



Neighborhood
Planning
Initiative

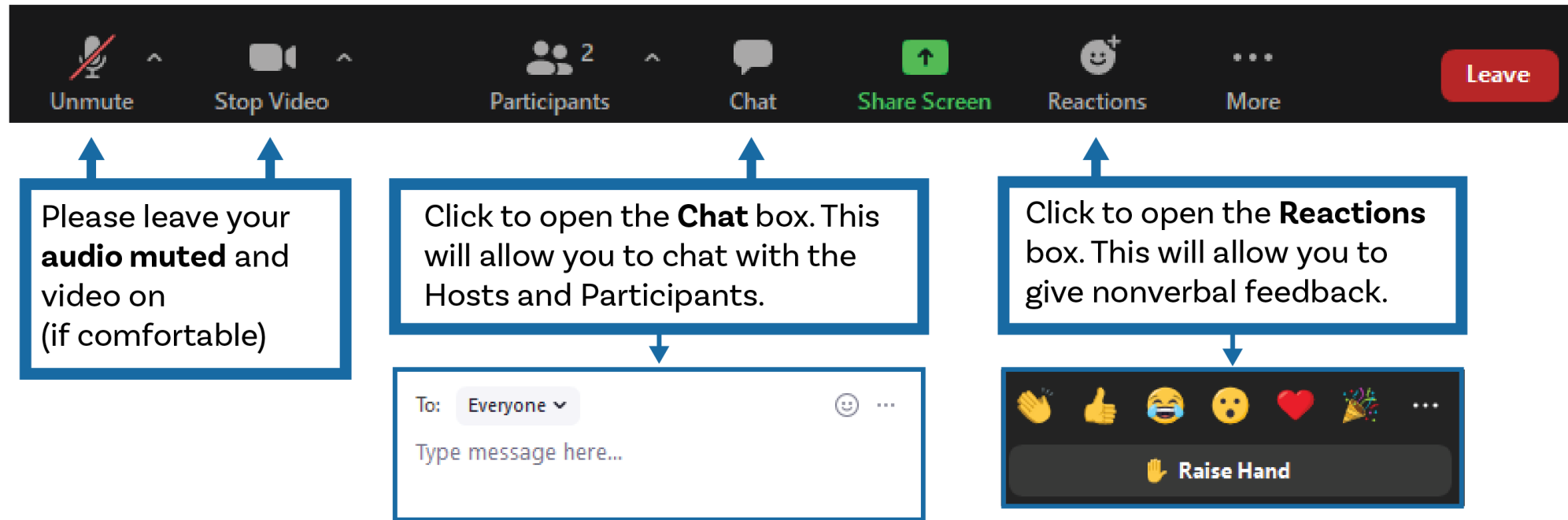
First Community Meeting

Mid-Cambridge Action Plan

June 13, 2023



Getting to Know Zoom



For Zoom-related questions reach out to Lev McCarthy via chat or email lmccarthy@cambridgema.gov



If you're having connectivity issues, call in at 929-436-2866
Meeting ID: 879 1068 7177



We're recording!

Meeting Purpose, Outcomes, & Process



PURPOSE

- Learn from you about day-to-day life in your neighborhood, and discuss your ideas to make the neighborhood better

OUTCOMES

- Help create a neighborhood vision
- Guide the Plan's next steps
- Increase awareness of future opportunities to be involved in neighborhood planning

PROCESS

- A presentation and two breakout group discussions

Connect with your
Neighborhood
Planner!

GARY CHAN,
Neighborhood Planner
gchan@cambridgema.gov
617-349-4603

Outreach



We acknowledge that the entire community isn't present tonight

- Project mailings, signage, focus groups, and online engagement will help us reach members of the community who aren't here tonight
- Let us know your suggestions for how to reach a wider audience!

There will be more opportunities to engage!

- This is the beginning of the engagement process, not the end!
- Over the coming months, we welcome your feedback, whether online or in-person
- We'll post a recording of tonight's meeting online, including the presentation slides

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Agenda



1. Welcome + Introduction to Neighborhood Planning 15 min
2. Getting to Know Mid-Cambridge & Overview of Current Projects 5 min
3. What We've Heard So Far 5 min
4. Breakout Groups: Neighborhood Assets + Needs 20 min
5. Emerging Themes So Far 5 min
6. Breakout Groups: Visioning + Key Themes 20 min
7. Report Back & Next Steps 10 min
8. Questions & Discussion

