

KENDALL SQ URBAN RENEWAL PLAN PUBLIC FORUM REPORT

March 12th, 2015
Robert Healy Public Safety Building

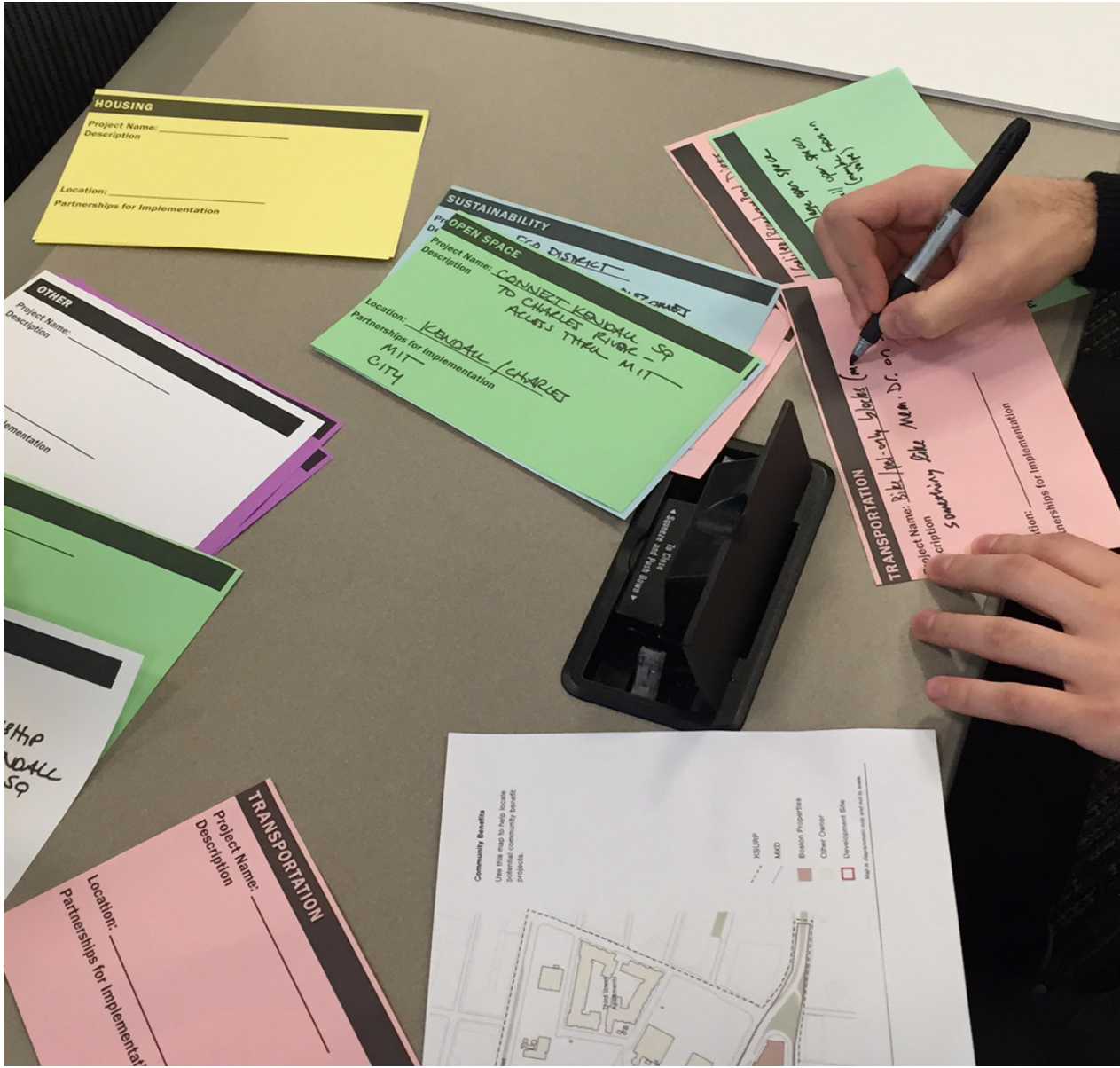


TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....1-2

Summary of Findings.....3-5

Workshop Documentation.....6-13

INTRODUCTION

The Cambridge Redevelopment Authority held a Public Forum at the Robert Healy Public Safety Building in East Cambridge to discuss proposed updates to the Kendall Square Urban Renewal Plan (KSURP) and receive community input regarding public benefits that should be prioritized in the development process. Approximately 40 people were in attendance, representing various interests throughout the city.

CRA Executive Director Tom Evans gave a detailed slide show presentation during which he outlined the history of the KSURP dating back to the 1960s, and existing status of development within the KSURP area. He provided an overview of the objectives identified in the K2 study conducted by the City of Cambridge in 2013. The key takeaway of the presentation was an introduction to the detailed and sometimes complex changes proposed to the KSURP in Amendment #10 including initial design concepts from the developer, Boston Properties.



The history of planning and development in Kendall Square is long and complex; the March 2015 public meeting is the CRA's most recent effort to ensure that this history is a product of as many residents, workers, and institutions as possible.



The focal point of the Public Forum was a creative exercise developed by CRA staff to engage members of the public in helping create project ideas that will fulfill the objectives of KSURP and simultaneously help prioritize them. Because the CRA is an implementation-based organization, this input will be directly used to cultivate a work plan of actionable projects that fulfill the objectives and updates found in Amendment #10.

Each attendee received a collection of blank cards labeled with six broad categories for future needs of Kendall Square: Economic Development, Housing, Open Space, Sustainability, Transportation, and Other. After listing ideas individually, attendees formed groups of 3-5 and through debate and compromise, collectively prioritized the projects on display boards. Once completed, each group brought its board to the front of the room for display and joint discussion with the other participants.

The exercise resulted in prioritized lists of ideas for short- and long term implementation, the opportunity for participants to identify innovative ideas that originated from outside of their immediate engagement groups, and time to speak candidly and informally with all in attendance. Eight teams produced over one hundred project idea cards detailing locations and institutional partnerships for each project.



