Wellington–Harrington Neighborhood Action Plan

CAMBRIDGE
CDD@344
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
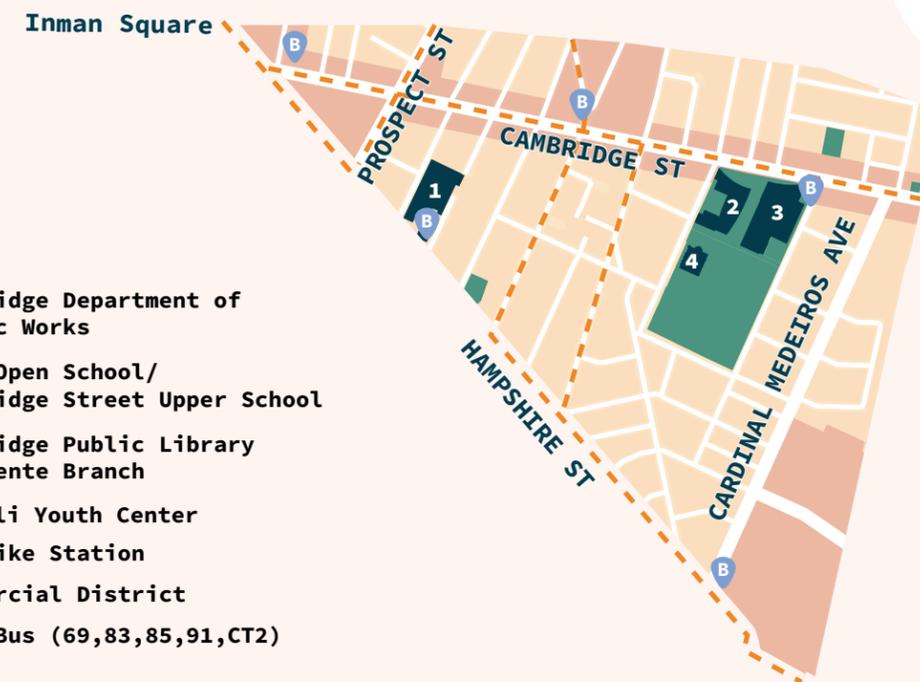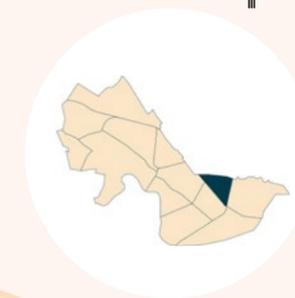344 Broadway

npi

Contents

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.

Other Planning Efforts

Neighborhood **Visioning** *Process*

196 Idea Map Comments & Responses

Pop Ups & Focus Group Input

1ˢᵗ Community Meeting
June 21, 2023

Set Neighborhood **Goals**

164 Online Survey Responses

Focus Group Input

2ⁿᵈ Community Meeting
September 13, 2023

Set Neighborhood **Actions**

Action Plan!

Neighborhood Snapshot

Inman Square

PROSPECT ST

CAMBRIDGE ST

HAMPSHIRE ST

CARDINAL MEDEIROS AVE

1. **Cambridge Department of Public Works**
2. **King Open School/ Cambridge Street Upper School**
3. **Cambridge Public Library – Valente Branch**
4. **Frisoli Youth Center**
- **Bluebike Station**
- **Commercial District**
- - - **MBTA Bus (69,83,85,91,CT2)**

Density

At more than **53 residents per acre**, Wellington-Harrington is one of the densest areas of Cambridge.

Land Use

Wellington-Harrington is a predominantly residential neighborhood, with about 56% residential, 17% commercial, 15% institutional or government uses, and 1% open space.

Community Resources

include 5 public parks and playgrounds, 2 schools, and 1 library.

Neighborhood Organizations

Neighborhood organizations in Wellington-Harrington include the **Inman Square Neighborhood Association** and the **Wellington-Harrington Neighborhood Association.**

What's going on?

Recent projects include the **Our Cambridge Street Plan** and the **Inman Square Intersection Improvements Project.**
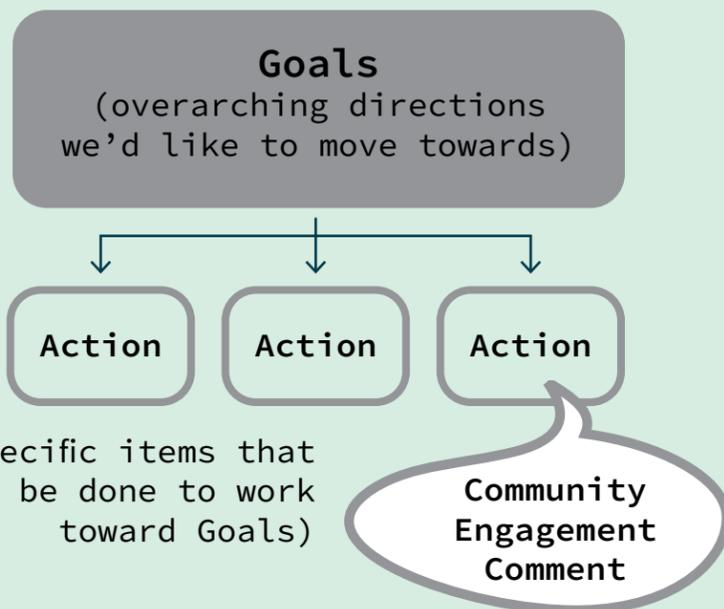
DATA SOURCE: U.S. Census, 2020 Decennial Census

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 seven goals.

