

Cambridge Redevelopment Authority
255 Main Street, 4th Floor
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02142
617 492-6800
www.cambridgeredevelopment.org



October 8, 2014

Gabrielle Sigel
U.S. General Services Administration
Office of Real Property Utilization & Disposal
10 Causeway Street, Room 1010
Boston, MA 02222

Re: Redevelopment of the John A. Volpe National Transportation Systems Center

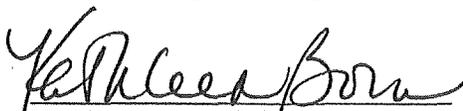
Dear Ms. Sigel:

The Cambridge Redevelopment Authority (CRA) is very pleased that the General Services Administration (GSA) and the US Department of Transportation are moving forward with the redevelopment of the Volpe Center – a unique development opportunity in Kendall Square. As you know, the CRA has a long history with this property dating to 1965 and has undertaken multiple efforts over the years to realize the full potential of the site. We continue to work with the City of Cambridge and developers on projects in and around Kendall Square aimed at enhancing the local and regional economy. A redeveloped Volpe property could be the centerpiece of such an effort – no less important than the one the CRA, the City, and the United States Department of Transportation began after the withdrawal of NASA from the property in July of 1970.

The CRA is not a potential purchaser of the site and therefore is not in a position to respond to the specific survey questions within the RFI. We are, however, interested in participating in whatever manner might be most helpful for the City of Cambridge, the GSA, the Volpe Center, and a future redeveloper in order to bring about the delivery of a high quality development consistent with what is currently taking place within the MXD zoning district. As one example of how that involvement might come, the CRA owns a parcel of land on the block at the intersection of Binney and Third Streets that perhaps could be better integrated into the redevelopment.

The CRA is, first and foremost, Cambridge's redevelopment authority, and therefore will continue to work closely with the City on the accomplishing of our unique mission. Please accept this letter as the CRA's formal expression of support for the current collective efforts of our Federal government partners, and our willingness to assist in your redevelopment effort in a positive, practical way that makes sense for all parties. Thank you.

Sincerely,
CAMBRIDGE REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY


Kathleen Born, Chair

Copies:
City Manager Richard Rossi
Assistant City Manager Brian Murphy
Director/Associate Administrator Robert Johns

ATTACHMENT B

6/29/15

The Volpe site is an exciting opportunity for Cambridge, and it is also a complicated site. It is clear that the PB and CC are very supportive of affordable housing. As the discussion goes forward, I urge the CC and PB to find a balance that provides as much affordable housing as possible and to think carefully about the implications of setting a percentage goal for affordable housing that is lower than the current zoning requires.

Margaret Drury

From: Thomas Stohlman <tstohlman@alum.mit.edu>
Sent: Friday, June 26, 2015 10:36 AM
To: City Council; Lopez, Donna
Subject: Volpe Zoning Comments

June 26, 2015

To the Members of the Cambridge City Council,

Regarding the Zoning Amendment for the Volpe Site:

FAR

FAR is the ratio of Building Area to Lot Size. Downtown Manhattan has an FAR of 15. The Back Bay (the Charles to the Hancock Tower, but including the Tower) comes in at 2. Most residential neighborhoods in Cambridge have a FAR of less than 1.

The current Volpe FAR is 3. The recently passed MIT Kendall Zoning is 3.9. The proposed Volpe FAR is 4.5, the highest FAR in the City. And this 4.5 FAR does not actually include all of the building area. A large exception is the new Federal Building and there are also exceptions for Ground Floor Retail and Innovation Spaces. With exceptions included, the true FAR is around 5.5.

The Volpe Site will be very dense with Buildings, too dense. Imagine the whole 14 acres covered by a 5 story building. Or all of that Building Area put in a couple of skyscrapers. I did, and made a video tour of it. YouTube Video: https://youtu.be/dN18_MJAUGI

Housing/Commercial Mix

In 2011, the City Manager appointed the Kendall Square Advisory Committee (KSAC) to plan for the future of Kendall Square. I attended almost every meeting. There was a strong argument by residents that more Housing and Open Space were essential to a vibrant Kendall Square. The neighbors even hired a consultant to draw up a plan with their input and made T shirts with the mantra "Live, work, play".

They asked the question: What Business:Residential ratio makes for a vibrant neighborhood? Kendall has a very high B:R ratio, a whopping 3.5. San Francisco's Mission Bay has a B:R of 0.7, Hamburg's HafenCity has a B:R of 1.6. The Back Bay is at 1.3.

The recommend increase of the current FAR from 3 to 4.5 results in a bonus of almost 1 million square feet more than the current zoning allows. The great majority of this extra square footage will be going to commercial space. This is contrary to the multiple schemes presented for the Volpe site by the KSAC (see attached photo). The KSAC schemes called for extra FAR and puts most of it in housing.

Walking around the Volpe parcel in a virtual model (It's hard to experience this looking at plans.) also shows that commercial space will dominate the ground uses. Residential use (specifically walk-ups) add special life to the street and is missing in this Zoning. Here is a YouTubeVideo of CDD Scheme showing how commercial space dominated the ground level: https://youtu.be/apcno1_fpMY

Although a Volpe developer is allowed to provide the housing that is needed, it is more likely that the more profitable commercial space will continue to dominate the development mix. The proposed Amendment falls short in requiring more housing.

