Reinventing Kendall Square for the 21st Century
Preliminary vision and framework

KENDALL SQUARE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
JULY 21, 2011
Agenda

• MIT zoning petition update
• Toward a Kendall Square vision
• Preliminary framework
• Strategies for sustainability
• Next steps
• Public comment
MIT rezoning petition update
Toward a vision:
Priorities we heard at the June 21 public meeting
Enhancing neighborhood identity and sense of place

- Communicate better the many assets Kendall already has
- Convey a stronger, more memorable sense of place
- Let innovation take a central role in identity
- Identity should also include other aspects
Creating a more active, extensive public realm

- Emphasize human scale at the street
- Create/improve *gathering* spaces
- Improve connections to Charles River
- Blur the boundaries between public and private space
Attaining the right mix of land use/activities

• Land use should be mixed, diverse
• High density is important
• Emphasize amenities for people who work, study and live in/near Kendall
• Continue to add/improve choices in use/activity categories that already exist
• Create more hang-out opportunities for people working nearby
• Designate an organization with primary responsibility for cultural programming in Kendall
Sustaining Kendall’s strong innovation culture

• Maintain Kendall’s momentum as a globally significant innovation center
• Create an “innovation ecosystem” enabling small and large companies to thrive together
Expanding the amount and range of housing

- Expand range of available housing choices
- Locate housing to discourage driving
- Design housing so that the presence of its inhabitants is felt on the street
- Design housing to be sensitive in scale/character to traditional neighborhood housing
Expanding retail choices

- Develop more economic diversity in the points of retail, dining
- Attract more retail serving day-to-day needs
Making Kendall a global leader in sustainability innovation and practice

- Kendall Square should be a model of environmental sustainability innovation and practice
Improving transportation choices

• Improve access to/from adjacent neighborhoods
Ensuring plan implementation delivers effective results

• Support plan concepts and their implementation with sound demographics and economics

• Identify specific action steps with associated agents, timeframes, resources, standards of success
Toward a vision:
Priorities we heard at the June 21 public meeting

• Enhancing neighborhood identity and sense of place
• Creating a more active and extensive public realm
• Attaining the right mix of land use/activities
• Sustaining Kendall’s strong innovation culture
• Expanding the amount and range of housing
• Expanding retail choices
• Making Kendall a global leader in sustainability innovation and practice
• Improving transportation choices
• Ensuring plan implementation delivers effective results
## Translating vision *(what)* into a framework *(how)*

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Plan framework: four perspectives

- Nurturing Kendall’s innovation culture
- Demonstrating leadership in environmental sustainability for the world
- Creating places that foster community and vitality
- Integrating activities that support creative interaction
Nurturing Kendall’s innovation culture

• Build upon the remarkable successes of this culture to reach still greater achievements for people …
• …and remain globally competitive
  – This culture has grown in planned and unplanned ways
• Bring different minds together, formally and informally
• Share the innovation – within and beyond Kendall’s community
Share the innovation
Share the innovation
Demonstrating leadership in environmental sustainability

- Be aware of leadership by others
  - Cities
  - Institutions
  - Businesses
- Build upon Cambridge’s established leadership
- Focus on the opportunities most intrinsic to Kendall
- Create an eco-district
Creating places that foster community and vitality

- Walkable streets
- Active street edges
- Green spaces and recreation connections
- Where new investment can contribute to place
Placemaking starts with walkability...a framework of streets already exists.

- 30,000-50,000 people are within $\frac{1}{4}$ mile of Kendall on a typical workday.
...along with opportunities for important new connections...
...and strengthening existing connections
Retail and other active edges can make streets lively public places.
...yet critical gaps exist

- Up to 10 blocks more
Various green spaces invite gathering
...and can grow into a network that incorporates the riverfront
Over 5 million sf of largely research space is planned or proposed.
...and options for more space are limited

- 15 million sf of existing 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
Growth and investment are building blocks for a more vibrant innovation community.
...and can shape distinct neighborhoods within Kendall
Integrating activities that support creative interaction

• Respond to current and future values
• Combine the uses that characterize innovation “communities”
• Considerations for research, housing, location, height/massing
• Initial scenarios
Respond to current values

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

2000s:
• Main Streets
• “Social places”
• Diversity
• Live near work
• Social and environmental responsibility
Combine the uses that characterize innovation “communities”

1. **Variety** of research (life science, IT, materials etc.)
2. Physical, social, and intellectual **proximity** between academic and commercial activities
3. Culture and environment that **attract and retain an innovation workforce**...and foster formal and informal interaction
4. **Flexible research facilities** (wet, dry etc.)
5. ...paired with **flexible synergistic uses**—housing, support activities (marketing, finance, legal, fabrication...), services...
6. **Design and the arts** to promote and express creative vitality
7. **Convenient transit connections** to downtown, other activity centers, neighborhoods
8. **A leadership** entity to manage synergies
9. **Ability to grow** while maintaining these qualities
Considerations: Research/office

- Minimum floorplate 25,000sf; larger floors preferred
- Proximity to transit
- Wet lab height constraints
- Relative contribution to retail demand
Considerations: Housing

Consider optimal amount from multiple perspectives:

- Workforce availability per job (survey)
- Relative contribution to retail (quantitative)
- Contribution to sense of place (qualitative)
- Contribution to non-auto transportation mode share (quantitative and qualitative)
- Other housing options within walking distance (quantitative ... nearly 3,200 more permitted at North Point/Lechmere beyond approx. 950 completed)
Considerations: Location (any use)

- Reinforces critical mass?
- Sense of place
- Impacts on existing/historic buildings or places
- Support for innovation culture
- Property ownership
- Phasing
Considerations: Height and massing (any use)

Promote:
• Scale that is comfortable for people
• Well-defined public streets and parks/plazas
• Landmarks
• Intensity of activity and value

Prevent:
• Undesirable shadow, wind impacts
• Obstructed views
• Inhuman scale
Development scenario - existing

Integrating activities
Development scenario - A

Integrating activities
Development scenario - B

Integrating activities