

Urban Form Plan

The design of buildings, open spaces, and streets affects how we experience the city. Cambridge has a distinctive urban fabric of major squares, mixed-use districts, commercial corridors, neighborhoods, campuses, and open spaces. The city is also home to a vibrant mix of architectural scales and styles. This collage makes Cambridge an exciting and pleasant place to live, work, learn, and play. At the same time, a strong economy means that some areas of the city are undergoing redevelopment. These include the major squares and mixed-use corridors, as well as once-industrial districts, the edges of residential neighborhoods, and areas adjacent to parkways. Cambridge has the opportunity to utilize the momentum of redevelopment to generate community benefits and ensure that the urban form of new districts advances the community's values and complements the existing context.

Coordinated Efforts

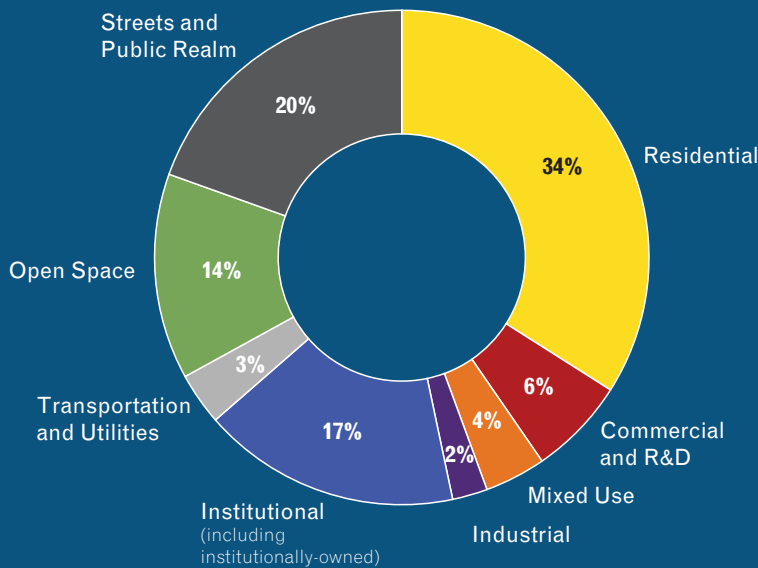
Many plans, codes, and policies developed over time influence the urban form of the city. The Zoning Ordinance regulates land use and standards for new development, and contains urban design objectives that are applied by the Planning Board through its review of major development projects. The City Council amends the Zoning Ordinance regularly, responding to new planning concerns, and the City creates plans and design guidelines for certain areas or specific aspects of development. The Historical Commission also regulates development through the City's Demolition Delay Ordinance, historic districts, and Neighborhood Conservation Districts. Many City departments are involved in the design, development, and maintenance of the City's public spaces, including streets and parks.

Urban Form

Context

Land Use as Percent of Citywide Land Area

Source: City of Cambridge Community Development and Assessing Departments. Water bodies such as Fresh Pond that sit within Cambridge's borders were not considered part of the citywide land area for this analysis.



“I value the beauty and character of the city, which makes a huge psychological impact on all—even if people aren’t aware of it. Beautiful and compelling architecture and ample open space make Cambridge a nice place, not just to visit—but to live in.”

— Neighborhood Nine resident via online survey

Land Use and Density

Cambridge has an urban structure that has been defined over the centuries through its patterns of land use and buildings. Today’s Cambridge is marked by distinctive residential neighborhoods, connected by commercial and mixed-use corridors (such as Massachusetts Avenue and Cambridge Street), institutional campuses, and open spaces, and flanked by evolving commercial districts such as Kendall Square and Alewife, which are becoming more mixed-use.

The city is relatively dense overall, with moderate-density residential areas and higher-density mixed-use areas around major squares, such as Kendall Square, Central Square, and Harvard Square. The arrangement of buildings along the corridors and in much of eastern and northern Cambridge position buildings along the street, defining a “street wall,” and creating a sense of enclosure for the public realm. This pattern dissipates at the edges of the city, particularly along the highways and parkways, such as Fresh Pond Parkway and Memorial Drive.

The Public Realm

The most ubiquitous public spaces in Cambridge are streets. City streets are not just spaces for transportation, but they also serve as open spaces that

“Cambridge should be a dense, mixed-use, mixed-income city.”

— Huron Village resident

For more context and data on urban form in Cambridge, see pages 18–37 of *Cambridge Today*, the Envision Cambridge report on existing conditions.



Envision Cambridge conducted several walking tours of Cambridge's mixed-use corridors and side streets to assess recent development and workshop new ideas.