How to read this document:

Goals
(overarching directions we'd like to move towards)

Action   **Action**   **Action**

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

Community Engagement Comment

(1) Create more and improve existing shared outdoor spaces, such as parks, plazas, and public patios.

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

(3) Support a thriving local business environment.

(4) Expand affordable housing opportunities.

(5) Encourage the revitalization and use of vacant properties.

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

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

Goal 1

Create more and improve existing shared outdoor spaces, such as parks, plazas, and public patios.

Shared outdoor spaces provide places for people to relax, get exercise, and spend time together. The trees and plants in these spaces provide habitat for wildlife and help us be resilient to climate change.

We've heard people advocate for a space and/or time for dogs to be off leash.

Actions

1.A
Increase shade and comfortable gathering space at Donnelly Field through creative installations informed by the Shade is Social Justice project.

1.B
Assess existing dog hours and facilities in the neighborhood, and explore improvements.

1.C
Partner with the Public Space Lab to imporve existing and add more temporary plazas, seating, and events to foster gathering spaces in the neighborhood.

1.D
Explore establishing an adopt-a-plot program, where volunteers can help maintain public gardens and green spaces.

1.E
Program the temporary plaza where the Grand Junction Railroad crosses Cambridge St.

1.F
Continue to plant trees at Donnelly Field to add shade and wildlife habitat.

1.G
Continue to plant more street trees.

We've heard a request for improved plantings and pathways at Donnelly Field.

Goal 2

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

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

"Cars drive too fast and I can't imagine letting my elementary school aged kids cross the street alone on Cambridge Street."

Actions

2.A
Improve the intersection of Cambridge St. and Cardinal Medeiros Ave. to make it safer for all people who pass through.

2.B
Use the Street Code to educate all users of the road about rules, etiquette, and how to get around town Safely.

2.C
Offer Healthy Aging On-Bike Skills Clinics, group rides, and other community bike workshops in the neighborhood.

2.D
Improve the intersection of Cambridge St and Prospect to make it safer and more comfortable for people who walk.

2.E
Add separated bicycle facilities along the length of Cambridge St from Inman Square to the Grand Junction Rail Line.

2.F
Encourage residents to utilize the Traffic Calming Request Form to request traffic calming measures at specific locations in the neighborhood.

2.G
Explore locations to add more bluebike stations.
Encourage people to use the Bluebikes Station Suggestion Map to recommend specific locations for new stations.

Goal 3

Support a thriving local business environment.

Commercial areas in Wellington-Harrington include the retail, restaurants, offices, and service providers in Inman Square, along Cambridge St, and on Hampshire St.

We've heard people especially want businesses that serve daily needs, such as grocery and corner stores.

"It's sad to see longtime businesses close down. Would love to support local business and small shops. Keep the old ones and have new ones thrive."

Actions

3.A
Promote the Boosting Business Blocks (BBB) grant.
The BBB grant helps business associations and groups of businesses improve their commercial district.

3.B
Promote the Direct Business Grants, including the Storefront Imporvement Program, Small Business Enhancement Program, and Retail Interior Accessibility Program.

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

3.D
Study creating inclusionary commercial spaces, which would require that market-rate developments include a certain amount of space for affordable commercial tenants.
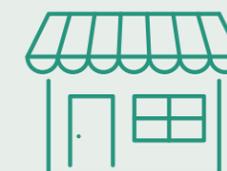
Goal 4

Expand affordable housing opportunities.

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.

We heard people appreciate the existing affordable housing in the neighborhood. Neighbors would like to add to what exists and share successes with other neighborhoods.

Actions

4.A

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

4.B

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

4.C

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

People we spoke to during the Action Plan process mentioned concern about the increasing housing costs in Wellington-Harrington. Several people were worried they would not be able to afford to stay in the neighborhood. Other people said they want it to be easier for a more diverse group of people to move to Wellington-Harrington.

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 5

Encourage the revitalization and use of vacant properties.

Even temporary vacancies through normal turnover can have a negative impact on how people view an area. There are a few ways we can help fill vacancies, and improve any negative perception of the place.

Actions

5.A

Promote the vacant storefront database to connect potential small businesses with viable commercial spaces.

