

2016-11-03

Engagement Working Group #5

Committee Members

Ben Peterson, Cathie Zusy, Phyllis Bretholtz, Tara Greco, Justin Kang

Staff/Consultants

Melissa Peters, Wendell Joseph, Cory Berg

Committee Members Absent

Justin Crane, Elaine DeRosa, Sarah Kennedy, Zuleka Queen-Postell, Debbie Bonilla, Jeenal Sawla, Eryn Johnson

No public attendees

Meeting Overview

Beta test draft street team activity on visioning the corridors

Comments

- Suggestions for game board improvements:
 - Be specific about what street location the activity is referring to
 - Indicate the exact number of tiles by use (how many residential tiles, etc.) and discuss how to communicate desire for multi-use buildings
 - Make green block color (parks) a lighter green as to not confuse with parking
 - Explain how affordable units are created through inclusionary zoning
 - Add info on tax revenue to scorecard
 - Add info on square footage for each block piece to key (“1 yellow block = 5 residential units”)
 - Existing triple-deckers drawn on board are confusing; consider making them 3D massings to illustrate scale; other things like tree, car, etc. could provide scale
 - Consider placing constraints on the type of development – so if you place a certain number of residential blocks, you are required to place a proportional number of parking spots or parks
 - Expand parking tiles to include bike parking, not just auto. Inform people of current parking ratios.
- Suggestions for descriptive text framing the game:
 - Consider bolding what is really important or providing main takeaways – the text is too dense as it stands now
 - Be very clear in identifying which streets are considered “corridors”
- Setbacks arose as a way to minimize shade while adding density
- Having the precedent cards is important in order to help understanding the massing
- Confidentiality is important since activity elicits strong feelings, particularly during an extended discussion of individuals’ values and tradeoffs
- Context is important – should explore placing a street name on the board to help with scenarios (great variation between Mass Ave and Cambridge Street, and there’s even great variation within the streets themselves based on which part you are looking at – so, not only which streets but where on the street)

- Better explain the relationship between taxes/rent between Cambridge and surrounding towns (i.e. explain that Cambridge property tax is so low because of commercial real estate taxes)
- Only played the game once with 44 tiles (zoning as it currently stands) and the idea of doubling that may be too much (playing with 88 tiles, illustrating up-zoning and a doubling of the FAR)
- The game triggered a larger discussion about housing and density that could be used as a conversation piece, however, the game actually took much longer than anticipated