CAMBRIDGE CONVERSATIONS

Strategic Recommendations for a Citywide Plan

City of Cambridge, Massachusetts

November 19, 2014

madden.
PLANNING
GROUP

STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A CITYWIDE PLAN

Cambridge Conversations Report, November 19, 2014

The Cambridge Conversations outreach process begun by the City earlier this year responds to City Council interest in soliciting input from the community to provide "recommendations and a strategy for moving forward on short and long range planning/urban design work based on previous studies and recommendations" (Council Order, April 28, 2014).

The process outlined an intensive effort for open-ended discussions to hear concerns, thoughts, and ideas about a citywide plan and process, working with an outside consultant, Kathryn Madden, Madden Planning Group. The public engagement was designed to achieve the following objectives:

1. Hear issues and concerns on the mind of residents and businesses in the city
2. Develop themes that can frame the upcoming citywide plan
3. Establish some common understandings about municipal roles and activities

Input received during the series of meetings and drop-in sessions held in June was reported to the City Council in July through the *Cambridge Conversations: Preliminary Summary of Process and Input.*

Subsequently, Cambridge Conversations staff and consultant met with groups who were under-represented in the June public engagement -- youth and underserved communities of Cambridge (working with the Community Engagement Team). Meetings with Planning Board members, institutions, business associations, and other neighborhood groups further contributed to the understanding of issues and priorities in the city (Attachment A summarizes the input from the discussions since July). A diagram summarizing the geographic location of all comments is included as Attachment B.

1. INTRODUCTION

Citywide planning will be an opportunity to (re)create a shared vision for Cambridge, as well as develop policy goals and actionable recommendations to guide future change. Cambridge has latitude to define a citywide planning process that will shape the best possible city for this generation and the next. The plan will be enriched by incorporating the voices of all segments of the community and promoting dialogues between diverse groups that can lead to better understanding. To be successful, the planning process needs to be an open-ended exploration with an expectation for learning and discovery by all parties. Critical issues will be identified so that necessary trade-offs can be clearly understood and resolved. The citywide plan will also represent an agreement about priority action steps with a clear assignment of responsibilities.

During this process, the city can take stock of where it stands today and consider what kind of city it will be in the future. At the heart of this will be an opportunity to discuss shared values and aspirations. Focused research and data will help inform the dialogue, including visualization of data and projections of the built environment. A new citywide plan will pick up all the threads of current planning initiatives and community priorities and integrate them into a cohesive vision and policy document. By taking a bold approach to the plan and expanding the reach beyond typical planning efforts, the citywide planning effort can serve as a model for other communities.

This collaborative project will engage citizens, employers, employees, institutions, non-profit organizations, appointed and elected public officials, and the operational and planning functions in the city. A professional consultant team can help guide this multi-year endeavor, bringing outside expertise to complement the capacity of City staff. The citywide plan will influence the City's future capital budget planning, HUD Consolidated Action Plan, neighborhood and district plans, and zoning and other policies. During the multi-year process, early action items will be identified and launched. At its conclusion, the citywide plan will define short and long term actions by the City and will seek to align the interests of the public, private, and institutional sectors.

2. THEMES AND PRIORITY TOPICS

The Cambridge Conversations process has raised a number of convergent themes that reflect Cambridge's strengths and a number of priority topics that warrant further discussion as the focus of the citywide plan (*Preliminary Summary of Process and Input,* July 23, 2014; see Attachment A for additional community comments).

At the outset of the citywide plan, the initial themes should be verified and modified to create the community's shared values or principles. As guiding principles, they will be further tested when tackling the priority topics. An initial set of themes or guiding principles is outlined below.

1. **Social Equity and Diversity**: Cambridge values the cultural and economic mix of peoples that live and work in the city.
2. **Environmental Resiliency**: Cambridge seeks to adapt to climate change, reduce its carbon footprint, and emphasize energy conservation and use of renewable energy.
3. **Character of Neighborhoods and Squares**: Cambridge has a strong architectural heritage of quiet neighborhoods and vibrant squares.
4. **Healthy Community**: Cambridge has great public spaces and safe neighborhoods. The community values active lifestyles, access to affordable nutritious food, and access to quality health care.
5. **Learning Community**: Cambridge values education and lifelong learning in academics, arts, and cultural programs, and is known for its institutions of higher learning.

6. **Coordination with the Region**: Cambridge plays a pivotal role in the metropolitan area and its actions are coordinated with regional systems and networks.

The conversations also revealed a more challenging set of priority issues about the future of the city. These topics will involve further discussion to understand different viewpoints, necessary tradeoffs, and a balance of interests. A preliminary set of priority topics are described below.

Transportation and Mobility

Cambridge has historically been a key connection between the heart of downtown Boston and the larger region beyond. Within the city, demand is driven by the origins and destinations of work, school, home, shopping, recreation, and entertainment. The city's streets have limited rights-of-way, however, to move people and goods across and through the city. As efforts to encourage sustainable modes of transportation result in changing demand, the allocation of space and the use of the roads is a topic that warrants in-depth discussion to balance the needs of automobiles, trucks, bicycles, MBTA buses and other shuttles, and pedestrians, while acknowledging the interaction of transportation and land use decisions. Complete streets, traffic calming, and parking strategies deserve continued focus. The MBTA Red Line is the back bone of the city, also connecting Cambridge to the region. The political issues affecting this system are keenly felt at the local level, and the ability of Cambridge to influence this discussion should be explored.

Shaping Change

In Cambridge, change is not only constant, but often feels accelerated. The community is dynamic, with generations of students, recent immigrants and other new residents, start-up enterprises, and research breakthroughs set within a context of long-time residents, stable businesses, and evolving institutions. Historic districts celebrate particular eras of strong architectural character. Many neighborhoods are preserved through constant reinvestment in homes or businesses. Other areas of the city experience change as technology shifts, buildings deteriorate, or demand for prime locations puts pressure on the real estate market. Redevelopment of former industrial districts continues to raise questions about the future of these areas and warrants discussion to weigh questions of the jobs/housing balance, transportation access, and the implications of climate change, resiliency, and alternative energy trends. The plan will address desired land uses, character, size and design of development, and how it relates to the rich diversity of Cambridge's residential and commercial context. The experience of transformation differs with scale and pace of change – the approach has to address small infill and create strategies for emerging districts where multiple developments may need to contribute to creating amenities and a sense of place. The plan will also need to develop tools to evaluate and manage the impacts of change including impacts on the environment and on transportation systems.