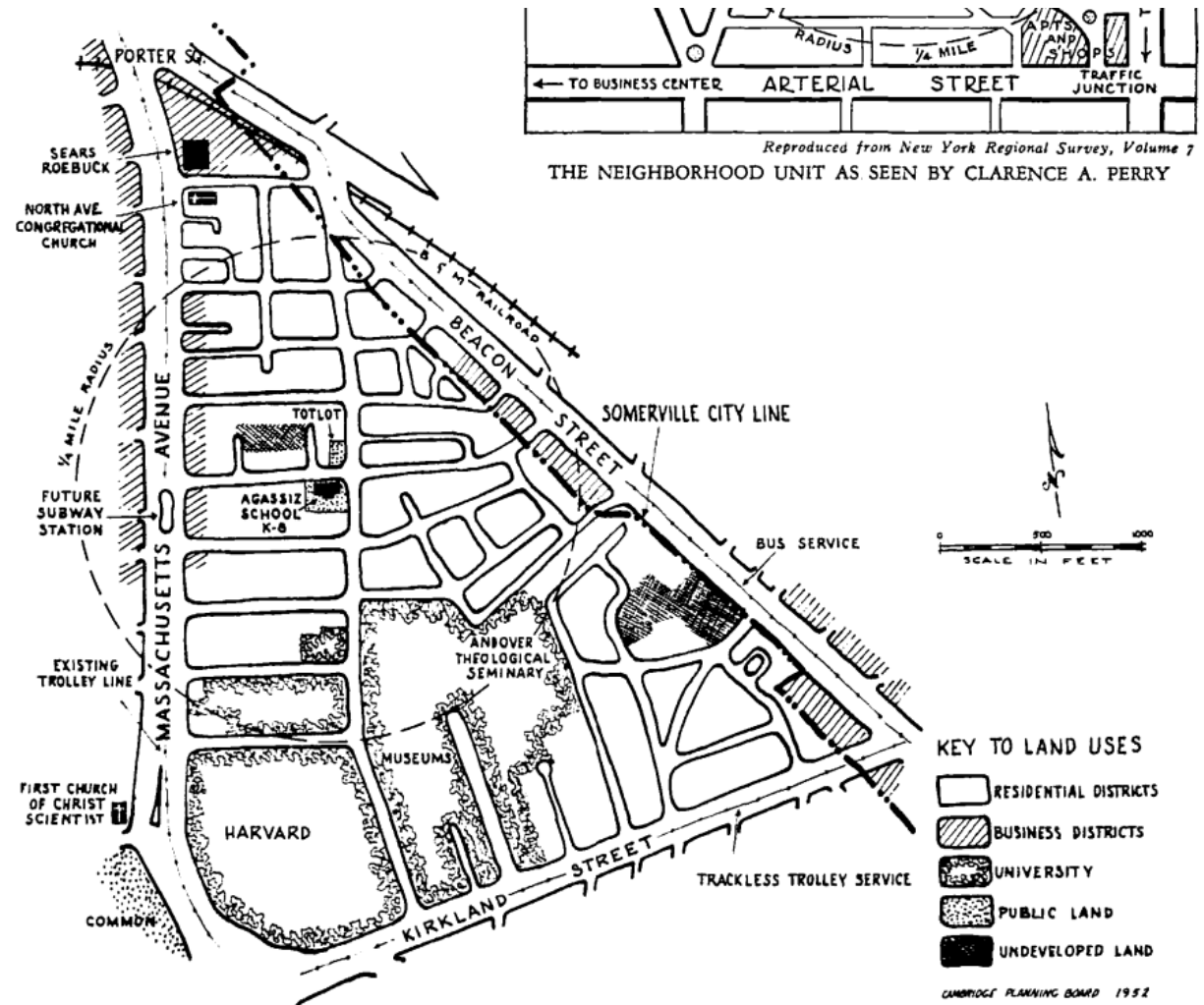
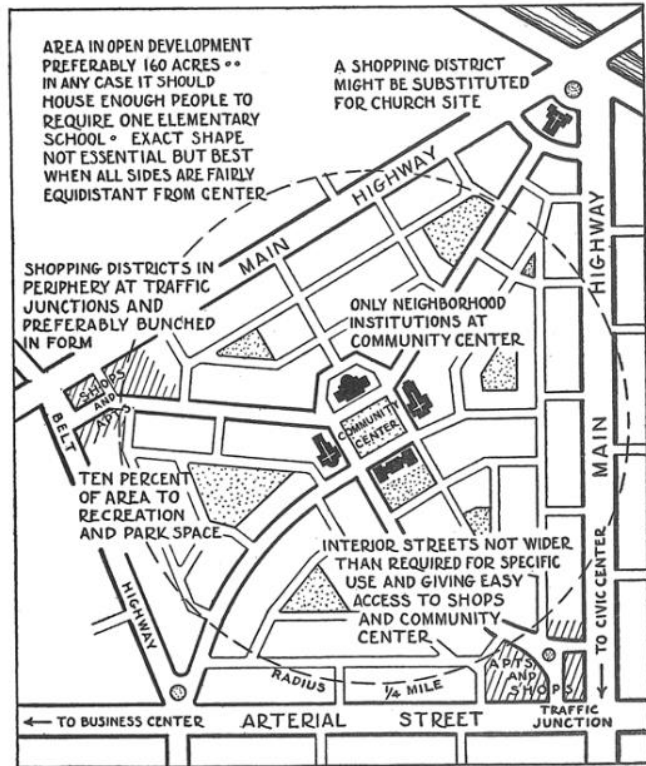


