



**Back Bay / South End Gateway Project
CAC Working Meeting #8
Thursday, February 23, 2017, 6:00 p.m.
Location: Boston Common Hotel & Conference Center**

CAC Attendees:

Ann Beha, Boston Society of Architects (BSA)
Kenzie Bok, Bay Village Neighborhood Association
Damien Chaviano, Urban Land Institute (ULI)
Jacquelyn Cox-Crite, Tent City Resident
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
Mayra Negrón-Rivera, Inquilinos Boricuas En Acción
Ted Pietras, South End Business Association (SEBA)

Ex-Officio Attendees:

Massachusetts State Representative Byron Rushing
Elizabeth Corcoran-Hunt, Office of Massachusetts State Representative Byron Rushing
Kate Bell, Office of Boston City Councilor Josh Zakim

City of Boston Attendees:

David Carlson, BPDA
Sam Chambers, Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services
Catherine McCandless, BPDA
Michael Rooney, BPDA
Lauren Shurtleff, BPDA

Project Team Members:

Jim Batchelor, Arrowstreet Architects
Simon Beer, OJB Landscape Architecture
Nicole Benjamin-Ma, VHB
Michael Cantalupa, Boston Properties
Kyle Greaves, VHB
Rafael Pelli, Pelli Clark Pelli Architects
Melissa Schrock, Boston Properties

State of Massachusetts Attendees:

Mark Boyle, MassDOT

Jim Kersten, MassDOT

Members of the Public:

Chris Bergeron, The Boston Guardian

Carol Card, Resident

John Corey, Resident

Deborah Dunmore, Resident

Dan Murphy, Boston Sun

Martyn Roetter, NABB

Bill Rowe, Resident

Andrew Sobel, Resident

Cameron Sperance, Bisnow

Marvin Wool, Resident

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

Meeting Summary

On Thursday, February 23, 2017, the eighth meeting of the Back Bay / South End Gateway Project Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) commenced at 6:10 p.m. with an introduction by Lauren Shurtleff, BPDA Senior Planner, at the Boston Common Hotel & Conference Center at 40 Trinity Place.

Lauren explained that this meeting would include a presentation by the project team to update the CAC on changes made to the project over the past few months. The Draft Project Impact Report (DPIR) was filed on January 31, 2017. The presentation is available on the project website, listed above. She reminded the attendees that the CAC is serving as the Impact Advisory Group (IAG) for the project. She also announced that there is a public meeting for the project scheduled for Wednesday, March 1, 2017.

Lauren then introduced Michael Rooney (Michael R.), BPDA Project Manager, who will be taking over for Chris Tracy as Project Manager for the project. Michael R. stepped forward to discuss the Article 80 Process and the project milestones. A Scoping Determination was issued by the BPDA this past August, which included all of the comment letters, questions, and feedback received in response to the Project Notification Form (PNF). The Proponent then filed their DPIR in January, which responded to the Scoping Determination and provided more in-depth studies on the project. 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>. Additional comments can be sent to Michael R. at Michael.Rooney@boston.gov.

Michael R. then turned it over to Michael Cantalupa (Michael C.), Boston Properties, who thanked everyone for attending. He explained that Boston Properties has been busy

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responding to questions received in response to the PNF, and that the presentation would assume that everyone in attendance has some familiarity with the project. Pelli Clarke Pelli Architects and Arrowstreet Architects would also be present to give updates on the project's design. He explained that the project team would address what was heard during previous meetings, which included the desire for more public open space, to preserve the architectural integrity of Back Bay Station, and to see more detail on the public realm design. Since the last meeting, the Proponent has added an 11,000 sf public plaza on the Clarendon Street side leading to the new entrance to Back Bay Station. In addition, the two-level addition at Station West has been abandoned in favor of a single-story addition. Both of these design evolutions were made in response to public and agency feedback received on the PNF.

Melissa Schrock, Boston Properties, came forward to continue the presentation. She reminded everyone that the project consists of four different buildings: one office building, two residential buildings, and a one-story vertical retail expansion of Back Bay Station. The project will include approximately 600,000 sf of office space, 600 residential units, and 62,000 sf of retail. It will generate an additional \$15.3 million annually in real estate tax revenues, which is slightly lower than the previous estimate in the PNF, as a result of the removal of the second floor addition to Station West. The project also includes significant transit-related benefits, design improvements to the public realm and streetscape around the site, including the newly proposed 11,000 sf public plaza, and other benefits. One of the largest public benefits are the new Station entrances and related improvements. In addition, the Proponent is undertaking a concourse renovation as part of a separate project in coordination with the MBTA. Melissa reiterated that the focus of the meeting is on the design evolution of the project, and that Boston Properties has worked hard to incorporate feedback received on the PNF into the revised design of project.

