Planning Board Update
November 15, 2016
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

**VISION**
What we want to be

**CORE VALUES**
What is important to us

**FOCUS AREAS**
What we are going to concentrate on

**EXITING CONDITIONS**

**ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

**GOALS**

**EXISTING CITY PRIORITIES**

**SCENARIOS**
Implications of Projections and Policy Alternatives

**TARGETS**
Desired level of performance

**INDICATORS**
 Measures of success

**STRATEGIES**
Policies and Actions
Project Framework

**FOCUS AREAS**
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**EXISTING CONDITIONS**

**ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

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**EXISTING CITY PRIORITIES**

“A Changing Cambridge” Document
Role of ECAC: Liaison between topic-focused and citywide interests
Engagement update
Hubway ads

Envision new ways to get around.
Envision Cambridge.

Envision where you live.
Envision Cambridge.

Envision the jobs of the future.
Envision Cambridge.
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
Our Vision

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.

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

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

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.

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.

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

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

Join the conversation at envision.cambridgema.gov

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-being
- Learning

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
Executive Summary

What is Envision Cambridge?

Cambridge Today
- Demographics
- Housing
- Economy
- Urban Form
- Climate and Environment
- Mobility

How is Cambridge measuring up to its core values?
- Livability
- Diversity and Equity
- Economic Opportunity
- Sustainability and Resilience
- Community Health and Wellbeing
- Learning

Where do we go from here?
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.

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**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 Resilience:** 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.

### Engagement by Numbers!

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Existing conditions
A Changing Cambridge: 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
A Changing Cambridge: Existing Conditions

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 all\(^1\).
- Almost half of people who work in Cambridge (48%) are in education or technical industries like scientific research\(^2\).
- Wages for Cambridge workers growing, but increasing most for high-wage workers\(^2\).
- Income inequality among residents is high, especially across racial and ethnic minorities\(^3\).
- Commercial real estate costs are high, impacting neighborhood businesses and startups\(^4\).

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\(^1\) “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

\(^3\) 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:** Affordability remains the biggest challenge to livability. Rising real estate values are also creating an affordability crisis for housing and 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.
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.
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.
A Changing Cambridge: Opportunities and Challenges

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.
Community Health and Wellbeing

- **Opportunity**: Relative to national averages, Cambridge is already physically and socially healthier.

- **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.
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 mitigate 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

Envision Cambridge Advisory Committee

The Plan