

City Council Roundtable

November 14, 2016

A map of Cambridge, Massachusetts, with various neighborhoods labeled in white text. The map is set against a blue background with a light blue overlay showing the city's boundaries and major water bodies like Fresh Pond and the Charles River. The neighborhoods labeled include North Cambridge, Cambridge Highlands, Neighborhood Nine, Strawberry Hill, West Cambridge, Agassiz, Mid-Cambridge, Riverside, The Port, Cambridgeport, Area MIT, East Cambridge, and Wellington/Harrington.

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Agenda

Project and Engagement Update

Overview of “A Changing Cambridge”

- Existing conditions
- How is Cambridge measuring up to it's core values?
- Where do we go from here?

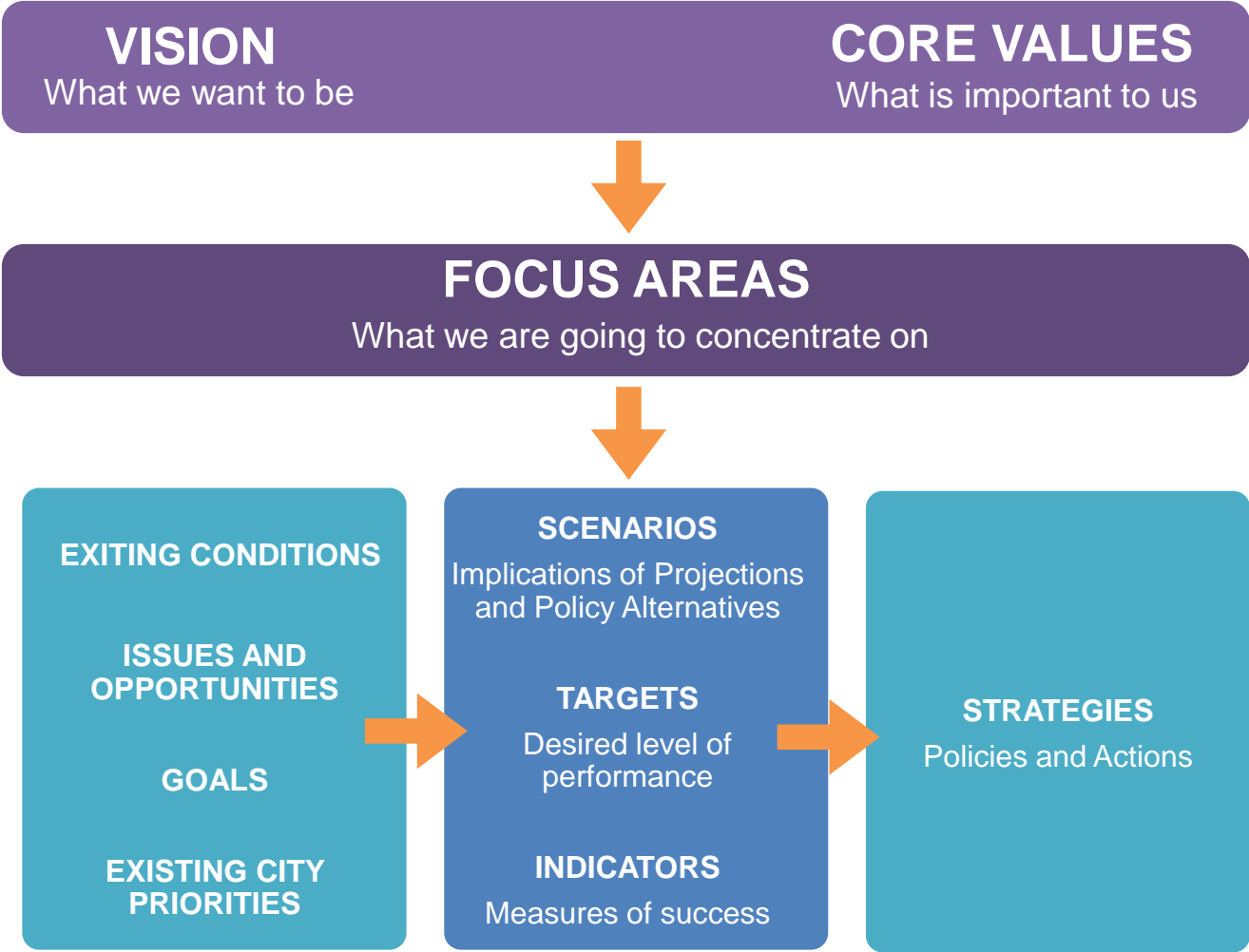
Discussion

Overview of Next Steps

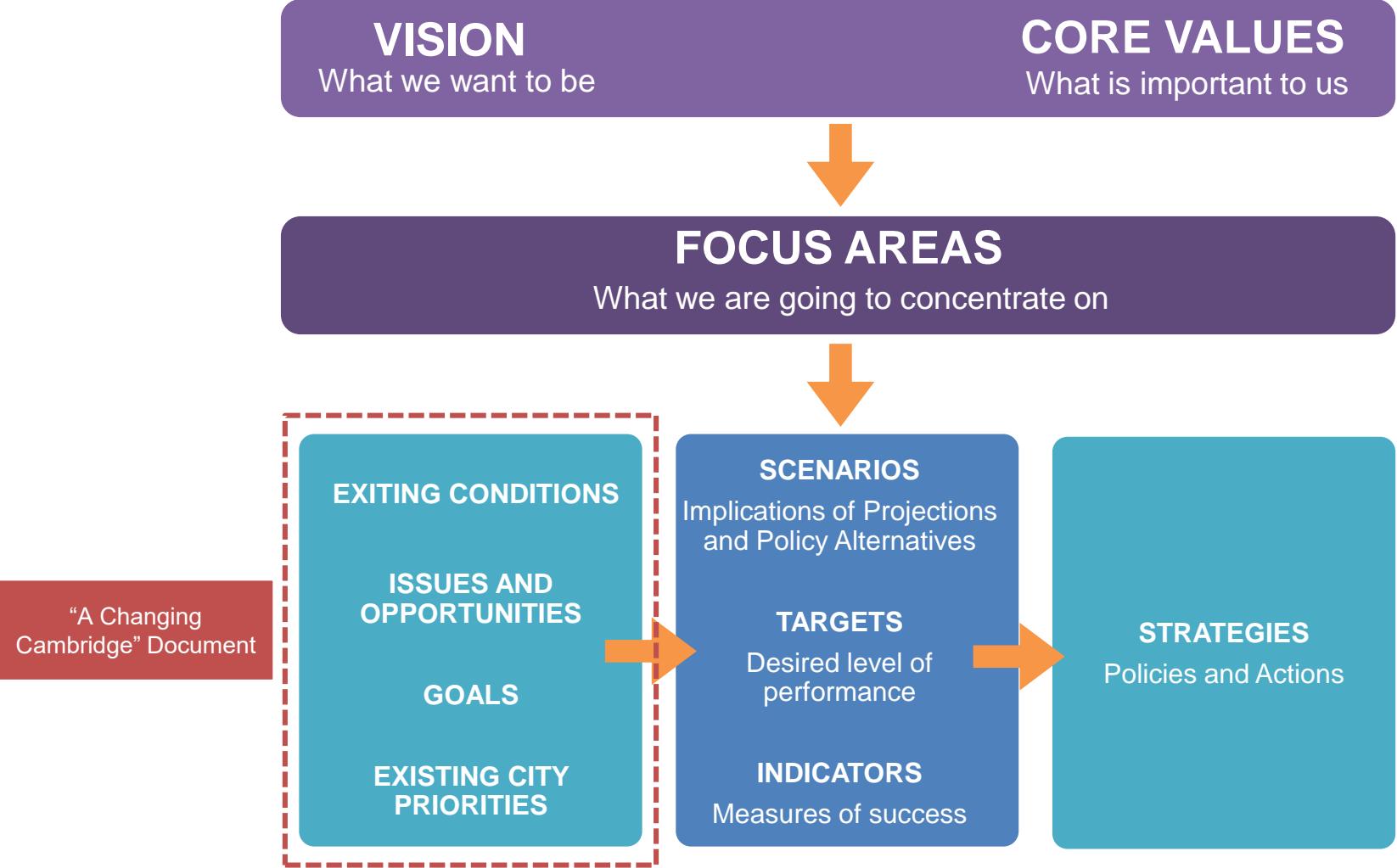
Wrap Up

Project update

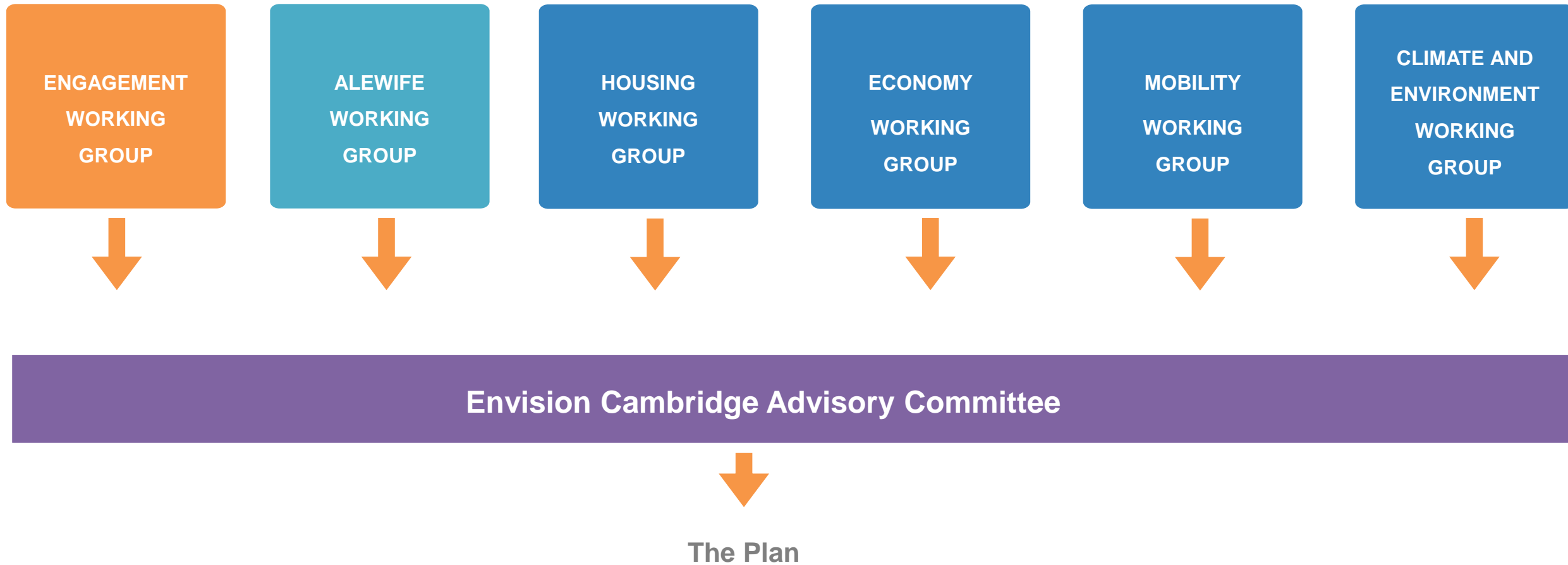
Project Framework



Project Framework



Role of ECAC: Liaison between topic-focused and citywide interests



Engagement update

Hubway ads

**Envision
new ways
to get around.**

**Envision
Cambridge.**



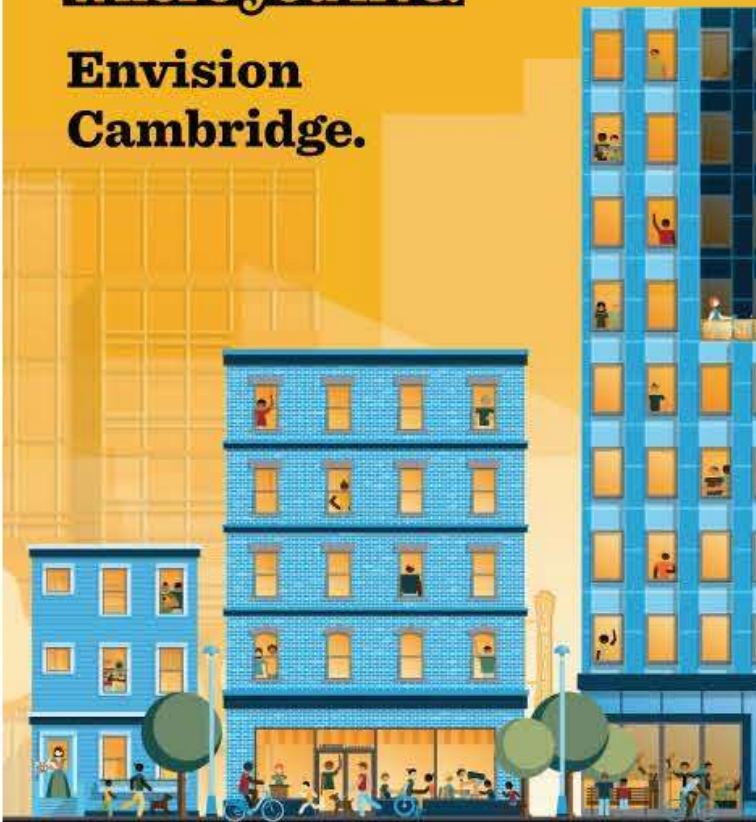
The illustration shows a city street scene. In the foreground, a blue bus is stopped, with several people riding bicycles and walking. A person is also pushing a stroller. In the background, a brick building has a person looking out of a window. A flying saucer with two people inside is flying in the sky. A digital display shows '908' and '578'.

