



# Cambridge Redevelopment Authority Strategic Plan

June 2, 2014 - *DRAFT*

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*The Cambridge Redevelopment appreciates the ongoing input from residents and representatives of the City, business and neighborhood associations, non-profit organizations, and other entities in Cambridge.*

*Cover photo: Officer William Loughrey Walkway (6th Street) between Broadway and Binney Street in Kendall Sqare.*

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# 1. INTRODUCTION



*The development patterns in Cambridge have been shaped by its important position in the region, with rail and roadway connections and adjacency to the Charles River and the ponds near the headwaters of the Mystic River.*

## VISION

**I**N FIVE YEARS . . . Through strategic community investments and real estate projects, the Cambridge Redevelopment Authority (CRA) will be creating landmark places that represent enduring urban design, with vibrant civic spaces and sustainable approaches to infrastructure and the built environment. Its projects will contribute to the community fabric of the city. Using its unique ability to merge the public interest with private sector resources, the CRA will implement projects that cannot be achieved by others. The CRA will have made significant contributions to the quality of the life for residents, employees, business owners, and visitors.

*The CRA staff will work in close partnership with the Cambridge Community Development Department (CDD) and other City staff, and will manage a mixed workload that includes property management, real estate transactions, project management, community*

*investment programs, design review, and longer-range strategic initiatives for key redevelopment areas.*

*The CRA will be a relatively small yet efficient, independent operation, with a well-regarded Board that is responsive to community concerns and ensures that its decisions are transparent and sound.*

*A unique strength of the CRA will be its ability to act nimbly to negotiate and develop real estate to achieve public goals. Projects will include district scale projects involving infrastructure, mixed-use development, and mixed-income housing as well as small-scale investments related to the mission. As a redevelopment authority, the CRA will be financially independent and stable, able to steward public and private funding sources and maintain a longer-term vision that has continuity through political cycles.*

### CAMBRIDGE REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY MISSION

The Cambridge Redevelopment Authority is committed to implementing imaginative, creative development that achieves social equity and environmental sustainability. Our goal is to work in the public interest to facilitate infrastructure investments and development projects that integrate commercial, housing, civic and open space uses. We are a public real estate entity with a unique set of redevelopment tools, working in close partnership with the City of Cambridge and other organizations.

### MISSION

A mission statement is the basis for any strategic plan, since all the activities of an organization respond to this call. The mission serves the purpose of setting forth the organization's identity and its core programmatic work, while also establishing a connection to the organization's constituency and serving as inspiration for the future. The new mission statement for the CRA (see inset) has been shaped by the Board and staff and is intended to be specific to the CRA, to the Cambridge context, and to today's demands. The accompanying vision serves as a complement that lays out more specifically the unique role of the redevelopment authority, the importance of its partnerships, and the type of work that it will engage over the next five years.

### PROCESS

The CRA started a new chapter in March 2012, when a new Board was established with four members appointed by the City of Cambridge and one by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Based on recommendations from a transition study, the Board hired an interim Redevelopment Officer and a Strategic Planner to help set a course of action.



*Community forum discussions, March 2014.*

### Outreach and Collaboration

The strategic planning process was launched in June 2013 as a collaborative effort between the CRA Board and staff, with input from the City of Cambridge and many other stakeholders (Figure 1). Early in the process, the CRA staff interviewed City officials and representatives of the State Department of Housing and Community Development, Cambridge Housing Authority, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), and the Kendall Square Association (KSA) to gain an understanding of roles and current initiatives in the city. Consistent collaborations with the Cambridge Community Development Department have helped inform the strategic planning process.

The plan also evolved through discussions at monthly CRA Board meetings, which are open to the public. The Board held an extended strategic planning working session at its August 2013 meeting, where the draft mission, vision, and operating principles were developed. Staff and Board representatives met with each of the City Councillors in January 2014 to review draft concepts and collect ideas.

A broader public outreach phase began shortly after, including an online forum on the CoUrbanize interactive website. An open community workshop on March 26, 2014, gave the Board, staff, and participants a chance to weigh the implications of these priorities further. The CRA continues to meet with business associations and neighborhood associations across Cambridge to gather input and suggestions. Over a one month period, 54 comments and 172 interactions expanded the reach of the discussion about CRA priorities.



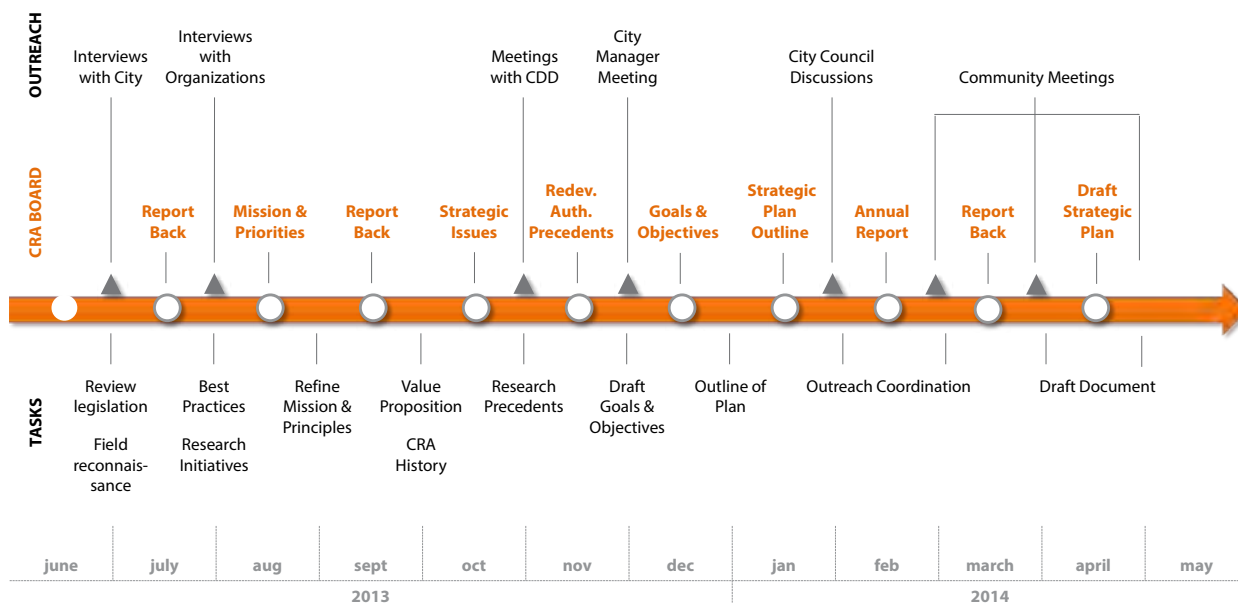


Figure 1. The Strategic Plan has been developed with the input of many stakeholders over the course of a year.

### Research

During the planning process, the staff reviewed the legislation and met with State officials to understand the intent and the parameters of the enabling legislation, M.G.L. ch. 121 A and 121B. This was followed by research and conversations with other redevelopment authorities to gain insight into the use of these tools today, both within the Commonwealth and nationally.

Field reconnaissance and the conversations with multiple stakeholders was an important part of the research effort. Through these, the broader range of development issues facing the city provided context. The CRA was better able to define its position within the spectrum of roles and responsibilities being carried out by the City, quasi-public entities, non-profit organizations, and the private sector.

Through many conversations in a variety of venues, a long list of potential development initiatives and activities was developed and became the

basis for evaluating the role of the CRA. For each suggestion, the CRA staff researched the location, property facts, status, and relevant planning studies (Appendix A).

