

Envision Cambridge (2019) [SUMMARIZED]

Summary of the Plan’s goals and recommendations.

Objective	Indicators
Maintain existing development patterns where they are well-established, and advance the city’s values through a mix of preservation and complementary infill development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New development should support existing patterns of residential neighborhoods, major squares, mixed use corridors, campuses, and open spaces.
In Evolving areas, promote mixed use, pedestrian-oriented, and sustainable development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include a mix of building uses, include open space and other civic amenities.
Transitional Development, at the edges of well-established districts, should complement the pattern of adjacent districts, accommodate variations in use and scale, and add greater density.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fit into and improve the existing context, transition between scale or uses, particularly where sensitive residential uses abut other uses.
Create a connected network of high-quality open spaces that links all residents of natural assets, provides a range of activities, encourages social connections, and is inclusive of all people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include public space, such as parks, plazas, and streets, and also publicly accessible private spaces.
Shape form, uses and design of development, especially public spaces and street frontages, to support an active public realm.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create spaces for informal social life.
Encourage activity on the ground floors of new buildings, particularly along mixed-use corridors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote a continuous streetwall on commercial corridors. • Uniform standards for front setbacks and façade length. • Compatibility with established patterns of the area. • Primary building entrances located on Mixed-use corridors. • Building entrances to be located on the mixed-use corridors (including at corners). • Provide activating design elements along the streetwall , such as signage, awnings, entrances, and breaks in the building façade.
Leverage Private development to create public open spaces and provide programming.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publicly accessible indoor space in private and institutional developments including community rooms and other community facilities. • Increase tree canopy on private property. • Encourage family-friendly design elements (such as playgrounds)

Expand the public open space network.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide new spaces, redesign existing spaces, improve walkable and bikeable open spaces connections and focus in increasing activity in these open spaces.
Improve the open space network to serve a diverse population.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open Space and recreational facilities that serve a wide range of uses. • Incorporate universal design. • Provide playful public spaces.
Support institutional growth within existing campus boundaries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permit reasonable densities for large institutions to forestall unnecessary expansion.
Tree canopy over sidewalks and streets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow targets established by the Urban Forest Master Plan.

Central Square Design Guidelines (2013) [SUMMARIZED]

The site is within the Central Square District.

Objective	Indicators
Establish Mass Ave and Main Street as great public spaces in an improved system of streets and sidewalks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Require active ground floor uses.
Enhance the street network to make walking more convenient, safe, and fun.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pedestrian street lighting • Transparent retail storefronts • Setbacks of up to 10 feet to accommodate outdoor dining or other active programming. • On Main Street: design sidewalks with three zones: street furniture zone, circulation zone (8’ to 10’ wide), storefront zone. • On Main Street: Consider outdoor dining, parklets, public art/play installations, performance. • On secondary streets: Enliven with active ground floor building uses, and where possible compact setbacks of 5’ to 10’ to accommodate front gardens or outdoor dining.
Integrate buildings with public spaces. Improve the attractiveness and functionality of open space. Create new outdoor and indoor gathering spaces.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Install publicly accessible spaces such as plazas, play areas, pedestrian connectors, and parklets.
Pedestrian oriented storefronts providing visual interest along Mas Ave and Main Street.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large window areas • Awnings and canopies • Integrated signage • Creative signage, awnings, and graphics

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Street grade entrances which continue strong linear edges along Mass Ave and Main Street. • Window boxes. • Chamfered ground floor entrances if appropriate at corners.
Enliven the public realm by expanding the publicly accessible private spaces along sidewalks, in association with the creation of retail, cultural, and office space.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transparent materials and interior lighting. • Strong interactive connections between active ground level spaces and adjacent public sidewalk/plaza. • Avoid blank walls longer than 10’.
Variation in building height is encouraged. Align façade elements with the tops of adjacent buildings, but overall building height does not need to be uniform.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In streetwall situations, relate architectural elements to significant elements on adjacent buildings.
Massing: Continuation of strong linear retail frontage is critical.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Occasional setbacks of up to 15’ to accommodate outdoor dining or retail sales. • Limit shadow impacts on adjoining neighborhoods and public parks. Shadows should not substantially reduce the appeal of public spaces. Limit shadows to no more than 2 hours a per day from March to October. • Illustrations depict the massing of large projects as composites of smaller elements, rather than as single unified constructions.
Streetwalls and bulk control: Reinforce the 55 foot height range of many traditional buildings, and also introduce variation in height, including volumes that exceed 55 to 65 feet.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Step down from Mass Ave/Main Street toward the neighborhood context. • Maximum streetwall height of 45 feet along perpendicular streets within 100 feet of adjacent districts. • Taller volumes are permitted if stepped back from the streetwall by 15 feet and are within the overlay’s height limits.
Recognize heavy pedestrian activity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relate to the human dimension and be rich in detail.
Facades: Buildings should have their own integrity, and be of their place. New projects should have enduring and durable qualities. They should contribute to the liveliness of the Square and its diverse set of architectural statements over the long term.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respond to orientation with regard to environment, place, and site, and acknowledge the importance of building profile, edges, and corners. • Both modernist designs and designs more reflective of historical precedent are appropriate.
Facades: engage the interest of pedestrians. Combine strong	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pedestrian level treatments should either be rich in detail and reinforce human scale, or be inviting and interesting through dramatic treatment of space, lighting and signage.

