

ENVISION CAMBRIDGE Newspaper

A Newspaper Covering the Cambridge Citywide Plan

ABOUT ENVISION CAMBRIDGE

Envision Cambridge is a community-wide process to develop a comprehensive plan for a more livable, sustainable, and equitable Cambridge. With input from those who live, work, study, and play in our city, Envision Cambridge will create a shared vision for the city’s future. The plan will result in recommendations on a broad range of topics such as housing, mobility, economic opportunity, urban form, and climate and the environment.

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Envision Cambridge Mobile Engagement Station in action at Cambridge City Hall Annex

Welcome Bienvenidos 欢迎

Welcome to the *Envision Cambridge Newspaper*, a free publication produced by the Envision Cambridge Team.

Since Envision Cambridge was launched in November, the Team has been busy trying to understand what makes Cambridge tick. Whether we are collecting, analyzing, and interpreting housing, transit, or climate change data; interviewing experts about Cambridge’s past, present, and future; or talking to Cambridge community members about what they love about their city and what’s important to them, we’re always discovering new things about this amazing city.

We made this newspaper so readers can learn as we learn. We want to give you a window into the planning process and let

Cambridge community members see the things we see, meet the people we meet, and hear some of the feedback we hear.

Envision Cambridge Newspaper features maps, data, history, fun facts, portraits of public spaces, and interviews with Cambridge residents, community leaders, and experts. The features will highlight lesser-known aspects of the city and its neighborhoods.

Happy reading!

HELP US SPREAD THE WORD

Is there a location that is central to you, your friends, and your community that you think would be good for flyering? If so, please send an email to envision@cambridgema.gov. Please include “flyering location” in the subject line.

FYI
There are
4,566
private businesses in
Cambridge.

DID YOU KNOW?

According to the 2010-2012 American Community Survey, the predominant occupations of Cambridge residents are:

- Computer Engineering and Science Occupations - 20%
- Education, Training, and Library - 16%
- Management Occupations - 11.9%
- Service Occupations - 9.8%
- Office and Administrative Support - 8.7%

Follow
#EnvisionCambridge
on Twitter and
Facebook!



GUESS WHAT?

29.7%

of Cambridge residents are enrolled full time or part time in college or graduate degree programs.

DID YOU KNOW?

140

languages are spoken in Cambridge.

Volunteer to teach English or learn a new language at
The Cambridge Community Learning Center.

Learn more at:
cambridgema.gov/teachatclc

STAY IN TOUCH

Do you want to receive project updates via email? If so, visit envision.cambridgema.gov

WORD JUMBLE

UNSCRAMBLE THESE WORDS

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ANSWERS: zoning, envision, planning, cambridge, community, engagement

SURVEY 02

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

We want to know what you want for your city. Each issue of *Envision Cambridge Newspaper* will contain a survey that we encourage you to fill out.

Cut out the survey and mail it to:
Melissa Peters
Community Development Dept.
City Hall Annex
344 Broadway
Cambridge, MA 02139

Or snap a picture of your survey and email it to:
envision@cambridgema.gov

FYI

Major languages and language groups other than English recorded by the 2010-2012 American Community Survey include Spanish (5.4%), French, including Haitian Kreyol (4.3%), Chinese (4.8%), Portuguese (2.1%), and African languages (1.7%).

DID YOU KNOW?

42% of Cambridge’s land use is residential, with commercial uses concentrated along key corridors and squares. Another substantial portion of the city is open space, although it is not evenly distributed across neighborhoods.

Colleges and universities comprise 10% of the city’s land, with another 5% allocated toward civic, educational, and healthcare uses (labeled at right as institutional). A small portion of the city is presently categorized as mixed-use, utilities, and industrial.

Source: City of Cambridge CDD Land Use and Roads GIS

Category	Percentage
Residential	42%
Open Space	20%
Commercial	10%
Higher Education	10%
Institutional	5%
Transportation	4%
Research & Development	3%
Mixed Use	2%
Industrial	2%
Utility	1%

CUT ALONG THE DOTTED LINE

ENVISION CAMBRIDGE

Survey 02:
A Vision for Cambridge

Envision Cambridge is a community-wide process to develop a comprehensive plan for a more livable, sustainable, and equitable Cambridge. With input from those who live, work, study, and play in our city, Envision Cambridge will create a shared vision for its future.

Envision Cambridge Survey 01 asked for priorities for the plan and what you loved most about the city. We heard that **housing, mobility and transportation, and urban form** were the topics that matter most to you. Now we would like your help visioning for Cambridge.

Survey 02 asks for your hopes and visions for Cambridge's future.

If your hopes are realized, in twenty years Cambridge will be . . .

When you think of how you would like Cambridge to be in the future, what words or phrases come to mind around the following topics? (Free associate!)

Mobility and Transportation

Housing

Community Interaction

Urban Form

Climate and the Environment

Economic Opportunity

What should the three main goals of the plan be?

1.

2.

3.

City of Cambridge

Spotlight on...Community Learning Center

Great cities like Cambridge have spaces for communities to live together, gather, and celebrate. In Cambridge, these spaces are churches, neighborhood restaurants, and informal clubs that become a living room for people with similar interests. For this issue, we look at the Cambridge Community Learning Center (CLC).