Access to Housing

Many people want to live in Cambridge including residents who have been a part of the community for many years and newcomers who recognize the quality of life and want to put down roots here. With constant waves of new residents, the ability to accommodate all people is not easily achieved. New residents compete with existing residents for limited housing, and as a result, housing costs continue to rise. With market forces that favor higher income households, these dynamics challenge the City's core values of welcoming all and retaining its cherished socio-economic diversity. Citywide planning provides an opportunity to explore how and where to accommodate new housing, and how housing affordability goals, including housing that is affordable to low-, moderate-, and middle income households, can fit within the ever-expanding demand for market housing in the city. Different types of housing, different models for development, and the need to include a range of unit sizes including family units will need to be investigated. The discussion will have to consider the tradeoffs that come from allocating financial resources, land, and other opportunities to achieve shared goals in shaping the future of the City's housing stock and community.

Economic Opportunity

Cambridge has a layered economy, with the burgeoning economy of Kendall Square, research and academic staff in higher education, start-up enterprises, small businesses, and vestiges of its industrial roots. Not all people interact or move comfortably between these layers, and youth and immigrant populations in particular do not always have access to all the economic resources in the city. Many members of underserved communities of Cambridge do not have the same awareness of, and therefore ability to access, city resources. In addition, access to affordable child care can also be a barrier to economic opportunity for some members of the community. The citywide plan provides an additional opportunity to consider the infrastructure for economic success for all, including workforce training, youth programs, the role of colleges and universities, and avenues for entrepreneurship.

Community Cohesion and Interaction

Cambridge is beloved by each of its many constituencies, but forums for interaction and dialogue between these constituencies might be stronger. While diversity is prized, issues of discrimination, inequality, and lack of awareness persist. The citywide plan is an opportunity to explore the nature of a welcoming environment given the dynamic population and employment conditions. At the heart of this discussion are the physical places and programmatic initiatives that foster interaction, involving schools, public parks, community and recreation centers, youth centers, senior centers, and libraries, among others. These elements offer gathering places that contribute to the quality of life in the city.

Civic Engagement

The city is fortunate to have many engaged citizens, but not all voices are represented in many civic discussions. Given the number of initiatives and the pace of change, the amount of information can be overwhelming to many, and the process can sometimes be frustrating rather than productive. The citywide plan is an opportunity to establish better lines of communication in all directions, recognizing the value of diverse engagement strategies to reach the city's diverse demographic. A range of tools such as traditional meetings, flexible-format open houses, provision of translation services and childcare at meetings, online engagement, street teams, and print, social, and other media will have to be used to reach people and the citywide planning process will need to develop methods to ensure that the input received through new engagement strategies is honored in the same way as traditional formats. Cambridge maintains a strong record of fiscal responsibility and sound governance, and methods for leadership development and decision-making can be explored to encourage participation across age generations, ethnic groups and income ranges.

3. PROJECT TEAM

Outside professional services will complement internal City staff capacity, but the process should be viewed as a partnership that builds on the internal expertise and working knowledge of the city. The consultant team will also need to coordinate closely with other consultants engaged by the City to avoid duplication of efforts. Key areas where the consultant team could bring expertise include the following:

- **Community engagement**: ability to connect with and outreach to diverse populations, with an understanding of social justice and bringing a wide of a variety of creative methods and techniques including personal and online engagement
- **Data analysis and visualization**: expertise in managing data, synthesizing information, framing critical issues, and generating insights that inform the community discussions
- **Communication**: ability to communicate complex issues and ideas in graphic plans, diagrams, and illustrations; data visualization; and narrative storytelling
- **Project management**: ability to set milestones, take initiative, marshal resources, advance the project, coordinate with other consultants, and mediate differences
- **Technical knowledge**: a team that integrates knowledge and expertise in planning and urban design, social equity, demographics and trends analysis, transportation, economic development, land use, housing, landscape architecture, green infrastructure, resiliency, and energy.

The ability to conduct a process that engages the community, involved stakeholders, elected and appointed public officials, City staff, and other professional consultants

working for the city will be the highest priority. The City's Community Engagement Team will be a key partner in developing outreach to underrepresented communities, but the consultant team is expected to bring their own experience and ideas to this process as well.

4. AVAILABLE RESOURCES AND INTEGRATION WITH ONGOING INITIATIVES

Current Initiatives

In addition to ongoing day to day programmatic efforts that span the spectrum from connecting people to affordable housing to installing bike racks, the City is working on numerous planning and program initiatives, including key planning studies, capital improvement and development projects, and development review processes (Attachment C). A consistent theme is to achieve a sustainable future for the city, addressing the triple bottom line of environmental, social, and economic goals, as well as the general livability of the city.

- **Key Planning Initiatives** focus on climate protection, greenhouse gas emissions, sustainable transportation modes, equitable housing, and appropriate densities for new development.
- **Capital Improvement and Development Projects** tackle issues of parks and open space networks, lighting, street redesign and traffic calming, preservation of existing and development of new affordable housing, and repurposing of vacant city owned properties.
- **Development Review** of private commercial and residential projects requires considerable attention given the current real estate climate.
- **Ongoing Programs** are sustained efforts largely focused on affordable housing, economic development, healthy communities, energy efficiency, and use of sustainable transportation systems.

Each of these initiatives involves a community engagement component, which results in many formal (such as public meetings and hearings) and informal interactions (such as small group meetings and work sessions) with the community, as well as a variety of online platforms. With so many meetings, the need for communication and coordination is essential to keep residents and other stakeholders informed and allow for meaningful input.

These initiatives and their community engagement processes will continue concurrently with the citywide plan. The citywide plan will embrace and integrate recent and current initiatives, providing an opportunity to focus on gaps that may warrant focused attention. The update of the zoning table and the studies to support and update both the Incentive Zoning and Inclusionary Housing Ordinances were planned for FY15 based on previously identified needs and will also continue to advance. These recommendations may be taken up by the City Council/Planning Board/ City staff as

early action items. There has been a great deal of interest in the Alewife area so this will be studied in an early phase of the citywide planning project.