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**Envision
where you live.**

**Envision
Cambridge.**



The illustration shows a city street scene with three blue brick buildings of different heights. People are walking and cycling on the street. The buildings have many windows, some of which are lit up. There are green trees in the foreground.

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**Envision
the jobs of
the future.**

**Envision
Cambridge.**



The illustration shows a city street scene with a tall blue building. The building has many windows, and people are working on different levels. There are green trees in the foreground. People are also walking and cycling on the street.

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Newspaper issue 1



In-person events

Listening and Visioning Workshops

- Citywide and Alewife Visioning Workshops
- “What’s the Plan?” Panel 2

Fall pop-up events with engagement station

- Cambridge Carnival
- DPW at Observatory Hill
- (PARK)ing Day
- Danehy Park Family Day
- Port Pride Day
- DPW BBQs – North and West Cambridge



Street team and surveys

- Vision and Core Values brochure, survey
- Core Values post-it activity
- Placing Core Values on the map
- CET Focus Groups



The Plan

Envision Cambridge is a three-year public process to develop a comprehensive plan for a more livable, sustainable, and equitable city.

With input from the community, Envision Cambridge has developed a shared vision around six core values for the city's future.

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Engagement by Numbers!

2,510

People reached with the mobile engagement station

1,706

Online and in-person survey responses

2,372

Social media interactions

211

Workshop attendees

119

Participants in focus groups with hard-to-reach populations

16

Public meetings, including workshops, panels, and working group discussions

Engagement summary as of July 2016.
For a full report, visit the documents tab at
envision.cambridgema.gov/documents/#summaries

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Survey 04:
Core Values

Which aspects of each core value are most important to you?

Livability _____

Diversity and Equity _____

Economic Opportunity _____

Sustainability and Resilience _____

Community Health and Well _____

Learning _____

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Survey 04:
Vision

What is the most important thing that Cambridge should be in the future?

What does this vision mean for your neighborhood?

