



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
Community Development Department

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TO: Richard C. Rossi
City Manager

FROM: Iram Farooq
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SUBJECT: Appropriation of \$3,300,000 for Citywide Planning

DATE: October 15, 2015

RECOMMENDATION: I am hereby requesting that the City Council appropriate \$3,300,000 to the Community Development Department Public Investment Account. The appropriation will be used to pay for a consultant team to lead the multi-year process, as well as services and materials to support enhanced community engagement.

The consultant team will be led by Utile Architecture + Planning (Utile). Utile was selected to lead the planning process through a multi-day evaluation process that included presentations to the public. Utile will lead a team with a wide range of expertise, including urban design, housing and development economics, sustainable transportation, and community engagement.

The Utile team will work with the City staff to develop a strategic framework to address a broad range of issues, including mobility, housing, land use, urban design, environment, social equity, economic development, and open space. The plan will also include a detailed study of the Fresh Pond/Alewife area. Funds are also included for childcare, translation services, food at key meetings and events, and to increase staff capacity.

The planning process will begin in the fall and is expected to span three years. A detailed work plan is provided below, and a draft schedule is attached.

CITYWIDE PLANNING WORK PLAN

The citywide plan will build on Cambridge's momentum, inherent strengths, and social capital to develop a strategic framework for how the City can address urban change and a range of pressing social, economic, housing, mobility, and environmental issues. The plan will develop a shared vision with clearly defined goals and aspirations, and then develop land use, policy, and economic development strategies to achieve these. It will draw upon

best practices and also propose forward-thinking, data-driven approaches. The plan must seek common ground through shared aspirations.

TASK 1: PROJECT MANAGEMENT

The consultant team will work with the City to establish and manage the project timeline and work plan. These tasks include:

- Work with the City to develop an approach and detailed roadmap for integration between the citywide plan and other ongoing initiatives. The City will provide information on project timelines.
- Develop detailed schedule of milestones, deliverables, and deployment of various engagement techniques.
- Establish clear process for integrating the Fresh Pond/Alewife District Study into citywide planning.
- Clarify protocols for working with subconsultants and City staff.
- Regularly update the City Manager, City Council, and Planning Board.
- Track and evaluate the ongoing planning process and revise the roadmap as required.

Meetings

City Council: The City Manager will organize regular meetings with the City Council to provide milestone updates

Planning Board and City Boards and Commissions: CDD will organize regular meetings with the Planning Board and other City Boards and Commissions, as needed, to provide milestone updates.

Advisory Committee: An Advisory Committee will be created to guide the work of the consultants and staff. The Committee will include a wide range of stakeholders, including residents, representatives from businesses, institutions, and subject matter experts. Topic-focused subcommittees will be formed for limited durations to research specific topics areas (e.g. communication and outreach, land use, etc.)

Deliverables

Overall Project Roadmap: Detailed project management plan, including schedule, work plan, and strategy for coordination with other ongoing initiatives, client communication, and media/communication protocols.

TASK 2. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND SHARED VISION DEVELOPMENT

The citywide plan will have a strong community engagement component that involves a broad set of strategies to encourage full community participation. Special emphasis will be placed on reaching people who do not typically attend public meetings. Public engagement will inform all tasks.

Engagement Plan, Strategy, Evaluation, and Execution

The consultant team will work with the City and Advisory Committee to identify key stakeholders and constituencies, and develop a range of outreach techniques appropriate for each (online, social media, in-person informal gatherings, newsletters, observation, tactical urbanism, etc.); establish a communications and engagement schedule; build off of the knowledge of City staff, past planning efforts, and the city's Community Engagement Team (CET).

The consultant team will work with the City to create a visual branding strategy across multiple formats including the web, brochures, posters, flyers, slide presentations, etc.

Urban Prototyping and Tactical Urbanism

The consultant team will use tactical-urbanism-style events to prototype new concepts such as public space, crosswalks, and infrastructure. By physically visioning interventions citywide and in the area of focus study areas, the consultant team can help the community and designers calibrate potential projects together in real-time.

