodic and ongoing.
OS4	Encourage the closing of Oxford Street for community celebrations.	The City of Cambridge welcomes community organizations holding large Special Events open to the general public. Special Events require the approval of several City departments. Requesting approval involves sending a letter to the City Manager 30-60 days in advance describing the event in as much detail as possible, including the date(s), location, purpose, and length of time. This information is forwarded to the Special Events Committee, which will discuss the request at a public meeting. To hold a Block Party, it is necessary to obtain a Temporary Street Closing Permit from the Cambridge Traffic, Parking and Transportation Department, which requires that an application and an Abutter Approval Form be submitted at least 7 business days prior to the date of the party. For applications and information on permit fees, call 617-349-4700 or go to the following web page: http://www.cambridgema.gov/~Traffic/onstreet /sop_index1.html.
OS5	Encourage prompt removal of all graffiti by property owners - including City street signs and U.S. mailboxes.	***Graffiti Removal Ongoing*** The Department of Public Works operates a graffiti hotline at 617-349-6955. Residents are encouraged to call to report incidents of graffiti for prompt clean up, and to receive information about removing graffiti from private property. Reports of graffiti on US mailboxes are sent to the US Postal Service, which has an ongoing process for re-painting mailboxes tagged with graffiti.

■ ***ACTION ITEM*** **- Timeframe**

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

OPEN SPACE RECOMMENDATIONS - (cont.)

Rec. Type & Number	*Recommendation*	*Status and Progress to Date*
OS6	Encourage the Agassiz Neighborhood Council to continue its tree-sponsorship program.	The Agassiz Neighborhood Council (ANC) has maintained a fund to sponsor the planting of street trees through the Residential Street Tree Programs sponsored by the City's Department of Public Works (see OS7). ANC's program was put on hold while sewer separation work was underway in Agassiz and tree planting was difficult. However, ANC hopes to revive the program in the near future.
OS7	Encourage residents to take advantage of the City's sidewalk tree program.	***Residential Street Tree Programs Ongoing*** The Cambridge Department of Public Works has published a brochure with information on Residential Street Tree Programs. Through the Client Tree Program and the Commemorative Tree Program, residents, business owners, and organizations may request that a tree be planted on the street near their building or home for a fee. For more information, please call 617-349-6433 or visit the following web page: http://www.cambridgema.gov/theworks/departments/parks/forestry.html.

INSTITUTIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Rec. Type & Number	*Recommendation*	*Status and Progress to Date*
I1	In conjunction with their residential projects, Harvard and Lesley should consider including housing for their hourly-wage employees.	Harvard has a goal of providing housing for 50% of its graduate students and some of its faculty and affiliates within the next ten years. Most recently, it has acquired condominium housing on Pleasant Street for sale to its faculty members and affiliates, and according to its 2003 Town-Gown Report, it plans to construct additional housing for faculty and graduate students in the Riverside neighborhood. In the past, Harvard has made land available for the construction of affordable housing in Cambridge, and supports the development of affordable housing through the 20/20/2000 loan and grant program. Harvard also plans to develop affordable housing for the community as part of its housing development in Riverside. More information about Harvard's housing programs is available from its Office of Government, Community Affairs and Public Affairs, 617-495-4955.
I2	Harvard and Lesley should inform Cambridge residents of upcoming events open to the public.	A calendar listing of events is published in the Harvard Gazette and online at: www.news.harvard.edu/gazette/calendar. Lesley events are listed at: www2.Lesley.edu/events_search.html. More information about Harvard's community programs is available from its Office of Government, Community Affairs and Public Affairs (617-495-4955). Harvard also publishes a catalog called *Harvard in the Community: A Directory of Harvard University Community Service Programs*, which lists ongoing events and facilities open to the public.
LES1	The University should improve the landscaping at the Oxford Street side of 47 Oxford Street.	In its 2004 Town-Gown Report, Lesley University indicates 47 Oxford Street as a building for potential future renovation. Currently, Lesley is involved in a campus master planning process, and has agreed to return to the Cambridge Planning Board to discuss its plan as it nears completion.
LES2	Lesley should work with a neighborhood committee to discuss development issues with Agassiz.	Lesley is currently involved in a master planning process, and has discussed its plans with the Cambridge Planning Board (as part of the Town-Gown reporting process) as well as with neighborhood groups, including the Agassiz Neighborhood Council and Porter Square Neighborhood Association. A representative from Lesley has also been appointed to serve on the Agassiz Working Group, specifically to discuss development issues in the Harvard Law School / Lesley Main Campus area.

■ ***ACTION ITEM* - Timeframe**

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

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

Rec. Type & Number	Recommendation	Status and Progress to Date
ED1	The Committee encourages the creation of pedestrian-friendly, neighborhood-oriented uses of commercial spaces along Massachusetts Avenue and throughout the Agassiz neighborhood.	***Programs and Services Ongoing*** The City undertakes a variety of programs to encourage pedestrian-friendly, neighborhood-oriented uses of commercial spaces throughout Cambridge. The Economic Development Division of the Community Development Department provides services to support and assist small, diverse retail, such as counseling and façade improvement programs for income-eligible business owners. For example, the Indian Club restaurant in Agassiz recently participated in the City's façade improvement program. Also, improvements to sidewalk and roadway infrastructure, such as upcoming improvements to Harvard and Porter Squares, make sidewalk spaces safer and more desirable for pedestrians. ■ ***PROCESS UNDERWAY – Short Range*** Discussion related to supporting retail in the Mass Ave corridor has been taking place in a series of City-sponsored public meetings on Porter Square and Lower Mass Ave, occurring in the winter and spring of 2004.
ED2	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.	***Business-Locating Support Programs Ongoing*** In an effort to help match businesses with suitable locations, the Economic Development Division of the Community Development Department maintains a database of vacant commercial space and provides a free SiteFinder Service to businesses seeking space in Cambridge. ■ ***PROCESSES PLANNED AND UNDERWAY – Short Range*** Discussion related to supporting retail in the Mass Ave corridor has been taking place in a series of City-sponsored public meetings on Porter Square and Lower Mass Ave, occurring in the winter and spring of 2004. Additionally, a symposium on ground floor retail in the city was held at the Cambridge Planning Board in June 2004. This included presentations by City staff on the Cambridge context, the City's efforts to assist retailers, and a regulatory overview, and was followed by a panel discussion. A follow-up discussion will occur at the Planning Board in August.
ED3	The Committee supports Harvard's established practice of reduced rents to diverse retail tenants.	

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