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

KENDALL SQUARE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
SEPTEMBER 8, 2011
Agenda

- Draft vision framework
- Land use mix and scale
- Discussion
- Next steps
All areas should include a mix of uses
Land use framework and intensity

All areas should include a mix of uses
Public realm intensity
Public realm intensity
Streets and public spaces
...with green connections
Streets and public spaces
Active street edges
Vertical land use and building form framework

• Height thresholds vary in different areas per context

- Tallest height band (where appropriate) – smaller floorplate, housing, outstanding design, reasonable impacts (shadow, wind, traffic etc.)
- Intermediate/Taller height band (where appropriate)
- Streetwall height band
- Active, pedestrian-oriented ground floor use
- Any new off-street parking below-grade
Land use and scale
Research/office

• To enhance the Innovation Community dynamic, maintain opportunity for research/office space growth in locations and formats that support complementary goals (walkable streets, housing choices, gathering places, parks etc.)

• Typical minimum floorplate 25,000sf

• Wet lab space hard to provide above 5 stories, hard to combine with housing

• Need flexibility for future research needs (wet/dry etc.)
Research/office: opportunity

* Indicates sites that best satisfy research floorplate criteria
Research/office

- Resulting Available sites yield potential of about 2.5 to 3 million sf close to Kendall Sq. (translating to about 6,000-7,500 jobs)
- Another 1 to 1.5 million sf possible in Transition Area (translating to about 2,500-3,750 jobs)
Retail

• To About 120,000sf of new retail would be needed to enliven the most important edges currently lacking retail in the core public realm intensity area (2,000 linear feet @ 60’ avg. depth)

• Another 40,000sf would be highly desirable to enliven additional areas.
Active street edges
Housing: Getting at how much and where

A look at multiple factors for guidance:

- Optimizing jobs/housing balance
- Supporting active retail
- Defining neighborhoods
- Finding an appropriate building envelope
Housing: Optimizing jobs/housing balance

• Adding roughly equal amounts of new research/office and housing space would maintain Cambridge’s citywide ratio of about 2.5 jobs per household

• Adding 2,000-2,500 units within convenient walking distance of Kendall, and another 2,000-2,500 units within a short transit or bike ride (as far as Central Sq or Lechmere/North Point), could house a quarter to a third of the 7,500 new jobs (assuming 1 new worker per 2 new households)
Housing: Supporting active retail

• 1,000 sf of new housing (1 unit) can support 20-40sf of new retail; 1,000sf of new research/office can support 16-24sf new retail

• Both sources of demand are desirable; housing especially so to expand 18/7 activity, enhance retail business viability

• 7,500 new workers will support about half the 120,000sf retail needed in key locations. 2,000 new housing units would support the remaining half; additional housing would support retail in additional desirable locations

• The 2,900 current and planned units in/near Kendall is just enough to support existing retail; additional housing would help spur more active retail evenings and weekends
Active street edges
Housing: Defining neighborhoods

• Buildings with housing should be located on the same block as or across the street from other housing buildings to contribute to neighborhood critical mass

• Amenities needed:
  — Neighborhood retail
  — Public spaces
  — Community & cultural organizations

• Range of housing choices needed: income level, style, size etc.

• Distinct approaches needed for:
  — New/emerging neighborhoods
  — Infill in/near existing neighborhoods
Housing: Finding an appropriate building envelope

- 2,000 to 2,500 new units could likely be accommodated within convenient walking distance of Kendall Square...
  - Protecting prime research/office sites
  - Avoiding significant shadow impacts on public spaces
  - Enhancing the skyline and view corridors
- Assumes some buildings exceeding the tallest existing buildings (about 275’)
Housing: Conclusions

- Target of 2,000-2,500 new units within convenient walking distance of Kendall Square
- Plus a similar number no farther than Central Square or North Point – within an easy transit or bike ride
Development increments

- Development capacity modeling showed that the Volpe site would likely provide about 40% of the potential housing units and nearly 50% of the potential research/office space within a convenient walk of Kendall Square.

- The balance of new development would be spread among sites controlled by MIT, Boston Properties/CRA, RREEF, Twining, Forest City and others.