



## **MassDOT Turnpike Air Rights Parcels 12-15**

### **CAC Working Meeting #23**

**Wednesday, January 17, 2018, 6:00 p.m.**

**Location: Saint Cecilia's Parish Hall**

#### **CAC Attendees:**

Fritz Casselman, Neighborhood Association of the Back Bay (NABB)

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:**

Kate Bell, Office of Boston City Councilor Josh Zakim

#### **City of Boston Attendees:**

Yissel Guerrero, Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services

Phillip Hu, BPDA

Michael Rooney, BPDA

Courtney Sharpe, BPDA

Lauren Shurtleff, BPDA

#### **Commonwealth of Massachusetts Attendees:**

Mark Boyle, MassDOT

#### **Development Team Attendees:**

Dave Bohn, VHB

Tom Burroughs, WSP

Kevin Lennon, Elkus Manfredi Architects

Donny Levine, D. Levine Management, LLC

David Manfredi, Elkus Manfredi Architects

Kurt Massey, Gregory Lombardi Design

Adam Weiner, Weiner Ventures

#### **Public Attendees:**

Tim Horn, Fenway Civic Association

Bill Whitney, Berklee School of Music

Jackie Yessian, NABB

**Project Website:** <http://www.bostonplans.org/projects/development-projects/1000-boylston-street>

### **Meeting Summary**

On Wednesday, January 18, 2018, the 23rd meeting of the MassDOT Turnpike Air Rights Parcels 12-15 Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) commenced at approximately 6:10 p.m. with an introduction by Michael Rooney, BPDA Project Manager, at the Saint Cecilia's Parish Hall. After a round of introductions, Michael explained the purpose of the meeting — to review the different topics in the CAC's letter in response to Weiner Ventures' proposal for Parcel 15, officially filed as the 1000 Boylston Street project, and to review how the development team responded to the requests and questions. Michael then explained that Weiner Ventures will submit their Planned Development Area (PDA) Development Plan as the next step in the development review process, kicking off a new 45 day comment period. He added that he also anticipates receiving a supplemental information document from the project team at or around the same time as the PDA. The comment period for both documents would run concurrently.

A CAC Member explained they hoped to continue the dialogue, narrow the identified issues in the CAC letter, and make progress on resolving those issues. The issues were broadly organized into these categories: public realm, podium design, solar reflectivity, transportation, building systems, and shadow studies.

Adam Weiner, Weiner Ventures, introduced himself and briefly described the development team's approach to responding to the CAC letter. He then gave a brief introduction to his team's presentation, which can be found on the project website, listed above.

Adam then introduced Kurt Massey from Gregory Lombardi Design, the project's landscape architects. Kurt began by describing the proposal's improvements to the public realm. These improvements include sidewalk improvements to Boylston Street, an expansion of sidewalk width, street tree planters, a reduction of curb radii, improved ramps, improved street lighting, and small greenscape zones to mitigate stormwater. Kurt explained how the Boston Complete Streets guidelines were used to guide the design of the sidewalks directly abutting the proposal.

Next, David Manfredi, Elkus Manfredi Architects, described the evolved design of the podium and ground floor experience. David brought over a physical model of a section of the podium. He explained the intention of the two zones: the ground floor retail below and the screened parking floors above. The two stories of ground floor retail will allow for flexibility in the storefront by tenants, but follow a set of specific guidelines to ensure transparency, low reflectivity, and high design quality. The two stories of parking above will be screened by a pattern of glass fins on a faceted surface. He explained how the screening

surface and canopy seemed exaggerated in earlier images of the proposal, but the model and additional images of the proposal are more to scale and were relatively flatter.

Kevin Lennon, Elkus Manfredi Architects, summarized the key findings of the solar reflection study. The study analyzed the solar reflectivity from the building on different points and at different times. These different points were labeled by what kind of user would be affected and then ordered numerically (drivers (D), pedestrians (P), and facades (F) of neighboring buildings). Three points (D4, D8, D7) were identified as moments of high visual impact reflections or glare during certain times in the morning or late afternoon.

