



MassDOT Turnpike Air Rights Parcels #12-15
CAC Working Meeting #15
Thursday, December 4, 2014, 6:00 p.m.
Location: St. Cecilia's Parish Hall

CAC Attendees:

Brandon Beatty, Back Bay Resident
Kathleen Brill, Fenway Civic Association (FCA)
Fritz Casselman, Neighborhood Association of the Back Bay (NABB)
Brian Doherty, Building and Construction Trades Council of the Metropolitan District
David Gamble, Boston Society of Architects
Valerie Hunt, Fenway Neighborhood Resident
David Lapin, Community Music Center
Meg Mainzer-Cohen, Back Bay Association
Teri Malo, Fenway Studios
Barbara Simons, Berklee Task Force
Gil Strickler, St. Cecilia's Parish
Steve Wolf, Fenway Community Development Corporation (FCDC)

Ex-Officio Attendees:

Massachusetts State Representative Jay Livingstone
Mohona Siddique, Office of Boston City Councilor Josh Zakim

City of Boston Attendees:

Shaina Aubourg, Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services
Jonathan Greeley, BRA
Ellen Lohe, BRA
Lauren Shurtleff, BRA

State of Massachusetts Attendees:

Joe Cheever, MBTA
Mark Gravallese, MassDOT
Mary Runkel, MBTA
H.P. James, MassDOT
Drew Leff, Stantec Consulting
Carla Moynihan, Robinson & Cole
Jeffrey Simon, MassDOT
Bill Tuttle, MassDOT
Gretchen Von Grossman, MBTA

Members of the Public:

Randall Albright, Back Bay Resident
Alleyn Alie, Tishman/AECOM
Emily Ashby, Utile
Jonathan Berk, Resident
Kenan Bigby, Trinity Financial

Kelly Brilliant, The Fenway Alliance
Kwesi Budu-Arthur, Cambridge Seven Associates
Elizabeth Christoferetti, Utile
Mirreile Clapp, Back Bay Resident
Greg Cola, The Peebles Corporation
John Copley, Copley Wolff Design Group
Eric Daniel, Fenway Resident
Tawan Davis, The Peebles Corporation
Paul DeSouda, Resident of 360 Newbury
Patricia Dubuque, NABB
Michael Epp, Kleinfelder
Richard Giordano, FCDC
Brian Gregory, Transit Advocate
Andrew Hall, Back Bay Resident
Grace Holley, FCDC
Tim Horn, FCA
Gary Johnson, Cambridge Seven Associates
Howard Kassler, NABB
Jim Keefe, Trinity Financial
Curtis Kemeny, Boston Residential Group
Matt Kiefer, Goulston & Storrs
Neil Kollios, HDR
Ruth Krieger, HDR
Marc Laderman, Fenway Resident
Elliott Laffer, NABB
Nancy Ludwig, Icon Architecture
Blake Middleton, Handel Architects
Myron Miller, NABB
Dave Newman, The Strategy Group
Tom Palmer, Tom Palmer Communications
Amelia Patt, The Peebles Corporation
Msrk Pelletier, STV
Richard Pien, Boston Ward Five Committee
Sue Prindle, NABB
Steven Riggs, Berklee College of Music
Nick Rubino, AECOM
Tina Schaefer, Resident of 360 Newbury
Susan Shafer, NABB
Cynthia Smith, Halvorson Design
Carolyn Spicer, McDermott Ventures
Herman Tomer, Landmark Properties
Bill Whitney, Berklee College of Music
Jacqueline Yessian, NABB

Meeting Summary

On Thursday, December 4th, 2014, the fifteenth working session of the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) Turnpike Air Rights Parcels 12 – 15 Citizens Advisory

Committee (CAC) was called to order at approximately 6:00 p.m. in the St. Cecilia's Parish Hall by Jonathan Greeley, BRA Planner.

Jonathan welcomed everyone and explained that the meeting would provide an opportunity to further explore the proposals for Parcel 13 (all of which are available on the BRA's project website: <http://www.tinyurl.com/Parcels12-15>) presented by Trinity Financial, The Peebles Corporation, and Boston Residential Group at the previous CAC working session. In response to written questions from the CAC, he stated that Parcel 13 was subject to the underlying zoning, which allows Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for parcels over an acre in size. It has been BRA policy that any Turnpike Air Rights Parcel proposal seeking zoning relief would pursue a PDA, which would require approval by the BRA Board and the Boston Zoning Commission at separate public hearings. He also stated that there are no separate tax policies for air rights development. Any tax exemptions would have to be advocated for by the proponent related to potential non-profit ownership.