Every weekday morning and evening, a rush of students floods the halls of the Community Learning Center's (CLC) flagship facility at Central Square, which occupies the former police station building. Close to 1,000 students annually enroll at CLC. Some are speakers of other languages who study English at five different levels; others are adults learning basic literacy, studying for high school equivalency, and preparing for college.

Students at CLC come from across Cambridge and range in age, skill levels, and language backgrounds, representing the diversity of Cambridge's cultural heritage. Students come from more than 70 countries, including Haiti, Ethiopia, Bangladesh, Brazil, and China. Many students are long-term residents of Cambridge, while others are recent immigrants to the city.

CLC provides bright new classrooms with state-of-the-art technology and computer labs on site. It also has a large, cozy lounge, where students often eat dinner or chat between classes. CLC works hard to provide connections to jobs and career pathways for its students. It supports its many students who are aspiring to healthcare occupations by offering specific classes targeted to medical language and maintaining an active relationship with Mt. Auburn Hospital. It also maintains a relationship with Bunker Hill Community College and often graduates students to further learning opportunities there. Additionally, CLC has created part-time outreach positions that are filled by current and former CLC students.

CLC always welcomes new students and also welcomes Cambridge residents looking to volunteer as classroom aides or tutors who work one-on-one with students to boost their language skills.

2015 ENROLLMENT BY COUNTRY

Country	Number
Haiti	208
Ethiopia	83
Bangladesh	44
Brazil	41
USA	41
China	35
El Salvador	32
Dominican R.	24
Eritrea	16
India	14
Japan	14
Morocco	13
Nepal	12
Jamaica	11
Cape Verde	9
Sudan	8
Colombia	7
Puerto Rico	7
Algeria	6
Honduras	6
Peru	6

For more information on the center or to get involved, visit their website at:

cambridgema.gov/clcinfo

or call (617) 349-6363.

The Cambridge Community Learning Center is located at:

5 Western Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139

WHERE IS YOUR COMMUNITY SPACE?

We want to profile places that are important to you. If you have a suggestion, email it to envision@cambridgema.gov. Please include "Community Space" in the subject line.

DID YOU KNOW?
Cambridge is home to over 300 life science and technology-related companies.



A section of a quilt made by students from the Community Learning Center



Students from the Cambridge Community Learning Center

In April, we reported back our early findings to you, the City Council, and the Planning Board. In June and July, we had a series of visioning activities, both for the city as a whole and for Alewife.



Envision Cambridge public workshop at the Kennedy-Longfellow School



Envision Cambridge public workshop at the Tobin School



Envision Cambridge public workshop at the Cambridge Senior Center

CAMBRIDGE ON CAMBRIDGE

In our survey, we ask people what words come to mind when they think of Cambridge and what they love about Cambridge. Here are the results so far.

1. When you think of Cambridge, what words or phrases come to mind?



2. What do you love about Cambridge?



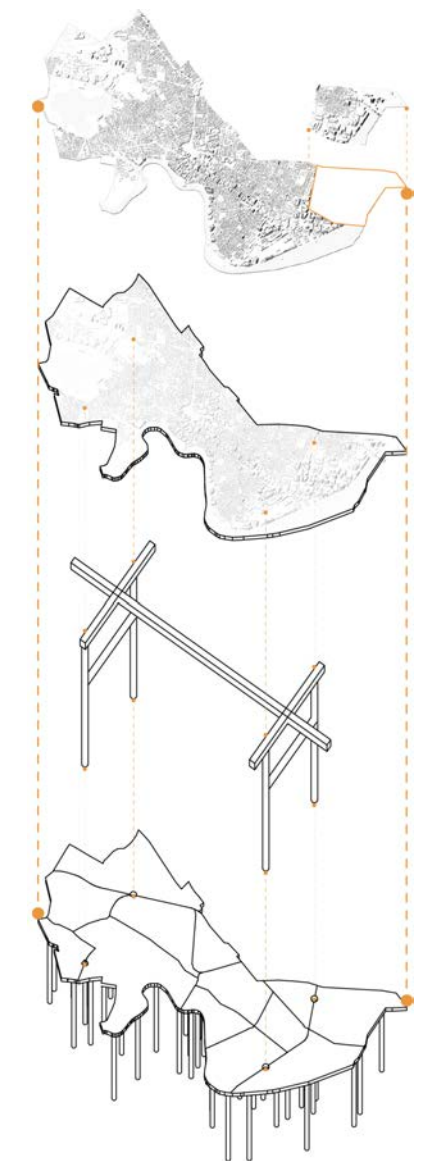
Mobile Engagement Station Comes to Cambridge

On March 1, the Envision Cambridge Team launched its Mobile Engagement Station, a large interactive model of Cambridge that gives Cambridge residents and workers the opportunity to identify what they like and don't like about Cambridge and to share their hopes for the future.

The Station has three layers. The top layer is a 3D model of Cambridge showing all of the buildings in the city. The second layer is a map of Cambridge, color-coded by land use and showing all streets and building footprints. The third layer consists of stools in the shape of each of Cambridge's neighborhoods.