Name: _____

Email: _____

Neighborhood: _____

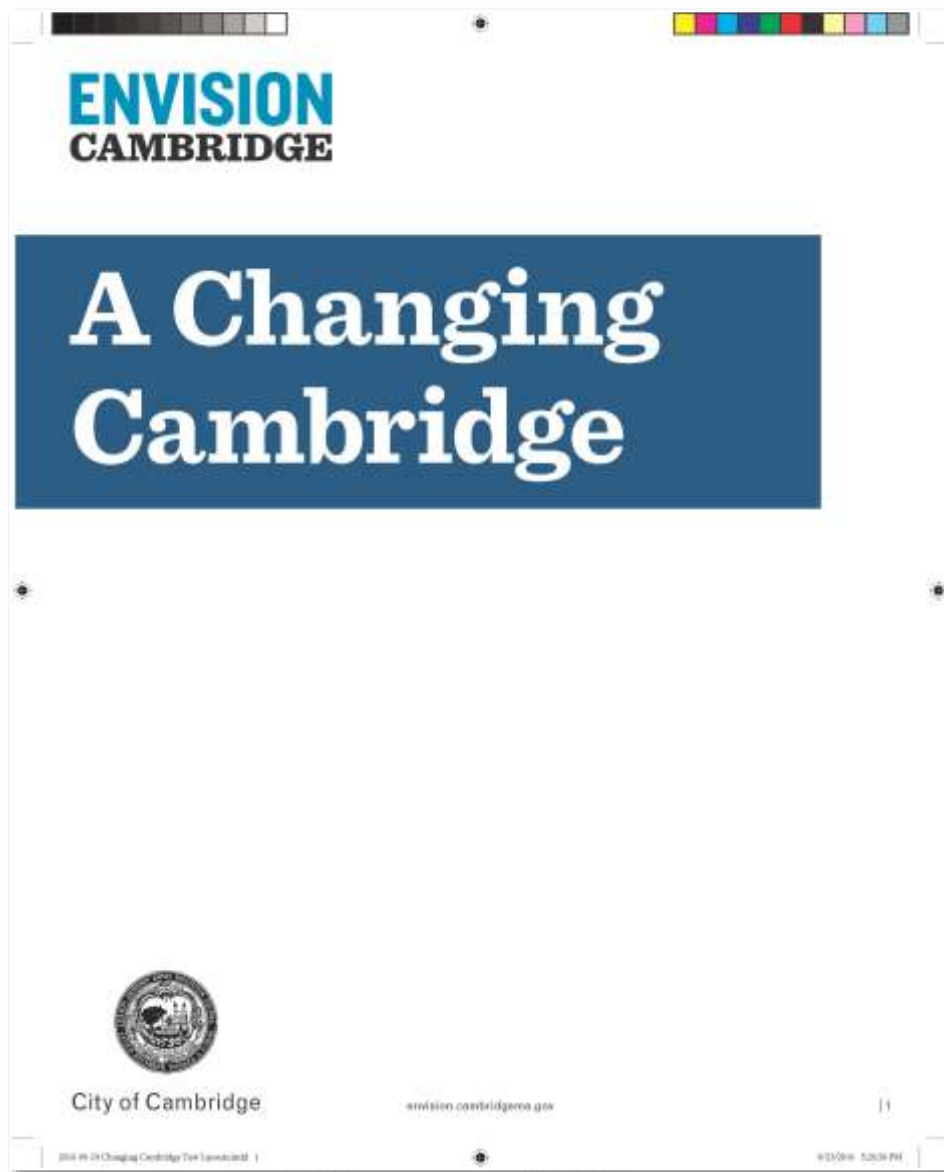
Sign up to receive email updates

Yes
☐

No
☐

A Changing Cambridge

Issues and opportunities report

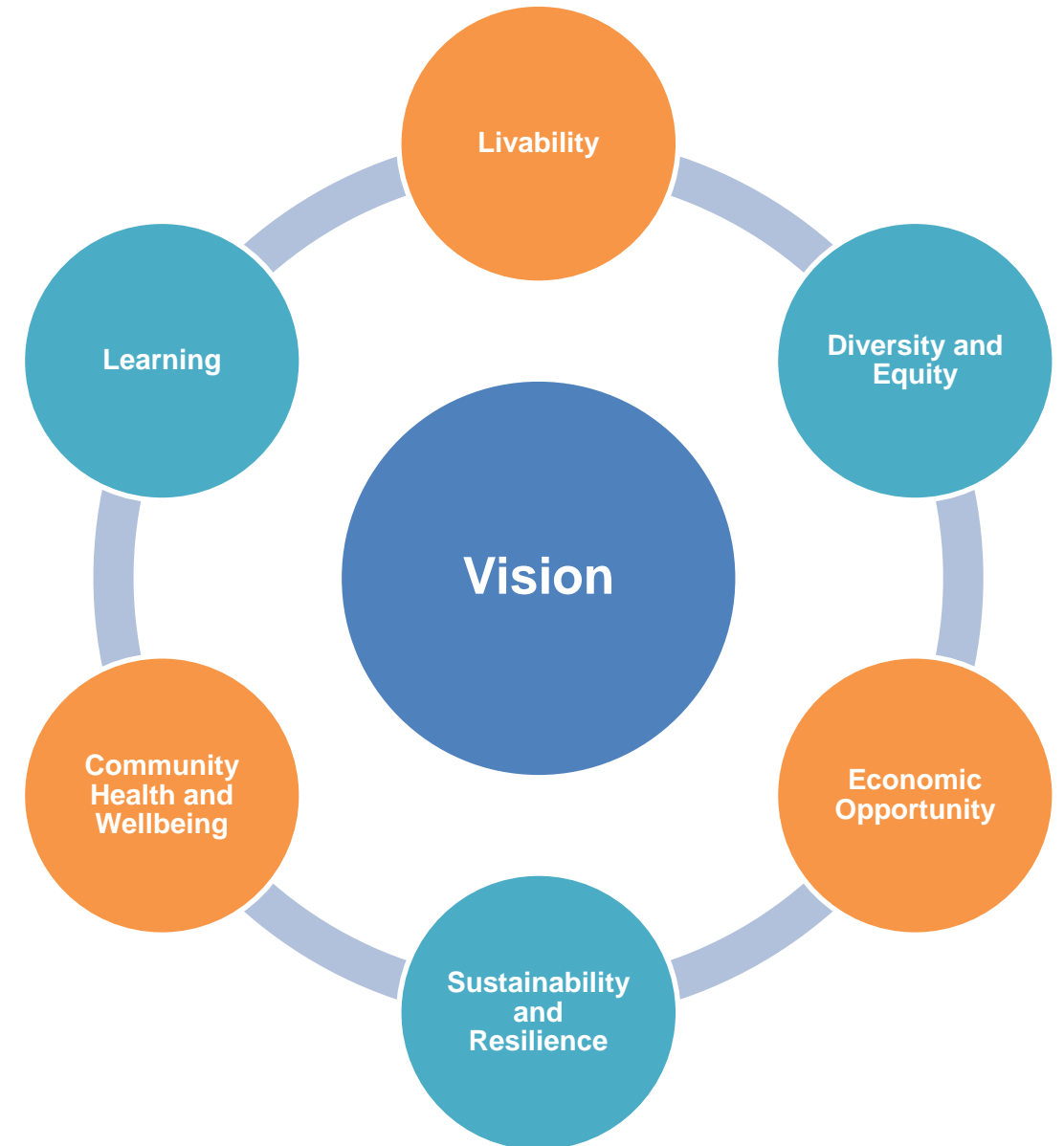


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Urban Form	##
Climate and Environment	##
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Diversity and Equity	##
Economic Opportunity	##
Sustainability and Resilience	##
Community Health and Wellbeing	##
Learning	##
Where do we go from here?	##
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Vision

What we want to be

“Cambridge is a forward-thinking, welcoming, and diverse city. We enjoy a high quality of life and thrive in a sustainable, inclusive, and connected community.”



Core Values

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

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

Economic Opportunity: We provide opportunity and stability through access to quality jobs, workforce development and training, and livable wages that support high level of services.

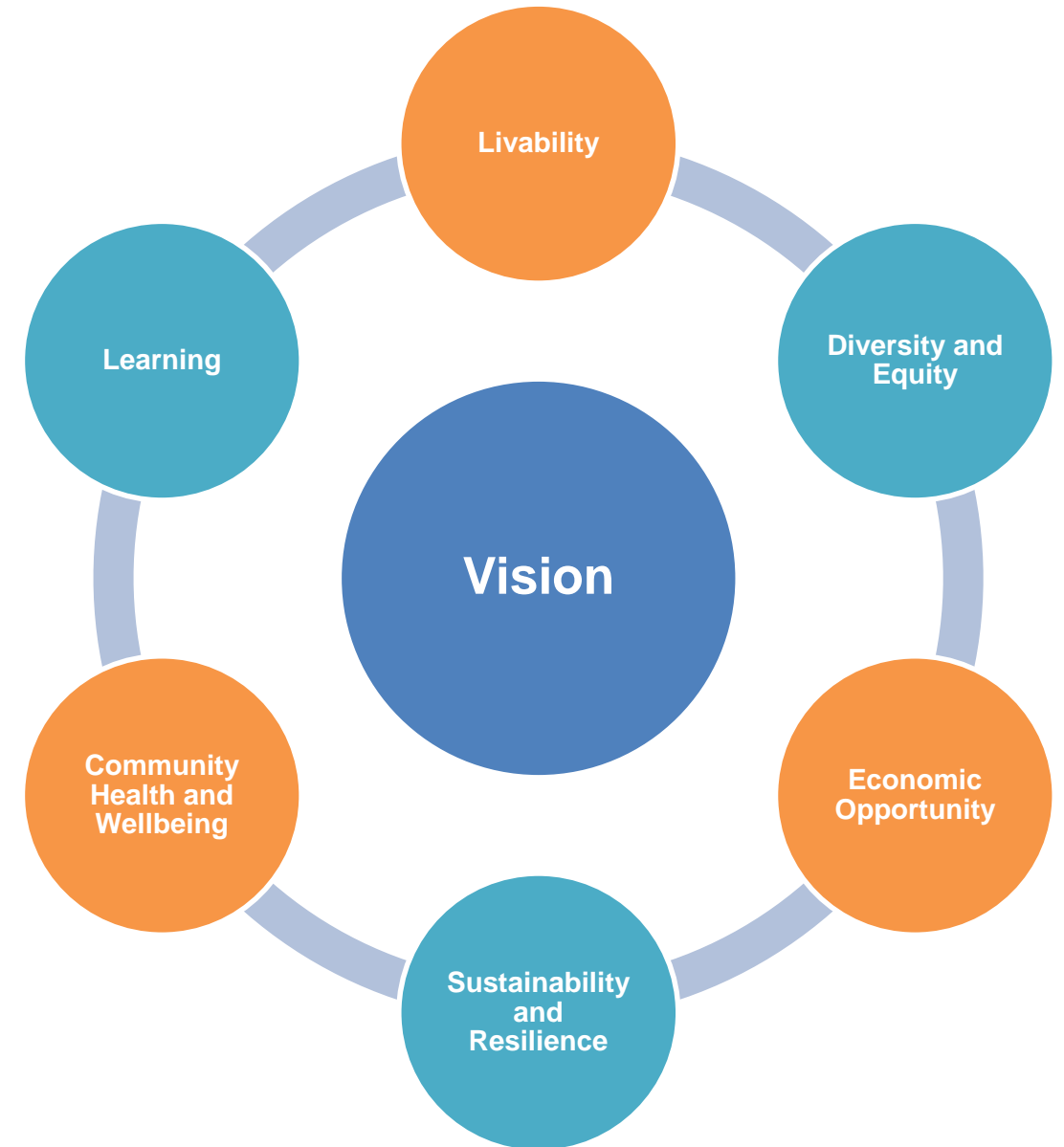
Sustainability and Resiliency: We take responsible action to reduce our impact on the environment and build a resilient city and strong community.

