

2016-09-15

**Alewife Working Group #4**

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Committee Attendees

Karen Dumaine, Geoff Wood, Jennifer Gilbert, Eric Grunebaum, Mark DiOrio, John DiGiovanni, Sam Stern, Margaret Drury, James Butler, Doug Brown, Catherine Connolly

Staff / Consultant Present

Staff: Melissa Peters, Iram Farooq, Stuart Dash, Stephanie Groll  
Utile: Tim Love, John McCartin, Nupoor Monani

Committee Members Absent

William Ahern, Tom Ragno

Seven members from the public

Meeting Overview

- Presentation from consultant on July visioning workshop summary, preliminary vision and goals, and discussion of challenges (available here)

Discussion Comments

- Need to make physical connections that will in part and human connections
- Mitigate flooding risk in creative ways to turn climate change risks into an asset (i.e. educational opportunity)
- Draft vision is precisely what it is not today. Group agrees that vision is what they want the place to be in the future
- Currently there are no buses that originate in Cambridge that services the T; poor service and frequency
- Need to promote sustainable modes of transportation
- Multiple solutions include bus lane signal priority, more affordable housing so increase in people who work and live in Cambridge, increase in telecommuting
- Use of eminent domain as tool to create public open space
- Connect green spaces on perimeter
- Clarify how ADT is counted, does it account for congestion? Is there an alternate metric that captures this?
- Reduce auto capacity on Alewife Brook Parkway by introducing bus signalization
- Need for improvements to the red line
- Most severe challenges to the neighborhood are related to mobility, all other focus areas are relatively "softer"
- New development on Concord Ave has deed restricted uses, detract from the character of the neighborhoods
- New developments on 70 Fawcett do not conform to the urban design guidelines from the 2005 plan
- Is there potential for CRA to play a role as a mediator in negotiations with private owner sin Alewife redevelopment?
- Dollar value is an obstacle for the City to acquire any parcels for public use. City has to weigh the cost / benefits of all capital projects together.

- Potential for form based zoning, added density and new network of streets
- City should propose to add streets where they have benefits for urban form, private owners may be willing to reconcile impacts to their properties if there is a net gain for the neighborhood
- City should consider tools like density bonuses to incentivize owners whose parcels are compromised
- Three proposals for medical marijuana dispensaries in and adjacent to quadrangle. One at the possible location of the ped bridge over railway tracks
- Precedent for good building form in historical developments. There is some good quality building stock which can be rehabed to house new commercial / retail
- Sectors which offer employment at low levels of education are also ones with a low LQ declining steadily
- Potential for Alewife to be a hub of “Green Tech” - a title unclaimed by any other peers
- Small businesses are more vulnerable if they are renting like Longleaf Lumber, but owner-occupied businesses are safer like Iggy’s