

Via Email

March 7, 2025

Ms. Mary T. Flynn, Chair
Cambridge Planning Board
344 Broadway
Cambridge, MA 02139

Mr. Tom Evans, Executive Director
Cambridge Redevelopment Authority
255 Main Street, 8th Floor
Cambridge, MA 02142

Boston

Los Angeles

New York

San Francisco

Washington, DC

Re: Request for Minor Amendment to Infill Development Concept Plan (IDCP) Special Permit (PB#315, as amended to date, the “IDCP Special Permit”) for the MXD District (the “IDCP Project”), Cambridge, MA

Dear Chair Flynn and Members of the Planning Board and Mr. Evans and Members of the CRA Board:

On behalf of Boston Properties Limited Partnership (“BPLP” or the “Applicant”), I write to request changes to the criteria for Innovation Space as described in Section 14.32.5 of the Cambridge Zoning Ordinance (the “Ordinance”) within the IDCP Project. As provided in Section 14.32.5(c) of the Ordinance, the Planning Board may allow “variations in the specific characteristics” of Innovation Space as a Minor Amendment to the IDCP Special Permit. In addition, we are also requesting a modification of the Aggregate Development Program as defined in the IDCP Special Permit in order to create an opportunity for Innovation Space to be located in an area previously shown on the approved plans for the IDCP Project as being for retail use, as well as a modification of the frontage requirement for active ground floor uses under Section 14.38 of the Ordinance related to this new Innovation Space opportunity.

We seek this Minor Amendment to provide a proposed user (The Fab Foundation) with an ideal environment for its operations, as well as to provide The Fab Foundation and other users of Innovation Space with the options they need to grow within Kendall Square without the leaving the neighborhood. This request does not include any proposed changes to the overall amount of approved GFA. However, as noted above, we are proposing to modify the IDCP Special Permit to allow for certain Office and Biotechnology Manufacturing Uses already permitted within the MXD District (to be discussed in greater detail below) within the area on the second floor of 325 Main Street and the entry

vestibule located on the ground floor of the building shown on Attachment 1 and containing in total approximately 12,132 square feet of Gross Floor Area, in addition to the Retail Uses that are currently authorized by the IDCP Special Permit. For the purposes of this request, the area shown on Attachment 1 (inclusive of the entry vestibule) will be referred to as the “325 Main Second Floor Space.”

As required by Section 14.32.2.5 of the Ordinance, the Cambridge Redevelopment Authority (the “CRA”) shall review and approve any request for a Minor Amendment. In 2024, the CRA approved the proposed Fab Foundation use and concept as meeting the requirements for Innovation Space as described in Section 14.32.5 of the Ordinance. While the proposed Fab Foundation use was located on the second floor of 325 Main Street at the time of the CRA review last year, the CRA’s specific approval did not include approval to modify the designated use of the 325 Main Second Floor Space to allow for Office and Biotechnology Uses in addition to Retail Uses.

Innovation Space - Current Requirement, Characteristics and Permitted Variations

Pursuant to Section 14.32.5 of the Ordinance, the Applicant is required to include within the IDCP Project “Innovation Space that has a GFA equal to, or in excess of, ten percent (10%) of the Infill GFA used for Office and Biotechnology Manufacturing Uses”. Additionally, the Innovation Space must meet certain characteristics that are specified in Section 14.32.5(b) of the Ordinance (collectively, the “Innovation Space Characteristics”). Section 14.32.5(c) allows the Planning Board, in approving an Infill Development Concept Plan or a Minor Amendment to an Infill Development Concept Plan, to approve variations from such Innovation Space Characteristics “if the proposed Innovation Space is found to be consistent with the purpose of these characteristics.”

Active Ground Floors - Current Requirement and Permitted Variations

Pursuant to Section 14.38 of the Ordinance, “[t]he ground floor of newly constructed buildings utilizing fifty thousand (50,000) square feet or more of Infill GFA, where that ground floor fronts onto Main Street, Broadway or Ames Street, must be occupied by (i) Retail and Consumer Service uses, as listed in Section 14.21.3, or (ii) active public gathering space (whether enclosed or open), along a minimum length of seventy-five percent (75%) of the building façade along this frontage; provided, however, that the requirement shall be forty percent (40%) for any building with a façade length of one hundred (100) feet or less along such frontage onto Main Street, Broadway or Ames Street.” Section 14.38 allows the Planning Board to approve dimensional variations and alternate uses upon determining that “the specific uses and designs proposed are consistent with the purpose and intent” of said Section 14.38.

The Fab Foundation

The 325 Main Second Floor Space is proposed to be the home of The Fab Foundation's global flagship 'Fab Lab'. A lease has been executed with The Fab Foundation, which is contingent on the Applicant receiving the necessary permits and approvals to allow for the use of this space as contemplated.