Previous Plans

The City of Cambridge has prepared previous citywide plans and a number of area plans over the years. These planning endeavors reflected the current issues and trends of the time, and each had an influence on shaping the city today. In the 1970s and 1980s, redevelopment was seen as a priority, leading to a series of plans for the revitalization of specific areas (East Cambridge Riverfront Plan, 1978; Alewife Revitalization Plan, 1979; and Cambridgeport Revitalization Plan, 1983). The need to coordinate these plans provided impetus for the first citywide growth policy in 1993, ***Toward a Sustainable Future***, which was issued during an economic downturn and was a departure from the redevelopment plans of the previous decades. In 1998-2000, the City conducted a citywide planning effort that culminated in citywide rezoning of 2001. The 1993 citywide growth policy was updated in 2007.[1]

During the 1990s and 2000s, a series of neighborhood plans (and updates) addressed local issues around housing, land use, urban design, transportation, open space, institutional uses, and economic development. In this time period, CDD also began to prepare citywide plans on specific topics, such as Inclusionary Housing, Open Space, Traffic Calming, Pedestrian Improvements, Bicycling, Economic Policy, Climate Protection, Energy, and Lighting. Significant planning initiatives for specific districts have included the East Cambridge Planning Study (ECaPS, 2001), Concord/Alewife (Con/Ale, 2006), and most recently, Kendall Square and Central Square (K2C2, 2013). CDD has also issued a number of guides on zoning, business development, demographics, fire safety, historical commission certificates, and other topics. [2]

Data & Mapping

Cambridge Conversations highlighted data and visualization needs for a citywide planning process, and these are outlined below.

- **Measurements**: transportation use by mode, existing parking by type, density, heights, housing unit counts, demographics, employment counts, business data, crime, funding, open space by type, land use by type, tax revenues by land use, land use by density, energy use
- **Projections**: future population estimates, student enrollments, employment, school-age children, housing needs, socio-economic diversity, and other demographic changes in the community; business trend analysis
- **Assessments**: development project outcomes; previous plan outcomes; economic base analyses (shift share and location quotient); workforce/training,

[1] http://www.cambridgema.gov/cdd/planud/masterplan
[2] http://www.cambridgema.gov/CDD/publications

education, housing, social services, culture, and community building programs; infrastructure condition and capacity

- **Precedents**: examples from other places, such as streetscape, parks, housing types, building types, districts, civic engagement processes, and funding sources
- **Mapping**: GIS data maps, thematic maps, conceptual diagrams, regional maps

5. PROJECT SCHEDULE

The citywide plan is expected to take two to three years of engaged discussion, including an initial period to confirm goals and conduct research, an Alewife study, focused discussions on priority topics, discussions of cross-cutting themes, and development of recommendations and action steps. A regular schedule of milestone events will keep the process on track, while engaging all participants in working sessions to advance ideas and recommendations.

6. CITYWIDE PLAN DELIVERABLES

To be useful, the citywide plan must result in a set of deliverables that will be accessible to all the participants and will be effective in guiding decisions over many years. Since this is a community-wide project, the deliverables will reflect the interactive dialogue and work sessions involving residents, businesses, property owners, institutions, the many other stakeholders.

1. Statement of community principles/goals and priority topics
2. Alewife study (an early study to focus on key issues in this area), which will ultimately be folded into the citywide plan
3. Priority topic summaries (e.g. transportation and mobility, shaping change, access to housing, economic opportunity, community cohesion and interaction, and civic engagement), with each summary incorporating data visualization, trade-offs, ideas, strategies, and early actions
4. Cross-cutting investigation of the interaction of the priority topics, testing ideas, alternative scenarios, implications, and trade-offs
5. Recommendations and Action Plan

Attachment A
Cambridge Conversations: Additional Comments
November 19, 2014

INTRODUCTION

Cambridge Conversations began with a six-week long process that reached hundreds of Cambridge residents through three community meetings, 18 drop-in sessions, and online outreach. These comments are summarized in the *Cambridge Conversations: Preliminary Summary of Process and Input*, July 23, 2014. While this process was able to reach many people and many who might not otherwise have been involved, there were many important constituencies that were not reached during that short period.

Between August and November 2014, several other meetings were organized to reach deeper into the community and to hear from other representative groups. These meetings are summarized below:

Youth Outreach: Teen Workshops on Citywide Plan and Foundry

- CCTV Summer Media Institute, July 31, 2014
- Community Arts Center, August 11, 2014
- Mayor's Summer Youth Employment Program Councilors, August 13, 2014

Community Engagement Team Focus Groups

- Focus Group: American-born Black Families, October 23, 2014
- Focus Group: Immigrant Families (Area Four), October 30, 2014
- Focus Group: Immigrant Families (North Cambridge), November 6, 2014

Other Focus Groups and Neighborhood Meetings

- Concord Avenue Businesses and Residents, July 30, 2014
- Agassiz Neighborhood Council, September 9, 2014
- East Cambridge Planning Team, September 17, 2014
- Cambridgeport Neighborhood Association, September 24, 2014
- Institutions Focus Group, November 6, 2014
- Business Associations Focus Group, November 10, 2014
- Conversations with Planning Board members, November, 2014
- Emails and online engagement through CoUrbanize request for comments

In all of these discussions, the four primary questions have been the same as the earlier conversations:

1. What is special about Cambridge?
2. What could be working better?
3. What should Cambridge's priorities by for a citywide plan?
4. How would you get others involved?

The following notes provide a summary and compilation of the actual comments recorded during these additional meetings held between August and November 2014. The document doesn't capture the frequency of comments, but rather the range of topics discussed.

The following comments represent input from Cambridge citizens and other participants and do not necessarily represent the view of the City or the consultant.

WHAT'S SPECIAL ABOUT CAMBRIDGE?

