



## MEMORANDUM

**To:** CRA Board  
**From:** Kathryn Madden  
**Date:** February 7, 2020  
**Re:** 2020 Strategic Plan Process

In 2014, the CRA Board was able to reimagine its role in the city and used a strategic planning process to update its mission, set strategic objectives, and identify projects and a staffing plan necessary to achieve its goals. The 2014 process considered the context at that time and the initiatives of the City and other organizations. Since then, the CRA staff has grown significantly; many projects have been set in motion and completed; and the context continues to change. Against this backdrop, the CRA is embarking on an update of its Strategic Plan.

### 2020 Goals

A preliminary set of goals for the current strategic planning effort are to:

1. Identify any needs in the community or gaps in service that the CRA could be filling
2. Determine how best to complement, partner, and/or extend the work of other community development organizations and the City
3. Establish criteria or focus for project decisions, especially whether to go broader geographically and/or to go deeper into specific topical areas
4. Make strategic decisions regarding use of CRA funds (priorities as well as tools such as grants, loans, technical assistance)

### Strategic Plan Process

The 2014 Strategic Plan is organized around a balanced scorecard (Kaplan 1996, 2004). This robust framework can be used again as we update the plan. The balanced scorecard considers four key areas that should align with and advance the mission:

- External actions and relationships (projects, partners, maintenance, events, etc.)
- Internal operations (staffing, policies, office space, etc.)
- Financial considerations (budget, sources and uses of funding; assets)
- Learning and growth (outreach, professional development, innovation, etc.)

The process will initially engage the staff internally and then the Board at its annual meeting in February. In addition to reviewing the mission and operating principles, we will begin to brainstorm needs in Cambridge and how the CRA might engage with the City and various non-profit partners to advance projects and programs that have a public benefit. We will also discuss ways to conduct outreach to inform the strategic planning process.

Over the next several months, the scope of the strategic planning process will include the following steps:

1. Mission: refine and update the mission statement
2. External Activities: identify strategic areas (geography and topic); establish priorities according to mission and urgency; identify potential partners for key projects; identify measurable outcomes; refine Operating Principles and Decision Tree to enhance decision-making processes
3. Internal Operations: align staff goals and targets, identify new hires if any, and review and refine office policies and processes to better achieve mission and external activities
4. Financial Considerations: research and present different tools that could be used; analyze CRA assets and budget; and make proposals for board discussion
5. Learning and Growth: target professional development opportunities, define ongoing and new outreach strategies; and identify opportunities to continue to learn and innovate.