

## First Thoughts from the Allston Planning Team

University campuses are a treasured part of American civilization: exemplary as physical environments, as social milieux, and as catalysts for ideas, knowledge, and cultural insight. Harvard will continue this tradition as it grows with and within Allston. The University is committed to make the Allston part of Harvard's campus as intellectually invigorating, physically graceful, and livable as its older environments in Cambridge and the Longwood Medical Area. The University is also committed to continuing its strong partnership with the Allston community and the City of Boston.

This document summarizes the work of the four academic task forces and conversations held with members of the University community in a variety of forums over the past few months. We articulate general objectives in three areas that will be important in informing planning for Allston:

- Harvard's **academic needs** as an educational institution,
- Harvard's aspirations with regard to the goal of a **shared experience of community** as part of the Allston neighborhood, and
- Harvard's priorities regarding the **physical development** of its assets in Allston.

This work does not present any firm conclusions, but rather describes the aspirations the team has heard articulated. Our aim is to facilitate a discussion of these aspirations among University constituents, our neighbors in Allston, Mayor Menino, and all the public agencies and officials with whom we will need to work closely to implement a plan.

Academic Considerations	Shared Community Considerations	Physical Planning Considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <u>Science and technology</u>: Programs and facilities encouraging innovation in research and teaching</li> <li>▪ <u>Undergraduate Life</u>: Facilities and programs improving undergraduate education and the undergraduate experience</li> <li>▪ <u>Professional schools</u>: Harvard School of Public Health and Harvard Graduate School of Education</li> <li>▪ <u>Enhancements to arts and cultural activities</u>: Performing arts and museum space</li> <li>▪ <u>More housing</u> for graduate students &amp; junior faculty</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Long-term vision for Harvard in the community, informed by the North Allston Neighborhood Strategic Plan</li> <li>▪ Engine for economic development in the region</li> <li>▪ Effective connectivity for pedestrians, bikes, and vehicles</li> <li>▪ Affiliate and community housing</li> <li>▪ Creating an innovative, safe, and livable campus/urban place</li> <li>▪ Improved access to and stewardship of the Charles River</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Congenial open space</li> <li>▪ Architectural design that allows for innovation and respects Harvard traditions</li> <li>▪ Sustainable development</li> <li>▪ Creating a sense of place during each phase of construction</li> <li>▪ Effective connectivity within campus</li> <li>▪ Wise use of land resources</li> </ul>

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### **ACADEMIC CONSIDERATIONS**

*An ideal campus accommodates and embodies its university's academic mission and values, and provides a stimulating place to study, work, and interact, and to enjoy a remarkable time in one's life.*

#### **1. Science and Technology**

- Facilitate interdisciplinary collaboration among scientists from FAS and the professional schools. Incorporate large floors and a high degree of flexibility in space planning to accommodate multidisciplinary science research.
- Incorporate ground level uses, 'street' activity, and common spaces, to animate the science buildings, thus avoiding the sterile character of some science complexes.

#### **2. Professional Schools**

- Enhance collaboration among Harvard's Schools.
- Identify areas for each of the professional schools locating in Allston that will allow for future growth and that create a sense of concentration and synergy among them.
- Establish opportunities for interaction and mutual benefit between the Business School and its new academic neighbors. Propose building massing and open spaces that complement the HBS part of campus while acknowledging that the rest of the Allston part of Harvard's campus will need greater density.
- Ensure that SPH has good connections to other science facilities.

#### **2. Undergraduate Life**

- Cluster undergraduate houses, with a strong relationship to the river.
- Program new social, learning, and recreational facilities in order to encourage interaction among students housed on both sides of the river.
- Enhance opportunities for interaction between undergraduates and the Allston-based professional and research programs.

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### **3. Athletics**

- Reorganize the athletic fields and facilities west of North Harvard Street into an enhanced setting for athletics, including improved facilities for varsity, intramural, and recreational activities.
- Make certain that the new academic, social, and residential uses benefit from their proximity to the athletic areas.
- Increase the functionality and quality of the fields, particularly by improving drainage and infrastructure.

### **4. Arts and Cultural Facilities**

- Affirm through physical planning for new facilities the central place of the arts and culture in the academic and curricular life of the University.
- Program and locate new cultural facilities to activate street life and social interaction for the Harvard campus and for the neighboring communities.
- Ensure that cultural facilities acknowledge their academic role, as well as local and regional community needs.
- Integrate cultural and social functions into the fabric of academic and research facilities.