An Envision Cambridge "Street Team" has been taking the Station to different locations around Cambridge. When we take the Station out, we ask residents to draw their daily routes, favorite places, least favorite places, and ideas for the future. So far, we have collected 624 routes, 1906 favorite places, 819 least favorite places, and 574 ideas for the future.

When the Station is not in use, it stays at City Hall, where it will be used to visualize some of our findings.



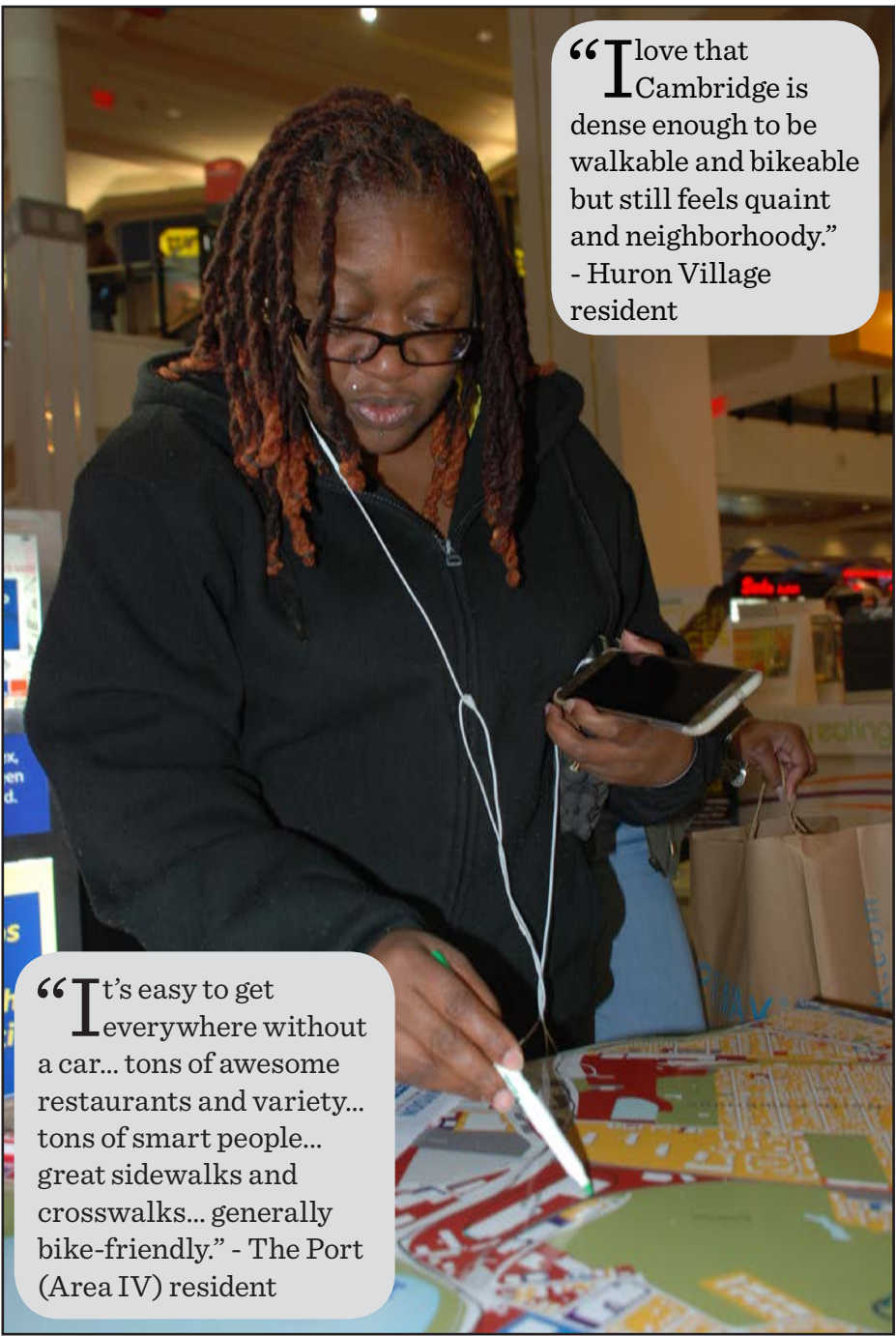
Drawing of the Mobile Engagement Station

Here's where we've been so far:	
3/1/2016	Mid-Cambridge (City Hall Annex)
3/5/2016	Harvard Square
3/6/2016	Cambridge Public Library
3/12/2016	Area IV
3/13/2016	Porter Square
3/14/2016	Kendall Square
3/19/2016	Cambridgeside Galleria
3/20/2016	Inman Square
3/24/2016	Kennedy-Longfellow School
3/26/2016	Huron Village
3/30/2016	Tobin School
3/31/2016	Tobin School
4/2/2016	Cambridge Community Center
4/2/2016	Cambridge Senior Center
4/6/2016	Alewife T Station
4/11/2016	Collins Branch Library
4/15/2016	Lafayette Square
4/16/2016	Cambridge Rindge & Latin
4/27/2016	Cambridge Public Library
5/11/2016	MIT
5/14/2016	158 Spring Street
5/15/2016	Harvard Square
5/19/2016	Frisoli
5/24/2016	Fletcher Maynard School
5/27/2016	City Hall
5/31/2016	Cambridge Learning Center
6/1/2016	Cambridge Learning Center
6/4/2016	River Festival
6/6/2016	Trader Joe's Alewife
6/11/2016	Fresh Pond
6/18/2016	Hoops n Health at Hoyt Field
6/19/2016	Mayors Cup at Donnelly Field
6/21/2016	Magazine Beach
6/24/2016	Central Square
6/25/2016	Rindge Field
6/26/2016	Sennott Park
7/7/2016	Greene Rose Heritage Park
7/10/2016	Northpoint Park
7/13/2016	Centanni Courtyard
7/19/2016	Riverside Press Park
7/20/2016	Newtowne Court
7/22/2016	Cambridge Rindge & Latin
7/23/2016	Magazine Beach

Where can you find us next?

