
NEIGHBORHOOD NINE STUDY



A JOINT REPORT OF THE

NEIGHBORHOOD NINE STUDY COMMITTEE AND THE

CAMBRIDGE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

NEIGHBORHOOD NINE STUDY

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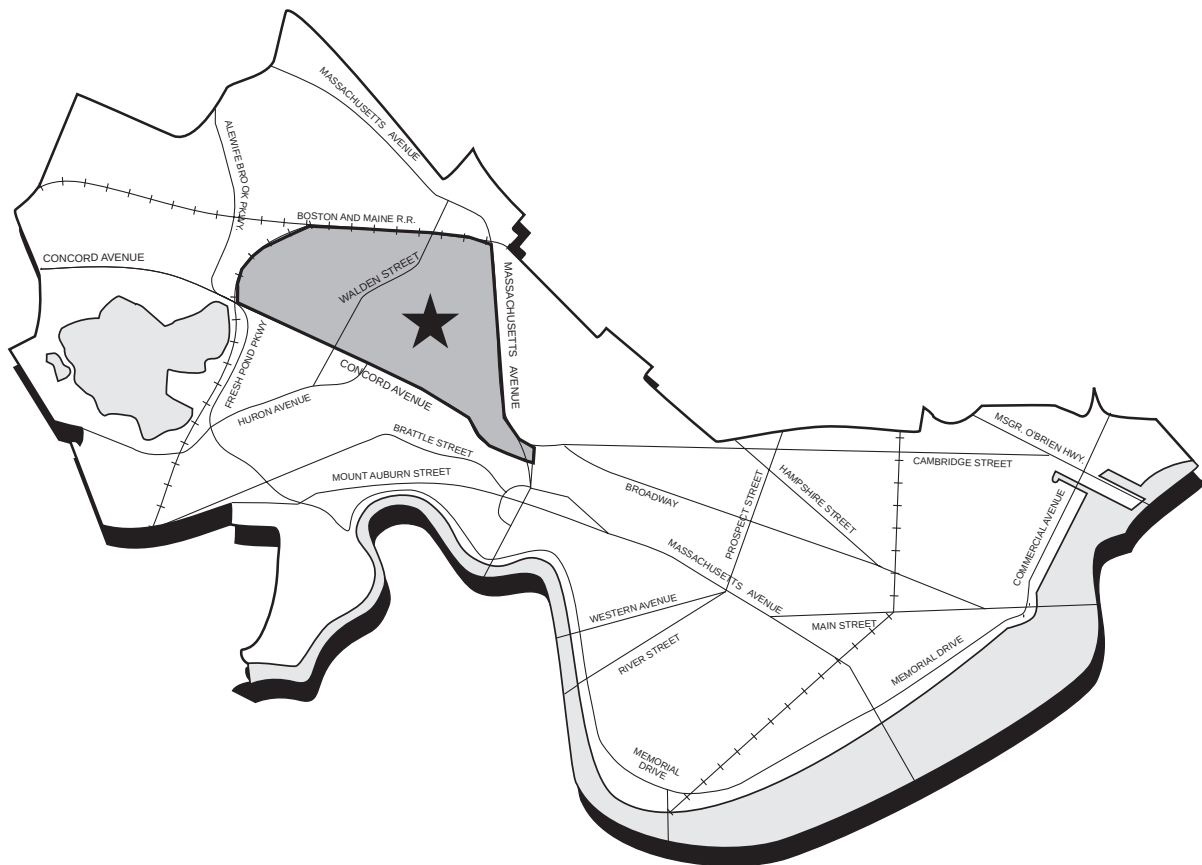
The Neighborhood Nine Study Committee and the Community Development Department would like to thank the Cambridge School Department for allowing us to hold our meetings at the Peabody School and also thank Mary Ellen Breen of the Peabody Community School for her assistance.

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I N T R O D U C T I O N

City of Cambridge
Neighborhood Nine Location



Introduction

The Neighborhood Study Process

During the 1980s the City of Cambridge, along with the surrounding region, witnessed a wave of commercial growth and economic development. This growth expanded the City's tax base and created new jobs and opportunities for its residents. While many residents welcomed this prosperity, it also brought about an increasing awareness of issues which are of concern to neighborhood residents: increased building density, traffic congestion and parking problems, the rising cost of housing, inadequate open space, and the threat to neighborhood character and quality of life.

Since 1988, the Community Development Department (CDD) through its neighborhood planning program has conducted comprehensive studies in seven of the City's neighborhoods. The object of the neighborhood studies is to identify major planning problems and concerns through a joint CDD and community study committee and formulate recommendations for their solutions. The studies address issues such as traffic and parking, housing affordability and home ownership, neighborhood commercial areas and employment, park maintenance and rezoning of areas now inappropriately zoned. As part of each neighborhood study, CDD collects data on demographic changes since 1980, as well as changes in housing markets, land use, and development potential in each neighborhood.

For each study, the City Manager appoints a committee of neighborhood residents, small

business owners, and civic leaders, along with staff from the CDD, to review the data, identify problems that exist in the neighborhood, and make recommendations as to how to resolve these problems. The recommendations are presented to the City Council, and, where appropriate, are incorporated into the work programs of City departments for implementation over the next several years.

The Neighborhood Nine Study

In the fall of 1993, CDD staff placed advertisements in the local papers seeking Neighborhood Nine residents to join the upcoming study committee. City Manager Robert Healy named 12 applicants to the committee. The newly named members came from all of the different parts of the neighborhood with the aim of representing the demographic diversity of Neighborhood Nine. Some of the members were lifelong residents, while others had lived there less than ten years.

The Neighborhood Nine Study Committee met weekly for seven months from November 1993 until May 1994. The Study Committee reviewed, discussed, and debated issues of housing, parks, public safety, economic development, land use, zoning and urban design. They listened to a range of speakers from representatives of educational institutions to city staff responsible for traffic and zoning policies, and took walking tours to see each part of the neighborhood. Through the discussions, they identified problems facing the neighborhood and

worked together to develop recommendations for each topic.

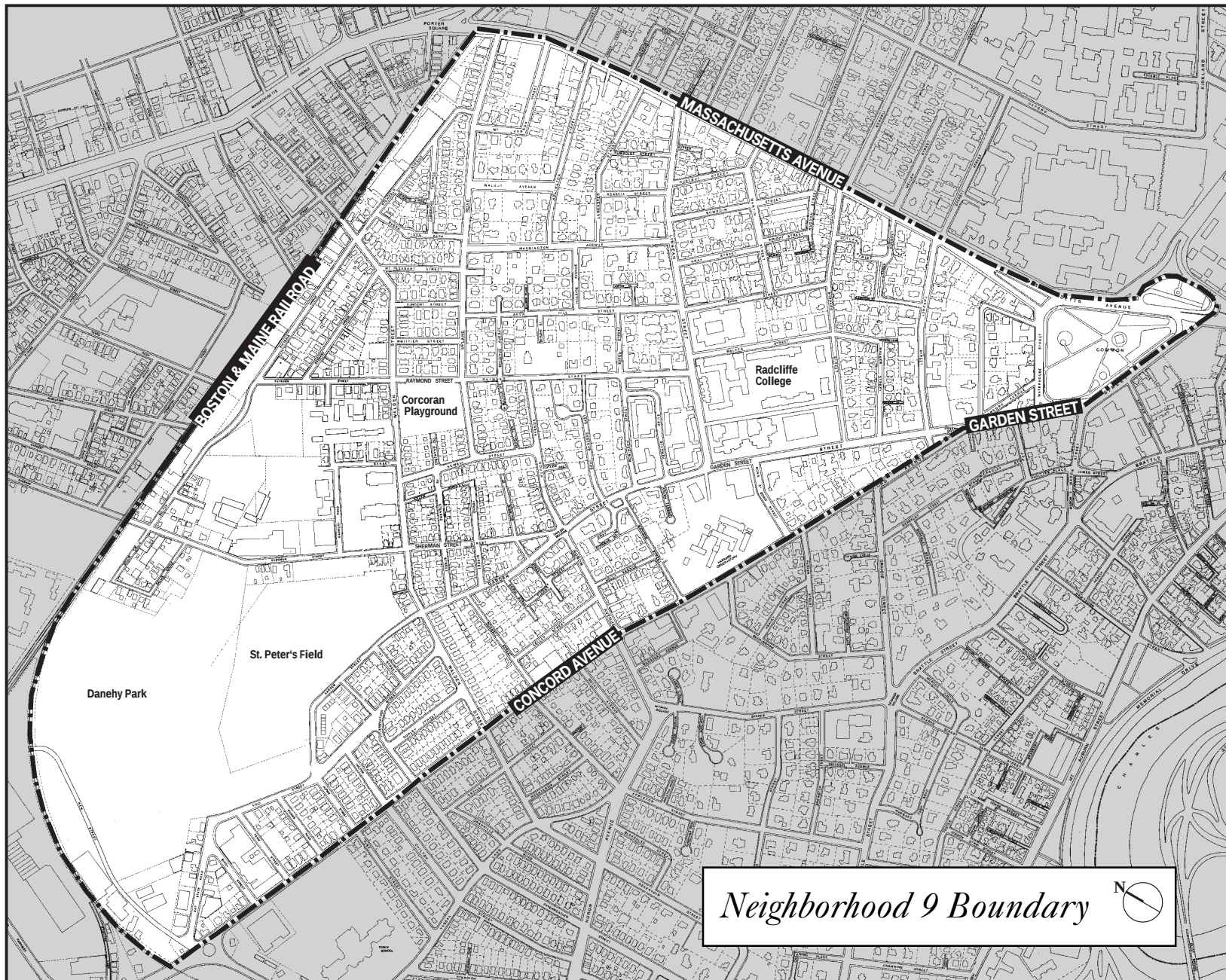
At the end of the process, the Study Committee offered over 60 recommendations ranging from opening up university facilities for neighborhood use, to creation of an “adopt-a-park” program, to rerouting certain streets to prevent traffic from cutting through the neighborhood. The Study Committee offers this study and its recommendations to the Neighborhood Nine community as a means to create a long-term planning guide for the evaluation of the neighborhood and to secure its well-being in the years to come.

The City of Cambridge Growth Policy

The Neighborhood Study process is seen as an extension of the City’s Growth Policy document, “Towards a Sustainable Cambridge,” which outlines the City’s planning assumptions and policies in the areas of land use, housing, transpor-

tation, economic development, open space and urban design. The document was drafted by CDD staff in 1992-3 after a series of workshops with citizen, business and institutional representatives. It recognizes that the City’s diversity of land uses, densities and population groups should be retained and strengthened. The document also calls for careful development of the City’s evolving industrial districts.

While the growth policy document is comprehensive, it does not prescribe land uses or designs for specific sites. Each of the City’s 13 neighborhoods has distinct needs and resources which can be identified and addressed through neighborhood studies and the City’s planning policies. The Growth Policy and neighborhood studies complement each other by informing the community of important issues, recommending a plan of action to address the concerns, and utilizing current policies to implement change.



M E T H O D O L O G Y

Methodology

The Study Committee produced its recommendations through an extended process of issue identification, data collection and analysis, and further review and discussion. CDD staff supported this process by gathering and presenting data from a number of sources, chief among them the U.S. Census, a random telephone survey of Neighborhood Nine residents, and the Cambridge Assessing Department.

The U.S. Census: 1980 and 1990

The Census is a survey of every household taken every ten years by the U.S. Commerce Department Census Bureau as mandated by federal law. It collects demographic information on age distribution within the population, household composition, racial makeup, income, length of residency, ancestry and other categories. In theory, the Census is a survey of every household and provides us with a complete profile of the City and its residents. Census data is available from the CDD.

1990 Random Telephone Survey of Neighborhood Nine Residents

In 1993, the City contracted with the consulting firm, Atlantic Marketing Research Co., Inc., to conduct a random telephone survey of 373 households in Neighborhood Nine to determine the demographic character of the neighborhood as well as residents' perceptions and attitudes on issues of community concern. Atlantic divided Neighborhood Nine into two sections — north of Upland Road and south of Upland Road — for

analytical purposes, because of distinct demographic and living patterns in those areas. The Neighborhood Nine survey is one of a series of telephone surveys conducted by the CDD in several neighborhoods in conjunction with the neighborhood study process.

The survey instrument is composed of 66 questions designed by the CDD with assistance from the consultant. It is a combination of open-ended questions (those to which the respondent can give any response desired) and objective questions with a specified range of answers. The instrument includes four broad categories of questions: general demographics, housing, employment, and attitudinal.

The survey was done, in part, to elicit demographic information similar to what is provided through the Census but was not yet available, was in need of updating, or was not part of the federal questionnaire. Typically, it takes the Census Bureau two to three years to process neighborhood level data and make it available to municipalities. The intention of the telephone survey was to provide Study Committee members with as current a profile of the neighborhood as possible to inform their discussions. In addition, because of the structure of the survey data, CDD staff were able to use cross tabulations to develop more refined conclusions than those provided by the Census. For example, the Study Committee could analyze the neighborhood's population in terms of race, income, housing, and more.

The Census and the telephone survey are not directly comparable, as the Census is a house-by-

house survey, and the telephone survey is a sample of households. While one cannot compare numbers directly, general trends can be determined and general conclusions can be made.

Another very important reason for conducting the telephone survey was to gather attitudinal information from residents which is unavailable elsewhere. The survey asked residents questions about their views on development and its positive or negative effects; the need for more housing, especially affordable housing, and whether that should be rental or owner housing; whether, how often and for what reasons residents use neighboring commercial squares or districts; attitudes about the condition and availability of parks and open space; and other questions on other topics of concern in the neighborhood. The Study Committee could also use cross tabulations of attitudinal data with demographic data to get a more refined picture of neighborhood views, such as the attitudes of the neighborhood's elderly residents towards the condition and availability of open space.

