Reinventing Kendall Square for the 21st Century
Building form workshop

KENDALL SQUARE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MARCH 9, 2012
Agenda

• Draft building form framework: what we heard from you
• Updated building form framework
  – Kendall Square
  – Transition Area
• Discussion
Draft building form framework: What we heard from you

- Proposed office and research floorplates: need to reflect balance between market realities and community-building urban design
- Need to achieve same balance for new generation of housing floorplates
- Need practical approach to achieve “streetwall” heights
- How Cambridge makes growth work for everybody...need to understand order of magnitude of community benefits associated with increased heights
GUIDING PRINCIPLES

• Frame streets as outdoor rooms to support their perception and use as public spaces
• Create an appropriate pedestrian scale
• Relate new development to scale of context buildings

**Streetwall: up to 80’/85’ (was 75’)**

• 16’ step-back at datum height
• Main, Broadway, Third, Volpe park: 80’ datum
• Binney: 85’ datum
• Typically accommodates active ground floor plus up to 4 floors research/office or 6 floors housing

Third Square: 85’ streetwall
Three height thresholds: Intermediate...

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Accommodate significant additional research and housing development
- Leverage future development to provide community benefits such as enhanced parks and plazas, local retail, affordable housing
- Produce variety of building height and massing to enhance aesthetics, place-identity

Intermediate: Streetwall to 200’

- Floorplate limits
  - Streetwall to 120’ tall: up to 30,000sf (was 25,000sf), 240’ length limit
    (accommodates prevailing research configurations)
  - 120’ to 200’ tall: up to 25,000sf (was 15,000sf between 150’ and 200’), 160’ length limit

One Main floorplates:
West 23,000sf; East 29,000sf
Three height thresholds: Tallest

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

• Locate added intensity where infrastructure and mixed-use concentrations best support it – and vice-versa

• Physically define the center of Kendall Square to improve place identity

• Leverage future development to provide community benefits

• Produce variety of building height and massing to enhance aesthetics, place-identity

Tallest: 200’-300’

• Within 2 blocks or 800’ of T

• 20,000sf floorplates allowed up to 250’ height if extended down to stepback at 160’ height or below (was 15,000sf); 160’ length limit

• Floorplate limit otherwise: 8,000sf (was 6,500)

• Housing, added community benefits required above 250’

Limited number of buildings over 200’ tall

One Broadway: 20,000sf floorplate, 226’ tall
Three height thresholds: Tallest

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

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Sample buildout scenario

Main

Ames

Broadway

Watermark: 11,000sf floorplate

Marriott: 11,000sf floorplate
GUIDING PRINCIPLES
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• Housing, added community benefits required above 250, limited number of buildings over 200’ tall
Upper floor connections enable larger floorplates

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

• Connections should serve internal tenant circulation rather than diverting public circulation from street level
• Not over primary streets
• Majority of exterior should be glazed
• Integrated with building architecture

Floorplates of 35,000-70,000 possible
Community benefits may take a variety of forms

Examples of potential benefits in return for potential increase in density and/or height: support for...

- Parks/public spaces
- Active ground floors
- Workforce readiness programs and education
- Housing production and affordability
- Superior sustainability performance
- ...and of course, expanded transportation alternatives and demand management
Leveraging height for community benefits

- Housing
  - Assumptions:
    - Leverage 5 floors of added housing value from 250’ to 300’ height
    - 7 units per floor
    - Several hundred thousand dollars per floor (after accommodating standard affordable housing inclusion requirements)
    - Rental lower end of range
    - Ownership higher end of range
  - Office and research...at top of this range or higher
Use mix: potential

Approximate floor areas (beyond pipeline):

- **Housing**: 2,500 units
- **Office/research**: 3 million sf
- **Retail/active ground floor**: 200,000sf
Transition area building form
Balancing complementary goals

• Provide appropriate scale and use transition to Area 4.
• Provide incentive for housing south of Main Street
• Accommodate research uses on sites uniquely suited to it
• Encourage active ground floor uses, emphasizing a continuously walkable Main Street corridor
Existing conditions: south of Main

- Zone IB
- 2.75 FAR maximum for non-residential, 4.0 FAR maximum for residential
- 120’ maximum height
- 2.75 FAR maximum non-residential (research/office)
- Active ground floor uses not counted in FAR
- 45 degree height limit plane ascending from Main Street centerline
Proposed framework: south of Main

- 2.75 FAR maximum for non-residential
- Active ground floor uses not counted in FAR
- Additional residential FAR allowed up to 4.0 total
- 45 degree height limit plane for non-residential, not housing
Research/office restricted west of Windsor

- Active ground floor uses not counted toward FAR
- Building height may rise to 60' within 100' of Main Street, and within 100' of Portland St as far as X Street
- Building height may rise to 45' beyond 60' height envelope
- FAR bonus possible with housing affordable to moderate incomes
- Standard maximum FAR
- 1:1 replacement of public housing units required
- Priority area for housing

Opportunity sites and ownership:
- Planned / Permitted
- Potential - Volpe Site
- Potential - Kendall Square
- Potential - Central Square
- Potential - Transition Area
Existing conditions: north of Main

- Zone C-1
- 0.75 FAR maximum
- 35’ height maximum
Proposed framework: north of Main

- Mixed-income redevelopment opportunity
- 1:1 replacement of public housing units
- 60’ height limit within 100’ of Main and Portland to Washington
- 45’ height limit beyond
- FAR approx. 2.0-2.5
- Additional density possible with low/moderate income housing
DISCUSSION

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