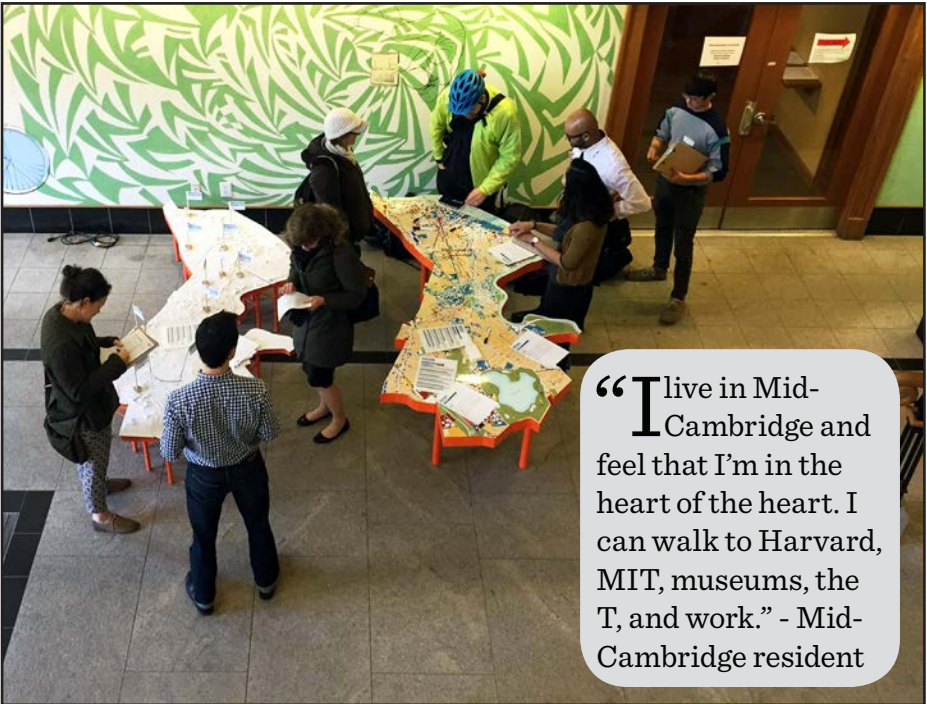
The mobile engagement station schedule can be found on the city website:

envision.cambridgema.gov



“I love that Cambridge is dense enough to be walkable and bikeable but still feels quaint and neighborhoody.” - Huron Village resident

“It’s easy to get everywhere without a car... tons of awesome restaurants and variety... tons of smart people... great sidewalks and crosswalks... generally bike-friendly.” - The Port (Area IV) resident



“I live in Mid-Cambridge and feel that I’m in the heart of the heart. I can walk to Harvard, MIT, museums, the T, and work.” - Mid-Cambridge resident

THE MOBILE ENGAGEMENT STATION AND YOU

The Mobile Engagement Station already has a very busy schedule, but we want to make sure it makes it to your community! Is there a location that is central to you, your friends, and your community where you would like us to bring the Mobile Engagement Station? If so, send an email to envision@cambridgema.gov. Please include “Mobile Engagement Station” in the subject line.

DID YOU KNOW?

32.0%

of Cambridge residents age 5 or older speak a language other than English at home.

Why do people love Lafayette Square?

SO MANY GREAT PUBLIC SPACES, BUT WHAT MAKES THEM WORK?

We looked at Lafayette Square at the intersection of Massachusetts Avenue and Sidney Street, where a gas station once stood. On any typical day (if the weather is cooperating), you will find many people outdoors enjoying the plaza, sitting along the planters or at one of the outdoor tables provided for the public. Many are having conversations with friends and family as they enjoy ice cream or food from one of the restaurants flanking the square or while waiting patiently for a table inside. Others take in a moment alone: studying for class, reading a book, or checking email on their phones. Those walking by the square enjoy a brief opportunity to people watch, well aware that they are likely being watched in return.

Indeed, one of the reasons Lafayette Square is such a successful urban space is that it

caters well to all of these types of users simultaneously, providing many options for each group to interact with the plaza and, potentially, with each other.

The original intent of Lafayette Square was to improve pedestrian safety at the busy Massachusetts and Main intersection by closing off part of Main Street to vehicular traffic. However, what sets it apart from other projects of this type is the design of the plaza itself. It does not attempt to differentiate itself from its surroundings in any major way, as some new urban plazas do, or make a bold design statement. It successfully blends into the urban context that already exists while subtly making its own contribution.