### **5. Housing**

- Address the affordable housing and child care needs of junior faculty to enhance recruitment and academic life.
- Provide graduate housing that is convenient and affordable, and in an amount and configuration that meets the needs of the Schools.
- Locate housing on sites that will animate street life and enhance the livability and residential character of the neighborhood.
- Effectively use the increased presence of graduate students living in Allston to expand the market for services that benefit to all who live and work in the Allston area.

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### **SHARED COMMUNITY CONSIDERATIONS**

*Good campus planning does not stop at the borders of the campus. Harvard's Allston planning must proceed with deep understanding of, and sensitivity to, the interests of its neighbors.*

- Inform the framework plan for development of the Allston part of Harvard's campus with the North Allston Neighborhood Strategic Plan, which includes community interests in housing, transportation, and economic and workforce development.
- Embed the physical plan for the Allston part of Harvard's campus in the neighboring community: it should not be a place apart.
- Continue serious engagement with the City and with community leaders throughout the planning process.
- Coordinate Harvard's planning phases with broader neighborhood development.
- Minimize the impacts of construction, demolition, traffic, and new University activities on the neighboring communities.
- Explore building and infrastructure alternatives that will support and encourage economic activity, job and business creation, and economic growth.

### **Connectivity**

- Improve pedestrian, bike, and vehicular access for both short- and long-term development.
- Plan for adequate and conveniently accessible parking.
- Reduce the effect of Soldiers Field Road and Memorial Drive as barriers between the campus, the community and the river.
- Establish a street and pathway network that extends neighborhood patterns and creates accessible, practical, and desirable building parcels

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### **PHYSICAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

#### **Congenial Open Spaces**

*The outdoor setting of the university – its courtyards, lawns, quadrangles, pathways, lanes, porticos, and landscaping palette -- are at least as important to the character of a campus as its buildings.*

- Design for a system of pathways, crossings, open spaces and vistas that connect the campus, neighborhoods, centers of activity, and the river and other natural features. Design a system of graceful and diverse open spaces to establish the scale, rhythm and spatial configuration of the campus, and achieve the most elegant fit between buildings and landscapes.
- Continue to improve the University's relationship to the Charles River, its most significant geographic asset. This should include better public access to the riverbanks, possible new crossings, improved landscapes along the river, mitigation of traffic barriers, and new buildings that respond to the river as gracefully as do the Harvard Houses and portions of the Business School.
- Recognize the four seasons in the design of the open space system, and provide both outdoor and sheltered pedestrian pathways across the campus.

#### **Architecture**

*The architecture and spatial organization of an institution must facilitate the teaching and research enterprise, portray the institution's academic mission, and enhance the quality of life on the campus.*

- Consider both community and university precedents in establishing guidelines for building massing, scale, and height.
- Establish design guidelines that allow for innovation, respect existing architectural paradigms, and build on Harvard's traditions. Take clues from the old to create the new.
- Aim for generosity and design excellence, not simple functionality, in all new and renovated facilities.
- Establish key locations for important buildings that lend coherence, create landmarks, and facilitate orientation and way-finding around the campus.

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### **Sustainable Development**

*Harvard is committed to developing new green campus buildings, and promoting and rigorously monitoring sustainable practices in all campus operations. Allston planning will reflect the University's commitment to the following principles, adopted in 2004:*

- Demonstrate institutional practices that promote sustainability, including measures to increase efficiency and use of renewable resources and to decrease production of waste and hazardous materials, both in Harvard's own operations and those of its suppliers.
- Promote health, productivity, and safety of the University community through design and maintenance of the built environment.
- Enhance the health of campus ecosystems and increase the diversity of native species.
- Develop planning tools to enable comparative analysis of sustainability implications and to support long-term economic, environmental, and socially responsible decision-making.
- Encourage environmental inquiry and institutional learning throughout the University community.
- Establish indicators for sustainability that will enable monitoring, reporting, and continuous improvement.

### **Implementation**

*A plan is less a means to fix the future than an iterative process by which an institution can respond to identified and future needs, strategically, alertly, and wisely.*

- Plan infrastructure improvements to optimize programmed space per infrastructure dollar invested.
- Achieve a sense of a complete and diverse environment at the conclusion of each phase of growth.
- Outline strategies for growth beyond the first 20-year timeframe – while mindful of full-build capacities – by establishing a street, block and open space framework that includes all Harvard-owned land.