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 projects and planning 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

**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.

  1. Raise your hand and we will take your questions orally in the order that hands were raised once the presentation is complete.

Powerpoint

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

• Chris Breen - Urban Renewal Manager
• Raul Duverge - Senior Project Manager
• Charlotte Ong – West End Planner
• Martin Serrano – Legal Assistant
• Joe Christo – Senior Coastal Resilience Waterfront Planner
• Elected Officials/Reporters
Urban Renewal Area Agenda

1. Introduction
2. Urban Renewal Background
3. Urban Renewal Action Plan
4. Land Disposition Agreement Inventory
5. BPDA Owned Land Inventory
6. Urban Renewal Importance
7. Next Steps: Q+A
Introduction
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
How Urban Renewal Affected My Life
Why Are We Here?
Director Brian Golden
Boston Redevelopment Authority
One City Hall Square, 9th Floor
Boston, MA 02201

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
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, adjustment of goals and extension/sunsetting.
Urban Renewal Community Engagement - Group 1

North Station

Park Plaza

Kittredge

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

South End

Washington Park

West End
02

Urban Renewal Background
1937-1949

Setting the Stage: Pre-Urban Renewal
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. Also African Americans continue to move north from the Deep South.

• 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’.

• Rise of the automobile and growth of US highway system sends investments into the suburbs
Locally - Boston

- Boston Irish Immigrants dominate city politics.
- Brahmin Elites control the State House, reduce aid to Boston and deprive the city of home rule.
- 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 (Redlight-Scollay).
- Moody’s downgraded Boston’s bond rating from A to Baa which is near Junk Level and on the brink of bankruptcy in 1949.
Urban Renewal

1949 - Present
Eisenhower Amendment for Federal Housing Act

1949

Boston's First Urban Renewal Plan: New York Streets

Boston Redevelopment Authority formed as Successor to Boston Housing Authority

1954

Federal Housing Act

1957

North Harvard and Tremont Mason

1958

West End

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

1962

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

1963 - 65

Central Business Districts (Bedford West), Kittredge Square, Park Plaza and Summer Street

1968

Housing and Community Development Act of 1974

1970 - 73

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

1980

1974

North Station

1974 - 80

1980
1949 – U.S.
American Housing Act:
Origin of Urban Renewal
New Deal for Cities
• 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
“Boston is like an apple with a shiny skin, rotten at the core”

- Robert Ryan, Pioneer of the Industrial Park Concept 1950
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 nations largest cities.
Boston’s Population (1900 – 2015)
1954
New York Streets
“Slum Clearance”
The BHA writes the West End Project Report, which blames population drop on the decline in quality housing and negative environment.

The report blames high rates of tuberculosis, juvenile delinquency and crime on the environment and lack of open space.

The report cites the West End narrow streets endanger lives due to high emergency service response times.

The report declares that the West End neighborhood does not provide enough “sunlight and air for healthy living”.

The report indicates that over 80% of the structures are substandard.
1957
Boston Redevelopment Authority
1957
West End
Urban
Renewal Plan
Approved
West End: Goals

- Elimination of substandard residences replaced with new homes to provide stable neighborhood with green open space.
- Elimination of narrow, costly, outmoded streets and public utilities.
- Elimination of under-utilized, over age schools.
- Reduction of traffic by providing new, wide streets and off-street parking.
- Federal Project Grant $189 Million considering for inflation.
1958

- Whitney Streets
- North Harvard
What was Learned?

- Emotional toll/grief 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.
1960-1970
Boston
“Is Boston worth saving? The streets are choked with traffic, vast jungles of blighted housing, faded business districts...

Is it worth the effort to change this?” (1960).

– Christian Science Monitor Article
1961

Ed Logue: Takes the Reigns

Urban Renewal 2.0
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.
- Sought to create more mixed race & income communities.
- 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.
“I would like to say that we negotiate. It is now our policy to negotiate Urban Renewal Plans and develop it jointly with the people who live in the community. Where we did not do that before we all paid and paid dearly for it”

– Ed Logue, 1963
Further Reading…

SAVING AMERICA’S CITIES
Ed Logue and the Struggle to Renew Urban America in the Suburban Age
LIZABETH COHEN
1965-1994

23 Urban Renewal Plans Exist in Boston
South End Urban Renewal Project

Castle Square
Downtown Faneuil Hall
Urban
Renewal Project

New England
Aquarium
South Cove
Urban Renewal Project

Ladder 17
Campus High School
Urban Renewal Project

Whittier Street BHA
Government Center

Urban Renewal Project

Ames Building
Central Business District
Urban Renewal Project

Old City Hall
Charlestown Urban Renewal Project

Bunker Hill Community College
Fenway
Urban Renewal Project

Symphony Gardens
Washington Park
Urban Renewal Project

Doris Bunte Apartments
Kittredge Square
Urban Renewal Project

Highland Street
1994-2015

Urban Renewal Plans
Sunset

- New York Streets (South End)
- Whitney Streets (Huntington Ave)
- St. Botolph (Fenway)
- Bedford West (CBD)
- Sumner Street (East Boston)
- North Harvard (Allston)
- Tremont Mason (CBD)
2016

