

**John A. Volpe National Transportation Systems Center  
Exchange Project Fact Sheet  
DRAFT – June 23, 2015**

**Summary**

The U.S. Department of Transportation's (DOT) Volpe Center, together with the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA), proposes to convey most of its current Kendall Square site to an exchange partner, who will develop a new Volpe Center facility for DOT on a portion of the site that will remain in federal ownership.

**Background**

The Volpe Center seeks a new state-of-the-art (approx. 390,000 gross square foot) facility to better serve its mission of improving the nation's transportation systems. The current Volpe Center facility was developed in the late 1960s for use by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). When NASA's mission was relocated, the site was transferred to DOT in 1970. The site consists of approx. 14 acres of land, six buildings, multiple surface parking lots and large areas of open, landscaped land.



The current facility is in need of modernization and does not optimally support the transportation innovation mission. The general site boundary is highlighted in red in the image above.

**Exchange Transaction Approach – No Federal Funds Appropriated**

In order for this project to be feasible, the value of the portion of the Volpe Center site to be conveyed to the exchange partner must be equal to or greater than the cost of developing a new Volpe Center facility for DOT, because there will be no additional federal funds available for the project. The value of the Volpe Center site is driven by the City of Cambridge's zoning requirements and market demand. If there is not enough value in the site, the comprehensive approach afforded by the exchange transaction will not be realized.

The first step in the process is for the federal government to select an exchange partner. The federal government will issue a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) and then select those respondents that meet the qualifications set forth in the RFQ. The selected respondents will be invited to respond to a Request for Proposals (RFP). Based on the responses to the RFP, the government will select a preferred exchange partner. After the exchange partner and the government enter into an exchange agreement, the exchange partner will work with the Volpe Center and GSA to design and construct the new federal facility. Simultaneously, the exchange partner would be able to work with the City of Cambridge to create a master plan for the remainder of the site, subject to the City of Cambridge zoning. Once the new Volpe Center facility is constructed, the federal government will transfer the remaining portions of the site to the exchange partner.

**Benefits of Exchange Approach**

The exchange transaction approach not only benefits the Volpe Center, but also U.S. taxpayers and Cambridge residents and workers. Unlike a traditional federal project that requires Congressional funding, this project will exchange some of the federal government's land in Kendall Square for a new state-of-the-art Volpe Center. In addition to what will be a more attractive and accessible federal facility, the City of Cambridge will be in a position to guide reuse of approx. 11 acres of previously unavailable land/space in a manner that is the same as used with other properties in the City. This means that any master plan submitted to the City Planning Board for approval will need to conform to local zoning requirements, including those concerning market rate and affordable housing, retail spaces, commercial buildings, parking and open space. The project has the potential to be a significant driver of economic development and growth in the community.

**For additional information, please visit: [www.gsa.gov/volpecenter](http://www.gsa.gov/volpecenter)**