

Volpe Working Group Meeting – Notes

October 20, 2016, Cambridge Innovation Center

Attending (VWG/staff): Chris Barr, Suzannah Bigolin, Kathleen Born, Peter Crawley, Brian Dacey, Esther Hanig, Steve LaMasters, Gerald O’Leary, Jeff Roberts, Hugh Russell, Erik Thorkildsen

Introductions, review of group purpose and mode of conduct

Topic Discussion: What are the priority topics for the group to discuss?

- Streets and connectivity
 - Binney is quiet; Broadway is unpleasant; we should bring excitement and foot traffic into the site
 - Third Street has high density of people walking; opportunity to bring people into other areas
 - How do we connect to a vibrant core?
 - How do you connect the different edges of the adjoining districts?
 - Bring excitement on Third Street more inward
 - Look at ways of tracking typical patterns of movement in the area
- Role of housing and residents
 - What does it mean to be a residential community? What do families need?
 - Families need open space, retail, daycare
 - Cambridge needs more family housing
 - Neighborhood needs more residential to support retail, and retail to support residential
 - Rental housing also has a role in the innovation economy; people are very mobile; much of the housing in the area is directed toward this need, should be considered
 - What will be the housing needs for this area in the future, not just right now?
- Open space
 - Connections and open space are fundamental
 - Create a network of open spaces that connects to the surroundings
 - Creating places that people will like
 - We need a place that becomes a square, full of people, such as: Bryant Park or Roche Brothers at Downtown Crossing
 - Goal is sense of place; a public space that “becomes” Kendall Square; activity and programming can be important, like at Post Office Square, Times Square, Bryant Park
- Community uses/benefits
 - Should provide benefits to longtime Cambridge residents as well as newer residents
 - Daycare at Volpe site is accessible to residents; nice way to connect the site to the neighborhood; shared asset
 - Off site solutions: can some of the benefits be located elsewhere in Cambridge? Possible transfer of development rights?
 - Quality and type of community space should respond to the needs of the community; community center with recreation (e.g., Yerba Buena center in San Francisco)
- Built form

- Kendall Square has changed significantly
- Sense of void associated with the Volpe site
- Not just glass buildings
- Important to think about the feel at the ground floor
- Opportunity to create a place, not just corporate feel
- If there's a place to build density, this is the right place
- Process
 - Acknowledge constraints of transaction process – new Volpe Center to be built before other development begins – what becomes too much to ask?
 - A lot of tradeoffs to balance at the site - needs of the developer, Volpe, and the community
 - Look at images, examples we might like from other places – focus on contemporary development at a similar scale