- Social equity and diversity: diversity; welcoming city – much support – safety; resources; programs; love living here; neighborhoods are economically mixed; creates opportunities to bring people together; community feel; inclusive community – not one-size fits all; idealistic – devote many resources to youth; staff who work here; rich in city services and non-profit agencies offering array of services; cultural and economic approachability
- Healthy Communities: health systems (Cambridge Health Alliance): welcoming; service; good health care; safe city; community environmental issues good – recycling; everyone wants to live here – open space 46 parks! Services; diversity; services for elderly; use of parks; accessible river; investments in human services for the poor and disabled
- Learning Community: programs for students (enrichment programs); youth community good - there are programs, summer camps, vacation day programs, many opportunities even if family cannot afford; after-school programs; youth are engaged here in the city with many programs; Mayor's Program – allows us to work during summer; universities lead to the motivation of students; school system: reaches the needs of students; inclusiveness (the inclusion of cultural holidays); education; community learning center; Libraries! Everybody reads! Adult education services (CLC!); Programs for teens including work programs
- Housing successes: congregate housing (Norfolk Street); City homeowner program; CHA moving to work – contracts with non-profit; more pockets of immigrant communities are less isolated; having diverse economic representation in city/schools; having some clients being able to keep their units with advocacy of multi service center; 1st time home buyer programs; eviction prevention program; congregate housing for seniors 116 Norfolk; intense assistance for strategizing in special circumstances; persistent advocacy; some families are happy with their housing, once they get in; CHA has done a good job with their renovations
- Mobility: Good biking routes – biking is easy; MBTA; T public transportation; transportation; transportation workability; walkability; walkable city – bike friendly; walkability where streets are better organized for development; comfortable to walk around safely; Hubway and bicycle paths
- Character of Neighborhoods and Squares: the city is a neighborhood; neighborhood is welcoming, modern growth, mix of old and new; the way the neighborhood was years ago; blend of old and new (people and housing); Favorite Places: the Mission – Hoyt Field (indoor play and basketball); home; Concord Massachusetts (friends); Porter Square - lots of places to explore near home, pool on Rindge Avenue; Harvard Square/Kendall Square - school/friends, eateries, mall; maintaining street trees; a city with small town aspects, sit in park, trees, benches, lots of people. It is more of a challenge to preserve parks and trees or to create places where people congregate
- Civic Engagement/City Services: City government openness – looks out for residents; works w/businesses; takes care of residents – all populations – recognizes many cultures; City asks for input from residents and listens and makes improvements; geographic locations of services; property tax levels; good tax rate; high level of

engagement; zoning process; city services, trash pick-up; DPW (they are very responsive)

WHAT COULD BE WORKING BETTER?

Access to Housing

- Size of units: few 3-bedroom apartments; too many one-bedroom, condos; not enough 3 bedroom apartments – no vacancies; large families/few large apartments; there's a shortage of housing for lower-income single individuals; SROs have disappeared from the city; mot enough 3 and 4 bedroom units offered through affordable housing programs; not enough 3 bedroom units; not much turnover in 3 bedroom units; typically do not allow or want like West Cambridge, North Cambridge; homebuyers programs need more than three bedrooms; there is need for larger units 3 and 4 bedroom units; why are the bedroom so small in housing, no storage area
- High rents: City too expensive forcing lower income people out; concerned with the cost of housing forcing long term resident to move out; rents too high, non-affordable – student using affordable units; the high tech community is taking units away from lower income resident/families, people are being forced to Chelsea, Everett, Jamaica Plain, and Medford; studio apartments at costly anywhere from $2,000 up; nore mixed income housing in neighborhoods
- Losing housing: e.g. construction, sale, owner bringing in family, increasing rent; expiring use; expiring use buildings unaffordable; foreclosure issues
- Qualifying for housing programs: Shortage of subsidized housing; fewer and fewer income-based housing (low & middle income); Section 8 voucher limitations – time – available units - rent rates; restrictions on fair-housing subsidies; CORI obstacle to housing – hard to overcome; CHA building rehab subtracts units; CDD affordable units – tenants must pay utilities; $35,000 min. senior income for CDD – unaffordable; In affordable housing – unable to apply for units in safer neighborhood; not many private landlords will accept Section 8 vouchers, especially in Cambridge; some landlords are reluctant to take on repair and upkeep requirements for Section 8; Some landlords have been burned when the amount of the voucher changes (based on changes in family size); criminal records from the distant past can make people ineligible for housing; Low Income families have a difficult time getting housing; need more affordable units, (Lower Income, Section 8, and Disability units); what is the make-up of the new developments in the Alewife area (Fawcett Street, Faces, Cambridge Park Drive); does the City have Units that are set aside for lower income residents (Inclusionary Zoning); wait list for housing 5 to 10 years; City should not focus on buying homes, should focus on affordable units rental (Singapore Style)
- Change in status and middle income: rent increases when income increases and become too high to qualify; working families above voucher limits but can't afford; slightly "over-income" families – not eligible for anything; hard for mid-income to find housing to buy; middle-income families get squeezed between the private and subsidized markets many retired seniors cannot afford to stay in Cambridge; senior downsizing from units of 30-40 years; changes in family status effect housing – over housing – under housing; immigrant status – mixed status families; families needing to relocate to communities without desirable school systems; older adults not old enough

for senior housing; loss of former income; the wait can be so long that family size/status might change in the interim; income guidelines are not realistic;

- Waitlists: Wait list for seniors and families; Lack of available units even with vouchers; Long (years) CHA waitlists; Long waiting lists (50 – 100 people); it can take many years to reach the top; The order/ranking on waiting lists is confusing and seems to change
- Information: residents don't have info on how to search for housing – literacy/language – online services; the requirements to; need access to Housing information; information is needed on how to access the Voucher Program; JAS Programs – limit restrictions on ownership (If a parent dies cannot leave to children must vacate the unit in one year); deed restrictions should be reviewed
- Conditions: health/conditions, environmental issues; lot of people sharing small spaces; housing conditions – rodents, trash; some families have concerns about unhealthy living conditions
- Housing support issues: childcare; getting and keeping jobs; transportation and access to health insurance for seniors; afterschool/rec activities expensive; lack of support for homeless going into luxury housing; affordable, accessible child care; families move out – when have 2nd child; medical costs with illness, healthy, affordable food and location of affordable markets; safety of youth, especially in Area IV
- Cambridge Housing Authority rules give no freedom within your unit, rules and regulations very strict, not allowed to place TV on walls as an example; low income residents not looked upon or treated very well
- Not able to make profit from homebuyers, no incentive (more like a leasing program); kids feeling that ownership may not be for them; how realistic is it to stop conversion/removal of housing? What happens when leases run out?

