Holton Street Corridor- CWP MODULE 1
SUMMARY NOTES from ALL Groups – May 27, 2009

General /Process
- What's the timeframe for implementation of this plan?

- Worried that community could end up with only "half a plan" if it takes too long to implement.

Overall Framework

Streets, Blocks, Circulation
- While the new streets being proposed work well, the North/South connections need improvement. Telford St. needs to go over the turnpike.

- How does the neighborhood get to the river? We need to connect with the river.

- Like proposals…especially along Western Ave.

- Cygnet, Antwerp, and Benson streets may not be suited for high development.

- Concerned about Everett being used as a cut through street.

- Development would result in a lot more traffic along Everett Street.

- Western Avenue traffic will be highly increased.

- New development will make it harder to get to Commonwealth Ave. (south of the turnpike).

Land Use - Open Space
- While I like the park being shown, is it the park that has been settled on?

- Splitting the park in two is a good idea. Two parks can support different uses/needs better than one large park.

- Two separate parks allow for alternative uses.

- Smaller parks (vs. ball fields) work better for smaller children and elderly. Smaller parks bring people together. People will adopt parks if the parks are accessible.
- Smaller neighborhood parks are maintained better because people adopt them. And, they are not torn up each year like ball-fields are.
- The Gardner school kids should be able to use the parks for some sports – the parks need a balance between passive use and recreation. Some sports (kicking a soccer ball) should be allowed. Kids need to run around and have fun.
- It's good that there is no planned parking for the proposed parks. This helps the parks maintain a residential use and not become a destination for events.
- The park needs to be framed correctly. We need to better understand the relationship between the heights of the proposed buildings and the parks' edges. Is there an optimum building height for the park to have a sense of place?
- Is it possible to create an aqueduct (from the river) to create a water feature in the park?
- Water features in parks need to be very shallow for safety reasons. We should instead create a way for residents to get to the river, not bring the river to the residents.
- If the parks need a water feature, a fountain may achieve a better result.
- Like proposed parks.

Land Use - Retail
- We need a retail hub on Western Avenue.

- Do we need more retail along Western Ave? A lot of shops/restaurants aren't needed. Concerns with increased traffic generation.

- Taking the mall away will raise prices for goods.

- OK with just a supermarket for retail.

Housing

Height
- Heights being proposed on Western Avenue work. Heights should start out higher and then step down.

- St Anthony's, which was shown in the presentation, is 2.5 stories – not 5 (**BRA Note:** overall height of St Anthony's is 50 feet or equivalent to a 5 story building).

Density
- Question the density – quite an increase when compared to the surrounding homes; higher du/acre than surroundings.

- There could be some housing of lower density. This housing could have front yards and small back yards. Of course it can't all be single family homes, but some of the development could be.

- What is the rationale for more density north-south down Everett Street when the goal is to unite the neighborhood east-west? Won't this create a wall to the east?

- Worried that this proposal would allow for buildings like the 5 unit development on Litchfield St (at end of Holton) which feels too big.

- Why so much density in a small area?

- How will parking be handled?

Typology

- Cambridgeport is a great example of architectural diversity that works; there is a diversity of housing styles and densities, but it comes together to create a neighborhood.
- We need interesting architecture.
- Architecture should be a mix of different styles. There should be visual variety. New housing should not look programmed.
- The neighborhood's heritage includes kids playing in yards and mothers watching over children from their kitchen windows. That history is not shown in this plan. Your plan does not show front and back yards.
- Will there be single-family houses included in the plan?
- Single family homes are much more in character for community.
- We should create some single family homes but they should be small/modest so the homes will not be attractive to students looking for rental housing.
- Antwerp has many single family residences, this proposal would change that.
- Single family homes with yards are needed.
- Residents don't necessarily want area to take cues from existing neighborhood; they want more of what they don't have, i.e. owner-occupancy, family appropriate units, etc.
- What input do citizens have with regards to the building types?
- Currently there is no zoning for multi-family residences in the neighborhood; 3-4 stories is too much and too high.
- Green/energy efficient housing should be a priority. There are models of housing that have shared walls and shared outdoor space.

Social and Unit Mix

- What is going to happen with Charlesview? How will it be incorporated?

- The presentation did not discuss the social mix of the new housing. We want to see a mix of incomes *and* housing types.

- Is there a breakdown of unit types within buildings?

- Harvard affiliate housing is acceptable.

- Harvard should integrate Harvard affiliate housing with housing for the community.

- Too many new residents could undervalue neighborhood.

- Need to attract more families to area.

Overall Vision
- Who do we want to live here?

- Won't get some amenities without more diversity.

- Neighborhood needs a "jewel" to attract people to move to the area.

- A school is needed in order to support the new amount of new residents.

- Key amenity is school, i.e. K-8 school that will draw people to neighborhood. Should lead with school and THEN right type of housing. Can Harvard build school? Can the plan identify a location for a school?

- Look at it through the lens of "what does the neighborhood need that it doesn't have?"