

Summary of proposed Kendall Square Urban Renewal Plan Amendment

The CRA is considering an amendment to the Kendall Square Urban Renewal Plan (KSURP) to facilitate the relocation of a proposed electrical substation that had been planned for a site on Fulkerson Street in close proximity to a public elementary school and playing fields.

In conjunction with the amendments to the development plan, the CRA is also proposing a revised name for the historic urban renewal plan: the Kendall Square Urban Redevelopment Plan.

The KSURP's initial implementation was modeled on the "urban renewal" programs of the United States of the 20th century. While residential relocation was not a significant element of the parcel assembly work for Kendall Square, other urban renewal programs throughout the United States had tremendous impacts on communities of color, often displacing large portions of Black neighborhoods or recent immigrant communities. The work of the CRA today in Kendall Square is focused on guiding the ongoing development to fulfill a broad set of community needs and economic development within and around the project area. Thus, a new project title that disassociates the current planning efforts in Kendall from the legacy of urban renewal is proposed. Additionally, CRA staff propose to undertake a research effort to examine the CRA's eminent domain records to learn more about any disproportional impacts of its historic urban renewal project implementation upon Black and other economically challenged residents of Cambridge at that time.

Below is a summary of changes to the development controls to the KSURP required to facilitate the relocation of the planned Eversource substation into the MXD District of Kendall Square.

GFA Cap: Increase the aggregate development Gross Floor Area (GFA) allowance to 5,073,000, an increase of 800,000 SF. This new GFA is defined as Substation GFA and is only available if the substation is relocated.

Housing Requirement: Adjust the timing of residential requirement such that the full 400,000 SF of multi-family housing is delivered before or simultaneously with the first commercial Substation GFA.

GFA Exemptions: Exempt the square footage of the substation from the aggregate GFA and other development limitations.

Height Limit: Increase the height limit to 400 feet for residential and removing the 200-foot height limit for properties along Binney Street to allow design flexibility in articulating the commercial buildings.

Retail Requirement: Modify the active ground floor requirement for narrow residential buildings.

Parking: Reduce the minimum automobile parking requirement to .25 spaces per residential unit. Allowing added flexibility regarding interim shared parking. Keeping the bicycle parking ratios but allowing modifications to the dimensional standards.

Plan Expiration: Extend the applicability of the KSURP five years until 2035 to accommodate any extending project implementation timeline due to the technical work related to the construction of the substation and corresponding commercial GFA.