Economic Ladder

- Holistic approach: live, shop and move around
- Schools: school buses unreliable, not satisfaction with the School Transportation Department (bus service provider not connected to school, as a result of time delays children missing out on breakfast, also being marked late due to fault of bus not students; instances of many substitute teachers as oppose to assigning a long term sub, children have to deal with many different teacher in this case 7 months; parents having to supplement enrichment activities for children because the teachers are not challenging them, due to the many different levels in one grade; school improvement, 1st graders not getting History, science or reading not being challenged; concerned with the new policy at the Cambridgeport School of no homework
- Training Programs: training and education needed for lower income residents; programs needed for 20-30 year olds; Cambridge companies need to hire local residents; resident 30-40 years old are not being hired by the companies (Bio-tech); City should have requirements of the companies that locate here of employment of residents; a need for job training programs; commercial kitchen, catering, culinary arts training
- Jobs/Employment: In order to get jobs in Cambridge "it is who you know not what you know" (City of Cambridge and Cambridge Health Alliance); how do Cambridge Youth enter bio-tech sector? Need advocacy for STEM; need more jobs; kids being driven out

of school affects their ability to get jobs; vicious cycle; keeping jobs – layoffs, seasonal, skills gaps; getting jobs with language and CORI issues

- Small businesses: more small locally owned businesses; encourage business ownership; affordable retail spaces for new businesses-Cambridge Starters; lower income entrepreneur; kiosks entrepreneurial - find kiosks for lower rent; pop-ups; support for low income entrepreneurs; what programs spearhead opportunities for starter businesses?
- Shopping/Retail: In the region, use Target's, Trader Joes, Marketbasket; Whole Foods too expensive (can't afford organic – must make choices between what you know is good and what you can afford); Shaw's/Star too expensive; supermarket expansion – need a Marketbasket type; more stores like H & M; will we be able to shop in Central Square? Too many banks in Central Square; no reason to go to Central Square; Assembly Square: Something like that would be good in Cambridge
- Community Benefits: Companies in Cambridge should be required to give something back to City to supplement City/Community benefits; Comcast the only company in City, by having only one provider many in the elderly community cannot afford, City should help set more affordable rates.

Community Cohesion and Interaction

- Safety: Nighttime safety in Area Four, Norfolk Street, King School Open; turf Issues; perception by non-community residents (working not living) of area is unsafe; other groups have sense of strategy to pursue agendas; Concern about safety during the evening hours
- Parks/Playgrounds: Glacken Field needs renovation; Raymond Park problems with dogs; Danehy Park use for soccer and basketball, needs dog enforcement, dog owners do not stay in designated area; like/use: Sennott, Bergin, Cedar Street and Russell Field Parks; equipment needed for adults in parks; places to bring dogs off leash
- Adult Programs: City programs for adults do not provide childcare which limits parents from using and are expensive; programs for adults – work schedules don't allow for participation, lack of information; parent exercise teams – recreation for parents (swim, gym)
- Youth Programs: No In-door child play space (18 months – 6 years old); sports activities not available during the week days, only available on Saturday (ages 8yrs-14yrs) Soccer, basketball, tennis, too expensive to join teams, and not able to get children to locations due to working schedules; transportation to activities difficult; University, smart kids – young people should be a major focus; resources/encouragement for parents to help
- Community Center [or access and information to a community center] with meeting space and event space (social events, birthday parties, talent shows); fitness opportunities for all ages
- Other: People are not as "Green"; tax rate, sewer and water high; homelessness; cell antennas

Transportation and Mobility

- Transit: T not dependable; T cost $26 monthly for students to get to the high school with student pass – too expensive, no school bus service for high school; Biking a problem (Seattle, Washington is a good example of a good biking City); Infrastructure in poor condition; development at fresh pond and the effects on public transit; transportation and red line capacity; lack of bus shelters in central square
- Streets: bump-outs; sidewalks are uneven (ups and downs); brick needs repair; living in construction areas; jaywalking; pay attention to neighborhood; cutouts (curb cuts?) for cars; cars turning right on green (against pedestrians); gouges in sidewalk, especially cement—trees are uprooting sidewalks; traffic and public transportation infrastructure (which may help with middle income housing); traffic and public transportation infrastructure, and more middle-income housing; sidewalks (roots) dangerous; cyclists biking through red lights; need more parking; pot holes and broken sidewalks; speeding buses; noise; pedestrian environment; truck traffic on local streets; crosswalk, lighting, bikers not following rules of road; safe routes to school; restricted routes and enforcement, truck traffic, and funneling of traffic, including bus routes and cyclists, onto Concord Avenue, which is very narrow; need for traffic calming on Concord Avenue; Park and Ride concept in Alewife; update definitions of arterials
- Parking issues in neighborhoods; parking around small businesses

Shaping Change

- Cambridge turning into college town; people who have grown up in Cambridge don't want it to turn into a transitional city; especially because of college town; prevent becoming like San Francisco, where industry is pushing people out; Central Square what's there that's original? What is here for people coming home from college?
- Development, character; density for affordable housing; role of chain stores and franchises; LED and other lighting issues; future of National Guard Armory site; what is the future of the Cherry Street Lot; lots of people want to live and work in Cambridge, and unless we accommodate increased density and development (in well-planned ways), the pressures on affordable housing, etc. are only going to get worse; pressures on the city aren't going away

WHAT SHOULD THE CITY'S PRIORITIES BE?

- Diversity and Social Equity: Diversity is valued – risk of losing it; community, classism, racism, gentrification; attention to families; engaging all sectors of community (regardless of income); attention to high-need individuals and families - (e.g. Pay attention to services to assist homeless individuals not use emergency room for respite care); 18-25 yr. Old men of color;
- Access to Housing: affordable housing for older youth returning to city; housing/supports for newly-arriving immigrants – including education ESL and childcare and trauma services; replace state-funded housing; the middle class is also struggling and is in danger of disappearing; housing is needed for both middle and lower income families; annual apartment inspection - costly to landlords; developers should be required to increase the percentage of affordable units; developers should also contribute more money to the affordable housing pool; support person for landlord

liaison for Sec. 8 – assist tenants – promote program to landlords – overcome past bad experiences; Incentives for landlords to take Sec. 8; bank special home purchase financing (reduced down payment, etc.); encouraging home purchase by families, not investors; Condo fees a problem; quantity/quality of transitional housing – vets – teens – elderly; need more mixed housing options – not just high and low; incentives for homeowners to keep rents reasonable, e.g. tax policy; expiring use – plan ahead, facilitate purchase by non-profit; higher % low income in new developments; Mixed-income housing; Low-income housing needed – decrease leads to homelessness; We are graduating young people who may not be able to afford housing upon return from college. Do we have a commitment?