Jonathan then introduced Bill Tuttle, Director of Projects in the Office of Real Estate and Asset Development at MassDOT, to talk about station design and contract details. Bill noted that MassDOT is comfortable with the qualifications of all three of the teams' contracted station designers. He reiterated that any development would be subject to local taxation and regulation to the extent that the lessor is subject. In response to an inquiry from Kathleen Brill, FCA, Bill also noted that the project's phasing is not yet fixed.

Gil Strickler, St. Cecilia's Parish, inquired further about schedule, noting that each developer had presented a different time table. Gretchen Von Grossman, MBTA, replied that while the schedule varies from project to project, the MBTA has worked with developers to minimize design complications and streamline to what is typically a one-year design process. Bill added that the developers had presented conceptual schedules, noting that these would be worked out in more detail as the design progressed. Bill also alerted the assembled group that the MassDOT deadline for public comment is December 15th (comments can be emailed to MassDOT.RE@dot.state.ma.us). Lauren Shurtleff, BRA, noted that executive summaries had been received from Trinity Financial and the Boston Residential Group. Subsequent to the CAC meeting, The Peebles Corporation submitted their project summary.

CAC Co-Chair Fritz Casselman, Neighborhood Association of Back Bay, turned the meeting over to the first proponent. Each proponent was given 5 minutes to present an overview of their development proposal, followed by 5 minutes to answer any questions that had arisen during the previous meeting. A summary of the presentations and resulting Q&A discussions follows.

The Peebles Corporation: The Viola

Tawan Davis, The Peebles Corporation, began by highlighting Peebles' experience in other markets and their excitement to be in Boston. Amelia Patt, The Peebles Corporation, then addressed questions raised by the CAC at the last working session, noting that the garden terraces adjacent to 360 Newbury are not publicly accessible, but that the project creates a covered plaza on Massachusetts Avenue to protect commuters from the elements. This plaza extends into an indoor public space that will be programmed according to community need. The proposal's program will look to focus on local retail and restaurants. The boutique hotel will include a publicly accessible 7,250 square foot roof garden. There would be no additional curb cuts for the hotel. Tawan Davis concluded with an overview of his team's strengths: their

experience delivering quality engineering on top of complex infrastructure, as well as their long-term financing ability.

Boston Residential Group: Boylston Place

Curtis Kemeny, Boston Residential Group (BRG), gave an overview of the project: a mixed-use transit-oriented demand (TDM) project with retail, hotel, and student housing. He noted extensive public access to the roof space, active retail connections between Newbury Street and Boylston Street, and integrating the MBTA station with the realities of 360 Newbury. He also spoke about the firm's experience on air rights parcels in Boston, noting BRG's advisory role for the Simon tower project at Copley Place. He articulated BRG's goal to reclaim the last block of Boylston and noted the firm's experience in and commitment to Boston. He also ran through his experienced project team and indicated a total development cost of \$407 million.

Trinity Financial: The Boylston

Kenan Bigby, Trinity Financial, emphasized the firm's experience partnering with MassDOT and the MBTA to execute complex projects, including the following: The Carruth (Dorchester), Avenir (Bulfinch Triangle), and One Canal (Bulfinch Triangle). They have a well-capitalized financial partner who shares their aggressive timeline for this project. He noted the pedestrian and public realm focus, along with the strong balance of uses, of this project. Nancy Ludwig, Icon Architecture, spoke about the design goals: maximizing public space and marking the corner of Boylston Street and Massachusetts Avenue with a sculptural element and contemporary architecture. She also discussed the inclusion of local retail and noted that the tower would not create additional shadow (based on existing and previously approved projects).