### STRATEGY FRAMEWORK

The Strategic Plan is based on a balanced scorecard that takes into consideration four key areas that an entity must address as it carries out its mission (Figure 2; adapted from Kaplan 1996, 2004):

- External Actions and Relationships
- Internal Operations
- Financial Considerations
- Learning and Growth

This approach allows the organization to focus on the external activities that best align with its mission, while recognizing the need to build internal capacity and systems to support this work. At the same time, the need to scrutinize each potential action according to its financial

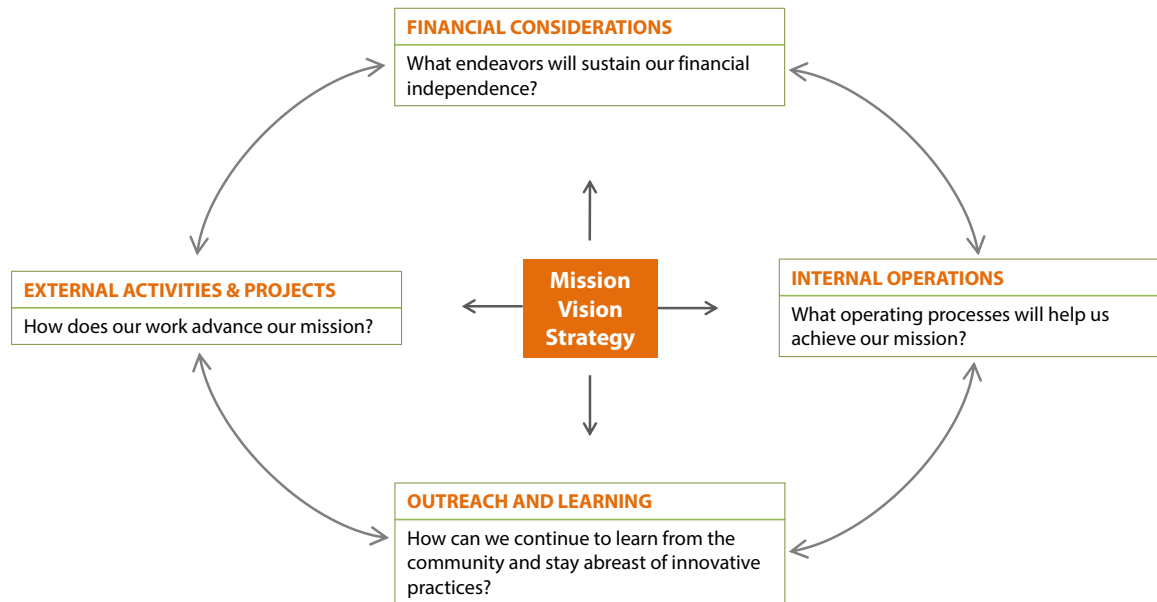


Figure 2. The Strategic Plan has been developed with the input of many stakeholders over the course of a year (adapted from Kaplan, 1996, 2001).

implications is recognized. Projects might spend down funds, maintain and manage investments, or generate new sources. The CRA operates in a dynamic context in a city on the forefront of many innovative initiatives. With the balanced scorecard, the CRA recognizes the need for ongoing outreach and learning.

## OPERATING PRINCIPLES

Through the strategic planning process, the CRA established the following principles to guide its work.

1. **Act:** Complement the City's planning role by focusing on implementation using redevelopment tools imaginatively.
2. **Operate with transparency:** Be visible and foster face-to-face relationships and a forum for discussing ideas.
3. **Maximize the public benefit:** Serve a broad public purpose with ethically sound practices in partnership with the City and others.

4. **Operate with fiscal responsibility:** Use our independent resources wisely to accomplish our mission.
5. **Set an example:** Through our actions, advance thinking on issues with long-term consequences and within a larger context; be innovative while maintaining an awareness of history.

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

As a part of the strategic planning process, each subcommittee of the Board participated in work sessions with staff to identify objectives to fulfill the CRA mission and vision. In alignment with the "balanced scorecard" approach, these are organized around external activities, internal operations, financial considerations, and outreach and learning, and aligned with the CRA's operating principles (Figure 3). These objectives become the basis for the Strategic Plan elements described in Chapters 3 through 6.



		PRINCIPLES				
		Maximize the Public Benefit	Operate with Fiscal Responsibility	Act	Operate with Transparency	Set an Example
BALANCED INTERESTS	External Activities & Projects	Evaluate projects/ programs against mission	Evaluate projects/ programs against resources	Set priorities for long and short term projects/ programs	Assign Board members as ambassadors for different initiatives	Lead in innovative practices
		Establish protocols for community loan fund	Identify new revenue sources through development and/or loans	Participate in city policy decisions that affect CRA activities (e.g. zoning)	Update community on status of projects using variety of platforms	Track changes in city and development trends
	Internal Operations	Align internal capacity with strategic priorities	Align budget with priority projects		Reinforce Board role in policy, oversight, fiduciary responsibility	Identify opportunities for employee learning and growth
		Establish collaborative office environment and location			Share news and updates between Board and staff	Involve interns in research on innovative practices
	Financial Considerations	Align program and administrative costs with priorities	Ensure administrative costs are in service to programs		Utilize financial procedures and protocols	
		Reinvest revenues to serve the public interest	Balance risk with a higher return on investment			
	Outreach and Learning	Measure our progress with data and benchmarks	Monitor time and expenses by projects	Develop an understanding of community issues on specific projects	Engage in ongoing dialogue with community	Engage higher education representatives
		Identify targets for community loans		Maintain relationships with city, state, and federal officials		Participate in regional special interest groups

Figure 3. These objectives are organized according to their relationship to the strategic framework and the CRA's operating principles.



*Kendall Square has been the focus for the CRA for many years, including investment in transportation infrastructure that set the stage for new development (circa 1980s, looking west on Main Street).*

## 2. CONTEXT

**T**he Cambridge Redevelopment Authority (CRA) was founded on November 12, 1956 pursuant to the authority granted by what is now M.G.L. ch. 121B, § 3. In the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, redevelopment authorities are provided with broad powers to plan and implement activities needed to redevelop underutilized, deteriorated or blighted open areas, to encourage new development, and to promote sound growth. Over the years, the CRA worked on projects throughout Cambridge including the Riverview Project, Rogers Block (Technology Square) Project, the Wellington-Harrington Neighborhood Renewal Project, the Walden Square Urban Renewal Project, the Alewife Feasibility Study, and the Broad Canal Land Assembly Project, and, most notably, the Kendall Square Urban Renewal Plan (KSURP, See Figure 4). Since 2012, the new Board has hired new staff and is setting a new direction, working in partnership with the City.

### REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY TOOL SET

In recent years, many redevelopment authorities in the Commonwealth and elsewhere in the United State are using their unique tools to spearhead innovative projects and programs. The more active authorities have been stepping in to fill a void when neither the public nor the private sector can move projects forward. Eminent domain is a tool of last resort, rarely used except in cases where a single small property is holding up redevelopment of many other properties. In all cases, redevelopment plans and any other actions by redevelopment

authorities require city council approval. In Massachusetts, state approval is necessary for redevelopment plans and major amendments.

The advantages of an independent redevelopment authority are that it has the following attributes:

- Has an independent board, separated financially from the city,
- Endures through different political cycles, bringing consistency to development policies,
- Allows for longer range development policy,
- May assert stronger control over development and preservation,
- Is more independent of political pressure,
- Has the ability to act as a real estate developer and property manager, and
- May accept third party funding, combining public, private, and non-profit sources to accomplish a project.

All redevelopment authorities in Massachusetts have an independent five-person board. A few have independent staff, as the CRA does. Many redevelopment authorities are staffed by city staff, and some are completely integrated with city planning and/or economic development departments.

Redevelopment authorities in other ocalities, both in Massachusetts and elsewhere, offer the following insight into the range of available tools.



Figure 4. The CRA has undertaken many different types of projects in its sixty year history.

- **Salem:** works within an historic district where preservation and design review is paramount; plays a lead role in the adaptive reuse of public buildings.
- **Fitchburg:** has a mission to support and attract business; owns and manages the Putnam Place to foster startups and manufacturing; administers brownfield grants; acquires land; and provides economic development incentives.
- **Holyoke:** new authority staffed by the office of planning and economic development; new urban renewal plan to encourage transit oriented development (TOD) and the creative economy; implementation of city master plan.
- **Malden:** administers community loans and grants, as well as federal programs; oversees public works improvement programs; manages off-street parking; and spearheads new projects such as the proposed ballpark.
- **Somerville:** pursued District Improvement Financing (DIF) and other funding for infrastructure; facilitated transit station; acquired key parcels; and issued Developer Request for Proposal.
- **Denver, Colorado:** use of redevelopment to tackle large vacant buildings including an old power plant, which was redeveloped into REI complex, and the Lowenstein Theater, now home to a bookstore, film center, restaurants and shops.