- Economic Ladder: Jobs in city for city residents; more training programs; raise the minimum hourly rate; jobs – access for residents – high-tech jobs for minorities; people need training to develop their skills so they can get high tech jobs; there's a disincentive for lower-income families to increase their earnings, because there's no housing or resources for the middle class; Businesses: hire residents in community - involve/businesses more - map balance of housing livability; Funding increases need for training programs – not just level funding; role of business besides profit-making - generating internship – create opportunities for business to contribute more to non-profits and programs for residents; small businesses culture

- Community Cohesion: affordable childcare; access to technology for residents; better teachers; healthy cities; livability; safer neighborhoods; school administration spending priorities; park planners need to *listen* to people, not come in with things determined; community/municipal presence on river, so community can enjoy river; trash and waste in parks; need to empty trash cans; need cohesive street design; trash barrels by river (on Cambridge side, by galleria) have been removed; litter on side and trash going into river

- Civic Engagement: access to information and services: more available/coordinated info about what subsidies are available; supports/education for new families/parents re: services available; help with educating service providers: on Affordable Care Act that could potentially create new supports for families; increase supportive services once in stable housing – supports for mental health issues – budgeting – family supports; inability of city government to entertain alternative view point and unlimited growth; i don't like the idea of a master plan; board of zoning appeal

- Mobility: traffic and parking issues; better transportation infrastructure (both public transportation and car/bike interactions)

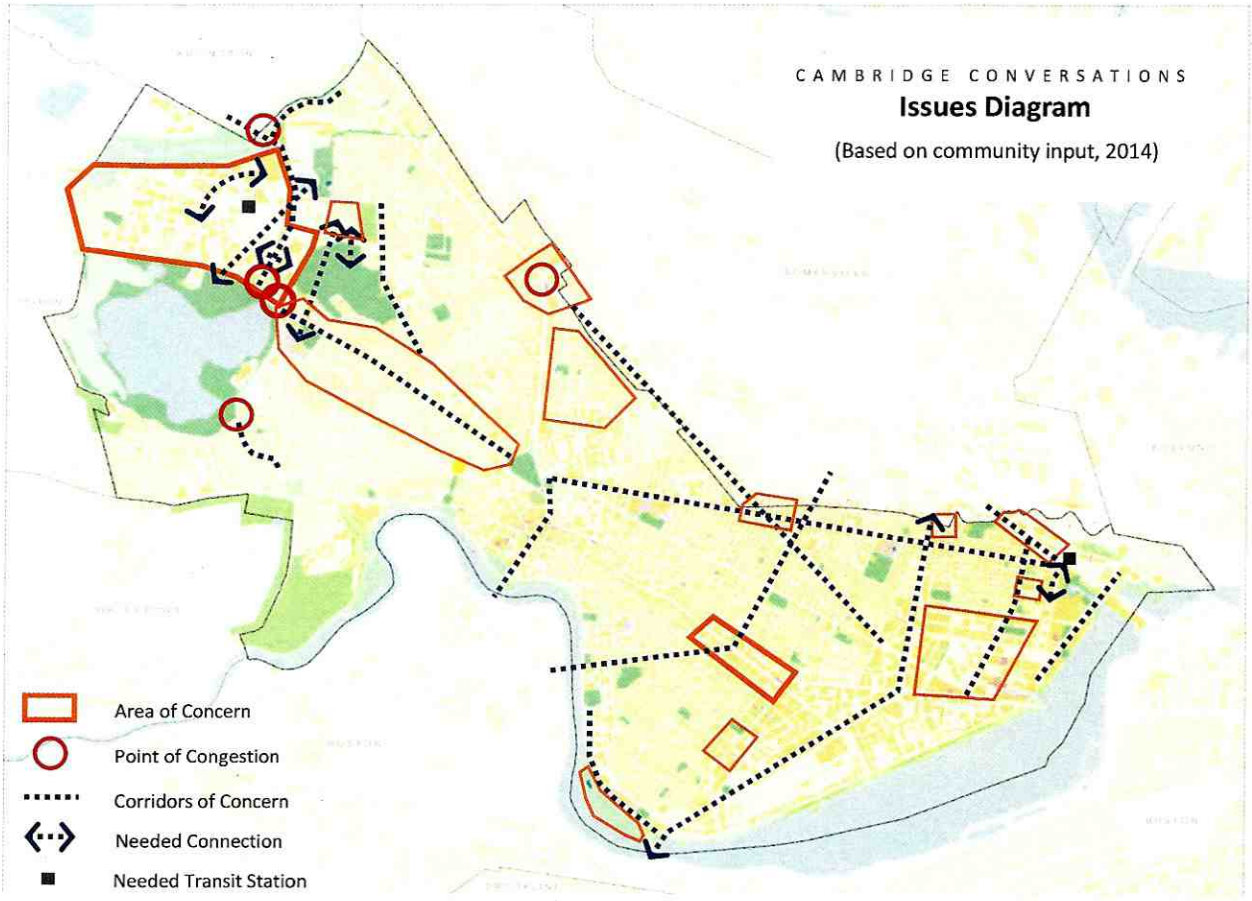
HOW WOULD YOU GET OTHERS INVOLVED?

- Underrepresented groups: How to connect with other voices? Better communication - mail, flyers, CET Outreach Workers, Library, Parks (summer); flyers in different languages; cultural communities and their institutions (e.g., churches attended by members of the Haitian community); Many underrepresented groups feel that they do not get the information in order to participate more actively in civic events, meetings, the suggested best method to reach many parents would be to include information through the schools, and postings at the public libraries, the best time for them to attend meetings is 5:30PM – 7:30PM, and would require childcare; reach out to people in community that are struggling; Engaging students, which may get parents interested/involved too; Bring meetings to people (have them at schools, etc., and not

just at City Hall); Residential building managers, to let residents know about events; Have a contest at high school to engage students

- Online Media: Create master calendar to avoid overlap of important meetings with community or neighborhood association meetings; web and email; Social software to know where events are (e.g., Facebook); social media; technology; use technology; data-driven 311; iReport works well; CCTV should be more community oriented; survey online that rates the cities performance; municipal internet access
- Other techniques and media: Print media: flyers, community bulletin boards; telephone announcements for community meetings (like reverse 911); Need to use *all* avenues (e.g., Riverfest booth, reach out to youth, use technology, foreign language outreach); Public transportation to get people to meetings; 311; reach out to subgroups/networks (e.g., home daycare community has extensive network); transportation for those who want to attend (like seniors, who do not want to walk at night); channel 22 as community bulletin board; public access TV; intercept surveys at neighborhood parks; small groups allow people to better express themselves; breaking down into small groups at meetings loses the value of the big group discussion; newspaper advertisements; outreach in schools
- Civic Engagement: long term involvement, rather than one-time engagement (e.g., community liaisons); many people turned off because City has not been responsive enough; word of mouth? city communication with people—people do not get answers about what processes city needs to go through; Embarrassed to speak because people lack information; need to convey to people that it makes a different to invest their time and energy into neighborhood groups; Input in decision making; timing and community input in advance; notification of when large buildings are proposed and each time developments appear on the planning board agenda; BZA webpage; regularly scheduled neighborhood meetings
- Access to City information: ISD's electronic files should be accessible to the public online, not just City personnel; public notices, agendas and postings issued by or through all departments should provide sufficient information in words to inform adequately instead of barebones information and obscure references to City codes and ordinances; city Agendas should list all matters to be taken up and updated when appropriate, using revision dates to indicate changes. BZA and ISD's zoning-related procedures and decision-making should be reviewed as there has been for the Planning Board; curb-cut permitting "process" is confusing and overly complicated; DPW is the most user-friendly, responsive, and receptive to suggestions, otherwise disheartening how City functions; CDD should provide its research, suggestions, drafts, comments, proposals to the City Council, other departments and the public reasonably well in advance for people to be able to review and consider them intelligently; Consider raising residential real estate taxes to finance some of Wish List items

