

35 Cherry Street

CET Focus Group | Spanish Speaking | 1st Meeting | September 13, 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 September 13, 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 six community members and one outreach worker from the Department of Human Service Programs' (DHSP) Community Engagement Team (CET).

Meeting Notes

Project Massing and Height

- A couple participants stated the building should fit in with the design and size of surrounding buildings. One participant said they don't want the building to "stick out like a sore thumb".

On-Site Amenities

- Participants stated that some affordable units charge extra for parking. One participant asked that the proposed units at 35 Cherry St not charge for parking.
- One participant said there should be laundry on site.
- One participant proposed that 35 Cherry St have a playground and some green space for kids to play.

Unit Size, Bedrooms

- A couple participants shared that they or people they know are living in 2-3 bedroom units alone, because their children have moved out and they are on waiting lists to downsize. One participant continued to say the city needs more one-bedroom units so people can downsize.
- Another participant stated there is a need for more 3-4 bedroom units to accommodate families and children.
- One participant proposes that 35 Cherry St have a variety of different sized units since it seems that all sizes are needed, and that way people may be able to move between units in the same building as they need to upsize or downsize.

Level of Affordability

- One participant stated there is need for affordable units at a variety of income levels.

- A participant said they are unemployed and are in need of transitional housing, so when they do get a job they can save some of their earnings to move into a larger unit.

Rental or Homeownership

- One participant stated the new units should be rental and accessible to single parents and people with disabilities.

Other Comments

- One participant shared that she grew up in Cambridge, but all her Cape Verdean and Haitian friends she grew up with have moved out of town. This participant said she is glad she has been able to raise her own children in Cambridge, and hopes that others are able to find affordable housing so they can stay.