Open Space

Every Kendall Square study group in the past decade has recommended that the amount of open space for the Volpe Parcel remain at 42% of the lot area, which most of it available to the public. Although the Planning Board's explanatory letter says this is being retained, their explanatory notes then call this requirement "onerous" and reduce the requirement to 25%. The proposed Amendment falls short in both open space and public open space requirements.

Height

Building heights are both a distraction and a key ingredient to the Volpe Amendment. Once a building creeps over 5 stories (1 story= 10 feet), both the people on the street and the occupants in the building begin to lose visual contact and opportunities for interaction.

Tall buildings affect natural daytime street light, the reduction of sky increases quickly as a building goes from 1 story to around 10 stories. Then the reduction begins to flatten out as the buildings get higher. In other words, there is little difference to people on the street between a 10 story building and a 20 story building. The difference is much more pronounced when one gets further away from the immediate neighborhood.

What's in it for the neighborhood, besides reduced sky and weird wind effects? In theory, open space. In other words, giving height without getting open space is a bad deal. The two tower video above opens up over 75% of the site to open space.

The Richest City in Massachusetts

Cambridge is the richest city in Massachusetts. Those riches flow in greater and greater amounts from the Commercial Property Tax base. If the Volpe parcel is built out according to the proposed zoning, the City will be \$47M richer every year. If the Volpe parcel is built out with more residential than commercial, the City will be richer \$39M every year. If nothing is built, Cambridge will remain the richest City in Massachusetts.

It is hard to see, from Cambridge's point of view, the urgent need to pass a Volpe Zoning Amendment which, while it attempts to maximize the parcel's value to the US Government, does not contain all the ingredients for a livable City.

Here's my input:

- 1 I suggest lowering the commercial maximum (thus increasing the residential minimum) from 60% to 40%. Put most of the extra FAR square footage into housing, not commercial square footage.
- 2 I suggest keeping the open space requirement at 46%, even larger in return for greater heights.
- 3 I suggest keeping the heights flexible, even unlimited, but only for open space in return.
- 4 Keep all those requirements for Housing for All, Sustainable Building, Ground Floor Retail, and Innovation Spaces. They should not just be used as excuses/justifications for 700,000 SF of new commercial property.
- 5 And address the sleeping giant of any Kendall Square proposal: How will this development affect a transportation system that is already broken?

Tom Stohlman
19 Channing Street

Lopez, Donna

ATTACHMENT D

From: John A Hawkinson <jhawk@mit.edu>
Sent: Tuesday, June 30, 2015 3:57 PM
To: City Council; Paden, Liza
Cc: Lopez, Donna
Subject: Flyover Volpe video

Council, Planning Board:

<https://youtu.be/5byy0cfqCak> is the flyover video I wanted to show last night. It shows CDD's 4 scenarios in quad split screen as you go around the Volpe parcel from Point Park down Third, Binney, Loughery Way, and Broadway. I hope it says something meaningful about comparing them.

Liza Paden: Please forward to the Board.

Donna Lopez: Please enter into the Council record.

Thank you.

--jhawk@mit.edu
John Hawkinson

Freelance Journalist
+1 617 797 0250
twitter: @johnhawkinson

ATTACHMENT E

Jerry O'Leary
Resident and condo owner at 303 third Street

Need for a landmark park

The development of the Volpe Center property presents a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to define the character and image of Kendall Square. A critical element will be the size and apportionment of open space. The Connect Kendall Square competition produced four designs for open space on the Volpe plot. Three out of the four recognized the importance of the site at Third and Broadway as the focus for the major part of a public open area, a signature park. Such an open space will affect the image of Kendall Square as much as or more than any tall building that could be built.

Putting a major open space at this corner makes sense for many reasons:

1. The site is large enough to have a dramatic impact on the character of the neighborhood. It makes you think of vibrant spaces like Washington Square in New York or Rittenhouse Square in Philadelphia.
2. The site is centrally located in the Square right by the T stop and functions as a daily crossroads for commuters, residents and visitors.
3. The site's southern exposure, with the absence of tall buildings to the south of it, assures abundant sunshine for many people during a large portion of the day.
4. As the crossroads of Kendall Square, this site becomes the natural location for informal neighborhood meetings and interactions. As a large space, the site can be a venue for larger events and activities.
5. The site offers an excellent opportunity to exploit the connection to the river via the Broad Canal.

Size of Park

The park needs to be large. Two of the design competition studies allocated the entire area bounded by Broadway, Third, Potter, and the line of Fifth streets to park or open space. This area by itself comprises about 3.5 acres. This means that the amount of open space required on the non-DOT portion of the development must be at least four (4) acres. For comparison, Washington Square is about nine (9) acres, Rittenhouse Square about seven (7).

Definition and determination of open space

Under the Planning Board's zoning amendment petition, the total open space for the entire development would be fixed. The space required for the DOT building with its surrounding restricted buffer area and the amount of DOT open space would each be set in a negotiation between the developer and DOT. Any DOT open space would reduce the non-DOT open space, while the developer would be guaranteed a fixed amount of area for development. This seems like a perverse incentive.

If instead, the allotment of non-DOT open space were specified in the zoning, any DOT open space would come out of the developer's buildable space. This would give the developer the incentive to negotiate a minimum amount. It would simultaneously guarantee that Cambridge retains enough open space to fulfill its vision for development.

In summary, what needs to be done? I ask the the Planning Board and City Council:

1. Modify the zoning to require *at least 4.0 acres of open space* on the non-DOT portion of the development.
2. Define this requirement to include only the open space on the non-DOT portion of the development.
3. Endorse a vision for the development that includes a significant park at the corner of Third and Broadway. To the extent possible, key elements of this vision should be included in the revision to

Monday, June 29, 2015

the zoning ordinance, and the remainder incorporated into the PUD-KS Planning and Design Guidelines used to evaluate the PUD proposal.