Our team went out on a nice, sunny day to ask the people hanging out at Lafayette Square the following questions:

1) What brought you here today?

2) What do you think of this square?

- 1) We just had brunch here at Desi Dhaba. It was beautiful outside so we sat here to enjoy the sun.
- 2) I personally like the space and frequent this area a lot, even though I don't live here. I just think it's a nice space—the centrality of it and just the way it's laid out. It's like the heart of Cambridge right here. I don't think there's too many places that look like this around here. There's an openness to the architecture. The buildings are just your ordinary, mom-and-pop small buildings so you don't feel overwhelmed—you're just like this important person enjoying the sun. It's the kind of place where people just congregate and have a good time.

WHICH SPACE IS YOUR PLACE?

Where do you hang out? What's your favorite public space in Cambridge? If there is a public space that you are particularly passionate about, we would love to hear about it; maybe we will even feature it in a future edition of *Envision Cambridge Newspaper*! Send your feedback to envision@cambridgema.gov. Please include "Public Space is the Place" in the subject line.

Nkatha & James



Ricardo



- 1) I'm working for a company that picks up food and delivers it. So, I'm just here waiting on an order from Café Luna and then I've gotta run.
- 2) Yeah, it's a nice place to sit. It's a great place to just kind of hang out and have a coffee.

Doug & Kevin



- 1) We went to the MIT Museum, had lunch, and just got some ice cream. It's a nice day—nice and sunny out—and this looked like a nice place to sit.
- 2) It worked for us! It's certainly welcoming and convenient for everybody here. And it's pretty nice, especially Toscanini's.

- 1) I was trying to get some tickets to a rock concert over at the Middle East that was sold out. So, I gave up and now I'm just spending my time waiting for the concert to start.
- 2) Yeah, it's a good place. A lot of people walking, and it looks safe.



Vincent

- 1) We went to the MIT Museum and we were just looking for somewhere outdoors to enjoy a little bit of fresh air.
- 2) If you look around, you've got the old and the new architecture here. The seating was very nice.



Ted & Maxine

BIG PLANS FOR CAMBRIDGE

What is a citywide plan? How have comprehensive plans shaped Cambridge in the past? How are planning decisions made, and who makes them? Here we ask three prominent local planners a simple question: What should a Cambridge comprehensive plan do?

Philip Clay

Professor and former chancellor of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology



The city should focus on vision and strategy and not a traditional comprehensive plan that has unhelpful rigidity and can become outdated.

The plan should call for attractive and active places, especially not just at T stops in neighborhood commercial areas. These environments support walking, accommodate the elderly and those with special needs, and feature green space.

The plan should acknowledge the diversity of the Cambridge community and encourage appropriate inclusion of features to support community-generated activity.

The plan should encourage and facilitate the production of affordable housing.

The plan should specify and highlight urban design features that apply to all significant projects (greater than 50,000 feet or located in critical areas) and give preference or incentives when desirable features are included.

The plan should specify the ways planners, developers, and investors can engage communities and the ways the community can engage with local agencies.

The plan should include the

Charles River as a significant element and include green infrastructure to enhance the environment as a potential recreational asset and to mitigate climate change risks. Similar attention should be extended to Fresh Pond.

The plan should identify ways to use digital technologies to support community engagement with agencies and to support community life.

Ann Forsyth

Director of the urban planning program at Harvard Graduate School of Design



A comprehensive plan focuses on a big scale in terms of space, time, and people. It allows a community to understand the connections between places and consider what is fair to all. Three examples show how this helps.

First, the planning process can look out at alternative plausible futures that the city and its residents might face and create a plan that is robust enough to have good outcomes under a variety of scenarios. Second, governments make a lot of plans, strategies, and policies about different topics over time. A comprehensive planning process can identify inconsistencies and contradictions that matter and then foster an informed public debate about how to resolve them. Third, one important contradiction is the jobs-housing balance. Cambridge has succeeded in attracting and retaining jobs; it has not been

so successful in housing those workers.

Affordability is, however, a problem that is difficult to deal with one project or policy at a time. Comprehensive planning can identify the scale of the problem for current and potential residents, highlight issues of equity, and identify opportunities—from specific vacant parcels to better transportation links to surrounding communities.

Alex Krieger

Professor in Practice of urban design at Harvard Graduate School of Design



In Cambridge, where debating development futures is practically a contact sport, a comprehensive plan should have the goal of calming passions; a diminution in the angst and concern that the next round of change will, as if it were inevitable, irrevocably harm local quality of life, preventing Cambridge from remaining Cambridge. How interesting might it be if skepticism about change is channelled to a consideration that more of some things—whether housing choice, density, diversity of citizens and institutions, or greater overlap of activities—might just lead to a better Cambridge one day?

This is NOT a call for acquiescence to any development projects as they come along. Hardly. Many comprehensive plans, upon publication, become inert, somewhat tedious compilations of broad land use and development-related goals. Not a particularly helpful tool when an ambitious development project comes forward for public scrutiny.

But if a comprehensive plan’s goals and recommendations enable calmer discussions to unfold—discussions recognizing that any great human setting is ever evolving; discussions mindful of the impacts of change, with of course determination to avoid harmful change, but discussions dedicating equal effort to pondering the potential benefits of change—then the comprehensive plan process will have achieved its purpose.