Introduction to Neighborhood Planning

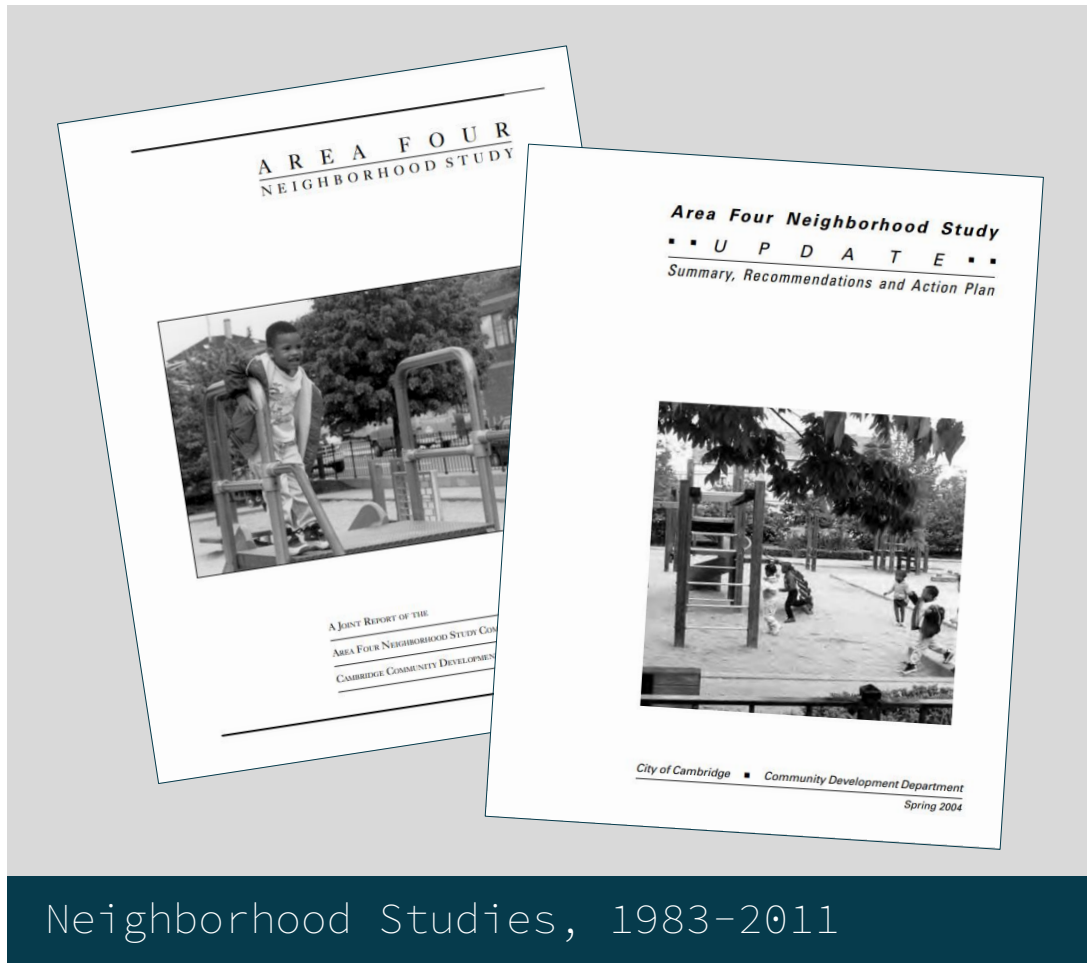
Neighborhood Planning in Cambridge



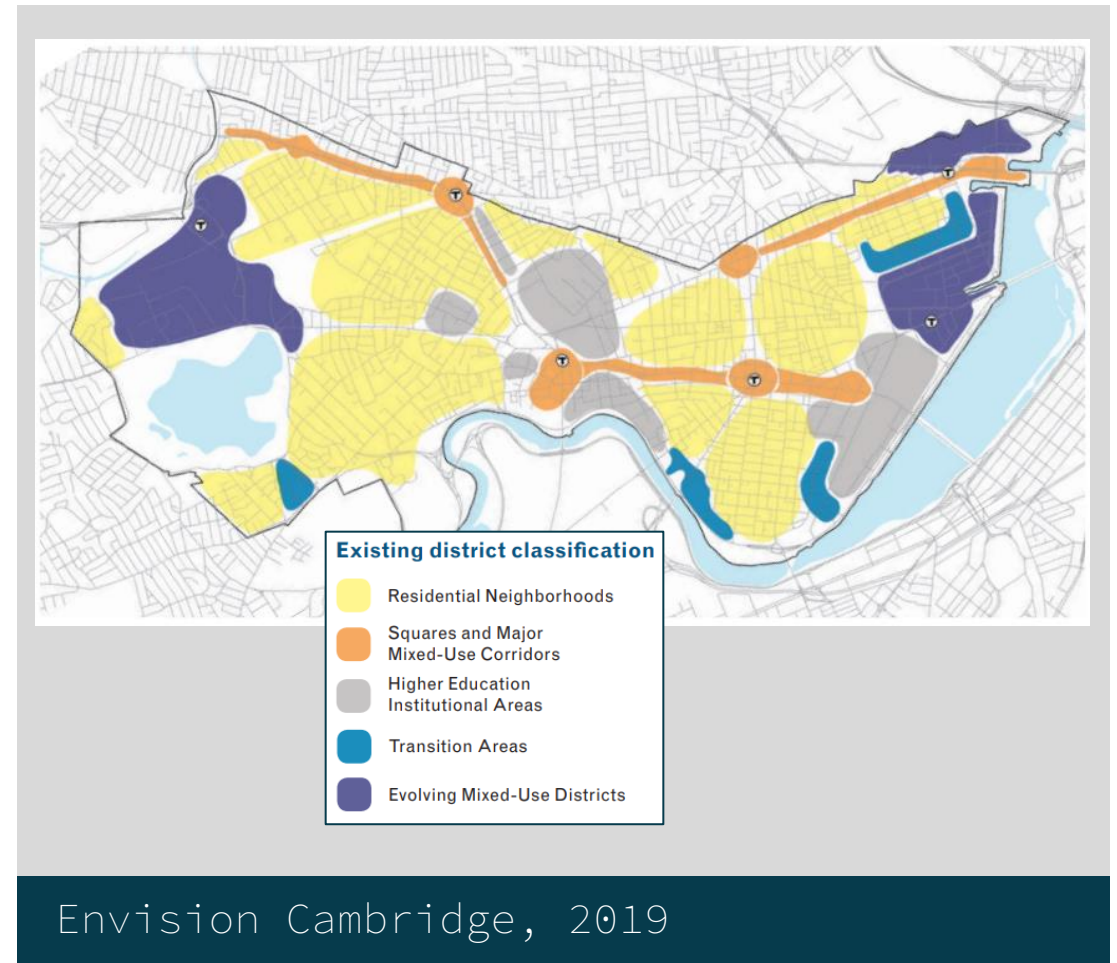
- “Neighborhood unit”



Neighborhood Planning Initiative Builds on Past Work



Neighborhood Studies, 1983-2011



Envision Cambridge, 2019

Envision Cambridge Core Values



Livability

- Vibrant built & natural environment
- Sustainable transportation
- Affordable & convenient access to daily needs & recreational resources

Diversity & Equity

- Welcoming community
- Celebrate our diversity
- Ensure access to affordable housing choices & opportunities to succeed

Economic Opportunity

- Access to quality jobs
- Workforce development and training
- Livable wages that support a high level of services

Sustainability

- Reduce our impact on the environment
- Build a resilient city & strong community

Community Health & Wellbeing

- Promote healthy & active lifestyles
- Supportive, safe community
- Diverse opportunities to connect with our neighbors & engage in civic life

Learning

- Embrace lifelong learning
- Celebrate the pursuit of knowledge
- Celebrate our culturally rich & creative community

Why Focus on Neighborhoods?



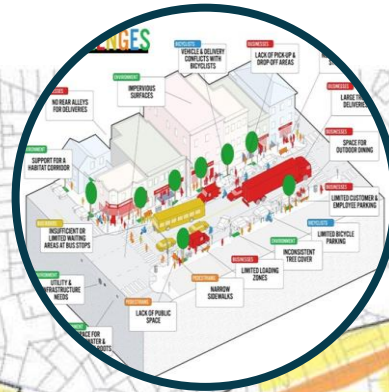
- Venue for discussions that aren't planned for as part of other City initiatives
- Understand how Citywide topics relate to neighborhoods
- Small scale allows for community-led project ideas
- Foster connections
- Focus on day-to-day



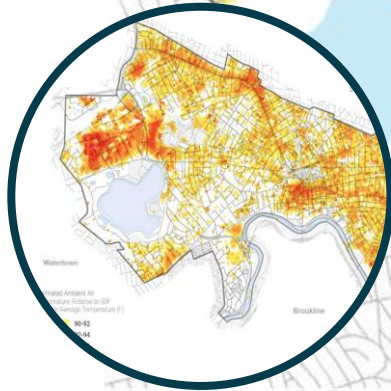
How NPI fits in with other City projects