A CAC Member asked whether the study accounted for other proposed buildings and asked how that would affect solar reflection. Kevin responded that the study accounted for the other proposed buildings and that they would see how the results would change if the other proposed buildings were not included.

A CAC Member asked how many cars drove past the point labeled as D4 on the Massachusetts Turnpike during the 11 minutes of high solar reflectivity before 7:00 AM from the proposed project. The CAC Member emphasized the potential accidents that could happen due to high solar reflectivity. Dave Bohn, VHB, calculated a quick estimate that around 400 cars could pass through that point. He also noted that drivers heading east on the Massachusetts Turnpike already face direct sun in the morning.

Kevin continued explaining the visual impacts on other users on Boylston Street during short periods of time in the morning and afternoon. A CAC Member asked for clarification on how the proposal can mitigate the effects of high solar reflectivity. Kevin responded that using the results of the study, they will now test how potential design modifications can mitigate solar glare.

Dave Bohn then presented excerpts from the CAC letter that related to transportation concerns. He explained that the development team and CAC have shared values and interest around transportation. While the proposal by itself has a minimal impact on transportation, a collaborative effort is needed to look at all the new projects in the neighborhood as a combined whole. The intention of the project is to promote alternative modes of getting around, such as transit, cycling, and walking. The development team welcomed continued dialogue to help support transit use as public transit in the neighborhood continues to approach capacity. He explained more information will be included in the supplemental information document.

A CAC Member asked about the proposed curbside uses along Boylston Street. Dave responded they are working on it with Boston Transportation Department (BTD) and would welcome ideas.

A CAC Member asked about what cyclist accommodations are planned and whether it is limited to where cyclists park or more. Dave responded by explaining cyclists today currently use a “sharrow”, biking with traffic in the right lane. BTD has asked the development team to think more creatively about the potential for protected or separated bike infrastructure. The CAC Member emphasized the need to engage with more stakeholders, since a discussion around bike infrastructure should be coordinated along more of Boylston Street. Dave responded by confirming that bike infrastructure should not be limited to one block.

Tom Burroughs, WSP, began to describe how the building systems of the proposal were designed to minimize energy use and lower greenhouse gas emission impacts. Strategies include creating an efficient building envelope and heating-ventilation-air conditioning systems, and working with renewable energy providers to use offset credits to promote renewable energy use.

A CAC Member asked whether a new National Grid natural gas pipeline was being built only to serve the proposal. The CAC Member was concerned about the negative externalities of the pipeline and whether the proposal can consider being all-electric. Another CAC Member explained the National Grid pipeline was discussed in a separate community process to ensure that there would be enough utility capacity to serve new projects and the existing neighborhoods. Yissel Guerrero, Mayor’s Office of Neighborhood Services, clarified that National Grid did not choose to disclose what projects would be served by the new natural gas connections and that the proposal was not called out to be the only project to be served by the pipeline.

A CAC Member asked whether the project could later transition from using natural gas heating systems to electric systems when low-carbon electricity sources are more readily available. Tom replied that when the natural gas heating system exceeds its lifespan, the system can be modified to be electric without impacting the tenants.

Finally, David Manfredi presented the results of the proposal’s animated shadow studies. There are two legal parameters that limit shadows from new buildings. The first are the restrictions placed on shadows that would fall on the Boston Common and Public Garden, and the other, which is more specific to this immediate area, is the Huntington Avenue/Prudential Center District Zoning Article 41-16, which applies to PDAs. The former states that no new shadows can be cast on the Boston Common or Public Gardens past the first hour after sunrise or before 7:00am, whichever is later, or before the last hour before sunset. The latter states no shadow can impact public parkland for more than 2 hours from 8:00am to 2:30pm on any day from March 21st through September 21st (See Boston Zoning Code Article 41, Section 16 for more detail). David proceeded to show 12 animations of the shadows from existing buildings and the proposed project on the 21st of each month.