Urban Renewal Extension Process

14 of 16 Plans Extended 2016 -2022
2016

Bridgeview

61 Affordable units for individuals with disabilities.
2019
Urban Renewal: Community Engagement

boston planning & development agency
How is Urban Renewal Used Today?
South End
Parcel 57 & Parcel 59

February:
The BPDA used Urban Renewal tools to protect expiring affordable housing uses and to help create a new parcel whose building will also have 100% affordability.
November:
The BPDA began a community process regarding Urban Renewal Parcel R-1 to further community goals of affordable housing creation, and other requested public uses.
December:
The BPDA has contemplated using its U-District tools in the Charlestown Urban Renewal Plan Area to facilitate the replacement of 1,100 units of Public Housing into a mixed income redevelopment.
Urban Renewal in 2020?

boston planning & development agency
Worcester: Polar Park

- **Location:** Downtown Worcester Urban Revitalization Area
- **Expected Completion Date:** April 2021
- The Polar Park project creates a ballpark for the incoming Triple-A minor league baseball team, Worcester Red Sox, along with an office building overlooking the ballpark with a marketplace on the ground floor, envisioned as “Worcester’s Faneuil Hall”
- The project site was previously occupied by parking lots and vacant industrial and manufacturing buildings
- **Project Highlights:** The park will be capable of hosting year-round, affordable entertainment, connecting the historic “Canal District” in which the project is located to Downtown Worcester
- Part of the project is to improve surrounding infrastructure including Kelley Square, where seven streets currently converge into one intersection

### Urban Renewal Tools

1. Site Assembly
2. Zoning Controls
   - The project site was previously zoned Manufacturing-General 2.0, but has been rezoned to Business General-6.0. This change enables mixed-use developments
3. Road Discontinuance

NYC: Melrose Commons

- **Location:** Melrose Commons Urban Renewal Plan (located in the Bronx)
- **Completion Date:** September 2018
- **Completion Date:** September 2018
- 100% affordable residential building consisting of 58 studio apartments for chronically-homeless adults with serious mental illness, with a preference for veterans at or below 60% AMI
- Vacant, city-owned buildings were located at this property prior to redevelopment
- **Project Highlights:** Melrose Commons addresses the homeless crisis in NYC by providing a permanent foundation for rehabilitation and reintegration into the community

### Urban Renewal Tools

1. **Eminent Domain**
2. **Land-Use Controls**
   - The Urban Renewal Plan designates a specific land use to each site within the Urban Renewal Area

---

03

Urban Renewal Action Plan

[boston planning & development agency]
5. The BRA committee is exploring the creation of new urban renewal plans areas, including Backbay.

6. The BRA will review the existing procedures surrounding disposition of BRA-owned land and propose protocols for land disposition accordingly, in such a manner that reflects community planning goals and priorities.

7. As part of the renewal plans, the BRA will continue to provide updates on progress of the completion of the urban renewal plans.

Outline of Minor Modification Hearing Process:

1. The BRA will file the minor modification notice with the City Clerk to be posted in the Public Register of the City. In accordance with the Bylaws of the City, the Chairman of the Committee on the Appropriation of the City shall issue a notice and have a hearing held in the City Chamber on the minor modification. Said notice, if any, shall be issued at least 10 days of the time the notice is issued with the City Clerk.

2. After the adoption of the minor modification, the Chairman of the Committee on the Appropriation of the City shall file with the Executive Secretary of the BRA, the proposed hearing notice and amendments to the hearing notice, if any, to the minor modification.

ORDERED:

That the Committee on the Appropriation of the City shall not issue a hearing notice for the request of the BRA to file an amendment to the hearing notice, if any, to the minor modification.
The Boston City Council's Committee on Planning and Development will hold a public hearing on Friday, September 30, 2016 at 10:00 AM in the Lannella Chamber, fifth floor, Boston City Hall. This hearing is a biannual urban renewal progress update by the BRA d/b/a the Boston Planning & Development Agency (BPDA).
News & Calendar for Community Meetings

Urban Renewal Community Meeting: West End

Dec 10, 2020
6:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Contact Name:
Christopher Breen

Contact Email Address:
Chris.Breen@Boston.gov

Type:
Public Meeting

Location:
Virtual Meeting

Contact Phone:
617.918.4202

Description:
The Boston Planning & Development Agency (BPDA) invites the West End and surrounding neighbors for a community meeting to meet members of its Urban Renewal Team and to hear updates to the Urban Renewal Action Plan and Land Disposition Agreement Inventory regarding the West End Urban Renewal Plan Area.

Agenda
1. Introduction
2. Urban Renewal Background
3. Urban Renewal Action Plan
4. Land Disposition Agreement Inventory

Related
Planning Initiative(s)
Urban Renewal

Neighborhoods
West End

Document(s)
West End Community Meeting Presentation 2020-12-10 (PDF 228MB)
The BPDA recently switched to Box, a cloud content management and file sharing service.