Attachment B
Cambridge Conversations: Diagram of Community Input
November 19, 2014



During the Cambridge Conversations, participants focused their discussion of issues on these key areas and corridors in the city.

Attachment C
City of Cambridge: Index of Cambridge Community Development Department Projects
November 19, 2014

KEY PLANNING INITIATIVES AFFECTING THE CITYWIDE PLAN

Kendall Square/Central Square (K2C2) Plan — **Plans Completed**
Developed the Kendall and Central Square Plans following the K2C2 public process that established a shared vision for the two squares and the connecting Osborn Triangle area; implementation is ongoing, including MassDOT study underway

Getting to Net Zero Task Force — **Underway, Expected Winter 2015**
Advise the City Manager on ways to advance the goal of setting Cambridge on the trajectory towards becoming a "net zero community" with focus on greenhouse gas emissions from building operations

Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment & Preparedness Plan — **Underway**
Conduct broad outreach to engage the community and to solicit early feedback on issues of concern regarding the impacts of climate change; the vulnerability assessment will serve as the foundation for the climate change preparedness plan; vulnerability assessment expected December 2014; preparedness plan process to begin Winter 2015

Bicycle Network Plan — **Underway, Expected Spring 2014**
Solicit input and develop a plan including principles, policies, and design guidelines for improving the bicycle facilities in Cambridge; this is a core component of the larger "Towards a Bikeable Future" (Cambridge's Bicycle Master Plan- in process); Draft Plan & Recommendations to be available for public review December 2014.

Land Use Classification Study — **Beginning December 2014**
Develop recommendations for amendments to Zoning Ordinance Table of Use Regulations to bring zoning in line with current and anticipated future use types. Study completion date projected for summer 2015.

Incentive Zoning Study — **Underway, Expected January 2015**
Analyze the current impact of non -residential development on the need for affordable housing in Cambridge and recommend amendments to the Incentive Ordinance.

Inclusionary Housing Study — **Underway**
Analyze the impact of market-rate residential development on the affordable housing needs in Cambridge and recommend amendments to the Inclusionary Ordinance.

Transit Strategic Planning Process — **Underway, Report Expected Early 2015**
Initiate a strategic planning process to develop an action place for how Cambridge will take a stronger leadership role to improve quality and expand capacity of our transit system; working closely with the MBTA, an advisory committee and city staff developed overarching goals including mobility, funding, efficiency & reliability, expansion, usability, accessibility, and safety, public participation, support and outreach, and resiliency

Climate Protection Goals and Objectives — **Adopted**
Work with the Climate Protection Action Committee (CPAC) to formulate climate protection goals and objectives for 2020 to provide the City with a framework to prioritize actions to address climate change. CPAC 2020 goals adopted by City Council July 2014, and implementation of recommendations is ongoing

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

Foundry Building Reuse

- *Conduct a public process to determine future use of the Foundry Building acquired by the City dedicated to community use*

Cherry Street Parcel in Area 4 Options

- *Conduct a public process to determine future use of a site in a manner that directly benefits residents in Area 4 Neighborhood*

ECKOS Study/Connect Kendall Square Design Competition

- *Conduct a design competition to plan and implement a vision for the entire open space network in Kendall Square and vicinity; announcement of selected framework plan in March 2015*

Lighting Ordinance Task Force

- *Evaluate existing lighting standards, offer guidance for the creation of a new ordinance, propose new regulatory approaches if needed, and develop enforcement mechanisms.*

Major Infrastructure redesign and traffic calming

- *Recent redesign projects include Western Ave, Huron Ave. and Cambridge Common; construction is underway*

Greenway/multi-use path projects

- *Projects to convert former railroad properties to multi-use paths, including Alewife Greenway Extension to Belmont, acquisition of railroad property at Fresh Pond Reservation, and work with DCR on Watertown Branch greenway planning*

Green Line Extension and O'Brien Highway Redesign

- *Work with MBTA and HYM Investments on new Lechmere Station and redesign of O'Brien Highway to include high quality pedestrian crossings and protected bicycle facilities*

Alewife bicycle/pedestrian bridge and commuter rail feasibility study

- *Initiate a feasibility and design study for a bicycle/pedestrian bridge and commuter rail station between the Alewife Quadrangle and Triangle to strengthen sustainable transportation infrastructure in a high-growth area*

ONGOING PROGRAMS

Development review of commercial projects and residential projects

- *Coordinate Planning Board process and conduct design reviews of citywide development including both commercial (1.6 million sf) and residential (2,500 units) projects; examples include Millennium Pharmaceuticals building with ground floor retail, residential building at 240 Sidney Street, and residential project with ground floor retail at 10 Essex Street in Central Square; review projects for compliance with bicycle parking requirements*

Transportation Demand Management

- *Encourage changes in travel behavior to reduce the number of single occupant vehicle trips and toward more sustainable modes such as walking, bicycling, and transit through PTDM during development project review and CitySmart outreach and marketing initiative*

Hubway bikeshare expansion

- *Continued expansion of the Hubway bikeshare network in Cambridge*

Kendall Square Ecodistrict: district-scale collaborations and solutions

- *Initiated a public private partnership including MIT, Kendall Square Association, Cambridge Redevelopment Authority, and Kendall Square businesses to advance sustainability through district scale neighborhood projects; Received Barr Foundation Grant for K2 Ecodistrict Staff Member*

Energy efficiency upgrades and solar installations

- *Connect with residents about energy efficiency and solar energy assessments, which leads to energy efficiency upgrades and solar installations; support community partner, Home Energy Efficiency Team (HEET), in the Cambridge Race to Solar Challenge resulting in new solar installations*

