Urban Renewal: Park Plaza

June 30, 2021
Simultaneous Cantonese and Mandarin interpretation service is being provided for this meeting.

To switch to the Cantonese and Mandarin audio channel, please select "interpretation' located at the bottom of your screen.

For the Mandarin audio channel, please select “Chinese”.

For the Cantonese audio channel, please select “German”.

Language Interpretation Services
BPDA’s Covid-19 Response

• The BPDA paused the public review process for all development projects and planning initiatives in March as a result of the Covid-19 public health crisis.

• The BPDA resumed public meetings virtually for Article 80 development projects on a pilot-basis at the end of June, using the Zoom platform.

• For more information on the BPDA’s Covid-19 Response, please visit the following link: https://bit.ly/BPDACovid-19
Zoom Tips

Here are some tips on using Zoom for first-time users. Your controls should be available at the bottom of the screen. Clicking on these symbols activates different features:

- **Mute/unmute**
  you will remain muted until a host gives you access
  *If you dialed in from your phone, dial *6 to mute/unmute yourself*

- **Turn video on/off**
  your video will remain off until a host gives you access

- **Q & A**
  may be used to provide written questions and comments during the presentation and question and answer session

- **Raise Hand**
  ask for audio/video permission at the end of presentation
  *If you dialed in from your phone, dial *9 to raise your hand*
Meeting Recording

The BPDA will be recording this meeting and posting it on BPDA’s webpage for those who are unable to attend the Zoom meeting live. Please note, it is possible that participants may be recording the meeting with their phone cameras or other devices. If you do not wish to be recorded during the meeting, please ensure that your microphone and camera are off.
Meeting Format

During the BPDA’s presentation, all microphones will be muted.
After the presentation is over, please raise your hand and we will take your questions orally in the order that hands were raised.

**Raise Hand**
ask for audio/video permission at the end of presentation
*If you dialed in from your phone, dial *9 to raise your hand*
Virtual Meeting Etiquette

- Please be respectful of one another.
- Participants will be muted during the presentation to avoid background noise.
- We ask that participants limit their questions and comments to two minutes so that all may participate in the discussion.
- During Q & A session, please wait until all attendees have had the opportunity to ask a question before asking a second question/comment.

Powerpoint
http://www.bostonplans.org/planning/urban-renewal/overview
Panelists

- Chris Breen
  Urban Renewal Manager
- Mary Knasas
  Downtown Planner
- Kelly Sherman
  BPDA Planner
- Arreen Andrew
  Community Engagement Manager
- Melissa Lo
  Cantonese Interpreter
- Terry Yin
  Mandarin Interpreter
- Electeds/Press
- BPDA Staff
Urban Renewal Area Agenda

1. Introduction
2. Review: Initial Community Process
3. Urban Renewal Basics
4. Potential Sunset of Park Plaza
5. Question and Answer
Introduction
Who am I?

Christopher Breen, Urban Renewal Manager

Under direction of the Deputy Chief of Staff, Christopher manages projects and coordinate with interdepartmental staff on research and accountability measure related to Urban Renewal, including the oversight of Land Disposition Agreements (LDA's), the disposition of BRA-owned land, and other matters involving BRA assets. Christopher also works on special projects, as assigned.
My Background
My Background:
My Background:
How Urban Renewal Affected My Life:
Why Are We Here?
Dear Director Golden,

Thank you for the series of productive meetings that the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA) has had with the City Council throughout the Urban Renewal extension process. We very much appreciate your willingness to work more closely with us and to be more transparent with the Council and with the residents of Boston.

