



**February 2, 2023**

**To the Honorable, the City Council,**

### **Introduction**

After over a decade of planning, design, and construction, the Foundry at 101 Rogers Street opened its doors to the public in 2022. In 2015, the City and the CRA adopted a Demonstration Project to execute a public-private partnership to create a sustainable operational model to steward the Foundry as a community asset. After an extensive community planning process, the CRA crafted a mission for the building focused on STEAM programming designed to as a multi-generational asset for the City.

**Mission:** *The Foundry is an adaptive reuse project to build a self-sustaining center for creativity and collaboration for the Cambridge community. At the intersection of the Kendall Square Innovation District and the East Cambridge neighborhood, the Foundry building provides space and programs for the visual and performing arts, entrepreneurship, technology, and workforce education within its historic, industrial setting. The Foundry facilitates access for residents, especially underrepresented communities and adjacent neighborhoods, to the dynamic working and learning environment of Kendall Square.*

Designed by Cambridge Seven Associates, with W.T. Rich as the general contractor, the renovation of this City-owned building broke ground in 2020 with full occupancy beginning in September of this year. The \$46 million project transformed the historic landmark into a contemporary facility filled with performance spaces, maker spaces, studios, office spaces, and kitchen facilities designed to facilitate collaboration across creativity and innovation. The building operations are supported primarily through office space on the top two floors with the full ground floor dedicated to community use. The Foundry has already hosted dozens of dance classes, various performances, regular STEM education programs, mixed media art workshops, cooking classes, and community meetings of all sizes.

### **Project Background**

The Foundry building is a brick and timber frame industrial building, built in 1890 as a factory to produce iron steam pump parts as part of the Knowles Pump Factory Complex. Early in its history, the building also played an important role in the women's labor movement as women workers in the building successfully fought to improve their working conditions. Since the end of its role in steam pump production, the Foundry building has served as a taxi barn, and an auto repair shop. In the early 1980's the building was modified into a three-story office building. The City acquired the property in 2012 as part of a community benefit commitment from Alexandria Real Estate. The Foundry building was landmarked by the City Council in 2019.

The Foundry is a Demonstration Project designed to model a unique form of public private partnership to redevelop a property and deliver a public asset that would not have been possible through private or public efforts alone. The City of Cambridge owns the building and led the renovation effort, while the CRA led the community planning process to define the project goals and conceptual design, and holds a master lease to operate the site.

The full renovation required extensive interior demolition and environmental remediation. A new steel structural system was laced into wood beam structure, creating three new floors within the brick

envelop. The ground floor entry opens up into a shared atrium area providing views of the historic structure. A three-story addition replaced a structurally compromised section of the old structure and now houses most of the modern mechanical functions of the building. The building meets the City’s sustainability goals with a fully electric HVAC system and an extensive solar array on the roof. The completed renovation includes nearly 50,000 SF of commercial space, over half of which is community or shared space. The program within the community space includes:

- Multi-purpose rooms for community meetings and other programs 2,000 SF
- Maker spaces for wood, jewelry, fabric arts, and digital fabrication 3,700 SF
- Multi-use performance space 2,100 SF
- Dance/Fitness/Rehearsal Room 1,000 SF
- Artist Studios 2,100 SF
- Demonstration Kitchen 340 SF
- Café and catering kitchen 490 SF
- Community Hall & Gallery 6,000 SF
- Art Nook featuring Elisa Hamilton’s *Jukebox* 175 SF

The CRA selected the Foundry Consortium, assembled by Lemelson-MIT and Lesley University, as the building operator through an RFP process. The CRA supported the creation of the Foundry Consortium as an independent 501c3 to curate the arts and education community spaces on the ground floor and to manage the entire building including the office spaces upstairs. The Consortium has hired TSNE, a property management organization to lead the building maintenance responsibilities. The formation of a nonprofit operator allows the CRA to steward the facility and its operating mission while delegating day-to-day management and programmatic decisions for the community space – allowing the creators, innovators, and educators within the community spaces to do their work independently. The CRA also facilitates the Foundry Advisory Committee to help oversee the execution of the community’s vision for the building and guide its programmatic evolution in the years to come.