Census information and the telephone survey results are available to the public from the CDD.

Cambridge Assessor's Data

The Study Committee used data from the Assessor's Office to analyze the nature and quality of the neighborhood's housing stock, to understand the market for renting or buying a house in

Neighborhood Nine, and to examine the remaining build-out potential in the neighborhood. Housing data included the number of buildings in each property class (one, two, three-family, etc.), the number of dwelling units, the number of housing sales in each property class, and sales prices. This data forms the basis for analyzing housing availability and affordability in the neighborhood. Property data, such as building and lot size, were gathered for all commercially zoned areas and higher density residential zoning districts. This information was used in calculating the amount of additional building allowed in the neighborhood under current zoning. All data are current through mid-1993.

The Cambridge Zoning Ordinance

The Zoning Ordinance, in conjunction with the Assessor's data, was used to determine the remaining build-out potential in Neighborhood Nine. The Zoning Ordinance is the part of the municipal code that governs the use of land and buildings in the City. For each zoning district, the ordinance lays out three types of general regulations: 1) use: what activities or mix of activities may or may not take place; 2) dimensional requirements: what floor-area-ratio, density, height or set back restrictions apply to any one building in any given zoning district; and 3) parking requirements: how many spaces, if any, must be provided for a building.

N E I G H B O R H O O D
O V E R V I E W

Neighborhood Overview

History

Neighborhood Nine comprises a large area of the original Cambridge community, founded in 1631 as “Newtowne” and centered on what is now Harvard Square. The settlement was chosen as capital of the Massachusetts Bay Colony because of its rich farm land, its comparative safety from assault at sea, and for its good access to the colony’s agricultural plantations. This access also made Newtowne, later Old Cambridge, a village center for surrounding agricultural areas in nearby communities, such as Brighton, Arlington, Lexington and Newton.

During the early colonial era, the Cambridge Common extended into much of present day Neighborhood Nine. The Common was a large tract of land in community hands that was open to common uses, such as grazing, but also to private subdivision for farms. It was bounded on one side by the Great Road, or present-day Massachusetts Avenue, still a major boundary defining the neighborhood. As demand for farm land and house lots expanded, the village partitioned what is now Avon Hill into 24 small farms in the area defined by Garden, Linnaean and Raymond Streets. Settlement extended as far as the edges of the Great Swamp, or Alewife.

Though agriculture would continue to be the primary pursuit of most residents for centuries, the establishment of Harvard College in 1636 changed the neighborhood’s character — and the city as a whole — for good. Harvard was then as now an educator, an employer and a magnet for new residents. In the colonial era, the college attracted

wealthy settlers such as shipping merchants, plantation owners and others. Residents of more modest means also expanded the population, including Irish immigrants who came to work the clay pits and brick yards in the nineteenth century. New settlement and industry were also facilitated by the construction of bridges to Boston and railroad links to the west. The neighborhood’s northwest section developed rapidly and Porter Square became a major regional crossroads. Residential development spread along Massachusetts Avenue. By the early decades of the twentieth century, Neighborhood Nine was largely built up, barring open spaces around Fresh Pond and the old clay pits.

While the overall layout of the neighborhood has changed little in this century, important developments have continued to shape its character and composition. The former clay pits were capped and converted into the city’s dump. This fifty acre parcel would eventually be transformed into Danahy Park. Industrial parcels along the B&M railroad tracks are now vacant, and in some cases have given way to residential uses. Mixed income residential developments, such as Walden Square and the Cambridge Housing Authority’s (CHA) Lincoln Way apartments, were constructed, increasing the social diversity of the neighborhood. Expansion on the periphery of the neighborhood also changed the character of Neighborhood Nine. For instance, Harvard and Lesley College have expanded their student population and associated facilities, while retail developments such as the Porter Square Shopping Center have affected the commercial mix and the traffic patterns in the neighborhood.

NEIGHBORHOOD NINE TODAY:

A Demographic Profile

POPULATION

Neighborhood Nine is the city's most populous neighborhood. The 1990 Census counted 11,126 residents, an increase of nearly 500 people. While this growth is the largest of any Cambridge neighborhood over the decade, it represents a small percentage increase for the neighborhood, only about four percent over the count for 1980.

AGE

Trends and patterns in age distribution of the neighborhood are very similar to those found in the city as a whole. The population is aging, but there has been a small increase in infants and toddlers occurring as well. The population bulges in the "middle" or in the age group 35-44. Nearly one in five Neighborhood Nine resident falls into this group, compared to one in six citywide, and in both cases it is the fastest growing age group. More residents are entering their child bearing years: infants and toddlers (aged 0-4) increased by 41%. An aging population is also indicated by sharp increases in the population aged 45-64. Consistent with citywide trends, Neighborhood Nine has fewer school age children than in previous decades, while the level of seniors (65 and up) has remained stable.

HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION

One in eight neighborhood residents are dormitory residents of Harvard University. In U.S. Census terms, they live in "group quarters," while the rest of the population live in households. In 1990, 11% of Neighborhood Nine's total population lived in group quarters.

In 1990, the household composition of Neighborhood Nine mirrored the city as a whole, with more people living as "non-family households" than as families (61% vs. 39%). (*"Families" are households of two or more persons related by marriage, birth or adoption; "non-family" households are singles living alone or unrelated adults living together as roommates.*)

Most of the non-family households in the neighborhood consist of single people living alone (82%). Fully one half of all neighborhood households fit this description. Neighborhood Nine has a greater share of singles, and a smaller share of families, than does the city as a whole. Over the decade 1980-1990, the numbers of single parent households declined while couples with children increased. Households with children (both two parent and single parent) represent a greater share of the households north of Upland Road than in homes to the south.

Percent of Households with Families

	1980	1990
Neighborhood Nine	39.06%	38.53%
Cambridge	44.87%	44.97%

Source: 1980, 1990 U.S. Census

LENGTH OF RESIDENCE

Neighborhood Nine residents are highly mobile, like their citywide neighbors. Nearly half, or 48%, lived in different houses in 1985 and 1990, identical to citywide proportions. The neighborhood, however, shows signs of increasing residential stability. Forty-six percent of the population aged five or older lived in the same house five years previously, up from 41% in 1980. This trend is more pronounced than citywide patterns.

RACE

Nearly one in four residents of Neighborhood Nine is either non-white or Hispanic, up from a 19% minority population in 1980. Over the decade, the Asian population doubled, while Hispanics increased by more than half, comparable to citywide trends. The Black population remained stable, comprising 15% of the area's population. There is greater racial diversity north of Upland Road than in the southern section of the neighborhood. About eight in ten residents south of Upland is White, compared to 56% of those north of Upland. In comparison, nearly 40% of residents north of Upland are Black, compared to just six percent of all those living to the south.

FOREIGN BORN

Increased cultural diversity is also reflected in a rising share of immigrants from abroad living in the neighborhood. In 1990, close to 2,000 persons, or about 17% of all residents, were foreign born, up from 13% in 1980. Twenty-eight percent of the population north of Upland Road is foreign born, compared to 16% of those living south of Upland.

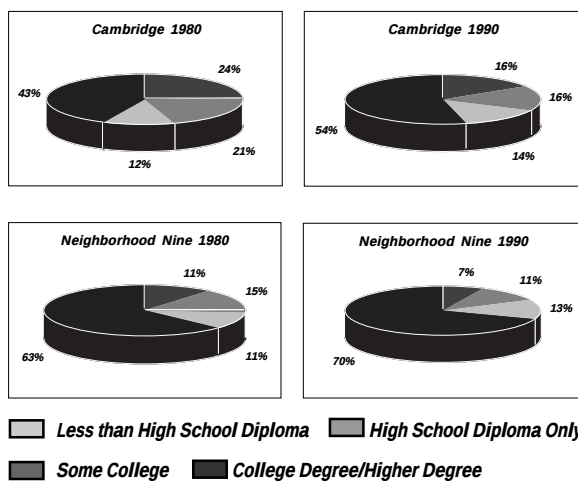
LANGUAGES SPOKEN

Diversity of languages has also increased in Neighborhood Nine. Seventeen percent of those aged five and up speak a language other than English at home, compared to 12% in 1980. The numbers speaking other languages increased by over half; only two other neighborhoods (North Cambridge and Area Four) had greater proportions of change in linguistic diversity. Among the languages heard in Neighborhood Nine these days are Creole, French, Portuguese and Chinese. A greater share of North of Upland residents speak languages other than English at home.

EDUCATION

Neighborhood Nine residents are, on the whole, extremely well educated. Seven in ten persons aged 25 or older have a college degree or higher education, up from 63% in 1980. Among residential neighborhoods, only Agassiz has higher levels of educational attainment. In comparison, 54% of all city residents aged 25 and up have college degrees or higher. Educational attainment is somewhat unevenly distributed between residents living North and South of Upland Road, however, with 59% of those on the north side attaining college degrees or more education, compared to 84% on the south side.

Neighborhood Nine Educational Levels



Source: 1980, 1990 U.S. Census

INCOME

Only two other city neighborhoods, Agassiz and Neighborhood Ten, had median family incomes higher than Neighborhood Nine. Neighborhood Nine continues to be one of the city's more affluent areas, with incomes well above the citywide norm. At \$52,721, neighborhood families' incomes were a third higher than family median incomes citywide, at \$39,990. The median income for all *households* (\$36,608) was close to the citywide median income of \$33,140 in 1980. This figure is more reflective of the area's income distribution, since it includes the 60% of resident households who are not living as families.

Neighborhood Nine incomes are unevenly distributed by geography and race. Residents living south of Upland Road are almost twice as likely to earn higher incomes (over 120% of area median income), while residents north of Upland are twice as likely to earn lower incomes (at or below 50% of median income.) White residents are twice as likely as Blacks to earn higher incomes.

Neighborhood Nine Median Family Income*

	1980	1990	% Change
Neighborhood Nine	\$41,249	\$52,721	28%
Cambridge	\$31,943	\$39,990	25%

Source: 1980, 1990 U.S. Census

**all figures are adjusted to 1990 dollars*

Neighborhood Nine Median Household Income*

	1980	1990	% Change
Neighborhood Nine	\$30,845	\$36,608	19%
Cambridge	\$25,438	\$33,140	30%

Source: 1980, 1990 U.S. Census

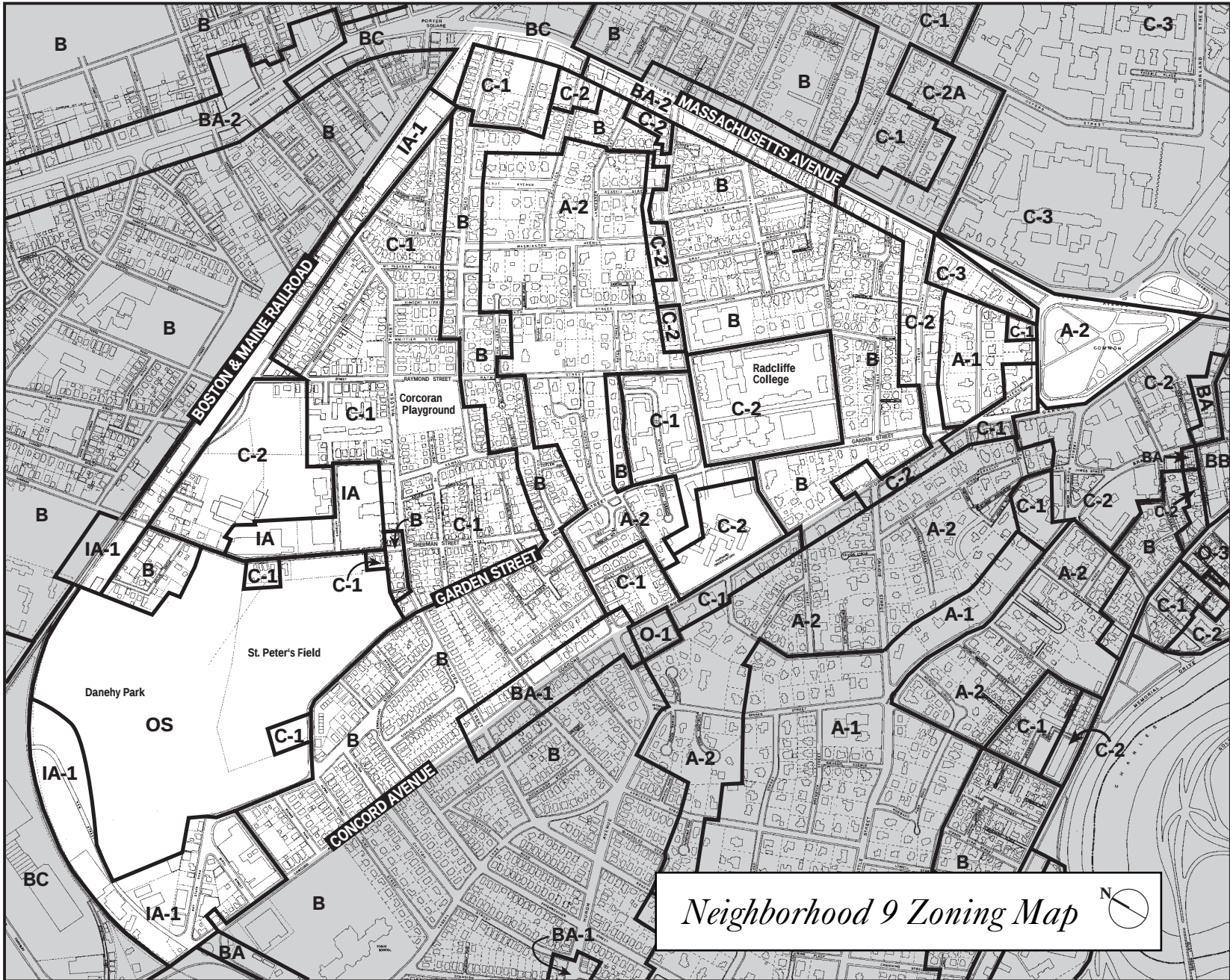
**all figures are adjusted to 1990 dollars*

Conclusion

Census data and telephone survey results reveal that Neighborhood Nine residents are comparatively well educated, well paid and increasingly rooted. While half of the area's households are occupied by singles living alone, more residents are starting families and settling for longer periods here. The neighborhood has become more racially and culturally diverse in recent years. There is also considerable internal diversity between sections of the neighborhood. The areas north and south of Avon Hill, marked roughly by Upland Road, differ along racial, educational and socioeconomic lines.

