

PART C – PUBLIC SPACES/ PLACEMAKING

After much debate among the various stakeholders in Cambridge, your team’s open space plan has been accepted (if it was only that easy, right?). Your ideas were so compelling that the City of Cambridge has decided to request RFPs (Request for Proposals) for each of the specific open space interventions that you recommended. Each design team may only submit one entry.

Purpose: To develop a detailed design for a single open space in Cambridgeport/East Cambridge.

Task: You will work in groups to produce a detailed proposal for a single open space in Cambridgeport and East Cambridge. You may choose to do any one of your interventions, subject to approval (please tell us which space you intend to develop in detail – ideally we would like a range of open space types in the class). Among the possible spaces you might design are: a small neighborhood park (i.e. roughly one block or smaller), a city park (a few blocks), a plaza, a playground, a linear park, or a boulevard. You are required to complete the following:

1) Site Inventory and Analysis.

Visit your existing site in the field and, drawing upon previous assignments, do site observation and recording (sketches, notes, photos – subjective and objective analyses). This does not need to be handed in (just do it in your sketchbook), although you may want to scan some of your sketches for your final panels (see 5 below).

2) Prepare Base Plans.

Prepare analysis plans, in either digital form or hand-drawn, which depict the site conditions and opportunities/constraints as related to your specific open space proposal. You will need to download or otherwise find a base plan of your specific site at a reasonable scale (this should be a line drawing). Scan or download any images you might find useful – these might be images of similar open spaces that you feel might be influential on your design, or photos that you took of the site. On 11”x17” prepare the following plans (refer to the Graphic Reference Book - please remember to have titles (typed), labels (typed), a graphic scale and north arrow):

a) Context Plan: This plan should locate your site in the context of Cambridgeport/East Cambridge, drawing a series of concentric rings of walking distances surrounding your site, rendering (and labeling) important overall features of Cambridgeport/East Cambridge, (see sample).

b) Existing Conditions Plan: This plan should indicate in detail the current situation on the site. Indicate circulation types and routes, land uses and districts, key landmarks, activities, vegetation, views, etc. Remember to properly label important features and observations (see sample).

c) Opportunities/Constraints Plan: This plan should be your response to the existing conditions plan – not a design response, but the potential opportunities and constraints that come out of your analysis. At minimum, it should indicate the “envelope” of where you intend to intervene, vegetation patches, unique site features, site entries/exits, major/minor views, which uses are linked, etc. (see sample).

3) Design Program.

Produce a 1 page (max.) written design program. The design program is a clearly organized set of written statements and tables, articulating the objectives of your design and the site development potential. The written statement is one where the designer clearly articulates how he/she expects a certain space to perform. This statement is based on your site analysis and should contain the set of goals that you have formulated. It should include objectives for spaces/structures location, size, form, activities and quality of experience. For example:

“Maintain natural surface drainage and riparian vegetation. Use area for trails and recreation. Design should respond to natural conditions, be low-key and maintain rustic appearance.”

The tables should include a list and description of the different facilities/ amenities/structures, their specific square footage or acreage, their number, ideal location and design considerations. For example:

FACILITY	SIZE	NUMBER	LOCATION	CONSIDERATIONS
PARKING	2500 s.f.	15	EAST ACCESS TO AMENITIES	50% OF PKG LOT SHALL BE IN SHADE
RECREATION BUILDING	1500 s.f.	1	NEAR SPORT AREA	CONCESSIONS, RESTROOMS
TOT LOT	500 s.f.	1	NEAR LARGE TREES	SEATING AREAS FOR ADULT SUPERVISION
...				
ETC.				

References:

Harris and Dines. *Time Saver Standards For Landscape Architecture*. New York: McGraw Hill, 1988.

De Chiara, Joseph. *Time Saver Standards For Residential Development*. New York: McGraw Hill, 1984.

4) Concept Plan.

Drawing upon the rendering exercises, the graphic reader and the landscape plans we passed around in class (in books), prepare a diagrammatic plan showing your suggested design scheme. Be sure to render your plan using appropriate colors,

shades, textures, etc., label all relevant spaces and features (type), show major paths and trails, important visual connections, etc. This plan should be simple enough to convey the major ideas, without too much detail (see sample).

5) Design.

Refine your concept plan into a detailed site plan. Draw 2 site sections (typically, one in perpendicular directions, i.e. a cross-section and a longitudinal section). Illustrate impressions of your space through a couple of vignettes (3D sketches or photo collages of how you see your open space).

The whole package should be assembled into two 36" x 24" panels which should be laid out on your favorite layout program (Powerpoint, InDesign, etc):

1) Analysis: a 'story board' of your process, including items 1-3 above.

2) Design: a summary of your design, including items 4-5 above.

You should include short bits of text to explain your thoughts and ideas on the two panels. Panels should be landscape orientation and include a title on each panel, legends, scales and north arrows.

Note: Each layer of analysis and information in the design and decision-making process has to be supported by a continuity of graphic presentation. That is, the panels should speak for themselves.

Note: the scale of your drawings will depend on the size/type of open space you design, in order to fit them on the paper size (we can help determine what scale you should be working at).

- Deliverables: Two 36"x 24" panels, one each for:
- Analysis: Any relevant site observations.
 - Context Plan.
 - Existing Conditions Plan.
 - Opportunities/Constraints Plan.
 - Design Program (abbreviated, if necessary).
 - Other information about your decision-making process.
 - Design:
 - Concept Plan.
 - Detailed Site Plan.
 - Two (2) site sections.
 - Vignettes.
 - Design rationale (text).