Project idea cards

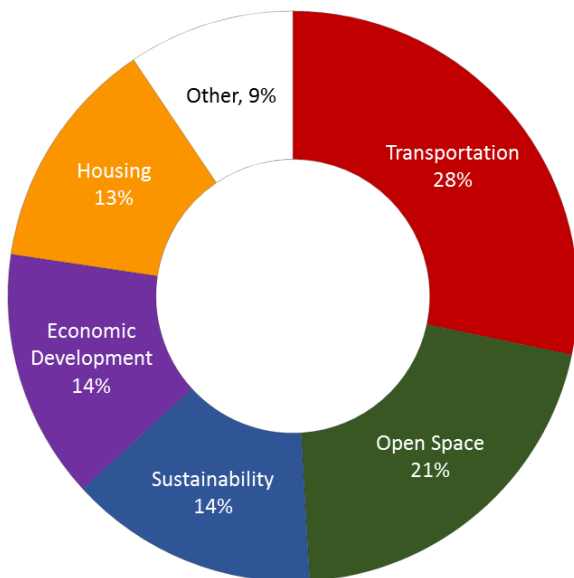
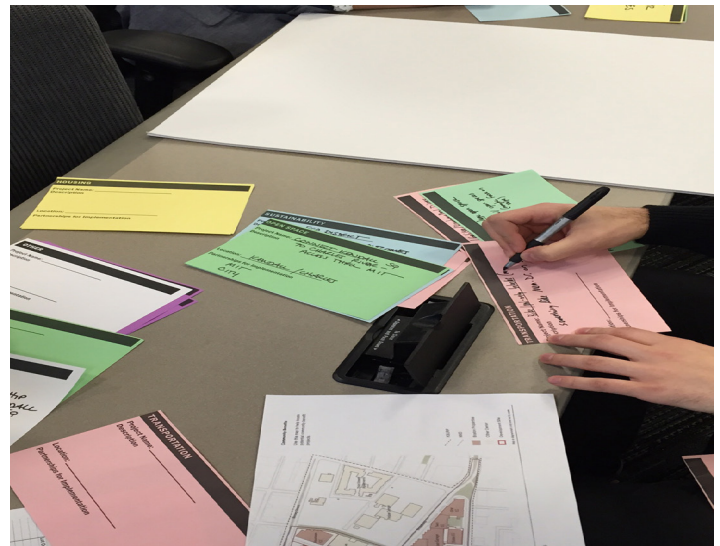
SUMMARY OF WORKSHOP FINDINGS

The breadth of ideas generated during the activity reflected the diversity and creativity of personal interests and professional backgrounds in attendance. Some broader trends in preferences emerged with respect to implementation timeline, yet overall the proposed projects touched on every available category.

For example, to some, transportation improvements in Kendal Square meant bike-friendly streets, to others they took the form of MBTA enhancements, and still others imagined multi-use infrastructure. The other categories—Economic Development, Housing, Open Space, Sustainability, and Other—exhibited similar variation.

After re-categorizing the projects into more specific focus areas, the following topics were cited most frequently:

- MBTA Improvements
- Environmental Protection
- Parks and Recreation
- Housing Affordability
- Neighborhood Vibrancy



Total Number of Cards: 106

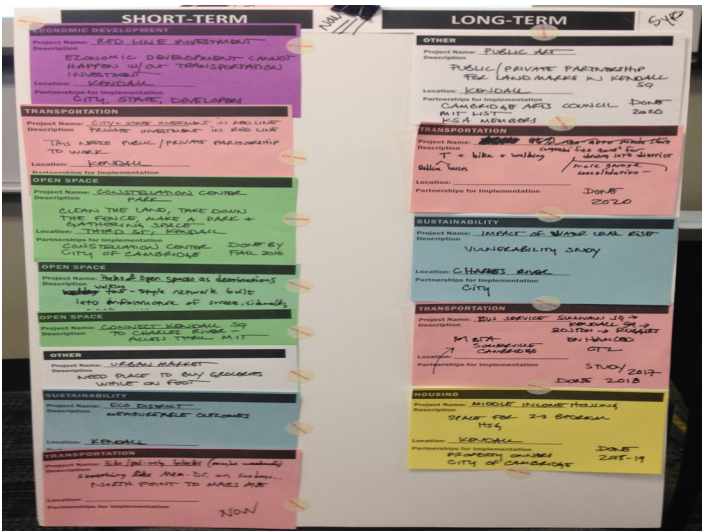


TRANSPORTATION

- 28% of responses were in this category
- While it was the most frequently discussed category of all groups, only half of the groups listed it as #1 or #2 on their list of short and long term priorities
- Ideas revolved around MBTA bus and train improvements and measures to improve accessibility for cyclists and pedestrians

OPEN SPACE

- 21% of responses were in this category
- 6 of the 8 groups listed a project related to Open Space as a top (#1 or #2) priority for either short or long term implementation
- Projects included measures to improve conditions along the Charles River, include more open space for parks and recreation, and increase tree planting as a means of environmental protection



SUSTAINABILITY

- 14% of responses were in this category
- All but one group chose to list sustainability as a priority, and 4 of 8 listed it as #1 or #2 in their list of short and long term goals
- Projects revolved around energy/resource usage and environmental protection measures



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- 14% of responses fell into this category
- Each group included Economic Development on their list of priorities, but it only made it to #1 or #2 on 2 of the groups' lists for short term goals
- Suggested projects under Economic Development spanned a wide range of categories, including art, innovation, MBTA improvements, neighborhood vibrancy, small business development, and workforce development