BRING YOUR OWN BAG

Clean bags regularly to keep them germ-free.

Avoid the minimum 10¢ charge on each checkout bag

CambridgeMA.Gov/BYOB

City of Cambridge
Bring Your Own Bag Ordinance
Effective March 31, 2016

Do you need to prepare for college?

THE BRIDGE PROGRAM

can help open the door to your future!
The Community Learning Center offers free classes to help you get ready:
College prep; reading, writing, math; computer skills; and study skills. Info on college and financial aid and help with applications.
Class meets Monday, Wednesday & Thursday evenings, 6:15pm–9:15pm
5 Western Avenue
Central Square, Cambridge

DID YOU KNOW?

28.1%

of Cambridge residents are foreign-born.
Cambridge has long served as a port of entry for immigrants from around the world.

EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITY

Want to learn about Affordable Housing Opportunities in Cambridge?

Visit: www.cambridgema.gov/cdd/housing





WHAT DO YOU WANT TO ASK A PLANNER?

For our next issue, we are soliciting questions about housing. Send your questions to envision@cambridgema.gov. Please include “Ask a Planner” in the subject line. We will select the best questions we receive and ask an expert planner to answer them.

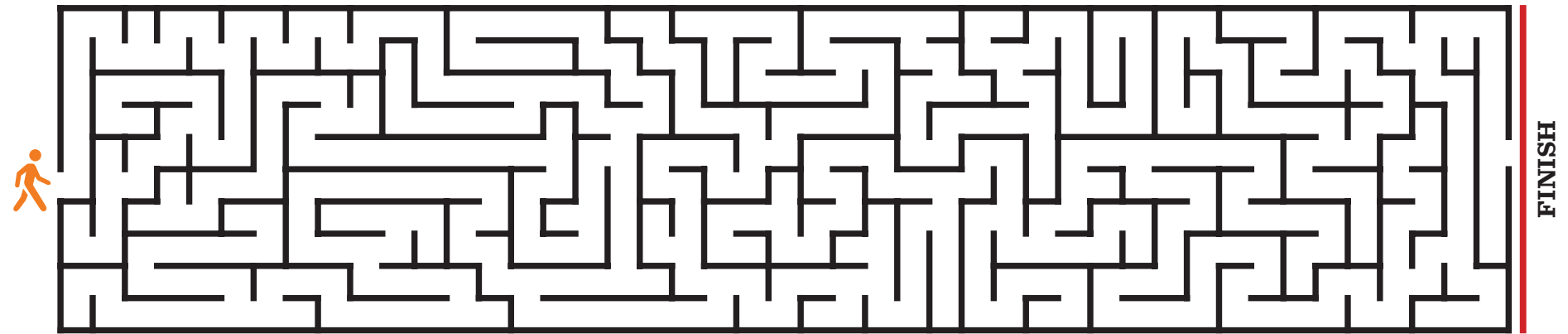
LET’S TALK!

ENVISION CAMBRIDGE TEAM INTERVIEWS LOCAL RESIDENTS

The Envision Cambridge team spends lots of time on Cambridge’s sidewalks, talking to residents about their hopes, dreams, and concerns for Cambridge. Next time you are out and about, watch for our interview team: the next issue could feature you!

<div>Today’s Questions:</div>	<div><div>Rose</div></div>	<div><div>Terry</div></div>	<div><div>Andrew & Marianna</div></div>	<div><div>Ryu</div></div>
<div>1. What comes to mind when you think of Cambridge?</div>	<div>Collegiate and eclectic</div>	<div>Educated, liberal, environmental, international</div>	<div>Privileged, safe, good for children</div>	<div>Universities, an old city</div>
<div>2. What do you want changed? What should stay the same?</div>	<div>Change: More cafes, more small businesses Keep: Small size, diversity of businesses, small, residential feel</div>	<div>Change: The cost of housing Keep: Local businesses (rather than chain stores), pedestrian accessibility, mix of places</div>	<div>Change: Population homogeneity, price of housing Keep: Cultural programs, parks</div>	<div>Change: Make Cambridge cleaner Keep: Everything else is great!</div>
<div>3. What place in Cambridge do you love the most? Why?</div>	<div>Harvard Square and Central Square because of the mix of residential and businesses</div>	<div>Inman Square because of the diversity of businesses and the easy access to Harvard</div>	<div>Inman Square because it is more lively and more diverse</div>	<div>Harvard-MIT area: Great universities and good opportunities for research</div>
<div>4. What topics should the Cambridge Citywide Plan address?</div>	<div>The Cambridge water; it’s too minerally, very heavy</div>	<div>Focus on mobility for bikers to feel safe in the city, climate change, and the rising sea level</div>	<div>Diversity, access to housing, making the public programs more accessible, managing sidewalks in winter</div>	<div>Playgrounds and parks: More space for kids and kid-friendly events</div>
<div>5. If I had my way, in twenty years Cambridge would be...</div>	<div>An ideal city to live in</div>	<div>The greenest city in the northeast</div>	<div>Super diverse—culturally and ethnically, accessible because of affordable housing</div>	<div>More child-friendly with more amenities for children’s education</div>

LET’S PLAY!