Per our agreement of March 23, 2016, the City Council approved a six-year extension to fourteen Urban Renewal Zones, with a number of provisos and procedural changes going forward. One such proviso was the BRA’s agreement to appear at a review hearing twice per year to report on progress and planned urban renewal activities. In order to help prepare for a productive
Urban Renewal Community Engagement - Group 1

North Station
Park Plaza
Kittredge Square
Brunswick-King
CBD School Franklin
CBD Boylston Essex
Urban Renewal Community Engagement - Group 2

- Government Center
- Campus High School
- South Station
- South Cove
- Fenway
- Downtown Waterfront Faneuil Hall
Urban Renewal Community Engagement - Group 3

Charlestown

Washington Park

South End

West End
Civic Engagement Goals

• Touch on the historical rationale for Urban Renewal.
• Explain the importance of Urban Renewal Tools to the Agency.
• Show the land use protections in the Urban Renewal Plan and Land Disposition and Regulatory Agreements. (Public Interest)
• Talk about boundary changes, modification to goals and extension/sunsetting conversation.
• Complete the Urban Renewal Action Plan.
02

Review: Community Process

History
Tools
LDA Inventory
BPDA Owned Property Inventory
Changes
Nationally – US Cities

- Housing Act of 1937 - (i.e. Housing Authorities – eminent domain)
- In post-World War America, Immigrants arrive from a destabilized Europe in great numbers as industrialization slows. African Americans continue to move North to escape Jim Crow Era Policy.
- US Financial Institutions are engaging in ‘Redlining’ practices creating a lack of home ownership and investment in many urban communities.
- By 1949, cities begin bleeding white middle-class residents into the suburbs ‘white-flight’. (GI Bill)
- Rise of the automobile and growth of US highway system sends investments into the suburbs
Locally - Boston

• Mayor Curley lowers taxes in neighborhoods and increases the tax rate downtown for businesses (to the highest rate amongst major cities).

• No money for city services in the neighborhoods and no jobs downtown (Red-light District).

• Moody's downgraded Boston's bond rating from A to Baa which is near Junk Level and on the brink of bankruptcy in 1949.
**Eisenhower Amendment for Federal Housing Act**

**Boston's First Urban Renewal Plan: New York Streets**

1949

**Federal Housing Act**

1954

**Boston Redevelopment Authority formed as Successor to BHA**

1957

**North Harvard and Tremont Mason**

1958

**West End**

1962

**Government Center, Downtown Waterfront, Charlestown, Fenway, South Cove, South End, and Washington Park**

1963 - 65

**Central Business Districts (Boylston Essex, School Franklin, South Station) and St. Botolph**

1968

**Brunswick King, Campus High School, Central Business District (Bedford West), Kittredge Square, Park Plaza and Summer Street**

1970 - 73

**Housing and Community Development Act of 1974**

1974

**North Station**

1980
1999: New York Streets Expires
2002: Tremont Mason Street Expires
2005: St. Botolph Expires
2011: North Harvard and Bedford West Expire
2016: LDA’s collected and catalogued
2018: DHCD Letter and Community Process
2021: Urban Renewal Community Process Begins

1994: Whitney Street Expires
2009: Ten Year Extension
2015: Summer Street Expires
2019: Six Year Extension
2021: Urban Renewal Community Process Begins
1949
American Housing Act:
Origin of Urban Renewal
• The Federal Government began to invest great sums of money to redevelop cities that were rapidly declining after World War II. (UR)

• Early Urban Renewal efforts attempted to tackle widespread blight by often using tools to assemble land for infrastructure and public facilities to attract jobs and upper middle-class residents back to cities.

“Five million people are still living in slums and firetraps. Three million families share their home with others”

– President Truman
1950’s - Boston

• From 1950-60 Boston lost 13% of its population (over 100k in 10 years and 250k in 30 years.)

• Loss of 48k jobs in manufacturing & 14k downtown finance jobs. Contributing to an 8% drop in city-wide employment.

• Greater Boston jobs increased by 22%.

• Boston has the lowest median family income of the nation’s largest cities.
• New York Streets (BHA)
• West End
• Whitney Streets
• North Harvard
What was Learned?

