Envision Cambridge Update

The Carl Barron Business Forum
February 28, 2017
Envision Cambridge

- Community process to establish a **shared citywide vision** for Cambridge.
- **Plan for growth and change** based on shared priorities.
- **Get a more holistic perspective** on key city policy decisions about energy, climate change, mobility, growth management, etc. so these issues are not considered in silos.
- **Create an inclusive citywide discussion** that engages the voices who aren’t typically at the table.
Project Schedule

2016
Visualizing the Future
- Determine Vision and Core Values
- Assess Opportunities and Challenges
- Set Preliminary Goals

2017
Evaluating the Possibilities
- Analyze Different Scenarios
- Discuss Trade-offs
- Set Targets

2018
Preparing for Action
- Identify Strategies
- Integrate District Studies
- Draft the Final Plan

Community Engagement will be an integral part of every phase.
Vision and Core Values

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: What is important to us

• Livability
• Diversity and Equity
• Learning
• Community Health and Wellbeing
• Economic Opportunity
• Sustainability and Resilience
Planning Framework

Vision
The ideals we stand for

Core Values
The ideals we stand for

Focus Area Goals
What we want to achieve

Indicators
Metrics that determine whether we’re meeting our goals

Targets
Our desired level of performance for each indicator

Strategies
Programs and policies to reach our targets and achieve our goals

We are here!
Envision Cambridge Advisory Committee and Working Groups

ALEWIFE WORKING GROUP
ENGAGEMENT WORKING GROUP
HOUSING WORKING GROUP
CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENT WORKING GROUP
MOBILITY WORKING GROUP
ECONOMY WORKING GROUP

Envision Cambridge Advisory Committee

New Focus Area Working Groups

Community Engagement

The Plan
Setting the Larger Context: Parcels by Land Use

Cambridge’s diverse and socially-rich residential neighborhoods are bounded by commercial corridors and institutions.
Citywide Analysis

Commercial and Mixed-use: FAR < 1.5 or Height < 40 ft.

Some of these parcels are built to a height and density that do not contribute to the surrounding urban form.
Corridors
The corridors and Alewife are two areas of the City that warrant a comprehensive study.
Alewife Vision

“Alewife should be a sustainable, resilient, mixed-used district with convenient and safe connections within the neighborhood and to the rest of the city along with amenities that support interaction and social ties among its residents.”
Alewife is a mosaic of privately owned parcels

The 99 parcels in the Quadrangle are owned by 48 different owners.
The Quadrangle has the highest propensity to change in the next 15-20 years.
Existing Land Use

District FAR = 0.61

- Educational
- Industrial
- Commercial
- Residential
- Parcels less likely to be developed
- Existing Development
- Permitted Projects
- Future Projects
Baseline: Testing capacity and urbanism under current zoning

Zoning Summary

**IB-2**: 15’ front setback with no required rear or sideyards. Under special permit:
- Max. FAR: 1.5
- Max. Height Non-residential: 55’
- Max. Height Residential: 65’

**O-1**: All setback determined by formula relating to the building’s dimensions. Under special permit:
- Max. FAR Non-Residential: 1.5
- Max. FAR Residential: 2.0
- Max. Height Non-residential: 70’
- Max. Height Residential: 85’

Development yields
- ~2,400 housing units
- ~1.75m SF office / lab space
- 575 existing housing units
- 610 pipeline housing units

District FAR = 1.30
## Scenario development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Optimized Baseline</th>
<th>Mixed-use residential</th>
<th>Mixed-use commercial</th>
<th>Mixed-use industrial</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Create better urbanism at the same density and use-mix as currently allowed</td>
<td>• Significantly increase housing</td>
<td>• Create better urbanism with the same use-mix at a higher density</td>
<td>• Provide low-barrier-to-entry jobs for residents</td>
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<td>• Incentivize less suburban development</td>
<td>• Increase the commercial tax base</td>
<td>• Provides space for fabricators and start-ups</td>
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<td>• Fewer vehicular trips generated</td>
<td>• Create jobs</td>
<td>• Avoid building residential in floodplain</td>
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<tr>
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<td>• Minimize residents in the floodplain</td>
<td>• Add minimal vehicular traffic (trade-off of higher percentage of truck traffic)</td>
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Optimized Baseline

Development yields

- ~2,800 housing units
- ~1.51m SF office / lab space
- ~142,000 SF of ground floor retail
- 575 existing housing units
- 610 pipeline housing units

District FAR = 1.50
Mixed-use Residential

Development yields

• ~4,000 housing units
• ~2.61m SF office / lab space
• + 390,000 SF office / lab (with HRO)
• 126,000 SF of ground floor retail
• 575 existing housing units
• 610 pipeline housing units

District FAR = 2.05

District FAR = 2.37 (with HRO)
Mixed-use Commercial

Development yields

- ~1,800 housing units
- ~5.9m SF office / lab space
- + 860,000 SF office / lab (with HRO)
- 126,000 SF of ground floor retail
- 575 existing housing units
- 610 pipeline housing units

District FAR = 2.34

District FAR = 2.64 (with HRO)
Mixed-use Industrial

Development yields

- ~1,000 housing units
- ~2.16m SF office / lab space
- ~79,000 SF of ground floor retail
- ~648,000 SF of industrial space
- ~1,300 industrial jobs
- 575 existing housing units
- 610 pipeline housing units

District FAR = 1.27
What to consider when evaluating scenarios: Housing

**Housing units**: Number of housing units created to meet citywide housing needs

**Affordable units**: Number and type (e.g., 3-bedroom) created

**Housing market**: Potential effect of new housing growth on the overall Cambridge housing market
What to consider when evaluating scenarios: Jobs

**Commercial space and jobs:**
Increased space for growing economic sectors

**Access to jobs:** Skill and education level needed for different economic sectors
What to consider when evaluating scenarios: Mobility

**Vehicular trips:** Managed number of auto of trips generated and/or vehicle trip reduction

**Transit:** Increased number of transit users and transit options

**Active Transportation:** Increased number of people biking and walking
What to consider when evaluating scenarios: Revenue and Fiscal Impacts

**Tax revenue:** Increased commercial or residential tax base, which supports robust city services, schools, open space improvements, etc.

**Fiscal Impacts of Development:** Increased cost of service for new residents and workers
Environment

Resilience from sea level rise, storm surge, and precipitation:
Reduced vulnerability

Energy: Reduced GHG emissions and enhanced resilience

Water: Water conservation, clean waterways, and reliable drinking supply

Materials and Waste: Soil remediation, zero waste goals, circular economy

Urban Heat Island: Increased tree canopy, reduced pavement, open space requirements
Resilient Urbanism
Next Steps

Alewife
- Present detailed impacts of scenarios (March)
- Develop new or refined scenarios based on feedback (April)
- Public workshop (early spring)
- Draft plan (late spring/early summer)

Citywide
- Existing conditions analysis report coming soon
- Focus Area Working Groups: First meetings in April
- Next Envision Cambridge Advisory Committee meeting: March 1, 6pm at 344 Broadway
Discussion Questions

• What do you think about the Alewife scenarios?
• What do you see as the greatest challenge for your business/sector?
• What do you see as the greatest opportunity for your business/sector?
• What kind of change would you like to see on the commercial corridors?