From Ethiopia to Cambridge

Cambridge is a diverse city, home to many nationalities, ethnicities, and cultures. In this issue we talk to North Cambridge resident Tagesech Wabeto about everyday life in Cambridge.

Tagesech Wabeto has been a resident of North Cambridge for the past 9 years. She moved to the United States from Ethiopia, first landing in Boston with her husband and two-year-old son. They found a shared apartment in Dorchester before moving to Cambridge. When she came to the United States, she had to stay with her son at home until they moved to Cambridge. Initially she faced a lot of difficulties finding decent housing at a price they could afford. Only after finding an apartment in North Cambridge were they able to move into a place to their liking.

They wanted their son to learn English and to interact with other kids. Even though they had a scholarship, it was still expensive. “We work and we pay. There is no savings!”

But she believes the city can do a lot more to make childcare and preschool programs more affordable so one member of the family isn’t forced to stay at home.

There is also much room to improve public transit. Tagesech uses public transit frequently and would like it to be more reliable to reduce her commute time.

Tagesech attended English classes at Community Learning Center (CLC) and graduated from CLC’s Bridge Program. She then attended Bunker Hill College and graduated with an associate degree in early childhood education. Now she is attending Lesley University for her bachelor’s degree.

Tagesech assists the City of Cambridge in her role as an outreach worker on the Community Engagement Team. She connects the Ethiopian community to the resources in the city. Part of her job is to post flyers in different parts of the city where they live, mainly around North Cambridge, and to attend meetings and training in the CLC every Thursday morning. She also helps with the English teaching program at CLC. The outreach part of her work occasionally takes her to

<i>Tagesech’s responses to questions on the previous page:</i>
1. Safe, diverse, liberal
2. Change: Too many parking tickets! Free or affordable preschools and tutoring Keep: Children’s playgrounds
3. North Cambridge: It’s a quiet and good residential area.
4. Transportation: Buses don’t follow the schedule.
5. A convenient area to live, accessible, and more resources and activities for children



Tagesech Wabeto

elementary and middle schools, public housing in Alewife, and the main Cambridge Public Library for training.

Tagesech is now a mother of three. The son with whom she moved to the United States is now 13 years old, and she has two daughters ages seven and eight. During weekends, Tagesech loves spending time with her kids at the parks in her neighborhood and at the Alewife pool in the summer. Church is very important to her and the Ethiopian community. Every Sunday she goes with her family to the Ethiopian Christian Fellowship Church in Central Square Cambridge.

For Tagesech, Cambridge is a great

city that is full of opportunity and is also safe and accessible. Once a newcomer to the city, she now makes sure immigrants are not lost, helping them get in touch with the resources they need.

As she raises her kids in a city she has made her own, she hopes the city can become more affordable for future generations.

GUESS WHAT?

The Ethiopian population in Greater Boston is estimated at 9,000-12,000. One quarter of the Ethiopians in the Greater Boston area are children, while the majority are young to middle aged adults (aged 18-50).



IMPORTANT PLACES: We took a look at important places in Tagesch Wabeto’s daily life in Cambridge.

FIVE VIEWS ON CENTRAL SQUARE

A walk around the same block with five different people can feel like a walk around five different blocks. What is unremarkable or even invisible to one person might be of great importance to another. What is beautiful to one person might be another person’s eyesore. For this issue, we walk around Central Square with five Central Square regulars to see the neighborhood through different eyes.



Pauline Paris
Resident of Central Square area since 1932

Member of Cambridge Senior Center for the past 19 years

Pauline has lived in the Central Square area her whole life. She now lives in the Housing for the Elderly on Essex and regularly visits the Cambridge Citywide Senior Center (which she loves!), where we met to talk about how the neighborhood has changed. She reminisced about her favorite stores: Emilie Roses, Jo-Ann, Bill’s Fish Shop, and Harvard Donuts. “There are no places to shop for clothes anymore. And no department stores like Woolworth’s,” she remarked. Even so, she finds Central to be a “happy place” today, with many places to visit, restaurants to eat in, and events to attend.



Geeta Pradhan
President of Cambridge Community Foundation since 2015

Organization located at 99 Bishop Allen Drive, founded in 1916

Geeta is president of the Cambridge Community Foundation, whose building is in the heart of Central Square. For Geeta, Central Square represents everything that makes a great city, including ethnic and economic diversity, a vibrant cultural scene, and an active street life. Yet she is most concerned about the future of this diversity in the face of new development. Some of the most cherished cultural spaces—like the Dance Company and Out of the Blue—are very vulnerable to gentrification. She hopes to preserve the “soul of Cambridge” while celebrating Central as a historic and cultural district.



Louis
Artist and street vendor, selling his paintings in Central Square for 30 years

Lives in a homeless shelter in Boston

Louis has been coming to Central Square from Boston one day a week for the past 30 years. He carries two suitcases and sells color reproductions of his paintings. He thinks that “Central Square is a nice place with nice people. I tell them about my paintings, but not everyone can understand what they see.” Louis wishes there were more public restrooms around and swears that “there’s nothing better than a coffee and a donut at Dunkin’ Donuts here.” He used to play the drums in pubs around the neighborhood and know all of the managers and jazz players.