- Emotional toll of displacement.
- Lack of voice for community (BRA takes over community process late in the game).
- The over emphasis on 1950’s style high rises for the upper middle class and attracting of commercial/industrial uses back to the city.
- Failed promises for affordable housing and relocation.
1960’s
Ed Logue
Planning with People
Ed Logue

- Learned over time the importance on creating a city fabric that mixed the historic with modern.
- Sought to create cities that were more just & equitable by improving the quality of housing & learning over time how to minimize displacement.
- Believed that the public sector had to shoulder the responsibility of social problems and it was not realistic or appropriate to rely on the private sector for affordable housing.
1970 - Present

23 Urban Renewal Plans Exist in Boston
Urban Renewal Basics
What is an Urban Renewal Plan?

- Goals and Objectives in each area.
- Land Use Restrictions, Height, FAR, Dimensions, Setbacks, Parking, Open Space, Density. *In addition to the Zoning Code compliance, unless in a U-District.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Use</th>
<th>Permitted Uses</th>
<th>Maximum Building Height (in feet)</th>
<th>Maximum Floor Area Ratio</th>
<th>Minimum Parking Spaces</th>
<th>Minimum Access</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A-1</td>
<td>General Business</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3 for each apartment unit</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-2</td>
<td>Residential</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-3</td>
<td>General Office</td>
<td>305</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>600/2</td>
<td>Not from Atlantic Avenue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-4</td>
<td>General Office</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3/8</td>
<td>10' in depth along the sidewalk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-5</td>
<td>General Office</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1/8</td>
<td>10' in depth along Eastern Frontage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-6</td>
<td>General Office</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1/8</td>
<td>10' in depth along Eastern Frontage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-7</td>
<td>General Office</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2/8</td>
<td>10' in depth along Eastern Frontage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-8</td>
<td>Public Open Space</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1/No open parking permitted.
2/No building setbacks permitted along Atlantic Avenue frontage.
3/If transit housing is developed, 3 enclosed parking spaces shall be provided for each 4 guest rooms.
4/In addition, up to 1/2 open parking spaces may be provided upon a demonstration of need.
5/In all cases, the parcel is not disposed of to the New England Telephone & Telegraph Company for an addition to its existing building, the use shall be public open space.
Park Plaza – Goals

- To facilitate the creation of a high density, mixed use community in the heart of the city.
- To facilitate redevelopment of existing garages, obsolete public buildings, and private development opportunities.
- To preserve and enhance historic resources of the area.
- To create improved connections from Chinatown through Back Bay.
- To support expansion of the area’s Institutional and Mixed Uses.
- To increase tax revenue by redeveloping underutilized parcels.
A Land Disposition Agreement is a contract between buyer and seller regarding use of land.

**Example:** (Right) This Land Disposition Agreement allowed the preservation of a nursing home use in the North End.
Urban Renewal Tools

1. Site Assembly
The agreed upon taking of property to accomplish certain public and private development projects.
Property is no longer taken without the agreement of the property owner.

2. Title Clearance
The taking of property to clear title. Important for financing of projects.

3. Vertical Discontinuances
Takings of a city's air rights over public ways to maintain and encourage diversity of building type and design in the city.

Zoning Controls
1. Land Use Controls
Use, FAR, parking and design restrictions specific to each Urban Renewal Disposition Parcel.

2. Urban Renewal Overlay Districts (U Districts)
Special Zoning areas within Urban Renewal Areas.

Housing Affordability Restrictions
Affordability restrictions can be imposed on properties located within urban renewal areas.

Urban renewal tools and the areas in which they are used must be periodically renewed. In Boston, both the Boston City Council and Massachusetts' Department of Housing and Community Development must renew them:

- Last renewed in August 2016
- Up for renewal in April 2022
1. **Unique Real Estate Acquisition Options/Disposition Options**
The City of Boston is limited by City Charter to only acquire property for municipal purpose.

