

MEMO

Date: April 24th, 2024

To: CRA Board

From: Joel Smith

RE: 245 Main Street and Galaxy Park Temporary Use

BACKGROUND

The original One Cambridge Center building (now 255 Main Street) was completed in 1987 within Parcel 4 of the Kendall Square Urban Redevelopment Plan (KSURP). In 2012, the building underwent a renovation to add a glass atrium which acts as an interstitial space to serve as an elevator atrium to the office space above, originally occupied by Microsoft. In 2018, the second floor along with four other floors of the building were converted into Innovation Space by BXP under a lease with CiC. CiC's main lobby is located on the second floor, similar to its previous function when Microsoft occupied the building, and the entry was given the 245 Main St address. In 2020, the 245 Main St lobby was temporarily repurposed as a testing site for COVID-19 by CiC Health.

Adjacent to the glass atrium is Galaxy Park, a 19,000-square-foot park space jointly owned in parts by BXP and the CRA. Galaxy Park has been used for at various times for temporary retail ventures. The plaza area of the park is currently maintained by Boston Properties, necessitating a licensing agreement for any retail activities at that location.

The KSURP aims to promote a dynamic retail environment and enhancing street-level activation within the MXD district. The glass atrium at 245 Main Street was not constructed using Infill GFA from the Infill Development Concept Plan (IDCP), and thus was not subject to the recent ground floor activation requirement in the MXD zoning. However, the IDCP had identified this area of Main Street as an area to be retrofitted with retail or active use in the future. Allowing temporary retail activities would better align with the objectives outlined in the KSURP plan. Additionally, through the Innovation Space requirements of the KSURP the CRA recognizes the value of opportunities for startup retail ventures at an entrepreneurial stage, which may benefit from lower barriers to entry such as indoor or outdoor temporary spaces (like kiosks, markets, and food trucks).

PROPOSAL

In December of last year, CiC presented various temporary and permanent retail concepts for the glass atrium at 245 Main Street and Galaxy Park. After some initial feedback the proposal was revised and on February 7, 2024, it was review by BXP and the CRA staff. Following these presentations, CRA staff

and BXP encouraged CiC to explore the feasibility and success of a temporary retail cart before moving forward with a more permanent solution.

CRA staff received a proposal from CiC on April 12, 2024 outlining plans for a temporary coffee cart to be located in the glass atrium at 245 Main Street with the plan to relocate into Galaxy Park during favorable weather conditions. The proposal emphasizes that the temporary cart would function as an extension of CiC and the Venture Café, fostering social connections and community building within 245 Main Street and Galaxy Park, however the vendor would be serving to the public at large. Additionally, CiC has discussed with MIT Press the possibility of setting up a bookshelf next to the cart featuring popular technology-oriented books for public browsing. To enhance outreach efforts, CiC is also in talks with the Innovation Trail regarding their potential role as an information resource.

Therefore, CRA staff recommends approving this retail use within the building lobby area. The proposed motion would give the 245 Main Street lobby a permanent retail land use designation. Alternatively, the Board could approve a two-year temporary use for CiC’s proposed coffee cart, before converting the space into a permanent retail area. Concurrently, CiC and BXP are finalizing a license agreement that will outline the requirements for compliance with local codes and acquisition of necessary permits.

MOTION

Draft Motion: Approving the use of the entry lobby at 245 Main Street for Retail Use to accommodate a proposed coffee cart service and future café development, Parcel Four of the Kendall Square Urban Redevelopment Project.

Alternative Motion: Approving a Temporary Use for a Retail Cart located at 245 Main Street, Parcel Four of the Kendall Square Urban Redevelopment Project.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: 245 Main Street and Galaxy Park Temporary Retail Cart from April 12, 2024

**Cambridge Redevelopment Authority
Submission Cover Letter**

Tom Evans
Executive Director
Cambridge Redevelopment Center
255 Main St.
Cambridge, MA 02142

Mr. Evans,

Please accept this letter as part of the submission for our proposal for Æthos Café, part of Project Æthos to be located in the “glass box” located at the front of 245-255 Main Street, in Cambridge, MA.

Project Æthos, Inc, referred to here as Project Æthos, is a Massachusetts Benefit Corporation led by Sam Rowe which is restricted under its Articles of Incorporation to never have shareholders nor distribute a profit. We are creating new mechanisms to build community.

By way of background on us, in our first project, called the Station, we are assembling a diverse group of AI focused company founders who combine expertise in artificial intelligence (AI) with deep domain expertise in a variety of fields, and who have a goal to bring about lasting impact. In this inaugural physical hub, the Æthos Station on the 7th floor of 1 Broadway, Kendall Square, we intend to gather approximately 100 top entrepreneurs to work on groundbreaking AI applications. This location fosters close interactions that enable founders to embody shared values of honesty, diversity, and service mentality, thereby building a community that learns from, supports, and trusts each other. As an example of our work, on May 2 we will be holding a public forum at Venture Café focused on harnessing the power of AI to address public health challenges facing Massachusetts.