“ The urban landscape is changing rapidly... Good public green space and walkable connections are extremely important to incorporate now.”

— East Cambridge resident

provide opportunities for social interaction and civic action, especially where sidewalks are wide and street trees are located at regular intervals.

Cambridge's public realm shapes the experience of everyday life for Cambridge residents, workers, students, and visitors. Much of the city's public realm is traditionally urban, with narrow streets, many building entrances, active ground floor uses, relatively wide sidewalks, consistent street lighting, street furniture, and some presence of street trees and plantings. This high-quality public realm is important in creating a vibrant atmosphere, especially at the city's squares. The squares are important in defining the “mental map” of Cambridge

for many residents; they often serve as transit nodes, and are centers of retail and other neighborhood amenities.

Development patterns in the middle and late 20th century did not prioritize a consistently high-quality public realm. The City has reinvested in public realm infrastructure, and City agencies have pushed private development to make a positive contribution to the public realm. Consistent regulation of private development to ensure it contributes to good urban form is especially important in areas where new development concentrates and new neighborhoods take shape.

Open Spaces

A diverse collection of open spaces—including large parks,

neighborhood pocket parks and tot lots, linear paths, and plazas—offer the Cambridge community a variety of public spaces for recreation and congregation. Envision Cambridge's research on open spaces shows that the most intensive use for many public spaces is simply walking, either for recreation or for travel. Traditional publicly owned open spaces are augmented by an emerging system of privately owned public spaces. In some areas, parts of the university campuses also serve as usable open spaces. However, some engagement participants noted that campus spaces are not public and not all residents feel comfortable using them as everyday open space.

Vision

Public and private development in Cambridge creates vibrant, healthy, beautiful places for the city’s residents, workers, students, and visitors. The form of the city honors Cambridge’s history, while meeting the needs of today’s community and future generations. Urban development balances preservation of the city’s urban character and growth to accommodate new residents and activities, with an equitable distribution throughout the city.

Goals

Development Patterns: Maintain the existing patterns of the city where they are well-established, and advance the city’s values through a mix of preservation and complementary infill development.

Significant existing buildings should be preserved and new development should support the existing development patterns of residential neighborhoods, major squares, mixed-use corridors, campuses, and open spaces.

Growth in Evolving Areas: Promote redevelopment that is mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented, and sustainable within areas currently characterized by surface parking lots, automobile-oriented uses, and obsolete commercial buildings.

New development should serve a mix of functions (e.g., housing, employment, education), include open space and other civic amenities, and allow development patterns that would be difficult to accommodate in the city’s more well-established districts and neighborhoods.

Transitional Development: Where redevelopment occurs at the edges of well-established districts, shape new development to complement the prevailing pattern of adjacent districts, accommodate variations in use and scale, and add greater density to areas well-served by public transit.

New development at the edges of well-established neighborhoods should fit into and improve the existing context, transitioning between scales or uses, particularly where sensitive residential uses abut other uses.

Open Space: Create a connected network of high-quality open spaces that links all residents to local and regional natural assets, provides a range of activities and experiences, encourages social connections, and is inclusive of all people.

Cambridge’s open space network should include public space, such as parks, plazas, and streets, as well as publicly accessible private spaces.

Activation: Shape the form, use, and design of development, especially its public spaces and street frontages, so that it supports an active public realm.

New development should create spaces for informal social life, particularly on the commercial corridors and in evolving areas.

Design Process: Strive for design excellence in all new development by creating a review process that is clear and efficient in its engagement with City staff, boards and commissions, and the community.

Cambridge’s process for approving new developments should encourage dialogue among property owners, the City, and community members. All development should be held to consistently high design standards.

Connections to Our Core Values

Outlined here are key ways that the core values of the Cambridge community, identified through the Envision Cambridge process, are reflected in the Urban Form goals and recommendations. For more about the community's vision and core values, see page 26.

Livability: We value a vibrant built and natural environment and support sustainable transportation with affordable and convenient access to daily needs and recreational resources.

The structure of the city and design of the built environment directly affect livability and how we experience the city. Cities are also continuously evolving. This section includes recommendations that redevelopment be characterized by high quality urban design, and that there be a citywide focus on an

inclusive public realm consisting of parks and open spaces, squares and plazas, and streetscapes and pathways that provide opportunities for recreation and social connection.

Diversity and Equity: We are a welcoming community that celebrates our diversity and ensures access to affordable housing choices and opportunities to succeed.