Cambridge Compact for a Sustainable Future

- *To leverage the intellectual and entrepreneurial capacity of the business, nonprofit, education and municipal sectors to collectively address climate change at the local level and improve the quality of life and well-being of the community by considering nine key areas of collaboration such as energy efficiency, renewable energy, climate mitigation and adaptation, storm water management, and green tech innovation*

Public Disclosure of Building Energy Use

- *Introduced an ordinance to City Council requiring owners of larger buildings to track and report their annual energy use to the City and publically disclose the data, a key step in efforts to reduce Cambridge's greenhouse gas emissions; conduct ongoing data analysis to understand energy use patterns and trends in Cambridge, issue reports, and use the data in local energy planning*

Creation of new affordable rental and ownership housing

- *Finance and support the creation of new affordable rental and homeownership housing through new construction, conversion of non-residential structures or acquisition of market-rate residential buildings for conversion to affordable housing*

Preservation of existing affordable housing

- *Finance and support the preservation and revitalization of affordable rental units with expiring affordability restrictions*
- *Finance and support the revitalization and preservation of affordable rental units at-risk due to property's physical or financial needs*

Inclusionary Housing Program

- *Administer the Inclusionary Housing provisions of the Zoning Ordinance to create new affordable housing rental and ownership units in new market-rate residential buildings*

Homebuyer/Homeowner Assistance Programs

- *Provide assistance and support for first time homebuyers before, during, and after their purchase including:*
  - *Affordable Homeownership Units: access to the more than 500 City-assisted affordable homes available upon resale through CDD applicant pools;*
  - *Financial Assistance Program: financial assistance of up to 40% of purchase price to first-time buyers purchase their first home;*
  - *Downpayment and Closing Cost assistance: funds available for eligible buyers*
  - *Home Improvement Program: low-interest and/or deferred financing available to income-eligible owners to make needed home repairs and improvements*
  - *Homebuyer/Homeowner education: monthly FTHB workshops and periodic specialized classes on homeownership, credit/debt and budgeting, etc.*
  - *Individual Homebuying Counseling: one to one homebuying counseling available to FTHB workshop participants*

Inclusionary Rental Housing Program

- *Provide access through a single application to more than 600 affordable inclusionary rental units at more than 30 properties across the city*

Open Space Design and Planning

- *Completion of new Cambridgeport parks and design completion for renovation of Hurley Park, Bishop Allen/Main Plaza and Elm/Hampshire Plaza to create new recreation options for people of all ages and physical abilities*

Community Engagement Team

- *Connect families to events and resources; leadership development; conduct targeted outreach to underserved families and populations*

Health equity programs

- *Partner with Cambridge Health Alliance, Community Engagement Team, and Metropolitan Area Planning Council to encourage health equity through Food and Fitness Policy Council and bike equity*

Job Skills Training for Youths

- *Host students and interns to conduct outreach, community engagement and urban planning supporting career skills and development; programs include* Dream Careers Program, Mayor's Summer Youth Employment Program, YouthWorks Cambridge Job Program, and Mayor's Fall Youth Employment Program

Earth Day, PARK(ing) Day, and other events

- *Coordinate community outreach to improve access to information, broaden public interaction, and offer varied opportunities to connect; Other events include Cambridge Science Festival, Employee Transportation Fairs, and outreach at the Main Public Library,*

Community Access to Healthy Foods

- *Work with the Food and Fitness Policy Council to broaden access to fresh, healthy food and fitness opportunities; programs include Cambridge Healthy Markets program*

Life Sciences and technology recruitment and expansion

- *Attend annual BIO conferences as part of continuing focus on life science sector and attend Venture Café events to promote the City's economic development services to innovation businesses*

Regional economic development initiatives

- *Launched a regional economic development initiative focused on the life sciences sector (Life Sciences Corridor)*

Cambridge Biomedical Careers Program

- *Oversee the Cambridge Biomedical Program, a partnership between the City of Cambridge and the Just-A-Start Corporation, providing ten Cambridge residents with an academic foundation in the biomedical science field*

Support and Training for Entrepreneurs

- *Assist entrepreneurs through technical assistance and educational workshops ranging from starting a business to social media; provide site searches for businesses relocating or moving into Cambridge; and provide resources for entrepreneurs including connections to co-working spaces and investment training through the Cambridge Entrepreneurship Assistance Program*

Interior Retail Programs

- *Foster interior and marketing improvements to assist Cambridge retailers by providing workshops, in-store consultations, and matching grants through Best Retail Practices Program; and providing financial resources to retail businesses seeking to increase accessibility inside their businesses through the Retail Interior Access Program*

Storefront Improvement Program with universal access

- *Provide technical and financial resources to Cambridge property owners or tenants seeking to renovate or restore commercial buildings to increase accessibility into storefronts and improve physical appearance of independent businesses*

Commercial and Development Data and Reporting

- *Implement annual Customer Intercept Survey of commercial districts. The survey reports what Cambridge residents and other area users want in their commercial districts to better understand the local market to help existing business owners and also to help property owners recruit potential businesses. Develop commercial district profiles, quarterly development log, survey of top 25 employers, as well as provide ongoing technical assistance to business associations.*

Harvard Square public space enhancement

- *Initiate a public process to develop recommendations for the public open space in the center of Harvard Square; published report in May 2014*

Expansion of bicycle parking

- *Install new bike racks and stalls in response to requests and planning in high-demand areas; incorporate bicycle parking facilities in street reconstruction project and development project review; developed revised bicycle parking zoning requirements*

COMPLETED PROJECTS

Healthy Aging Project: Transit Access for Seniors

- *To engage seniors to assess existing and potential barriers to transit access (will be incorporated into Transit Strategic Plan)*

Play in the Public Realm guidebook

- *Created Play in the Public Realm Guidebook suggesting ways to make streets, walkways, plazas and other public spaces more playful, engaging, and welcoming to people of all ages*

Youth Engagement Task Force (YETF)

- *Initiative to broaden youth engagement in planning initiatives; partnering with the YETF created a youth engagement guidebook; also hosted "What is CDD Day" at Cambridge Rindge & Latin High School*

Grand Junction feasibility study and planning

- *Represent City interests and assist in accelerating the planning process for the Grand Junction Community Path project*

"Celebrate the Coast Initiative"

- *Launched "Celebrate the Coast Initiative" as part of the Western Avenue reconstruction to incorporate the rich history and stores of the neighborhood into a permanent commemorative installation*