

Staff Report to the Board: *September 20, 2023*

Personnel and Hiring Updates

On Monday, August 21, the CRA welcomed **Joel Smith** to our team as a Project Manager. Joel joins the CRA from Tufts University, where he worked on campus planning initiatives on the University's Boston campus. He previously spent 15 years at Sasaki Associates working on a variety of urban design, planning, and landscape architecture projects for clients across the United States including institutions, municipal agencies, and private developers. Joel has contributed to several projects in Kendall Square and is excited to bring his knowledge of Cambridge to bear at the CRA. He is managing several initiatives related to the Kendall Square Urban Redevelopment Plan as well as coordinating the CRA's response to the Walden Square II project.

On Thursday, September 7, the CRA bid farewell to Senior Planner **Fabiola Alikpokou**. Fabiola joined the CRA in the Summer of 2020 during a time of great transition for our organization and made immense contributions to the organization during her three years here. Fabiola led the development of the CRA's community engagement strategy which we have subsequently put into practice on our projects to ensure we are holding ourselves to rigorous standard in the design and execution of community outreach. Fabiola managed several projects at the CRA including the Rindge Connectivity project in North Cambridge, the Center Plaza community engagement efforts, the POPS signage initiative, and research into the CRA's past use of eminent domain to inform a forthcoming public report. Fabiola has joined the MBTA as a Project Manager and we wish her all the best in her new role.

Last month, The CRA began to advertise for the final new position that is part of our 2023 hiring plan, the Finance Manager position. The Finance Manager will work as part of the CRA's Operations and Finance team and report to the Director of Finance and Operations. Responsibilities of the Finance Manager will include supporting the day-to-day financial operations within the organization, managing reconciliations and cash, and performing bookkeeping duties. Applications are due on September 25.

Forward Calendar

- Bishop Allen Close-Out
- CRA Organizational DEI Plan Update
- BXP Community Room Change of Use
- CRA 2022 Audit Review

Project Updates

2023 Annual Transportation Report Kick-Off

The CRA executed a contract extension with our consultant VHB to begin work on the 2023 Annual Transportation Report. The first phase of this year's contract began earlier this week with data collection running through Saturday, September 24. Observational field work was

conducted today in the form of cordon counts. CRA staff are also looking forward to developing a new RFP for the 2024 report, which will occur over the late fall and early winter months.

Foundry Leasing Updates

On Friday, September 15, Olema Pharmaceuticals moved into the front half of Suite 3B which was subdivided to allow for their occupancy. The rear space that remains from this subdivision is currently undergoing a design process to formally separate the space into either one or two office suites along with creating a new egress corridor along the north end of the atrium that will connect to the other end of Suite 3B. The CRA is working with Newmark to market the rear space to potential tenants as either a singular space or two smaller spaces. The CRA is hopeful that the final subdivision work will commence along with a signed tenant or tenants before the end of 2023.

Parcel 6 Food Vendor

The CRA has contracted with the Chicken and Rice Guys food truck to vend for lunch on a trial basis on Parcel 6. Currently, they are vending for lunch between 11-2 on Mondays on September 11, 18, and 25. Further dates will be announced after this trial period.

Rindge Avenue Connectivity Community Engagement

Outreach at 362, 364, and 402 Rindge Avenue, as part of the CRA's Rindge Avenue Community Connectivity project, has wrapped up for Phase 1. The first phase of outreach included a survey to understand resident's goals and preferences for the path project, and was translated into nine languages: Amharic, Arabic, Bangla, Simplified Chinese, English, Haitian Creole, Hindi, Spanish, and Urdu. The Engagement Coordinators received 304 survey responses. The survey confirmed resident interest in having the CRA continue to pursue design work, with 75% of respondents noting they wanted to see improved connectivity in their neighborhood and have the fence dividing the 402 and 364/362 Rindge Avenue buildings removed. Phase two outreach will occur in the second half of September and in October and will include a series of focus groups and a community meeting.

Center Plaza Engagement Completion

CRA staff have concluded the current phase of community engagement after two months of outreach efforts to solicit more input on the Center Plaza design as part of the Eversource Project. Through an online survey, tabling events, and a public meeting, staff garnered about 200 responses on design direction. The next step in the process is a review during the CRA Design Review Committee meeting scheduled for October 4, 2023.

KSTEP Project Development

The CRA is developing a proposal to install a new bus shelter at the NE corner of Ames Street and Main Street as a KSTEP-funded transit improvement project. CRA staff have begun contacting vendors to price out the installation and analyze site survey documents to better understand the potential positioning of the shelter and construction techniques that will be necessary to install the shelter. For long-term KSTEP project ideation, the CRA has engaged with an MIT transportation policy course that is considering ideas of how to improve transportation in Kendall Square. This semester-long engagement provides an opportunity for students to better understand the CRA's work, while providing KSTEP with valuable feedback and access to transit-related research.