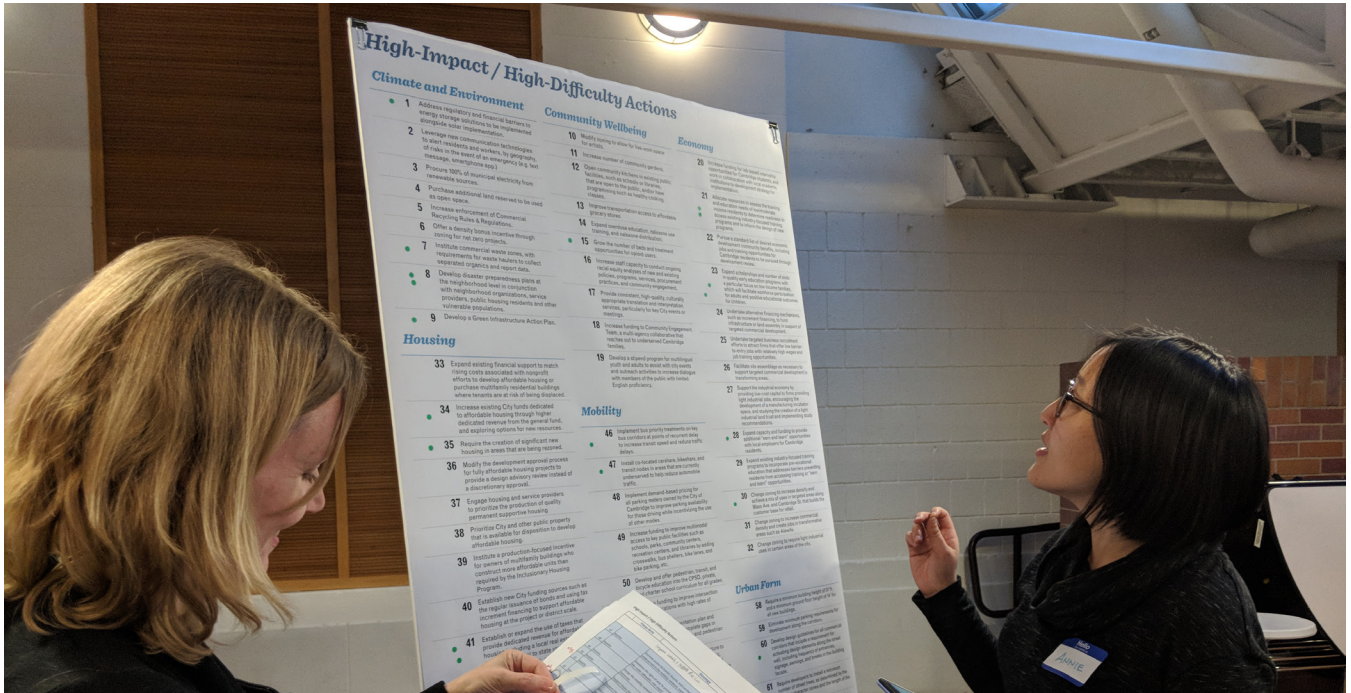
Recommendations in this section address how public and private development can advance community goals and bring about new opportunities for housing, jobs, community benefits and amenities for our diverse community. They also support a welcoming and inclusive public realm throughout the city that provides opportunities for recreation and social connection for people of all ages, incomes, races, and abilities.

Economic Opportunity: We provide opportunity and stability through access to quality jobs, workforce development and training, and livable wages that support economic security for residents.

A high quality public realm and pedestrian-friendly design can encourage active street life that is supportive of local businesses, particularly in commercial districts and mixed-use corridors, contributing to their vitality. This section includes recommendations to support this and suggests that redevelopment in areas like Alewife create opportunities for building types that incorporate businesses and industries that provide low barrier-to-entry jobs.



A community member participates in the Envision Cambridge Corridors activity at Inman Square Movie Night in 2017.



Members of Envision Cambridge committees rate their priorities among proposed actions across all planning topics.

Sustainability and Resilience:
We take responsible action to reduce our impact on the environment and build a resilient city and strong community.

The design of streets and public spaces in the city can help to reduce impact on the environment, for instance by facilitating access and travel through sustainable modes of transportation. This section includes recommendations that encourage sustainable modes, as well as recommendations to incorporate sustainability and resilience measures at the building and district level to support both environmental and social resilience.

Community Health and Wellbeing: We promote healthy and active lifestyles in supportive, safe community with diverse opportunities to connect with our neighbors and nature and to engage in civic life.

This section emphasizes continuing to build and enhance Cambridge’s vibrant public realm, including parks, plazas, open spaces, as well as streetscapes that contribute to a pleasant, walkable environment. A high quality public realm encourages healthy and active lifestyles and provides opportunities for connecting with neighbors. These opportunities for connections can take many forms, from impromptu interactions walking down the street to community gatherings in parks and open spaces.

