

## Cambridge Redevelopment Authority

# 2022 STRATEGIC PLAN: VISION AND MISSION

September 19, 2022 – DRAFT

## INTRODUCTION

The 2022 Strategic Plan for the Cambridge Redevelopment Authority (CRA) takes into account the context of where the CRA is now, almost ten years after reforming itself with a new board and staff in 2013. The work has been developed with the voices of the CRA Board, staff, and Strategic Advisory Group over many different work sessions during these overlapping phases of work:

- Discovery Phase (February to July 2021)
- Strategic Priorities (August 2021 to June 2022)
- Mission Alignment (September 2021 to August 2022)

This document presents a draft of the vision and mission, which will together set the tone for the rest of the Strategic Plan. The draft vision presents a set of aspirations for the organization in the next five to ten years, based on interviews with the Board members. The steps to achieve the vision will be presented in more detail as external activities and projects, internal operations, financial considerations, and outreach and learning.

## VISION

The CRA's unique set of assets are a committed staff, sophisticated public policy tools, and resources. These assets will continue to give the CRA the opportunity to make a positive difference in the city, a responsibility that the board and staff take seriously. The strategic plan will be a framework that informs project and program decisions.

### **Geography and Scale of Impact**

The CRA will be working on the most pressing needs in Cambridge. Recognizing how challenging it can be to move the needle on key issues, the CRA will scale up their efforts through partnerships that can accelerate impact and by developing models that are replicable. Cambridge has actively engaged City departments, many non-profit organizations, and a robust real estate market. Working within this context, the CRA will focus on places where gaps exist, where partnerships need strengthening, where greater equity and strategic intervention are called for, and where the CRA can make a difference with its unique assets (staff, public policy, and resources). The stewardship of KSURP will remain an important priority, but the CRA has demonstrated that opportunities are not limited to Kendall Square, and that the resources generated from real estate investment in Kendall are best used in making a difference in other parts of the city and in the lives of those in need.

### **Innovation and Growth**

The CRA will be known for being responsive and strategic. Since its reformation in 2013, the CRA has functioned in many ways as a start-up enterprise, testing its capacity to solve problems as they arose

across a wide array of scales, topics, and expertise. By 2022, the organization has grown to encompass significant assets and a larger staff. Moving forward, the CRA will chart its future initiatives as a more mature organization, employing a deep understanding of itself, community needs, national models, and research. The CRA will conduct research, invest in community relationships, and assess community needs in order to anticipate opportunities. Through this approach, the CRA will generate and attract ideas with a clear understanding of context and implications.

**Stewardship**

The CRA will continue to manage its long term obligations, including its role as the responsible authority for the Kendall Square Urban Redevelopment Plan (KSURP); oversight of KSURP Development Agreements including the Infill Development Concept Plan (IDCP); alignment of KSURP with the Kendall Square Mixed Use Development (MXD) District; environmental review and mitigation of KSURP through the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA), including the Kendall Square Transit Enhancement Program (KSTEP) and annual transportation report (ATR); long term operation of the Foundry; ownership of Bishop Allen; and retirement obligations for its employees.

*Table XX. CRA Long-Term Obligations*

Initiative	Begin Term	End Term	Notes
KSURP	1965	2035	Urban Redevelopment
IDCP	2017	~ 2028	Amended 2019, projected 3 phases
MEPA	1977	2035	KSURP review w/amendments
KSTEP	2019	-	KSURP mitigation, until funds dispersed
KS ATR	1994	-	KSURP mitigation
Eversource	2021	2028	Affordable Home Ownership obligation
Open Space	1965	-	Galaxy, Grand Junction, 6 <sup>th</sup> Street
MXD District	1977	-	Zoning alignment with KSURP
Foundry	2022	2072	Long term lease
Bishop Allen	2021	-	Ownership

**Engagement and Partnerships**

The CRA will continue to occupy a distinctive position as a quasi-public entity with autonomy, an appointed governing board, and independent sources of revenue, all working within a state-enabled framework (Chapter 121b). The CRA will be working in partnership with community development corporations, non-profits large and small, private developers, the City, and other public and quasi-

public entities. In efforts that involve the City, the CRA will coordinate and offer its services, tackling some of the thorniest issues with the ability to focus on specific tasks and move projects forward quickly if need be. The CRA will continue to build trust among its many partners and constituencies through its mission focus and commitment to equity and transparency. CRA activities will support, advocate for, engage, and collaborate with communities, and wherever possible, will involve youth in a deeper level of engagement. The staff will develop regional relationships with other cities and non-profit organizations that engage in related work and will increase their awareness of conditions on the ground through weekly walks, community walks, and other field reconnaissance.