DOT, the developers, and the City of Cambridge each have strong motivation for the Volpe development. Cambridge needs to insure its interests are met and make the changes outlined above.

Monday, June 29, 2015

From: Carol O'Hare <cbo1066@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, June 15, 2015 3:04 PM
To: City Council; Rossi, Rich; Farooq, Iram
Cc: Lopez, Donna; Paden, Liza; Dash, Stuart
Subject: P.S./Correction: Volpe Development - Policy Order #4, 6/15/15 - A picture is worth 1,000 words. So is a 3-D electronic model.

Importance: High

Correction, courtesy of eagle-eyed & quick-witted John Hawkinson:
 Of course, the "deliberative process" exemption is a Public Records Law concept, not an Open Meeting Law concept.
Ms. Lopez, Please include this in the Official Record.
Ms. Paden, Please forward this to the Planning Board.
 CO'H

From: Carol O'Hare [mailto:cbo1066@gmail.com]
Sent: Monday, June 15, 2015 2:34 PM
To: Cambridge City Council; Richard Rossi; 'Farooq, Iram'
Cc: Donna Lopez; 'Paden, Liza'; Stuart Dash
Subject: Volpe Development - Policy Order #4, 6/15/15 - A picture is worth 1,000 words. So is a 3-D electronic model.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

A. Why Withhold Volpe Development 3-D Electronic Models from the Public?

1. Background

- CDD has developed 3-D electronic models (Models) of some hypothetical developments that could be built at the Volpe site under their draft PUD-KS zoning amendment.
- The City Law Department has opined that the Models (though available to city personnel, the City Councillors and presumably the Planning Board members) may legally be withheld from the public under the "deliberative process" exemption to the public records law, which allows the government to avoid releasing materials that could taint the process of policy development."¹

2. PR and Common Sense

Just from a PR and common sense perspective, that seems both counterproductive and counterintuitive. If all those city elected and appointed officials and personnel (including CDD personnel who wrote the zoning amendment need models, in addition to words, to help them imagine and understand what the proposed zoning amendment would/could/might permit, why should the public be denied those models? Why should we have to rely solely on words, often conveying complex and technical zoning concepts like FAR, cross-references to other provisions of law, etc.?

3. Deliberative Process Exemption^[2]

I'm definitely no expert on the Open Meeting Law or its exemptions. But, it seems to me that the Law Department's position that the City Council and Planning Board may benefit from viewing the Models, but the public may not, undercuts the very purpose of the Open Meeting Law and for no good reason.

It's difficult to understand how viewing some potential options would "taint the development process." Especially because there is no private developer to present an actual project that requires this zoning amendment, the City should (instead of hiding the models) make extra robust efforts to Show and Tell the public what this proposed rezoning could permit to be constructed on the 10-acre Volpe site. That seems to have been Iram Farooq's sense, too, until the Law Dept. rendered its opinion.

4. City Waiver?

Even if the Law Dept.'s view would be legally defensible in court, may the City not waive its claimed right to withhold the Models? Are our City officials the required to take refuge in the "deliberative process" exemption? If held public office, I think I'd be embarrassed to do so in a case like this.

B. Lessons from Normandy/Twining Tower: their Rendering & 3-D Model

1. Normandy/Twining's Pretty-as-a-Picture Rendering, copy attached.

Normandy/Twining's widely circulated bird's-eye view rendering shows how their project would look from many stories above street level. Here's what two architect friends observed about the N/T rendering. (I did not coach them.)

a. Ray Warburton, retired Design Partner at Shepley Bulfinch, wrote:

"The purpose of the proposed rendering is to "sell" the project... This aerial perspective does not show how it would be perceived by residents, pedestrians or motorists. The most illustrative vantage point from which to draw this perspective would from the "entrance" to Lafayette Park from MIT – the corner opposite the intersection of Sidney Street and Mass Ave – looking down Mass Ave towards Central Square. Lafayette Park would be in the foreground and the fire station on the left hand side. This would better show the scale difference between the 19 floor tower and the four and five story buildings currently flanking both sides of Mass Avenue and would better facilitate a discussion about the benefits, drawbacks and appropriateness of changing existing zoning to allow such a design to proceed."

b. Robert Kroin, 40 years' experience in urban design and project review; teaching at Harvard, MIT, and Harvard Institute of Learning in Retirement; AIA's Thomas Jefferson Award, the profession's highest acknowledgement of design work in the public sector, wrote in relevant part:

"The site is significant because it marks the location of the easterly entrance to Central Square (and the westerly entrance to MIT), because the street intersection has memorable place-making geometry, and because the site is important in orienting the visitor to the street plan of Cambridge -- the East Cambridge and Cambridgeport street grids merge at the site -- and to the physical relationship between Cambridge and Boston: both of the streets lead to bridges between the two cities....

[The Normandy/Twining rendering] does not illustrate the project from street-level as it would be seen and experienced by the community.

I don't understand why neither CDD nor the Planning Board insisted that the deep-pocketed N/T developer illustrate show all of us renderings their proposed project from specified locations and at specified angles.

2. Normandy/Twining 3-D Model

Normandy/Twining first publically showed their 3-D tower-project and surrounding-area architectural model at an Open House last fall, I think. The residential tower part of the model was lopped off at mid-height, stories short of their proposal. After public objection, N/T altered their model to show the actual proposed stories/height in relationship to surrounding buildings. That should have been a no-brainer from the start.