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

Learning: We embrace lifelong learning and celebrate the pursuit of knowledge, and our culturally rich and creative community.

Organization and Philosophy

- “A Changing Cambridge” is infused with these values
- The **Focus Areas** organize the existing conditions analysis
- The **Core Values** structure the opportunities and challenges we have identified



Public engagement

- Two phases: Listening and Visioning
- Multiple activities (right) targeting different populations for their ideas

Plan structure derived from engagement feedback

- Public input showed people’s thinking didn’t fit neatly into traditional urban planning silos. Their thinking was based on their values.

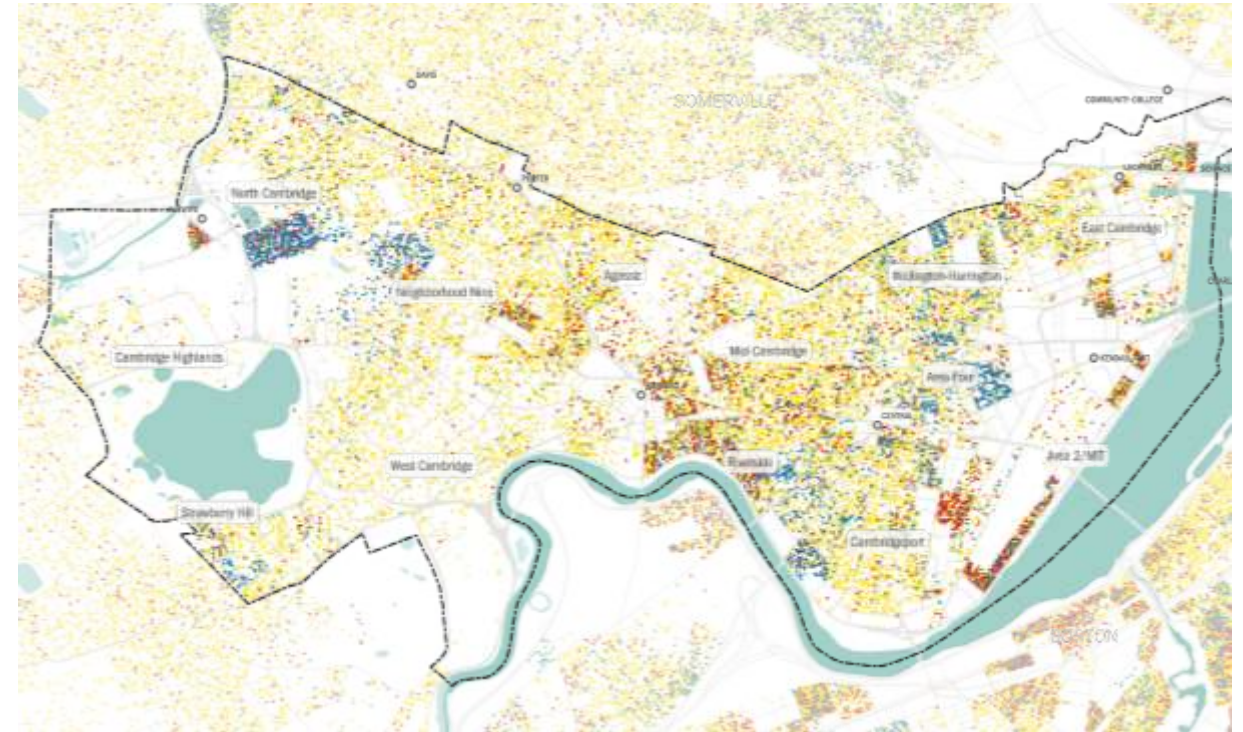


Existing conditions

Demographics

- Cambridge is moving towards its historic peak population (120,740 in 1950)
- Almost half (48%) of Cambridge's residents are 18- to 34-years-old
- Student and faculty resident populations growing 34% since 2000
- 78.5% of Cambridge's residents have a bachelor's degree or higher
- The city is becoming increasingly racially and ethnically diverse, with the percentage of foreign born residents also growing
- At the same time, the City is becoming economically polarized, often described as a "hollowing middle"

Data sources: Census Bureau, Cambridge Town and Gown reports



Population density by race

- Black
- All Other
- Hispanic
- Asian
- White

Housing

- The demand for housing in Cambridge and the Greater Boston region is growing
- This has led to housing prices and rents skyrocketing, especially in last five years
- The majority of residents are renters. A salary of \$100,000 is necessary to afford an average market rate 1-bedroom rental apartment
- Most of the recent housing production has been in former industrial areas, where the physical capacity and land use regulations are in line with the real estate development market
- Developers are building smaller units. In tandem, household sizes are also decreasing.



