

FW: Volpe Transportation Site - Open Space (Clerk, please place letter in Official Record of Council Meeting)

Lopez, Donna

Thu 2/5/2015 2:36 PM

Inbox

To: Creedon, Paul <pcreedon@cambridgema.gov>;

From: peteracrawley@gmail.com [mailto:peteracrawley@gmail.com] **On Behalf Of** Peter Crawley

Sent: Thursday, February 05, 2015 2:48 AM

To: City Council

Cc: Lopez, Donna; Paden, Liza; City Manager; Murphy, Brian; Dash, Stuart

Subject: Volpe Transportation Site - Open Space (Clerk, please place letter in Official Record of Council Meeting)

Dear Councilor,

I write in support of the Policy Order (O-29 of February 2, 2015) sponsored by Councilor Carlone requesting the *"...City Manager work with all relevant City Staff to revise the proposed zoning for the Volpe site to include an option for a 7.5 acre public park as originally planned..."*

Cambridge is the 10th densest city in the United States and characterized by urban planners as "fully developed". This means there are scant few opportunities for creating open space in the city.

The benefits of large parks is well known, both environmentally and sociologically. Parks make a city livable and world class. Think of Central Park in New York or the Boston Common. Kendall Square is the densest commercial neighborhood in Cambridge with literally tens of thousands of daily workers and residents - and with much more building/density on the way. Kendall Square sorely needs a major park close to the Broadway/Main Street intersection to serve this dense population, as well as to become the heart and focal point of Kendall Square. In addition, the residents of adjacent East Cambridge and The Port have born the highest burden from development over the last decade and deserve a major public benefit, like a large park on the Volpe site. (Close to 40% of the City's real estate taxes are generated from the greater Kendall Square area.)

Remember, the Volpe site was originally taken by eminent domain and belongs to the taxpayers by way of the federal government. The mission of the government is not to maximize profits but to serve the public interest. I contend that a large park on a portion of the site does exactly that. And since the site is already zoned for 7.5 acres of open space, the City is not taking anything away from the owner.

The "City of Cambridge Open Space and Recreation Plan: 2009 - 2016" states as its #1 Community Goal: *"To increase the amount of usable public open space in Cambridge..."* Does it make sense then for the Community Development Department to propose decreasing the amount of open space on the Volpe site by re-zoning the current requirement of 7.5 acres down to 2.5? Shouldn't the zoning density and height increases proposed by CDD for parts of the site be balanced by a preservation of the currently zoned open

space?

With good planning, in 20 years we will see a Kendall Square that is pleasant to live and work in (and thus more vibrant and valuable) because it has a balance of tall buildings AND open space. Let's not miss this once in a lifetime opportunity to create a large public park on a portion of the Volpe site and "put the square in Kendall Square!"

Thank you for your public service.

Respectfully,
Peter Crawley
88 Thorndike Street
Cambridge, MA

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