Carla Ferrer Llorca
Has lived on Western Avenue since October 2015

Student at the Harvard Graduate School of Design, originally from Spain

Carla is a 25-year-old student at the Harvard Graduate School of Design. She moved into the Central Square area shortly after she arrived from Alicante, Spain. Sometimes she feels uncomfortable going through Central at night when she gets home from school and wishes there were more light. Coming from a busy seaside city, she misses the urban intensity, although she appreciates the lively street life in the neighborhood and says that “there are always interesting things happening here.” Carla enjoys the dance clubs and studios in the Square and regularly attends them for salsa classes and parties.



Zane
Eight-year-old resident of Central Square

Aspiring geologist and advocate for cleaner sidewalks, new buildings, and playgrounds

Zane is eight years old and has grown up around Central Square, rolling down the grassy hill in front of the City Hall and playing over the stairs of the post office. However, he declares he is now too mature to run around stairs. He still indulges in climbing up the benches on the sidewalk of Mass Ave. He also bikes along the sidewalk in summer and longs for safer bike lanes when he is old enough to bike on the streets. He is fond of the Lafayette Square area and wishes there were more places with flower beds, parks, and playgrounds. He loves Central because he loves to hear many people talking.



ONE (OR MORE) OF THESE THINGS ISN'T ALLOWED



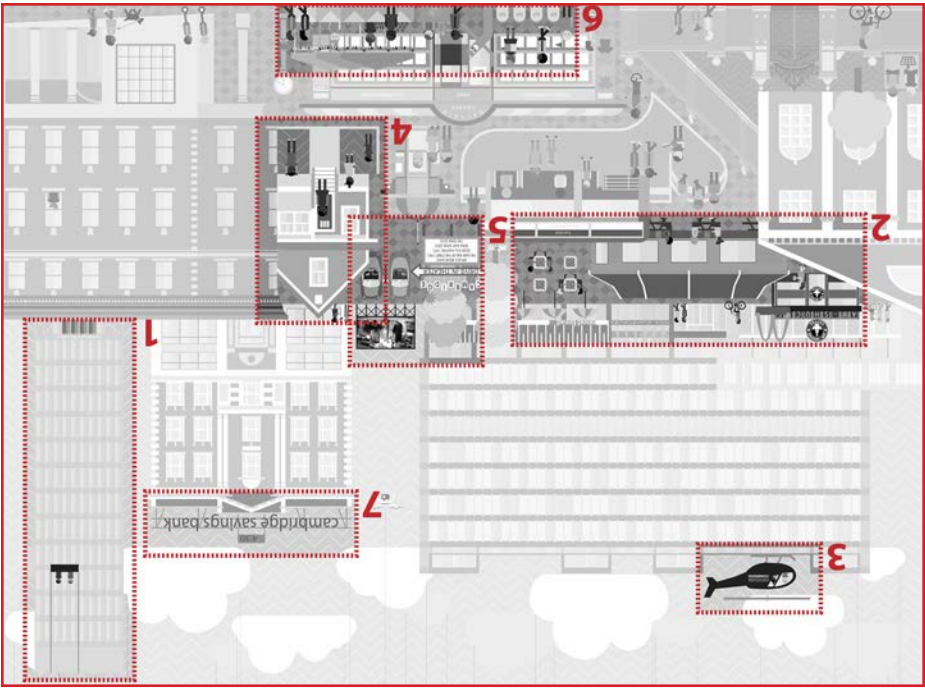
Ever wonder why Harvard Square is so lively? Open Air Retail

Maybe one reason has to do with the fact that places for exhibition, lettering or sale of grave-stones* are prohibited! Many types of open-air retail are prohibited, which also impacts courses such as farmers markets (which could of course make Harvard Square Savings Bank Sign

This iconic sign is an example of something that is "legally non-conforming," because it was allowed at the time it was built, but wouldn't be allowed today. Currently, signs can be no higher than 20 feet above the ground.

ANSWERS:

1. Eight-Story Office Building
Keep it down out there! The maximum height of any building in the core of Harvard Square is 60 feet, or 80 feet with a special permit. Building height is regulated by most zoning codes.
2. Fast-Order Food Establishment
Can't find a fix for your Big Mac attack? That's because fast-order food establishments are only allowed with a special permit. Extra points if you ordered the coffee shop, which counts as a fast-order food establishment, which Cambridge's zoning defines as any establishment selling food that is "primary" intended for immediate consumption. "Is 'available upon a short waiting time,' and is 'packaged or presented in such a manner that it can be readily eaten outside the premises where it is sold.'" Bans on certain kinds of retail establishments are found in many zoning codes across the country.
3. Help pad
You are entering the no spin zone! Help pads are strictly prohibited throughout Cambridge. Activities that generate excess noise are restricted by many zoning codes across the country.
4. Single-Family Dwelling
Probably you thought this single-family house didn't belong. But think again! There aren't many such structures in Harvard Square, but they are allowed by zoning.
5. Drive-In Theater
You'll have to get out of your car if you want to watch a movie in Harvard Square. Drive-in theaters are not permitted here. Try the Brat-Theatre or Harvard Film Archive (both indoors).



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