2. **Ability to Negotiate Directly with Tenants (30B Exemption)**
The BPDA can negotiate directly with tenants which allows for a large portfolio of ground leases and direct commercial leases to help achieve greater public good.

3. **Enforcement and Re-Negotiation of Land Disposition Agreements**
LDA restrictions ensure public policy outcomes specific to a property. UR allows us to renegotiate leverage those restrictions as public policy objectives change.

5. **Bonding Authority**
The ability to issue Bonds to acquire and create income restricted housing.

6. **Preservation of Uses and Affordable Housing**
Urban Renewal Regulatory Agreements can help protect specific uses such as Arts and Culture. Allows us a seat at the table when affordability restrictions expire.

7. **Design Guidelines**
Urban Renewal restrictions can preserve structures and or encourage a diversity of building types.

8. **Economic Development**
Ability to acquire a property interest in the context of assisting with Pilot Agreements and or other tax incentive programs.

Urban renewal tools and the areas in which they are used must be periodically renewed. In Boston, both the Boston City Council and Massachusetts' Department of Housing and Community Development must renew them:

- Last renewed in August 2016
- Up for renewal in April 2022
Urban Renewal Action Plan

The City of Boston has issued this action plan to promote the growth and development of communities and provide a framework for the city's initiatives in the areas of urban renewal, revitalization, and economic development.

The plan outlines strategies for improving existing neighborhoods and creating new development opportunities. It includes initiatives for housing, transportation, and public amenities, aiming to enhance the quality of life for residents and attract new businesses to the city.

The plan is designed to be flexible and responsive to changes in the urban environment, allowing for ongoing evaluation and adjustment based on feedback and observed outcomes.

This document provides a comprehensive overview of the current status, goals, and recommendations for future actions, serving as a roadmap for the advancement of the City of Boston's urban renewal efforts.
Urban Renewal on the Zoning Viewer
BPDA Owned Property

This map displays property owned by the BPDA. The BPDA property inventory consists of land parcels ranging from small, unbuildable parcels to larger parcels and sites consisting of contiguous land parcels that are suitable for residential, mixed-use or commercial development. The Real Estate department conducts strategic property dispositions with the goal of maximizing public benefit generated from public land.

See this page for information on the BPDA Property disposition process.

Data keys:
- The fields Address, Zip Code, Lot Size SF, and Built SF pull from the City of Boston Assessing Department database.

BPDA Neighborhoods

Layers
- BPDA Parcels
- Assessing Parcels
- BPDA Neighborhoods
- Zoning Subdistrict
- LDAs
Parcel C-T-1
China Trade Building
Potential Sunset of Park Plaza
Park Plaza Review

Owned Property

Regulatory Restrictions

Actions Taken

Feedback

boston planning & development agency
Expiring Restrictions

• LDA’s expiring in 2022
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Assessing No.</th>
<th>Assessing No. - Individual Units</th>
<th>Urban Renewal Parcel R-77</th>
<th>Street Address</th>
<th>Use</th>
<th>LDA section 302(a)</th>
<th>LDA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>0501170000</td>
<td>Multiple Assessing ID's (Heritage on the Garden)</td>
<td>Arlington/Haddassah subparcel of Parcel 1</td>
<td>300 Boylston Street</td>
<td>R/C</td>
<td>Residential Condo Units</td>
<td>12633/001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>0501185000</td>
<td>Multiple Assessing ID's (Four Seasons Place)</td>
<td>Subparcel of Parcel 1 (Sawyer Parcel) Boston Plaza Hotel Associates Four Seasons Place</td>
<td>200-220 Boylston Street Hadassah / Charles (subparcel of parcel 1) Boston plaza Hotel Associates Four Seasons Place</td>
<td>R/C</td>
<td>Construction of luxury hotel and condominium units. Project shall contain approximately 290 hotel units, 100 residential units, 220 parking spaces, a restaurant, bars, meeting rooms, a ballroom, a health club, and a pool.</td>
<td>9975/127 (Approval of PPS Design Proposal - 38631/210)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>0500105010</td>
<td>Multiple (One Charles Street South)</td>
<td>Park Square Parcel of Parcel 2, (D-1, 43-4-C, 43-4-C-UR)</td>
<td>One Charles Street South (Park Square Parcel of Parcel 2)</td>
<td>R/C</td>
<td>Amended LDA includes air rights, Residential Condo Units</td>
<td>26061/082 30929/244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>0304910020</td>
<td>we control Sliver Parcels around it (Avalon)</td>
<td>45 Stuart Street Residences Project, Avalon Stuart LLC</td>
<td>24-58 LaGrange Street (includes 24-26 La Grange St)</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>Construction of a residential building with various elements ranging from 28-30 stories containing approximately 404 residential rental units on floors 4-30, approximately 198 managed parking spaces on floors 2-5, and a lobby and support space on the ground floor.</td>
<td>49888/189 56408/69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Urban Renewal Plan Area Update**

