



Neighborhood Nine Neighborhood Action Plan





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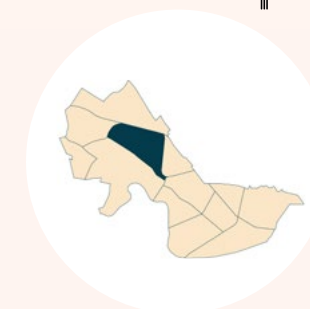
Introduction

Neighborhood Action Plans

Neighborhood Action Plans are a one-year planning process to understand neighborhood priorities and identify projects and policies to improve day-to-day life. Action Plans are done in one year so we can progress through all the neighborhoods and update the plans every few years.



Neighborhood Snapshot



- 1 Graham & Parks School
- 2 Cambridge Public Library - Boudreau Branch
- 3 Cambridge Montessori School
- 4 Cambridge Friends School
- 5 Cambridge Montessori - Elementary School
- B Blue Bike Station
- Commercial District
- MBTA Bus (74,75,77,78,83,96)
- T MBTA Red Line (Porter)

Density

Neighborhood Nine is a moderate-density neighborhood, with approximately **22 residents per acre**.

Land Use

Neighborhood Nine is a predominantly residential neighborhood with large park areas, with about 61% residential, 22% open space, 9% government or institutional uses, 4% commercial, and 1% mixed use.

Community Resources

include 7 public parks and playgrounds and 4 schools.

Neighborhood Organizations

Neighborhood organizations include the **Porter Square Neighbors Association, Taylor Square Neighborhood Association**, and 3 listservs: Buena Vista Social Club, Richdale Avenue, and North Commons.

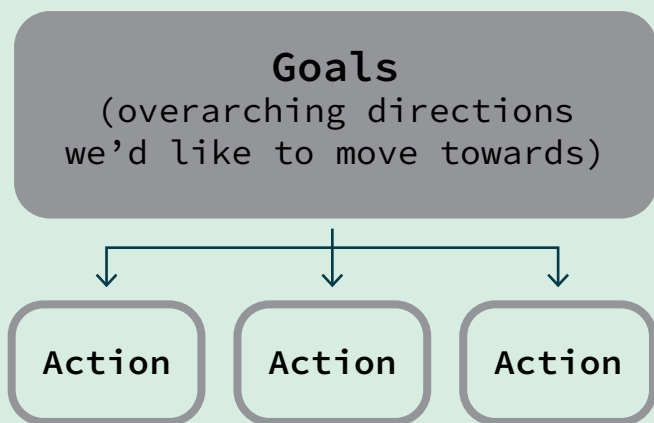
Neighborhood planning

The last neighborhood plan update for Neighborhood Nine was in **2010**.

Neighborhood Goals

Working with the community, we identified 28 actions to help improve day-to-day life in the neighborhood. These actions are organized into the following eight goals.

How to read this document:



(specific items that can be done to work toward Goals)



(1) Maintain and/or improve existing community spaces and parks.

(2) Expand affordable housing opportunities.

(3) Make the neighborhood more beautiful and climate resilient by maintaining existing trees and planting more.

(4) Build community through events, festivals, and increasing access to public community spaces.

(5) Support a thriving local business environment.

(6) Make it safer, more comfortable, and more convenient for users of all modes to move around the neighborhood.

(7) Slow and reduce traffic through the neighborhood and at key intersections.

(8) Improve waste management and rodent control in parks and around homes.

Goal 1

Maintain and/or improve existing community spaces and parks.

We've heard that people especially love Raymond Park and Danehy Park. People suggested we improve water management at Raymond and consider better lighting at Danehy.



Shared outdoor spaces such as parks and plazas, provide places for people to relax, get exercise, and spend time together. There are parks in and near Neighborhood Nine that are very popular but could still be improved or updated.

Actions

1.A

Encourage participation in the Raymond Park improvements process to be sure any changes address community needs.

1.A.a

Improve water management at Raymond park through the park improvements project.

1.B

Plan for the long-term upkeep and improvement of Danehy Park through the capital improvement planning process.

1.B.b

Improve the lighting at Danehy Park to support evening and all-season use.