Alewife District Plan



Our Cambridge Street



Resilient Cambridge

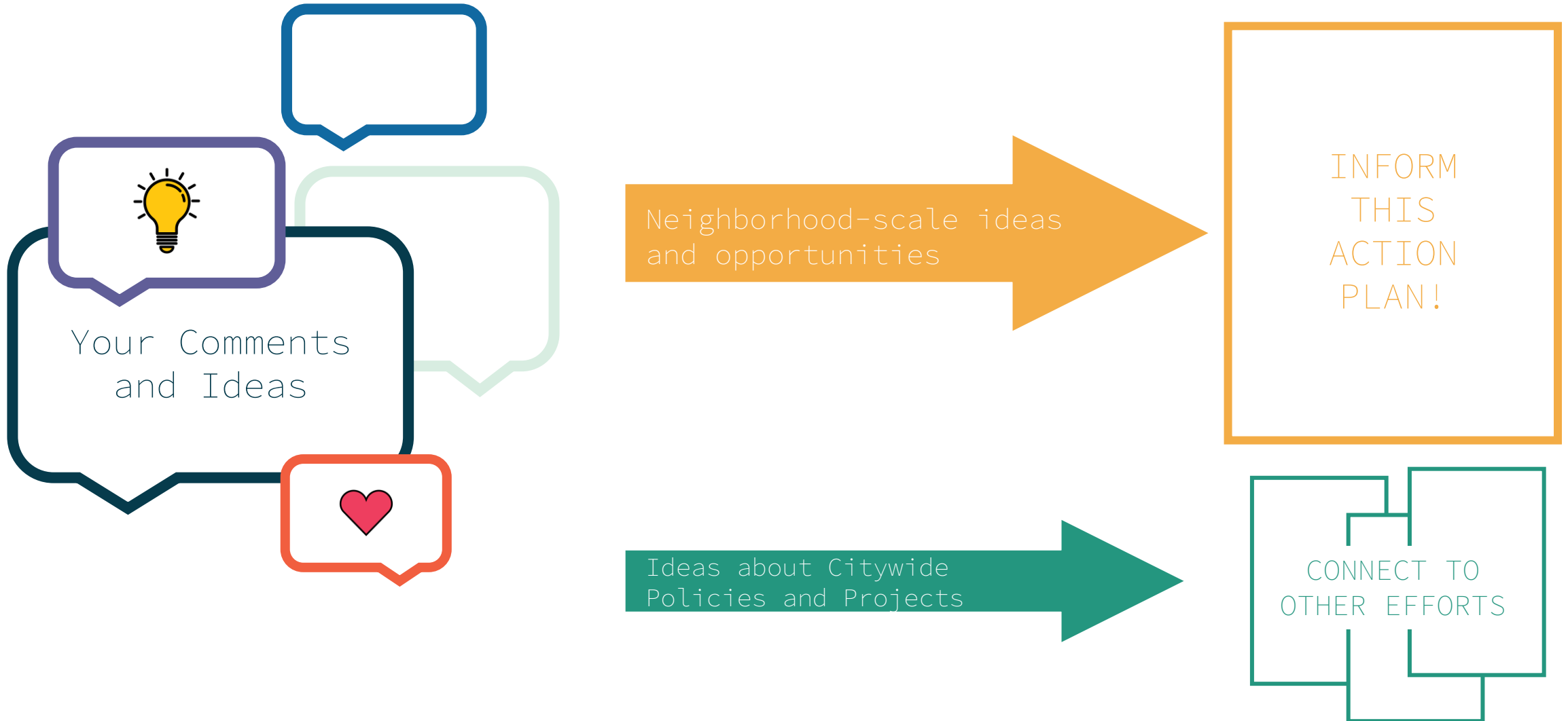


Urban Forestry Master Plan



Vision Zero Action Plan

What's the Focus of Neighborhood Action Planning?



What is the Neighborhood Planning Initiative (NPI)?



Cambridge's Neighborhood Planning Initiative (NPI) gives everyone in Cambridge access to local planning! City staff work with community members to improve the places that are central to daily life.

NPI includes four parts:



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NPI includes four parts:

Focus for Tonight!



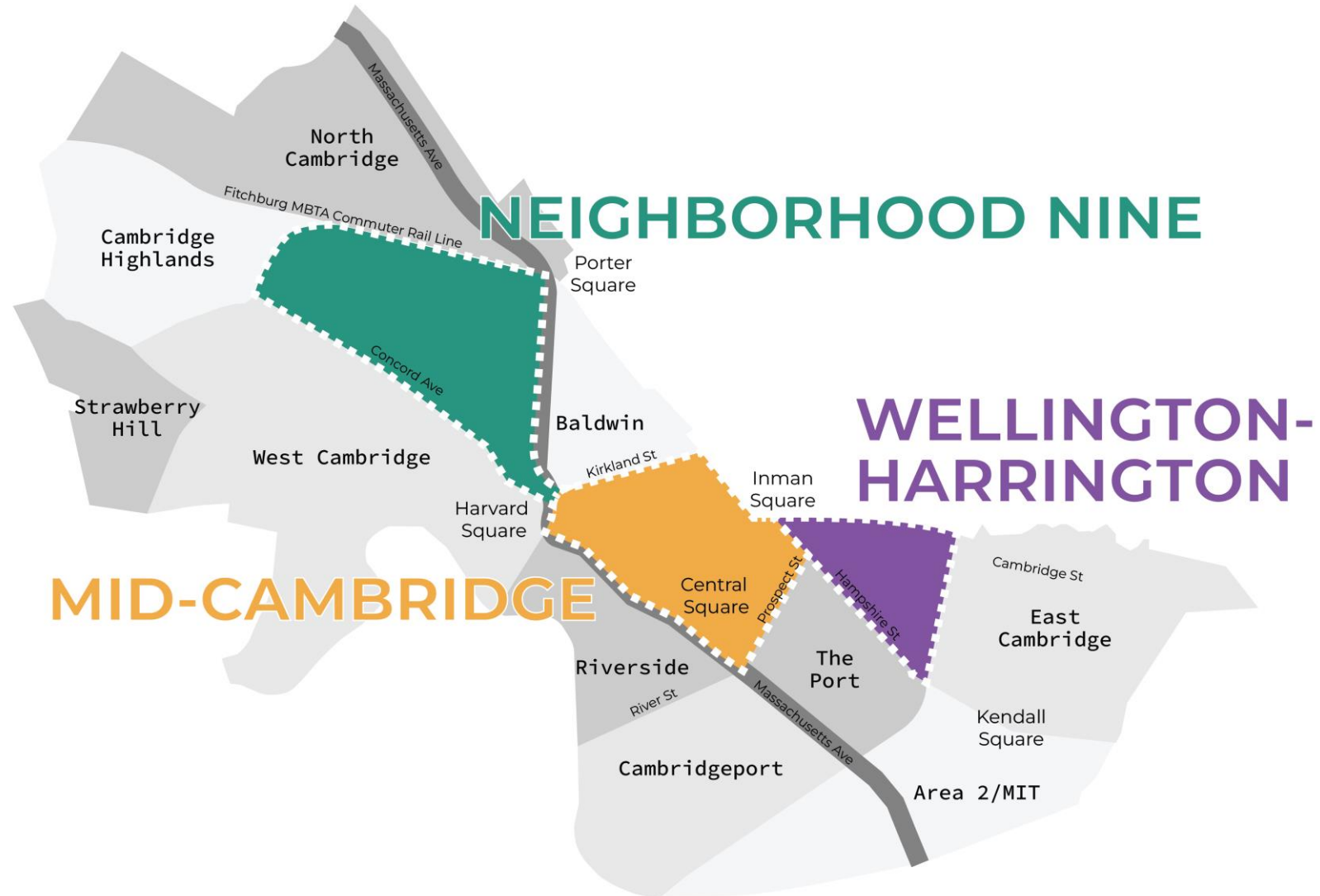


A one-year planning process to identify neighborhood priorities.

