urban design/planning study for the central and kendall square area
Agenda

Central Square Red Ribbon Committee
May 25, 2011

• Understanding the opportunity
• Creating a vision: initial thoughts
• Making it happen: planning team and process
• Central Square context
• Discussion
UNDERSTANDING THE OPPORTUNITY: finding the synergies between creating community and competing in the 21st century
The right time and place: “demographics are destiny”

- More than half of all households in the region are singles and couples
- …roughly twice the percentage of a decade ago
- …large majority of households seeking housing included kids 20 years ago…less than one-quarter today
- …family households still have an important place…
- …trends that will dominate housing…and neighborhood…choices for 15-25 years
Boston/Cambridge: 1960 to 2000
America faces a long-term shortage of innovation workers

• 25-34-year olds were no more likely than the rest of the population to want to live in or near a downtown 20 years ago
• Today they are 33% more likely
• “Creative workers” in this age range are 53% more likely
Changing demographics are changing values that shape our living environment

1950s to 1990s:
- Golf courses
- Large backyards
- Homogeneity
- Escape from work

2000s:
- Main Streets
- “Social places”
- Diversity
- Live near work
- Social and environmental responsibility
Changing technologies offer opportunities to improve our natural environment.
Changing working patterns require us to rethink our working environments

- Microsoft, IBM, and Amazon report that less than half their employees are at their desks any particular day
- Forrester urges its employees to exercise for one hour during the day
- Research shows frequent interaction among employees representing different disciplines produces more innovation
SHAPING A CENTRAL SQUARE VISION

- Opportunities
- Precedents
- Preliminary ideas
Reviving Central Square as the heart of a diverse community

- Celebrate its identity as one of the most diverse places around
- Enrich the mix of uses with more housing, retail, arts...
- Create a more complete destination for more people
- Improve connections to surrounding neighborhoods
- Capitalize on transit connections
- Build upon groundwork of the Red Ribbon Commission recommendations
Transforming Main Street into a place of community connections

- Front door of a mixed-use neighborhood
- Expanded range of housing choices
- Walkable place connecting Central Square to Kendall
- …and to adjacent neighborhoods (Area 4, Mid-Cambridge, Cambridgeport)
- …and to MIT
Precedent: Downtown Asheville, NC
Precedent: Washington, DC … U Street, Columbia Heights, Eastern Market
Precedent: Rockridge (Oakland)
Urban design: vitality, community
Urban design: vitality, community
Urban design: vitality, community, and connection
Urban design: vitality, community, and connection
MAKING IT HAPPEN:
Critical issues...and the team

- **Integrating all perspectives:** Goody Clancy
- **Markets:** MJB (retail), W-ZHA (development economics)
- **Feasibility and implementation:** W-ZHA (economics), Ferrell Madden Lewis (zoning)
- **Transportation:** Nelson Nygaard
- **Community:** Goody Clancy
- **Urban design:** Goody Clancy
Process

- Public meetings
- Stakeholder interviews
- Advisory committee meetings

Analysis: Retail, development, design, zoning

Integrated plan Kendall, Central, Transition

Kendall

May | June | July | August | September | October | November | Dec. – Feb. 2012
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Next step: June 9 public meeting

- Identify initial Central Square issues for discussion
- Small group discussion sessions on:
  - Identity
  - Public space
  - Housing
  - Retail and restaurants
  - Transportation and neighborhood connections
  - Arts, culture and entertainment
- Report-backs with summary of priority vision elements