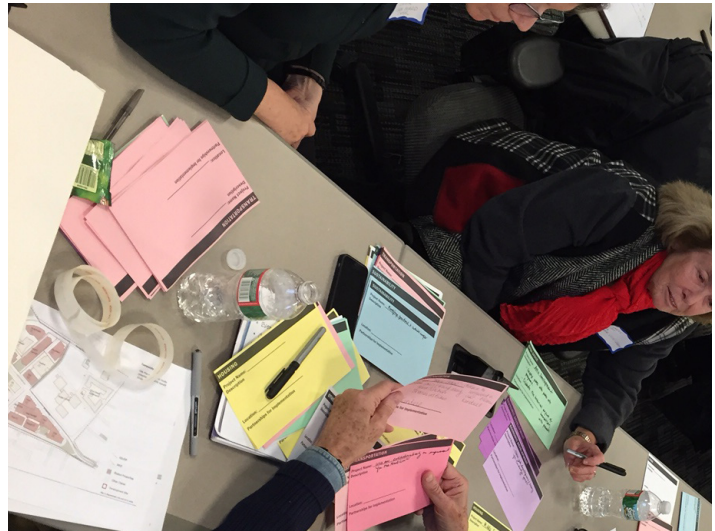
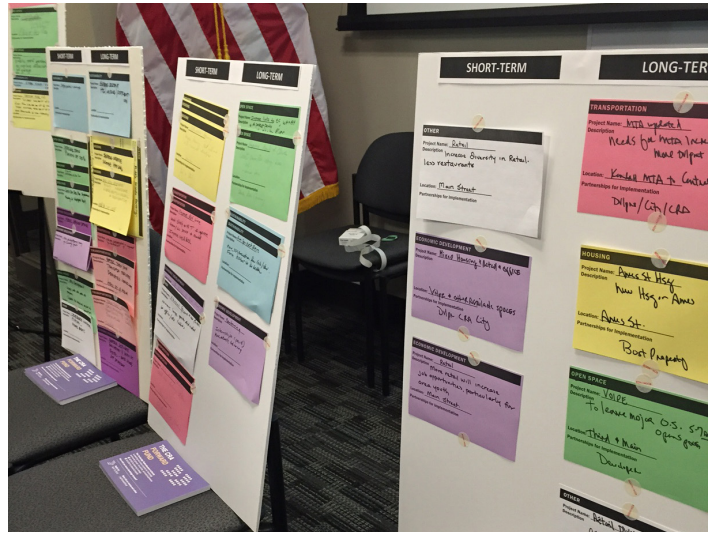
HOUSING

- 13% of responses fell into this category
- All groups included housing as a priority, and 5 of the 8 groups listed it as #1 or #2 on their list of short and long term goals
- Middle income housing development was of unique interest to most groups, as was expanding the existing stock of housing in the neighborhood

OTHER

- 9% of responses were in this category
- The focus areas of Art and Neighborhood Vibrancy made it to #1 on the list of priorities for 2 groups
- Suggestions ranged from including more ground floor retail to creating spaces for more public art and providing a grocery store in the square

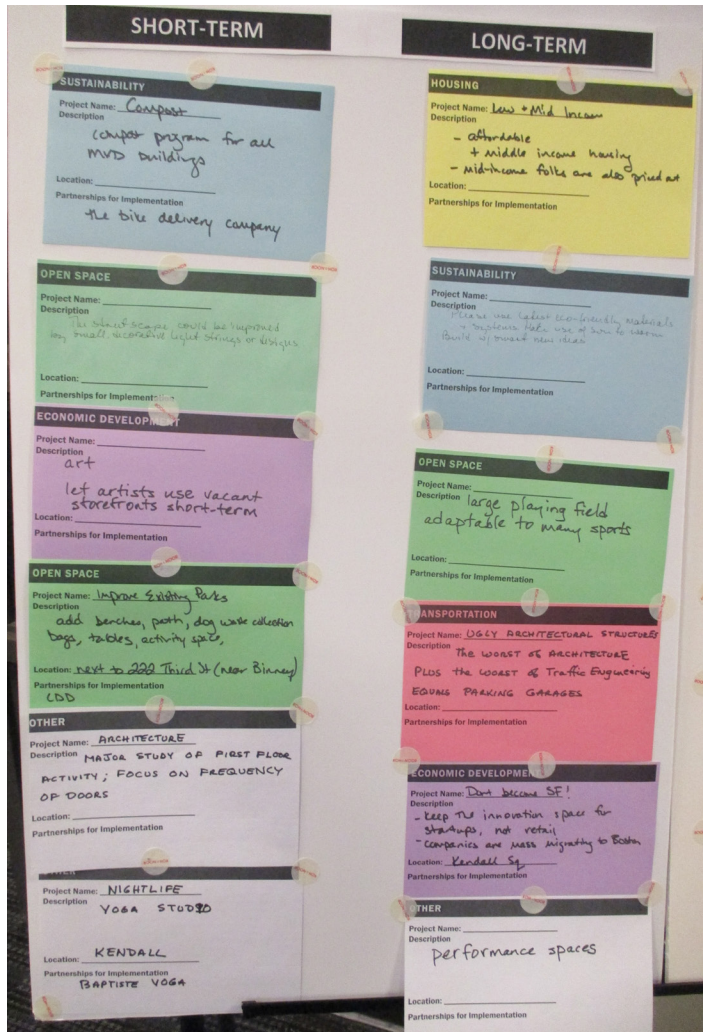
For short term implementation, Sustainability and Transportation were at the top of the list. In the longer term, focuses remained on Sustainability and Transportation but began to encompass greater requirements around Open Space.



Top Priority for Each Group

Short Term		Long Term	
Category	Focus Area	Category	Focus Area
A	Sustainability	Environmental Protection	Housing
B	Transportation	MBTA Improvements	Housing Affordability
C	Sustainability	Environmental Protection	Transportation
D	Housing	Environmental Protection	MBTA Improvements
E	Housing	Housing Affordability	Sustainability
F	Other	Neighborhood Vibrancy	Open Space
G	Transportation	Cyclists and Pedestrians	Transportation
H	Economic Development	MBTA Improvements	Open Space
	Open Space	Parks and Recreation	Other
			Sustainability
			Energy Usage

GROUP A



Prioritized Initiatives

Short Term

- 1 Sustainability / Compost / Compost program for all MXD buildings
- 2 Open Space / The streetscape could be improved by small, decorative light strings or designs
- 3 Economic Development / Art / Let artists use vacant storefronts short-term
- 4 Open Space / Improve Existing Parks / Add benches, path, dog waste collection bags, tables, activity space
- 5 Other / Architecture / Major study of first floor activity; focus on frequency of doors
- 6 Other / Nightlife / Yoga studio

Long Term

- 1 Housing / Low and Mid-Income Housing / Affordable and middle income housing. Middle income folks are also priced out
- 2 Sustainability / Please use safest eco-friendly materials and systems. Make use of soil to warm. Build with smart new ideas.
- 3 Open Space / Large playing field adaptable to many sports
- 4 Transportation / Ugly Architectural Structures / The worst of architecture plus the worst of traffic engineering equals parking garages
- 5 Economic Development / Don't Become San Francisco! / Keep the innovation space for startups, not retail; companies are mass migrating to Boston
- 6 Other / Performance Spaces

During their discussion, Group A selected its main ideas from each category available and even went outside the box to express ideas that could only be categorized as "Other".

