

**Staff Report to the Board:** *September 22, 2021*

**Administration**

**Open RFP**

The CRA is seeking an insurance advisor/consultant to assess the risks of the Agency and recommend policy coverage. The Insurance Consultant RFP opened on September 1, 2021 with a closing of October 1, 2021.

The CRA is also seeking proposals from qualified firms or individuals to provide real estate advisory and brokerage services. In particular, the consultant(s) selected will assist the CRA in analyzing short-term and long-term real estate development strategies and to identify real estate opportunities to purchase land for the development of home-ownership housing and commercial uses. The RFP opened on September 1, 2021 and proposals are due by October 1, 2021.

**Delayed Office Occupancy**

As a result of rising cases due to the Delta variant, full return to the office is delayed until at least November 1, 2021. There will be an assessment made in October on a new return to office date plan.

**Forward Calendar**

- IDCP Amendment
- Danny Lewin Park MOU
- 2021 Budget Amendment
- Personnel Policy / Handbook
- 2020 Audit presentation

**Project Updates**

**3rd & Binney Civic Space**

The City began vacating the temporary dog park that was located at 3rd & Binney in September as the new Tim Toomey Park's construction was completed. Brightview Landscaping has renovated the civic space back to its original condition with a few minor improvements to soften up the area. For the restoration project, the City provided the CRA with stone dust to update the seating areas, and mulch to replace the loose gravel in the landscaped areas.

Staff are in discussions with food and beverage vendors for activation options for the open space. Barring any setbacks, the space will host its first beer garden of the Fall season during the second week of October. Staff will promote the activation schedule on the CRA website, via emails to community partners and social media platforms.

### 325 Main and Roof Garden Construction Updates

Interior work at 325 Main Street continues. Elevator testing is underway, and work on the wood ceiling, and curtain wall in the Public Lobby is nearing completion. Work is underway on the social and second level terrace stairs, and soffit panels are being installed on level 9. The Roof Garden is also taking shape! Hardscaping is underway, and some landscape planting is expected to occur this fall.

The first of the Kendall Plaza art installations, approved by the CRA Board in BXP's Wayfinding and Art Master Plan, were completed by Jessie & Katey this past month. BXP hosted an unveiling ceremony with the artists on September 1st.



### KSTEP Bus Shelter

The KSTEP bus shelter project hit a few snags during the last few weeks, but with assistance from the City to assist in utility coordination, the project should begin to move along. The main item that delayed the installation was the discovery of an old water lateral that was not uncovered during the test pits due diligence. Additionally, there was a delay due to the filming of Black Panther Two.

The water line caused the installation of the shelter's helical piles to shift 15" east to not impact the water lateral, which required modifications to the engineering plans and additional collaboration with Verizon. The City, CRA and Verizon have also agreed that Bond Construction will install a new conduit sleeve to better protect their conduit line that is located 14" below grade.

At the time of the writing of this report, Bond was still waiting for the delivery of new helical piles. Once those have arrived, they will begin the installation of the bus shelter in front of 500 Main Street.

