



Back Bay / South End Gateway Project
CAC Working Meeting #11
Thursday, April 6, 2017, 8:00 a.m.
Location: Boston Common Hotel & Conference Center

CAC Attendees:

Brendan Ahern, South End Business Alliance
Kenzie Bok, Bay Village Neighborhood Association
Damien Chaviano, Urban Land Institute (ULI)
Jim Cochener, The Salty Pig Restaurant
Jack Fitzgerald, Ellis South End Neighborhood Association
Susan Gilmore, Resident of Back Bay
Elliott Laffer, Neighborhood Association of the Back Bay (NABB)
Meg Mainzer-Cohen, Back Bay Association
Scott Mustard, Saint Botolph Neighborhood Association
Ted Pietras, South End Business Alliance (SEBA)
Jacquelin Yessian, NABB

Ex-Officio Attendees:

Massachusetts State Representative Byron Rushing
Elizabeth Corcoran-Hunt, Office of Representative Byron Rushing

City of Boston Attendees:

David Carlson, BPDA
Tim Davis, BPDA
Catherine McCandless, BPDA
Michael Rooney, BPDA
Lauren Shurtleff, BPDA

Project Team Members:

Mary Marshall, Nutter McClennen & Fish LLP
Dave Newman, The Strategy Group
Melissa Schrock, Boston Properties
Susan Tracy, The Strategy Group

Members of the Public:

Randi Lathrop, RG Lathrop Consulting

Project Website: <http://bit.ly/BBSEGP>

Meeting Summary

On Thursday, April 6, 2017, the eleventh meeting of the Back Bay / South End Gateway Project Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) commenced at approximately 8:10 a.m. with an introduction by Lauren Shurtleff, BPDA Senior Planner, at the Boston Common Hotel & Conference Center at 40 Trinity Place.

Lauren noted that the meeting would function primarily as a CAC discussion session for Boston Properties' Draft Project Impact Report (DPIR) for the Back Bay / South End Gateway Project, which was filed with the BPDA on January 31, 2017. The filing of the DPIR initiated a 75-day comment period, which ends on April 18, 2017. The DPIR is available on the BPDA's website: <http://www.bostonplans.org/getattachment/81985ac5-b24c-47cc-90af-da07b744a897>.

Michael Rooney, BPDA Project Manager, noted that he will send comments received through the DPIR to the CAC as they come in. Michael added that additional comments can be sent to him at Michael.Rooney@boston.gov.

Elliott Laffer, CAC Co-Chair and NABB, began the discussion, starting with the notion of drafting a CAC comment letter. Another CAC member suggested having two drafting sessions, one for the representatives of the residential community and another for the representatives of the business community. The CAC members discussed issues of wind and shadow, affordable housing, streetscape, project phasing, public benefits, and transportation.

During the course of their discussion, Tim Davis, BPDA Housing Policy Manager, provided a brief overview of the City's Inclusionary Development Policy (IDP) as it relates to the project's affordable housing component, which has yet to be determined. He explained the BPDA's preference for locating a project's affordable housing on-site, or at least in the immediate vicinity. He added that the BPDA works closely with developers and evaluates the financials of the project when a developer seeks to locate the affordable units off-site.

CAC Discussion:

- A CAC member expressed approval in regard to the architectural design of the project, and believes that the project fixes issues related to sidewalk grading, connectivity, and the public realm.
- A CAC member expressed concern about the difficulty and expense of developing a project over an active highway and rail lines and the potential for underlying infrastructure issues. The member acknowledged how complicated the project is and thinks the job of the CAC is to find ways to improve the conditions that are there right now.
- A CAC member expressed concern about the existing ventilation systems, potential environmental issues in the area, and security around the station.

- A CAC member would like to see the Boston Transportation Department (BTD) weigh in on the design of the Dartmouth Street streetscape, and believes that the proposed street trees serve an important role in terms of wind prevention and shade. Another CAC member acknowledged that street trees are enjoyable for pedestrians, but stated their concern about narrowing the amount of space for pedestrians. Lauren explained that BTD has been involved and is still reviewing the streetscape design.
- A CAC member expressed concern about the project's plan for affordable housing. Another CAC member explained that they feel that the affordable housing should not be the factor that makes or breaks the feasibility of the project. Another CAC member disagreed and stated their belief that this project is a great opportunity to add more affordable housing to the area, recognizing the pro forma concern, but expressing that affordable housing should be a top priority. An ex-officio member of the CAC stated that they have no problem with off-site affordable housing, as long as it is located Downtown. Melissa Schrock, Boston Properties, explained the complexities related to the ground lease with MassDOT and the MBTA, noting that Boston Properties does not own the land in fee. She explained that the land's value was pre-negotiated with MassDOT several years ago before the additional requirements of the Stuart Street Zoning were enacted, and that additional affordable housing would negatively impact the land value that could be paid to MassDOT and the MBTA. At the end of the lease, Boston Properties will turn the property back over to the State. She continued, noting that the project is offering an enormous amount of public benefits, which has to be balanced against the public benefit of affordable housing.
- In response to a CAC member's question about where the off-site affordable housing could be located, Tim explained that under the old IDP, which this project is subject to, there was no locational boundary for off-site units. The new IDP policy stipulates that the affordable housing must be within a half-mile of the project site.
- In response to a CAC member's concern about the relocation of the MBTA Bus #39 terminus, Lauren replied that the MBTA has stated a preference for the new drop-off to be located on St. James Street, adding that representatives from the MBTA had been in attendance at many of the previous CAC meetings. Some CAC members feel that the new bus location is better for the community and others feel that it is not. Melissa explained that the MBTA believes that the new location will improve level of service and ridership and noted that the MBTA had studied multiple locations. She also added that there is a bus pull-off area on Stuart Street proposed as part of this project, although it is not located on the #39 bus route.
- A CAC member stated that BTD should make a recommendation for how the Dartmouth Street garage exit (which would only exist if the on-ramp to I-90 remains open) would impact pedestrian and bike conditions. Another CAC member asked for more clarity on how the exit would be managed. There is a preference by the CAC for the garage exit not to be on Dartmouth Street, and the group agreed to submit a

statement to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) supporting the on-ramp closure proposed by MassDOT.

- There is a general consensus that the pedestrian bridge over Stuart Street from 40 Trinity Place to 200 Clarendon Street be removed from the Planned Development Area (PDA).
- A CAC member expressed a desire to see the Clarendon Street side of the existing garage screened in some sort of decorative way.

Elliott concluded the meeting by asking the CAC if another discussion would be beneficial. The CAC agreed and decided to meet again on Thursday, April 13 at 8:00 am.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:55 am.