KENDALL SQUARE
PUBLIC SPACE CENTER PLAN

AS KENDALL SQUARE HAS BEEN ON THE CUTTING EDGE OF CREATING THE FUTURE, WE PROPOSE MAKING KENDALL SQUARE THE PUBLIC SPACE CENTER—BRINGING THE SPIRIT OF EXPERIMENTATION, INNOVATION AND OPTIMISM INTO THE PUBLIC REALM.

KENDALL SQUARE IS WHERE THE FUTURE IS INVENTED.

Kendall Square has always been a place for dreaming big, for exploration, research, innovation and taking risks—from the early industries built on marshland to the grand vision of a NASA, and its abundant of research facilities and innovative businesses located here today. In developing a new framework for Kendall Square, we questioned: how can this heritage of innovation and ideas be continued and leveraged to address opportunities for Kendall Square today?

We need a shift in perspective towards a grand moment of optimism for Kendall Square. People should think of it as a destination in itself, a place to discover, the perfect place to build, to start new ways to participate in public space.

Development of a public space framework allows us to ask: “What is this place?” and “How can we be curious and explore again?” while developing new public space fabric for Kendall Square.

As Kendall Square has been on the cutting edge of creating the future, we propose making Kendall Square the Public Space Center—bringing the spirit of experimentation, innovation and optimism into the public realm. Kendall Square, as Public Space Center, can be a global model that joyfully addresses the social and environmental challenges of our time in a forward-looking, healthy and humane neighborhood.

The framework for creating the Public Space Center consists of three layers: The Physical Realm, which incorporates the tangible elements and design of landscapes, buildings and systems; The Participatory Realm, which includes the ideas made visible and the activities that take place in the stage set by the physical realm; and Beautiful Policy, which lays the groundwork for fueling change towards a better public future.
T STATION GATEWAY

The T Station should be a clear, well-marked and lighted arcade from the plaza through the ground floor of the hotel to Broadway. It should reflect the spirit of the passageway to MIT on the other side of the street. Together the two could become an element of the pedestrian system.

The Crossing is envisioned as a major new open space at the intersection of the Canal Trace and Volpe Walk. The crossing of two “big move” routes, significant in terms of wayfinding, makes it an exciting place and a signature location in terms of intuitive wayfinding.

VOLPE BACKYARD

The Backyard is located inside the Volpe site. It is designated as a Childsafe Zone, with a discovery playground and children’s garden. This would be a safe place for children to play in a playful environment, set away from busy traffic. The Backyard is designed to provide a safe and attractive setting for children and serves as an outdoor extension of the Kendall neighborhood.

ROGERS PARK

Rogers Park is well located for larger scale activities that bring together East Cambridge residents with the Kendall Square community. Its location is key to the success of the Foundry Building Development Project. A synergy between the STEAM activities and the park is possible, but the proposed new development west of the park and Plans Boulevard specifically reduce that potential.

The character of Point Park draws on the retail nature of the juncture as a plaza space for people to meet in the course of the day’s activities. It is bustling day and night. The design includes iconic overhead cloud canopies that are colorful and lit in the evening. They help visually connect Point Park with the Kendall/MIT station as part of a larger pedestrian node and also as an entrance to the city.
The “porkchop” shaped open space between Binney and the Grand Junction right-of-way could be a beautiful and functional junction that supports safe and pleasant commutes by bicycle, with facilities for cyclists including bike storage, repair and showers. Should there be passenger transit on the route in the future, the site takes on an even stronger use as a junction. The Station is located at the south end of the park near Broadway.

The other interesting junction is below ground—the combined sewer main is just north of the park. We propose diverting stormwater from the main and pretreating it through bioretention and/or a filter media device before discharging it to the Canal Trace. This treated water is aerated by being pumped to a “water wall” visible from across Binney, and directed to the Canal Trace.

Access to the Charles River is a key contextual component of an open space system, but the current opportunities to engage with the river are surprisingly sparse. We propose going under the bridges to the river. From the existing walkway a ramp would lead to the river. This ramp would take us to a new park at the median of the two bridges. This land between the two bridges has views down to the river, and the new park below would connect to this existing green space above.

Canal Trace begins at the Junction Park Waterworks, taking cleansed water through the heart of Kendall to the Broad Street Canal. It is one of the new signature connections defining the new neighborhood.

Our framework looks at the collection of parks near the river—Front Park, Charles Park, the riverfront, the existing but currently disconnected parcel described as Under Park, and the newly acquired triangle of land as an assembly of Front Parks. Front Park Triangle draws on the culinary art school as inspiration for growing food and bringing the people together around a common dining table. Herbs and edible plants grow in raised beds along the south end of the park, with a slight incline to diminish the effects of the traffic along Land Boulevard. The north side emphasizes the connection diagonally across Land Boulevard to the existing Front Park.

Reconnecting Cambridge and the Charles River is one of the most exciting aspects of the Connect Kendall Square project. People will be drawn to the river via the Under Pass or the improved crossings associated with the Front Parks. Along the riverfront itself, people can choose to be on the lower boardwalk, close to the water, or upland along the Cambridge Park(way). The Riverfront walkway connects from MIT through Cambridge over to Boston, making a continuous pathway.
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LAUNCHING EXPLORATION

ACTIVATION WILL COME FROM PROACTIVE AND NATURAL STEWARDSHIP

The Space Center—the “brain” of the research and experimentation in activation—is a unique approach to proactive stewardship. It means on the incredible resources of MIT and other nearby institutions, and combines academic expertise with the grass roots community members of Kendall Square and East Cambridge. The efforts to invent new strategies and activities supported by institutions and the City, with draft support events and activities.

Our Kendall Framework Plan includes Invitational Programming led by the Space Center. This entity would be the activation of the neighborhood. Not only would the Space Center be in charge of a number of incredible resources of MIT and other nearby institutions, and combines academic expertise with the grass roots community members of Kendall Square. A number of events and activities.

Because purposeful programming is resource intensive, we look for ways to leverage efforts to activate the neighborhood through what we call Invitational Programming. Kendall is as wonderful place to test invitational programming.

Canine Mission

Canine Mission is a general for features and services to a digital app with daily physical challenges for you and your dog to complete.

PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP - REAL WORLD MINECRAFT

Public/Privater Partnership-based activities are using local relationships between institutions and community to invent new strategies and activities supported by institutions and the City, with draft support events and activities.

We would aspire to bring some of the many ground breaking ideas being explored inside the office and talk into the public realm.

Another strategy to create well-stewarded places is through ‘outposts’ and ‘outposts’ of the Space Center. These ‘outposts’ may be nearby business owners, schools, children, or the people who live and work nearby.

We are proposing a year of activation events, installations and moments to launch the Kendall Square Public Space Center Plan. These will occur throughout the season and complement the existing seasonal events and programming already being implemented in Kendall Square.