City staff work with community members to identify projects and policies to improve day-to-day life.

Action Planning

2023 Action Plan Neighborhoods



NPI Overall Scheduling



Action Plan Schedule



April

May

June

July

August

September

October

November

COMMUNITY VISION

Work with community members to create a neighborhood vision and set of goals.

- Understand what it's like to live in the neighborhood.
- Learn how the community thinks we can make the neighborhood better.
- Identify what topics we should focus on in the Action Plan.

STRATEGY

Work with community members to identify policies and actions to improve the everyday experience of people in the neighborhood.

- Figure out what resources we have available.
- Identify which actions and policies will be most effective.

DRAFT & PUBLISH

Develop consensus for actions and policies to achieve the community's goals.

- Write the action plan into a document.
- Set a plan to implement the actions.

What Do Action Plans Do?



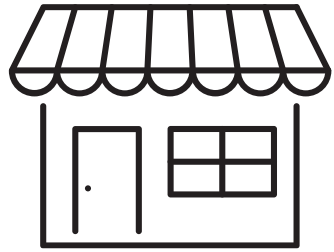
Community conversations about open space, housing, transportation, economic development, environment

→ Craft a neighborhood's vision for the future

→ Identify actionable local projects

→ Build relationships with neighbors and with City staff while demystifying City processes

Example Actions from Past Neighborhood Studies



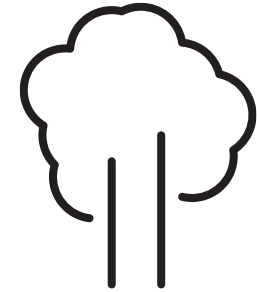
Connect small businesses to financial supports



Make streets safer to cross with signal improvements



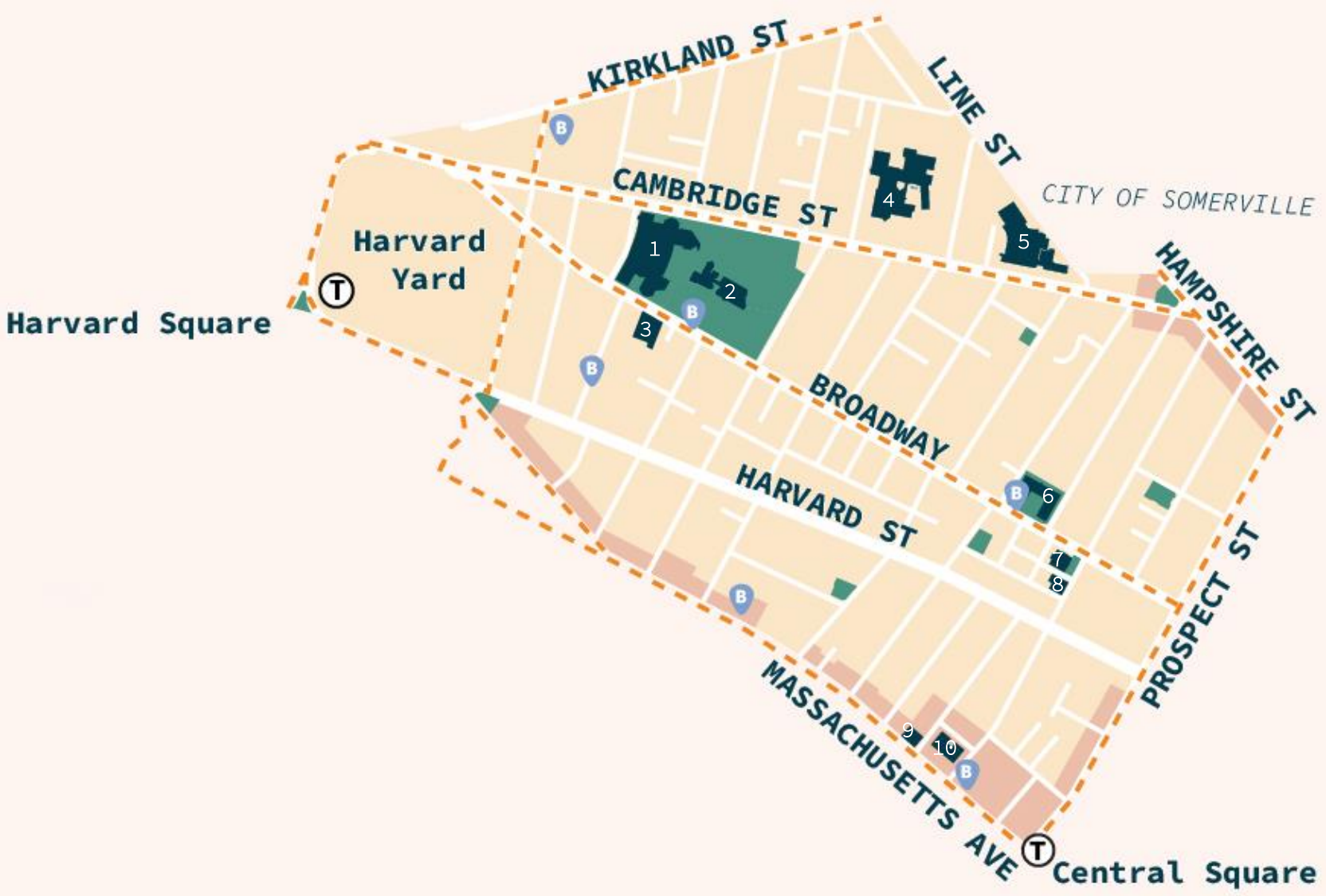
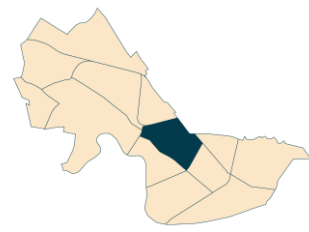
Encourage more family-sized housing through the permitting process







Improve parks and make better access to parks



Getting to Know Mid-Cambridge!