### **Priority Topics of Interest**

The CRA will focus its attention on a number of key priorities that address pressing needs related to climate change, housing, and economic opportunity, especially through the lens of diversity, equity, and resilience. These are topics that have a particular resonance for the Cambridge community, and the CRA will tackle these as a public real estate entity within the framework of its distinctive policies, staff capacity, and resources, as well as its track record on project-based initiatives. This vision acknowledges the role and actions of other entities and the importance of the CRA working in partnership with others. Notably the City works on these issues citywide through long-range planning, policies, and project implementation, and certain non-profits specialize in mission-based projects, programs, advocacy, and services in these areas.

- **Climate Change:** The CRA will employ its particular expertise in transportation and open space to reduce carbon emissions through projects that advance different mobilities; foster compact living and working through greater walkability and the quality of the urban environment; and increase the tree canopy through its work on streetscapes and parks.
- **Affordable Housing:** The CRA will consider the unmet needs in the realm of affordable housing development, including loans and grants to reduce costs, open space needs associated with housing, home ownership, small infill development, aging in place, supportive facilities, energy retrofits, and the acquisition of land, among other. These initiatives will require careful partnership with the community development corporations, settlement houses, private developers, the City, and others. The CRA will conduct local and national research that informs this practice and leads to creative models, such as land banks, community land trusts, or other methods of acquiring, holding, and writing down the cost of land for eventual homeowners.
- **Economic Opportunity:** The CRA will play a leadership role in convening workforce advocates, practitioners, educators, and employers to identify gaps in the delivery of services and to find better matches between residents and jobs in Cambridge. The CRA will take an active role by lifting up the role of the LINK as a workforce training and coworking space, promoting skill-based programs at the Foundry, and drawing on connections to employers in Kendall Square. Opportunities will be pursued to inspire youth, encourage internships,

connect with community colleges, and invest in community facilities that foster workforce services and training.

- **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion:** The CRA will strive to be actively anti-racist, not just in its statements but in its actions. Board and staff members will pursue ongoing trainings that will deepen this knowledge and awareness and help the CRA become a model in this regard as it grows. This commitment will be apparent in Board representation, hiring, and the location and format of public and community meetings. The CRA will listen not just to the loudest voices but will seek out those who are underrepresented and less comfortable in planning and development spaces. The CRA Board and staff will build community relationships by showing up at neighborhood meetings and walking the city with community members to share perspectives. The CRA will consider issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion in its project decisions and formation of programs.

## MISSION

The 2014 mission statement has proved to be very robust and is used on social media, websites, documents, policies, and project materials. Since it is used in so many ways, having a concise mission statement ensures that it is used in full, while still allowing second level information to follow as operating principles or as part of the general description of the organization. Based on discussions with the Board and staff, the following statement suggests an updated mission to guide the organization's work:

*The Cambridge Redevelopment Authority is committed to implementing creative development projects and initiatives that promote social equity and environmental sustainability. As a real estate entity that works in the public interest, we offer distinctive public policy tools and a human dimension to our projects and partnerships in the city.*

The Operating Principles from 2014 continue to animate the work of the CRA

1. **Act:** Complement the City's planning role by focusing on implementation using redevelopment tools imaginatively.
2. **Operate with transparency:** Be visible and foster face-to-face relationships and a forum for discussing ideas.
3. **Maximize the public benefit:** Serve a broad public purpose with ethically sound practices in partnership with the City and others.
4. **Operate with fiscal responsibility:** Use our independent resources wisely to accomplish our mission.

5. **Set an example:** Through our actions, advance thinking on issues with long-term consequences and within a larger context, be innovative yet with an awareness of history.