And, I'd guess that N/T representatives first showed their lopped-off model to CDD before presenting it to the public. And, if so, why didn't CDD insist on a complete model, including all stories and the mechanical penthouse?

Bottom Line: If pictures (and models) are worth 1,000 words, why not let us see them, too?

Thank your for your time and consideration.

Carol O'Hare
172 Magazine St.

P.S. Donna Lopez, City Clerk: Please file this with the Official Record.
Liza Paden: Please forward this to the Planning Board.

Lopez, Donna

ATTACHMENT G

From: l.stabile@comcast.net
Sent: Sunday, June 28, 2015 2:29 PM
To: Lopez, Donna; Paden, Liza
Cc: Chris Matthews; City Manager; Peter Crawley; Farooq, Iram; Richard Burck, Owner/Principal; East Cambridge Planning Team; City Council; Patrick J. Sclafani, Public Affairs Officer; Dash, Stuart; Tom Evans, Executive Director; 303 Third St unit owners; Jennings, Taha; Mark Jaquith; John Hawkinson
Subject: Comments for public hearing on Volpe zoning 6/29/15
Attachments: volpe.pdf

Please submit the attached document as part of public comment for the zoning hearing scheduled for June 29, 2015.

Thank you,

Larry and Jane Stabile

To: Cambridge City Council Ordinance Committee and Cambridge Planning Board
Subject: Comments for public hearing on Volpe zoning 6/29/15

Committee and Board Members:

We are unit owners at 303 Third Street, with a direct view onto Kendall Square and the Volpe Center.

We join with many other residents of Kendall Square to express our deep concern over proposed zoning amendments affecting the future of the Volpe Center.

These proposed changes signal diminished quality of residential life in Kendall Square. Already there are residential buildings within the square; any new development of the Volpe must also include more. Should the recent proposals we have seen come to pass, those residents will largely be encased in an urban canyon.



As Kendall Square is transformed into a complex of modern buildings, we also should not forget the historical side of the Square. The Kendall Building (clock tower) is an important landmark and forms the heart of Kendall Square. It is visible from academic and business offices, and some residences. MIT plans call for more buildings on the MIT side, dwarfing the clock tower. Large-scale buildings on the Volpe site will further reduce its visibility. The result, if all these plans come to fruition, is that the heart of Kendall Square will occupy one small triangle, surrounded by high walls.



Residential buildings currently in Kendall include the Watermark, 303/285 Third Street ("Third Square"), and MIT housing in Eastgate. These buildings all abut the Volpe playground/parking lot at Third and Broadway. Residential construction on the Volpe site will also abut this portion of the site. The clock tower is visible from that spot as well.

This "playground corner" is a key spot: It brings together residential, business, and historic components of the Square; the clock tower then connects these to academic uses with a sense of historic continuity.

We offer that keeping the playground corner as an open space would define a true Kendall Common for Kendall Square. Those of us who live in the Square would like to



see more residential use. It will be much more attractive to potential residents with a livable, open common as opposed to dense buildings.

Building height and massing of course are also major issues. Generally, taller buildings allow them to be slimmer and allow more open space and sunlight. However the idea of a 1000 foot building here simply doesn't fit. Of the studies we have seen, those that put tall buildings (but still less than 500 feet) on the site and leave the playground corner open are most favorable. Studies one and two most closely fit this model.

With specific reference to the zoning proposal:

- Building height (section 13.13.4): We support up to 500 feet, but as stated above taller than that is not compatible with the character of the area. From the viewpoint of adjacent residences, taller buildings should be accompanied by more openness and greater setbacks, and thus greater distance of new buildings to residences. Some of the studies show Third Square to be completely surrounded by buildings; this to us is the least desirable alternative.
- Open space requirement – amount (section 13.14): Please retain the current 42% figure. Increased building heights should allow for the desired use density, while helping retain contiguous open space of an amount that meets residential needs. In addition, relying on the federal land for open space seems unwise, as true control over that use by the city is limited.
- Open space requirement – type (section 13.14, 13.14.1): No good rationale is apparent for eliminating the “green area” language, nor for eliminating 13.14.1 entirely. We would like *specifically*, within the bounds of legal zoning, to establish that a good portion of the open space be green, public park. Our preference is that this park be the playground corner as described above.
- Retail (section 13.12.4): We are encouraged by the addition of language encouraging grocery stores and related uses. There is very little of this in Kendall Square now. Additional incentives, by zoning or other means, for attracting a large-scale supermarket to the area, are highly desirable.

We urge the Council and Planning Board to take into account the goals discussed above, summarized as:

- Residents would like a public common.
- Residents would like more openness.
- Residents would like more retail for necessities.
- Residents would like more residents.
- Historic connections are important to the context of all us who live and work here.
- It is important to emphasize connections among residential, commercial, and academic environments.

Zoning is a complex process involving conflicting goals. However zoning was developed to protect people who would otherwise have no power against a given use. The people who live in a city are the primary beneficiaries of these protections. In deliberating on the zoning goals for this parcel we urge the Council and Planning Board to keep residential use not only protected but encouraged.