#### MODELS FOR REDEVELOPMENT

The research into enabling legislation, past CRA projects, precedents from other communities, and the unique conditions in Cambridge today, four models for redevelopment suggest a range of different activities that might be relevant for the CRA to consider in moving forward.

## CRA HISTORIC MODELS FOR REDEVELOPMENT

Although most closely associated with Kendall Square, the CRA has actually been involved in a number of projects over the course of its nearly 60 year history. These selected projects are illustrative of the broad range of tools available to redevelopment authorities.

The **Riverview Project** was initially approved by the Housing Authority in 1952, and the CRA first studied the site in 1957. The Authority acquired the site in June 1959, prepared it for development and sold it in 1962. When completed in 1964, the project provided new 79 housing units. Riverview was a single project and not part of a large urban renewal area. Today, the public benefit on such a project would include the need for low and moderate income housing.

The **Wellington-Harrington Neighborhood Improvement Plan** was initiated in 1965. This broad-based redevelopment initiative included rehabilitation of blighted structures; construction of new residential, commercial, and community buildings; and funding of community groups. The plan was a partnership with the CRA and the Just-A-Start Corporation, which was founded by the CRA, and included significant community participation. Other important developments included workspace for artists, a new school, churches and houses of worship, the Dante Alighieri Cultural Center, and the economic revitalization of Cambridge Street, the area's main commercial corridor.

The CRA began studying **Kendall Square** in 1964 to address what was seen at the time to be a blighted area of empty and obsolete industrial space. The CRA has overseen the transformation of the 42 acre space into a dynamic economic center, adding almost 3.5 million square feet of commercial space including hotels, office, and biotech facilities. The project also involved the reconstruction of the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority station, a traction power substation, cogeneration facility, three structured garages, public open space, and a network of new streets, pedestrian walkways, and bicycle lanes.

### *District Infrastructure*

In many locations, the need for infrastructure - such as streets, utilities, and parks - is a motivating force for using redevelopment tools. Kendall Square provides an example of this approach. By investing in the Red Line subway station, new streets, and civic parks, this part of the city was opened up for development according to a defined plan. Today, the Kendall Square Urban Renewal Plan area has a valuation of \$800 million and generates an estimated \$15 million annually in taxes and user fees for the City.

### *Preservation and Infill Development*

One redevelopment approach is preservation and infill development within a district. District boundaries might be broadly drawn, but the redevelopment activities would focus on surgical infill projects while working to preserve the character of an area with design guidelines and development review. The Salem Redevelopment

Authority and the Wellington-Harrington Neighborhood Revitalization Plan illustrate this approach.

### *Demonstration Projects*

Demonstration projects today are understood to be individual projects that call for unique public/private responses. Although this terminology is recent, the Riverview Project at 221 Mount Auburn Street can be viewed as an example of this approach. This project was a surgical intervention that addressed a real estate issue facing the city at that time, where the private sector was not able to act on its own. The Denver Lowenstein Theater offers another example of this approach.

### *Distributed Model of Investment*

A fourth model for redevelopment is to administer small loan and grant programs, which distribute money back to the community to improve their properties or businesses. This activity is part of the



portfolio of the Malden Redevelopment Authority. Research into other examples is provided in the next chapter.

## CURRENT ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

### *External Actions and Relationships*

The role of the CRA must be understood within the context of City responsibilities in planning and economic development as well as the activities of other organizations. The CRA also works under a complicated framework of municipal zoning, the Kendall Square Urban Renewal Plan, and multiple development agreements, which have been amended many times over the years. The City's recent K2C2 planning process identified the potential for new zoning that affects the urban renewal area as well as other areas in Kendall Square.

The CRA is currently operating within a very strong real estate market, which affects land and development costs and drives private development interests and pressures. External perception of the CRA is varied, based partly on the past actions of the CRA and partly on lack of understanding of urban redevelopment authorities, which have wide powers that range from the public to the private sphere.



*Community involvement and workforce development were essential elements of the Wellington-Harrington project.*

### *Internal Operations*

Even as a small operation, a full range of tasks is required to operate the business of the CRA: administrative, financial management, human resources, governance, and management of programs and projects. With a very small staff, administrative activities often preclude the more strategic project management tasks. Some tasks, such as payroll and bookkeeping, are being done by the City of Cambridge; very specialized tasks are outsourced to professional consultants, such as design review and transportation planning; and interns have been engaged to tackle other initiatives on a part-time basis. Given the need to analyze real estate opportunities in this particular market, detailed expertise in this area is needed. Until recently, there have been no policies and procedures for personnel. The Board sub-committees meet on an ad-hoc basis. A decision about the office location needs to be addressed.

### *Financial Considerations*

The CRA currently has a strong balance sheet and potential for new development agreements based on future development within the urban renewal area in Kendall Square. Nevertheless without steady revenue sources, the cash reserves can quickly be drawn down by the cost of operations. Many corrective measures have recently been put in place in response to the 2012 and 2013 audits. The financial strategy needs to consider investment strategy and financial stability as well as the best use of funds to further the organization's mission.

### *Learning and Growth*

The CRA is located in a city that prides itself on being at the forefront of many innovative practices, fueled in part by Harvard, MIT and other higher education institutions. The CRA will need to stay in touch with the interests of the community in each of Cambridge's neighborhoods.



### 3. EXTERNAL ACTIVITIES & PROJECTS



*Kendall Square has become a lively commercial center that attracts biotech, digital information and other companies, complemented by hotels, restaurants, parks, and more recently, housing.*

Over the course of the last year, much of the CRA's attention has been absorbed with organizing files, taking stock of history, and ensuring that the financial house is in order. The purpose of the Strategic Plan, however, is to move beyond the past and present and chart the course for future activities.

The strategic framework asks the question: *how does our work advance our mission?* A central component of the mission is to “work in the public interest to facilitate new and revitalized infrastructure and development.” In order to address this question, the CRA cast a wide net, talking to many stakeholders to define and to identify its possible role, activities, and projects.

The selection of specific projects is an ongoing process. A preliminary evaluation of initiatives is provided below along with key objectives for external activities and projects.

#### STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The Board initially reviewed over twenty suggestions for projects, weighing the relative merit of each according to its value toward serving the public interest, its alignment with the CRA mission, and its financial implications. This review helped define the CRA mission and strategic role. These actions were categorized in two ways (Figure 5):

- Geographically with activities centered in Kendall Square, in other parts of the city, and city-wide
- Role in the development process, with initiatives representing planning and policy, programs, real estate transactions, and district and property management.

The following discussion presents the current evaluation of a full range of activities. The CRA will continue to play a role in the Kendall Square Urban Renewal Plan. Several key projects have been identified as new initiatives, while another set are