CAC Q&A

- David Lapin, Community Music Center, asked if The Peebles Corporation, coming from outside of the Boston market, had considered the initial strategic report of the development committee – A Civic Vision for Turnpike Air Rights– noting that their proposal resembles the prior proposal from Trinity that was rejected in 2012. He also commented that the building's lack of height made it feel massive. Blake Middleton, Handel Architects, replied that the Civic Vision document had been the team's main entry into understanding the community's desires. He also noted that the façade, with its articulated material choices and curve, was intended to break down the massing, and could be further studied going forward.
- Fritz Casselman asked for more information about the cantilever in the Peebles proposal, noting that some were in favor and others were not. Blake Middleton explained that the intent was to create an urban porch that would frame the site – a key threshold – while acknowledging 360 Newbury.
- Kathleen Brill asked whether the curb cut for the residential entrance in the Peebles proposal could be moved to the public alley. Blake responded that the alley is a very complex and busy site, but that they would be willing to work on reconfiguring the design to meet both service and residential needs.
- Brandon Beatty, Resident of Back Bay, asked for the name of Peebles' local development partner. Tawan Davis, Peebles, replied that he had a short-list of well-regarded partners and hoped to make a decision and disclose this information soon. In further response to Brandon regarding the Peebles consultant team, Tawan noted that Peebles has worked on 1-2 deals with McNamara/Salvia, 3 with Handel, and 1 with John Moriarty & Associates. It would be their first time working with Utile and HDR.

- Meg Mainzer-Cohen, CAC Co-Chair and Back Bay Association, asked about BRG's decision to include unaffiliated dorm space in their proposal. Curtis responded that the idea was driven by the market demand for student housing, and that a program that was not parking intensive was a smart response to a constrained site. He also noted that BRG would happily make a deal with a nearby university, having already spoken to interested institutions such as BU and Northeastern. In response to Barbara Simons, Berklee Task Force, Curtis affirmed that BRG is open to many different types of operation arrangements.
- Kathleen Brill asked each team about their schedule. Kenan Bigby commented that Trinity's fast schedule was based on experience on similar projects, but emphasized that they were not looking to speed through the process and looked forward to engaging with the community. Greg Cola, The Peebles Corporation, confirmed that the firm had conferred with MassDOT and could advance their schedule 18-24 months. Curtis Kemeny, BRG, noted a completion date goal of 2020.
- Brandon Beatty asked all three developers why they wanted to undertake such a complex project.
 - Tawan Davis, The Peebles Corporation, gave three reasons: the firm is looking to enter the Boston market, specializes in urban infill projects in places like the Back Bay, and focuses on public-private partnerships.
 - Curtis Kemeny, BRG, spoke about his dedication to the neighborhood, his intimate involvement with the site through 360 Newbury, and his commitment to improving the block and reconnecting the neighborhood.
 - Kenan Bigby, Trinity Financial, noted the firm's commitment to Boston and focus on transforming underutilized parcels by tackling complex sites to create a long-lasting positive impact.
- Steve Wolf, FCDC, asked each firm to clarify their position on affordable housing.
 - Curtis Kemeny, BRG, noted that for student housing, there is a linkage requirement, not an affordable housing-specific requirement, but affirmed that BRG would do whatever necessary to accommodate these requirements.
 - Kenan Bigby, Trinity Financial, spoke about Trinity's longstanding commitment to affordability, noting that they would explore options including on-site development or partnering with local CDCs.
 - Tawan Davis, The Peebles Corporation, spoke about Peebles' intention to be in Boston long-term and create jobs, noting that affordable housing is a priority locally and nationally. He expressed that Peebles would explore different solutions – both on-site and off – to satisfy the requirement.
- Gil Strickler asked each firm to describe their public realm and public amenities approach.
 - John Copley, Copley Wolff Design Group, commented on Trinity Financial's public plaza and noted that having trees in a plaza above the Turnpike is possible.
 - Tawan Davis, The Peebles Corporation, explained that the concept is to create indoor and outdoor public spaces that maximize use to the public in all seasons. He noted that management of these spaces would be decided going forward.
 - Curtis Kemeny, BRG, noted the proposal's significant investment in the MBTA, as well as the goal to activate a retail and pedestrian connection between Newbury and Boylston streets. Gary Johnson, Cambridge Seven Associates, added that hotels add public amenities to the neighborhood.

- Bill Tuttle clarified that MassDOT would pay for the majority of station costs; the selected developer would be responsible for the entrances.
- Meg Mainzer-Cohen brought up the Back Bay Architectural Commission and their potential comments and input. Jonathan Greeley reiterated that the CAC's goal is to choose a development team that can work with the wide range of stakeholders and public agencies involved to successfully deliver a feasible project – noting the potential for design concepts to change based on additional input. He noted that the BRA has been in conversation with William Young of the BBAC and that he would continue to be incorporated as the evaluation process moves ahead.