Sincerely,

Larry and Jane Stabile
303 Third Street #517

PEACE BE UNTO TO YOU

EXCLUSION OF THE HOMELESS SECTOR, IS TRANSPIRING IN OUR MIDST, RIGHT BEFORE OUR EYES, IN REGARDS TO THE VOLPE CENTER. IN ACTUALITY THE GENERAL SERVICE ADMINISTRATION (GSA)/VOLPE CENTER IS IN VIOLATION OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT MANDATES, PERTAINING TO HOMELESSNESS. THE NORTH EASTERN GSA OFFICIALS ARE GUILTY OF A DISREGARD FOR FEDERAL TITLE V, MANDATES, ETC. UNDER TITLE V OF THE MCKINNEY-VENTO HOMELESSNESS ACT OF 1987, HOMELESS SERVICE PROVIDERS HAVE A RIGHT OF FIRST REFUSAL TO ACQUIRE SURPLUS PROPERTY, AT NO COST BEFORE THE PROPERTY CAN BE OFFERED TO STATE OR LOCAL GOVERNMENT, OR BE SOLD TO GENERATE REVENUE FOR THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT. WHEN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT NO LONGER HAS USE FOR A PROPERTY, THE PROPERTY IS USUALLY DECLARED TO BE SURPLUS. THE VOLPE CENTER ADMINISTRATION CIRCUMVENTED AND REMOVED, THE LOCAL HOMELESS SECTOR AND MOSAIC, FROM THE PLANNING EQUATION FOR THE VOLPE, IN VIOLATION OF FEDERAL MANDATES.

UNDER THE GSA'S PLAN, A DEVELOPER WOULD ACQUIRE THE RIGHT TO BUILD OUT PARTS OF THE PROPERTY IN EXCHANGE FOR A COMMITMENT TO CONSTRUCT A MODERN RESEARCH FACILITY FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION. " THE MCKINNEY-VENTO ACT WAS INTENDED TO EXPAND AND COORDINATE FEDERAL RESOURCES AND PROGRAMS, TO ADDRESS THE CRITICALLY URGENT NEEDS' OF HOMELESS AMERICANS. THE TITLE V SURPLUS FEDERAL PROPERTY PROGRAM IS CENTRAL TO THIS OVERARCHING MISSION. TITLE V IS A PROVEN VEHICLE FOR ASSISTING AMERICA'S HOMELESS WITH NO COST TO TAXPAYERS.

GSA HAVE BEEN LED TO PARTICIPATE IN A LOCAL DISREGARD FOR FEDERAL TITLE V MANDATES. INSTEAD OF NOTIFYING THE PUBLIC THAT THERE WAS VACANT LAND AND FACILITIES, AVAILABLE FOR ADDRESSING HOMELESSNESS NEEDS, THEY CIRCUMVENTED THIS TO PUBLICIZED THAT A NEW FEDERAL BUILDING WAS IN NEED, AND ARE CURRENTLY ADVERTISING FOR PROSPECTIVE DEVELOPERS TO FOOT THE BILL ALSO IT DOESN'T MAKE GOOD OR COMMON SENSE FOR THE GSA/VOLPE ADMINISTRATIONS TO ADVERTISE FOR DEVELOPERS TO FOOT THE BILL, WHEN THERE IS ADEQUATE GOVERNMENT RESOURCES TO BE FOUND, LOCATE, AND VIEWED AT THE US DEPT. OF PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION'S Website (<http://www.transportation.gov/>) FOR SUCH AN UNDERTAKING.

IN REALITY IT ALL BOILS DOWN TO A SOPHISTICATED LOCAL PLOT TO ERECT BARRIERS, UP FOR KEEPING THE HOMELESS SECTOR FROM SECURING AFFORDABLE AND FAIR HOUSING ACCOMMODATIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES, IN THE KENDALL SQUARE AREA OF CAMBRIDGE. THE LOCAL GSA SHOULD HAVE BEEN CONSIDERING THE VACANT VOLPE CENTER PROPERTY PARCELS AS VACANT SURPLUS LAND, FOR ADDRESSING HOMELESSNESS. NOWHERE CAN IT BE FOUND IN PUBLIC DOCUMENTATION THAT THEY HAVE DONE SO. INSTEAD THE HOMELESSNESS DILEMMA WAS SMOOTHLY CIRCUMVENTED, IN FAVOR OF INVITING DEVELOPERS TO BUILD A FEDERAL CENTER. GSA'S VOLPE CENTER DEVELOPMENTAL NEEDS SHOULD BE TAKEN SOLELY TO THE HOME OFFICE OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IN WASHINGTON, DC. FOR FUNDING. THE CITY OF CAMBRIDGE, SHOULD BE CAREFUL AND CAUTIOUS WITH ITS ZONING GAMES, AS THEY PERTAINS TO THE VOLPE CENTER AREA. IT CAN AND WILL MOST LIKELY LEAD TO AN IMPEDIMENT TO AFFORDABLE AND FAIR HOUSING FOR THE HOMELESS SECTOR AND MOSAIC.

YOURS IN PEACE, MR. HASSOM J. RASHID, CAMBRIDGE, MA

Palatka Impoverish - poverty makes



June 27, 2015

Cambridge City Council
City Hall
795 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139

Cambridge Planning Board
344 Broadway
Cambridge, MA 02139

On Wednesday, June 24, the East Cambridge Planning Team met and discussed the revised zoning proposed for the Volpe Transportation site filed by the Planning Board and largely written by the Community Development Department (CDD). We learned that CDD had filed significant changes to the proposed zoning from an ECPT member, not, as would have been preferred, from CDD, which highlights the need for better communication between ECPT and CDD regarding key filings on large projects in our neighborhood. With such a large volume of development occurring in the City, we appreciate what a challenge it is to keep neighborhood groups informed, but reiterate the importance of giving the residents a seat at the table.