Learning: We embrace lifelong learning and celebrate art and creativity in our culturally rich community.

This section’s recommendations to enhance public spaces, particularly those that encourage social connection and activation, can support and reflect the cultural richness and diversity of the city. Parks and playgrounds encourage creativity and play for people of all ages and abilities, host community celebrations, and provide opportunities to engage with art and culture.

Strategies & Actions

1 Increase density near transit nodes while accommodating the unique character of our squares and areas along the corridors.

Cambridge’s corridors are the center of community life and have the greatest access to amenities in the city. Contextual redevelopment on the corridors should be encouraged where existing buildings detract from the corridors’ appearance or function. Existing buildings that support the historic urban character of an area should be preserved and repurposed where practical, and new development should complement that character. To mitigate traffic congestion and encourage walkability, parking requirements should be eliminated and larger buildings should be concentrated.



A mix of building densities on Massachusetts Avenue near Porter Square.

Action	Action Type	Status	Completion Timeframe
Eliminate minimum parking requirements for development along the corridors.	Study or plan	New	Near term
Adjust existing zoning near transit nodes to allow greater density while complementing the character of the surrounding area.	Other regulatory changes	Expanded	Near term

2 Preserve the historical integrity and diversity of Cambridge's neighborhoods, including buildings and the public realm.

Cambridge has many historically significant places, including individual landmarks and districts that communicate our connections to the past. New development should not disrupt this historical continuity, while accommodating changes that meet our present and future needs.



Traditional neighborhood fabric in western Cambridge.

Action	Action Type	Status	Completion Timeframe
Investigate potential additions to the historic inventory through public engagement, planning, and designation studies.	Study or plan	Expanded	Ongoing
Disseminate information about the city's history.	Community interface and outreach	Expanded	Ongoing
Utilize CPA-funded preservation grants to preserve and promote the restoration of significant historic properties.	Capital investments	Expanded	Ongoing
Adjust zoning in residential districts to be more compatible with prevailing patterns of development, including building setbacks, maximum heights, open space, parking requirements, and uses.	Zoning changes	Expanded	Medium term
Protect buildings in historic and neighborhood conservation districts, as well as individual landmarks and properties governed by preservation restrictions.	Other regulatory changes	Existing	Ongoing
Maintain and protect reservations and other natural resource areas, carefully balancing public access and use with preservation and conservation.	Programs and operations	Existing	Ongoing
Preserve small open spaces that provide passive or visual benefits to the public, even where they do not allow for intensive or active recreational use	Programs and operations	Existing	Ongoing

Action	Action Type	Status	Completion Timeframe
Honor local projects with Preservation Awards.	Community interface and outreach	Existing	Ongoing
Work with private land owners owners, institutions, and public agencies on historic preservation issues, and participate in reviews of state and federal projects that impact historic resources.	Regional partnerships	Existing	Ongoing
Ensure new development reinforces and enhances the complex urban aspects of Cambridge as it has developed historically, and where appropriate, ensure historical contexts are respected.	Other regulatory changes	Existing	Ongoing

3 Encourage activity on the ground floors of new buildings, particularly along mixed-use corridors.

Active street life is partly a function of the use and design of buildings located on the street. Street-activating uses and pedestrian-friendly design features should be incorporated into new developments. This is especially important on existing commercial

corridors, where street activity is crucial for the healthy functioning of the city, its residents, and its businesses. Elsewhere, new development should not shun the street, but rather embrace it in a way that is appropriate to the surrounding context.

“We need spaces that have a sense of place—not just thoroughfares that look like mini-highways.”

—Neighborhood Nine resident via online survey

Action	Action Type	Status	Completion Timeframe
Allow the maximum height of mixed-use projects with active ground floor uses to be increased in order to achieve taller ground floor spaces that better support active uses.	Zoning changes	New	Near term
Streamline the approval process to allow more street-activating elements in or above the public way, such as awnings, entry canopies, street furniture, etc.	Other regulatory changes	New	Medium term
Establish development standards to promote a continuous street wall on commercial corridors, including uniform standards for front setbacks and building facade lengths that are compatible with the established patterns of the area.	Other regulatory changes	Expanded	Near term



People enjoying the public realm in Harvard Square.

