

East Cambridge
ECPT
Planning Team

A Neighborhood Organization for the Betterment of East Cambridge

January 20, 2020

Cambridge Redevelopment Authority
255 Main Street. 8th Floor
Cambridge, MA 02142

RE: 135 Fulkerson St (Substation Site)

Dear CRA Board Chair Born; Vice Chair Crawford; and Board Members Bator, Zevin, and Drury:

We were very pleased to see the commitment of 20,000 sq. ft. of affordable condominiums by the Cambridge Redevelopment Authority (CRA). We believe home ownership is an important path to social and economic equity. However, we are concerned with possibly siting the condominiums on the former Fulkerson Street substation site. ECPT had a roundtable discussion of the site at its January 13th meeting and there were several public needs the members present thought were pressing which the site could accommodate including:

- Playing Field. There has been a need for additional multi-use playing fields in East Cambridge for decades. In fact, a former City Manager evaluated the Fulkerson site for a soccer field 20 years ago and concluded it was too expensive to purchase and develop into a field. A field here now would also complement the adjacent privately owned public space planned by Alexandria.
- Elementary School Park. One idea is close part of Fulkerson Street and connect this parcel with Ahern Field (but allow for emergency vehicle passage). In addition, a crossing would be made to Linden Park and the Grand Junction Path. The intention would be to make a more usable connection between the Ahern and Donnelly Fields and the neighborhoods surrounding them.
- Indoor Pool. Remove the lap pool from the Volpe Community Center and create a full size pool for year-round use by communities that are expected to be the primary users of the Volpe Center. According to the USA Swimming Foundation, 64% of African American children can't swim as opposed to 40% of white children. In the same study 79% of children in families earning less than \$50,000 didn't know how to swim. The highest disparity is among children 5-18 years old, with drowning rates 5.5 times higher for black children than white children. The close proximity to two schools makes this an opportune location.

As the Fulkerson parcel directly abuts two neighborhoods, ECPT proposes a study committee with members of the Linden Park neighborhood and East Cambridge neighborhood to investigate potential uses of the site. We recommend making a point of seeking out the participation of residents of the larger Wellington Harrington neighborhood and The Port as well. The Eversource Fulkerson Street site presents a rare opportunity for these neighborhoods, who have absorbed much development and lost much green space over the years, to weigh-in on the best public use of this site.

Very truly yours,



Charles T. Hinds
President, ECPT