At the June 24 ECPT meeting, the members did their best to understand the current zoning changes in relation to the K2 Plan and the Eastern Cambridge Planning Study. There were many unanswered questions and we ask that the Planning Board and City Council withhold any vote on the revised Volpe zoning until a formal presentation and feedback session can be held with the East Cambridge Planning Team and residents.

Our members agreed that the following points were important to convey regarding the future of the 14.5-acre Volpe site:

- Increasing the height limit to 250 - 500 ft for most of the site, up from 65 – 250 ft for the same area under the K2 plan, is a MAJOR increase in height and FAR and we are unclear as to (1) the planning rationale for this enormous increase; (2) the specific added benefits to the residents/public for the zoning bonus. (For example, will the value of the bonus be earmarked for Kendall Square infrastructure improvements paid for by the federal government/developers?); (3) the capacity of the area infrastructure (especially transportation) to handle the massive project (3 - 4 million SF).
- The revised zoning further reduces the open space to 3.5 acres, down from 7.5 acres in the original zoning, and 5.7 acres in the draft zoning shared with the public and ECPT members at the April 6, 2015 Volpe Roundtable hearing. The revised zoning also removes the requirement for a "significant public park" and allows open space on the federally-owned portion of the site to count toward the total open space. Our members

had serious objections to these changes. ECPT feels that (1) especially given an increase in the height of buildings, the open space should not be further reduced; (2) that open space on the federal site should NOT be counted toward total open space as the City/public would have no control over access or future use of that space, especially due to security concerns in a post 9/11 world; (3) a majority of the open space should become a contiguous and publicly accessible park with a permanent easement granted to the City/public. The density of development in Kendall Square requires a major park to provide adequate environmental, urban planning and public benefits. (The membership voted that under no circumstances should the amount of total publicly accessible open space on the Volpe site, excluding open space controlled by the federal government, be less than 4 acres.)

- ECPT requests that the ideas of the Connect Kendall Square open space competition be better integrated into the zoning, including requirements to create/enhance public pedestrian and bike connections across the site, including via the Fifth and Sixth Street corridors.
- ECPT asks that the principles and goals of the Kendall Eco-District, such as district energy and stormwater management and resiliency features, be referenced in the zoning.
- Given that the proposed Volpe zoning allows for the tallest/densest building(s) in Cambridge, the normal “tall buildings” review requirements (regarding health and safety impacts) should NOT be weakened, as suggested in the proposed zoning.
- ECPT asks the City to commission an independent study of the infrastructure capacity of the Kendall Square area (in terms of public transportation, parking, road capacity, bike lane and sidewalk capacity, stormwater, open-space, resiliency features, etc.) to understand what level of commercial development can be supported by the infrastructure—existing and planned. ECPT thinks it is good planning to build the infrastructure capacity first and the buildings second.

The Volpe site provides very exciting opportunities for both commercial development and public benefit. As in past negotiations that ECPT has participated in, there must be a balance between the level of zoning bonus (and added burden on the neighborhood and infrastructure) and public benefits/impact mitigation. ECPT has yet to understand the specific and enumerated public benefits/mitigation of such a major zoning bonus granted to the federal government and private developers on the Volpe site—and believes details of such benefits need to be integrated into the zoning negotiations.

Very truly yours,

Mark Jaquith
President

June 29, 2015

Cambridge City Council
City Hall
795 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, Massachusetts, 02139

Cambridge Planning Board
344 Broadway
Cambridge Massachusetts 02139

Dear Councillors and members of the Planning Board:

The two letters from the East Cambridge Planning Team have stated many of the specifics that I would have you consider, but there is much more that needs to be said.

With regard to housing:

It is unconscionable to reduce the requirement of affordable units to ten percent. When Cambridge is experiencing skyrocketing land value and increased rents, and the affordability conversations have all been about raising that requirement to preserve some degree of socio-economic equity. While I understand the desire to include so called moderate income units, when this means offering subsidies to folks making ninety to one hundred thousand dollars per year and cutting poorer people out of it makes no sense when there are so many with such greater need.

With regard to publicly ~~accessible~~ open space:

It is also unconscionable to drastically reduce the publicly ~~accessible~~ open space requirements when for fifteen years we have been promised a seven and a half acre public park as part of the mitigation for the massive development that has been and is still occurring in this part of Our Fair City. MIT, MXD, Volpe, North Point, Alexandria - it adds up to over one hundred acres, and somewhere north of nine million square feet on buildings. Read each million as one Prudential Building.

With regard to process:

Our Senator Warren said, "If you don't have a seat at the table, you're probably on the menu." During the drafting of the proposal before us now, residents, your constituents, had no place at the table. Councillor Mazen said in a recent meeting in this chamber that there is a perception among many residents that in many cases the decision making process used by city government is one of decide, announce and defend. What has happened with this piece of proposed legislation only further reinforces that way of thinking. Having the proposal already written before there is public input makes it far more difficult and less likely for the public to have any real meaningful input.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is up to you. Will we be invited to dinner or will we be the main course?