3 Encourage activity on the ground floors of new buildings, particularly along mixed-use corridors. (Continued)

Action	Action Type	Status	Completion Timeframe
Establish development standards to promote street-activating uses (such as retail) on ground floors, including minimum ground-floor heights, limitations on the frontage length occupied by lobbies and other non-active uses, standards for the frontage length of individual storefronts, and requirements for smaller-sized commercial or community spaces in larger buildings.	Other regulatory changes	Expanded	Near term
Along mixed-use corridors and in major squares, prohibit parking and vehicular loading and service between buildings and the street, and prohibit curb cuts along the mixed-use corridor unless the parcel only has frontage on the mixed-use corridor, the frontage is no less than 40 feet wide, and the access is no more than 20 feet wide.	Zoning changes	Expanded	Near term
Require primary building entrances to be located on the mixed-use corridors (including at corners on the corridors) to create visual variety and to encourage the mixing of building residents, shoppers, and passers-by on the sidewalk.	Zoning changes	Expanded	Near term
Establish design guidelines for all mixed-use corridors that include provisions for activating design elements along the street wall, such as signage, awnings, frequency of entrances, and breaks in the building facade.	Other regulatory changes	Modified	Near term

4 Proactively guide development in areas with a strong potential for change through area-specific planning and development review.

Some areas of Cambridge are more likely than others to see redevelopment, and further thought is needed to shape any redevelopment to meet the needs of the community. Development review and finer-grained planning efforts should shape the direction of the districts that emerge in line with Envision Cambridge goals.

Area Planning
 The Cambridge Community Development Department has undertaken 23 neighborhood or area plans since 2000, as well as topic-specific planning studies, citywide planning studies, and parcel- or street-level planning studies.

Action	Action Type	Status	Completion Timeframe
Initiate district plans for specific areas to inform new zoning approaches and design guidelines that support the Envision Cambridge objectives.	Study or plan	New	Near term
Prepare a streetscape/landscape character plan that identifies different character types, determines desired uses and setbacks, and sets guidelines for types of landscaping, building frontages, etc.	Study or plan	New	Medium term
Amend development standards to encourage balconies, roof terraces and decks, and projecting bays to overlook streets and other public spaces.	Other regulatory changes	Expanded	Near term

“We need buildings that are oriented to the street, have green spaces and street trees and support biking and walking.”

—Cambridgeport resident via online survey

5 Revise the development review process to be more transparent to developers and the public while striving for high-quality design.

Cambridge is subject to a unique set of market, social, and physical conditions, and these conditions require a distinct approach to the review of new development projects. Like much of the Boston region, Cambridge has a public

discretionary review process for most developments. This process should be calibrated to create reliable, high-quality outcomes for all parties, including the City, the community, and developers.

Action	Action Type	Status	Completion Timeframe
Develop design guidelines for as-of-right affordable housing development.	Other regulatory changes	New	Near term
Establish a consolidated set of citywide urban design guidelines based on development types or design themes that reflect historic contexts, while enhancing the overall character of the city and responding to contemporary circumstances.	Other regulatory changes	Expanded	Near term
Continue to update area- and neighborhood-specific design guidelines to ensure that new developments’ urban design outcomes complement their neighborhood context and the review process is more predictable to stakeholders and developers.	Other regulatory changes	Expanded	Near term
Create clear design- and performance-based guidelines to address the environmental impacts of new development through green building standards. Where guidelines are area-specific, prioritize guideline development in areas likely to see significant change.	Other regulatory changes	Expanded	Near term
Encourage developers to meet with the City’s urban design team early in the design process to frame the essential urban design issues of a project, as defined by Envision Cambridge and other relevant plans and guidelines, before conceptual design commences.	Community interface and outreach	Modified	Ongoing



Construction in Cambridge in fall 2018.

Action	Action Type	Status	Completion Timeframe
For larger-scale projects, encourage applicants to present initial design concepts to the Planning Board for pre-application advisory review.	Other regulatory changes	New	Near term
Clarify the development review process by publishing a process diagram to clearly articulate requirements and expectations at every step.	Community interface and outreach	Expanded	Near term
Update the citywide urban design objectives in the City’s Zoning Ordinance to reflect Envision Cambridge recommendations.	Zoning changes	Modified	Near term
Review and assess which districts should be designated “Areas of Special Planning Concern” in the Zoning Ordinance.	Other regulatory changes	Modified	Near term
Review and simplify the various elements of project review established by Article 19 of the Zoning Ordinance to provide a clearer set of procedures.	Zoning changes	Modified	Near term

6 Leverage private development to create and maintain high-quality public open spaces and to provide dynamic programming.

Private development, especially large-scale private development, plays an important role in expanding the city’s open space network. In order to make the most of these redevelopments, new public open spaces should be encouraged on private property in locations where they are most needed or will provide important connections. Furthermore, partnerships with private property owners to provide open space programming can encourage more use of new and existing open spaces.



