

Memorandum

Date: March 14, 2016

RE: CRA Kendall Square Implementation Plan Outreach Program – Outline

To: CRA Board

From: Tom Evans Executive Director

The memo is presented to update the CRA Board on the various platforms of community engagement we are utilizing, and to initiate a thoughtful conversation on the effectiveness of these efforts and opportunities for improvement. One of the four operating principles from the 2014 CRA Strategic Plan was to “Operate with Transparency: Be visible and foster face-to-face relationships and a forum for discussing ideas.” Through the Strategic Planning process, the CRA utilized various forms of outreach from traditional meetings to experimental online tools. The Plan’s section on Outreach and Learning intended to build on the engagement and research that went into the Strategic Planning process and ensure that the work of the CRA is consistently reviewable by the public and informed by community engagement.

In reviewing our strategies and tools for public engagement, I recognize that there are varying degrees of outreach and interaction available for every outreach tool. Thus, our outreach strategy must remain diverse to allow various opportunities for engagement and to find meaningful venues for public input into the CRA’s programs.

Reach: Web – Social Media – Public Meetings – Special Events – Private Meetings

Accessibility: General Public – Subscriptions – Stakeholder Groups – Staff – Individuals

Depth: Background Information – Surveys – Discussion – Conversation

The most current and widely accessible source of information about the CRA and the Kendall Square Urban Renewal Plan (KSURP) is our web presence; both the CRA website and the KSURP coUrbanize site where we often learn the most from individual stakeholder conversations. Building upon the CRA work to amend-the KSURP in 2015, we are evaluating opportunities to expand both the Reach and Accessibility of our outreach work and to provide the appropriate level of Depth for each audience type.

Below are the efforts utilized over the past year, or currently under discussion and development by staff. Many of the efforts listed include statistics about their utilization. Using this list, we plan to expand the outreach effort and track the effectiveness of each effort.

Internet Presence

- Website (9,201 visits over the past year, audience size of 6,185 users)
- coUrbanize (4,774 site visits, 235 comments, 230 followers)
- Constant Contact List Serve (784 subscribers)
- Twitter (784 followers)
- Other Social Media under development (Facebook, Instagram)
- Interactive Mapping (CartoDB, Yonward)

CRA Publications

- Technical Documents (KSURP, Environmental Impact Report, Traffic Report)
- Implementation Plan
- Summary Outreach Materials
- Surveys (CDD 2011 – 640 surveys completed)

Planning Events

- Poster Campaign (147 text comments)
- CRA Meetings (Average meeting attendees sign-in in 2015 = 5.3)
- Public Hearings (Eight held for KSURP Amendment)
- Workshops (2015 Forum 40 attendees, 95 initiatives proposed)
- Special Events – (2015 PARKing Day, Farmers Market, KSA Lunch and Learn)
(Future options – HUBweek)

Stakeholder Meetings

- Neighborhood Groups – ECPT, Area Four / Port Coalition, Kendall Square Residence Alliance (future: A Better Cambridge, Cambridge Residence Alliance)
- Business Associations – Kendal Square Association, East Cambridge Business Association, Chamber of Commerce
- Governmental Coordination – City Of Cambridge, Department of Housing and Community Development, Metropolitan Area Planning Council, Boston Redevelopment Authority

Press / Media Relations

- Press Releases
- Staff Interviews with media
- Media Clippings Library

Memberships

- Kendall Square Association
- Central Square Association
- Cambridge Chamber of Commerce
- Urban Land Institute
- Massachusetts Chapter National Association of Housing & Redevelopment Officials