

35 Cherry Street

CET Focus Group | Spanish Speaking | 2nd Meeting | November 4, 2021

Project Summary & Community Engagement Process

The City of Cambridge is leading a public process to decide the future use of 35 Cherry Street, an approximately 11,000 sf vacant property in The Port. 35 Cherry Street will be acquired by the City as part of a real estate development agreement with Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). This transfer includes the stipulation that the parcel be used in perpetuity in a way that directly benefit residents in the Port neighborhood (formerly Area Four) and surrounding communities. The City Council identified the site for affordable housing.

On November 4, 2021, staff from the Community Development Department led a focus group with Cambridge residents who speak Spanish. Staff presented the results of the preceding engagement events and the group discussed additional feedback. This focus group was attended by three community members, and one staff member and one outreach worker from the Department of Human Service Programs' (DHSP) Community Engagement Team (CET).

Meeting Notes

Project Massing and Height

- One participant said that larger buildings feel impersonal. She is a single mother with two children, and would like to raise them in a place with a sense of community.
- Several participants stated a preference for a smaller building.

On-Site Amenities

- Participants stated mixed opinions on parking. One participant said they don't have a car, so would not need a dedicated parking space. Another participant stated they would like to have a car, so parking would be valuable.
- One participant said it is important to have units that are accessible.

Unit Size, Bedrooms

- Participants shared a preference for 3-4 bedroom units to support multigenerational households.
- All participants spoke about the need for larger units. They and many people they know have children that require more bedrooms.

Level of Affordability

- Participants expressed that the units should be made to help those in the greatest need; people with very low incomes or transitioning from homelessness.

Rental or Homeownership

- A participant said she has to rent now because her income is too low for homeownership programs, but she would like an opportunity to buy in the future.

- One person stated there is more need in Cambridge for affordable rental units.
- A Participant said they believe rentals are more flexible and can help more people, while homeownership is more exclusive.