

Cambridge Redevelopment Authority
STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS
PROPOSED WORK PLAN AND DELIVERABLES

May 13, 2013

The goal of the strategic planning process will be to create a clear framework for the role of the Cambridge Redevelopment Authority (“CRA”), now and into the future. This process will seek to align the organization with its context, acknowledging the changing environment and the issues and opportunities that lie ahead. Some of these contextual changes are physical, relating to CRA land holdings, the maturing urban renewal plan area, and development opportunities both in Kendall Square and beyond. Other factors are organizational, including the reconstitution of the CRA Board and the City of Cambridge’s (“City”) evolving development priorities and planning capacity. CRA staff will utilize the Transition Planning Report, the C2K2 documents and other City and CRA documentation as the foundation for the strategic planning.

The strategic planning process will be interactive, working closely with Board members, City staff, and local constituents to address the CRA’s role in relation to the City, the community, the private sector, federal and state agencies, and other institutions and non-profits. Establishing broad agreements regarding the CRA’s mission among the CRA Board members, CRA staff, as well as with the City, will be important for future success.

With a strategic vision in place, the CRA will be able to align its activities and interactions in relation to its context and to set priorities for the future. With strong governance and a clear mission, the CRA can play a long term leadership role, while also adapting and responding to any future changes in the context.

Task 1. Project Initiation

- a) Review and refine project schedule, approach, and milestone meetings.
- b) Refine the process for engagement with Board members, the City, the community, and any other stakeholders.

Deliverables and Meetings:

- Revised schedule and outline of process
- Meeting with Board representatives to confirm strategic planning approach

Task 2. Vision and Mission

- a) The Transition Report has already outlined a number of suggestions for the role of the CRA based on many interviews. At the outset, confirm these suggestions and other aspirations identified in the report as the basis for defining a vision and mission.
- b) Summarize the framework within which the redevelopment authority must operate, documenting the powers and responsibilities granted urban renewal authorities in the Commonwealth, with confirmation by counsel, in relation to some of the suggested aspirations outlined in the Transition Report.
- c) Building on the results of the Transition Report, engage the CRA Board members in more focused discussions about who the organization serves, its unique competencies, and business model potential, drawing on existing practices and aspirations for the future. Define the reason and purpose for organization's existence and its ideal state.
- d) Draft a mission statement as a working document to guide the subsequent strategic planning work.

Deliverables and Meetings:

- Staff work session(s) with legal counsel and Department of Housing and Community Development staff to review the legal framework and its relation to the vision and mission of the organization
- A series of small group, one-on-one, and/or public meetings with Board members, City officials, and community stakeholders to define the vision and mission of the CRA
- Summary memos documenting the draft mission statement and the legal framework for the organization for consideration by the Board

Task 3. Strategic Issues

- a) The Transition Report identified many strategic issues including internal resources, outside forces, changing context, benchmarks (best practices), and relationships with stakeholders. Staff will update the understanding of issues as they affect the future role of the CRA, such as the status of C2K2 zoning proposals, the development objectives of major land owners, the evolving decisions about Volpe Center and the relationship between the CRA and the City.

- b) After confirming these issues, summarize the difference between where the organization is today and where it wants to be.

Deliverables and Meetings:

- Summary memos summarizing the strategic issues including any updates, and strategic gaps
- Staff work session with the City and/or Board members as appropriate, to review and update strategic issues
- CRA meeting to discuss vision and mission and strategic issues

Task 4. Strategic Goals

- a) Engage the Board in a dialogue about the gap between the organization vision and the current challenges.
- b) As a part of this interactive process, introduce different scenarios and weigh their implications as a means of clarifying goals.
- c) Working with the Board, identify a set of operational goals that can serve as achievable milestones that relate back to the overarching mission. These should be measurable and realistic, and relate to the specific context now facing the CRA.
- d) Engage the City as appropriate to discuss and review the mission and strategic goals, eliciting information that will help shape the proposed strategies

Deliverables and Meetings:

- Staff work session(s) to discuss goals and prepare for board meeting
- Participate in meetings with the City (by department or as a group) to review goals and the implications for the proposed strategies
- CRA Board meeting to discuss strategic goals and strategies
- Summary memo documenting the strategic goals

Task 5. Strategies

- a) In developing the overall plan, a set of strategies and specific action steps will be defined to help reach the goals identified in Task 3. Clarify the structure of governance for decision-making in accordance with bylaws that are under review by the Board and counsel at this time.
- b) Identify business practices that reflect innovation, transparency and effective management.

- c) Distinguish the roles that the CRA will take on in relationship to the roles of various City departments, including areas of collaboration and partnership.
- d) Identify staff resources necessary to carry out the goals, including internal staff, consultants, and participation of city staff if any.
- e) Establish priorities for the different strategies to guide the work of the board.
- f) Outline a process of periodic evaluation of the strategic goals and strategies in relation to the overall vision and mission. Provide for a process to incorporate this feedback into the ongoing work of the CRA.

Deliverables and Meetings:

- Refine the proposed strategies
- Community outreach and preparation for discussion of proposed strategies and other draft plan elements
- CRA meeting to review and comment on the proposed strategies

Task 6. Plan Documentation

- a) Refine the draft Vision, Mission, Issues, Goals, and Strategies into an overall Strategic Plan for the CRA
- b) Generate a draft and final Strategic Plan report that documents the vision and mission, issues, goals, strategies, and action steps

Deliverables and Meetings:

- CRA meeting to comment on Draft Strategic Plan
- Work session with the Redevelopment Officer and the City as appropriate
- Final presentation to the CRA Board on Strategic Plan