Riverside Neighborhood Study Update

City of Cambridge
Community Development Department
February 12, 2011
Today’s Agenda

• Introduction to Neighborhood Planning
• Your Thoughts and Questions
• Review and Summarize Main Points
• Open Discussion, Next Steps
Neighborhood Studies

• Riverside Neighborhood Study (1993)
• Riverside Neighborhood Study Update (2003)

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
What is City Planning?

• Providing a vision for the city’s future
• Managing city growth over time
• Creating a more **sustainable** city

Planning Tools

• City ordinances, policies (Zoning, Design Guidelines, and others)
• Public investment (e.g. transportation, parks and 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)
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
Riverside:
At a Glance

• Of the neighborhood’s 10,000+ residents ...
  ~ 8% are under 18 (13% citywide)
  ~ 41% are 18-24 years old (21% citywide)
  ~ 51% attend college or graduate school (26% citywide)
  ~ 34% live in group quarters (dorms, hospitals)
  ~ 66% of households are “non-family”
  ~ Average 1.93 persons per household (2.03 citywide)

Source: US Census, 2000
Neighborhood Planning Topics

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

Land Uses by Area
Source: Cambridge Assessing Department (all figures approximate)
Land Use and Zoning Goals

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

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

• Support new retail where it exists
• Allow new housing
Institutions

- Institutional Use Overlay Districts
- Limited growth in residential districts
- Economic and cultural activity near campus
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 and white roofs
Transportation in Riverside

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

- Drive alone: 22%
- Public transit: 27%
- Walking: 38%
- Carpool: 3%
- Work at home: 4%
- Other: 6%
- None: 31%
- One: 55%
- Three or more: 12%

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

In order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve livability and sustainability;

• 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 Riverside

Units by Tenure
Source: US Census, 2000
(all figures approximate)

- Owner-Occupied: 19%
- Renter-Occupied: 77%
- Vacant: 4%

Units by Building Type
Source: Cambridge Assessing Department
(all figures approximate)

- Single Family: 3%
- 2-3 Family: 15%
- 4-8 Unit Apts: 10%
- 9+ Unit Apts: 16%
- 2-3 Unit Condos: 5%
- 4-8 Unit Condos: 4%
- Mixed Use Bldgs: 10%
- University Hsg: 18%
- Public Hsg: 6%
- Rooming/YMCA: 3%
- Other: 0%
- 9+ Unit Apts: 10%

(all figures approximate)
Affordable Housing Programs

- Inclusionary Zoning
- Affordable Housing Trust
- Home Improvement Programs
- Homebuyer and Renter Assistance
Businesses in Riverside

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

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

• About 17.5 acres total
• Hoyt Field, Riverside Press Park and the Charles River make up the largest spaces
• With smaller playgrounds and “pocket parks”
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!)
Open Space Improvement

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