<p>architectural expression with awareness of context.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide varied design rather than uniformity, and allow for future flexibility. • Avoid undifferentiated facades that consist of a single pattern used throughout. • Provide expansive windows, interior illumination. • Articulate windows and cornices. • Masonry provides a sense of durability and stability. • Consider providing depth of façade and recessed windows. • Complement existing buildings. • Where ground floor frontage is recessed, avoid creating dark, unappealing ground floors.
<p>Parking and service areas: Screened from the public realm.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parking below grade wherever possible. • Locate service areas on alleys or side streets. • Loading docks should have garage doors, typically closed; complement the architecture of the building. • Prevent vehicles from backing into a public street.
<p>Walkable streets that promote non-automotive transportation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unobstructed motorist and pedestrian sight distances. • Avoid oversized driveways, curb cuts, and turning radii. • Provide direct pedestrian access from parking and loading to public streets and building entrances. • Permeable pavement where appropriate.

Kendall Square Design Guidelines (2013) [SUMMARIZED]

The site is outside the Kendall Square District, but nearby. As the proposed project is similar in program to many of the buildings in Kendall Square, these guidelines, while not literally applicable, may be worth considering

Objective	Indicators
<p>Create a positive mixed-use district where tall buildings with large floorplates can be good neighbors to public spaces, smaller existing buildings, and adjacent residential neighborhoods.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage the impacts of bulk and height. • Animate major streets and public space with active ground floors.
<p>Enhance the quality of public street and park spaces.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On major public streets, including Main Street, provide a well-defined streetwall to help frame them as public spaces. • Provide adequate space along sidewalks of major public streets for outdoor activity associated with active ground level uses. • Activate ground floors on edges of parks

<p>Avoid unnecessary environmental impacts.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimize shadows on existing public parks and plazas. • Minimize negative wind impacts. • Provide vegetative cover, improve stormwater infiltration, and reduce heat island effect. • Minimize noise from mechanical equipment.
<p>Locate loading and service to support walkability, away from major public streets and pedestrian corridors.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide loading/servicing bays with architectural doors, designed to complement the overall façade composition. They should be customarily closed. • Driveway turnaround and vehicle drip-off facilities are discouraged along public streets.
<p>Street activity should activate the district.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Locate courtyards and open spaces to maximize sun exposure. • Connect the outdoor public realm with indoor public spaces. • Design wayfinding and lighting for safety. • Accommodate diverse retail and service offerings to serve residents and workers in the neighborhood.
<p>Provide universal access.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parks and plazas are to provide activities and facilities serving people of all ages.
<p>Architectural composition should particularly emphasize a distinct identity for the building as well as for Kendall Square.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Methods include use and proportioning of materials, colors and shapes that differ from those of adjacent buildings
<p>Design buildings to help create streetwalls, where appropriate, to help frame the sidewalks, plazas, and other public spaces in Kendall Square.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Align new facades with existing ones if doing so helps give a sense of spatial cohesiveness to the sidewalks. • Allow breaks in the streetwall if needed to help define entryways to buildings. • Streetwall design should take into account the need to provide active ground floor uses.
<p>Convey the act and spirit of innovation in Kendall Square through transparency to reveal activity and display visual media.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transparent building materials. • Media displays. • Interactive media.
<p>Relate to the surrounding context by scale and massing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include setbacks to create transitions to adjacent low scale buildings. • Create sensitive transitions to neighbors, especially residential buildings, and public parks. • Reduce impact on significant view corridors from public spaces by sensitive site planning and building design.
<p>Minimize monolithic massing and break down the scale of large buildings.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Express base, middle, and top. • Pay particular attention to the bottom 20' of buildings. • Maximum length of facades for buildings 85' to 120' tall: 240'x175'
<p>Create a strong street edge and limit the sense of height at the street level.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On major public streets, set back approximately two thirds of the upper volume above 85 feet by approximately 15 feet.

Reflect a rhythm and variation appropriate to the urban context.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Express bay widths of 25 to 50'. Divide massing with a vertical break for every 100' of façade length
Vary the architecture of individual buildings to create architecturally diverse districts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use variations in height and architectural elements, cornices, shading devices, illumination, etc. to create varied rooflines. Avoid flat facades by articulating bays and balconies, changes in material, fenestration, detailing, etc.
Rooftops should be conceived as integral to the rest of the building's architecture.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If rooftop mechanical equipment is exposed, it should be carefully arranged. If equipment is screened, the screening should be in the same idiom as the rest of the architecture.
First floors should be actively used.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On major public streets, approximately 75% of the street frontage should be occupied by retail uses such as café, restaurants, and shops. On secondary streets approximately 75% of the street frontage should be occupied by active uses. Avoid extensive use of frontage by lobbies.
Retail and services should serve local communities as well as people who work in the area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lease space to small, locally owned businesses. Provide diverse types of retail and service stores.
Create space at the sidewalk level to allow for interaction between ground floor uses and the public sidewalk.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide adequate sidewalk widths. Provide small setbacks (5 to 15 feet) for café seating, benches, or small open spaces.
Directly engage the public and create a well-defined streetwall to frame streets and public spaces.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Setbacks greater than 10' should be provided with caution. Avoid setbacks for ornamental landscaping. Locate primary entrances on public streets and on corners wherever possible.
Design ground floors to reduce the distinction between exterior and interior space to extend the effective public realm indoors and reveal indoor activity on the street.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transparent material and interior lighting. Active ground level spaces with strong interactive connections with adjacent public sidewalk. Avoid blank walls longer than 20 feet in length. Provide awnings and canopies. Mechanical/utility rooms should not be located on primary streets.