Hi Phil, A few comments on the 1000 Boylston project and meeting last night (2/28). Thank you for running a good meeting and keeping the speakers brief and focused. (I spoke with you briefly after the meeting.) I live at Church Park Apartments, opposite the Christian Science Complex on Mass. Ave., and I walk on this section of Boylston several times a week, if not daily at times.

In general, I think the project is a positive improvement to the area.

* The height and bulk seem fine for that side of Boylston Street, especially with the addition of the 1 Dalton Street tower.
* The wide sidewalk and setback of the two towers will make walking along Boylston Street pleasant. In winter, neither side of the Boylston St. sidewalks over the Turnpike is shoveled, making walking difficult.
* A speaker’s comment last night about the loss of green space mystified me. The small park behind St. Cecilia’s Church is not used (and not pleasant!), and I do not see this as a loss. I’m not sure how the developer could provide street-level open green space in the plans (nor does Berklee plan to provide green space, which did not seem to be a problem in their proposal for the Crossroads project), nor would I want to sit in a park right next to the car traffic in Boylston St.

 Concerns:

* Affordable housing: I think affordable units need to be incorporated into the site to keep our neighborhood diverse. The Back Bay and adjacent areas of the South End and the East Fenway/Symphony neighborhoods do not seem to have available land for building affordable housing.
* Additional residential traffic: I do not own a car and walk or take public transportation. However, I assume that most residents in the 1000 Boylston complex will use their own cars for transportation (and also true for 1 Dalton, 30 Dalton, and the Parcel 13 buildings). While the development team emphasized that this traffic would be during morning and evening rush hours, that is exactly the time when traffic on Mass. Ave. and Boylston St. is in gridlock. Also, many Sundays have special events that close traffic on Boylston St. or Copley Square, also causing gridlock in the area – and presumably making use of their cars difficult for residents. Because both new Dalton St. projects use Dalton St., where the parking access will be located, means that Dalton will also be gridlocked at times because there seems to be no way to widen Dalton to accommodate the additional traffic.
* Impact of wind: Boylston St. tends not to be as windy as some other streets in the area, except for the openings over the Turnpike. Setting the two towers on a platform and back from the street would seem helpful. I would like to see more information on the impact of wind, anticipating (if possible) the Parcel 13 building on the other side of Boylston and the lower Berkley Crossroads tower.
* Shadows: I understood Back Bay neighbors’ concerns about shadows in their neighborhood and would like to see more information. Dalton Street is already in shadow most of the time and thus there would seem to be little impact there.
* Economic viability of the project: I do wonder about more “luxury” housing, both rental and condo, coming on the market in my area, with the recent Exeter St. Prudential building, the opening of both Dalton Street projects, and the proposed Parcel 13 buildings (which presumably will be completed before or at about the same time as 1000 Boylston St.). Also, will shoppers come to this section of Boylston, close to but still not contingent to the shopping areas of upper Newbury St. and the Prudential complex?
* Trees and plantings: It was mentioned last night that tree-planting over the Turnpike is a problem. Also, trees on busy streets do not seem to do well in our neighborhood. Perhaps the developer can design long planters along the curb, to add greenery and color while also making walking along the sidewalk more pleasant. The plantings on the Boylston St. divider are always nice to look at, and the1000 Boylston plantings could complement those.

 I look forward to more meetings with the developer. Best, Steve

Steve Csipke 