The City began the Danehy Improvements Plan towards the end of 2023 and it is expected to continue for at least 12 months. The final report will provide a roadmap that guides future park improvements for the next 10-15 years. Learn more about the improvements plan here:

www.cambridgema.gov/danehyimprovementsplan.

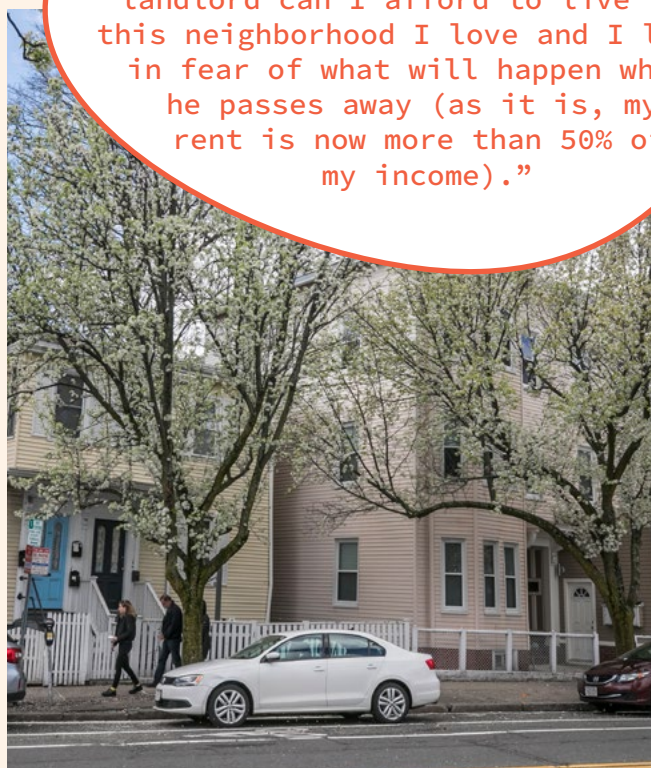


Goal 2

Expand affordable housing opportunities.

“I’ve rented in this neighborhood for 15 years and only by the grace of a kind landlord can I afford to live in this neighborhood I love and I live in fear of what will happen when he passes away (as it is, my rent is now more than 50% of my income).”

For many years housing affordability has been a top concern for Cambridge residents, and a top priority for the City. Rising housing costs, and a lack of affordable housing makes it very difficult for people to stay in Cambridge or move here.



Actions

2.A

Encourage people to sign up for the affordable Homeownership Resale Pool.

There are more than 500 affordable homeownership units in the City of Cambridge. When a current owner decides to sell their unit, a new buyer is selected from the Homeownership Resale Pool.

2.B

Promote the City’s free affordable housing classes and information sessions, to spread knowledge about opportunities for affordable rental and homeownership.

2.C

Promote the City’s free first-time homebuyer classes to people interested in finding a home in the neighborhood.

People we spoke to during the Action Plan process mentioned concern about the increasing housing costs in Neighborhood Nine. These concerns are shared across Cambridge. In a 2023 citywide resident survey, affordable housing was the most mentioned issue. Since 2015 rents in Cambridge have increased almost 40% and home prices have gone up nearly 50%, while median income has only increased by around 20%.

Actions to address the affordable housing crisis are a City priority, and often require citywide action. Although they are beyond the scope of any individual Neighborhood Action Plan, the actions on this page help to connect people to resources and support citywide efforts.



Goal 3

Make the neighborhood more beautiful and climate resilient by maintaining existing trees and planting more.

Trees are an important part of a healthy city. Trees make our city cooler in summer and clean the air we breathe. They also support a living ecosystem, benefiting water quality and providing food and habitat for mammals, birds, and insects.

Actions

3.A

Encourage people to help maintain our street trees through the Forest Friends Program.

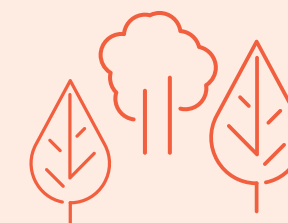
3.B

Expand the Water-By-Bike program to care for more trees.

Over the summer, the City hires a team to bike around Cambridge to help maintain and water our trees.

3.C

Develop a young tree training program to help educate residents on the best practices for helping care for young trees.



Goal 4

Build community through neighborhood activities such as block parties and neighborhood events.

“It would be great to have more intentional opportunities to meet our neighbors and build community.”