Neighborhood Nine is faced with a variety of challenges as the country moves into the 21st century. The following discussion outlines recommendations in Land Use and Zoning, Transportation, Housing, Economic Development and Employment, Open Space, and Public Safety to assist the community in meeting those challenges.

A N A L Y S I S A N D R E C O M M E N D A T I O N S



Land Use, Zoning and Urban Design

Background

The zoning ordinance is the city's chief tool for planning and regulating land use. While the zoning ordinance remains the city's clearest statement of land use policy, it cannot solve all development problems that arise. For example, goals for the quality of design are sometimes expressed in guidelines that supplement the ordinance. The quality of the city's environment rests on factors such as landscaping, scale, materials and building design, as well as the integration of open space and pedestrian connections with the built environment. While some portions of the city are regulated by specific design and development standards, such as Harvard Square and North Massachusetts Avenue, many critical areas are not covered by such guidelines.

Cambridge also utilizes its Building Code, Fire, Health and Safety Codes, Historic District designations and Flood Plain, Wetlands and Environmental regulations to govern development. These tools, along with zoning, are based on powers delegated to local government by the Commonwealth.

Individual zoning categories regulate land uses by specifying permissible (or prohibited) uses, required setbacks, height limitations, density (floor area ratio (FAR) or lot area per dwelling unit), required open space, parking requirements and signage regulations.

In the Zoning Ordinance, 14 of the city's 39 zoning categories are used to determine permissible land uses within the boundaries of Neighborhood Nine. The following zoning districts are

applicable to parts of Neighborhood Nine: Open Space, Residence A-1, Residence A-2, Residence B, Residence C-1, Residence C-3, Office-1, Business A-1, Business A-2, Business A, Business C, Industry A-1, Industry A (see attached map).

These categories reflect an evolution in zoning and land use policy, prompted by neighborhood and government concern with density, height and other issues. A number of the residential zones were downzoned in the 1960s and 70s from higher density classifications - such as Residence C1 and C2 to Residence B - strongly limiting the amount of new development that would be possible. As the Red Line subway was being extended north from Harvard Square in the 1970's and 1980's, new commercial zones were crafted for the Massachusetts Avenue corridor (Business BA-2) and Porter Square (Business BC) to curb allowable height and density.

The neighborhood is mainly residential in its interior, from Avon Hill and the streets closest to Harvard Square on the south, to the sections closest to Danahy Park on the north. The Residence C-3 zone near Harvard Square allows the greatest density, as well as unlimited height. Other residential zones in the neighborhood limit FAR to 0.5 or 0.75 and height to 35 feet.

Commercial and industrial zones occupy the periphery of the neighborhood, represented by the Massachusetts Avenue and Concord Avenue corridors, and the Industrial A-1 zone along the railroad tracks. The Business districts allow retail, office and residential uses; allowable height and density are lower than those in force in some of

the city's other business zones, such as Harvard or Central Squares. The Industry A-1 district allows light manufacturing and warehouse uses, such as self-storage facilities.

Open space zones, represented mainly by Danehy Park and St. Peter's Field, cover over 50 acres on the neighborhood's northern section. The other important land use in Neighborhood Nine is institutional, represented by Harvard/Radcliffe properties and by the Smithsonian Observatory on Concord Avenue.

Survey Results

In the 1993 Atlantic telephone survey, over two-thirds (68%) of the neighborhood's respondents thought that developments over the past five to ten years in Cambridge have had a positive impact. Fifteen percent view these developments as having a negative impact. This viewpoint is consistent across all demographic groups, including race, income, education and housing status (owners versus renters.) Among the impacts seen by residents were more jobs, increased tax base, greater choice among stores and improved appearance for the city. Negative impacts of development seen by some residents included overcrowding, increased commercialism, and too much traffic among other concerns. Residents with a negative view of development were somewhat more likely to be longer term residents (over five years) in the neighborhood.

Most residents (73%) felt that they were not adequately informed about development plans about the neighborhood. While this view was consistent for all demographic groups, it was especially high among racial minorities: 89% of Blacks and 94% of Asians did not feel they knew enough about development. Renters were considerably more likely to feel uninformed than homeowners, as were low to moderate income residents, and those without a college education. Respondents preferred to be informed about development via printed media such as newsletters, flyers and newspaper articles.

Committee Discussions

In general, Study Committee members were concerned with how to match the scale of businesses, land uses and economic development in the neighborhood. Members discussed the need to maintain larger businesses in proximity to major traffic arteries, while promoting smaller scale uses along the neighborhood's secondary arteries. Members wished to see more pedestrian-oriented small businesses. They acknowledged issues of clean air and appropriate scale along with concerns about jobs and employment.

Land use and design issues in specific sections of the neighborhood were discussed as well. Regarding Massachusetts Avenue, participants raised concerns about noise, traffic congestion and delivery vehicles. There was concern that the city's major artery had been mismanaged and poorly planned at times. This roadway embodies much of the "good and bad of urban living" for Study Committee members. Also discussed was the retail and commercial mix along Massachusetts Avenue, including the number of liquor licenses issued. Some suggested the need for "greening" the streetscape and making it a more pleasant meeting place as well as a location for commerce. Study Committee members also desired that the city take a more proactive stance towards commercial business and property owners in the area. They spoke of the need to nurture small businesses serving neighborhood needs.

Concerning the Residence C-3 zone closest to Harvard Square, members wished to ensure that nearby residential neighborhoods were protected and that transitions between zones of differing uses and densities were smooth. Study Committee members also saw potential for design improvements in Porter Square, primarily by making retail and other uses besides parking more visually predominant, and placing parking below ground. A similar concern was raised about Concord Avenue, with the suggestion that parking directly in front of buildings be discouraged.

Recommendations

Land Use Recommendations

I. Evaluate what kind of redevelopment, if any, should take place in light industrial areas if the opportunity arises.

II. Consider the following changes in the Industry A-1 zoning district:

- Amend the zoning ordinance to require a special permit, issued by the Planning Board, for all development proposals in the zoning district. As part of the permitting process, the Planning Board should encourage residential use on the parcel at Sherman Street and along Concord Avenue at the Fresh Pond rotary (because of the proximity of Danehy Park and Tobin School). Commercial and light industrial use may be accommodated closer to the rail spur and Fresh Pond Shopping Mall.

III. Modifying the residence C-3 zoning district as follows:

- Develop design guidelines for the Residence C-3 districts surrounding Harvard Square to protect adjacent lower density residential neighborhoods and to provide a smooth transition between zoning districts of different character.

IV. Consider design changes in Porter Square:

- The owners of the Porter Exchange should redevelop the parking lots to make them visually appealing and with uses that serve the neighborhood. Possibilities include placing either a park, housing, or retail above ground with parking underneath.

V. Improve Concord Avenue as follows:

- Discourage parking in front of the buildings or visible from the main street.

Urban Design Recommendations

While a number of these recommendations are also found in the Open Space, Economic Development or Transportation sections of this report, Study Committee members felt that they were also vital to the topic of Urban Design, which requires an integrated approach to development.

I. As part of the Open Space Plan, the city should encourage commercial and residential property owners along Massachusetts Avenue and Concord Avenue and the corner of Walden and Sherman Streets to convert available area (small sites) to open space

- Small sites could be landscaped and benches installed.
- Give special consideration to the corner of Sherman and Walden Streets(Masse's Corner) to give it definition.
- Consider ways to reward property owners for not over-developing space that is currently open and consider tax breaks for limited public access to private open space.

II. The city should consider placing benches and trash receptacles along streets throughout the neighborhood in locations that do not impede pedestrian flow.

III. Encourage the following design improvements

to Porter Square

- The owners and manager of the Star Market/ Porter Square Shopping Center should landscape the parking lot (with no loss of parking spaces) making it less of an eyesore and more appealing.
- The owners of the Porter Exchange should redevelop the parking lots to make them visually appealing and with uses that serve the neighborhood. Possibilities include placing either a park, housing or retail above ground with parking underneath.
- Encourage programs and projects that make the area around the Fresh Pond Shopping Center more pedestrian-friendly by encouraging appropriate types of sidewalks and other pedestrian paths; planting trees and other vegetation; and installing benches, traffic lights, and other pedestrian amenities.
- Include open space requirements in redevelopment of larger spaces, such as Cambridge Storage, as well as mixed-income housing and retail activity that serve the immediate residents.
- Public Works, Commonwealth Electric and Nynex should collaborate on development of a single pole that would incorporate telephone wires and directional signs.

IV. Take an integrated approach to planning Massachusetts Avenue, with research and improvements in the following areas:

- Study problems of traffic flow, noise and loading zones; types of businesses desired in this area; strategies to encourage them; urban design improvements such as benches, open spaces, bicycle path and pedestrian crossings; means of making the area more livable.
- Place emphasis on making Massachusetts Avenue a pedestrian oriented neighborhood shopping area; plant trees, grass, and perhaps flowers along the center strip from Everett Street to the railroad bridge at Porter Square; encourage businesses to have more plantings in front of their stores- possibly boxed plants;

install benches where practical; consider encouraging development of outdoor dining facilities by existing establishments (zoning code could give bonuses to encourage this development); (encourage the License commission to give occupancy increases if the increased seats are outdoors); keep Massachusetts Avenue and Porter Square liquor license caps in place.

- Suggested areas for benches/enhanced landscaping: in front of Porter Exchange, in front of the Congregational Church and in areas that are practical and that do not impede pedestrian flow.
- Explore the feasibility of landscaping the median strip, not necessarily with trees and grass, but possibly other durable, low maintenance planting material. Consider having the parking meters along Massachusetts Avenue go into effect at 9:00 or 9:30 am. Look at what impact parking in the area has on the smaller businesses.
- Consider eliminating 15 minutes meter zones.
- More enforcement of double parked cars to ease congestion and promote flow of traffic on Richdale and Walden.
- Study the record of tickets issued to determine if any particular times of the day have an especially high rate of illegal parking; if so, follow up with tougher enforcement.
- Study size of trucks allowed on neighborhood streets.
- Study loading zone areas along Massachusetts Avenue, and at Walden and Richdale Avenue: Look at hours of operation, restrictions, enforcement, etc.
- Explore opportunities for cluster parking to allow alternative uses on the street, such as dedicated bus lanes and bicycle lanes.
- Explore the possibility of dedicated bus lanes for Massachusetts Avenue.
- Do a survey of current and potential users and trip purposes along the Massachusetts Avenue corridor.

VI. The city, neighborhood residents and businesses must work together to foster a good mix of commercial retail uses along Massachusetts Avenue that serve local needs such as drug stores, convenience stores, shoe repairs, dry cleaning, hardware, small clothing stores, toy stores, family and affordably priced restaurants

- There is insufficient parking along Massachusetts Avenue and in Porter Square for these to be satisfactory regional or destination retail areas.
- Massachusetts Avenue should not become “restaurant row” or have a concentration of businesses in the same field such as the furniture concentration around Putnam Square, nor should it have a concentration of craft shops, boutiques, tee shirt shops and similar shops principally aimed at peoples’ discretionary rather than necessity spending; limited destination shopping is preferable.
- Conduct a survey of businesses to determine where patrons come from.
- Look at incentives such as real estate tax exemptions to assist local businesses.
- Resolve issues of commercial delivery and trash pick-up times so as to minimize rush hour traffic delays and disruption to neighbors.

VII. Consider having city public works crews remove snow on sidewalks along Massachusetts Avenue and along all the city's major corridors and squares.

Growth Policy Context

A number of policies in the city’s Growth Policy document, *Towards a Sustainable Cambridge*, are relevant to issues and areas of concern expressed by the Neighborhood Nine Study Committee. The need to accommodate light industrial uses, such as storage, is discussed in Policy 12. The general principle of maintaining the scale and character of the city’s existing residential and retail areas is addressed in Policies 1 and 2. Policies 4 and 62 call for providing adequate transitions between differing scales of development and differing uses. Changes within evolving industrial areas such as the Industry A-1 district are addressed in Policies 9 and 10, which call for selective residential reuse, where appropriate, and measures to limit the impacts of industrial districts on existing residential neighborhoods. Policies 34, 35, 38 and 39 recognize the value of these areas as a resource, and suggest the need for careful planning within flexible guidelines to utilize them while minimizing disruption to neighborhoods.

Policy 66 recommends that new open space be accommodated in private developments where feasible. Landscaping and other suggested improvements to streetscape and retail environments such as Massachusetts Avenue, Concord Avenue and Porter Square are the subject of Policy 60, which recommends that urban design standards be crafted for all areas subject to future development or redevelopment. Policy 47 calls for strengthening existing retail districts, while Policy 48 discusses recognition and encouragement of their unique assets.