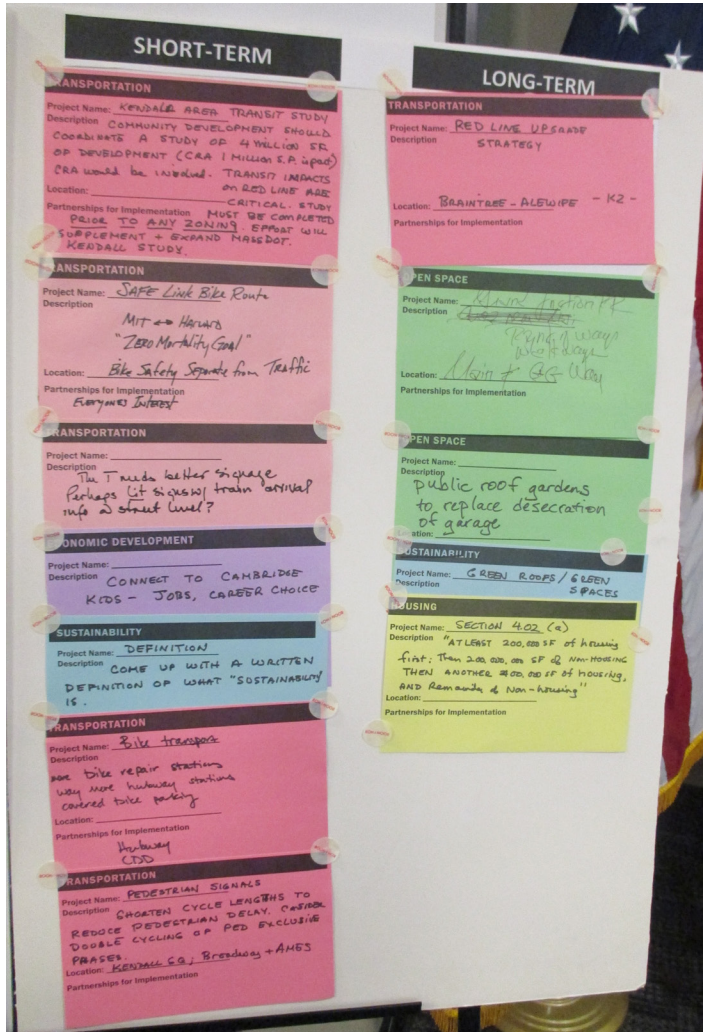
At the forefront were concerns around sustainability, open space, and economic development. The value of design and art on the character and economic development of the neighborhood showed through more than a third of the group's recommendations. The maintenance and availability of parks for recreation, the use of environmentally friendly materials, and the need for increased neighborhood vibrancy were also found in the list of prioritized recommendations.

Some big ideas that emerged included:

- Compost programs for all MXD buildings
- Vacant storefronts available for use by artists
- Yoga studio as a contribution to nightlife

- 6 City of Cambridge
Cambridge Redevelopment Authority

GROUP B



Prioritized Initiatives

Short Term

- 1 Transportation / Kendall Area Transit Study / Community Development should coordinate a study of 4 million s.f. of development (CRA 1 million s.f. is part). Transit impacts on the red line are critical. Study must be completed prior to any zoning. Effort will supplement and expand MassDOT Kendall Study
- 2 Transportation / Safe Link Bike Route / MIT <-> Harvard "Zero Mortality Goal". Bike safety separate from traffic
- 3 Transportation / The T needs better signage. Perhaps list signs with train arrival info at street level
- 4 Economic Development / Connect to Cambridge Kids / Jobs, Career Choice
- 5 Sustainability / Come up with a written definition of what "sustainability" is
- 6 Transportation / Bike Transport / More bike repair stations. Way more hubway stations. Covered bike parking
- 7 Transportation / Pedestrian Signals / Shorten cycle lengths to reduce pedestrian delay. Consider double cycling of ped exclusive phases

Long Term

- 1 Transportation / Red Line Upgrade Strategy / Kendall Square
- 2 Open Space / Grand Junction Rail Road / Right of Ways Walkways
- 3 Open Space / Public roof gardens to replace desecration of garage
- 4 Sustainability / Green Roofs/Green Spaces
- 5 Housing / Section 4.02 (a) / "At least 200,000 SF of housing first; then 200,000,000 SF of non-housing then another 400,000 SF of housing, and remainder non-housing"