Data sources: Census Bureau, CDD development log

Economy

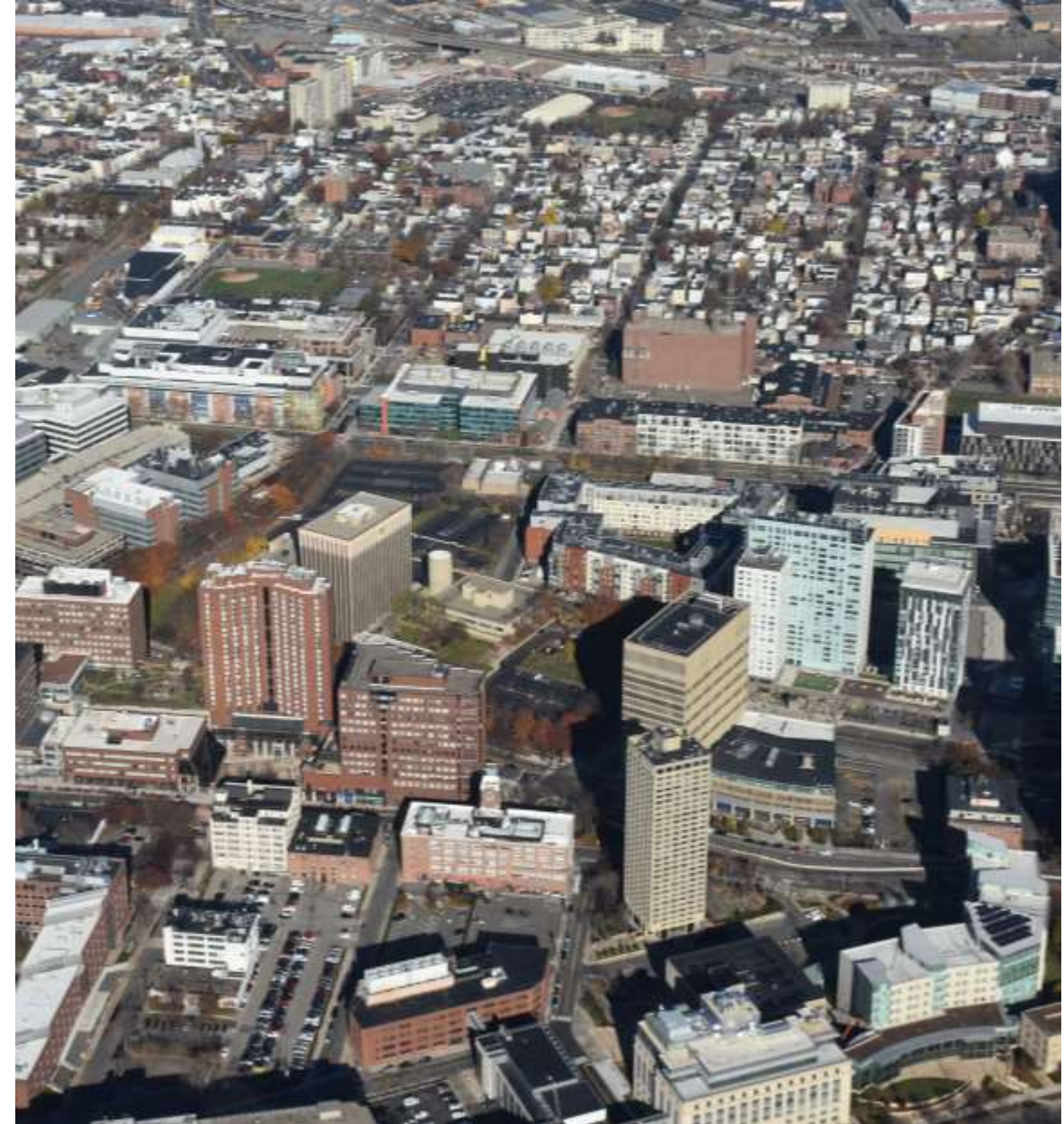
- Cambridge is cited as the center of the “knowledge economy” but the benefits are not shared by all¹
- Over half of people who work in Cambridge (48%) are in education or technical industries like scientific research²
- Wages for Cambridge workers growing, but increasing most for high-wage workers²
- Income inequality among residents is high, especially across racial and ethnic minorities³
- Commercial real estate costs are high, impacting neighborhood businesses and startups⁴

¹ “Knowledge economy” is a term meaning industries based in development and commercialization of ideas, such as the tech and life sciences industries

² MA Executive Office Labor and Workforce Development (LWD)

³ Census Bureau

⁴ HR&A analysis



Urban Form

- Cambridge has a memorable and diverse urban form defined by its physical scale and the arrangement of buildings, streets, and open spaces
- The City is relatively dense, helping to generate daytime and evening populations that create an active public realm and enable the consistent patronage of retail, transit, and public amenities
- The scale of buildings, the continuity of the street wall, and the diversity of shopfronts all contribute to Cambridge's vibrant walkable streets
- A rich mix of cultural, social, and retail amenities are within walking distance of the residential neighborhoods
- Virtually all Cambridge residents are within a 10 minute walk to some open space, but size and character of open spaces vary



Data sources: Census Bureau, Utile analysis, HR&A analysis

Climate and Environment

- City of Cambridge is a leader in sustainability and climate change mitigation and preparedness planning
- Striving to meet science-based goal of carbon neutrality by mid-Century through Net Zero Action Plan for buildings and other actions
- Air and rivers historically polluted, but have made huge strides through local and regional action
- Waste stream has been shifting increasingly to recycling (12% increase since 2010)
- 80% of GHG emissions come from building operations; transportation lesser factor due to relatively high density and low car use.
- Flooding and extreme heat are future climate change threats

Data sources: Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment, EPA, DPW, Net Zero Task Force



Mobility

- The percent of people commuting to Cambridge by transit, bike, and on foot has been increasing since 2000. As a percentage, biking has increased the most.
- Residents own fewer cars, and requests for parking permits have continued to decline the past 10+ years.
- Even with significant growth, car volumes have remained stable (with the exception of some local streets e.g. Cambridgepark Drive)
- Most residents can walk to transit, but the service ranges from infrequent buses to frequent subway.
- The Red Line currently experiences reliability and capacity problems in peak times.

Data sources: MBTA, Census Bureau, CRA, CDD reports



How does Cambridge live up to its Core Values?

