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

Kendall Square advisory committee
May 19, 2011

- Understanding the opportunity
- Creating a vision: initial thoughts
- Making it happen: planning team and process
- Kendall Square context
- Working criteria for development review
- 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
- Forester 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 VISION
Shaping Kendall Square’s next chapter: a vibrant home for the emerging knowledge community

- Vibrant public realm
- Gathering places building community and collaboration
- Mixed-use
- Community destinations
- Innovative, convenient access to support growth
- Proactive management

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Transforming Main Street into a place of community connections

• Front door of a mixed-use neighborhood
• Expanded range of housing choices
• Walkable place connecting Kendall to Central Square
• …and Area 4…and MIT
Urban design: vitality
Urban design: vitality
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
MAKING IT HAPPEN: Streetscape & Infrastructure Team

- Engineering HDR Engineering, Inc.
- Landscape Architecture/Urban Design Klopfer-Martin Design Group
- Transportation / Traffic McMahon Associates, Inc.
Process

- Stakeholder interviews
- Advisory committee meetings
- Third Thursdays
- Public meetings
- Infrastructure work continues

Kendall


Central

Draft Plan
Analysis: Retail, development, design, zoning
Integrated plan Kendall, Central, Transition

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CONTEXT FOR PLANNING
Kendall Square: What we’ve heard and seen

• Kendall is an innovation center of global significance
• Workforce is key to Kendall’s innovation dynamic. Talented workforce have other options – must entice them here. Variety of jobs is key asset
• 30,000-50,000 people are within ¼ mile of Kendall on a typical workday
• 15 million sf of lab and office space around Kendall
• 1,400 housing units were envisioned by ECaPS within ¼ mile of Binney St; more than 850 have been built and another 200 permitted
• Third Square housing on 3rd St is a good urban housing model
• Area housing is typically too expensive for graduate students
• Neighborhoods have suggested additional density can be appropriate if coupled with increased civic purpose
• Kendall has gained a number of new restaurants recently. Cambridge Center will soon have much better retail edges along Main St, plaza
• Kendall is intrinsically linked to East Cambridge, Lechmere, North Point
Our next steps: analysis

- Test **buildout scenarios** including greater density and heights in the Study Area; diagram strategic locations for housing, research, retail
- Understand Kendall Square **resident and worker profile** and where the workforce live, how they travel here
- **Transportation assessment**
  - 3rd & Main connection
  - Pedestrian and bicycle improvements
  - Red Line capacity and other transit issues
  - Assess trip generation and parking needs
- **Retail study** – what is Kendall’s distinct niche, considering Lechmere/Cambridge St. retail, Central Square?
- Strategies to **integrate** Volpe and Constellation Center sites
- Draft **design guidelines** – seeking authenticity, avoiding monotony
- Map **open spaces** – which are succeeding? Which need improvements to reach their full potential? What others are needed?
- **Evaluate existing zoning** against current and future objectives
Pending zoning petitions:
informing criteria for places of community
Novartis
Novartis
Criteria categories

- Land use
- Height and massing
- Support for the pedestrian environment
- Transportation and parking
- Sustainability
- Open space
Forest City

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CONTEXT FOR PLANNING
MIT

CONTEXT FOR PLANNING
Key development criteria areas highlighted by pending development proposals

- Land use
- Height and massing
- Support for the pedestrian environment
- Transportation and parking
- Sustainability
- Open space
Discussion questions

• What is a “21st Century” Kendall Square? What are its authentic elements? What will make it a community destination?

• How should housing goals be shaped by: Location? Target residents? Unit types? Quantity? Other considerations? Where should students live?

• What are key opportunities for retail and cultural/educational/non-retail ground floor elements (Constellation Center, Innovation Walk of Fame in the works)

• What areas are priorities for non-auto transportation improvements -- pedestrian, bike, transit/shuttle?

• Identify parks and recreation amenities – best existing, most needed

• What are key goals & services for potential district management (BID)

• How can property owners, neighborhoods, the City and other stakeholders most effectively build common purpose during planning and action phases?
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