Transportation

Background

As one of the City's largest areas both geographically and in terms of population size, Neighborhood Nine has significant transportation needs and problems. Twenty three percent of its households do not own an automobile. These residents must rely on walking, bicycling, transit services or rides from friends or family to reach their destinations.

Public transit serves the neighborhood at several nodes and corridors. The MBTA Red Line stations serve the neighborhood directly at Harvard Square and Porter Square, and less directly via Alewife and Davis Square. Several bus lines serve the main thoroughfares in or near the neighborhood, including Massachusetts Avenue (77, 96); Concord Avenue (72, 74, 78) and Rindge Avenue (83). The presence of the railroad tracks along the neighborhood's northern boundary has created barriers to transit access and serious safety problems for residents, particularly those in or near the Walden Square apartments.

The City's high density and car ownership heightens the problem of parking. Changing household and family patterns — more unrelated adults, more family members with cars — has resulted in more people searching for fewer parking spaces. The presence of popular commercial shopping corridors, such as Massachusetts Avenue, also brings residents and non-residents of the neighborhood into competition for scarce parking.

The City has taken a number of steps to improve transportation access while protecting the urban and natural environment. As part of state

efforts to meet Clean Air Act requirements in the late 1970s, the state imposed a commercial parking freeze on the downtown business district of the City of Boston. Concerned that commuters to Boston would use Cambridge as a "parking lot," the City opted into an extension of the parking freeze into Cambridge. This method has proven to be a hardship for the City to administer while still furthering economic development goals. Furthermore, the air quality benefits of such a strategy have proven to be marginal at best. In order to provide better air quality improvements and to address economic development concerns, the City instituted an aggressive commuter mobility program in the City during the early 1990s. These efforts were further promoted by passage of the Vehicle Trip Reduction Ordinance in June, 1992 and the establishment of the Cambridge Environmental Program to implement suggested trip reduction measures. In recognition of its close working relationships with the Community Development Department (CDD), the Environmental Program was reorganized and incorporated into the Environmental and Transportation Planning Division (E&TP) of CDD.

Commuter mobility staff work with local employers to reduce single occupancy commuter trips through support for ridesharing and transit use, establishment of shuttle services and initiation of bicycle and pedestrian incentives. Other activities in which E&TP staff are involved include improving bicycle and pedestrian facilities and public transportation service in Cambridge, as well as undertaking traffic calming measures to

discourage through traffic and encourage mode switches for short trips. A major component of the City's program involves creating bicycle lanes and guidelines for bicyclists and improving crosswalks and traffic signals for pedestrians. E&TP staff also coordinate the work of the City's Pedestrian Advisory Committee and the Cambridge Bicycle Committee.

Survey Results

About half of all telephone survey respondents viewed a lack of parking and traffic congestion as major concerns in the neighborhood. When asked about these issues on Massachusetts Avenue specifically, more residents considered them to be major concerns: 57% for traffic congestion, 54% for parking along Massachusetts Avenue. Longer term residents are more likely to view traffic congestion as a major concern.

Committee Discussions

Study Committee members discussed issues of access, traffic management, parking, and promotion and protection of non-vehicular travel modes, such as bicycling and walking. They also examined the need for better enforcement of existing regulations in these areas.

Transportation access to destinations such as grocery stores, jobs and City services was a considerable concern to Study Committee members. The lack of regular and accessible public transit in lower income sections of the neighborhood was noted. Improving such connections was supported as an important means to promote equality within the neighborhood. It is also a question of safety. Participants called on the School Department to examine the eligibility criteria for bus service, noting that children living in Walden Square and attending Fitzgerald School are not eligible for bus services, and walk to school over the railroad tracks.

The Study Committee also discussed the extension of shuttle or "paratransit" services to reach residents in the larger, mixed income housing developments such as Walden Square, Lincoln Way and Briston Arms. If established,

the routes should provide better connections to shopping centers offering affordable grocery stores, or to bus and rapid transit lines with direct access to affordable grocery stores. Specific routes discussed included:

- Porter Square and Alewife Station via Walden Street to Sherman Street to Rindge Avenue
- from Porter Square, up Upland road to Huron Avenue, right on Concord Avenue, past the Homestead to Alewife Station
- A circular route along Upland Road from Porter Square, over to Concord street and back along Walden Street to Massachusetts Avenue and Porter Square.

Study Committee members discussed approaching the owners of Briston Arms and Walden Square Apartments to contribute to the operation of a shuttle service. Participants also called for improved marketing (and expansion) of existing routes by SCM, the current provider of community shuttle services. Their services should be expanded to the elderly, disabled persons and linguistic minorities, both in the neighborhood and City-wide.

Management of traffic flow, to make residential streets more livable and commercial corridors vital, was discussed. A major concern was the use of residential streets as "cut-through" by drivers with destinations elsewhere. Study Committee members recommended that the City explore rerouting some streets to prevent cars from cutting through the neighborhood. They also explored the prospects for "calming" of traffic flow by changing some two way streets to one way, such as Hurlburt and Mt. Pleasant Streets and Buena Vista Park. Speed bumps and landscaped traffic circles were also suggested to slow down vehicles on residential streets.

In a similar vein, Study Committee members discussed road improvements on a number of unsafe intersections, whether through signs, lights or reconstruction. These included Massachusetts Avenue and Upland Road, Linnaean and Garden, and Sherman Street at Danahy Park/Walden Square Road.

Study Committee members also raised the issue of City vehicles, such as refuse or recycling trucks, slowing traffic flow during morning hours of pick-up. They suggested exploring pick-up after morning rush hour, or initiating a rule that if three or four cars are standing behind the truck, then the truck must move out of the way. The problem of delivery trucks blocking traffic was also discussed. Study Committee members recommended restrictions on truck delivery times to businesses and limits on the amount of time that trucks can idle.

Drivers who violate existing laws governing parking also raised member concerns. Double parked or illegally parked cars, particularly on Massachusetts Avenue, create serious safety and traffic flow problems, as do patrons of some businesses, such as Bruegger's Bagels, who park on the no-parking side of Upland Road. Participants stressed the need to ticket promptly all double-parked and illegally parked cars. An area needing particular enforcement is Garden Street, as well as areas where cars parked in the right-hand lane impede cars and buses turning right.

To reduce the incidence of non-residents occupying resident spaces illegally, Study Committee members suggested that the City ask the State Legislature to increase fines for vehicles in resident permit only areas. They argued that the fines for these tickets should be much higher than for tickets issued at meters; currently meter tickets are \$10 (\$20 for second ticketing,) yet resident parking tickets are \$15. Study Committee members suggested raising the resident parking fine to \$25 or \$30.

Study Committee members examined the obstacles faced by pedestrians and bicyclists in an

automotive environment, as well as possible strategies to balance the rights of cyclists, walkers and drivers. They noted a number of safety problems for walkers, particularly along the Massachusetts Avenue corridor, and pointed to pedestrians caught between the MBTA station and Lancaster Street. Study Committee members recommended that the City fix walking impediments, such as cracked sidewalks or missing or loose bricks, quickly. The City should also consider setting up a hot line similar to the pot hole hot line so residents can report problems easily. The problem of snow blocking pedestrian access was discussed, with suggestions for better enforcement of snow removal from sidewalks. Roadway enhancements to slow traffic on some streets, noted above, would also aid pedestrians. The need to rebuild a railroad underpass for pedestrians crossing near Walden Square Apartments was also discussed (see Urban Design).

Study Committee members discussed the need to protect cyclists from harm while ensuring that they observe traffic rules responsibly. They suggested that the City undertake a study to determine how other municipalities regulate bicycle usage. The need to enforce existing laws was noted. Bicyclists traveling the wrong way on one-way streets should be fined, as do those who fail to ride single file on City streets. At the same time, bicycle use should be encouraged through expansion of bike paths, better bike parking facilities and bicycle safety programs, as well as a bicycle registration program. Study Committee members pointed out hazardous areas, such as Porter Square, where roadway reconfigurations and changes in traffic patterns are needed to aid both bicyclists and walkers.

Traffic, Parking and Transportation Recommendations

I. Consider changing some existing two-way streets to one-way

- Possibilities for consideration include Hurlburt and Mt. Pleasant Streets and Buena Vista Park

II. Manage traffic flow to keep through traffic (no destination within the neighborhood) to main thoroughfares

III. Address the problem of non-residents parking illegally on residential streets

IV. Explore the possibility of changing hours of resident trash removal to after the morning rush hour

V. Consider instituting traffic calming techniques to slow traffic on neighborhood streets

VI. Support the establishment of shuttle/ paratransit services to areas of the neighborhood not now adequately served by existing public transportation, especially Lincoln Way, Walden Square, Walden Park Apartments and Briston Arms housing developments

VII. Increase awareness of and expand SCM Community Transportation Services

VIII. Improve pedestrian/bicycle safety and access through enforcement of existing regulation, expansion of programs to encourage walking and bicycling

IX. Improve, through signage, lights or reconstruction, at unsafe intersections:

- Garden Street beyond Walden to Field Street

- Walden and Richdale (install pedestrian crossing signal)
- Linnaean and Garden
- Sherman at Danchy Park/Walden Square Road
- Raymond and Richdale at Walden Square Road
- Garden and Concord at Arsenal Square
- Newell Street at Upland Road (install a Yield sign on Newell)
- Massachusetts Avenue and Upland Road
- Massachusetts Avenue southbound turning left onto Roseland Street

X. Pursue a comprehensive street enhancement program to help control the speed of traffic, discourage through traffic and enhance pedestrian flow by the use of landscaped traffic circles and speed humps

XI. Improve enforcement of existing parking and traffic laws which regulate double parking, illegal use of resident parking spaces, parking in no-parking zones, and moving violations

Growth Policy Context

Policies 20 through 22 address traffic flow and the need to restrict non-residential traffic to main thoroughfares, not neighborhood streets, as far as possible. Shuttles or paratransit services to supplement public transportation are addressed by Policy 19. Measures to encourage non-automotive forms of travel, and to minimize conflicts with cars, are the subject of Policy 23.

Housing

Background

Neighborhood Nine has a total of 5495 housing units densely distributed at 26 units per acre. One in four (27%) of the units are located in condominium buildings and 28% are located in privately owned multifamily buildings. Neighborhood Nine's four subsidized housing developments have 478 housing units, which constitute 9% of the total housing units in the neighborhood.

Neighborhood Nine has had a larger percentage of home owners than the City of Cambridge both in 1980 and 1990. The percentage of residents owning their own home in Neighborhood Nine rose substantially from 25% in 1980 to 34% in 1990 while the city's ownership rate rose from 23% in 1980 to 30% in 1990. The single family and condominium sales price in Neighborhood Nine has more than doubled between 1984 and 1992. The single family sales price rose from \$170,000 to \$356,000 and the condominium price increased from \$74,900 to \$168,000.

NON PROFIT HOUSING INITIATIVES

Cambridge Housing Authority (CHA)

The CHA owns and operates two developments in Neighborhood Nine: 60 units of family housing on Lincoln Way and a 24 unit development on Linnaean Street reserved for elderly residents.

City Housing Programs

City housing programs include home improvement and home ownership programs, multifamily rehabilitation programs, and support for affordable

housing development initiatives (*See Appendix for list of City housing programs*).

Federal Housing Programs

Neighborhood Nine has two housing developments (Briston Arms and Walden Square) which were originally developed in the 1970's under a federal housing program that provided owners of apartment buildings with low-interest, 40-year mortgages. In return, the owners agreed to keep rents affordable for low- and moderate-income residents. Unfortunately, provisions in these loans allowed owners to prepay the mortgages after 20 years and terminate the affordability restrictions.

In 1990, the federal government established a preservation program to protect the long-term affordability of these projects. Currently, the federal preservation program (also known as the expiring use program) is undergoing major modifications. The modifications will allow owners to prepay their mortgages and convert properties to market-rate housing. The changes may also affect the project-based Section 8 subsidy program.

Bristol Arms has participated in the Federal Preservation Program, and its affordability is ensured through 2018. In September 1994, the city played a key role in facilitating an agreement between the owner of Bristol Arms, tenants of the development, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and the Massachusetts Housing Finance Agency (MHFA). The owner has agreed to invest a substantial sum in physical improvements to the property. The 240-

unit Waden Square development faces risks to its long-term affordability. The owner may be able to prepay the federally-insured mortgage, but an affordable use restriction will remain in place for the original 40-year term. The City is monitoring the federal agreements related to affordability.

A third federally-assisted housing development, Walden Park Apartments, received federal mortgage insurance, and in return, HUD regulated the rents. While not specifically targeted for low- and moderate-income tenants, the rent regulation kept the rents low and affordable for lower income households. In 1995, HUD deregulated the property as allowed under the program regulations. The tenants contested the decision, which was upheld after a HUD review. In 1996, the City's Board of Zoning Appeal has determined that the owner is obligated to establish below-market rents as a condition for the original zoning variances granted to the project. The owner is challenging this decision.

Survey Results

The 1993 Atlantic Marketing Research, Inc. telephone survey revealed that the majority of low-income residents call for more rental opportunities, whereas a majority of moderate-income respondents say home ownership opportunities are needed more. One out of five high-income respondents felt that neither type of housing was needed.

Housing Opportunities Needed (by Income)

	<i>Low</i>	<i>Moderate</i>	<i>Middle</i>	<i>High</i>
More Rental Housing	60%	27%	47%	24%
More Home Ownership	23%	58%	14%	39%
Both Needed	16%	14%	37%	16%
None/Neither	1%	1%	3%	21%

*Source: Atlantic Marketing Research, Inc.
(telephone survey, 1993)*

The majority of respondents see both rental costs and housing prices as a major concern in the neighborhood. Fifty-two percent of the respondents listed displacement as a major concern. As

income increases, the proportion of residents who see this as a major concern in the neighborhood decreases.