Website and Engagement Infrastructure

The project's website should serve as a platform to announce upcoming events, archive older materials, and collect online responses, and will be a one-stop repository to house project documents and keep residents updated.

Shared Vision

Through the information gleaned from the ongoing engagement process and research phases, the team will formulate a shared vision for the community and the City.

Deliverables

Community Engagement and Communications Plan. Detailed plan with description of engagement strategies and their targeted audiences; and detailed schedule.

Engagement Execution. The scope, schedule and deliverables will be detailed in the engagement plan.

Website. Design and maintain website; develop ongoing content for website, including engagement-related content (e.g., surveys, interactive features, etc.).

Vision Plan. Document detailing the community-driven vision for the city, incorporating input from residents, City staff, and additional stakeholders. This will be formatted as a draft chapter for the final citywide plan.

TASK 3. RESEARCH & ANALYSIS

Literature Review and Coordination

The Consultant team will review current and recent studies; review existing and proposed zoning and other policies that affect future action steps, as well as potential policy changes being reviewed; and research national and international best practices.

Integration of Ongoing Work

- Meet with city staff on key planning topics to learn about recent planning themes and initiatives.
- Coordinate closely and hold ad hoc meetings and work sessions with other city consultant teams, including the Climate Change Preparedness and Resilience Planning team.

Precedents, Data Analysis, and Field Observations

The team will conduct a thorough spatial, quantitative, and qualitative analysis of the information available, and will conduct data analysis, mapping, and field observations through the lenses of the following key planning topics:

- **Civic Engagement:** analysis will include past planning studies and engagement, including current CET methods.

- **Shaping and Managing Urban Change:** analysis will include what other knowledge-based cities have done to balance growth and character and preserve socioeconomic diversity at the same time.
- **Transportation and Mobility:** analysis will include previous transportation initiatives, MBTA ridership, mode share analyses, and regional traffic projections.
- **Housing:** analysis will include real estate market projections, regulatory and zoning methods for accommodating residential demand, inclusionary housing policies, and the effect of the institutions of higher learning on housing trends.
- **Economic Development:** analysis will include topics including Cambridge's projected development pipeline, permitting and tax issues, and demographic and employment disparities.
- **Community Cohesion and Interaction:** analysis will include social media and digital use data, demographic analyses, school population information, and housing costs.
- **Climate Change and the Physical Environment:** analysis will include resilience issues, flooding projections, heat island effects, and strategies for construction that can accommodate storm and flooding impacts.

Data analysis and mapping needs are expected to include, but not be limited to, those outlined below. While the City tracks many of these, the Consultant will be expected to synthesize the data and enhance its visualization to clarify the narrative.

- Planning Metrics
- Demographic & Economic Projections
- Environmental Conditions
- Transportation Networks
- Mapping
- Observation/Fieldwork

The team will research and cross-compare best examples of other notable and exemplary citywide plans. Categories of comparison include representational strategies, engagement strategies, policy recommendations, design guidelines, integration with economic development strategies, and funding mechanisms.

Issues and Opportunities

The team will identify key issues and opportunities. The identified issues and opportunities will be used to develop scenarios and, ultimately, inform policy and regulatory recommendations.

Deliverables

Milestone Status Report(s): Summary of the content generated during the Task above, in both written and visual format. This will include a baseline conditions analysis and trends analysis, along with a research report, covering the aforementioned subject areas and identified issues and opportunities. This will be formatted as a draft chapter for the final citywide plan.

TASK 4: ALTERNATIVE SCENARIOS

The Alternative Scenarios will be framed by the key planning topics and themes identified by the City. The key planning topics include: shaping and managing urban change, transportation and mobility, housing, economic development, community cohesion and interaction, and climate change and the physical environment. The key planning themes include: social equity and diversity, environmental resiliency, character of neighborhood and squares, healthy community, learning community, and coordination with the region.

Projections and Scenario Development

The team will first refine and confirm demographic, housing, transportation, environmental, and economic projections as the basis for different scenarios.