Thank you for you attention,

Mark Jaquith
213 Hurley Street
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02141

Lopez, Donna

ATTACHMENT K

From: Bjorn Poonen <bjornpoonen@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, June 29, 2015 9:06 AM
To: Paden, Liza; Lopez, Donna
Cc: Patrick Sclafani - ZBA; City Council; Dash, Stuart; Farooq, Iram; City Manager; info@naeastcambridge.org; Tom Evans; office@richardburck.com; Jennings, Taha; 303uo; Peter Crawley; Mark Jaquith
Subject: Re: objection to 5/27/15 rezoning amendment

Dear Planning Board:

Thank you for sharing the June 24, 2015 "Supplement to PUD-KS Rezoning Petition", which explains many of the positive features of the proposed rezoning. (My objections in my June 22, 2015 letter stand, however.)

In response to the conceptual massing studies in this Supplement, I would like to share a few additional observations:

* Most or all of the massing studies show at least 3.5 acres of *non-Federal* open space. This demonstrates the practicality of the suggestion in the Booth and O'Leary letter to disallow Federal land to count towards the Public Open Space requirement.

* None of the massing studies show a "*continuous* retail presence along Third Street and Broadway", even though Section 13.11 of the 5/27/15 rezoning petition lists this as a goal. I am glad that the massing studies deviate from the petition in this way, because continuous retail along these streets would form a wall isolating any new Public Open Space from the rest of Kendall Square, making such open space invisible from the primary entry points at Point Park and Broad Canal. Buildings should have ground-level retail, but *continuous* retail should not be a goal.

Based on these observations, I suggest the following:

- 1) Please do not allow counting Federal land towards the Public Open Space requirement in Section 13.14(2).
- 2) Please change Section 13.11 to remove "continuous retail presence along Third Street and Broadway" as a goal.

I would welcome any communication or discussion about these issues.

Thank you,
Bjorn Poonen, homeowner at 303 3rd St. Unit 416, Cambridge, MA 02142

Eli Yarden

ATTACHMENT L

For the joint public hearing by the Ordinance Committee of the Cambridge City Council and the Cambridge Planning Board, June 29, 2015

select quotations from Laudato si' 24 May 2015

published 18 June 2015

"Politics must pay greater attention to foreseeing new conflicts and addressing the causes which can lead to them. But powerful financial interests prove most resistant to this effort, and political planning tends to lack breadth of vision. What would induce anyone, at this stage, to hold on to power only to be remembered for their inability to take action when it was urgent and necessary to do so?"

"The economy accepts every advance in technology with a view to profit, without concern for its potentially negative impact on human beings. Finance overwhelms the real economy. The lessons of the global financial crisis have not been assimilated, and we are learning all too slowly the lessons of environmental deterioration."

"A consumerist vision of human beings, encouraged by the mechanisms of today's globalized economy, has a levelling effect on cultures, diminishing the immense variety which is the heritage of all humanity. Attempts to resolve all problems through uniform regulations or technical interventions can lead to overlooking the complexities of local problems which demand the active participation of all members of the community."

"An authentic humanity, calling for a new synthesis, seems to dwell in the midst of our technological culture, almost unnoticed, like a mist seeping gently beneath a closed door. Will the promise last, in spite of everything, with all that is authentic rising up in stubborn resistance?"

"What kind of world do we want to leave to those who come after us, to children who are now growing up? This question not only concerns the environment in isolation; the issue cannot be approached piecemeal. When we ask ourselves what kind of world we want to leave behind, we think in the first place of its general direction, its meaning and its values.

It is no longer enough, then, simply to state that we should be concerned for future generations. We need to see that what is at stake is our own dignity. Leaving an inhabitable planet to future generations is, first and foremost, up to us. The issue is one which dramatically affects us, for it has to do with the ultimate meaning of our earthly sojourn."

"A politics concerned with immediate results, supported by consumerist sectors of the population, is driven to produce short-term growth. In response to electoral interests, governments are reluctant to upset the public with measures which could affect the level of consumption or create risks for foreign investment. The myopia of power politics delays the inclusion of a far-sighted environmental agenda within the overall agenda of governments. Thus we forget that "time is greater than space", that we are always more effective when we generate processes rather than holding on to positions of power. True statecraft is manifest when, in difficult times, we uphold high principles and think of the long-term common good. Political powers do not find it easy to assume this duty in the work of nation-building."

"The quality of life in cities has much to do with systems of transport, which are often a source of much suffering for those who use them. Many cars, used by one or more people, circulate in cities, causing traffic congestion, raising the level of pollution, and consuming enormous quantities of non-renewable energy. This makes it necessary to build more roads and parking areas which spoil the urban landscape. Many specialists agree on the need to give priority to public transportation. Yet some measures needed will not prove easily acceptable to society unless substantial improvements are made in the systems themselves, which in many cities force people to put up with undignified conditions due to crowding, inconvenience, infrequent service and lack of safety."

"Environmental impact assessment should not come after the drawing up of a business proposition or the proposal of a particular policy, plan or programme. It should be part of the process from the beginning, and be carried out in a way which is interdisciplinary, transparent and free of all economic or political pressure. It should be linked to a study of working conditions and possible effects on people's physical and mental health, on the local economy and on public safety. Economic returns can thus be forecast more realistically, taking into account potential scenarios and the eventual need for further investment to correct possible undesired effects. A consensus should always be reached between the different stakeholders, who can offer a variety of approaches, solutions and alternatives. The local population should have a special place at the table; they are concerned about their own future and that of their children, and can consider goals transcending immediate economic interest. We need to stop thinking in terms of "interventions" to save the environment in favour of policies developed and debated by all interested parties. The participation of the latter also entails being fully informed about such projects and their different risks and possibilities; this includes not just preliminary decisions but also various follow-up activities and continued monitoring. Honesty and truth are needed in scientific and political discussions; these should not be limited to the issue of whether or not a particular project is permitted by law."

