

2017-06-27

**Alewife Working Group
Meeting #10**

Working Group Attendees

Eric Grunebaum, John DiGiovanni, James Butler, Margaret Drury, Catherine Connolly, Doug Brown, Karen Dumaine, Mark DiOrio

Staff / Consultant Present

Staff: Melissa Peters

Utile: Tim Love, Meera Deean, Kennan Lagreze

Working Group Members Absent

Jennifer Gilbert, Geoff Wood, William Ahern, Tom Ragno

Approximately twelve members of the public present.

Meeting overview

Tim Love presented the overall vision, revised scenarios for the Quadrangle and Shopping Center, and new scenarios for Fresh Pond Parkway and the Jerry's Pond areas.

Presentation is available [here](#).

Comments on the Quadrangle scenario:

- Several committee members discussed the possibility of live-work space in the Quadrangle. One member liked live-work space in the Quadrangle but asked how that works with industrial zoning. Another asked about the overall jobs-housing balance within the district and how live-work space would affect that.
- About zoning, a committee member said that a failure of the Concord-Alewife plan is that the zoning did not require mixed-use development (just encouraged it). He shared his concern that only housing will continue to be built if the zoning is not prescriptive. Another committee member asked how successful the special permit process has been to incentivize the development we want? A committee member responded that the biggest mistake in existing zoning is not controlling the ground floor uses.
- Another committee member asked about seeing the flood map overlaid on the plan, and if there were ways to better connect to the Highlands, such as along a path parallel to the rails.
- Regarding connecting the Quadrangle to the T, a committee member commented that there are still no new connections to the T. She asked about bike/pedestrian crossings under or over the road (i.e., an underpass or bridge). Several members advocated for the bridge and including it in the plan. Others advocated for a commuter rail stop as part of the plan. Consultant team said that the lack of the bridge has forced the team and City staff to think of create alternative ways to connect the subdistricts. The committee

members stated that the plan should include a reference to the bridge, while acknowledging that there is not currently funding allocated for the bridge.

- A committee member commented that the plan must be aspirational but also realistic. The bridge should be in the plan, but we must acknowledge that it may not come for a while and thus alternatives must be clearly articulated. Consultant responded that Terminal Road and other connections have been discussed and those conversations are already impacting conversations the City is having with developers. In total, the plan includes nearly double the linear feet of streets in the Quadrangle that exists now. This is a pragmatic and visionary plan that will guide City staff and developers for the coming decade.

Comments on the Shopping Center scenario:

- Committee members said they generally liked the plan, but worry about the timing and the balance of activity between the Quadrangle and the Shopping Center.
- Committee member asked how one would get from the Quadrangle to the Shopping Center. Consultant responded that there is a bike connection along the tracks, a new connection to Terminal Road, and a realigned intersection on Fresh Pond Parkway (no vehicular access across the parkway, but easier pedestrian connections). In addition, there might be a pedestrian stair connection from the Parkway sidewalk to the shopping center. Committee members liked the concept and supported the idea of a pedestrian connection from the Parkway to the Shopping Center.
- Committee members emphasized the importance of constructing the connections first, in particular Terminal Road and the pedestrian connection from the Parkway.

Comments on the Jerry's Pond scenario:

- Committee members thought that the multiuse path connections are useful and would significantly improve pedestrian and bicycle options in the area.
- Committee members thought that the recommended scenario made sense overall.
- Committee members mentioned that Jerry's Pond could become a neighborhood amenity again. What about creating more of a place at Jerry's Pond with a pavilion or paths around it? A committee member provided some historical photos of people swimming in Jerry's Pond and advocated for it to become a passive recreation area. He emphasized creating ways to walk through the Pond area and softening the edges of the Pond.
- Committee members asked whether the new street connection, which passes by a garage, would lead to increased traffic. Would one-streets help prevent traffic from flowing through the neighborhood? A committee member is worried that the new street would impede the bus connections. Another member wants to make sure speeds stay slow – he was worried that the straight street would encourage high speeds. Another committee member asked whether it was possible for a priority bus lane or HOV lane coming out of the T. Consultant and City staff said they would consider alternatives.

Comments on the Fresh Pond Parkway development scenario:

- A committee member asked about the redevelopment of the Tobin School and connection from Tobin School to Fresh Pond. This would create a green transition between the Tobin School (through crosswalk) and Fresh Pond Reservation.

Comments on the Triangle scenario:

- A committee member asked about connecting Cambridge Park Drive with Rindge Avenue.
- A committee member said he would be willing to accept increased density in certain areas to pay for the pedestrian bridge and/or a commuter rail stop.
- Several committee members would like to make a formal statement of support for a bridge.

Public Comments:

- A member of the public asked about the increased industrial use in the Quadrangle, and any increases in buildings and density. He is concerned that increased density would further impede traffic flows and impact residential streets. He also asked about Jerry's Pond's environmental contamination.
- A member of the public said that, in terms of traffic, he wants to make sure that others do not drive through the neighborhood streets.
- Another member of the public commented that the new proposed bike connections are great. She also stated that Fresh Pond Parkway should be more like a true parkway, with trees, greenery, and separated from bike paths.
- A member of the public said that he was skeptical at the beginning of the process and is now excited about the plan.
- A resident of the Quadrangle said that the Shopping Center scheme needs to maintain the grocery store.
- A Rindge Towers resident advocated for improving Rindge Avenue. It should have less traffic and be more pedestrian and bike friendly.