Concerns About Displacement Due to High Housing Costs (by Income)

	<i>Low</i>	<i>Moderate</i>
Major Concern	72%	72%
	<i>Middle</i>	<i>High</i>
Minor Concern	40%	41%

*Source: Atlantic Marketing Research, Inc.
(telephone survey, 1993)*

Eighty-four percent of respondents do not think they can afford to buy a house in Neighborhood Nine. Fifty-eight percent of high income renters said they could not afford to buy a house in the neighborhood. Survey respondents listed housing prices, displacement due to high housing costs, and rental costs as the major housing concerns in the neighborhood.

Committee Discussions

The Study Committee discussed the various ways that affordable housing is made available in the city. There was a discussion about both the advantages of developing home ownership projects versus rental programs and the most cost effective way to provide residents with affordable housing.

The Study Committee differed on the best way to maintain an economically diverse resident population in the city. It was suggested that rental resources would be adversely affected if the City continues to expand home ownership programs. The Study Committee emphasized the need for the City to tap into whatever housing funds are available and to create a balance between affordable rental and home ownership opportunities. The Study Committee agreed that affordable housing programs should be geared towards resident families who need access to a variety of housing choices in order to continue living in the City.

Housing Recommendations

I. The City should continue limited-equity home ownership programs to promote home ownership for residents with low- and moderate incomes.

II. The City should identify properties within the neighborhood that may provide opportunities for limited equity development.

- lot near Bellis Circle
- storage site on Concord Avenue
- “bird house” on Walden Street

III. The City should identify distressed properties that may provide opportunities for rehabilitation and conversion into affordable housing.

IV. The City should support policies and programs that offer equitable solutions for expiring use housing and would not force residents to leave the City because of housing costs.

V. The City should consider giving floor area ratio (FAR) bonuses to owners of proposed mixed-use developments located in commercial districts which include a significant low-income housing component.

VI. The City should consider giving FAR bonuses to developers who build multiple-unit housing with deed restrictions requiring the housing to maintain affordable occupancy.

VII. Encourage the construction of low-income housing where possible on appropriate sites.

VIII. Continue to invest in home rehabilitation programs.

Growth Policy Context

Housing policy #29 encourages the city to concentrate its rehabilitation efforts on existing housing stock which will provide housing for low- and moderate-income resident families. Housing policy #31 encourages the promotion of affordable housing opportunities whenever feasibly possible.

Economic Development and Employment

Background

The Cambridge economy, once dedicated to the making of basic goods, such as steel, footwear and confections, now specializes in the delivery of knowledge based services, such as education, research and new product development. The shift can be seen by comparing the City's employment base in 1950 to 1990. Four decades ago, one in three jobs was in manufacturing industries; in 1990, it was less than one in ten. The Cambridge economy of 1950 primarily employed people who lived and worked in the same community. Today, only about one in five Cambridge jobs is held by a Cambridge resident; the labor market is truly a regional one.

These shifts accelerated in the 1980's. A 1991 survey of 91 employers found that the leading growth sectors locally were in new, knowledge based firms, led by business services such as research and consulting, and emerging technology innovators such as software, biotechnology and specialty materials. The survey also found that knowledge based industries have higher average requirements for employee education and training than their predecessors in traditional manufacturing. Many require a minimum of a year or more of college education for even entry level positions.

Education, the city's leading employer, has also provided facilities, staff and ideas to fuel hundreds of such firms. Over 25 start-up firms have been founded here using Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) licensed technology, primarily in biotechnology and medical science. MIT receives an average of 100 patents

per year. In 1993 alone, Harvard University licensed more than 50 technologies to industry.

A major challenge for the City is retaining these valuable employers beyond the start up stage, when they begin to look for locations that offer lower costs and more abundant land than an urban area such as Cambridge readily provides. Areas once dedicated to basic industries, such as Alewife, offer opportunities for the City to retain growing firms as they mature into the manufacturing stage, and create jobs for residents at a range of skill levels. The City's Emerging Technology Partnership Program combines assistance with finance, regulations, and site location to help make this vision a reality. The City also offers a variety of employment training and educational services to match the needs of new industries with the skills of the resident work force.

How do these trends match the situation of residents in Cambridge, and in Neighborhood Nine in particular? On average, neighborhood residents are employed in occupations that are growing or secure, and well paying, such as professional, technical and executive positions. City-wide, Cambridge residents are concentrated in professional occupations and industries, with education and related knowledge-based sectors predominating. Serious gaps between economic opportunities and resident preparation exist, however. Residents lacking a post-secondary education face limited opportunities, based on the employer survey noted above. A survey of local employment practitioners also revealed that many Cambridge youth, recent immigrants, older and

displaced workers and persons with limited English abilities faced special obstacles in the local economy. Obstacles to work force success included poor academic preparation, communication skills and low “job readiness,” or skills in job hunting, resume writing and interviewing. A lack of affordable day care and employer inexperience with diversity also hinders some applicants. Training professionals are attempting to meet these needs by moving towards a comprehensive approach that bundles job and skills training with child care, English as a Second Language, literacy training and support for trainees once on the job.

Survey and US Census Results

Data from the 1993 Atlantic Survey and the 1990 Census provide further insights on neighborhood economic status. While the neighborhood on the whole is well served by the economy, there are important gaps between racial groups and between the lower income area north of Upland Road, and its higher income counterpart to the south.

Education

Attainment of education beyond high school, as noted, is critical to success in the new economy. Seven in ten Neighborhood Nine residents (aged 25 or older) have a bachelor's degree or higher education; nearly 85% have at least some or more college education. Only seven percent of Neighborhood Nine adults have attained less than a high school degree.

While White, Asian and Hispanic residents of Neighborhood Nine are extremely well educated (at least three in four adults in each race have college degrees), Black residents fall behind. Less than 30% of the neighborhood's Black population aged 25 and up has attained a college degree, and nearly 20% have not completed high school. Residents living north of Upland Road are twice as likely to have lower education levels than those to the south.

Economic Comparison:

Neighborhood 9 and Cambridge 1990

Education (adults 25 years of age and up)

	Neighborhood 9	Cambridge
Less than 9th Grade	2.6%	7.1%
9-12th grade, no diploma	4.2%	8.6%
High School diploma or GED	10.5%	15.8%
Some college, no degree/Associates	13.1%	14.3%
Bachelor's degree or higher education	69.5%	54.2%

Source: 1990 U.S. Census

Education by Race: Neighborhood 9 (adults 25 years of age and up)

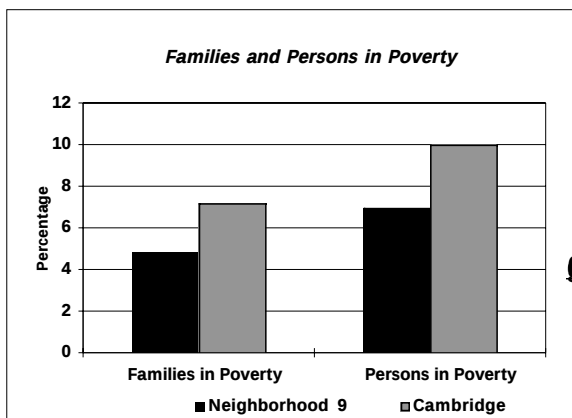
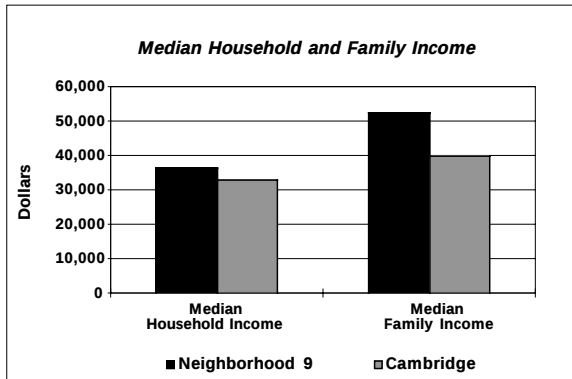
	All	White	Black	Asian	Hispanic
Less than High School	6.8%	5.0%	18.2%	10.1%	3.3%
High School diploma or GED	10.5%	8.4%	27.9%	2.0%	0.0%
Some college, no degree/Associates	13.1%	11.9%	25.7%	2.0%	18.3%
Bachelor's degree or higher education	69.5%	74.6%	28.1%	85.9%	78.4%

Source: 1990 U.S. Census

Income and Poverty

Median family income in Neighborhood Nine is about one third higher than family incomes city-wide. Only 5% of Neighborhood Nine families earn incomes below poverty, compared to 7% city-wide.

**Economic Comparisons:
Neighborhood 9 and Cambridge**



Source: 1990 U.S. Census

Unemployment Rates

Neighborhood Nine residents were unemployed at rates similar, though slightly higher, than persons throughout Cambridge: 5.8% versus 5.1%. Black residents of Neighborhood Nine fared worse than other races, with over 8% out of work, similar to the situation for Blacks city-wide, where 9% were jobless in 1990. Unemployment rates city-wide have dropped since 1990, the unemployment rate in June, 1996 was 3.1%.

**Economic Comparisons:
Neighborhood 9 and Cambridge**

	Neighborhood 9	Cambridge
All Races	5.8%	5.1%
White	4.6%	4.6%
Black	8.1%	8.8%
Hispanic	3%	7.4%

Source: 1990 U.S. Census

Occupation

Neighborhood Nine residents, as noted, are concentrated in the higher paying, faster growing fields that demand high levels of formal education. Forty two percent work in “professional” occupations such as teaching, software engineering or regional planning. Another 22% command executive or administrative roles; residents include the heads of high technology manufacturing or financial consulting firms. A little less than half of the city-wide work force are employed in either professional or executive positions. While nearly half (38%) of North of Upland workers are employed in professional specialties, 48% of those to the South are so employed. Few Neighborhood Nine residents (about one in twenty) work in lower paying service occupations, such as janitorial or dish washing work.

**Economic Comparisons:
Neighborhood 9 and Cambridge**

Occupation	Neighborhood 9	Cambridge
Executive/Managerial	21.5%	15.8%
Professional	41.5%	31.2%
Technical	5.7%	8%
Sales	7.5%	7.3%
Clerical	11.9%	15.6%
Service Occupations	5.9%	11.3%
Skilled Trades/Repair	2.2%	4.5%
Semi-skilled/unskilled labor	3.4%	6%

Source: 1990 U.S. Census

Industry

Over half of adult Neighborhood Nine residents work in professional services industries, such as education (29%), health (9%) and other professional services, such as research, engineering and architecture (16%).

Economic Comparison: Neighborhood 9 and Cambridge

<i>Industry</i>	<i>Neighborhood 9</i>	<i>Cambridge</i>
Agriculture, Mining	1%	0%
Construction	3%	3%
Manufacturing	9%	10%
Transportation/Communication	4%	4%
Wholesale/Retail Trade	8%	11%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	6%	6%
Business & Repair Services	6%	6%
Personal, Entertainment & Recreation	4%	4%
Health services	9%	10%
Education services	29%	26%
Other professional services	16%	15%
Public administration	4%	4%

Source: 1990 U.S. Census

Employment and Skill Matches

As part of the Atlantic Survey, neighborhood residents were polled about the “fit” between their job and their skills and education. Two-thirds of Neighborhood Nine respondents thought that their job matched their education level “very well”. About one in ten Neighborhood Nine residents noted that their job and skill level did not match very well. Residents North of Upland experienced job/skill mismatches at slightly higher levels, 15% compared to 10% for those living South of Upland Road.

Residents were also asked how well the jobs available in Cambridge fit their skills and education. Nearly half (48%) of Neighborhood Nine respondents felt this match was “very well.” For those living North of Upland Road, one quarter

said that job opportunities in Cambridge did not match their skills and abilities very well, compared with 15% of those South of Upland Road. Primary obstacles for moving into better work are the availability of suitable jobs (76%) and the need for more education and job training (59%). Two out of three respondents thought that career counseling and job placement would most help them move into better work, while one in three desired vocational training.

Committee Discussions

Study Committee members initially discussed the myriad ways that each of them participated in the Cambridge economy. Nearly all present participated as consumers of products and services, while some were employed — or employers — in Cambridge as well. Taking part in cultural and educational activities was another facet of economic participation.

The Study Committee discussed the need for jobs, retail goods and business opportunities that meet the needs of all sectors of the community. While much needs to be done to help business sustain the community along these lines, there are important tools that the City can use to help Cambridge sustain its economic base. Members would like the City to improve tracking of business start-ups and closings along with analysis and corrective steps to respond to undue failure or relocation of firms from Cambridge. Programs to foster small business creation and success were discussed. Given the City’s competitive advantage in technology, Study Committee members wished to help small research and development firms recruit in the local work force, find appropriate sites and locate appropriate financing for growth.

Study Committee members were also concerned that the City maintain a healthy retail and industrial climate, while protecting residential areas. The concept of “sustainable development” entered these discussions. Study Committee members discussed sustainability in terms of the costs to the human and natural environment being addressed now rather than deferred to future

generations. Discussion of potential tradeoffs in this area were conducted.

Members would like to ensure that Massachusetts Avenue not develop overly high concentrations of specific kinds of retail, becoming a “restaurant row” or a series of boutiques. Participants would like to encourage development of businesses that provide services reflecting the needs of residents of the surrounding neighborhood.

The need for an affordable supermarket for less affluent people was also stressed. Since the Fresh Pond Stop and Shop supermarket closed, many low-income families must now travel, by bus or by foot, outside the neighborhood (and the city) to shop. For example, Briston Arms tenants without a vehicle must take two buses to get to a grocery store.