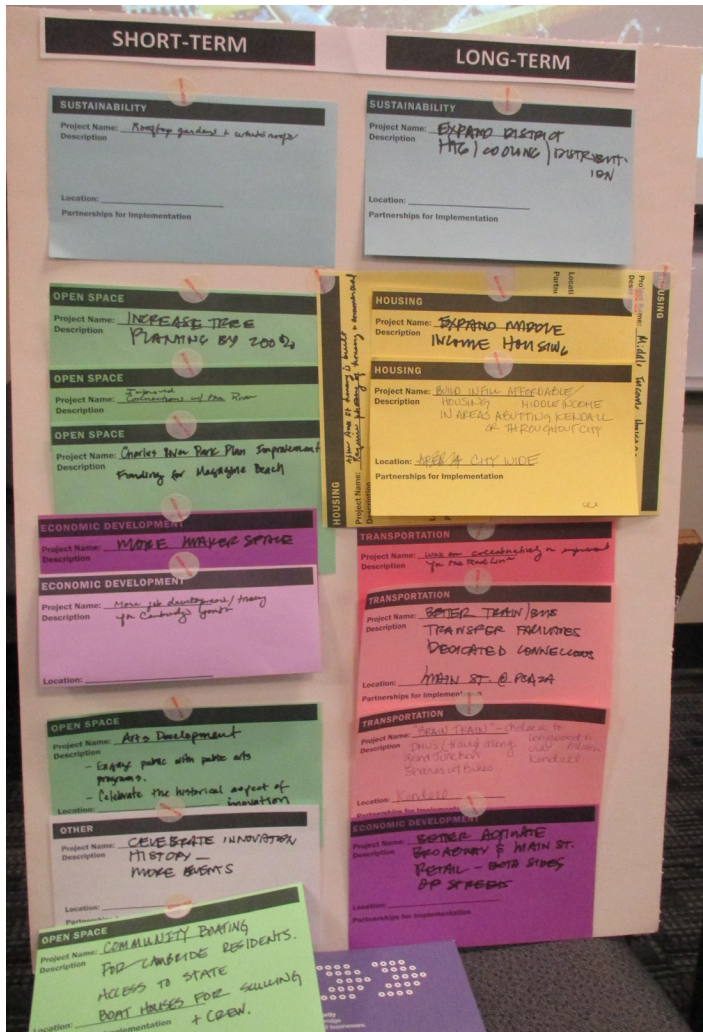
Transportation dominated the discussion in Group B, but sustainability and open space were also among chief concerns in Kendall Square.

Included in most of the short term priorities were recommendations for MBTA improvements and improved accessibility and safety for cyclists and pedestrians. Longer term priorities included a more diverse set of objectives, ranging from new ideas for Cambridge parks to expanded production of housing amidst other commercial development.

Some big ideas that emerged included:

- "Zero Mortality Goal" for cyclists
- Signage with train arrival information at street level
- Public roof gardens
- Workforce development for Cambridge youth

GROUP C



Prioritized Initiatives

Short Term	
1	Sustainability / Rooftop Gardens and White Roofs
2	Open Space / Increase Tree Planting by 200%
3	Open Space / Improvement Connections with the River
4	Open Space / Charles River Park Plan Supplement / Funding for Magazine Beach
5	Economic Development / More Maker Space
6	Economic Development / More Job Development/Training for Jobs
7	Open Space / Arts Development / Engage public with public arts programs. Celebrate the historical aspect of innovation.
8	Other / Celebrate Innovation History / More events
9	Open Space / Community Boating / For Cambridge residents. Access to state boat housing for sculling and crew.
Long Term	
1	Sustainability / Expand District H76/co ounce Distribution
2	Housing / Expand Middle Income Housing
3	Housing / Build Infill Affordable/Middle Income Housing / Build in areas abutting Kendall or throughout city
4	Housing / After Ames St. housing is built require phasing of housing and commercial
5	Housing / Middle Income Housing
6	Transportation / Work collaboratively on improvements for the Red Line
7	Transportation / Better Train/Bus Transfer Facilities / Dedicated Connections
8	Transportation / "Brain Train" / Chelsea to Longwood or via Allston/Kendall. DMU's (trains) along Grand Junction. Shares with bikes.
9	Economic Development / Better Activate Broadway and Main Street Retail / Activate both sides of streets

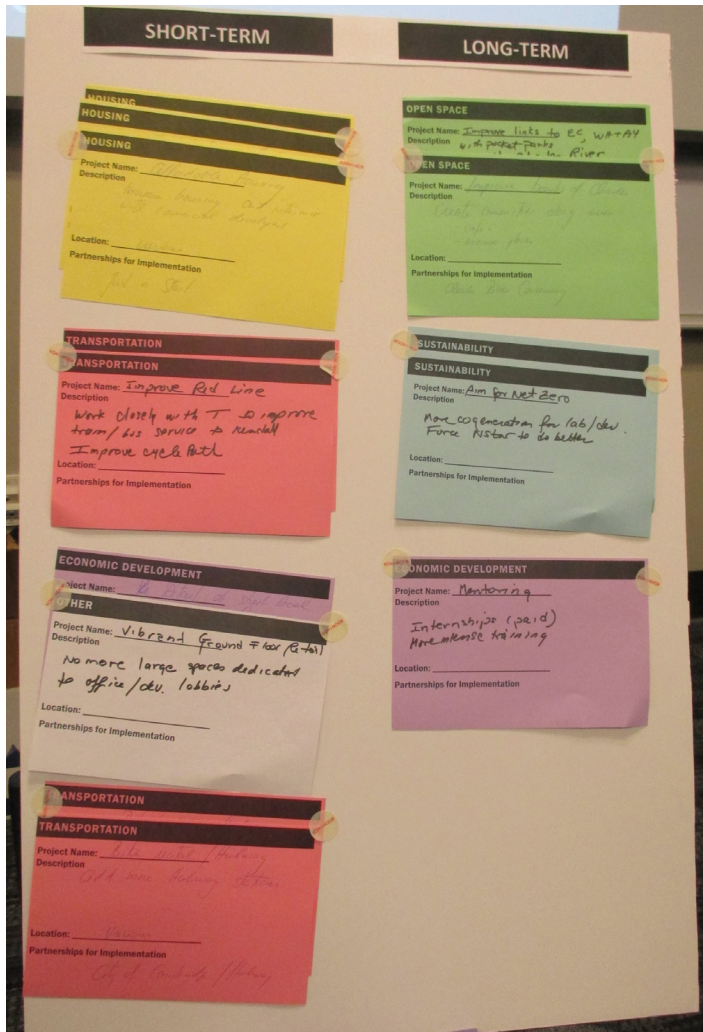
Group C discussed a wide range of topics but selected sustainability, open space, and housing among their top priorities.

