



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Community Development Department

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TO: CAMBRIDGE PLANNING BOARD
FROM: CAMBRIDGE BICYCLE COMMITTEE
SUBJECT: PB-368, MIT VOLPE REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT
DATE: JULY 16, 2021

To the members of the Cambridge Planning Board:

On behalf of the Cambridge Bicycle Committee, I am writing regarding the MIT Volpe Redevelopment Plan, specifically the amended proposal released June 12, 2021. We appreciate that MIT has taken the time to come before our committees and review this very important project with us.

On November 20, 2020, MIT presented plans for the Volpe project to a joint meeting of the Pedestrian, Bicycle, and Transit committees. At that meeting, committee members noted a number of concerns, particularly with Potter Street, Fifth Street and Canal Way.

On March 17, 2021, MIT presented updated plans to the committees. The updated plans showed that MIT had now addressed many of the concerns of the committees. We thank MIT for making the changes, particularly including high-quality bicycle facilities and separated bicycle lanes on Fifth Street and Potter Street, and incorporating two BlueBikes stations, which will be important amenities for the people who come to this area.

However, the committees still have concerns:

- Broad Canal Way: Although it is recognized that retailers desire, and accessible access is improved by a drop-off zone on Broad Canal Way, there is still too much on-street parking. Uber drop-off zones will encourage automobile traffic on this shared street and prevent it from attaining the full benefit of a shared street. Additional traffic calming such as chicanes, speed humps, or planters that redirect traffic would be helpful.
- People need to be able to bicycle directly from Broad Canal Way to the Kittie Knox path
- At Fifth St and Broad Canal Way, it would be good to have traffic calming at the intersection, e.g.: a raised intersection.

The Pedestrian Committee previously expressed some additional thoughts, which the Bicycle Committee supports:

- We emphasize the idea that the right design will encourage the right use
- Solid-structure diversions, such as large concrete planters, may slow the flow of cars that enter Broad Canal Way by encouraging a zig-zag rather than a straight-line path

- For pedestrians and people bicycling entering Broad Canal Way from the east side, a visual path through to Kendall Way would encourage pedestrian use as a through-route, rather than appearing like a dead end. Currently, the community center blocks the visual line down Broad Canal Way
- For cars entering Broad Canal Way, there should be as many cues as reasonable to indicate that Broad Canal Way is not a car-priority zone. The entrances to the space for cars provide the strongest opportunity to inform drivers of the restrictions

In sum, the Bicycle Committee supports most of this plan, and respectfully requests consideration by the Planning Board to encourage redesign of Broad Canal Way to make it more comfortable to walk and bicycle, connect visually and physically to Loughrey Way and Kittie Knox Path, and to further reduce private and ride share automobile traffic.

Thank you.

Mark Boswell
Chair, Cambridge Bicycle Committee