The Study Committee also reviewed the gap between work opportunities and the skill and training level of some residents. They would like to see neighborhood residents take part in a needs assessment to determine appropriate training and

educational programs. Child care services should be expanded, as well, to enable wider parent participation in the workforce. Outreach for employment programs should be expanded to enable more residents to learn about and participate in training programs.

Neighborhood youth were of particular concern in the discussions. Study Committee members suggested creation of a scholarship fund involving local schools and businesses, as well as partnerships with training programs to develop work preparedness and skills building programs for Cambridge youth. A child care training program in collaboration with local universities and non-profits, such as the Child Care Resource Center, was recommended; members hoped that this could spawn home-based child care businesses. They also ventured the possibility of expanding the Neighborhood Four Summer Landscaping Program to Neighborhood Nine, allowing resident youth to care for neighborhood parks.

Economic Development and Employment Recommendations

Economic Development and Employment Recommendations

- I. The City should make the provision of employment opportunities for low-income residents one of its primary concerns.***
- II. The City should develop a small business development and retention program to protect small enterprises from being pushed out by big stores and chains.***
- III. Continue to expand the City's micro enterprise development program (through the Cambridge Business Development Center) to develop home-based businesses, especially among economically disadvantaged residents.***
- IV. Encourage a major grocery chain to locate in the neighborhood.***
- V. Conduct surveys of businesses to track their business needs.***
- VI. Expand the Cambridge Emerging Technology Partnerships Program.***
- VII. Encourage parking transportation policy consistent with sustainable neighborhoods.***
- VIII. Manage development of economic activity along Massachusetts Avenue, Concord Avenue and Alewife area while protecting the residential areas of the neighborhood.***
- IX. Reevaluate taxation on businesses with the intention of protecting smaller businesses in the City. Consider small business adjustments.***

EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

The Study Committee directs these recommendations to the city's Work Force Development Office and its training and placement partners.

- I. Conduct English as a Second Language classes at the Peabody and Fitzgerald Community Schools (using the Graham and Parks Community School as a model).***
- II. Create or expand existing job training programs for young adults, single mothers and other economically disenfranchised parts of the population.***
- III. Intensify outreach efforts so that residents can take advantage of training and placement services.***
- IV. Build partnerships with emerging technology companies to provide training or training opportunities for residents.***
- V. Explore ways for high school graduates from the neighborhood to pursue a post secondary education, including the creation of a scholarship fund involving local schools and businesses.***
- VI. Expand youth employment and career pathways initiatives.***
- VII. Provide the necessary transportation links needed for residents to access job training programs, especially area community colleges.***

Growth Policy Context

The Economic Development and Employment policies address the need for business and employment training support. The policies stress the importance of an inclusive job base and widened opportunities for employment and entrepreneurship to the city's diversity and vitality. Policies 42-44 outline the need for regulatory and policy

support to create new, innovative industries and retain existing ones that are suitable to Cambridge. Policy 46 encourages the development of entrepreneurship and minority businesses. Strengthening retail businesses within existing districts and squares is addressed by policies 47 and 48. Policies 40 and 41 state the City's commitment to job training services, with an accent on reaching residents who have not benefited previously.

Open Space

Background

Neighborhood Nine contains 70.3 acres of public open space, one of the largest amounts in any of the city's neighborhoods. The neighborhood also has some of the most diverse set of facilities found in the city serving a wide range of users. Most of the open space is located on the western side of the neighborhood.

The neighborhood contains some significant privately owned open space including the Radcliffe Quadrangle, the Harvard Observatory and the playing field behind the Friends School. For the most part, Neighborhood Nine parks are in good condition. The following is a summary of Neighborhood Nine parks:

Corcoran Field/Raymond Street Park

Located in the heart of the neighborhood, the city constructed this 2.7 acre park in 1914-1915. In 1931, the city Council named the park the Timothy F. Corcoran Field in memory of a World War I veteran who was born and raised in the neighborhood.

With the exception of the ball field, the city renovated the park completely in 1987, including replacing the play equipment and benches, resurfacing the basketball court and pathways, and planting additional trees.

The Study Committee felt there was a conflict between programming for City- wide users versus neighborhood users and expressed a desire to see the park become a focal point for the neighborhood by having more planned community activities take place in the park. The Study

Committee felt that physical improvements to the park could help foster increased community use of the park facilities, possibly adding benches, a gazebo, and additional lighting.

Peabody School Playground

Located behind the Peabody School, this 0.6 acre playground is rather spare with only a few features and some hard surface open space. The city installed the swings, the play structure and youth fitness center as part of its 1987 repairs. The Study Committee felt the playground needs to be completely renovated to soften the surface, while still accommodating the basketball and play structures.

Danehy Park

When the city dedicated the new park in honor of former Mayor Thomas W. Danehy in 1990, the 50 acre park expanded the city's open space by 20 percent. The park sits on a former clay pit and city dump. Clay extraction for brick making started in the 1840's and continued until 1952 when the New England Brick Company closed its operations and sold the land to the city. The city, in turn, used the clay pit as its primary dump site until 1971. At the start of the MBTA Red Line extension from Harvard Square to Alewife, the city arranged with the MBTA to dump 2,000,000 cubic yards of tunnel excavations to cap the dump and aid its conversion into a new city park. The city added more gravel and loam to create the new surface.

The Study Committee members felt that added plantings where the park borders Briston Arms would provide privacy for residents and cut down on the wind tunnel effect. The Study Committee also felt there should be additional shaded areas and sitting areas in the park. Study Committee members encourage the city to consider eliminating the use of the methane leaching field as a dog run and identify an alternative site.

Roethlisberger Memorial Park

Relatively small in comparison to its neighboring parks, Roethlisberger is a passive, almost contemplative place. The city, at the urging of the Neighborhood Nine Association, carved the park out of the edge of the city dump in the mid 1960's. In 1967 the city Council dedicated it in the memory of Margaret Roethlisberger, a resident highly active in civic affairs. In 1992, the city completed comprehensive renovations in the park, including new lighting, benches, plantings and resurfaced walks.

St. Peter's Field

St. Peter's is one of the busiest ball fields in the city. St. Peter's Field was completely renovated in 1992 (in conjunction with Roethlisberger Park), featuring new lights, regaraged field and new sod.

Cambridge Common

This 8.2 acre active and passive open space is the remnant of the much larger 17th century cow pasture used by Cambridge's first European settlers. The different buildings along its periphery are evidence of the many changes that Cambridge has undergone since the 17th century.

The city has upgraded some of the facilities in the Common in the past several years. The city developed a new lighting plan and installed new lights which both respect the historical nature of the park while seeking to enhance pedestrian safety. The city also rebuilt the tot lot in 1990. Also, several statues in the Common have undergone cleaning.

The Study Committee would like to see the city continue to study safe passage for pedestrians and bicycles in and around the Common.

Flagstaff Park

Flagstaff Park is the 1.2 acre triangle of land dividing Massachusetts Avenue southeast of the Common. Strictly a visual amenity with no public access, the green space was rebuilt as part of the extension of the MBTA Red Line subway in 1983. At that time, the city regraded the area and installed new split rail fencing.

Survey Results

According to the 1993 Atlantic Marketing Research Company, Inc. telephone survey, overall, Neighborhood Nine residents feel well served by park land and facilities in the neighborhood. Across all demographic groups, the majority feel that the availability and condition of parks is either a minor concern or of no concern. Respondents' opinions regarding the availability of recreational facilities in the neighborhood did not differ much from opinions on the issues above.

Committee Discussions

The Study Committee identified four areas of concern; programming schedules, conflict between neighborhood uses and City-wide uses, dogs in parks, and public safety. Study Committee members felt that the fields, especially, tend to be too programmed and that they seem to be reserved for the use of organized leagues. The Study Committee felt there was little available field time for neighborhood pick-up ball games especially on summer evenings.

The Study Committee felt that Corcoran Field/Raymond Street Park, in particular, experienced conflicting uses. The Study Committee also cited poor drainage of the field, the lack of comfortable seating and maintenance issues at the edge of the field abutting Chetwynd Street as areas of concern. Study Committee members pointed out that gardeners have complained that the soft ball field is too small for adult play, and that batters some times hit balls into the garden. The Study Committee discussed the issue of dog owners allowing their pets to run off their leashes during restricted hours (very early or later at night) in Corcoran Field and agreed that strict

enforcement of clean up regulations and animal control standards would have to be established before such a policy could be implemented.

The Study Committee also discussed public safety in the neighborhood parks. Study Commit-

tee members agreed that increased police patrols including periodic patrols on foot and on bicycles should be instituted in parks throughout the neighborhood.

Open Space Recommendations

Management/Administration/Maintenance

- I. Encourage Department of Public Works employees to be more vigilant about picking up spilled trash on scheduled trash removal day.***
- II. Add dog waste receptacles in parks and along streets in the neighborhood.***
- III. Encourage the creation of an “Adopt-A-Park” program in neighborhood parks.***
- IV. Neighborhood organizations and residents groups should organize a neighborhood clean-up day in conjunction with the Department of Public Works.***
- V. Encourage neighborhood organizations and residents groups to organize a trustees organization for the major parks in the neighborhood.***

These organizations would serve as conduits to raise funds on a charitable basis to enhance the utility and aesthetic quality of the parks.

Planning, Programming, Design and Construction

- VI. Mitigate water pollution due to runoff into Alewife Brook/Little River and the Alewife Reservation.***
- VII. Seek opportunities to increase community open space. Add sites for community gardens and recreational use.***

- VIII. Study current policy of scheduling adult leagues in City fields/parks.***

Railroad Crossing

- IX. Convert open lot next to railroad tracks at Walden Square into a passive park along with the renovation of the tunnel.***
- X. Improve Railroad Underpass.***

The Study Committee recommends widening and deepening the opening to the underpass. Study Committee members also suggest eliminating the steps, painting the space white, adding lights and installing a mirror at each end to enhance public safety, and planting flowers and shrubbery to improve the appearance of the underpass.

Growth Policy Context

The city’s Open Space policy #63 addresses the multiple use functions of recreational facilities, stressing that shared use “...should be encouraged, either through expansion of the existing inventory, through multiple use of existing facilities, or through creative programming of those facilities.” Open Space policy #69 encourages the city to “retain and protect” existing private open space whether or not it is publicly accessible. Open Space policy #70 emphasizes that maintenance and upgrading of existing facilities “should be the city’s highest fiscal priority with regard to open space and recreational facilities.” The policy also calls for the city to explore ways to involve the private sector in maintenance of public open space and recreational facilities.

I N S T I T U T I O N S

Institutions

Background

Institutions play a singular role in the life and development of Cambridge and its neighborhoods. Institutions of education, government, health care, religion, non-profit services and scientific research occupy over half of the city's land and employ many of its residents. Educational institutions, primarily Harvard University, Radcliffe College and Lesley College, have the most direct impact on Neighborhood Nine. Their influence can be felt as educators, employers, land owners, developers and providers of cultural and community services. The academic community of students, faculty and staff also have impacts as tax-payers, consumers, tenants and homeowners. The institutions' scope and size demands careful planning and consultation involving the institutions, the city and neighborhood residents.

Educational institutions are among the city's largest landowners; the universities' academic and taxable land holdings comprise about 400 acres total, or 10% of the city's land. Twenty eight percent of the tax exempt land in Cambridge is university owned (the city is the largest owner of tax exempt land, at 46%). Twenty percent of Harvard's housing stock is in Neighborhood Nine. (See attached map which illustrates the location of institutional properties by type).

Properties owned by the institutions are used in a number of ways, with academic buildings and open spaces, such as the Radcliffe Quadrangle or the Cronkite Graduate Center, the most evident. University housing, such as Radcliffe dormitories

and graduate or affiliate housing such as the Botanical Gardens, are also a prominent feature in the neighborhood. The universities also maintain a portfolio of taxable property dedicated to private residential and commercial use. Research facilities, such as the Smithsonian Observatory, are another prominent use.

The institution's impacts can be felt when properties are acquired, constructed or altered, or if a change in use is instituted. Institutional expansion into residential and retail districts of Cambridge have sometimes raised concerns for residents, particularly in areas with a special character or identity, such as Harvard Square. In Neighborhood Nine, recent years have seen relatively little new activity by the institutions. Harvard erected a set of townhouse units, called Observatory Commons, on property purchased from Radcliffe College. Radcliffe has instituted no recent major additions in the neighborhood, though it has converted undergraduate dormitories into one and two family housing units.

Expanding institutions often result in taxable property being converted to tax exempt academic uses. This has become more of a concern as federal and state support have diminished, and service demands by the institutions for an expanding physical plant have increased. Voluntary agreements with the city, called payments-in-lieu of taxes (PILOT), are made by Harvard and other institutions to help compensate for these gaps.

Educational institutions make other contributions to the local and neighborhood economy. Higher education is the number one employer in

the city and the largest employer of City (and Neighborhood Nine) residents. The institutions also provide cultural and social services to the city, such as lecture series and community service activities of Harvard undergraduates.

The institutions' physical activities are governed by the city's Zoning ordinance, including the Institutional Overlay districts. The Institutional Overlay allows the city some regulation over institutional uses outside their core areas. The city's Historical Commission also works closely with the institutions on land use issues. The Commonwealth's laws, however, limit the city's powers to regulate the institutions' design and building choices within the core academic properties.

Harvard has an entire department dedicated to physical planning, the Harvard Planning Group. The planning staff identify building priorities through the university's Capital Campaign, but the latter is not a Master Plan. Their control is limited by the high degree of autonomy enjoyed by the individual colleges and departments in the University's highly decentralized structure. This is particularly true of the Smithsonian Observatory, which is situated on Harvard owned land but staffed by employees contracting with the federal government.

