**Mid-Cambridge Neighborhood Study Update**

City of Cambridge
Community Development Department
February 5, 2011

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**Why Are We Here?**

- Learn about planning in Cambridge
- Hear your thoughts, concerns, vision for the future
- Dialogue about long-term planning issues – How will the neighborhood change over 10 years or more?

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**Today’s Meeting**

- Introduction to Neighborhood Planning (~30 mins)
- Conversation on Topic Areas (~90 mins, small groups)
- Review and Summarize Main Points (~30 mins, large group)
- Open Discussion, Next Steps (~30 mins)

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**Neighborhood Studies**

- Mid-Cambridge Neighborhood Study (1998)
- Mid-Cambridge Neighborhood Study Update (2005)

**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

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**What is City Planning?**

- Providing a vision for the city's future
- Managing city growth over time
- Creating a more sustainable city

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**Planning Tools**

- City ordinances, policies (Zoning and others)
- Public investment in transportation, open space
- Programs and services
What Guides Cambridge’s Planning Today?

- “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)

Mid-Cambridge: At a Glance

- Of the neighborhood’s 13,000+ residents ...
  - ~8% are under 18 (13% citywide)
  - ~24% are 18-24 years old (21% citywide)
  - ~30% attend college or graduate school (26% citywide)
  - ~17% live in group quarters (dorms, hospitals)
  - ~70% of households are “non-family”
  - ~Average 1.76 persons per household (2.03 citywide)

Source: US Census, 2000

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

Neighborhood Planning Topics

- Land Use and Zoning
- Energy and Environment
- Transportation
- Housing
- Economic Development
- Open Space
Land Uses in Mid-Cambridge

Land Uses by Area (excluding roads)

- Residential: 63%
- Education: 19%
- Commercial: 1%
- Industrial: 1%
- Charitable/Religious: 1%
- Mixed Use: 1%
- Government: 0%
- Health: 2%
- Public Open Space: 2%
- Parking: 1%
- Vacant: 5%

Source: Cambridge Assessing Department
(all figures approximate)

Residential Neighborhoods

- Maintain pattern of development
- Rehabilitate existing housing stock
- New housing at existing height and scale

Land Use and Zoning Goals

- Support a healthy mix of uses
- Preserve existing character where appropriate
- Support housing, economic growth
- Address impacts of development

Retail and Office Districts

- Support new retail where it exists
- Allow new housing

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Institutions

- Harvard, Youville
- Limited growth in residential districts
- Economic and cultural activity near campus

Energy and Buildings

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

Energy and Environment Goals

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

Stormwater and Urban Heat Island

- Vegetation, trees, rain gardens
- Green roofs
- White roofs

Sources of Greenhouse Gas Emissions in Cambridge

Source: Community Development Department (all figures approximate)
Transportation in Mid-Cambridge

Journey-to-Work for Mid-Cambridge Residents
Source: US Census, 2000 (all figures approximate)

- Drive alone: 30%
- Carpool: 4%
- Public transit: 28%
- Walking: 28%
- Other: 6%
- None: 28%

Cars Owned by Household
Source: US Census, 2000 (all figures approximate)

- One: 56%
- Two: 13%
- Three or more: 3%
- None: 28%

Transportation Goals

- Reduce auto use
- Support walking, bicycling, public transportation (livability, sustainability)
- Make roads safer – slow speeds on residential streets

Transportation Projects/Programs

- Roadway, sidewalk improvements
- Bicycle facilities (lanes, paths, parking)
- Parking and transportation requirements for new development

Outreach Programs

- Transportation choices
- Reducing energy use
- Recycling programs
- Recognizing community efforts
**Housing in Mid-Cambridge**

*Units by Tenure*
- Owner Occupied: 31%
- Renter Occupied: 65%
- Vacant: 5%

*Units by Building Type*
- 9+ Unit Condos: 25%
- 2-3 Unit Condos: 7%
- 4-8 Unit Condos: 8%
- 4-8 Unit Apts: 7%
- 9+ Unit Apts: 26%
- Public/Assisted: 1%
- Mixed Use Bldgs: 3%
- Single Family: 4%

Source: Cambridge Assessing Department
(all figures approximate)

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**Businesses in Mid-Cambridge**

- Mostly small independent businesses
- Some retail or office “mini-districts”
- Several “non-conforming” businesses

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**Affordable Housing Programs**
- Inclusionary Zoning
- Affordable Housing Trust
- Home Improvement Programs
- Homebuyer and Renter Assistance

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**Small Business Support Programs**
- Grant programs (façade designs, store renovations)
- Workshops
- SiteFinder service, one-on-one consulting
Open Space in Mid-Cambridge

- About 4 acres total
- Joan Lorentz Park (at Library) is largest space
- Many smaller playgrounds and “pocket parks”

Open Space Improvement

- Making better use of public space
- Encouraging new types of activity
- Giving places a unique character

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?