5.B

Develop a succession planning training program to help business owners prepare for the future of their businesses.

"There are a lot of vacant homes that seems like a missed opportunity."

"It's such a shame to know there's a housing crisis or small businesses are looking for homes and yet many properties are vacant."

Goal 6

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

Events and spaces that encourage community building can help people make relationships with their neighbors, build a sense of belonging, and foster community pride.

We've heard people really appreciate the Valente Branch Public Library and the events and festivals that take place in the neighborhood.

Actions

6.A

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

6.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.

Goal 7

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

"Rodents remain a problem, even if they are less so than recent years."

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 better places to be!

Actions

7.A

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

7.B

Replace open waste receptacles at parks, open spaces, and streets with enclosed receptables.

7.C

Pilot a community clean-up day program in a neighborhood park or other public space. This event can help build community, foster neighborhood pride, and help keep our public spaces clean.

Did you know?

The City offers free rodent control services for homes with up to four units. Even if you're a renter, you can ask the City to inspect, bait/ trap, and follow-up inspect your home at no cost! Go to www. cambridgema.gov/ rodents for the details and application.

What's Next?
How can YOU be involved?

For the latest information on how to be involved, visit the City's NPI webpage:

www.cambridgema.gov/npi/wellingtonharrington

I LIVE IN WELLINGTON-HARRINGTON!

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!

Review neighborhood snapshots & previous plans

Sign up for neighborhood email updates!

I'd like to learn more about NPI!

Visit the NPI page of the City's website

I LIVE IN A DIFFERENT NEIGHBORHOOD!

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

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

E-mail your neighborhood planner, Lev McCarthy, at lmccarthy@cambridgema.gov

Review community resources

HAVE QUESTIONS? E-mail your neighborhood planner!

Lev McCarthy: lmccarthy@cambridgema.gov
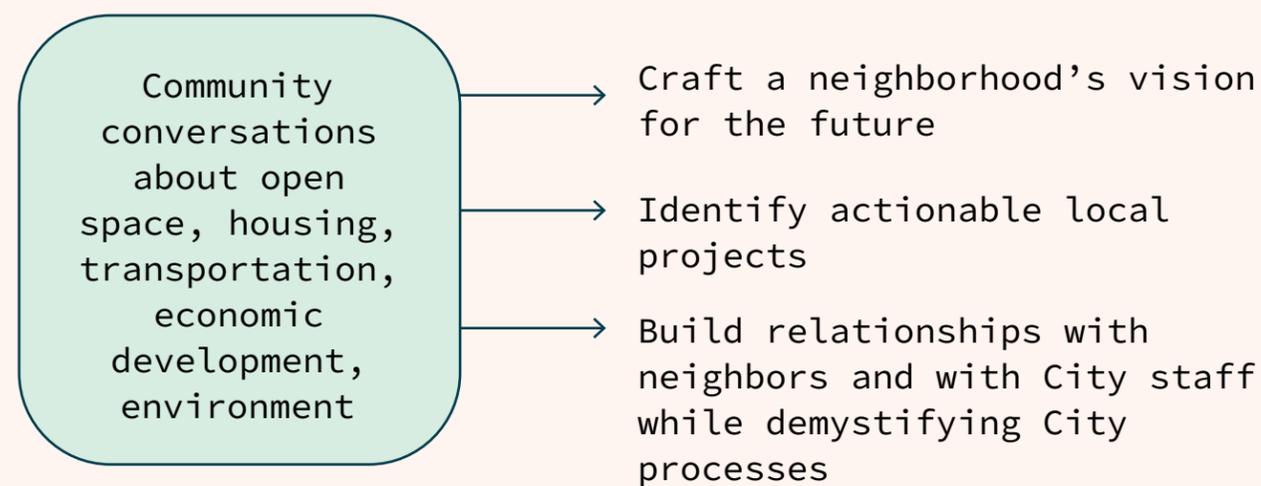
About the Neighborhood Planning Initiative

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:

Action Planning

Community Building Toolkit

Neighborhood Resources

Leadership Development

What Do Action Plans Do?

Community conversations about open space, housing, transportation, economic development, environment

→ Craft a neighborhood's vision for the future

→ Identify actionable local projects

→ Build relationships with neighbors and with City staff while demystifying City processes

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2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
ACTION PLAN	ACTION PLAN			ACTION PLAN
COMMUNITY BUILDING TOOLKIT				
NEIGHBORHOOD RESOURCES				
LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT				

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.

North Cambridge
Cambridge Highlands
Neighborhood Nine
Strawberry Hill
West Cambridge
Baldwin
Mid-Cambridge
Wellington-Harrington
Riverside
The Port
East Cambridge
Cambridgeport
Area 2/MIT

Diversity & Equity

Livability & Learning

Sustainability & Resilience

Community Health & Wellbeing

Economic Opportunity