Both Harvard and Radcliffe officials meet with city and neighborhood representatives to discuss specific projects and their impacts; Harvard also meets with the city Manager as part of its PILOT agreement. The 1991 Mayor's Report on Community-University relations, or "Town-Gown Report," called for expanding this type of dialogue. As a result of that recommendation, Harvard, city and neighborhood representatives meet on a monthly basis to discuss a variety of neighborhood/Harvard issues.

Survey Results

Most survey respondents (two out of three) felt that Harvard had a positive impact on the neighborhood; 12% viewed the impact as negative and 23% saw no impact. Specific positive impacts include the addition of ethnic diversity; cultural, artistic and scientific activities, new buildings and

benefits to the local economy. Particular negative impacts included institutional expansion into the neighborhood, increased housing costs, and over-development.

A majority of respondents (70%) did not believe that Lesley College has had any significant impact on the neighborhood. A little over one fourth (28%) viewed Lesley's impact as positive, while just 2% felt it was negative.

Committee Discussions

Representatives from Harvard's Planning Group and Government/Community Relations staff, as well as Radcliffe College, met with study committee study committee members to outline institutional holdings and policies. Study committee members were concerned with the degree of control that the university exerted over individual land use choices made in the neighborhood, such as at the Smithsonian Observatory. They were also interested in the institutions' forecasts for activities in the coming years. Both Harvard and Radcliffe representatives stated that little or no new building or acquisitions were expected for Neighborhood Nine. Radcliffe's priorities lie in reprogramming the Cronkite Graduate Center on Ash Street. None of Harvard's proposed projects in its Capital Campaign are in the neighborhood.

Study committee members wished to see Harvard limit expansion into residential areas "grandfathered" under prior zoning, or into commercially zoned areas. They supported both Harvard's and Radcliffe's efforts to meet with and discuss issues with neighborhood representatives during early phases of planning for new developments. (Radcliffe's representative noted its consultations with residents concerning issues such as curb cuts, color and drainage in its developments.) There is a need for consistent guidelines governing both the institutions' internal planning processes and their interaction with neighborhood residents. Institution representatives stressed that effective resident participation was critical to successful planning efforts, given the decentralized nature of communications and decision-making within the university.

Tax impacts of the institutions were a strong concern for study committee members. Potential losses of revenue, and the subsequent burdens on tax payers, were discussed and debated. The city needs to monitor such trends carefully. A Harvard representative also noted during discussions that the institution's PILOT payments more than doubled during the decade 1980-1990. Statewide governance of town/gown relations was also discussed. It was noted that in certain other

states, such as Connecticut, localities are reimbursed by the state for hosting educational institutions.

Study Committee members also noted the need for the institutions to provide better maintenance of their holdings, such as prompt shoveling of snow from the sidewalks. They would also like to see expanded resident access to university resources such as libraries and athletic facilities.

Institutions Recommendations

Harvard University and Radcliffe College

- I. Harvard and Radcliffe should continue to work with the neighborhood during the early stages of planning for new construction. Harvard should improve their internal planning process to ensure optimum communication with the community***
- II. Harvard should confine their institutional uses to their existing grandfathered premises (when within residential areas) and to commercially zoned areas.***
- III. The University should continue and expand cleaning the sidewalks on their property.***
- IV. The Committee urges Harvard and Radcliffe to open up certain resources to the immediate neighborhood, especially the libraries and athletic facilities)***
- V. Establish a business mentoring program with the Harvard Business School***
- VI. The city's Committee on Community-University Relationships should actively track all tax exempt property, analyze loss to the city, make recommendations, lobby and encourage institutions to contribute more, and issue a yearly report.***

Lesley College

- I. Undertake a master planning process including residents and the city and addressing such issues as physical expansion and traffic management. Encourage College's community relations office to do more outreach in the neighborhood.***

Growth Policy Context

The limitation of institutions to their existing core or surrounding area, such as an overlay district, is stated in Policies 5 and 6. The need for mutual outreach and dialogue between the major institutions and the community is stipulated in Policy 49. That policy calls for both on-going dialogue and the creation by each institution of a master plan describing both existing status and strategies to meet future needs and goals.

C O N C L U S I O N

Conclusion

This report reveals that Neighborhood Nine faces a variety of challenges which are addressed throughout the report. The report offers several recommendations to improve the quality of life for all residents in the neighborhood. The city has taken action to implement some recommendations made the study committee.

The city is planning roadway and landscape design improvements in Porter Square. The proposed improvements include installation of traffic control devices, addition of street trees and general landscape improvements, and design of bicycle lanes. Construction is scheduled for 1998.

The city is monitoring renovations and changes which have been proposed by the owners of the Porter Square shopping center facility which lies within the Massachusetts Avenue overlay district. The overlay district was created to encourage “a consistent image for the develop-

ment along the Avenue and adjacent areas”.

A committee composed of city staff and representatives from groups having a particular interest in the Cambridge Common has submitted a set of recommendations to the City Council to improve travel access through the Common. The recommendations include a request for funding to hire a project designer to implement a plan which would include retaining safe pedestrian access to the Common, preserving existing healthy trees and adding new trees, and retaining desired bicycle travel routes through the Common.

The remaining recommendations will be incorporated into the city’s decision-making process on future improvements in Neighborhood Nine.

A P P E N D I X I

Housing

Background

Neighborhood Nine has a total of 5495 housing units densely distributed at 26 units per acre. One in four (27%) of the units are located in condominium buildings and 28% are located in privately owned multifamily buildings. Neighborhood Nine's four subsidized housing developments have 478 housing units, which constitute 9% of the total housing units in the neighborhood.

Neighborhood Nine has had a larger percentage of home owners than the City of Cambridge both in 1980 and 1990. The percentage of residents owning their own home in Neighborhood Nine rose substantially from 25% in 1980 to 34% in 1990 while the city's ownership rate rose from 23% in 1980 to 30% in 1990. The single family and condominium sales price in Neighborhood Nine has more than doubled between 1984 and 1992. The single family sales price rose from \$170,000 to \$356,000 and the condominium price increased from \$74,900 to \$168,000.

NON PROFIT HOUSING INITIATIVES

Cambridge Housing Authority (CHA)

The CHA owns and operates two developments in Neighborhood Nine: 60 units of family housing on Lincoln Way and a 24 unit development on Linnaean Street reserved for elderly residents.

City Housing Programs

City housing programs include home improvement and home ownership programs, multifamily rehabilitation programs, and support for affordable

housing development initiatives (*See Appendix for list of City housing programs*).

Federal Housing Programs

Neighborhood Nine has two housing developments (Briston Arms and Walden Square) which were originally developed in the 1970's under a federal housing program that provided owners of apartment buildings with low-interest, 40-year mortgages. In return, the owners agreed to keep rents affordable for low- and moderate-income residents. Unfortunately, provisions in these loans allowed owners to prepay the mortgages after 20 years and terminate the affordability restrictions.

In 1990, the federal government established a preservation program to protect the long-term affordability of these projects. Currently, the federal preservation program (also known as the expiring use program) is undergoing major modifications. The modifications will allow owners to prepay their mortgages and convert properties to market-rate housing. The changes may also affect the project-based Section 8 subsidy program.

Bristol Arms has participated in the Federal Preservation Program, and its affordability is ensured through 2018. In September 1994, the city played a key role in facilitating an agreement between the owner of Briston Arms, tenants of the development, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and the Massachusetts Housing Finance Agency (MHFA). The owner has agreed to invest a substantial sum in physical improvements to the property. The 240-

unit Waden Square development faces risks to its long-term affordability. The owner may be able to prepay the federally-insured mortgage, but an affordable use restriction will remain in place for the original 40-year term. The City is monitoring the federal agreements related to affordability.

A third federally-assisted housing development, Walden Park Apartments, received federal mortgage insurance, and in return, HUD regulated the rents. While not specifically targeted for low- and moderate-income tenants, the rent regulation kept the rents low and affordable for lower income households. In 1995, HUD deregulated the property as allowed under the program regulations. The tenants contested the decision, which was upheld after a HUD review. In 1996, the City's Board of Zoning Appeal has determined that the owner is obligated to establish below-market rents as a condition for the original zoning variances granted to the project. The owner is challenging this decision.

Survey Results

The 1993 Atlantic Marketing Research, Inc. telephone survey revealed that the majority of low-income residents call for more rental opportunities, whereas a majority of moderate-income respondents say home ownership opportunities are needed more. One out of five high-income respondents felt that neither type of housing was needed.

Housing Opportunities Needed (by Income)

	<i>Low</i>	<i>Moderate</i>	<i>Middle</i>	<i>High</i>
More Rental Housing	60%	27%	47%	24%
More Home Ownership	23%	58%	14%	39%
Both Needed	16%	14%	37%	16%
None/Neither	1%	1%	3%	21%

*Source: Atlantic Marketing Research, Inc.
(telephone survey, 1993)*

The majority of respondents see both rental costs and housing prices as a major concern in the neighborhood. Fifty-two percent of the respondents listed displacement as a major concern. As

income increases, the proportion of residents who see this as a major concern in the neighborhood decreases.

Concerns About Displacement Due to High Housing Costs (by Income)

	<i>Low</i>	<i>Moderate</i>
Major Concern	72%	72%
	<i>Middle</i>	<i>High</i>
Minor Concern	40%	41%

*Source: Atlantic Marketing Research, Inc.
(telephone survey, 1993)*

Eight-four percent of respondents do not think they can afford to buy a house in Neighborhood Nine. Fifty-eight percent of high income renters said they could not afford to buy a house in the neighborhood.

Survey respondents listed housing prices, displacement due to high housing costs, and rental costs as the major housing concerns in the neighborhood.

Committee Discussions

The Study Committee discussed the various ways that affordable housing is made available in the city. There was a discussion about both the advantages of developing home ownership projects versus rental programs and the most cost effective way to provide residents with affordable housing.

The Study Committee differed on the best way to maintain an economically diverse resident population in the city. It was suggested that rental resources would be adversely affected if the City continues to expand home ownership programs. The Study Committee emphasized the need for the City to tap into whatever housing funds are available and to create a balance between affordable rental and home ownership opportunities. The Study Committee agreed that affordable housing programs should be geared towards resident families who need access to a variety of housing choices in order to continue living in the City.

Housing Recommendations

I. The City should continue limited-equity home ownership programs to promote home ownership for residents with low- and moderate-incomes.

II. The City should identify properties within the neighborhood that may provide opportunities for limited equity development.

- . lot near Bellis Circle
- . storage site on Concord Avenue
- . “bird house” on Walden Street

III. The City should identify distressed properties that may provide opportunities for rehabilitation and conversion into affordable housing.

IV. The City should support policies and programs that offer equitable solutions for expiring use housing and would not force residents to leave the City because of housing costs.

V. The City should consider giving floor area ratio (FAR) bonuses to owners of proposed mixed-use developments located in commercial districts which include a significant low-income housing component.

VI. The City should consider giving FAR bonuses to developers who build multiple-unit housing with deed restrictions requiring the housing to maintain affordable occupancy.

VII. Encourage the construction of low-income housing where possible on appropriate sites.

VIII. Continue to invest in home rehabilitation programs.

Growth Policy Context

Housing policy #29 encourages the city to concentrate its rehabilitation efforts on existing housing stock which will provide housing for low- and moderate-income resident families. Housing policy #31 encourages the promotion of affordable housing opportunities whenever feasibly possible.

City of Cambridge

Affordable Housing Activities

The City of Cambridge has an ongoing commitment to the preservation of existing affordable housing and the creation of new affordable home ownership and rental opportunities. The City's ability to accomplish this depends on a number of factors: primarily identification of resources to develop additional affordable units and rehabilitate existing units. Other factors include market and inventory conditions, the availability of sites, the capacity of local housing providers and support for local programs and initiatives.

Scarcity of vacant land in Cambridge necessitates that affordable housing opportunities come from existing stock. Affordable housing initiatives may take the form of stabilizing existing housing occupied by low and moderate income households or converting buildings to nonprofit or public ownership and providing access to affordable units to low and moderate income households upon turnover. They may also involve rehabilitating buildings in distressed conditions with vacancies and substantial capital needs for occupancy after rehab by low and moderate income households.

An important public benefit of many of Cambridge's housing initiatives is securing long-term affordability, either through limited equity restrictions, public or nonprofit ownership or via long-term contracts and deed restrictions with private owners. Large public investments are typically required to secure affordable units, therefore, making these units affordable in the long-term is the most efficient way to use scarce housing resources.

Approximately one million dollars, a sizable percentage of the City's CDBG funds, is spent on housing. In addition, the City receives approximately \$700,000 of federal HOME funds. The housing funds are administered through the City's Community Development Department (CDD). Along with supplying administrative support and program funds to the local nonprofit housing development agencies, CDD provides multi-family rehabilitation funds, first-time home buyer assistance, development funds and technical assistance for substantial rehabilitation and new construction for the benefit of low and moderate income households.

ONGOING HOUSING PROGRAMS

Development

Affordable Housing Trust: CDD staff provide technical assistance to the Affordable Housing Trust, a trust fund established by a local zoning ordinance to develop and sustain affordable housing with funds received under incentive zoning provisions. The City Manager is the managing trustee, and the other board members include representatives from different sectors of the community concerned with housing policy, including city agencies, nonprofit housing organizations and community representatives. The Trust has played an important role in leveraging other financing for affordable housing projects. Since its inception, Trust funds have supported the development of 405 units of housing. In addition, the Trust also acts as the local housing

partnership entity and is charged with the review and approval of all applications for funding from the Massachusetts Housing Partnership.