Using this information, the team will create up to three (3) realistic but hypothetical buildout scenarios for the areas of Cambridge where growth is appropriate and likely; analyze the implications of projected growth scenarios, considering, at minimum, impacts and implications on the key planning topics and comparing to a business-as-usual scenario. The scenarios projected for each area will be different because the city's different neighborhoods have different existing fabrics and therefore different potential futures. The City's key planning topics and themes will play an integral role both in the development of the scenarios and how their impacts are analyzed.

After the alternative scenarios have been vetted with the community and city, the consultant team will develop a preferred scenario and create a set of principles and overall development guidelines that will help the city realize that vision.

Priorities & Tradeoffs

Working with the City and an engaged community, the team will identify important tradeoffs inherent within each of the scenarios and across scenarios. The process of comparing the scenarios will allow for a discussion about the community's priorities, and it will help clarify what compromises are needed to balance planning for current and future needs.

Evaluation

The consultant team will develop a set of criteria with which to evaluate the scenarios, especially against the shared principles, and lead a process of evaluation with the community.

Deliverables

Milestone Status Report(s): Report detailing alternative scenarios tested. The report will include an analysis of development and related projections and implications that may be useful in informing future consideration and needs such as infrastructure, school populations, and community services. This will include an evaluation of how the scenarios relate to the shared community principles.

TASK 5: CITYWIDE PLAN DEVELOPMENT

Refined Citywide Vision

Based on input from the evaluation of scenarios, the team will develop and document a shared vision with goals and objectives, using both narrative and graphic illustration of key concepts.

Targets and Goals

The team will create an updated set of citywide targets and overall goals for the plan. These targets will correspond with the main planning topics researched previously, and will align with the preferred alternative scenario from Task 5.

Integration of Principles and Topics

The team will expand the shared citywide vision to address key principles, refining the vision and the plan. In developing the details of the plan, the consultant team will ensure that each of the key planning topics are addressed.

Visualization and Further Testing

The team will generate three-dimensional models and visualizations illustrating the build-out of the shared vision and its implications. Because multiple complicated physical and policy-based factors will have gone into developing this refined vision and scenario, it will be essential that the team's visualizations distill the ideas into readily-accessible explanations. As these materials are refined for public presentations and the final plan documents, the City will work with the consultant team to balance textual explanation with diagrams and information graphics.

Deliverables

Milestone Status Report(s): Draft chapters of the citywide plan, including a refined citywide vision, preliminary recommendations, draft strategies, citywide targets and goals, and visualizations (citywide, neighborhood-scale, and street-level).

TASK 6: ACTION PLAN

Strategy, Phasing, and Responsibility

The team will translate the vision and plan into action steps with short, medium, and long-term projects and initiatives, taking into consideration current priorities, funding, and capacity of City, local institutions, and other partners.

Financing Implications

The team will establish estimated costs of capital projects and the budget implications of initiatives. It will identify potential funding sources at the local, state and federal level, including third party sources. Along with strategies to encourage the right mix of privately financed developments, the team will identify key projects that might require public subsidy, and will

identify realistic sources of funding and methods to encourage public-private partnerships.

Policy and Regulations

The team will develop a zoning and regulatory strategy necessary to carry out the plan and its recommendations, including updates, new zoning tools, and other changes; identify key urban design principles that should guide new development for various settings in the city; identify policy changes or other steps that will be necessary to realize the plan recommendations; and identify new programs and programmatic changes that will facilitate the vision. With the need to plan for feasible building types, the team will identify parts of the zoning code that create unrealistic constraints.

Design Strategies

The team will develop alternative approaches to achieving an urban form that considers the City's planning topics. It is expected that the team will need to define a range of appropriate mixes of building typologies to define new urban fabric. These approaches may also include streetscape or Complete Streets guidelines, as well as open space guidelines to promote health and resiliency.

Development of Indicators

The team will develop a set of indicators to measure plan performance, implementation, and the need for re-evaluation over time, and will cut across the City's planning topics. This includes the establishment of baseline measurements based on previous research. Monitoring methods should be described, with visualization and reporting methods to present indicators to the public and elected officials.