- 1 Cambridge Rindge & Latin School
 - 2 Cambridge Public Library
 - 3 Cambridge Public Schools Facilities Dept
 - 4 Spaulding Hospital
 - 5 Cambridge Health Alliance
 - 6 Old Longfellow School Building
 - 7 Cambridge City Hall Annex
 - 8 Dept of Human Services Programs
 - 9 Cambridge Inspectional Services
 - 10 Cambridge City Hall
-
-  Bluebike Station
 -  Commercial District
 -  MBTA Bus (1,64,68,69,83,86,91)
 -  MBTA Red Line (Harvard, Central)

Snapshot Highlights



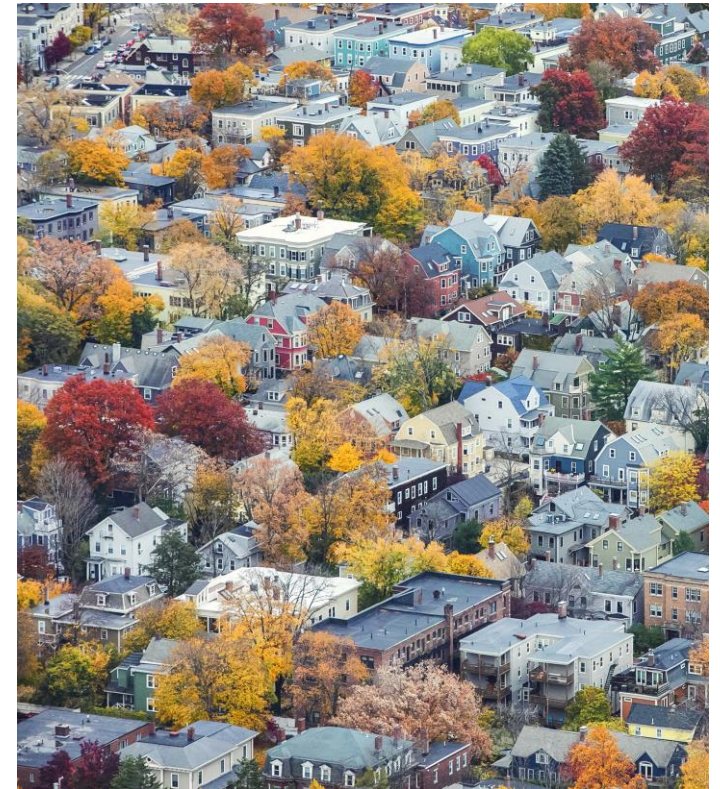
293
Acres

7% of Cambridge

14,827
Residents

13% of Cambridge

At more than 50
residents per acre,
Mid-Cambridge is one
of the densest areas of
Cambridge



Home to Many Institutions



Library Main Branch



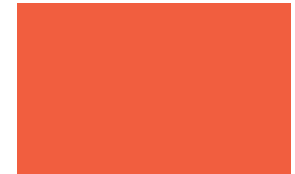
City Hall



Medical Institutions



Harvard University

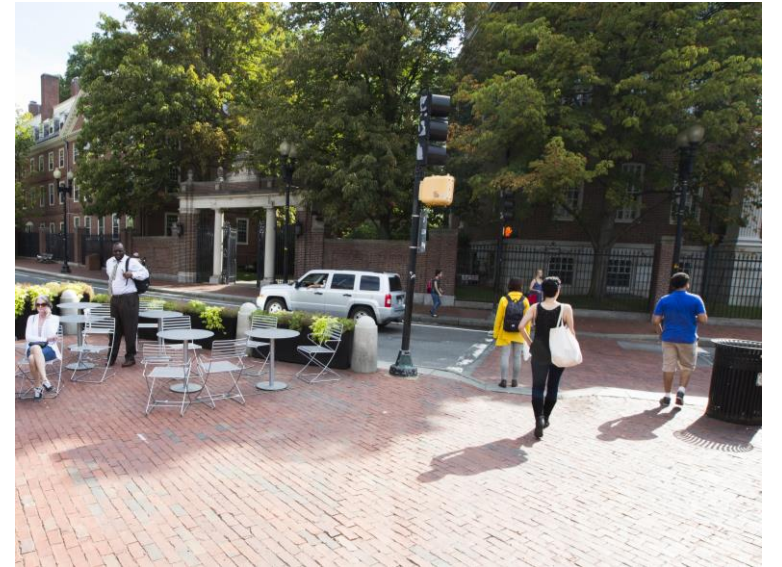
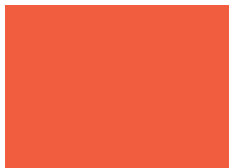


Cambridge Ringge & Latin

Squares and Commercial Areas



Mid-Cambridge includes portions of the Harvard Square, Central Square, and Inman Square commercial districts.

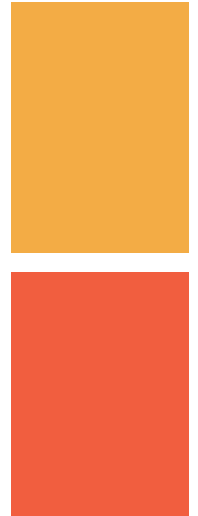
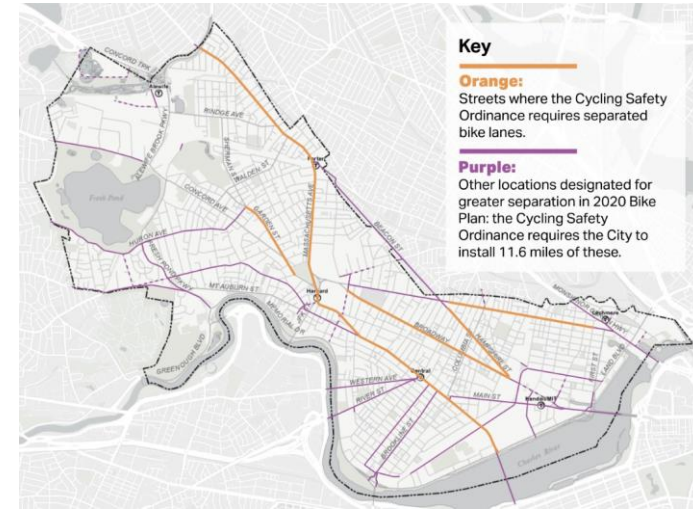


Mid-Cambridge Projects



Current and Upcoming Projects:

- [Inman Square Intersection Improvements](#)
- [Harvard Square Kiosk](#)
- [Fire Department Headquarters Renovation](#)
- [Centre St and Dana St Reconstruction](#)
- [Cycling Safety Ordinance Projects](#)
 - Separated bike lanes on Broadway by April 2026
 - Bike lanes in Central Square



Citywide Policies and Plans:

- [Envision Cambridge](#)
- [Resilient Cambridge](#)
- [UFMP and Healthy Forest, Healthy City](#)
- [Our Parks, Our Plan \(Open Space Plan Update\)](#)
- [Cambridge Bicycle Plan](#)
- [5-Year Sidewalk and Street Reconstruction Plan](#)





What We've Been Hearing So Far

Best library around

Could the grass area here be fenced in as an off-leash dog area?