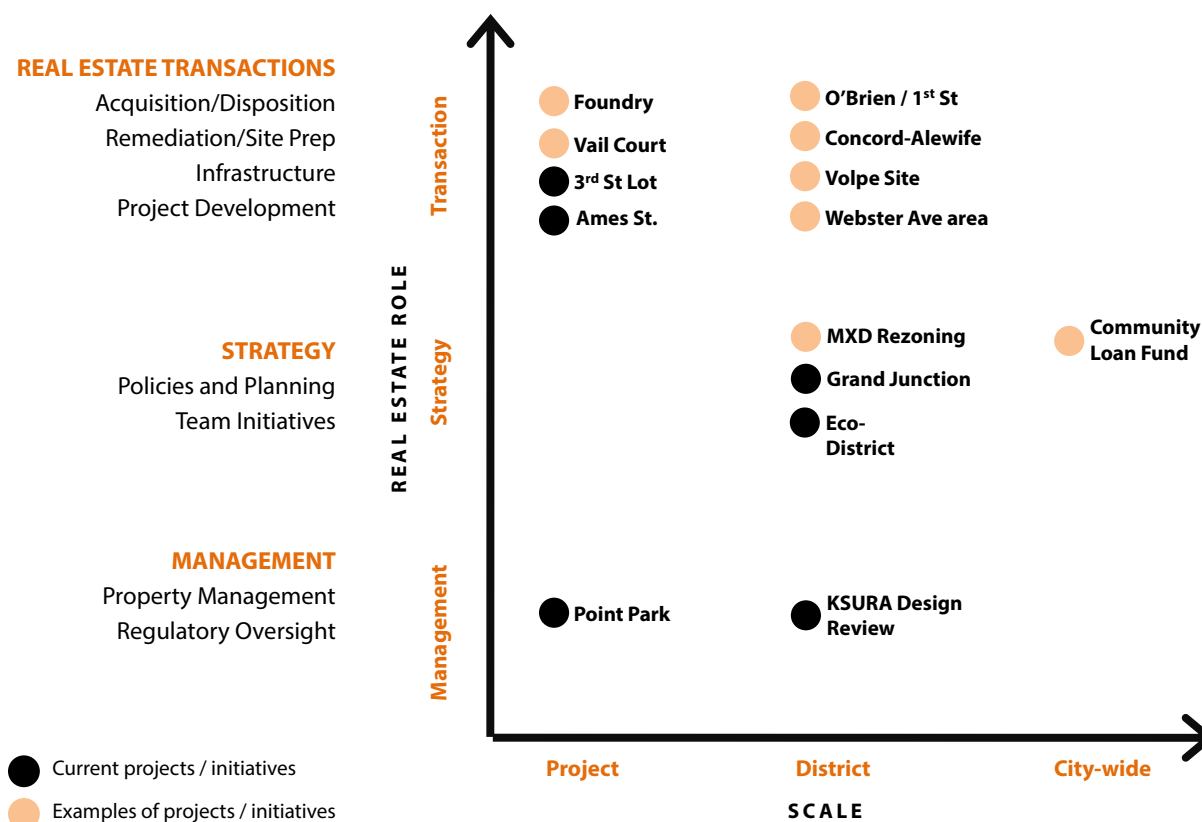


Figure 5. During the strategic planning process, a number of projects have been suggested as possible initiatives for a CRA role.

projects for further consideration. Another group of activities were deemed to be in the interest of the CRA, but not necessarily appropriate for the CRA to lead in that they are inherently planning in nature. Finally, a few projects were set aside as longer range or not likely to have a CRA role at this time.

#### Ongoing CRA Role in the KSURP

The CRA has a long history of involvement in development review and management in the Kendall Square Urban Renewal Plan area and this role will continue. Key activities at the current time are the following:

1. **Design review:** continue to review signage, new buildings, and modifications of buildings.
2. **MXD Rezoning:** participate in discussions with the City and the multiple property owners in the Kendall Square Urban Renewal Plan area to determine the best way to carry out recommendations in the K2 Plan.
3. **Ames Street Residential:** participate in the design review process for the Ames Street project.
4. **Point Park:** Coordinate with the City and Boston Properties to reconfigure Point Park ownership and geometry to facilitate streetscape improvement in the area.
5. **Eco-District:** participate in this initiative, which is a coalition of interests led by the City.

### New Project Initiatives

A number of projects have been suggested repeatedly as possible candidates in which the CRA could play a role in facilitating the implementation of City plans. Ten projects were posted on the CoUrbanize website and were the basis for the community workshop discussions on March 26, 2014. With community input as well as discussions with the City, the following projects represent significant new initiatives for 2014:

6. **Grand Junction Path:** The CRA owns 1.75 acres of open space along this proposed two-mile multi-use linear path, which will connect East Cambridge, Kendall Square, and Cambridgeport, as proposed in the 2001 East Cambridge Planning Study and a 2006 Feasibility Study. The City, MIT, and MassDOT and the community are also involved in this project.
7. **Third Street Lot:** The CRA owns this 6,000 square foot lot on the corner of 3rd Street and Binney Street. Recently the site has been used for construction staging site but could accommodate an interim retail/commercial or other use.
8. **Foundry:** This 76,000 square foot City-owned building is currently vacant and in need of renovation. The City is currently discussing the program and development process, and is in active discussion with the CRA regarding a potential role for the CRA in this project.

### Community Grant/Loan Fund

One initiative that has come to the top of the Board's priority list is the Community Loan Fund, which would be a way of reinvesting some of the development proceeds from Kendall Square into the community. The CRA staff is currently developing a pilot program to provide community grant / loan fund resources for physical development projects.

In order to be successful, rules for eligible projects must be developed to identify clearly the requirements for and definition of the public purpose required as the basis for any loan or grant.



*A decision about the interim use of the Third Street Lot is one of the priority actions for the CRA (google streetview).*

As a part of this effort, clear evaluation criteria must be in place for a transparent process. In addition, a set of protocols and appropriate staffing is needed to evaluate projects and process these monetary funds.

The research on comparable programs in other locations suggests that possible categories include:

- **Capacity Grants:** One time funds for capital project planning, feasibility study and/or design (up to \$2,500)
- **Small Capital Grants:** Providing smaller scale grants for improvements (up to \$20,000)
- **Low Interest Loans:** Financing for larger scale projects leveraging other funding sources for capital projects (up to \$200,000).

Potential projects are community gardens, park improvements, streetscape installations in retail corridors, public art, interpretive installations, commercial façade and entry improvements.

### Projects for Further Consideration

The Board will continue to evaluate the following projects according to their alignment with the CRA mission, financial implications, staff capacity, coordination with the City, and input from the community.



*Fairgate Farm in Stamford, CT is a community resource in the urban neighborhood (VitaStamford.com)*

- **1st and 2nd Street Corridor:** This corridor contains some disparate and underutilized properties in a key zone between the historic East Cambridge neighborhood, Cambridgeside Galleria, courthouse redevelopment, Lechmere station, and Kendall Square activities.
- **Concord/Alewife Quadrangle:** This 94-acre district between the railroad and Concord Avenue has over 1.5 million square feet of industrial, research, office, schools, and new housing developments. The focus of a 2005-2006 City planning study and rezoning, the area lacks a good roadway network and access across the tracks to the Alewife Station.
- **Fresh Pond Shopping Center:** This auto-oriented retail center was developed in 1978; the 16-acre site currently has an Activity Use Limitation from MassDEP due to former industrial uses.
- **O'Brien Corridor:** State Route 28 is a six-lane arterial highway fronted by some vacant and underutilized sites. The adjacent Green Line extension and community path and a proposed roadway redesign will bring change to this area.
- **Vail Court:** This 24-unit residential property is vacant and in poor condition with boarded up windows on the ground floor. The 0.65-acre site is close to the heart of Central Square.

- **Volpe National Transportation Systems Center:** The U.S. Department of Transportation conducts state-of-the-art research on this 14-acre site. The existing buildings (340,000 square feet) need reinvestment, and the recent K2C2 plan recommended additional residential, office, and open space development on the site.
- **Webster Avenue:** Industrial uses in this area are incompatible with adjacent housing and businesses, and some properties need remediation. This edge of Cambridge is adjacent to the future Green Line Station and proposed development in Somerville.

#### *Other Interests and Initiatives*

A number of critical issues are facing the city and Kendall Square in particular. Given the CRA's portfolio and commitment to social equity and a balanced economic system, the following topics will continue to be of interest to the CRA.

- Moderate income housing
- Transportation strategy
- Workforce development
- Public space and park programming
- Public art

These topics are matters of policy and long-range planning in the city, which are not the primary roles of the CRA. While the CRA will participate in conversations and integrate these elements as part of their work, it does not expect to lead in any of these initiatives.

Finally, a number of other projects and activities that were raised in the process have been set aside for the time being:

- Kendall Fund Administration
- W.R. Grace brownfields at Jerry's Pond
- Concord Alewife Triangle
- Department of Public Works facility relocation

This designation reflects a combination of the current status of these projects and the current capacity of the CRA staff.