Melissa invited Rafael Pelli, Pelli Clarke Pelli Architects, to continue the presentation. He outlined the four new buildings that would arise from the project. There are two variations on the office tower that are based on whether the I-90 on-ramp is closed by MassDOT. He showed updated renderings of the single-story addition to Station West and the updated design of the Station and the office buildings, which are refinements rather than significant changes. The sidewalk along Stuart Street will be widened and a bus drop-off will be provided near the proposed new Station entrance on Stuart Street. A footbridge will also connect the internal Stuart Street connector to 40 Trinity Place and new ground floor retail at the corner of Stuart and Trinity Place will activate the new Station entrance. The residential buildings' facades are still conceptual, but they will be textured with materials rather than all glass windows. The team sees the buildings as being different from each other, rather than a unified complex, so they each have different character. The footprint for the Station East building has been changed to allow for new public open space along Clarendon Street.

Jim Batchelor, Arrowstreet, came forward to discuss the removal of the concept of the second floor addition to Station West. He explained that the single-story addition above the Station will provide an overlook and terraces to activate the streetscape. He showed renderings of the inside of the Station, where the intent is to preserve the Station architecture while improving functionality and adding new waiting area and retail space. As part of the Station expansion, skylights will be built to preserve access to natural light and a bridge within the Station could connect the new second-level retail on both sides. He showed multiple views of the interior of the Station and with the new adjustments.

Simon Beers, OJB Landscape Architecture, came forward to discuss public realm improvements. He began with circulation to the project. He showed the different pedestrian access points to the Station. The crossing between the Southwest Corridor Park and Station West will continue to be signalized but the crosswalk will be significantly enlarged to a width of 60 feet (it is currently 15 feet). Other improvements to the public realm include increased short-term bicycle parking, new sidewalks with dimensions that exceed the Boston Transportation Department (BTD)'s Complete Streets Guidelines, improved crosswalks and grades, an improved station plaza along Dartmouth Street, the new public plaza on Clarendon Street and new street furniture, including street trees, benches and bike racks. With the closure of the on-ramp to I-90 (which is still to be determined), there would be an uninterrupted pedestrian pathway on Dartmouth Street. There are also improvements to the intersection of Clarendon and Stanhope Streets. The curb lines and crosswalks will be reconfigured to be safer for pedestrians. There will be a great opportunity for new public space and enhancement of the Clarendon Street side of Station East, where there will be public bike racks, a new Hubway station, and a significant amount of new landscaping as well.

Kyle Greaves, VHB, came forward to go over the pedestrian wind comfort and shadow. He explained that the BPDA uses a two-pronged standard to determine acceptable and unacceptable wind situations. The first is an evaluation of comfort criteria based on average wind speeds and the second is an evaluation of occasional wind gust conditions. RWDI, the preeminent wind engineering firm in the industry, studied three build scenarios, including the no-build scenario, the base scheme, and the alternate scheme. All three incorporated BPDA-approved projects in the Stuart Street corridor. By incorporating these projects, they assessed the worst case wind scenarios. The results of the base and alternate schemes were nearly identical. The on-site wind comfort conditions primarily remained similar or better than the no-build condition, and existing uncomfortable situations improve at 5 locations. There are only 2 on-site locations that become uncomfortable under the build scenarios and they occur in locations that can be improved by the addition of canopies or wind screens. The off-site wind comfort conditions are also maintained or improved, and there are no new dangerous conditions created at any location. Most off-site locations remain comfortable for sitting, standing, and walking, with only a few that are uncomfortable. As for wind gusts, in the no-build scenario, there are currently 5 off-site locations and 1 on-site location that experience unacceptable wind

gusts. Under the base scheme, the 5 off-site locations remain unchanged and the on-site location is eliminated.

Kyle also re-presented the seasonal shadow studies included in the PNF and explained that the project refinements have had no measurable impact on the shadow generated by the project. The analysis also included the regulations of the Stuart Street Zoning, which limit net new shadow on Copley Square to 2 hours between March 21st and October 21st from 8:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. The project applied this restriction globally across all 4 project components, minimizing the shadow impact to the greatest extent possible. He showed a video to reveal shadow impacts on Copley Square on October 21st (they day where the project's impact is the longest), where a total of 1 hour and 54 minutes of net new shadow is created on only approximately 3.5% of the square.

Nicole Benjamin-Ma, VHB, came forward to discuss the historic resource shadow analysis that was completed in response to the Massachusetts Historical Commission's comment letter. The shadow impacts were fairly limited for most of the year. She walked through the scenarios on each of the 5 area buildings. Even though shadows on these buildings are not regulated by the Stuart Street Zoning, the project limits as much shadow on these historic resources as possible.

CAC questions and comments made in response to the presentation included:

- A CAC member asked what the existing sidewalk width is along Dartmouth Street. Melissa replied that they will follow-up with the exact measurements, which vary, but noted that the project exceeds BTB's Complete Streets Guidelines, which recommend 12 feet in the pedestrian zone for Downtown Commercial locations. This number does not include the frontage zone, furnishing zone, or curb zone. An ex-officio member of the CAC asked why the project will reduce the size of the sidewalks by introducing street trees. Melissa explained that the majority of people are not currently crossing at the crosswalk, and widening the Dartmouth Street crosswalk to 60 feet will help promote use of the crosswalk, and added that the overall sidewalk widths will not be narrowed, but they will be greener and better landscaped, as promoted in the Complete Streets Guidelines.
- A CAC member asked about the size of the public plaza on Station East, excluding the vehicular access. Simon responded that the team would provide the size at the next meeting, but noted that the flush paving would give pedestrians both the priority and safety. The CAC member then asked how often the loading dock would be used and Melissa explained it would be used multiple times per day.
- A CAC member mentioned that the new shadow would likely block a stained glass window on Trinity Church in the month of December. Rafael said they could look into it further. Michael C. said they tried to minimize shadows as best as possible, noting again that they do comply with the Stuart Street Guidelines for shadow on Copley Square.