Public Questions and Comments

- Howard Kassler, NABB, noted the organization's desire to see this parcel built, but expressed dissatisfaction with any proposal exceeding the 1985 zoning restriction of 120 feet. He also noted their strong support for any affordable housing component to be built on-site.
- Marc Laderman, Fenway Resident, asked whether extending the length of the Prudential Center tunnel would have any negative impact in terms of fire suppression, ventilation, etc. that would require upgrades. Bill Tuttle, MassDOT, responded that the feasibility study done in preparation for the RFP indicated that no upgrade was necessary, but that they would continue to evaluate those issues as the project advanced through the City and State permitting process.
- Kelly Brilliant, Fenway Alliance, asked whether any of the proposals had shadow impacts on the Fenway Studios, and expressed her support for student housing. All three development teams responded that there were no shadow impacts on that location.

CAC Discussion

Fritz Casselman reminded the group of the tight schedule for making a decision and encouraged developers to send out written submissions that address any outlying questions or concerns. He then asked each CAC member to indicate their position thus far, acknowledging that members not have had the opportunity to fully discuss the proposals with their constituencies.

- Fritz Casselman noted that the Peebles proposal was attractive due to its compliance with the existing height and expressed the appeal of a developer new to Boston. He also mentioned that BRG's dorm proposal seemed uncertain from an operational standpoint, but that it was a good idea in terms of reducing housing pressure in the neighborhood.
- Valerie Hunt, Fenway Neighborhood Resident, countered that she appreciated a taller proposal and was in favor of Trinity's approach. She commented that she worried about mass of Peebles' proposal, especially in light of very bulky projects such as the Mandarin Hotel further down Boylston Street. She also noted her concern about the dorm and its management, but supported additional housing.
- Barbara Simons noted she was concerned about height, especially given the towers planned for the other side of Boylston Street on Parcel 15 and at the Berklee College of Music. However, she expressed support for BRG's glass drum architecture at the corner of Massachusetts Avenue and Boylston Street.
- David Lapin commented that a trade-off between height and mass is the crux of this debate. He also noted a pressing community need for a performance space like the one proposed by Peebles.
- Brandon Beatty reminded the group that the design will likely change and that the CAC's decision should be based on picking the best team. He noted that he was impressed by Peebles' experience in other markets and liked the idea of a new developer in the city.

- David Gamble, BSA, commented that height is not always bad – often what is more key is the treatment of the ground level. He reminded the group that this is a gateway site, and that selecting a team is about more than just feasibility – the site needs spectacular architecture. He noted the importance of public space being distributed and applauded Peebles for breaking down their massing.
- Teri Malo, Fenway Studios, noted that her main concern was how the design will accommodate the public, suggesting a need for greater volume and a large plaza. She also commented that she has no opposition to height.
- Kathleen Brill reiterated that the CAC should be selecting a team, and expressed her appreciation for the Peebles proposal staying within the current zoning height. She also complimented their iconic station entrance and public performance space. She also commented that the BRG student housing proposal would solve a huge issue in the area and would put no demands on the existing housing stock. She noted that she liked the glass drum and was not worried about height on this parcel, but was somewhat concerned about setting a precedent of allowing additional height above the 120' zoning limit.
- Brian Doherty, Building and Construction Trades Council of the Metropolitan District, commented that all three firms should reach out to construction and other labor worker groups – a priority in selecting a developer should be thinking about economic and job growth in particular.
- Massachusetts State Representative Jay Livingstone noted that the Peebles proposal would likely face the least struggle within the neighborhood because of its zoning compliant height and expressed that it would be positive to have a new developer in the market.
- Steve Wolf commented that he was not yet ready to make a decision. He appreciated Trinity's plaza; considered Peebles' urban design, with its broken down mass, to be the most convincing; and thinks BRG's student housing serves a need.
- Gil Strickler noted that all three proposals take thoughtful approaches to 360 Newbury. He commented that the view of the Peebles proposal was quite nice and that he didn't think the project was too bulky, given the generous sidewalk width.
- Meg Mainzer-Cohen commented that she liked BRG's glass drum and believed the dorm would be a huge benefit to the community. She also expressed support for the Peebles' curved design, community space, and the view from Newbury Street. She agreed that having a new developer in the city would be a good thing. She also spoke appreciatively of Trinity's experience with the MBTA, but wondered if the corner plaza was the best approach. She also asked for shadow studies to examine the impact of a tower on Newbury Street.

Jonathan then closed the meeting, noting that the group would reconvene in one week for the next CAC meeting, scheduled for December 11th. He also reminded the group that all project documents can be found on the BRA's project website: <http://www.tinyurl.com/Parcels12-15>. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:00 p.m.