Recommendations included making improvements to the Charles River, monitoring energy usage, and taking additional measures to protect environmental quality in the area. In the long term, housing affordability and availability rose as chief concerns. Other topics such as MBTA improvements, increased neighborhood vibrancy, and the value of arts and innovation programs reflected larger workshop trends.

Some big ideas that emerged included:

- A "Brain Train" via Allston/Kendall that shares a path with bikes
- More events to celebrate the history of innovation in Kendall Square
- Rooftop gardens and white roofs

GROUP D



Prioritized Initiatives

Short Term

- 1 Housing / Affordable Housing / Increase housing and intermix with commercial development
- 2 Housing / Student Housing for MIT / Provide housing for students and grads and married so that rental market is under less pressure
- 3 Housing / Multi-family Moderate Income / Build more housing in various locations between commercial before more commercial development
- 4 Transportation / Improve Red Line / Work closely with T to improve train/bus service to Kendall. Improve cycle path
- 5 Transportation / T / Improve service by T
- 6 Other / Vibrant Ground Floor Retail / No more large spaces dedicated to office/development lobbies
- 7 Economic Development / Retail at Street Level / Create incentives for new stores
- 8 Transportation / Bike Rental/Hubway / Add more Hubway stations
- 9 Transportation / Bike/Ped Way-Finding / Provide easier signage

Long Term

- 1 Open Space / Improve Links to EC, WH + A4 / With pocket parks and to the Charles River
- 2 Open Space / Improve Bank of Charles / Create amenities along river - cafés and exercise places
- 3 Sustainability / Aim for Net Zero / More cogeneration for lab/dev. Force Nstar to do better.
- 4 Sustainability / Net Zero Goal for New Projects
- 5 Economic Development / Mentoring / Internships (paid). More intense training

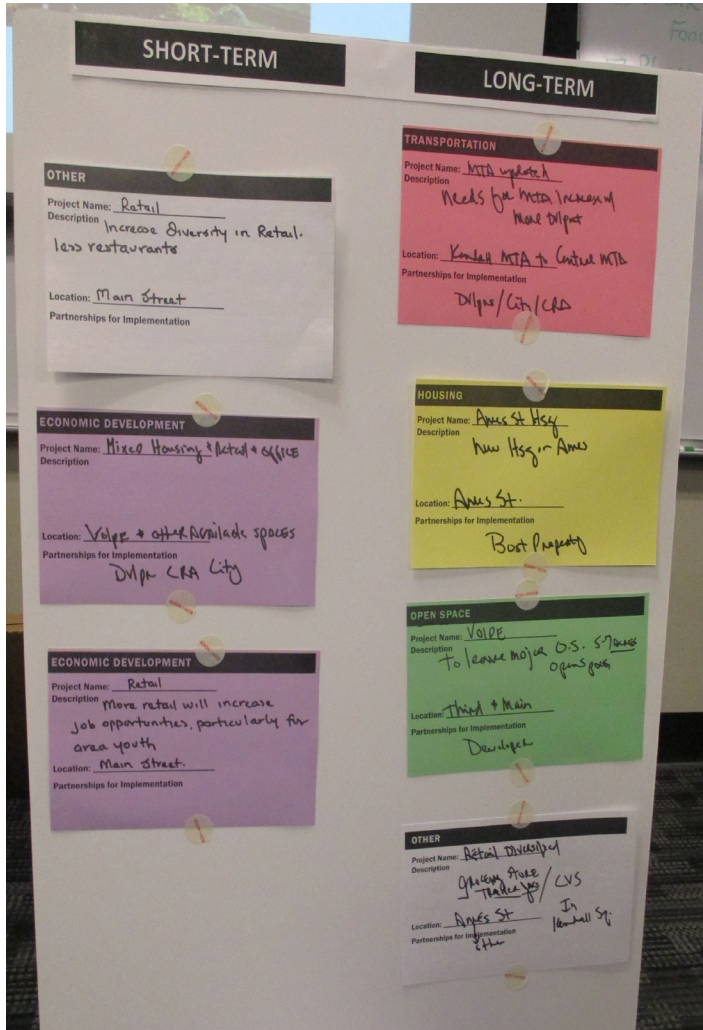
Group D focused most of their discussion on short term priorities that resolved chiefly around housing and transportation.

Suggestions included working closely with MBTA to improve train service, providing better signage for cyclists and pedestrians, and increasing the availability of affordable housing for students and middle income wage earners. Encouraging more retail at the ground level also rose as a strategy to improve neighborhood vibrancy. In the longer term, open space and sustainability concerns led to recommendations for reducing energy usage and improving access to the Charles River.

Some big ideas that emerged included:

- Net Zero goal for new projects
- Student housing for MIT to alleviate rental market pressure
- Cafés and exercise places on the banks of the Charles River

GROUP E



Prioritized Initiatives

Short Term

- 1 Other / Retail / Increase diversity in retail. Less restaurants
- 2 Economic Development / Mixed Housing + Retail + Office
- 3 Economic Development / Retail / More retail will increase job opportunities, particularly for area youth

Long Term

- 1 Transportation / MTA Updated / Needs for MTA increase with more development
- 2 Housing / Ames St. Housing / New housing on Ames
- 3 Open Space / Volpe / To leave major open space - 5-7 acres
- 4 Other / Retail Diversified / Grocery store, Trader Joe's, CVS