**Commercial Tenants**

The operating model provides financial support for the management of the building and promotion of community programs primarily through revenues generated by commercial office tenants on the upper floors. The operating budget for the first fiscal year is just over \$1.2 million. The office tenants, including one ‘below market’ office space, also utilize and collaborate with the community spaces below. Three office tenants moved in over the summer, and one office suite remains vacant at this time.

**Breakthrough Greater Boston – Office Suite 2A**

Breakthrough Greater Boston’s mission is to inspire excitement for learning, create paths to and through college and promote careers in education. The organization prepares low-income students for college and for life while also training the next generation of teachers through their Students Teaching Students model. Founded by MacArthur Genius Award winner Angela Duckworth in 1992 in Cambridge, Breakthrough Greater Boston now operates in Cambridge, Boston, and Somerville serving over 750 students while training 150 teaching fellows. Breakthrough Greater Boston space is rented at below market rate encapsulating the mission of the Foundry.

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### **Deep Genomics – Office Suite 2B**

Founded by Brendan Frey in 2015, Deep Genomics is a biotechnology company that builds proprietary artificial intelligence (AI) and uses it to discover new ways to correct the effects of genetic mutations and develop personalized therapies for individuals with rare Mendelian and complex disease.

### **Break Through Cancer – Office Suite 3B**

Founded in February 2021, Break Through Cancer's initial focus is on four intractable cancers. These cancers all share common features – a low five-year survival rates, little to no early detection, and a lack of recent progress or innovation in treatment. These cancers include Glioblastoma, Ovarian cancer, Pancreatic cancer and Acute Myelogenous Leukemia (AML).

### ***Café Tenant***

**Vester** – Originally opened on Ames Street in 2018, Vester opened it's second location in South Boston in late 2022 and now its third location on the first floor of the Foundry in January 2023. Vester serves coffee, pastries, and lunch for both tenants and the public out of the café space just inside the main entry of the Foundry. Started by Boston native Nicole Liu, Vester is female and minority owned and operated.

### ***Performance and Usage Data***

The Foundry Consortium initiated some 'soft launch' programs in the building in September, before organizing a Grand Opening on October 8th. Since those events, the Consortium has focused on booking public and private activities within the building across the broad spectrum of community activities that the building was designed for. The Consortium has created a website that describes the various spaces available and an online portal for inquiring about reservations. The Consortium offers a sliding scale for room reservations as well as membership opportunities to facilitate access to the maker studio areas. Additionally, the office tenants in the Foundry have also utilized the ground floor spaces on occasion. The Consortium must balance the goal to maximize community access to the space and hosting high quality programs with the need to bring in some income from the ground floor uses. Below are a series of data points from the inaugural three months of operation last year:

#### **Reservations**

- The Foundry received over 100 reservations in the last quarter of 2022. The majority of these were for weekly programs, (up to 10 programming slots)
- 64 out of 104 program requests required sliding scale pricing
- Only 10% of reservation requests have come from commercial/corporate entities

#### **Use Hours**

- The Foundry continues to expand its hours until it reaches predicted capacity of 700 use hours per month
  - The STEAM set (theatre) and Shop 6 (dance studio) have had the most use so far with the community hall the least utilized
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**Revenue**

- Since the grand opening, program reservations have more than doubled each month, from \$621 in October to \$6,777 in November, to \$15,983 in December
- Revenue is projected to level off in March at \$33,000 per month

**Community Engagement**

- The Foundry has hosted over 60 community organizations catering to different age groups and cultural backgrounds
- Over 5,000 people have engaged with the Foundry since opening in October
- Numerous public events have taken place since opening, most recently for Lunar New Year

It is anticipated that reservations for space will pick-up to the designed capacities over the course of 2023. It is also expected that the Foundry will constantly evolve to meet the needs of program providers and community interests in Foundry activities, and thus the design, layout and operations of the workshop spaces will adapt to meet those demands. As a Demonstration Project it was expected that the operating model would provide lessons to the City, the CRA, and other jurisdictions to inform related projects in the future.

Best regards,



Thomas L. Evans  
Executive Director