

Creedon, Paul

From: Rachel Wyon <r.wyon2010@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, July 14, 2015 1:40 PM
To: City Council
Cc: Lopez, Donna; Paden, Liza
Subject: Volpe up-zoning

Dear City Councillors:

I am writing to you as a long time resident of Cambridge -- I was a renter for 10 years and a homeowner for the past 21 years. Affordable housing has always been a serious concern for me as a single parent, raising my son in Cambridge. I was fortunate to be able to rent at a reasonable rate until 1994 and then buy a 3-family with 2 rental units which I have been able to rent out well below market rate. After rent control was voted out of MA by a state wide referendum, many families and now young people have had to abandon their dreams of staying in an affordable Cambridge.

I am also a retired teacher of the Cambridge Public Schools where the great majority of my students lived in affordable/low income housing. We know that Cambridge has a good number of low income units; however, the astronomical rents that are being charged by new developments have made it impossible for middle income families to stay in Cambridge - as well as putting much more pressure on the low income units available.

My concern is for the proposed up-zoning for the Volpe site.

This is an opportunity to increase affordable housing for Cambridge.

- Cambridge does not have enough affordable housing, so many longtime moderate and middle income families are being displaced, which results in less economic and racial diversity. The proposed zoning reduces the amount of required inclusionary affordable housing from the current 11.5% to only 10%. That is unacceptable. Instead, 20% of the residential should be affordable to low/moderate income people (below 80% of are median income) and 5% to middle income people (80-120% of AMI). That will result in a more balanced mix of residents.
- Cambridge and Kendall sq. needs more **family housing**. 5% of the residential units should be 3 bedrooms, all of which should be affordable to low, moderate, and middle income families.
- This site needs to increase the proportion of residential to commercial in the Volpe site - Maximum commercial should be 40% instead of the proposed 60%. Kendall Sq. already has a very high ratio of commercial - what we need is more residential units, more people living in Kendall sq and more customers for the businesses there.
- Also if there is an increase in FAR floor area ratio, that any increase above 3 should go largely to housing.
- Every Kendall Square study group in the past decade has recommended that the amount of open space for the Volpe parcel remain at 42 percent of the lot area; ECPT and the area 4 Neighborhood Coalition also called for substantial open space. The required open space should remain at 42%.
- The zoning language should encourage, not discourage, the possibility of a large public park. None of the federal government's open space should count toward an open-space requirement, because the government could choose to tighten access restrictions at any time.

- Current zoning allows for up to 250' buildings. The draft zoning would allow 350' buildings, and possibly one 500' building. (For comparison, the Hancock Building is 800'.) Tall buildings reduce natural daytime street light, produce very long shadows, and can cause wind problems.

I know you are also concerned about the well-being of low and moderate income residents in Cambridge. Thank you for taking these suggestions into consideration. There are a lot of people in Cambridge whose lives will be affected by the Volpe up-zoning decisions.

Sincerely,

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