People drive very fast down Harvard; faster than the 25 mph limit.

Can't take away park space for animals

This is the best playground in the city, and the city takes amazing care of it

So many empty storefronts on mass ave are bad for the neighborhood! Can the city of Cambridge incentivize (or penalize) landlords to fill spaces?

Do something more productive with this land, e.g. more mixed use commercial/housing or a park

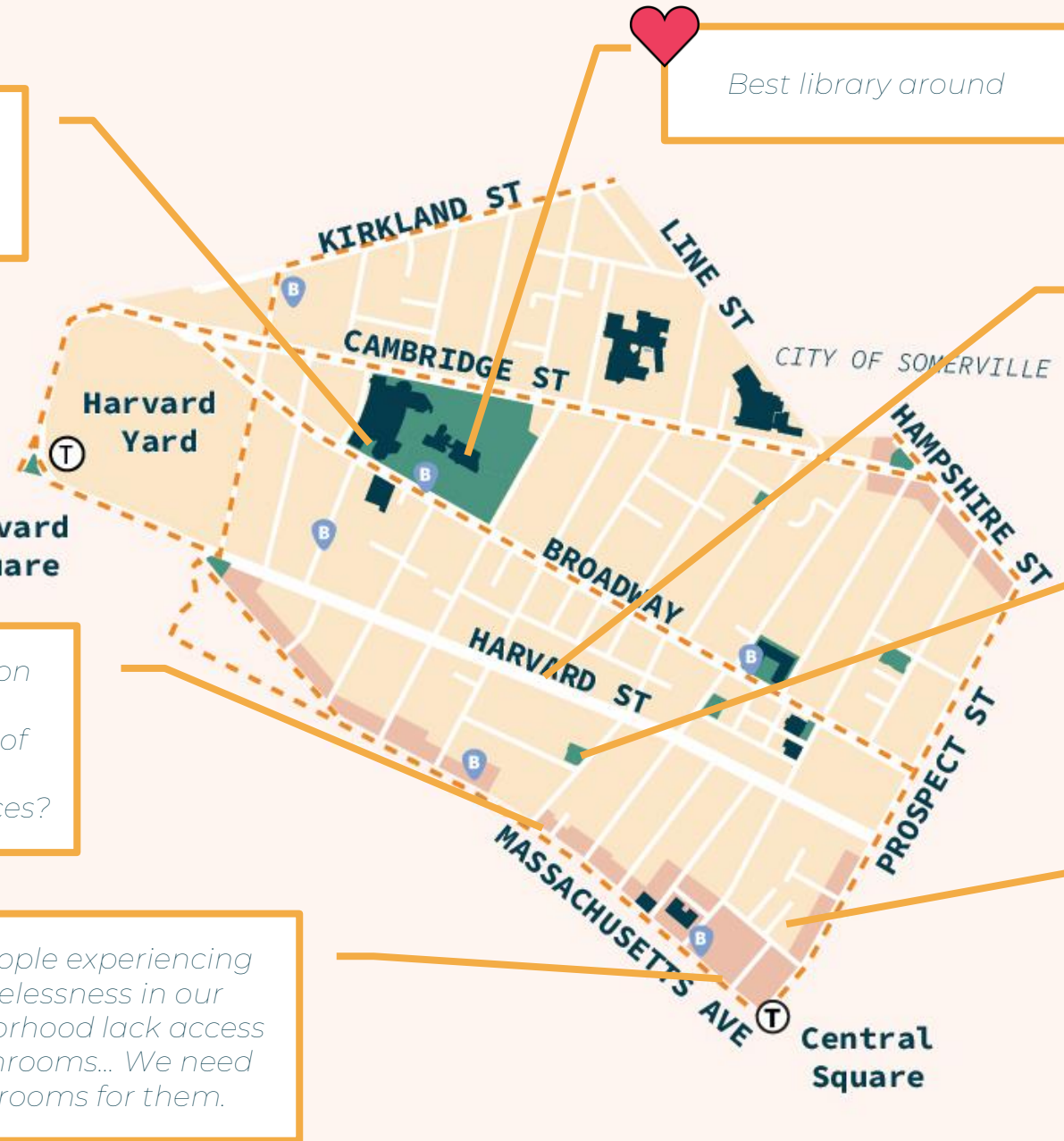
The people experiencing homelessness in our neighborhood lack access to bathrooms... We need bathrooms for them.

Harvard Square

Harvard Yard

CITY OF SOMERVILLE

Central Square



Your Input So Far!



Loved the outdoor dining in Inman Sq during the pandemic. Miss it.

Inman Sq Pop Up

Sad that Ryles Jazz Club closed.

Inman Sq Pop Up

More murals and public art

Inman Sq Pop Up

We have a mom's group that happens right outside the [Main Branch] library, which brings me a lot of joy.

Neighborhood Focus Group

4 family house on our street used to house 12 people. Now 2 fancy townhouses - housing 4 adults and 1 baby. 8 people no longer have affordable housing.