Meeting neighbors and building a sense of community can help create a sense of belonging, expose people to new and different ideas, and build networks of friendship and trust.

Actions

4.A

Upgrade the materials available in the Play Streets Toolkit and improve the rental system.

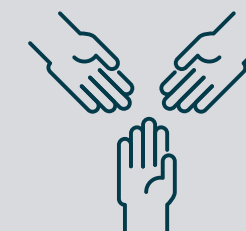
4.B

Encourage existing and new businesses to host uses that can be community gathering places.

Examples of these gathering places could be cafés, lounges, libraries, and indoor play areas.

4.C

Pilot a community clean-up day program in a neighborhood park or other public space.



Goal 5

Support a thriving local business environment.

Commercial areas in Neighborhood Nine include Massachusetts Ave between Cambridge Common and Porter Square, parts of Porter Square, and parts of Observatory Hill along Concord St.



We've heard your neighbors especially appreciate and want to support the businesses along Concord Ave.

"[A Local Business Environment] promotes sense of community; great to be able to walk to area businesses."

Actions

5.A

Study creating inclusionary commercial spaces, which would require that market-rate developments include a certain amount of space for affordable commercial tenants.

5.C

Explore shared control of a small network of storefront rentals through a master lease model.

5.D

Promote the storefront improvement grant program in the neighborhood.

5.E

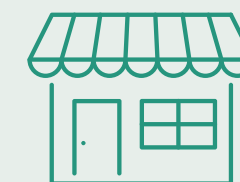
Support and cultivate "Main Street Champions".

These volunteers would help small businesses use available City funds and programs, such as the Boosting Business Blocks grants.

These rentals would be managed in a way to support the local business environment through affordable rents or specifically seeking small local tenants.

5.B

In commercial districts (Observatory Hill and Massachusetts Avenue) consider development incentives in exchange for creating desired ground floor uses (e.g. retail that serves daily needs).





Goal 6

Make it safer, more comfortable, and more convenient for users of all modes to move around the neighborhood.

Cambridge is committed to designing our city to help people to get around without driving. It is important that people are safe no matter how they travel in the neighborhood.

“When I walk with a stroller, I constantly have to cross the road or walk in the road to avoid rough patches of sidewalk that are either too narrow, too bumpy, or blocked by overgrown bushes or trash cans.”

Actions

6.A

Install additional benches and shelters at bus stops and along sidewalks.

6.B

Continue to plant and maintain more street trees along Massachusetts Ave. and other places with fewer trees.

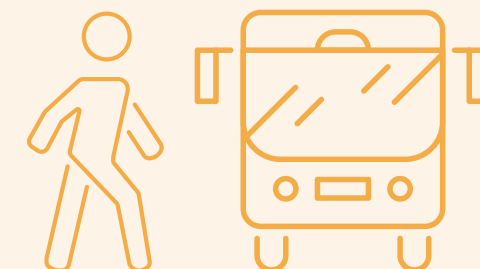
6.C

Add more bike share stations in the neighborhood, especially in the more residential areas where there are currently fewer stations.

6.D

Incorporate separated bicycle facilities along the length of Massachusetts Ave from Porter Square to Harvard Square.

The process for this work will follow the protocols laid out by the Cycling Safety Ordinance. This section of Massachusetts Ave is one of the Cycling Safety Ordinance groups called the “MassAve4”. To be completed no later than April 30, 2026.



Goal 7

Slow and reduce traffic through the neighborhood and at key intersections.

“If the traffic isn’t backed up, it’s frequently driving too fast.”

Neighbors who participated in the Action Plan process noted that people drive dangerously fast through the neighborhood. This makes people walking feel afraid and unsafe, particularly while crossing the street.



Actions

7.A

Encourage community members to utilize the Traffic Calming Request Form to request traffic calming measures at specific locations in the neighborhood they think could benefit from slower vehicle traffic.

7.B

Explore ways to slow traffic and improve safety at intersections along Walden Street.

Examples of traffic calming techniques:

Raised crosswalk intersections



Curb extensions



Goal 8

Improve waste management and rodent control in parks and around homes.

Rodents are an unavoidable part of city life, but there are several ways the City and our neighbors can help keep their population down. Many of the ways we prevent rodents also have the benefit of making our public spaces more enjoyable!