As our second initiative, we are working with Irida Zaimi to launch the Æthos Café in the glass box in front of 245 Main Street. Irida is an experienced and successful restaurant entrepreneur. We intend for the Café to serve as both a pleasant place where anyone can get a cup of coffee, and also as a key gateway between the Kendall Square tech community and the wider public, providing a platform for spontaneous encounters and mutual understanding. The Æthos Café provides the chance to showcase technology, artwork, and physical products made by local entrepreneurs in Cambridge and will serve to inspire the public about the potential for these technologies as well as about ways they can get involved in the innovation ecosystem here.

The MIT Press has offered to place a bookshelf in the Café with popular books in technology available for anyone to browse.

We are at the early stages of conversations with the Innovation Trail on how we can serve as an information point for those wishing to follow the trail.

Over time, we imagine creatively introducing other opportunities to the public to interact with entrepreneurship and innovation through the Café for realizing our vision.

Sincerely,

Samuel Penfeald Rowe, Founder, Project Æthos

245 Main Indoor Space Vision Board



Note: We are open to various ideas on the precise brand name.

Location: Galaxy Park



Location: Interior



Rationale

- Becoming an everyday **social connector** by performing a “physical activity that acts as a concentrator” to *frequently* bring people together; become the thread for a diverse and inclusive community at the intersection of Main, Third and Broadway and potentially at Galaxy Park.
- **Well designed** spaces and activities cultivate and foster social interaction; one of the few things that the WFH can not achieve.
- If invited to work in the park, activating its **multidimensional** use year round:
 - through “breaking bread”/ over a fresh cup of coffee
 - an exchange of ideas: something that Venture Café has successfully been doing since 2010.
- **Intuitively**, both of the park’s pathways are connected to CIC’s glass cube.
- A **“self-standing”** extension of Venture Café’s Thursday Gathering; consistently and sustainably “executing” excellent, fresh cups of coffee in VC’s style of hospitality.

VC@245's Unique Offering

- **LOCATIONAL UNIQUENESS:**

We are inviting visitors for a moment of settling down into a warm, welcoming, thought-provoking stop in the Innovation trail and heart of Kendall Sq.

We are encouraging them to leave the digital and rather grasp the magnificence of what the human mind in the right ecosystem can achieve.

- We are the “in-between”. (park adjacent to outbound subway entrance)
- Kendall TStop average fare gate taps every half an hour 1,077 (Oct '22)*
 - ~8K daily boardings at Kendall Stop; peak between 4-5pm
- Increase of 7.3% of Red Line monthly ridership from Jan 2023
 - Pre-pandemic at 180K/March 2020 at 14K/Nov 2023 at 90K
- Overall MBTA data as of Nov '23 shows Oct with peak increase of post-pandemic** (at 65% of pre-pandemic levels)**

VC@245's Unique Offering (cont.)

- **COMMUNITY: VC offers the appropriate context**

- VC2 is part of a larger context of bringing people together; already achieved through Thursday's Gathering.
- Familiarity and Novelty: we feel familiar to an established community and are able to nourish relationships through new ways and innovative ideas as this.
- We are the extension arm of an established community (VC); stabilized distribution channels;
- The MIT Press has said that they would be excited to open a "library" in the space with free browsing of their books

- **OPERATIONS DIFFERENTIATION:**

- Product competitively priced
- Sourcing high quality, local suppliers - doing business in the community and for the community
- Simple food menus with wholesome, new recipes; (differentiation)
- Recruitment: VC has the ability to solicit intentional workers who want to be part of an innovators community.
- We manage with the attention & care of a small business, creating a different feel which transpires through.

Alternative Approach: Begin with a Coffee Cart?



Samples: Ferla Grande



Coffee Cart Features

Standard Included Features:

Temperature Controlled
Freezer/Fridge
Sink & Water Package (water heater not included)
5GL Clean & 5GL Waste Water Tanks
Battery Operated Water Pump
Steel Frame
Front Wheels: Casters (Heavy Duty)
Rear Wheels: Big Wheels (Heavy Duty)
Table Top Commercial Grade Wood
Compartment Box - Water Resistant Wood
Acrylic Sneeze Guard
Water and Sun Resistant
Removable Canopy

Electrical:

100Ah 12V Battery System
Digital Display Temperature Controller
110V Refrigerator/Freezer Power Supply
110V AC to 12V DC Battery Inverter Charger
State of Charge LCD indicator
Overhead LED Roof Light Strips
Round LED Logo Signage

Other:

La Marzocco Linea Classic Cold Brew System Dual Tap
Installation of water heater tankless
Cart or Bike Full Assembly
Crate Packaging & Handling