## **CAC Questions & Comments**

- A CAC Member asked what the next steps are. Michael responded that the proponent will submit a supplemental information document in response to the City, BPDA, and CAC. They will also submit their PDA, which includes a 45-day comment period. This will run concurrently with the comment period for the supplementary information document.
- A CAC Member expressed concern about street furniture and the use of the sidewalks, explaining how street furniture with advertisements and street trees could make sidewalks too congested and narrow. The CAC Member asked what the viewpoint of the BPDA was on this matter. Lauren Shurtleff, BPDA Senior Planner, explained that the BPDA uses the Complete Streets guidelines to inform how sidewalks with different zones are designed based on the type of street it is on. A pedestrian zone is clear of obstructions while a furnishing zone is where street trees, bike racks, street lamps, and other street furniture could go. Boylston Street would be considered Downtown Commercial under the Complete Streets guidelines and would follow recommended widths and designs set by that type.
- A CAC Member expressed concern about the use of granite because it cracks. Another CAC Member added that these conversations about sidewalk material design should include both Jill Zick, the BPDA's landscape architect, and Chris Osgood, the City's Chief of Streets. There is a need to coordinate the recommendations between different stakeholders. The Boylston Street plan was also mentioned as a resource to better coordinate the discussion.
- A CAC Member asked whether the new street trees would survive in the proposed planters. Kevin replied that the design of the tree pits will follow best practices to ensure the trees survive and thrive.
- A CAC Member asked how the BPDA evaluates the impact of solar glare and at what phase will the design reflect the mitigation strategies for glare. Michael responded the team is working with the BPDA, which includes the Urban Design Department, and is waiting for the submission of additional information. Michael also added that it will be part of an ongoing design review. Kevin added they are working on modelling potential mitigation strategies for glare and will do the studies with and without neighboring, proposed buildings. A CAC Member expressed concern that the development team did not calculate the number of drivers who would be potentially affected by glare. Another CAC Member responded by saying drivers already experience glare from the east-west orientation of the Massachusetts Pike in the mornings and afternoons. The CAC Member explained that the development team has investigated the potential issues and now will investigate potential mitigation strategies, and the development team's presentation was helpful to understanding the issue. Another CAC Member expressed concern that many buildings with more glass create more heated reflections in the summertime.

- A CAC Member explained that the model and presentation of the podium was helpful because it showed a verticality to the facade. The CAC Member was previously concerned that the podium would be a monolith. Another CAC Member added on by saying the street view from across the entrance to the Prudential Center worked well, particularly with the stepping of green roofs. The CAC Member was initially concerned about the size of the podium canopy but thinks that the canopy is appropriately sized in the context. Another CAC Member asked whether the fins will wrap around the whole project. Kevin responded that the fins and canopy continued on St. Cecilia Street to mitigate wind effects and tapers on Dalton Street.
- A CAC Member asked if anyone had further concerns or issues to raise about transportation. Michael added that Josh Weiland, BTM, would come to the next meeting to discuss any transportation concerns that come up.
- A CAC Member asked how the potential for autonomous vehicles will affect how the proposal evaluates transportation. Dave responded by saying that ride-share apps such as Lyft and Uber already create pick-up and drop-off challenges. He added that there is a limited amount of space between buildings to dedicate to different uses of the street and the challenge is to balance these needs. There is a possibility in the future to recapture space for other street uses depending on changing needs.

### **Public Questions & Comments**

- A member of the public expressed disappointment with how current regulations limit shadows and is concerned about the shadow impact on the Fenway Victory Gardens. The member of the public explained that grass grows before 8:00am, which falls outside the protected time range.
- In response to a question from a member of the public, Michael responded that he will look into how the shadow study animations can be shared online. The member of the public added that sidewalk width was important for pedestrians and was worried that the sidewalks will not be large enough.

After confirming that no one else had more comments or questions, Michael reminded the room about the next steps. Tim Davis, BPDA Housing Policy Manager, will attend the next meeting to discuss the City's Inclusionary Development Policy and affordable housing requirements. The meeting date is not set but is tentatively planned for early February.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 7:45 p.m.