A farmers market in the privately owned public space at the the Kendall/MIT MBTA station.

Action	Action Type	Status	Completion Timeframe
Incentivize flexible publicly accessible indoor space in private and institutional developments, including community rooms and other community facilities.	Other regulatory changes	New	Ongoing
Establish citywide guidelines for programming, design, signage, and maintenance and operations of publicly accessible private open space.	Other regulatory changes	New	Near term
Establish guidelines to promote the addition of public pathways on large development sites where they would create desired neighborhood pedestrian and bicycle connections and a continuous tree canopy.	Other regulatory changes	Expanded	Near term
Implement recommendations developed in the Urban Forest Master Plan to increase tree canopy on private property through guidelines and development review.	Zoning changes	Modified	Near term

Action	Action Type	Status	Completion Timeframe
Allow developers to contribute to a fund for open space in areas where a need for such space is identified but it cannot be reasonably provided on-site.	Other regulatory changes	New	Medium term
Encourage family-friendly design elements (such as playgrounds) in residential and commercial development projects and public realm improvements through development review and design guidelines.	Other regulatory changes	Expanded	Ongoing
Partner with the private sector and community groups to provide, sponsor, and contribute funds or in-kind assistance to the maintenance and programming of the public realm including plazas, open spaces, sidewalks, and recreational facilities.	Community interface and outreach	Expanded	Near term
Conduct a citywide assessment to determine where new public or publicly accessible open space should be expected as part of redevelopment projects, when the amount of land area can accommodate such spaces.	Study or plan	Modified	Near term
Facilitate community use of private recreational and open space facilities where the recreational activity provided by the private facility is not well served in available public facilities.	Community interface and outreach	Existing	Ongoing

“I envision a vital, diverse city that values its open spaces as key places for people to interact and live life happily.”

—Central Square resident

7 Expand the public open space network through new open spaces, new programming, and improved local and regional connections.

Creating a robust network of open spaces is a critical way to advance many of Envision Cambridge’s goals. Cambridge should build upon its existing network by providing

new spaces, redesigning existing spaces, improving walkable and bikable open space connections, and focusing on generating increased activity in these open spaces.

Action	Action Type	Status	Completion Timeframe
Design and implement clear wayfinding, using signage and other means, for biking and walking routes to the City’s open spaces and other key destinations.	Capital investments	New	Ongoing
Build open space, bicycle, and pedestrian connections to integrate the “Alewife Square” into the fabric of the City (as recommended in the Alewife Planning Study).	Capital investments	New	Long term



Waverly Path in Cambridgeport.

“We must protect the environment, create new parks and green spaces, and plant more trees in all areas of the city, especially in East Cambridge.”

—Alewife resident via online survey

Action	Action Type	Status	Completion Timeframe
Establish public realm design guidelines for street infrastructure, landscaping, trees, seating, and public art, to result in a consistent, though varied, family of materials and street furnishings that can provide a greater sense of continuity between open spaces.	Other regulatory changes	New	Near term
Allocate funds to convert paved traffic islands into green spaces, or reconfigure roadways to eliminate them.	Capital investments	New	Medium term
Prioritize the planning and implementation of routes providing physical and visual connections to citywide open spaces and regional paths and trails, including the Charles River, Fresh Pond, Danehy Park, Alewife Reservation, and the regional greenway system.	Capital investments	New	Long term
Work with state agencies and other parties to encourage greater access to and more active use of the Charles River and other state-owned parks and recreational areas, including tables and seating areas, canoe/kayak launches, boat rentals, public swimming, and restaurants.	Regional partnerships	Expanded	Long term
Identify opportunities for increasing the amount of open space in or near remaining priority areas identified in the Green Ribbon report (2000) and other planning studies.	Study or plan	Existing	Ongoing

8 Improve the public open space network by preserving, maintaining, and enhancing existing open spaces to serve a diverse population.

Cambridge currently has many great public open spaces, but these spaces can be improved through better accommodations for different populations and by maintaining Cambridge’s variety of open space types to

meet diverse needs. Cambridge should ensure there are easily-accessible open spaces that create active and passive recreational opportunities for people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds.