From: Rosemary Booth <RosemaryBooth@verizon.net>
Sent: Friday, June 26, 2015 9:54 AM
To: Lopez, Donna; Paden, Liza
Cc: City Council; City Manager; Farooq, Iram; Jennings, Taha; Dash, Stuart; Patrick J. Sclafani, Public Affairs Officer; Tom Evans, Executive Director; Richard Burck, Owner/Principal; East Cambridge Planning Team; Peter Crawley; Chris Matthews; 303 Third St unit owners
Subject: Objection to Planning Board Petition to Amend Section 13.10 in PUD-KS District (Volpe Center site)

Dear Ordinance Committee and Planning Board Members:

We're writing as homeowners who live across from the Volpe Center site, to object to portions of the April 25 petition to amend provisions of the PUD-KS District as set forth in Section 13.10 of the Zoning Ordinance.

We are most concerned that the proposed amendments as written:

- completely remove the existing requirement for a contiguous public park;
- allow government-owned property to be counted as part of any open space; and
- dilute language requiring consideration of health and safety impacts as a criterion for new structures.

First and foremost, the inclusion of a significant public open space on this site, preferably at the visible “entry” point of Broadway and Third Street, has been a request at every community input meeting we have attended. It was the recommendation of the K2/C2 study final report (see Page 84), as well as a draft rezoning text circulated at the April 6, 2015 roundtable, which said: “The required open space shall include one or more significant public parks that provide opportunities for civic gathering, native and passive recreation, access to sunlight, greenery and other natural features.” The Volpe area bordering Third Street functions now as an effective “green corridor” for workers, students, residents and visitors walking to and from the T stop at Kendall Square. In fact, three of the four finalist design teams in the “Connect Kendall Square” competition proposed significant open spaces on the site, and winning team Burck Associates put that space at the corner of Broadway and Third as a focal point for entry to Kendall Square. A Cambridge resident petition to the City this spring similarly asked that a public park be preserved on the site.

Second, counting government-owned property toward the open space requirement seems chancy. Federal property owners are not subject to Cambridge zoning and could at any point decide to restrict access to their property, for security or other reasons, thus reducing effective open space.

Lastly, we place high value on preserving sunlight access in Kendall Square, especially during the winter months, and are concerned about removal of a requirement that “the orientation and location of [any] proposed structure not otherwise diminish the health and safety of the area around the development parcel.”

We ask that you consider revising the provisions of the PUD-KS District to (1) retain the existing requirement for a substantial contiguous public park, and encourage its placement at Broadway and Third Street as the entry to Kendall Square; (2) disallow counting government-owned land toward the open space requirement; and (3) restore current language for health and safety requirements to the proposed amendments.

We will be attending the joint public hearing to be held this Monday, June 29 at 6PM in the Sullivan Chamber of City Hall, and look forward to discussion.

Sincerely,
Rosemary Booth and Jerry O'Leary

Homeowners at 303 3rd St, Unit 505
Cambridge, MA 02142

Rosemary Booth
303 Third Street, #505
Cambridge, MA 02142

June 29th, 2015

TO: Richard Rossi, City Manager, City Council, Planning Board, CDD

RE: VOLPE SITE PLANNING

Dear Councilors and board members,

I am disheartened by the hurried procedure combining two public meetings—City Council and the Planning Board—into one fast-track effort to move the Volpe site forward by the city manager and government. This unprecedented consolidation marginalizes public input by combining two opportunities to speak into one short 3-5 minute effort. Two different meetings would have also afforded twice the public testimony, questions and board processing. This is not fair and gives the impression of lack of transparency by officials with the least amount of resistance. I hope the following points are being addressed, which are:

- Basic traffic, shadow, wind and transportation studies- The MBTA cannot handle the volume.
- Place more affordable/ moderate/ family housing in Kendall. The ratio of 80% to 20% will NEVER address Cambridge's need for housing snapped up by Bio/tech employees. Why can't we get 30-40%.
- More Green space- With all the towering density, residents need open space for relief and better quality of life. I do not consider a glass lobby of a building "public open space".
- Shorter buildings-The tall buildings proposed are an intrusion on the skyline. A 1000 ft tower is totally unnecessary and gratuitous, except as a monument to the councilor who continues to promote it. Does anyone stare at the Hancock Tower out their window? It is irritatingly disruptive.
- **MOST IMPORTANTLY, COMPUTER-GENERATED SCHEMES TOTALLY IGNORE CONTEXT.**

A MASTER PLAN IS LACKING AND IS BEING DONE PIECE-MEAL AGAIN!

MIT's 6 proposed towers are totally ignored.

Views are seen from the Boston-side of the Mass Ave Bridge.

- Where are the images from **Cambridge Street looking straight over the Longfellow Bridge?** The MIT towers are already "in your face". This project will contribute to visual density and generic clutter.

These Volpe Plans will canyon-ize and erode any Cantibridgian context or character left. As mentioned in an opinion on Cambridge Day.com (www.cambridgeday.com/author/tom-stohlman), Cambridge is already the richest town in the Commonwealth. With more commercial space, the city will be \$47 million richer. With more housing, the city will be \$39 million richer. Not everything is about money, but about quality of life for all. Quit railroading plans through that we will regret later. Learn from other city Urban Renewal and slow down for a better product. We don't have to max everything out.

Sincerely,

Marilee Boyd Meyer + 10 Dana st #404 +Cambridge+ 02138 + 617-497-0044 + mbm0044@aol.com