

From: [Kenneth E. Taylor](#)
To: [CDDat344](#); [City Council](#); [Paden, Liza](#); [Lopez, Donna](#)
Subject: COMMENTS FOR THE PLANNING BOARD, IRAM FAROOQ, AND THE CDD VOLPE TEAM
Date: Tuesday, July 07, 2015 4:35:40 PM

All,

The Volpe site is a major and exciting challenge and opportunity. **It needs a defined urban plan/design.** Issues I hope that you will address from the joint meeting last Monday night include:

Building height zones. Both the existing zoning and proposed ordinance permit the highest structures on the south side of the site blocking sunlight to the development areas north of the zone. Both are a huge mistake, casting unnecessary shadows over the balance of the site and devaluing it. The highest structures should be on the Binney Street side of the site where cast shadows will have less impact. Height will probably be an outcome of needed FAR (density) to afford the GSA space, but there should be an effort to keep everything below 350'.

Open Space. The open space should be as large as possible and contiguous rather than fragmented. It should be a minimum of 3.5 acres, not including the GSA site and any corporate 'front yards'. A new Kendall Common fronting on Broadway would provide light and open space in the most visible and community-friendly location. If, like Union Square in New York, the three non-Broadway sides of the new Common could have continuous retail with housing above, it could be a vibrant hub of east Cambridge. New shared pedestrian/vehicular streets on two or three side of the Common would liven and facilitate the businesses.

Building massing. The street frontages should consistently not exceed 70'. Taller structures should be set back.

Add Cultural Programs. In addition to residential, office, retail, innovation functions, cultural facilities should be provided. This could include performance venues (both in-door and out-door), cinema, museum.

Parc Villette. Parc Villette in Paris is the most dynamic and well-used park I have seen and could serve as a model. In addition to park and playgrounds, it has an open market structure (Grande Halle), cinema, a science museum (Cite des Sciences at d'Industrie), the Paris Philharmonic, Theatre Paris-Villette, and the Cite de la Musique.

All the elements above are critical parts of a plan and there needs to be a plan before drafting a new zoning ordinance to achieve it.

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