Below is a summary of the singular BPDA Board Action regarding the Park Plaza Urban Renewal Area that has occurred since the 2016 extension process.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3/2017</td>
<td>License agreement</td>
<td>Request authorization to enter into a three year License Agreement with the Boston Public Library for use and occupancy of 1,800 square feet on the lower level of the China Trade Building located at 2-22 Boylston Street in the Park Plaza Urban Renewal Area.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Property

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Urban Renewal Area</th>
<th>Assessing ID</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Lot Size</th>
<th>Use</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Review</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Park Plaza</td>
<td>0304908000</td>
<td>2 BOYLSTON ST</td>
<td>15390</td>
<td>Commercial</td>
<td>Commercial Lease</td>
<td>China Trade Building. Class B multi-tenant building. Not being considered for redevelopment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Other Considerations
Sunset

• Changes within the Height and FAR of an Urban Renewal Parcel considered Major Modifications and require City Council and DHCD approval.

• 1% of all construction costs are to be dedicated to street furniture and public improvements.
Furthering Planning Goals

- Imagine Boston 2030
- Plan: Downtown
- Stuart Street Study
- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
- Covid 19 Factors
Urban Renewal Tools

• Elevation of Streets, public ways, plazas and property to limit coastal flood inundation.

• Integration of stormwater storage and infrastructure at or below grade.

• Structural reinforcement of subgrade conditions to limit storm surges.

• Alteration of building exteriors for shade and wind mitigation structures.

• Transportation and Mobility
U-Districts
Question and Answer
URBAN RENEWAL PROJECTS

4. Boston – 16 urban renewal plans (most amended to extend expiration date to 2022)
9. Everett – Everett Square Urban Revitalization Plan, 2019
11. Fall River – Downtown Urban Renewal Plan, 2019
12. Fall River – Waterfront Urban Renewal Plan, 2019
14. Fall River – Municipal Airport Urban Renewal Plan (aka Commerce Park), 1997
17. Gardner – Urban Renewal Plan (Downtown), 2011
20. Lawrence – Lawrence TBD Urban Renewal Plan, 2017
23. Lowell – Acre Urban Revitalization and Development Project, 2000
24. Medway – Oak Grove Area Urban Renewal Plan, 2017
27. Salem – Heritage Plaza East Urban Renewal Project, 1965/Salem Downtown Renewal Plan, Major Plan Change in 2012
29. Somerville – Assembly Square Revitalization and Development Project, 1980/Assembly Square Revitalization Plan, 2002 Major Plan Change
30. South Hadley – South Hadley Falls Urban Redevelopment and Renewal Plan, 2020
32. Springfield – 16 Urban Renewal Plan areas (various expiration dates)
33. Westfield – Elm Street Urban Renewal Plan, 2013
35. Worcester – Union Station Urban Revitalization Plan, 1996
Urban Renewal in 2021