Action	Action Type	Status	Completion Timeframe
Encourage open space and recreational facilities that serve a wide range of uses that reflect the needs and interests of Cambridge’s diverse population, through expansion of the existing inventory, location of multiple uses of existing facilities, and creative programming.	Programs and operations	Expanded	Ongoing
Incorporate the principles of Universal Design in open space projects.	Capital investments	Expanded	Ongoing
Design playful public spaces that are fun, physically challenging, creatively stimulating, and socially engaging, following the recommendations and guidelines of the Healthy Parks and Playgrounds and Play in the Public Realm reports, and balancing safety considerations with developmentally-appropriate levels of challenge and risk-taking.	Capital investments	Existing	Ongoing
Maintain and protect reservations and other natural resource areas, carefully balancing public access and use with preservation and conservation.	Programs and operations	Existing	Ongoing
Preserve small open spaces that provide passive or visual benefits to the public, even where they do not allow for intensive or active recreational use.	Programs and operations	Existing	Ongoing
Prioritize the repair, maintenance, and timely upgrade of existing open space and recreational facilities.	Capital investments	Existing	Ongoing

Kendall Square Parks



Cambridge has long maintained an integrated, citywide network of public and private open spaces that enhance our community. Construction will soon begin on additions to this network: three new parks in East Cambridge: Rogers Street Park, Binney Street Park, and Triangle Park.

Over the past decades, the Kendall Square area in eastern Cambridge has transformed from an industrial area into a world-renowned center of biotech, high tech research, and innovation

companies. The area has also seen increased housing development, with over 1,200 housing units built during the past two decades. As the onetime office district becomes a lively neighborhood, the new parks—products of extensive planning and work with community members—will work together to support both longtime and new residents alike. The three new parks will provide a range of opportunities for people to engage, relax, play, and include features like dog runs, open fields, and play areas.

9 For Cambridge's institutions, including university and hospital campuses, support growth within existing campus boundaries and adjacent evolving mixed-use areas, and discourage intrusion into residential neighborhoods.

The major institutions, including Lesley University, Harvard University, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, other educational institutions, and hospitals, should be limited to those areas that historically

have been occupied by such uses and to abutting areas that are reasonably suited to institutional expansion, as indicated by any institutional overlay district formally adopted by the City.

Action	Action Type	Status	Completion Timeframe
Permit reasonable densities for large institutions within their core campuses to forestall unnecessary expansion into both commercial districts and low-density residential neighborhoods.	Zoning changes	Existing	Ongoing
Continue to engage with major institutions on future development plans through the Town-Gown reporting process.	Other regulatory changes	Existing	Ongoing



The MIT campus and Kendall Square.

Indicators and Targets

Street-activating Features on Massachusetts Avenue and Cambridge Street, and in Major Squares

The design and uses of streets and the buildings along them greatly impacts the activity along the street, which in turn impacts the sense of community, the viability of retail, and the sense of safety. Design features like regular building entrances and transparent facades activate sidewalks along an entire block. This set of indicators measures small design features that come together to enhance street life.



Street-activating features on Massachusetts Avenue in Central Square.

Indicator	Baseline	2030 Target
Percent of blocks with at least three building entrances per 200 feet	<i>The City does not have a baseline measurement for this indicator at this time, but will collect this information moving forward.</i>	<i>This target will be set after initial data collection.</i>
Percent of total building frontage that is restaurant, retail, or other active space	<i>The City does not have a baseline measurement for this indicator at this time, but will collect this information moving forward.</i>	<i>Targets for major squares, active pedestrian segments, and mixed residential segments will be set after initial data collection.</i>
Percent of building frontage that is transparent (no posters or curtains, and no tinted glass or other window treatments within 10 feet of the ground)	<i>The City does not have a baseline measurement for this indicator at this time, but will collect this information moving forward.</i>	<i>Targets for major squares, active pedestrian segments, and mixed residential segments will be set after initial data collection.</i>

Transit-Oriented Development

New development density is best suited for places well-served by urban amenities such as transit. This indicator tracks whether development in Cambridge is distributed in areas with a high concentration of urban amenities, using transit as a proxy.

Indicator	2015 Baseline	2030 Target
Percent of new housing units within a half-mile walk from an MBTA subway station	72.7%	75%
Percent of new gross floor area within a half-mile walk from an MBTA subway station	80.8%	85%