Livability

- **Opportunity:** Many parts of the city are livable because of easy access to retail, open space, and transit. The City can build on these benefits and the public's expressed desire to maintain and enhance them.
- **Challenge:** Housing affordability remains the biggest challenge to livability. Rising real estate values are also creating an affordability crisis for small businesses, threatening to make everyday amenities less accessible to the public at large. Because the real estate market is regional, solutions must be both local and regional.

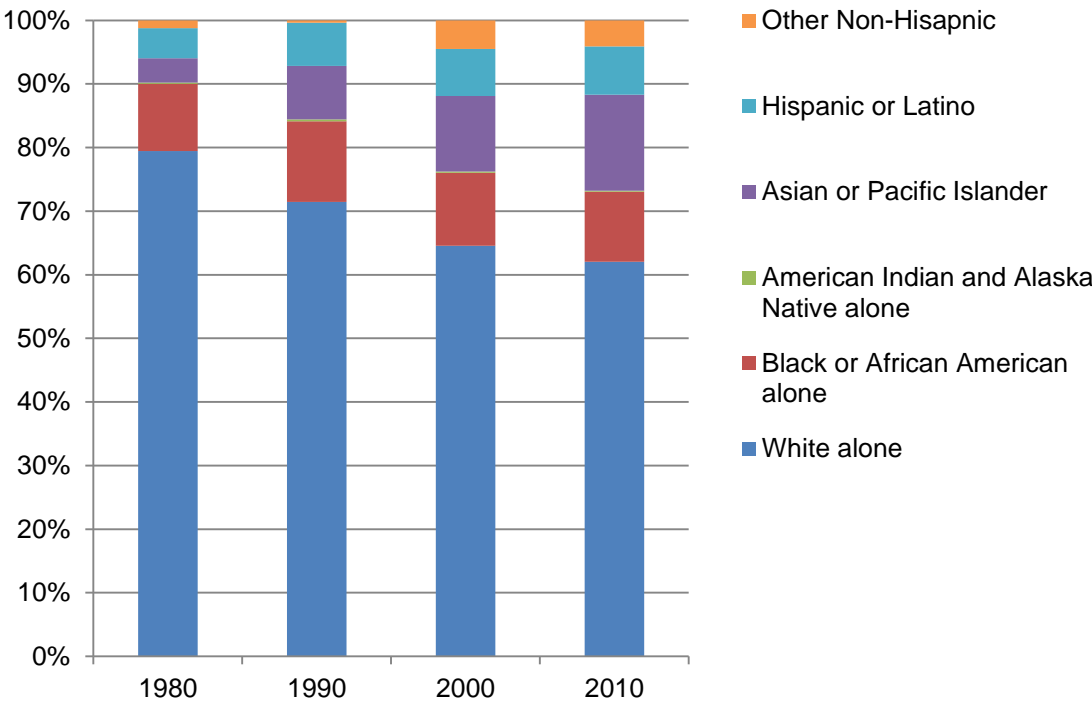


Massachusetts Avenue looking toward Central Square

Diversity and Equity

- **Opportunity:** Cambridge has the opportunity to be a leader in the public discussion about inclusion and diversity and forward-looking policies that result.
- **Challenge:** Cambridge is becoming economically less diverse, and job and housing opportunities and outcomes are inequitable across the population. Consequences of climate change will also be inequitable, most affecting the socioeconomically disadvantaged.

Residents of Cambridge by Race and Ethnicity



Economic Opportunity

- **Opportunity:** With a strong economy and top-tier public and private educational institutions, Cambridge has an uncommon advantage. Top companies locate here with a desire to have a “Cambridge address.” Cambridge continues to explore how to leverage this and create ladders of opportunity.
- **Challenge:** Over-reliance on certain business sectors (like life sciences and tech) could threaten the long-term stability of Cambridge’s economy. A disconnect between economically disadvantaged groups and career pathways in these key industries exacerbates the economic divide. Local businesses are meanwhile threatened by high real estate prices and competition for space.



Neighborhood businesses, including those which pay middle-income wages, are threatened

Sustainability and Resilience

- **Opportunity:** Cambridge has some of the nation's most progressive policies for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and is currently planning for climate change impacts. It can use this leadership and momentum to advocate for GHG and resiliency policy beyond the local scale.
- **Challenge:** Strategies to improve resilience at the district- or city-wide level needs to address existing and future development and involve regional coordination.



Flooding near Alewife.
Source: Fresh Pond Residents Alliance

Community Health and Wellbeing

- **Opportunity:** Cambridge has a built environment that makes it easy to lead an active and healthy lifestyle. The City can target policies to build more active, healthy environments in underserved areas.
- **Challenge:** Challenges related to personal health, including mental health and substance abuse, are more complex, harder to identify, and will take more creative thinking.



Learning

- **Opportunity:** Cambridge has great schools, universities, and community-based and informal learning opportunities. Together these can create a cohesive system of lifetime learning.
- **Challenge:** Connecting different formal and informal learning opportunities to create a pathway of lifelong learning requires cultivating partnerships among different stakeholders.



Cambridge's mobile library, c. 1970
Source: Cambridge Public Library

Where do we go from here?

Where do we go from here?

Create a citywide vision for the future of Cambridge

Protect and enhance Cambridge's assets:

- Stable residential fabric
- Vibrant active nodes (i.e. the squares)
- Open space and public realm

Prepare for and respond to external factors:

- Climate change
- Impacts of regional growth on housing supply / demand and mobility

Envision the future of Cambridge (Alewife as an example of a district-level intervention; Massachusetts Ave as an example of a commercial corridor):

- Character, quality and safety of public realm
- Density and urban form
- Rebalancing right-of-way for all modes

Discussion

Are there changes you would make to the key issues and opportunities?