Actions

8.A

Pilot a community clean-up day program in a neighborhood park or other public space.

8.B

Include enclosed waste recepticals in the renovated Danehy Park to help discourage rodents.

8.C

Promote the private property rodent control program, and encourage residents to use Commonwealth Connect to report rodent sightings.

“I see rats everywhere when I’m out at night.”

“Trash management in Raymond isn’t sufficient for the heavy use the park gets (esp. w[ith] so many dog owners using off-leash hours). Need Big Belly cans, several of them, to control rat problem.”



What's Next?

How can YOU be involved?

I LIVE IN NEIGHBORHOOD NINE!

My neighborhood wrapped up an action plan in 2023, and I would like to stay involved!

I'd like to learn more about my neighborhood!

I'd like to learn more about NPI!

I'm interested in starting a community group or learning about other community building opportunities!

I LIVE IN A DIFFERENT NEIGHBORHOOD!

Visit the NPI webpage to learn more about neighborhood planning in your area

For the latest information on how to be involved, visit the Action Plan webpage:

www.cambridgema.gov/npi/neighborhoodnine



Scan the QR code with your smartphone camera

OR

Click on the box!

Review neighborhood snapshots & previous plans

Sign up for neighborhood email updates!

Visit the NPI page of the City's website

E-mail your neighborhood planner, Daniel Wolf, at [dewolf@cambridgema.gov](mailto:dwolf@cambridgema.gov)

Review community resources

HAVE QUESTIONS? E-mail your neighborhood planner!

Daniel Wolf:
dewolf@cambridgema.gov

About the Neighborhood Planning Initiative

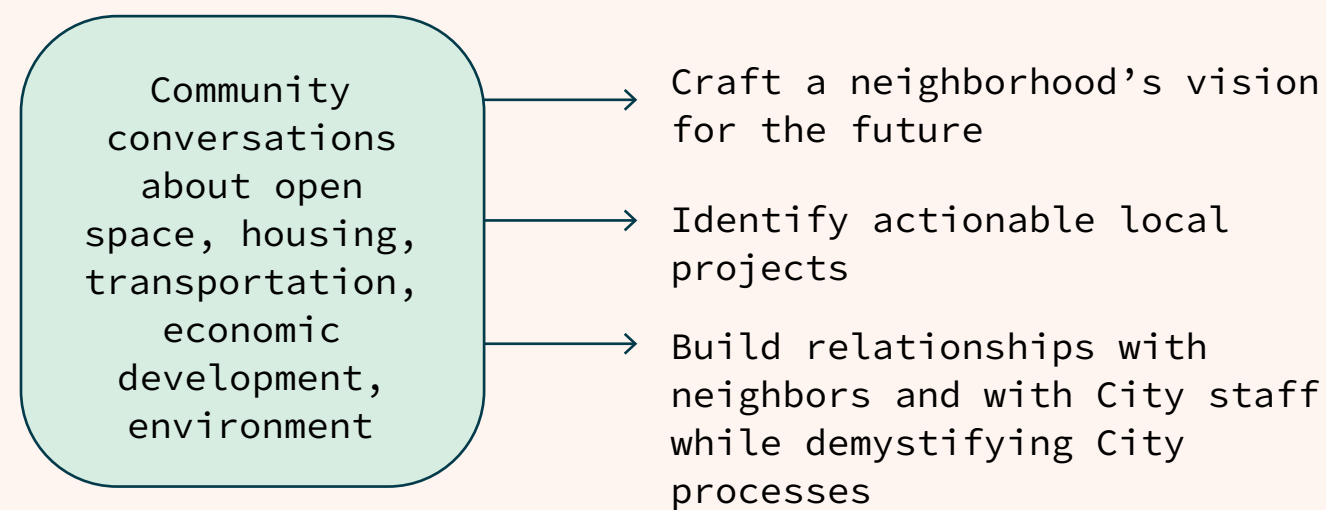
What is NPI?

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:



What Do Action Plans Do?



Action Plans are updated often so that community priorities can inform other planning efforts.

It will take 4-5 years to finish a Neighborhood Action Plan for all 13 neighborhoods. The Action Planning schedule was developed by looking at data-driven indicators of relative planning need across neighborhoods. This helped to identify areas that might most benefit from early action planning.