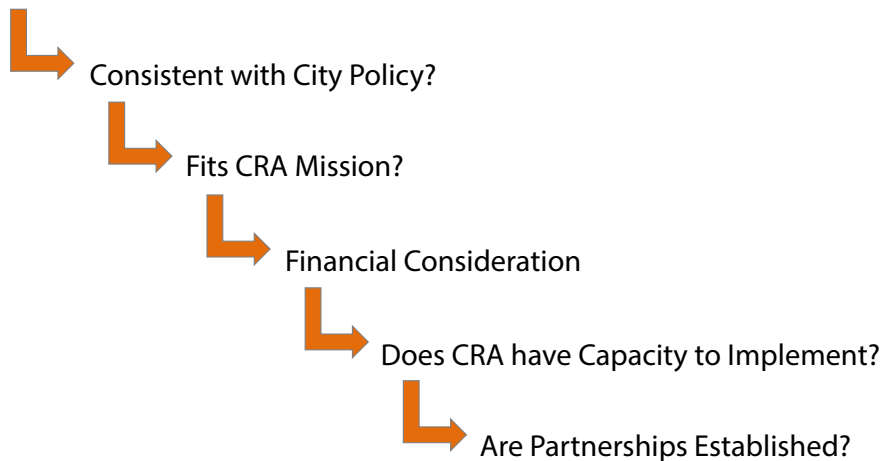
**Project Proposal**

Figure 6. This diagram of a decision tree for future project selection will be expanded to include specific and measurable criteria.

**STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES**

Over the course of the next year, the CRA will focus on the following action steps necessary to advance its core work. These are aligned below with the CRA Operating Principles. These objectives are intended to be measurable outcomes that can be evaluated on an annual basis.

**Maximize the Public Benefit**

- **Evaluate projects and programs against mission:** Based on the preliminary decision tree, specific measures for evaluating projects proposals need to be established (Figure 6).
- **Establish protocols for the community loan fund:** This work will involve a set of rules and regulations governing project definition, public purpose, and evaluation criteria, as well as additional staff capacity necessary to evaluate projects and manage loan and grant funds.

**Operate with Fiscal Responsibility**

- **Evaluate projects and programs against resources:** A project budget should be developed for each new initiative as part of the Board approval process. This budget would

estimate staff time, cost of consultants, and any other costs, and the relationship to the annual budget.

- **Identify new revenue sources through development and/or loans:** While the CRA is fortunate to have some financial resources at hand, these will quickly be expended unless consideration is given to project impacts on budget and the need for new sources. As an example, the Ames Street project will generate a new revenue stream over the next eleven years.

**Act**

- **Update and reevaluate priorities for long and short term projects and programs:** The process for ongoing evaluation of the CRA's priority projects is discussed further in Chapter 6, Outreach and Learning.
- **Participate in City policy decisions that affect CRA activities:** The CRA is an active partner of the City and will continue to participate and collaborate on a number of initiatives including the proposed MXD rezoning in Kendall Square.



*The City Council has identified the Foundry in East Cambridge as an opportunity for innovative programs. The City and CRA will work in partnership to develop a program and strategies for governance and adaptive reuse.*

#### *Operate with Transparency*

- **Assign Board members as ambassadors for different initiatives:** In the city of Cambridge, there are any number of important meetings and initiatives sponsored by private, institutional, non-profit, and public sectors. The CRA staff endeavors to keep abreast of these activities, but the Board has an important role in terms of being visible and present in these community conversations. As a volunteer Board, it's appropriate to deploy Board members strategically as their time allows to participate in key events.
- **Update the community on the status of projects and activities through multiple platforms:** The CRA will use the website, social media, and the public meetings to keep residents and other stakeholders informed.

#### *Set an Example*

- **Lead in innovative practices:** Cambridge is often on the forefront of innovative practices, emanating from the institutions, the city, the non-profit and the private sectors. In all of its work, the CRA should strive to set a positive example in demonstration projects and other endeavors that advance the approach to redevelopment.
- **Track changes in city and development trends:** The CRA staff and Board will keep abreast of trends in the city through their strong network of connections, and will continue to research advances in the field.



## 4. INTERNAL OPERATIONS

The internal operations of an organization are the vehicle for achieving its mission. As a public entity, the CRA operates with a Board and is subject to laws and policies of the Commonwealth, as well as its own by-laws. The role of the Board and Executive Director, staffing, office environment, policies and procedures, and methods for internal communication are key elements of the organization's operations. A set of strategic objectives for internal operations establish criteria for ongoing evaluation.

### THE BOARD

The CRA has a five-member volunteer Board, as mandated by M.G.L. ch.121b, with four members appointed by the City and one member appointed by the Commonwealth. According to the current By-Laws (January 16, 2013), the officers include a Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer, and Assistant Treasurer. As a public entity, the CRA Board is subject to open meeting laws (M.G.L. 30A, s.18-25), including provisions for executive sessions, and posts the Board agenda, minutes, and relevant documents online so that they are publicly accessible.

The current CRA Board was appointed in May 2012, and since that time, has been responsible for conducting a Transition Study, engaging the Executive Director, and carrying out the strategic planning process. The CRA Board has been actively engaged in establishing the new direction for the CRA, which has included drafting the new mission and operating principles, and fostering relationships in the community. During this time, the Board has continued its regulatory and oversight responsibility in the Kendall Square Urban Renewal Plan. The current Board exemplifies the recommended roles and responsibilities, which are documented below.



*Historically, Kendall Square is the intersection of Broadway and Main Street.*

### Role and Responsibilities

The role of the CRA Board is to provide oversight of the organization, exercise fiduciary responsibility, adopt and amend redevelopment plans, and set strategic priorities and policies that will carry out the organization's mission. As a redevelopment authority, the CRA Board also is responsible for design review and real estate decisions. The Board also plays an important role as ambassadors in the community, which helps strengthen relationships with the City, businesses, residents, and other partners. As their schedules allow, Board participation in community events increases the visibility of the organization and its work. An engaged Board is better able to offer insight and advice on key decisions, while still allowing the staff to make executive decisions and to carry out day-to-day operations.

Board members must be residents of the City of Cambridge, bringing a dedication to serving the interests of its various constituents. Maintaining the five-member Board is essential to the future of the CRA. As new Board members are appointed in the future, they should receive a Board briefing, including by-laws, summary of redevelopment authority role and powers, and information about past and current projects. As a relatively small Board, the professional expertise and knowledge of each member should be considered carefully to fulfill oversight responsibilities.

## *Agendas and Decisions*

Working with the Executive Director, the Board identifies strategic priorities for the year, which helps to shape monthly Board agendas. The Executive Director is generally responsible for disseminating information to inform the Board about the organization's work and upcoming decisions. This information needs to strike the right balance of properly informing Board members without inundating them. In some cases, a Board member may be working on special projects or tasks and will report information to the full Board.

Monthly Board agendas guide the discussion around the organization's top priorities. Board agendas also must allow time for the annual rhythm of internal business ranging from budgets to audits. Public comment, approval of minutes, and Executive Director reports are monthly items. Review of budget status and investments should take place every quarter. The Board Chair and the Executive Director typically set agendas jointly. Since most materials are sent out ahead of time, presentations should be short to allow sufficient time for meaningful discussion, especially as it relates to the organization's goals. Each meeting should be designed and organized to achieve a clear purpose.

Important decisions that come before the CRA Board include the following:

- Annual budget
- Real estate transactions
- Investment decisions

- Redevelopment plans and major and minor amendments
- Development agreements and amendments
- Design review
- Internal policies and procedures
- Executive Director hiring, contract, and performance review
- Contracts and other financial transactions over \$10,000
- Nominations of Board members.

## **STAFFING**

As a small, efficient organization, staffing decisions at the CRA must be made carefully. Staff members will need to be versatile, collaborative, and willing to assist on necessary tasks as they arise (Figure 7). The Executive Director, who reports to the Board, is responsible for supervising the administration of the CRA's business and affairs. A few key staff positions will allow the Executive Director to spend more time on strategy for programs and projects, while managing the day-to-day administrative operations. Projects, programs, public outreach, and research will be carried out in collaboration with staff, consultants, and interns.

The activities of the CRA staff fall into the following categories:

- Programs, Projects, and Property Management
- Office Management
- Financial Management
- Human Resources
- Board Administration
- Community Outreach and Research

Within these categories, the responsibilities range from Board level oversight to executive level management to staff level professional and administrative roles, including interns. Given the size of the organization, the Executive Director is involved from the executive to the administrative level depending on need, and works closely with the Board in all areas. A key aspect of the Executive Director role includes Board support, which involves managing communication and information flows and preparing for monthly Board meetings.