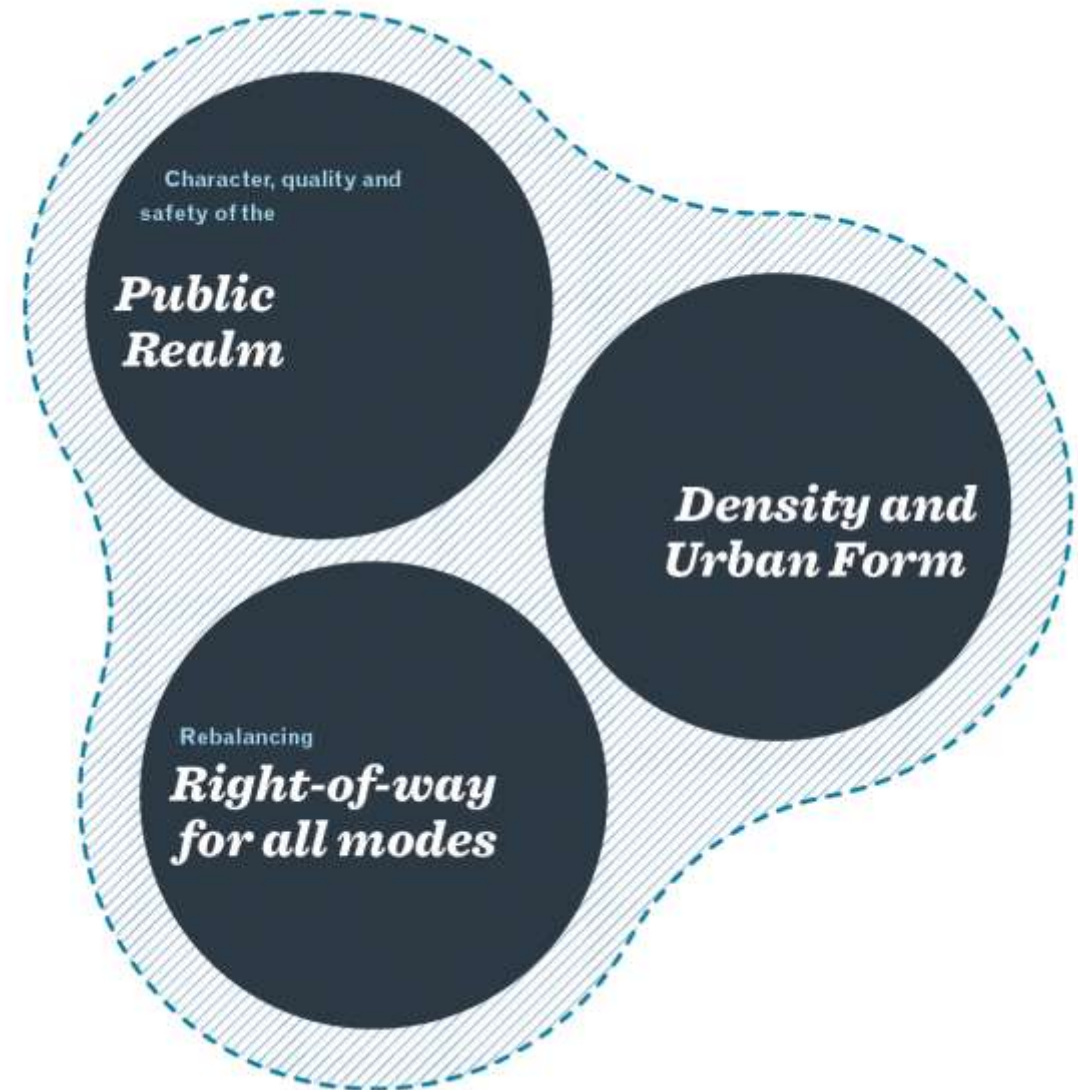
Do the core values resonate as a framework for planning?

What other areas are likely to see development pressure in the next few years?

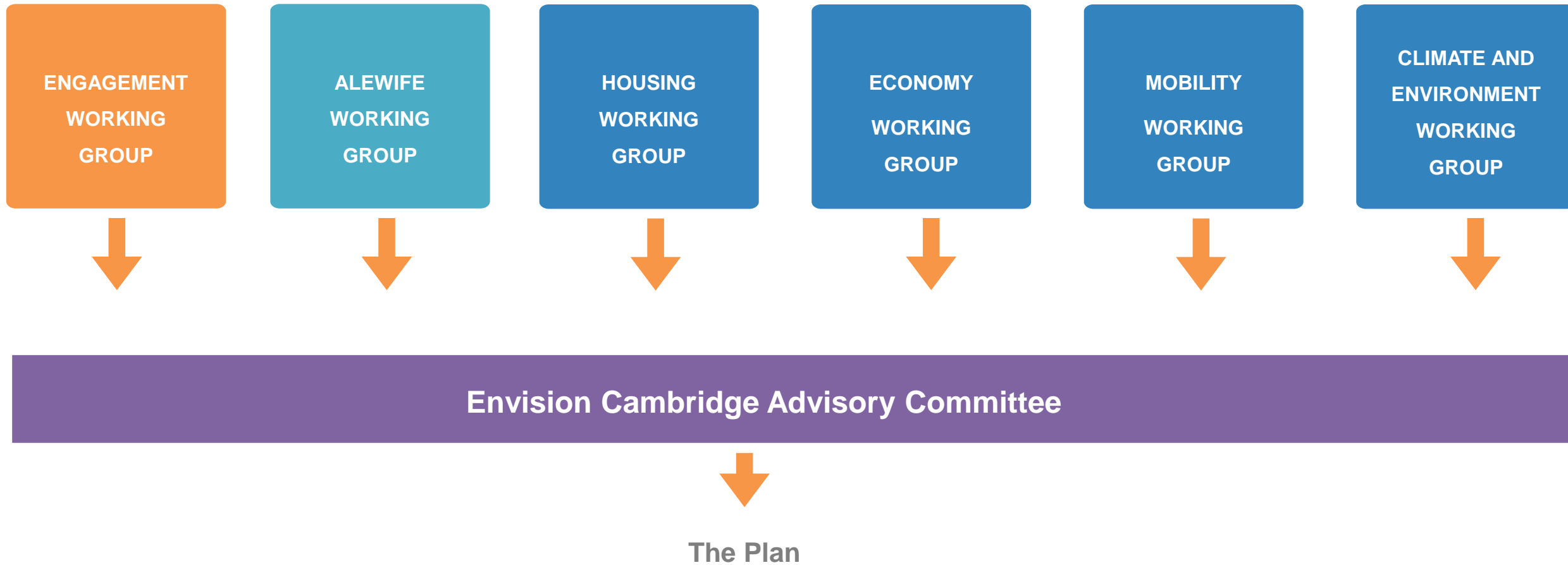
Next steps

Next Steps: Scenario development and analysis

- Study implications of population and job growth projections
- Conduct iterative development test-fits that reflect the Core Value
- Use feedback loops with economic, environmental, and transportation consultants to arrive at recommended scenarios
- Develop actions and policies
- **Public Workshops**
- **Topic-focused working groups**
 - Housing
 - Economy
 - Climate and Environment
 - Mobility



Role of ECAC: Liaison between topic-focused and citywide interests



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