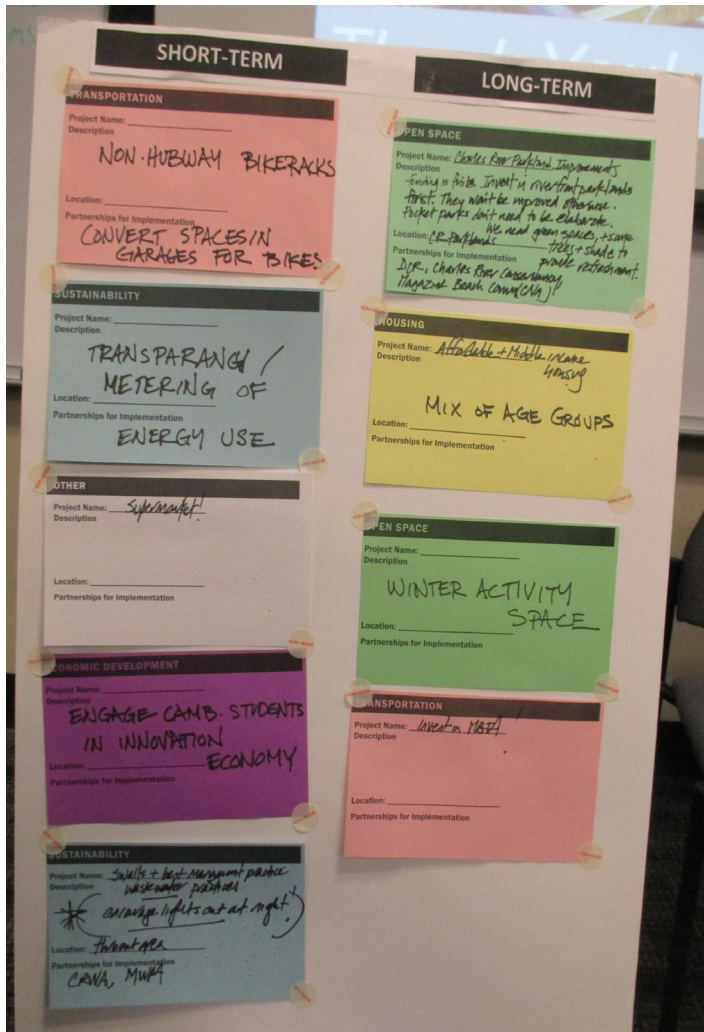
Neighborhood vibrancy dominated the conversation around short term goals in Group E, but longer term priorities varied to include transportation, housing, open space, and other neighborhood amenities.

Increasing the diversity of retail opportunities and permitting fewer restaurants emerged as the top priority in this discussion. Other contributions from retail diversity included improved neighborhood vibrancy, increased short term job opportunities, and a new grocery store for Kendall Square. In the longer term, improvements to the MBTA system and additional housing at Ames Street were the chief concerns.

Some big ideas that emerged included:

- Benefits of diversified retail establishments
- A new grocery store

GROUP F



Prioritized Initiatives

Short Term	
1	Transportation / Non-Hubway Bike Racks / Convert spaces in garages for bikes
2	Sustainability / Transparent Metering of Energy Use
3	Other / Supermarket
4	Economic Development / Engage Cambridge Students in Innovation Economy
5	Sustainability / Swales and waste-water best management practices / Encourage lights out at night
Long Term	
1	Open Space / Charles River Park Improvements / Funding is finite. Invest in riverfront parkland first. They won't be improved otherwise. Pocket parks don't need to be elaborate. We need green spaces and some trees and shade to provide refreshment.
2	Housing / Affordable and Middle Income Housing / Mix of age groups
3	Open Space / Winter Activity Space
4	Transportation / Invest in MBTA

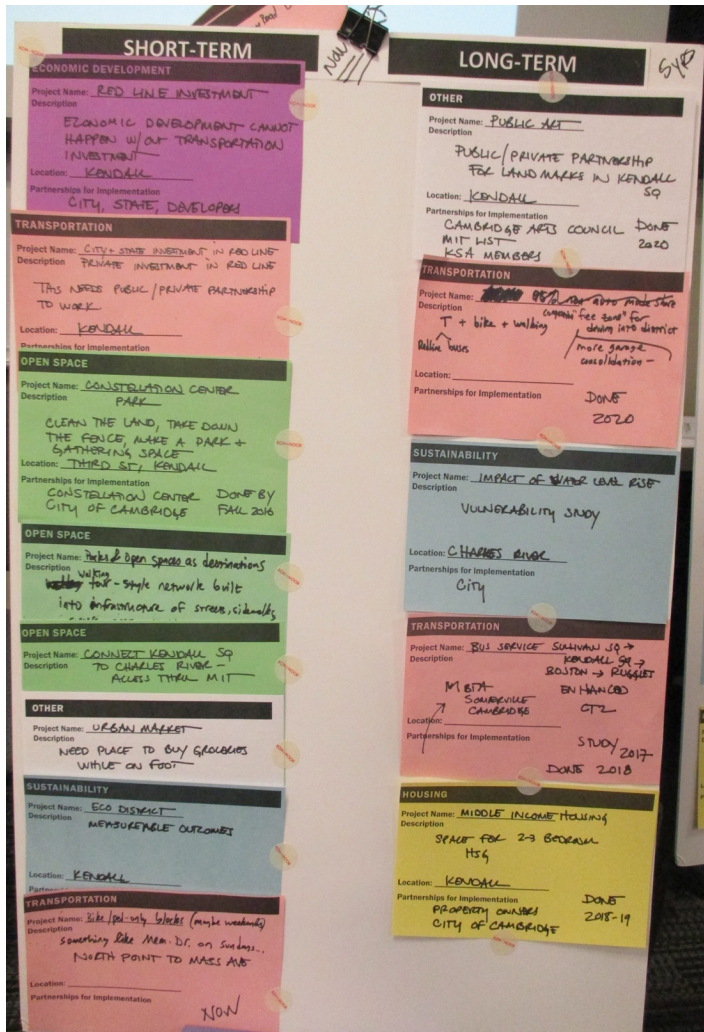
The list of priorities for Group F was fairly balanced with projects concerning transportation and open space among the top contenders.

Converting garage spaces to accommodate bikes and investing in Charles River Park improvements were listed as the main priorities. Other suggestions ranged from transparent metering of energy usage to housing affordability and engaging students in the innovation economy. This group also mentioned attracting a new grocery store and was aware of the limitations of public funds for Charles River improvements.