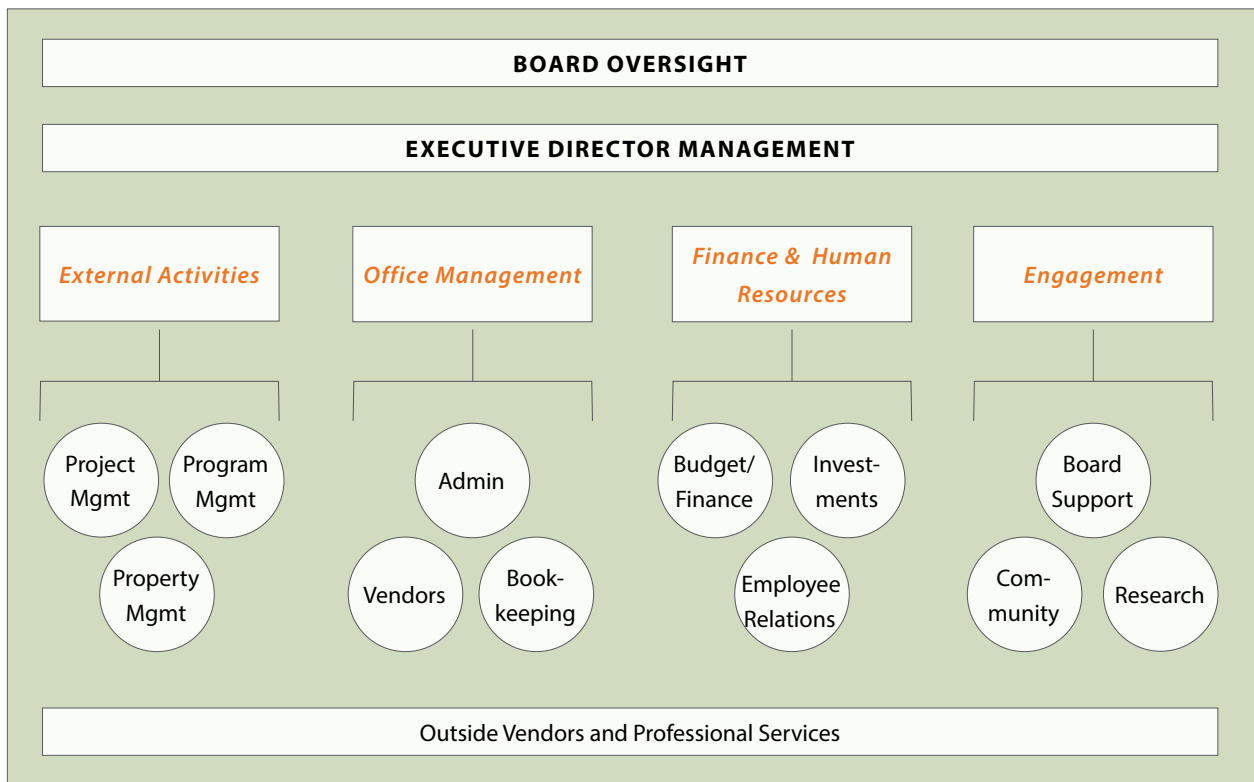


Figure 7. Although it's a small office, this simplified chart summarizes all the tasks that are required to run the CRA, underscoring the need to have a versatile, hands-on staff to address the range of activities.

The Executive Director also makes operational decisions related to financial management and human resources, and participates in the substance of the programs and projects that are the work of the organization. As a primary representative of the organization, the Executive Director is also instrumental in maintaining relationships with the City, negotiating with development partners, and engaging with the community and other stakeholders.

The CRA extends its capacity in a number of ways. The organization procures the services of professional consultants who work on a "house doctor" basis as needed to support the work of the CRA. Currently these include legal, audit, information technology, architectural, and engineering professionals. A process to engage the services of a real estate advisor is underway now. In the past year, the CRA also engaged financial management and web development services for a more limited time frame. The City of

Cambridge has been providing bookkeeping staff and administrative staff to support Board meetings. Graduate school interns have been instrumental in research and general support within the office, and a part-time temporary administrative staff has been invaluable in helping to organize the office. A part-time staff has led the Strategic Plan effort and is assisting with public outreach. The strategy for staffing CRA activities in the future is described below.

#### **Programs, Projects, Property Management**

Programs, projects, and property management are the main work of the organization. To date, this work has been carried out by a combination of the Executive Director, consultants, and interns. As more project and programs priorities get underway, however, some additional staff capacity is recommended. A mid-level professional with experience in urban planning, real estate, or a related field could fill the role of project and/

or program manager. Working closely with the Executive Director, this staff person will be able to advance the work from predevelopment activities through to implementation and project monitoring. Activities will vary depending on the specific project or program, but may include the following:

- **Project Management:** predevelopment coordination, project planning, due diligence, assessment of project viability, financing, schedule and phasing, design procurement, developer request for proposal (RFP), project monitoring.
- **Program Management:** program development, management of the application process, loan or grant reviews, and financial management of fund transfer and loan payments.
- **Property Management:** vendor management for maintenance, repair, and security systems, and if leases are involved, tenant relations and financial management.

The Executive Director and the Board would be involved in pre-development and development negotiations, real estate transactions, and lease negotiations. In order to administer loans or grants, a set of program policies and procedures must be established, staff capacity expanded, and financial management systems put in place.

#### *Office Management*

The office manager will work under the direction of the Executive Director, and primarily will focus on the following three areas:

- **Administrative:** manage social media, correspondence, meetings, Board logistics, internal record keeping, property manager interactions, supply requisitions, and insurance coverage
- **Vendors:** manage outside vendors responsible for equipment, information technology, telecommunications, document storage, and other as necessary
- **Bookkeeping:** process invoices, timesheets, expenses, and payroll; manage procurement;

maintain contracts and bank statements; and distribute monthly financial reports.

- The CRA will continue to utilize City staff as needed for program administration, but would have more internal capacity to manage bookkeeping and Board logistics.

#### *Financial Management*

The financial management will be performed through a combination of the CRA Board (notably the Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer), Executive Director, and outside professional services. The later would include the annual audit team as well as financial management and investment advisors as necessary. The Executive Director will have the primary responsibility of generating and tracking the budget; administering the accounting policies and procedures; managing cash flow, banking and insurance; and preparing for taxes and the audit, which will be conducted by outside consultants. The Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer are responsible for monitoring the investment of funds, and equity and debt financing. An outside advisor may be needed to assist in these efforts.

#### *Human Resources*

The Executive Director will take primary responsibility for human resources, working closely with the Board Chair and Vice-Chair. This work involves developing job descriptions (or consultant requests for professional services), interviewing, and training. The Executive Director will also administer performance reviews, ensure compliance with employee and contractor contracts, and in general apply the personnel policy. Legal counsel is on call to assist and advice on an ad hoc basis.

#### *Board Coordination*

Board support is a primary role of the Executive Director. This work involves preparation of documents for the monthly Board packet, helping develop the agenda, and preparing Executive Director Reports, as well as ongoing communication to the Board and the public. Working closely with the Board and its advisors, the

Executive Director helps set the strategic priorities for the organization. The office manager will assist in Board logistics, such as meeting preparation and documentation.

### *Public Outreach and Research*

Learning and growth is an important objective for the CRA. The internal capacity of the staff and the Board must allow time for ongoing public outreach, including informal relationship building and more formal participation activities. The Executive Director will take the lead in this area, although the participation of the Board is also essential. Research into innovative approaches and programs can be assigned to graduate-level interns who will work under the supervision of the Executive Director or a staff level project manager.

### **OFFICE LOCATION AND ENVIRONMENT**

The CRA office is currently located in One Kendall Center, with approximately 1,200 square feet on the fourth floor. The space is leased from Boston Properties, with an upcoming expiration in fall 2014. Currently the space is configured into a reception area, four private offices, and a conference room. Generous circulation space accommodates the numerous files held by the CRA as well as office equipment. Additional files, which provide documentation of over fifty years of work, are held in a basement storage area and an off-site storage facility. A building reception desk on the ground floor provides security for all the building tenants. Since September 2013, the Kendall Square Association (KSA) has subleased a portion of the office, but this arrangement will end when the KSA moves to new space in May 2014. Public meetings are held off-site, most frequently in the Cambridge Police Station on Fifth Street in East Cambridge.