### Residence Inn and Danny Lewin Park

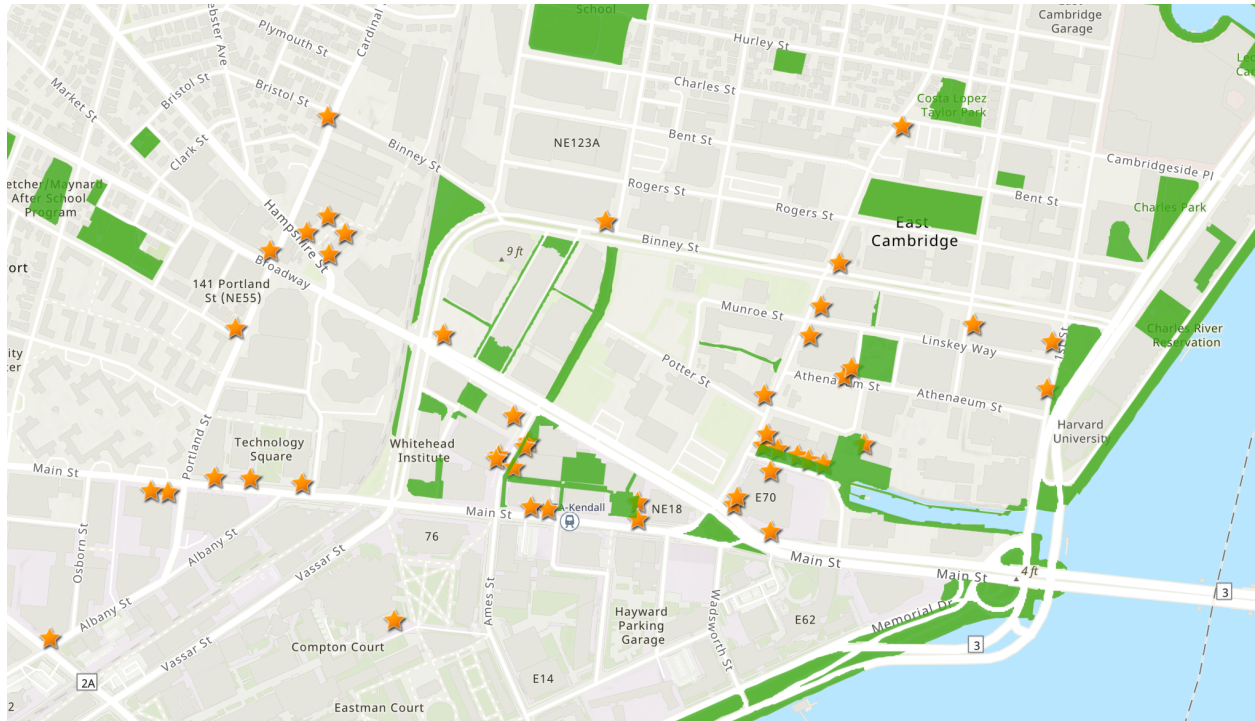
The Residence Inn on 120 Broadway is looking to redesign their ground floor space and open up their western side of the building onto Danny Lewin Park. The redesign of the western side includes a patio with outdoor furniture and alcohol service. The patio must be separated from the public during alcohol service hours to adhere to the liquor license law. Therefore, the CRA has been working with Residence Inn to ensure the design of the patio complies with the open space covenant on Danny Lewin. The aim is to make the entire park feel open and welcoming to all, even when there are separators. The next step is meeting with Residence Inn to talk in more detail about the design.

### Kendall Square - Future is Bright

To welcome employees and students back to Kendall Square, the KSA has launched a campaign called, The Future is Bright. The theme of the campaign is unity, new beginnings, togetherness. As part of the campaign, the KSA is amplifying programming and amenities in the area.



To help with the effort, the CRA developed a map for the KSA's website site where visitors can find open restaurants and public green spaces to visit.



### **Forward Fund**

The second round of the Forward Fund has had only one submission thus far; a Technical Assistance grant proposal for \$10,000. The awardee is Black History in Action for Cambridgeport (BHAC). The project has two phases. Phase One is to engage in a robust community process to determine the needs of the community. Phase Two will study the conversion of the former St. Augustine's Church building into a community center. The group's goal is to utilize the findings to create a community hub for outreach and advocacy, and serve as a center for the cultivation of public history and culture.

The Capital Infrastructure category does not have any completed submission as of this report. The original closing date for submissions was set for September 24, 2021, therefore the CRA has extended the deadline one month, until October 22, 2021.

To date the grant program has awarded a total of approximately \$200,000 of the original \$300,000 allocated for the 2021 program. Approximately \$50,000 of the awards have been distributed to Technical Assistance projects and \$150,000 to Capital Infrastructure projects. The lack of applicants can be attributed to many factors, but the main factor is the continued challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. Many organizations have lost staff and/or been forced to reduce operating budgets. These issues have had a major impact on programming planning efforts as well as capital improvements.

The Staff intends to have an in-depth review of the Forward Fund grant program in advance of the 2022 grant cycle, including outreach efforts and other factors to improve the annual program. Those findings will be shared with the Board at a future meeting.

### **COVID-19 Small Business Loan Program**

The first amortization payment of the 5-year Zero Interest Loan is due on September 30, 2021. Cambridge Savings Bank, the loan servicer, sent letters to all borrowers with information about repayment logistics. There are several borrowers who have already repaid the loan in full. In the next month's staff report, there will be a full analysis of the payments received and the loan amount outstanding.