For 15 years, this Boston-based educational nonprofit has served as steward of the international Fab Lab Network. Begun as an outreach project from MIT's Center for Bits and Atoms to expand access to advanced manufacturing in underserved communities, the network has grown to include more than 2,700 Fab Labs in 135 countries. The Fab Foundation's mission is to provide access to the tools, knowledge, and means to educate, innovate, and invent using technology and digital fabrication to allow anyone to make (almost) anything, thereby creating new pathways to economic opportunity. These digital fabrication laboratories are sites for STEM outreach, hands-on technical training, business incubation, and advancing sustainability commitments.

It is expected that Fab Hub Kendall will contain a number of spaces programmed to serve different user needs and interests, including: specific maker spaces such as a wood shop, metal shop and textile machine room; spaces that would include tools for rapid-prototyping and short-run production of functional systems (3D printing); an event space for classes, talks, workshops, demonstrations and collaborations related to the goal of enhancing maker knowledge and skillsets; and The Fab Foundation's headquarters, providing front office portal and back-office support for the Fab Lab Network. The uses described herein fall into the category of Office and Biotechnology Manufacturing Uses (and uses ancillary thereto) under Sections 14.21.2(1), (3) and (4) of the Ordinance. For the purposes of this request, these uses will be referred to as the "Additional 325 Main Second Floor Space Uses."

It is also anticipated that the Fab Hub Kendall would include a storefront selling products designed by the global network and produced locally, as well as maker equipment such as digital fabrication machines, tools, and materials (including [Fab-in-a-Box](#)), and a café space, both of which will be open to the public. These uses would be Retail Uses under Sections 14.21.3 of the Ordinance and are already permitted by the IDCP Special Permit.

From the Kendall Square hub, it will be possible to participate in distributed hands-on education programs through the Fab Lab Network's Academy platform. This includes such courses as the Fab Academy for digital fabrication, Fabricademy for textile technologies, Bio Academy for biotechnology, and the Fab All0in for promotion of access and inclusion. The site will also serve as the

hub from Cambridge, Somerville and Boston's participation in the Fab City global initiative, a 40-year countdown to urban self-sufficiency.

The Fab Foundation is committed to partnering with the community, and as such will provide free programming for youth and Cambridge residents -- examples include Brilliant Career Labs, repair cafes, intergenerational learning clubs, and Fab Opportunity Academy 2025 (a program supported by Akamai Technologies that provides an opportunity for local youth to learn immediately transferable skills for technical careers). Programming will also be co-designed with Cambridge-based non-profits.

Although the actual operating hours for the 325 Main Second Floor Space will be determined closer in time to the projected opening date, it is anticipated that the space will be open Monday through Friday with adjusted opening times for evening and weekend programming. Operating hours for a café within the premises would be determined in consultation with the operator (the Applicant and The Fab Foundation are in discussions with multiple local café owners to find an appropriate partner to operate within this unique environment).

Minor Amendment Request

In order to respond to existing market needs and provide an environment in which The Fab Foundation, its users, and other future users of Innovation Space can thrive and grow within Kendall Square, we request certain variations from the approved Concept Plan for the Project and the Innovation Space Characteristics and active ground floor use requirements set forth in the Ordinance. These modifications are being requested only for the 325 Main Second Floor Space and would not be applicable for other portions of the Project.

First, the Applicant requests to modify the Aggregate Development Program by modifying the use of the 325 Main Second Floor Space to include the Additional 325 Main Second Floor Space Uses (in addition to the Retail Uses shown on the plans that were submitted as part of the IDCP Special Permit). When all or any portion of the 325 Main Second Floor Space is being used for the Additional 325 Main Second Floor Uses, this will increase the amount of Office and Biotechnology Manufacturing Uses, and commensurately reduce the amount of Retail Uses, within the IDCP Project. The 325 Main Second Floor Space is ideally suited for the active, vibrant Innovation Space to be operated by The Fab Foundation and will create an exciting atmosphere not only within the 325 Main Street building itself, but also within the surrounding Plaza and other public areas. It should also be noted that although the space was originally contemplated to be retail space, it has proven extremely challenging to actually lease the space to retail users and the space has been empty since the building was originally completed in 2022. Allowing for this requested change, with a tenant already committed to lease the space, would result in the activation of the

space at a much earlier point in time and in a way that fulfills an important policy objective.

Second, the Applicant requests that Section 14.32.5(b)(i) of the Ordinance be modified for the 325 Main Second Floor Space only to allow for duration of lease agreements (or other similar occupancy agreements) with individual tenants from periods of approximately one month to periods of up to ten (10) years (inclusive of extension options). This change will allow for the existing lease to The Fab Foundation to qualify as Innovation Space.