The CRA is subject to procurement processes for its space, according to M.G.L. c. 30b. As the CRA considers its options, the following criteria should be evaluated:

- Cost of moving, including relocation of substantial files



*The CRA office is located in the heart of Kendall Square, near to the MBTA Red Line Station.*

- Advantage of a location in the Kendall Square Urban Renewal Plan area, where the CRA retains a primary interest
- Proximity to other priority projects in the Kendall Square area (Grand Junction Path, Foundry)
- Adequate privacy for conducting business including real estate transactions
- Security of files
- Ability to hold work-related meetings (from three to four or more people)
- Amount of space available
- Lease rates and terms (term, level of property management, utilities, insurance, etc.)

A goal will be to create a collaborative, flexible, welcoming work environment. The current configuration of the office is not ideal for



collaboration or flexibility, although its location in the Kendall Square Urban Renewal Plan area and its ability to accommodate file in a secure location are an advantage. With projected new staff, the amount of current space seems to be adequate for CRA operations.

## POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Over the last year, the CRA Board and Staff have established a number of policies and procedures to guide their work. The Management Letter contained in the recent Audit statements has served as the basis for many of these recommendations. In addition, the CRA is governed by the laws and policies of the Commonwealth, notably M.G.L. c. 121a and 121b.

Policies that have recently been updated or that are under review by the CRA Board include the following:

- **By-Laws, updated January 16, 2013:** regulates the governance of the Board and its staff
- **Personnel Policy, amended and restated January 15, 2014:** sets out the terms of employment for the Executive Director and staff
- **Internal Control Policy, draft:** processing of invoices, purchase orders, checks

These additional policies will also be set in place:

- **Procurement Policy:** statement of procurement procedures that the CRA will use to carry out Commonwealth laws and regulations
- **Project Evaluation Criteria:** specific criteria for evaluating projects and programs against mission and financial and staff capacity
- **Community Fund:** goals, procedures, application forms, evaluation criteria, approval processes, legal documents, program monitoring and assessment guidelines

- **Investment Policy:** balanced risk and income levels, and short and longer-term access to funds.
- **Signage Design Guidelines:** documentation of review criteria and processes to be followed by the CRA for signage review in the Kendall Square Urban Renewal Plan.

## INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

With monthly meetings, the flow of information between the Board and staff needs to be strategic and informative, acknowledging that any deliberations (on-line, telephone, or in person) are subject to open meeting laws.

Strategies for disseminating information to the Board and the public are highlighted below, although with a small staff the ability to maintain these media is necessarily limited.

- **Email Posts:** Information can be sent out individual to Board members for review and comment as long as Board members do not reply to other Board members.
- **CRA Website:** Board agendas, minutes, and information packages are available in a public online location. The website also is a forum for news, such as upcoming meetings and special studies, current project information, and historic documentation.
- **Social Media:** Twitter provides a platform for posting updates on Kendall Square activities, announcing CRA events, outreach, and dialogue about relevant planning and development issues in Cambridge and the region. Facebook, Instagram or similar platforms could be used in the future. Third party websites, such as CoUrbanize, offer the ability to post information, gather input, and encourage dialogue.



## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

In order to improve its internal operations, the CRA will focus on the following action steps. These are aligned with the operating principles and are intended to serve as a checklist for evaluation on an annual basis.

### *Maximize the Public Benefit*

- **Align internal capacity with strategic priorities:** Based on the CRA priorities, strategic hires and engagement of outside consultants is recommended to supplement the office's administrative and external project capacity.
- **Establish a collaborative office environment and location:** Evaluation criteria should be developed with the Board, and sufficient information collected as necessary to make a strategic decision about whether to stay in the current location or move to a new location.

### *Operate with Fiscal Responsibility*

- **Align budget with priority projects:** The costs of staff and expenses needs to be projected for each of the priority projects identified in Chapter 3, External Activities and Projects.

### *Operate with Transparency*

- **Reinforce Board role in policy, oversight, and fiduciary responsibility:** Ongoing Board and staff interactions will be governed by a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities.
- **Share news and updates:** As time allows, social media and other techniques should be used to keep the Board and the public abreast of new initiatives and developments.

### *Set an Example*

- **Involve interns in research on innovative practices:** The organization will continue to support two to three interns working summers and part-time during the school year.

- **Identify opportunities for employee learning and growth:** The Executive Director will stay abreast of development and regional trends through participation in the Urban Land Institute (ULI), American Planning Association (APA), and the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC). Training for MGL c. 30b procurement and social media are also recommended.



*Kendall Square has become an important location in the region and beyond (2005).*



## 5. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

**W**ith a new Board and the Strategic Plan, the CRA is in a position to determine its financial strategy over the next five years in alignment with its vision and mission and consistent with the other elements of the Strategic Plan (external activities, internal operations, and outreach and growth. This strategy encompasses decisions regarding sources and uses of funds, especially as it relates to delivery of services.

Like businesses, government authorities can change their financial strategy over time, moving through cycles from growth to sustaining operations to a mature phase of managing assets (Figure 8). Over the last year, the focus at the CRA has been on sustaining operations, with a concerted effort to reduce costs. Through the strategic planning process, the CRA has recommitted itself to an active role in serving the public interest, including new initiatives, some of which would reinvest current funds and anticipated revenue streams. With a focus on real estate, some of the other initiatives could lead to new revenue sources.

As of 2013, the CRA has assets totaling \$12 million, of which 7% are property assets. the organization no longer receives a regular stream of public funding from the federal government, the Commonwealth, or the City to sustain it. The current assets have been generated by adding value through the real estate process: assembling land, building infrastructure, gaining entitlements for development, and taking a patient position in terms of risk and investment returns over decades. While the CRA has not retained ownership of most of the land in the Kendall Square Urban Renewal Plan

area, the Development Agreements are structured such that any new development pays a fee based on gross floor area to the CRA.

The CRA property assets are a combination of public space (e.g. the Sixth Street walkway and Grand Junction parcels) and small parcels left over from the redevelopment process (e.g. the Third Street lot at Binney Street). The CRA expends funds to maintain these properties, but only the Third Street lot returns revenues based on license agreements for interim use of the 5,889 square foot parcel (0.14 acres).

With an annual budget of approximately \$800,000 to \$1 million, the current cash assets would be spent down in approximately 12 to 15 years. In selecting external activities and initiatives, the CRA must take into consideration the criteria of whether a project will spend down current funds or generate revenue to sustain the organization into the future. While both approaches might further its mission, the latter takes a longer term view. At the same time, simply sustaining the organization without reinvesting in the community does not fulfill the mission.

For a real estate portfolio, the CRA assets would not go far, especially in Cambridge where available land is scarce and prices start at approximately \$2 to \$3 million per acre and increase from there (Loopnet, April 2014). Limited strategic acquisitions may be possible. Thus the CRA Board has an important fiduciary responsibility to both conserve and invest its assets wisely, while seeking out and valuing new revenue sources.

		Financial Approaches		
		Revenue Growth	Cost Reduction	Asset Utilization
Business Life Cycle	Start-up			
	Mid-Stage			
	Mature			
	Re-Start	New Initiatives	Efficient Operations	Community Investment

Figure 8. Through the strategic planning process, the CRA has committed itself to reinvesting in the community and taking on new initiatives, while maintaining efficient operations (adapted from Kaplan, 1996, 2001).

## REVENUE SOURCES

Redevelopment authorities have a variety of ways of generating revenue. The form of the revenues within an urban renewal area or a demonstration project would be defined with the plan approved by the City Council and could be a combination of some of the sources described below.

### Return on Investment

The CRA has invested its funds across multiple financial institutions in a low risk portfolio with relatively low interest rates. Outside investment advice is recommended to evaluate the appropriate levels of risk and return and the appropriate financial vehicles for investment for a public entity.