Deliverables

Milestone Status Report(s): Strategic action plan, formatted as draft chapter(s) or subchapter(s) of the citywide plan, with zoning, land use, transportation, and other policies, urban design principles, indicators, capital projects, phasing of short and long-term actions, roles, responsibilities, and budget and funding strategies.

Framework (or dashboard) for tracking community indicators.

TASK 7: FRESH POND / ALEWIFE DISTRICT STUDY

Fresh Pond / Alewife District Study

The consultant will undertake the Fresh Pond/Alewife district planning study as an early phase in the citywide planning process. It will take an integrated look at development, infrastructure, mobility, climate change preparedness, urban design and character, and placemaking. The team will develop and analyze up to three different scenarios for the future and examine the implications, trade-offs, evaluation criteria and other factors, with a goal of finding a range of future buildout options that are feasible for what the market can bear. The team will create visual examples and digital three-dimensional models to illustrate scenarios.

Research and Analysis: The team will study existing plans to narrow the focus of analysis, including the City's recently-completed Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment, the existing Concord-Alewife Plan, and impacts of recently approved major projects. The consultant team will focus early data collection in this area, which will allow it to make traffic and development projections from an accurate baseline.

Vision and Planning Framework: Working with the City, the team will identify key issues and opportunities. This vision framework will explain the general tradeoffs between solutions for these different priorities.

Scenario Testing: The team will develop alternative development scenarios for the future of Alewife. The range of priorities underpinning these alternatives could include preservation of open space, urban design character of new development, and transportation impacts.

Plan Development: After relevant stakeholders come to an agreement about a broad vision, the team will develop a plan for Alewife. The consultant team will propose urban design interventions that address resilience and traffic issues, transportation recommendations to guide development patterns, and suggest long-term policy directions. Real estate and valuation studies as well as public realm data analysis will speak to the feasibility of the various interventions.

Integration into Citywide Vision and Plan: The team will incorporate this study's specific findings into the vision and citywide plan. Because Fresh Pond/Alewife is not fully representative of the city as a whole, the

conclusions drawn from this one study will not determine the City's overall priorities and development visions, and will serve only as one set of priorities against which the broader vision must be weighed.

Deliverables

Fresh Pond/Alewife District Study: study of Fresh Pond/Alewife district formatted as a draft chapter of the final citywide plan, which includes summary of research and analysis, analysis of alternative scenarios, and recommendations and early actions.

TASK 8: FINAL PLAN

Draft Citywide Planning Report

The team will integrate the vision, plan recommendations, action plan, and indicators into a narrative; develop and refine complementary graphic material. The key planning topics will provide a framework for the Draft Citywide Planning Report.

Final Citywide Planning Report

The team will revise the draft plan based on community and city input, finalize the layout, and ensure that all content fully reflects the plan's latest revisions. The team will work with City staff to present the Final Citywide Plan for formal endorsement by Planning Board and City Council.

Deliverables

Draft Citywide Report: concise printed and online report that incorporates the draft chapters from Tasks 2-7, and incorporates City and community feedback from throughout the process.

Final Citywide Report and Executive Summary: concise printed and online report communicating issues, ideas, and recommendations in narrative, plans, diagrams, charts, tables, and photos.

Technical Appendix: compilation of data, technical reports, community input, and other background information, in digital format.

Cambridge Citywide Planning Milestones

Fall 2015 – Fall 2018

Task	Detail	2015	2016				2017				2018		
		Fall	Winter	Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter	Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter	Spring	Summer
		Nov-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep
Engagement	Outreach (street team, community group meetings, etc.)	-----											
	Website launch	-----○											
	Vision plan	-----○											
Research	Preliminary research and analysis	-----○											
	Refined research and analysis	-----○											
Alewife	Draft Alewife Report	-----○											
	Final Alewife Report	-----○											
Framework	Draft Targets and Goals	-----○											
	Refined Plan Framework	-----○											
Scenarios	Draft Analyses and Tradeoffs	-----○											
	Final Analyses and Tradeoffs	-----○											
Plan	Strategic Plan and Dashboard	-----○											
Documents	Draft Citywide Plan	-----○											
	Final Citywide Plan	-----○											