Third, the Applicant requests that Section 14.32.5(b)(ii) of the Ordinance be modified for the 325 Main Second Floor Space only to provide that the maximum area that may be occupied by a single entity be 15,000 square feet. Currently, the maximum is set at 2,000 square feet or 10% of the entire Innovation Space provided in the MXD District, whichever is greater. We believe that this change is critical in order to attract innovators with unique business models like The Fab Foundation.

Fourth, the Applicant requests that Section 14.38 of the Ordinance be modified for the 325 Main Street building to allow for active street frontage along a minimum length of seventy percent (70%) of the building façade along Main Street so long as any portion of the 325 Main Second Floor Space is being used for Additional 325 Main Second Floor Space Uses. This request is being made to enable the construction of a dedicated entry vestibule on the ground floor of the 325 Main Street building as part of the overall plan for the 325 Main Second Floor Space, in order to create a well-defined sense of place for the 325 Main Second Floor Space. Although the ground floor vestibule would marginally reduce (by about 13 feet) the amount of frontage along Main Street being used for active ground floor uses as specifically defined in Section 14.38 from the seventy-seven percent (77%) shown in approved plans for the IDCP Project and the seventy-five percent (75%) required by Section 14.38, we believe the use of the space on the ground floor as an entry vestibule for an active and engaging community-focused use on the second floor above is consistent with the purpose and intent of Section 14.38.

The variations in the Innovation Space Characteristics and active ground floor use requirements applicable to the 325 Main Second Floor Space as requested in this submission are set forth in the table below¹

Section	Current Language	Requested Variation	Proposed Language
14.32.5(b)(i)	Durations of lease agreements (or other similar occupancy agreements) with individual office tenants shall be for periods of approximately one (1) month.	<p>Allow periods of up to ten (10) years (inclusive of extension options).</p> <p>No change is being requested for Innovation Space located outside of the 325 Main Second Floor Space.</p>	<p>Durations of lease agreements (or other similar occupancy agreements) with individual office tenants within the 325 Main Second Floor Space only shall be for periods of up to ten (10) years (inclusive of extension options).</p> <p>The provisions relating areas outside of the 325 Main Second Floor Space shall remain unchanged.</p>
14.32.5(b)(ii)	No single business entity may occupy more than 2,000 square feet or 10% of the entire Innovation Space provided in the District, whichever is greater.	<p>Allow leases not to exceed 15,000 square feet.</p> <p>No change is being requested for Innovation Space located outside of the 325 Main Second Floor Space.</p>	<p>No single business entity within the 325 Main Second Floor Space may occupy more than 15,000 square feet of Innovation Space.</p> <p>The provisions relating to areas outside of the 325 Main Second Floor Space shall remain unchanged.</p>
14.38	The ground floor of newly constructed buildings utilizing	Allow for reduction in required active	So long as any portion of the 325 Main Second Floor

¹ Note that the change in the Aggregate Development Program discussed in this letter is not shown on the table, as it is not a change to any of the Innovation Space Characteristics reflected in the Ordinance.

	<p>fifty thousand (50,000) square feet or more of Infill GFA, where that ground floor fronts onto Main Street, Broadway or Ames Street, must be occupied by (i) Retail and Consumer Service uses, as listed in Section 14.21.3, or (ii) active public gathering space (whether enclosed or open), along a minimum length of seventy-five percent (75%) of the building façade along this frontage; provided, however, that the requirement shall be forty percent (40%) for any building with a façade length of one hundred (100) feet or less along such frontage onto Main Street, Broadway or Ames Street.</p>	<p>street frontage for the 325 Main Street building from seventy-five percent (75%) to seventy percent (70%) so long as any portion of the 325 Main Second Floor Space is being used for Additional 325 Main Second Floor Space Uses.</p> <p>No change is being requested for buildings other than 325 Main Street.</p>	<p>Space is being used for Additional 325 Main Second Floor Uses, the ground floor of 325 Main Street must be occupied by (i) Retail and Consumer Service uses, as listed in Section 14.21.3, or (ii) active public gathering space (whether enclosed or open), along a minimum length of seventy percent (70%) of the building façade along Main Street.</p> <p>The provisions relating to buildings other than 325 Main Street shall remain unchanged.</p>
--	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

In addition, the Applicant has reviewed the conditions applicable to 325 Main Street in the IDCP Special Permit and does not believe that any of the same need to be modified in connection with this Minor Amendment (with the exception of the condition relating to active ground floor uses, as discussed in this request).

Conclusion

This Minor Amendment will allow for modifications to the approved plan for the IDCP Project and the Innovation Space Characteristics and active ground floor requirements, so as to enable the Applicant to bring an exciting new user, The Fab Foundation, into the Kendall Square area and more generally to provide

opportunities for early-stage companies to continue to grow. The requested variations do not modify any of the existing Innovation Space Characteristics with respect to Innovation Space outside of the 325 Main Second Floor Space, or modify the active ground floor requirements for buildings other than 325 Main Street.