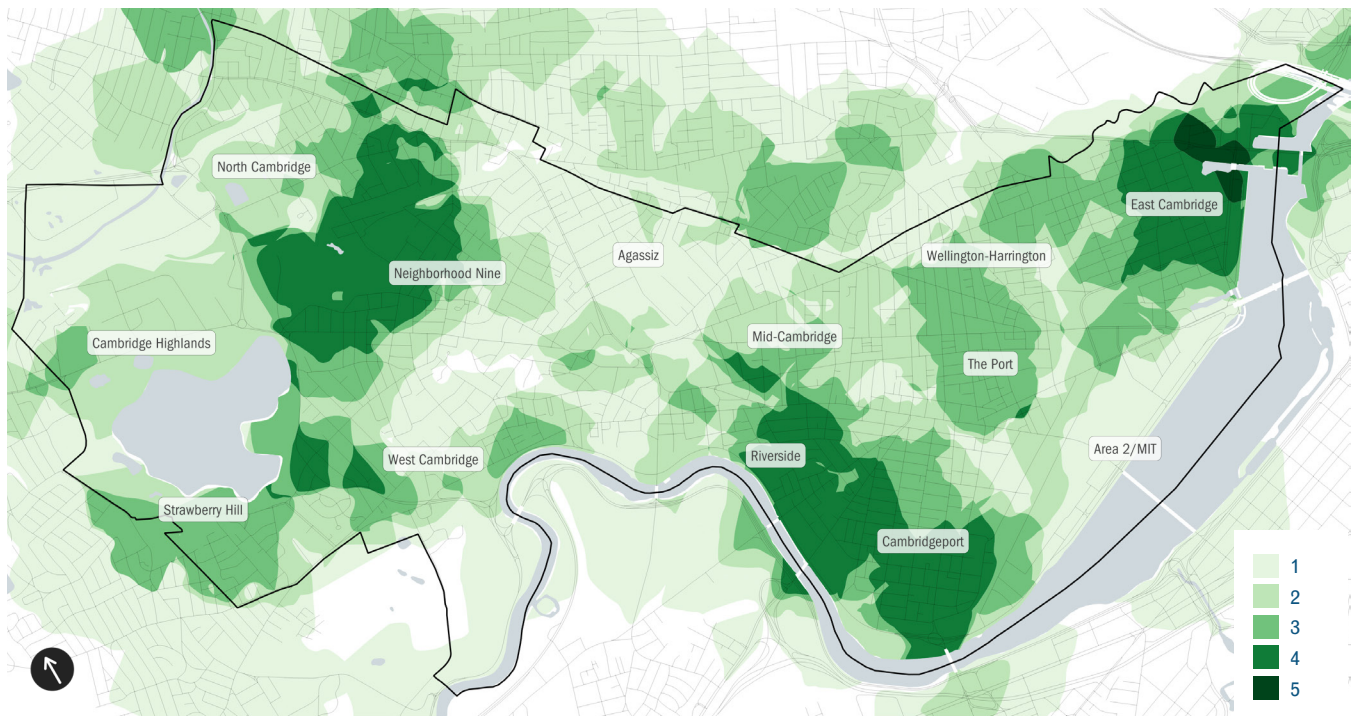
Source: City of Cambridge Community Development Department and City of Cambridge GIS, 2013–2015



Dense development near the Kendall Square MBTA station.

Proximity to a Variety of Park Uses

Cambridge has many high quality open spaces, serving different needs for people at different times. Through this indicator, Cambridge will track whether the community has access to several kinds of park uses, increasing the likelihood that they can find a nearby open space that serves their needs.



Number of Different Kinds of Park Uses Within Walking Distance

Source: City of Cambridge GIS

Indicator

Percent of housing units that are within the given distance to three or more different parks, including parks in adjacent municipalities:

- Quarter-mile walking distance for playgrounds and passive open space
- Half-mile walking distance for active recreation, trails and nature, and specialty spaces such as off-leash dog areas or exercise equipment

2018 Baseline

85.2%

Source: City of Cambridge GIS

2030 Target

87.0%

Tree Canopy over Sidewalks and Streets

The tree canopy covering our streets and sidewalks has a significant impact on the comfort of pedestrians, as well as the public health, sustainability, resilience, visual appeal, and livability of the city as a whole. This indicator will track street trees' contribution to creating a more healthy, resilient, and pleasant environment.



Street trees shading the sidewalk in Inman Square.

Indicator

Percent of tree canopy over sidewalk and streets

Baseline

The City does not have a baseline measurement for these indicator at this time. Data is being collected by the Urban Forest Master Plan.

2030 Target

Targets to be established by the Urban Forest Master Plan in 2019

Design quality

Most people have an intuitive understanding of what makes the design of a city great, whether or not they have formal design training. Of course, reasonable people can disagree on designs they like. Nonetheless, this indicator tracks Cambridge's progress in building a city that people find aesthetically pleasing overall.

Indicator

Percent of survey respondents who rate Cambridge's overall appearance as good or excellent

2018 Baseline

79% online

87% by phone

2030 Target

90% online

90% by phone

Source: City Manager's Biannual Survey



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