

Staff Report to the Board: July 19, 2023

Personnel and Hiring Updates

During our Board meeting, our three new staff members will be introducing themselves. All staff member biographies are now available on the [People](#) page of our website:

- **Gardy Laurent, Director of Finance and Operation:** Gardy joined the CRA on July 10th from the City of Cambridge's Department of Traffic, Parking, and Transportation, where he worked since 2016, most recently as the department's Fiscal, Administrative, and Technology Manager.
- **Alex Cardelle, Project Manager:** Alex joined the CRA on July 10th after completing his Master in Urban Planning degree with a concentration in Real Estate and Urban Analytics from the Harvard Graduate School of Design. Alex previously worked in several roles for the municipal government of Bal Harbour Village, Florida.
- **Joshua Croom, Project Planner:** Joshua joined the CRA on July 5th after completing his Master of City and Regional Planning degree with a concentration in Housing & Community Development from the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy at Rutgers University. Joshua has previously interned with the City of Revere, Metropolitan Area Planning Council, and Massachusetts Department of Transportation.

The CRA continues to recruit for one additional Project Manager to join our team.

Forward Calendar

- Bishop Allen Close-Out
- CRA Organizational DEI Plan Update
- Galaxy Park Contract Extension

Project Updates

Rindge Connectivity Community Engagement Outreach at 362, 364, and 402 Rindge Avenue, as part of the CRA's Rindge Avenue Community Connectivity project, is underway. In May, the CRA hired three Engagement Coordinators, Hiwot Bekele, Asmait Tekle, and Linda Vick to guide and facilitate engagement that seeks to understand residents' perspectives on open space and connectivity where they live. As part of the first phase of outreach, the coordinators are distributing a survey to residents to understand their goals and preferences for the project, which has been translated into nine languages: Amharic, Arabic, Bangla, Simplified Chinese, English, Haitian Creole,



Hindi, Spanish, and Urdu. Thus far, the Engagement Coordinators have received 247 survey responses. The survey will remain open through the end of this week.



Center Plaza Design Community Engagement

CRA staff continue to conduct community outreach to seek feedback on the updated Center Plaza design. The staff has tabled at the Proto residential building to get residents' thoughts on the design, as well as at the Pisani Center. To receive additional input from residents at the Washington Elms and Newtowne Court, CRA staff will table at the weekly game night every Monday until August 7. A community-wide Zoom meeting is also planned for July 26 from 6:30-7:30 pm. Please visit the CRA webpage to register for the July 26 meeting.



Galaxy Park Concept Design

The CRA presented concept design options for proposed improvements to Galaxy Park at the City of Cambridge's Joint Transportation Committee meeting, held on June 29. Members of various City community committees, including the bicycle committee and pedestrian committee, were present and offered feedback on the design options under consideration for both Galaxy Park and for the surrounding streetscape. Pending further conversation with City staff, CRA staff expect to bring a park concept and streetscape concept to the Board's next meeting for approval to move into 25% design plans.

Forward Fund

The CRA opened the Forward Fund Capital Infrastructure Grant Program on June 21. Over the past few weeks, CRA staff have spent time informing organizations about the new grant allocation, and conducting site visits and virtual meetings to discuss grant opportunities. For more information, and to access the grant applications, visit the CRA's [Forward Fund](#) webpage.