### Real Estate Transactions and Management

Redevelopment authorities typically invest in land and property, which increase in value in over time, especially if improvements are made. At the present time, no properties are identified for acquisition, and current funds are not sufficient to invest in such properties for the long term or at any scale. At some point in the future, the CRA could sell some of its miscellaneous small non-open space parcels to adjacent landowners. At this point, however, holding these assets seems to be the wisest strategy.

Revenues from leases and property management are another form of revenue. At the current time, the CRA generates a modest income from interim use of its Third Street lot. Other strategies have been investigated for use of this lot, including improvements for parking or lease to other interim operations more compatible with the neighborhood. Like their private counterparts, redevelopment authorities can develop and lease property, generating a steady stream of revenues for the organization. Ground leases are a form of revenue that involves retaining ownership of land and selling the development rights to a third party for a long period, typically 99 years, in exchange for an annual payment. Other redevelopment authorities develop and operate parking facilities as a means of generating revenues. Property management is a line of business where the CRA would be paid a fee for managing or operating a facility.

### Development Fees

Development fees are the largest source of revenue for the CRA at this time. Based on development agreements that have been negotiated with private developers, the CRA receives a lump sum payment for any new development within the Kendall Square Urban Renewal Plan area. For the Ames Street project, the development fee will be in the form of an annual payment over a period of 11 years.

### **Project Administration Fees**

The CRA can be entrepreneurial in pursuing state programs or other third party funding to acquire land, invest in infrastructure, or otherwise improve properties and districts. In delivering these programs, the CRA can offset its costs with project administration fees. Potential sources that relate to redevelopment activities include District Improvement Finance/Tax Increment Finance (DIF/TIF), tax credits (New Market, Low Income, Historic), low interest loans (MassDevelopment), and infrastructure investment (I-Cubed, MassWorks, municipal bonds).

### **Program Administration Fees**

Administering programs is another way to support the organization while delivering services that further the CRA's mission. Programs might include technical assistance, grants, and loans to small businesses and property owners as a way

of preventing blight. Currently, the Economic Development division within CDD provides these resources for façade, signage and lighting improvements, although there may be ways for the CRA to complement this program or partner with the City to expand its impact.

Funding for federal or state demonstration programs could also involve fee for service activities that could be fulfilled by the CRA. Programs related to sustainability, smart growth, energy, and brownfields would be alignment with the CRA's mission. As an entity specializing in public real estate, the CRA could also provide technical assistance to the City or non-profit organizations to advance revitalization. Some redevelopment authorities act on behalf of the municipality to deliver Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), HOME and other federal programs, although in Cambridge this role is fulfilled by CDD.

## **FINANCIAL MEASUREMENT AND CONTROL**

A number of assessment techniques can be used to measure and control financial resources in a non-profit entity, including a government authority (Herzlinger, 1994).

- 1. Are the goals consistent with financial resources?** In non-profit entities, a basic principle is that the largest portion of the budget should be devoted to projects and programs, with overhead operations that support these efforts. An entity needs to strike the right balance between modest expenditures that reflect low levels of external activities and high expenditures that reflect an overly ambitious agenda (asset turnover). Similarly, assets can be used to earn income, but a balance needs to be achieved to retain some liquidity for use in achieving the mission and goals.
- 2. Is the organization planning for the future?** This principle addresses inter-generational equity, so that decisions are not weighted too much in serving present needs (starving future beneficiaries) or future needs (starving present beneficiaries). Capital needs to be seen as a resource that should benefit both current and future constituencies.
- 3. Are the sources and uses of funds matched?** Fixed expenses, such as retirement benefits, should be covered by revenue sources that are reliable and steady. Variable sources of income, such as third party grants, should be matched to discretionary uses, such as special programs.
- 4. Is the organization sustainable?** New programs should be justified with a discussion of financial consequences to the organization. A financially sound organization will diversify its revenues (multiple sources), its expenses (not overly reliant on any one line item), its assets (not invested in a single property), and its liabilities (balancing risk).

In the past, the CRA provided consulting services to other redevelopment authorities. While there is no capacity for this now, it could be an option in the future.

## USES OF FUNDS

After focusing considerable attention to reducing overhead in the last year, the CRA expenses are fairly well distributed. With a 2013 budget of \$800,000, the CRA used 50% of its funds on outside professional services, including legal, audit, and architectural and engineering advice. Personnel costs represented approximately one third of the budget (32%). Included in the personnel category are relatively high fixed costs for retirement benefits for former employees, which will continue to affect the budget over the next five to ten years. The CRA spent approximately 13% on office and administrative costs, and a small amount on property management (4%) and community outreach and professional development (1%).

In the future, as the CRA turns its attention to projects and programs, a greater proportion of professional services and personnel time will be focused on mission related activities rather than office administration. With better tracking of time and expenses, it will be possible to determine more accurately the ratio between overhead costs and project and program services in all categories.

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

As the CRA considers future projects, the strategic objectives for financial considerations should guide their decisions. These are aligned with the operating principles and are intended to serve as a checklist for evaluation on an annual basis.

### *Maximize the Public Benefit*

- **Align program and administrative costs with priorities:** Strike a balance with the asset turnover to insure that funds are being used to deliver services without depleting all the assets.
- **Reinvest revenues to serve the public interest:** Identify programs and projects that carry out the mission of the CRA, while balance the consideration of the needs of current as well as future constituencies.

### *Operate with Fiscal Responsibility*

- **Ensure administrative costs are in service to programs:** Budget projects so that overhead costs are in proportion to the implementation costs of projects and programs, which are at the heart of the CRA mission.
- **Balance risk with a higher return on investment:** Invest funds wisely to earn a favorable return while maintaining accountability as a public entity.

### *Operate with Transparency*

- **Utilize financial procedures and protocols:** Operate the business functions based on a set of policies for internal controls. Provide frequent reports to the Board and the public on the budget and assets of the CRA.



## 6. OUTREACH AND LEARNING

**T**his draft document is a work in progress as the CRA is currently in the process of gathering input and feedback on the elements of the proposed Strategic Plan. As described in Chapter 2, the strategic planning process has been shaped by engagement with many members of the community, including initial meetings with City staff, City Councilors, partner organizations, and other stakeholders, as well as input generated at a community workshop held on March 26 and the CoUrbanize website. The monthly CRA meetings have provided an opportunity to hear from community members and to discuss preliminary findings with the Board members. Meetings with neighborhood associations, business associations, and other community groups are ongoing. With a focus on the draft document, comments from the Board, the City, and community members will be addressed and incorporated into the final plan.

With leadership from the Board, the CRA is committed to staying in touch, learning from others, and leading the way using innovative approaches. Looking outward, the CRA will continue to build strong relationships with others in the Cambridge community, as well as the agencies, institutions, and others in the region that share a similar mission. The balanced scorecard and strategic objectives found in each chapter provide a set of benchmarks to monitor progress on an annual basis. The Strategic Objectives related to Outreach and Learning are found below.

### STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

#### *Maximize the Public Benefit*

- **Measure progress with data and benchmarks:** As office systems are set up, data related to project budgets, loans, development, public benefits, and community meetings should be tracked.
- **Identify targets for community loans:** The program definition and criteria should respond to input from community dialogue and analysis of need.

#### *Operate with Fiscal Responsibility*

- **Monitor time and expenses by projects:** Assigning time to specific projects will demonstrate the CRA's delivery of services.

#### *Act*

- **Develop an understanding of community issues on specific projects:** The CRA's actions should respond to input garnered from the community and other stakeholders.
- **Maintain relationships with city, state, and federal officials:** An important part of the outreach process involves partnerships with other government agencies to identify opportunities, keep abreast of current issues, and collaborate on shared initiatives.

*Operate with Transparency*

- **Engage in ongoing dialogue with the community:** The community outreach process is an ongoing one, involving formal and informal meetings.

*Set an Example*

- **Engage higher education representatives:** With so many institutions of higher education in the region, the CRA should cultivate relationships with faculty and student groups who are studying new approaches in urban planning, design, real estate, and community development.
- **Participate in regional special interest groups:** Cambridge holds an important position in the region and must look beyond its borders to track initiatives in Somerville, Boston, and the region. In particular, issues related to urban and natural systems call for collaboration, especially climate change, energy use, hydrology, and transportation.

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