HOME Program: CDD administers the HUD-funded HOME Program. HOME funds are used to rehabilitate rental properties such as the Cambridge YMCA, as well as those that owned and managed by Community Housing Development Organizations (CHDOs). HOME funds can also be used for acquisition and new construction of affordable rental and home ownership units, such as those at the Hampshire-Columbia Street site. The City has contracted with Just A Start and Homeowners Rehab to operate a HOME-funded home improvement type program. This will benefit single family owner-occupied properties and two or three family buildings where HOME funds can be used in conjunction with CDBG funds. The HOME program has also been successful in reducing the acquisition cost of Cambridge properties to ensure their affordability to low income first-time home buyers.

Expiring Use Activities: The City of Cambridge has over 1,600 units in eight federally-subsidized developments facing the risk of expiring use restrictions or rent subsidies during the 1990s. CDD actively works with tenants, owners and other concerned parties to address the long-term needs of these affordable housing developments. The CDD provides technical assistance to help tenant groups to organize, to preserve affordability and maintain housing quality, and, in certain cases, to work with a local nonprofit organization to acquire their buildings.

Rehabilitation

Harvard Emergency Loan Program: The Harvard Emergency Loan Program, administered by the CDD, provides low interest rate loans to help owners of rent controlled properties to rehabilitate their buildings.

Home Improvement Program: Cambridge's Home Improvement Program (HIP) gives technical assistance and reduced rate loans to low

income, often elderly owners of one to four family buildings. By making relatively small investments in critical rehab needs, the program allows low and moderate income owners to remain in their homes. Funded primarily through CDBG and revolving loans, the program is operated by two agencies, Just A Start and Homeowner's Rehab Inc., under contract with the CDD. Between 100 and 150 units are rehabilitated annually through this program.

Rehab Assistance Program: The Rehab Assistance Program (RAP) is funded with CDBG funds and private sources. The program provides training and education for youth rehab and deleading crews which provide labor for HIP cases and affordable housing projects at cost.

Multifamily Loan Programs: Cambridge's continuing multifamily loan programs are managed by the Cambridge Neighborhood Apartment Housing Services (CNAHS), a private nonprofit corporation. CNAHS operates a rehab program for investor-owner rental buildings, providing low-interest loans and technical assistance to encourage reinvestment in the multifamily stock. Operating support for this program is provided by CDBG funds, leveraging loan funds from state and private sources. Two loan programs funded by HUD and administered by the City - The Rental Rehabilitation Program and the 312 Loan Program - were phased out in 1991.

Lead-Safe Cambridge

In 1994, Cambridge received a federal grant under the HUD Lead-based Paint Hazard Reduction Grant Program to abate 300 privately owned residential units over a two year period. The grant will be administered through the Lead Safe Cambridge program.

Home Ownership

Cambridge Condo Buyers Initiative: The Cambridge Condo Buyer Initiative is a new City sponsored affordable home ownership program for low and moderate income Cambridge residents.

The Buyer Initiative will provide technical and financial assistance to income eligible residents who want to buy a condo in Cambridge.

Limited Equity Cooperatives and Condominiums: The Resident Cooperative Ownership Program, in partnership with nonprofit housing agencies, provides technical, legal and financial assistance to tenant groups seeking to buy and renovate their buildings and convert them to limited equity cooperatives and condominiums. In addition to providing development assistance, the program advocates for funding for new projects and provides management support to established coops. The City will expand this program if suitable sites and funding are available. A Share Loan Program was recently established to help low and moderate income residents buy into existing cooperatives.

Home buyer Counseling: Beginning in August 1993, the City began offering home buyer counseling courses to Cambridge residents. Potential buyers attend four two-hour sessions covering issues such as credit, finding a home, qualifying for a mortgage and the purchase process. Over 40 households successfully completed the first course, and 45 are currently participating in a course offered this month. Participation gives buyers access to low cost mortgages through the Massachusetts Housing Finance Agency and local banks.

Technical Assistance and Services

Assistance to Nonprofit Development Organizations: The local nonprofit housing development agencies play a key role in the Cambridge housing delivery system. Cambridge is fortunate to have several stable and experienced agencies which have been integrally involved in the delivery of affordable housing for many years. Three agencies, Just A Start, Corp., Homeowner's Rehab., Inc., and Cambridge Neighborhood Apartment Housing Services, Inc., have extensive experience in all levels of rehabilitation and also in management of multifamily stock. CNAHS, which has a partnership-model board composed of lenders, city housing officials, property owners

and tenants, also has special expertise in dealing with the rent controlled stock. Cambridge and Somerville Cooperative Apartment Project (CASCAP) concentrates on the delivery of housing to the mentally disabled population. CASCAP has strengths in both rehabilitation and development and in the management of group homes/single room occupancy dwellings with a social service component. The CDD provides technical and operating support for these agencies and also provides loans and grants from CDBG funds to nonprofit organizations to support acquisition and development of affordable units.

Nonprofit agencies developed 375 units of affordable housing in Cambridge in FY93, including affordable rental units and SRO units for people with AIDS and other special needs. We project that nonprofit will develop 360 additional units in FY94.

Housing Access Services: The CDD in cooperation with nonprofit agencies, provides housing access services for low and moderate income households. These services include maintaining a list of households interested in affordable housing opportunities. The Department recently computerized this system, and will expand it during the coming year. CDD is also responsible for administering the resale of limited equity units, where deed restrictions limit the price and target the availability of these units to low income buyers. For these units, as well as for other affordable units, the Department also provides marketing assistance to both nonprofit and for profit developers and owners to help them locate low or moderate income purchasers or renters.

Housing Intercept Program: The Cambridge Housing Intercept Program (formerly the Cambridge Housing Services Program), is a program that provides counselling and information services for owners and tenants, and mediation services to try to resolve disputes over tenancies. This program has proved to be very effective in keeping tenants in their housing, thereby preventing homelessness in over 200 cases annually. This program is jointly funded by the CDD and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

OTHER INITIATIVES

Inclusionary Zoning: In certain parts of the City, like North Point and the south of Pacific area of Cambridgeport, the City Council has enacted zoning that requires that a percentage of the units developed in any residential project be affordable. Over time, this zoning initiative will result in mixed-income housing being created.

Fair Housing: Since 1981, HUD has periodically funded the Cambridge Community Housing

Resource Board (CHRB) which was established to promote equal housing opportunities for all regardless of race or ethnic background. The Cambridge CHRB's programs have been administered by CDD staff and have included real estate scholarships for minorities and a Fair Housing curriculum at the high school. When HUD funding ended, a citywide Fair Housing Commission was established to promote fair housing.

A P P E N D I X I I

Growth Policy

Land Use Policies

Policy #1

Existing residential neighborhoods, or any portions of a neighborhood having an identifiable and consistent built character, should be maintained at their prevailing pattern of development and building density and scale.

Policy #2

Except in evolving industrial areas, the city's existing land use structure and the area of residential and commercial neighborhoods should remain essentially as they have developed historically.

Policy #4

Adequate transitions and buffers between differing scales of development and differing uses should be provided; general provisions for screening, landscaping and setbacks should be imposed while in especially complex circumstances special provisions should be developed.

Policy #5

The major institutions, principally Lesley College, Harvard University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the 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.

Policy #6

For such institutions reasonable densities should be permitted in their core campuses to forestall unnecessary expansion into both commercial districts and low-density residential neighborhoods.

Policy #9

The evolution of the city's industrial areas should be encouraged, under the guidance of specific urban design plans, and through other public policy and regulations such that: 1) those areas can adapt to new commercial and industrial patterns of development 2) the residential neighborhood edges abutting such areas are strengthened through selective residential reuse within the development areas or through careful transition in density, scale and lot development pattern 3) new uses and varied scales and densities can be introduced into such areas, 4) uses incompatible with the city's existing and future desired development pattern are phased out.

Policy #10

In some evolving industrial areas multiple uses should be encouraged, including an important component of residential use in suitable locations not subject to conflict with desired industrial uses, to advance other development policy objectives of the city: 1) to provide opportunities for those who work in the city to live here, 2) to limit the use of the automobile to get to Cambridge and to travel within Cambridge, 3) to encourage more active

use of all parts of the city for longer periods throughout the day; and 4) to limit the secondary impacts of new development on the existing, established neighborhoods. These impacts may be both economic, as in the increased demand placed on the limited stock of existing housing, and environmental, as in the increase in traffic on neighborhood streets.

Policy #12

Those necessary or desirable uses and activities which require specially tailored environments should be provided for and those uses, activities and development patterns which create distinctive environments that serve as amenities for the whole community should be protected or maintained. For example, low-rent industrial space for start-up enterprises, locations for industrial use and development which could be compromised by proximity to other, incompatible, uses, including residential uses, small commercial enclaves which directly serve their immediate surrounding residential neighborhood, locations appropriate for gas stations, car repair facilities, tow yards, etc.; structures or clusters of structures eligible for local historic district designation, or for designation as a local conservation district; environments, as frequently found in the Residence "A" districts, where a unique combination of distinctive architecture and landscaped open space prevails; areas designated or eligible as national register historic districts.

Transportation Policies

Policy #19

Investigate the feasibility of developing and implementing, within the financial resources of the city, a paratransit system, utilizing taxi cabs where appropriate, in order to supplement the current MBTA system in Cambridge.

Policy #20

Encourage the state transportation and environmental agencies to develop a regional goods movement plan; in the meantime, use the city's

limited authority as much as possible to route truck traffic around rather than through residential neighborhoods.

Policy #21

Discourage vehicle travel through residential areas both by providing roadway improvements around the neighborhoods' perimeters and by operational changes to roadways which will impeded travel on local streets.

Policy #22

Undertake reasonable measures to improve the functioning of the city's street network, without increasing through-capacity, to reduce congestion and noise and facilitate bus and other non-automobile circulation. However, minor arterials with a residential character should be protected whenever possible.

Policy #23

Encourage all reasonable forms of nonautomobile travel including, for example, making improvements to the city's infrastructure which would promote bicycling and walking.

Policy #34

Cambridge's evolving industrial areas are a valuable resource whose mix of uses must be carefully planned over the next 20 years.

Policy #35

Appropriate development in the city's evolving industrial areas should be encouraged to maintain the city's overall economic health, to expand the tax base, and expand job opportunities for Cambridge residents.

Policy #38

Within clearly established limits, land use regulations in the evolving industrial areas should recognize the need for flexibility of use - as for instance between office, research, and light manufacturing activities - and provide for a wide range of density options throughout the city

including those which foster research and development and start-up operations.

Policy #39

Development patterns in all nonresidential areas must be planned to minimize negative impact on abutting residential neighborhoods.

Housing Policies

Policy #29

Encourage rehabilitation of the existing housing stock. Concentrate city funds and staff efforts on rehabilitation that will provide units for low- and moderate-income residents.

Policy #31

Promote affordable home ownership opportunities where financially feasible.

Economic Development and Employment Policies

Policy #40

The city should actively assist its residents in developing the skills necessary for them to take full advantage of the city's changing economic makeup and to provide the personnel resources which would make Cambridge a desirable place to locate and expand.

Policy #41

The benefits of a strong employment base should be extended to portions of the resident population that have not benefited in the past; the city should support appropriate training programs that advance this objective.

Policy # 42

While recognizing some of the disadvantages of any urban location for many kinds of manufacturing activities, the city should make every effort to retain and recruit a wide range of enterprises suitable for a Cambridge location, presently, or in

the future as manufacturing processes evolve and change. Where possible the disadvantages should be minimized and the real advantages strengthened for manufacturing activities that can widen the city's job base and solidify its economic vitality.

Policy #43

The city should establish the regulatory environment and provide the support necessary to encourage the establishment of manufacturing activities for which the city may be a suitable location in the future.

Policy #44

The city should actively cultivate a regulatory and policy environment that assists in the retention of existing industries, supports the creation of new businesses and the innovative thinking that precedes it, retains an inventory of low-cost space necessary for fledgling enterprises, and fosters and innovative environment where entrepreneurship thrives.

Policy #46

The diversity, quality, and vigor of the city's physical, ethnic, cultural, and educational environment should be nurtured and strengthened as a fundamental source of the city's economic viability. More specifically, minority businesses and economic entrepreneurship should be encouraged.

Policy #47

Existing retail districts should be strengthened; new retail activity should be directed toward the city's existing retail squares and corridors.

Policy #48

Retail districts should be recognized for their unique assets, opportunities, and functions, and those aspects should be encouraged, in part to assure that they can compete with regional shopping centers and maintain their economic vitality.

Urban Design and Environment Policies

Policy #60

Urban design and environmental standards should be developed for all areas of the city which are or may be in the future subject to redevelopment or significant new development.

Policy #62

As transitions between differing uses are extremely important in a densely developed city, urban design standards should be developed to ensure that these transitions are made properly, respecting the maximum extent possible the needs of each contrasting use.

Open Space Policies

Policy #63

Open space and recreational facilities serving a wide range of functions and clientele, including the elderly and special needs populations, should be encourage, either through expansion of the existing inventory, through multiple use of existing facilities, or through creative programming of those facilities.

Policy #66

New open space facilities, including larger ones for organized activities, should be considered for those private developments where the size of the development, the amount of land area and/or the ownership patterns provide the flexibility to accommodate such a facility without loss of economic value for other uses.

Policy #69

the city should encourage the permanent retention and protection of useful, effective, attractive private open space whether publicly accessible or not. Community use of private recreational and open space facilities in the city should be encouraged at reasonable levels where the private function of those facilities would not be impaired and where the recreational activity provided by the private facility is not well served in available public facilities.

Policy #70

Repair, maintenance and timely upgrading of existing facilities should be the city's highest fiscal priority with regard to open space and recreational facilities. The city should explore, and adopt as appropriate, mechanism whereby the private sector can reasonably provide, assist in and/or contribute to the maintenance of publicly useable open space and recreational facilities.