Interested in sharpening your Box skills?

IT and Records Management will be hosting two Box training sessions in April. Additional sessions will be available in the coming months.
New Procedures

Minor Modification 30 Day Notice to MA State - DHCD & Boston City Council
BPDA Land Disposition Agreement & BPDA Owned Property Inventory
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 best suited for use by abutters, 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 Parcels
- Developable
- Not developable
- Ground Leased
- Commercial lease/license
- Open Space/Community Garden
- Designated
- Future Planning Needed
- Parking lot/Garage
- Long Term Maintenance Agreement

BPDA Neighborhoods

Layers
- BPDA Parcels
- Assessing Parcels
- BPDA Neighborhoods
04
Land Disposition Agreement Inventory
What is a Land Disposition Agreement?

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.
This Land Disposition Agreement only allows for Open Space.
West End Urban Renewal Plan Area
West End
Urban Renewal Plan

Urban Renewal Parcels
Land Use Restrictions in Plan
Emerson Place

Parcels 1A & 1A1
Whittier Place

Parcel 1B
75 Blossom Court

Parcel 1C
Hawthorne Place

Parcels 1D, 1D-1 and 1D-1A
Charles River Plaza and Medical Buildings

161 – 209 Cambridge St

Parcel 1G(a)
Wyndham Hotel

Parcel 1G (b)
Amy Lowell House

Area 2A-2B of 2-1E-1F
West End Place

Area E including Area EA of 2-1E-1F
Massachusetts Eye and Ear
Formerly Retina Foundation
20 Staniford Street
Parcels J + J1
Otis House Museum

14-16 Lynde Street

Parcel 4 (Adjacent Slivers)
Regina Cleri Residence

60 William Cardinal O’Connell Way

Parcel 7, 7A, 7B
The Blackstone Preservation of Affordable Housing

Parcels A, B, and Lot 5
50 Staniford Street
Including Longfellow and Garden Garage

A portion of Area F and Area FA of 2-1E-1F
Longfellow Place

Area F, FA of 2-1E-1F
Garden Garage

Area F, FA of 2-1E-1F
Shriners Hospital for Children

Parcel 8
Blossom Street – MGH

Parcel 9
Boston Synagogue

Parcel 10
First Methodist Religious Society

Parcel 5, 5-1
Blossom Street – MDC Overpass

Parcel 11
05
BPDA Owned Property
BPDA Owned Property
Why Do We Need Urban Renewal?
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
Urban Renewal Benefits

1. Unique Real Estate Acquisition Options/Disposition Options
The City of Boston is limited by City Charter to only acquire property for municipal purpose. BPDA is empowered to acquire parcels to further policy goals.

2. Ability to Negotiate Directly with Tenants (30B Exemption)
In many cases the City of Boston, needs to undertake and RFP process in order to modify terms of a lease. 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. Preservation/Urban Design
Urban Renewal restrictions can preserve structures and or encourage a diversity of building types.

8. Economic Development/Tax Incentives
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 Plan**

- Conform with the Plan (Types of uses) additional restrictions/process.
- Land Use & Building Requirements (Use, Height, FAR, Dimensions, Setbacks, Parking, Open Space)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site Designation</th>
<th>Permitted Uses</th>
<th>Maximum Building Height (in feet)</th>
<th>Minimum Floor Area Ratio</th>
<th>Minimum Parking Spaces</th>
<th>Property Access</th>
<th>Arcade or ground-floor setbacks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A-1</td>
<td>General Business</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-2</td>
<td>Residential</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3 for each 2 dwelling units</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-2/1</td>
<td>General Office</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>Not from Atlantic Avenue</td>
<td>10' in depth along India &amp; Milk Streets and East frontages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-3</td>
<td>General Office</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10' in depth along frontages facing on to the water slip between Central and Long Wharves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-3/1</td>
<td>General Office</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10' in depth along Eastern frontage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-4</td>
<td>General Office</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Not from Atlantic Avenue</td>
<td>10' in depth along Northern &amp; Southern, Eastern frontages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-4/1</td>
<td>General Office</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10' in depth along Southern frontage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-8</td>
<td>Public Open Space</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1/3/6 open parking permitted.  
2/3/6 building setbacks permitted along Atlantic Avenue frontage.  
3/3/6,1/2 transit parking is developed, 3 enclosed parking spaces shall be provided for each 4 guest rooms.  
In addition, up to 15 open parking spaces may be provided upon a determination of need.  
4/1 In the event 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.
Aligning Goals

Imagine Boston 2030

Fair Housing and Equity
“In twenty first century America, some cities flourish while others struggle. But all must contend with deteriorating infrastructure, economic inequality and unaffordable housing. City Governments have limited tools with which to address these problems and many must rely on the private market to support the public good.”

-Lizabeth Cohen, author of “Saving American Cities”
08

Additional Information