Joan Lorentz Park Pop Up

Inman Square Intersection is much improved for walking

Inman Sq Pop Up

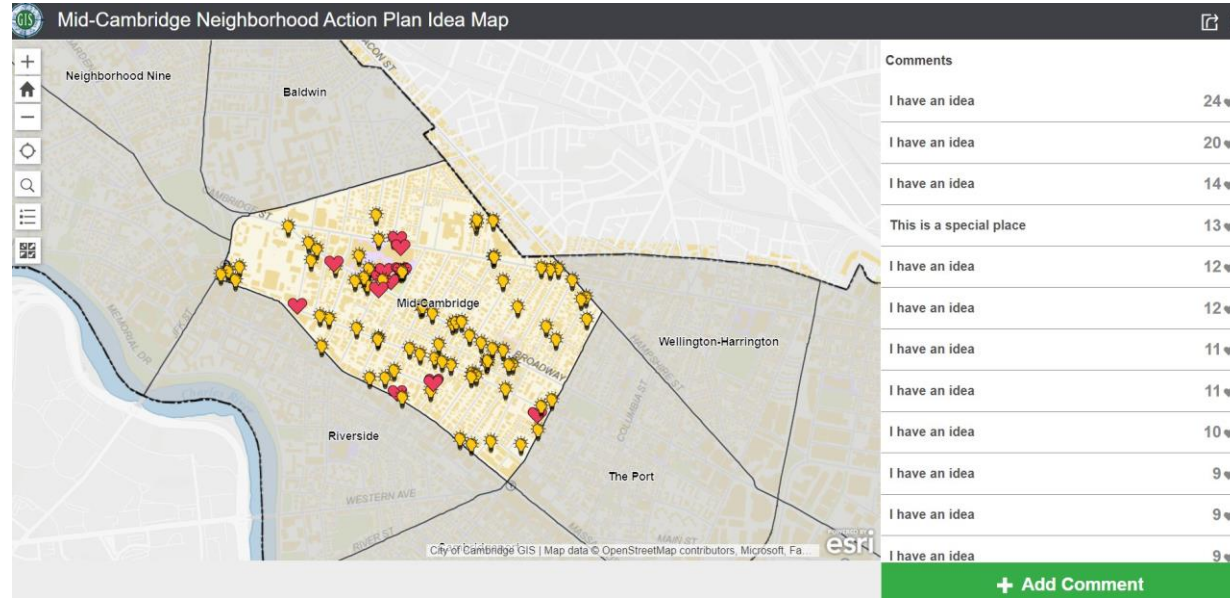
More signs reminding drivers they're required to stop for pedestrians in crosswalks. Other cities do this. We have lots of tourists and students who may not know.

General Comment Form

New traffic pattern in Inman Sq is complicated.

Inman Sq Pop Up

Your Input So Far!



CAMBRIDGE CDD@344

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT 344 Broadway

CLIMATE & ENERGY | ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT | FACTS & MAPS | HOUSING | PARKS & PLAYGROUNDS | PLANNING & URBAN DESIGN

Planning & Urban Design

Neighborhood Planning Initiative

Mid-Cambridge Action Plan

Wellington-Harrington Action Plan

Neighborhood Nine Action Plan

Comprehensive Planning

Urban Design

Planning Studies

Neighborhood Planning and Information

Neighborhood

CDD > Planning & Urban Design > Neighborhood Planning Initiative

Neighborhood Planning Initiative

What is NPI?
Cambridge's Neighborhood Planning Initiative (NPI) gives everyone in Cambridge access to local planning! Together, we will work to improve the places and activities that are central to your daily life.



Group Discussion Guidelines



- Show respect to all that participate
- Embrace diverse points of view
- Avoid debates and interruptions
- Listen to understand, not to respond
- Do not engage in personal attacks
- All stereotyping and hateful comments are not tolerated



BREAKOUT GROUP 1: Neighborhood Assets + Needs

20 minutes

Envision Cambridge Core Values



Livability

- Vibrant built & natural environment
- Sustainable transportation
- Affordable & convenient access to daily needs & recreational resources

Diversity & Equity

- Welcoming community
- Celebrate our diversity
- Ensure access to affordable housing choices & opportunities to succeed

Economic Opportunity

- Access to quality jobs
- Workforce development and training
- Livable wages that support a high level of services

Sustainability

- Reduce our impact on the environment
- Build a resilient city & strong community

Community Health & Wellbeing

- Promote healthy & active lifestyles
- Supportive, safe community
- Diverse opportunities to connect with our neighbors & engage in civic life

Learning

- Embrace lifelong learning
- Celebrate the pursuit of knowledge
- Celebrate our culturally rich & creative community

Relating Ideas to Core Values



Livability

- Safe street crossings and slower traffic on Harvard St., appreciation for 2020 shared street
- Uneven sidewalks make movement difficult

Diversity & Equity

- Empty lot on Bishop Allen Dr. is an opportunity for mixed use development and affordable housing

Economic Opportunity

- Vacant retail spaces on Mass Ave. and Cambridge St.

Sustainability

- Electric vehicle chargers
- Rain gardens and other green infrastructure

Community Health & Wellbeing

- Dedicated spaces for dogs and dog owners

Learning

- Love for the Main Branch Library

Let's Discuss!
What do these core values look like in your neighborhood?

Emerging Themes in Mid-Cambridge



- Transportation & Safety on our streets and sidewalks
- Parks & Recreation
- Community-building at small businesses, parks, and the library



Let's Discuss!
What do you think?
What's missing?



BREAKOUT GROUP 2:

What 3 words describe your neighborhood today and in 10 years?

20 minutes



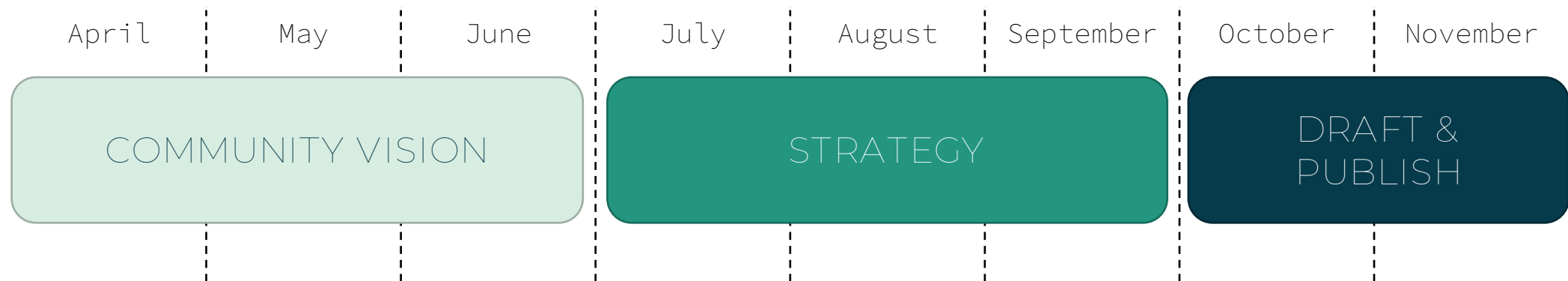
REPORT BACK

Share a couple of themes from your group's discussion!

What's Next?



- Summarize what we've heard so far
- Identify key themes / priorities for Mid-Cambridge
- Move from Vision to Strategy! Start to identify specific policies and actions
- More opportunities to engage!
 - Online survey and office hours
 - Next round of pop-up/drop-ins and focus group discussions
 - Share feedback at our next workshop in September!



Contact Us



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Planner!

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Thank You!

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