We are looking forward to presenting the proposed Minor Amendment to the Planning Board.

Thank you for your consideration.

Very truly yours,



Jeffrey J. Lowenberg
Senior Vice President, Development

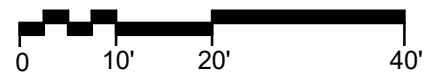
Enclosure

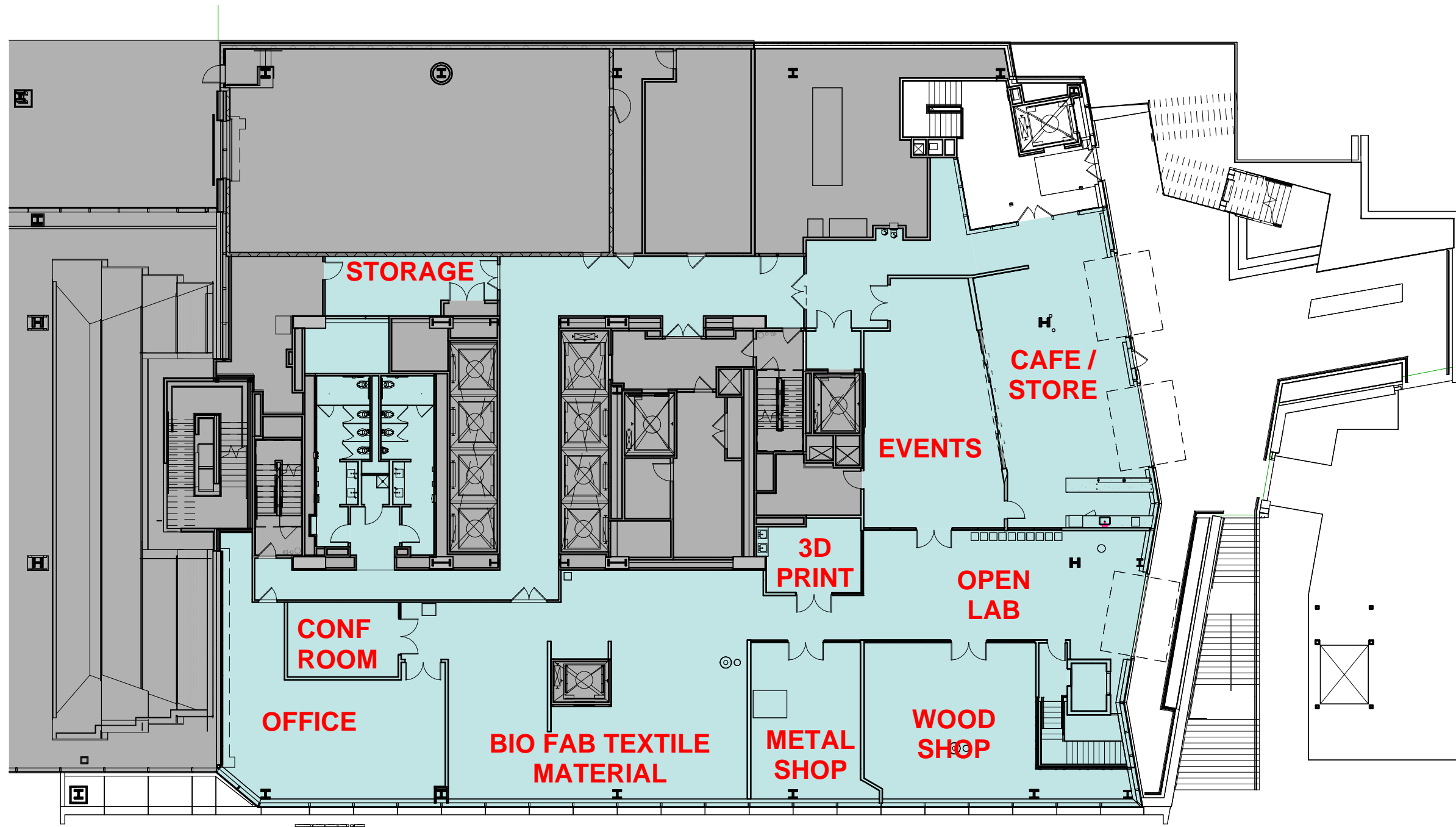
cc: Iram Farooq (by e-mail)
Swaathi Joseph (by e-mail)
Jeff Roberts (by email)
Jim Rafferty (by e-mail)
Madeleine Timin (by e-mail)

Attachment 1



LEVEL 1





LEVEL 2