Some big ideas that emerged included:

- Encourage lights out at night
- Winter activity space
- Convert spaces in garages for bikes

GROUP G



Prioritized Initiatives

Short Term

- 1 Economic Development / Red Line Investment / Economic development cannot happen without transportation
- 2 Transportation / City and State Investment in Red Line; Private Investment in Red Line / This needs public/private partnership to work
- 3 Open Space / Constellation Center Park / Clean the land, take down the fence, make a park and gathering space. Done by Fall 2016
- 4 Open Space / Parks and Open Spaces as Destinations / Walking tour-style network built into infrastructure of streets, sidewalks, corners, open spaces; Build Kendall Connect designs by 2018
- 5 Open Space / Connect Kendall Square to Charles River / Access through MIT. Done by 2018
- 6 Other / Urban Market / Need place to buy groceries while on foot
- 7 Sustainability / Eco District / Measurable Outcomes
- 8 Transportation / Bike/Ped-only Blocks / (Maybe weekends) Something like Memorial Drive on Sundays

Long Term

- 1 Other / Public Art / Public/private partnership for landmarks in Kendall Square. Done by 2020
- 2 Transportation / Congestion "Free Zone" For Driving into District / T (redline and buses) +Bike+Walking. More garage consolidation. Done by 20202
- 3 Sustainability / Impact of Water Level Rise / Vulnerability Study
- 4 Transportation / Bus Service / Sullivan Square -> Kendall Square -> Boston -> Ruggles enhanced. Study 2017, Done 2018
- 5 Housing / Middle Income Housing / Space for 2-3 bedroom housing. Done by 2018-19

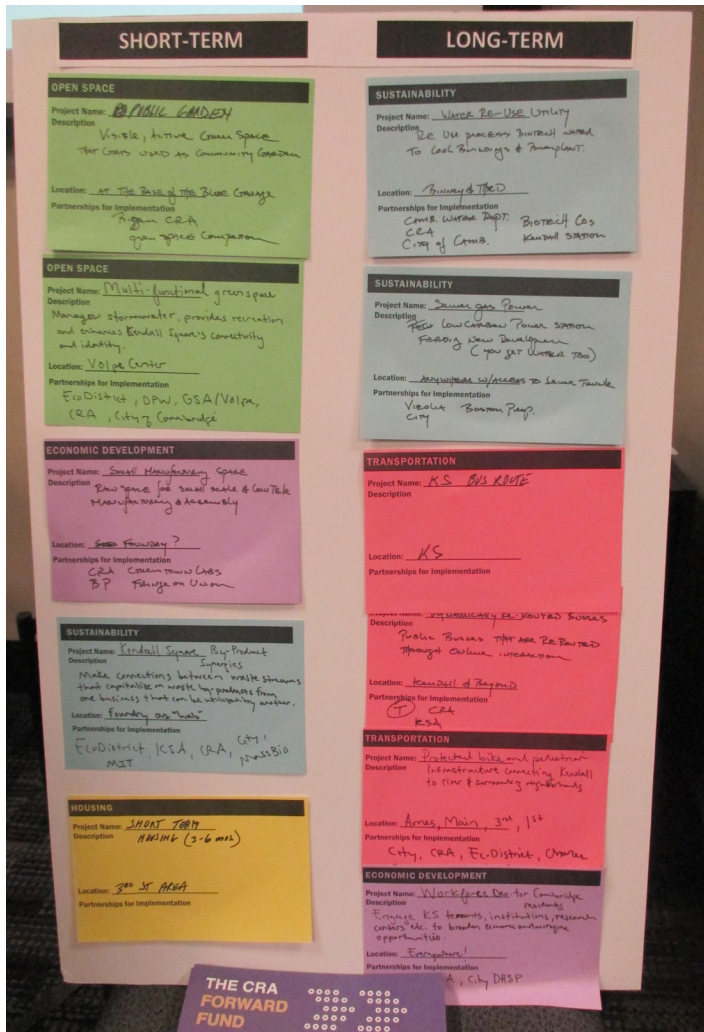
The discussion in Group G led to a prioritization of open space and transportation in Kendall Square.

Although transportation issues revolved around MBTA improvements, the group stressed the need for public and private partnerships for successful implementation. Environmental protection was a key concern in addition to improvements in parks and recreation. Like other groups, Group G also prioritized a new grocery store, housing affordability, and improved connection to the Charles River. The top initiative for long term implementation was the creation of a public private partnership for landmarks in Kendall Square.

Some big ideas that emerged included:

- Bike/pedestrian-only blocks on weekends from North Point to Massachusetts Avenue
- Vulnerability study for the impact of water level rise
- Walking tour-style network of parks and open spaces
- Congestion "Free Zone"

GROUP H



Prioritized Initiatives

Short Term	
1	Open Space / Public Garden / Visible, active green space that gets used as community garden
2	Open Space / Multi-functional Green Space / Manages storm water, provides recreation and enhances Kendall Square's connectivity and identity
3	Economic Development / Small Manufacturing Space / Raw space for small scale and low tier manufacturing and assembly
4	Sustainability / Kendall Square By-Product Synergies / Make connections between waste streams that capitalize on waste by-products from one business than can be utilized by another
5	Housing / Short Term Housing / 3-6 months
Long Term	
1	Sustainability / Water Re-use Utility / Reuse processes biotech water to cool buildings and power plant
2	Sustainability / Sewer Gas Power / Low carbon power station feeding new development (you get water too)
3	Transportation / Kendall Square Bus Route/Dynamically Re-Routed Buses / Public buses that are re-routed through online interaction
4	Transportation / Protected Bike and Pedestrian Infrastructure / Connecting Kendall to river and surrounding neighborhoods
5	Economic Development / Workforce Development for Cambridge Residents / Engage KS tenants, institutions, research centers etc to broaden economic development opportunities

Sustainability, open space, and transportation rose to the top of the list of priorities for Group H.

Energy usage was a concern in the long term, and the group looked to multi-functional green spaces as short term solutions for the area. The group also discussed workforce and small business development as needed resources in Kendall Square. Differing from other group discussions, MBTA improvements shifted away from improving train service toward dynamically re-routing public buses.

Some big ideas that emerged included:

- Water re-use utility to cool buildings and power biotech plants
- Low carbon power station feeding new development
- Public buses that are re-routed through online interaction
- Raw space for small scale and low tier manufacturing and assembly
- Capitalize on waste by-products from one business that can be utilized by another