Cambridge Highlands
Neighborhood Study Update

City of Cambridge
Community Development Department
March 3, 2011
2011 Cambridge Highlands Neighborhood Study Update Meeting #1

- Planning in Cambridge
- Thoughts, concerns, and vision for the future
- Dialogue about long-term planning issues – How will the neighborhood change over 10 years or more?
City Planning

• Facilitating a vision for the city’s future
• Balancing city growth over time with quality of life
• Creating a more sustainable city

Planning Tools

• City ordinances, policies (Zoning and others)
• Public investment in transportation, open space
• Programs and services
Overall City Goals

- Serve a diverse population
- Good housing, neighborhoods
- Sustainability
- Beautiful parklands and pathways
- Healthy economic base – jobs, retail
- High-quality city services
- Public process to address growth
• Growth Policy (1993, 2007)
• “Citywide Rezoning” (2001)
• Climate Protection Plan (2002)
• Topic-Specific Studies:
  – Green Ribbon Open Space (2000)
  – Green Zoning Task Force (2009)
• Area-Specific Studies:
  – Eastern Cambridge (2001)
  – Concord-Alewife (2006)
• Neighborhood Studies and Updates (1989-present)
Neighborhood Study Update Process

- Series of 2-3 community meetings
- Online questionnaire
- Discuss planning in the neighborhood
- Develop recommendations for future planning
- Report: Summary, recommendations and future action steps
Cambridge Highlands:

- Variety of land uses and characteristics
- Smallest neighborhood in terms of population
  
  ~ 673 persons (101,355 citywide)

Source: US Census, 2000
Cambridge Highlands Land Use and Zoning Issues

- Sense of place
- Transitions
- Urban design
- Redevelopment
Energy and Environment Goals

- Energy efficiency, renewable energy
- Reducing greenhouse gas emissions
- Moderating heat island effect
- Stormwater management
- Reducing waste, increasing recycling

Sources of Greenhouse Gas Emissions in Cambridge
Source: Community Development Department (all figures approximate)
Energy and Buildings

- Improved energy efficiency for existing buildings (Insulation, efficient appliances and mechanicals)
- “Green Zoning” for new construction
- Renewable Energy – solar, wind
Stormwater and Urban Heat Island

- Vegetation, trees, rain gardens
- Green roofs
- White roofs
Cambridge Highlands Transportation Issues

- Connections to transit and within neighborhood
- Street patterns
- Pedestrian, bicycle environment
Affordable Housing Programs

- Inclusionary Zoning
- Affordable Housing Trust
- Home Improvement Programs
- Homebuyer and Renter Assistance
Small Business Support Programs

- Grant programs (façade designs, store renovations)
- Workshops
- SiteFinder service, one-on-one consulting
Open Space Goals

• Maintain and improve what exists
• Provide variety of open space uses
• Expand supply and improve access as appropriate (Green Ribbon Study)
• Support “play” for community health and well-being (not just for kids!)
Neighborhood Planning Questions

• What do you like about the character of the neighborhood?

• What concerns do you have about the neighborhood?

• What do you see as opportunities for change and improvement over time?