- A CAC member asked to understand if more light will be coming into the Station with the expanded retail spaces on either side of the central hall. Jim explained that the skylights will provide good and true daylight, and that the rendering may not be a fully representative image of the light quality. Michael C. explained that one of the primary objectives was to lighten the Station through lightening the floors, walls, etc. Melissa explained that new lighting is also being provided with the Station concourse renovation. The current windows are glass block, which does not allow as much natural light into the space as normal vision glass. Jim added that the light quality will be more pleasant, due to removal of the glass block and the combination of skylight and new materials. The CAC member expressed their appreciation for the internal bridge that connects the two retail spaces above.
- A CAC member asked about access to the upstairs retail spaces in the Station. Jim detailed where the elevators and escalators are.
- A CAC member asked for clarification about the vegetated wall/winter garden within the Station. Jim explained that the garden will be a vegetative wall that will be part of the Station East facade. The CAC member asked how the winter garden was added instead of other programming. Jim explained that the winter garden is considered to be programming and it was added with the purpose of incorporating more light into the space, while also creating a nice space that is comfortable inside for people who are waiting for their train.
- A CAC member expressed appreciation for the widening of the crosswalk at Dartmouth Street. As part of a follow-up question, she reiterated the earlier question about the size of the Clarendon Plaza if the vehicular access was excluded. Melissa explained that they will provide the square footage, but noted that the service and loading space is required for both the MBTA Station and the Station East building, and noted that the 285 Columbus Avenue residential building and 131 Dartmouth Street also have service areas that need to be accessed. She reiterated that they want the area to have a pedestrian feel and noted that cars will have to slow down to enter due to the grade change at the curb line. The bollards will provide additional protection to the pedestrian zone. Melissa explained that building management is very organized in scheduling move-ins for residential buildings. The biggest use of the drive will be drop-offs by cars or car services accessing the station.
- A CAC member stated that she approves of moving the Stanhope Street crosswalk to the north and urged the closure of the I-90 ramp. She asked to see more renderings of the Station East building. Melissa replied that they can provide that.
- A CAC member asked about materials used for residential towers. Rafael explained that it would probably be metal panel, noting that it will be developed further as the project advances. Melissa added that the residential buildings will vary in facade so that they are complementary but do not look identical.
- A CAC member asked about having a further discussion about the MBTA No. 39 Bus. Melissa explained that the MBTA found that the preferred route relocation is along St. James Street, with a stop in front of the Fairmount Copley Plaza Hotel. This new

location would better locate the bus stop between the Green and Orange Lines. She reiterated that the route change will not occur until Station East is developed.

- A CAC member asked to understand whether there is any impact on the project's wind impacts by removing the Simon Property Group's Copley Tower from the model. He additionally asked for shadow diagrams without that building in it, and to see the views with and without the tower. Melissa replied that because the building is an approved project, it has to be included in the studies, but added that the project team can present these alternative studies without the Copley Tower at a future meeting.
- A CAC asked for a map of the bicycle accommodations in the area. The team replied that this would be provided at an upcoming meeting.
- A CAC member asked about the traffic analysis at the Turnpike exit onto Stuart Street. The team replied that the traffic study will be presented at the following meeting.
- A CAC member asked about the status of the Interchange Modification Report (IMR) on the potential closure of the I-90 on-ramp. Jim Kersten, MassDOT, replied that he will look into this and report back at the upcoming public meeting. Michael C. noted that this project must proceed on the assumption that both alternatives are still on the table.
- A CAC member asked about an update on the current status of the ventilation project. Mark Boyle, MassDOT, responded that he will follow-up.
- A CAC member asked for an assessment of the pedestrian bridges in the area. Melissa explained there are currently three pedestrian bridges, as part of the Copley Place and Prudential complexes.

Public questions and comments included:

- A member of the public asked about the affordable housing obligation and asked about the public realm benefits that will be provided per building. Melissa explained that the benefits are outlined by building in the DPIR. Michael C. explained that the affordability options are still being worked through. The project is subject to the previous Inclusionary Development Policy (IDP) and they are working to come up with a solution. They are looking at a range of options to meet the affordability requirement, including the possibility of off-site creation. A CAC member added that the affordable units should be on-site or very close by. The CAC member noted that a higher affordability requirement exists under the Stuart Street Zoning. Michael C. explained that air rights projects have extreme costs and that that guides how they finance a project like this and impacts its financial feasibility.

Lauren concluded the meeting by reiterating that the DPIR comment period ends on April 18th and that the next meeting will be scheduled by email for early to mid-March.

The meeting concluded at approximately 8:20 p.m.