Western Avenue Corridor Study and Rezoning
Urban Design Updates
Sept. 30, 2021
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Other departments include: BPDA GIS, Graphics, Research; BTD, Parks.
Agenda

1. Introduction & Housekeeping
2. May/June Public Feedback & How the Plan is Responding
3. Updated Urban Design Recommendations
4. Barry’s Corner Public Realm Concepts
5. Housing Approach
6. Next Steps
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Introductions & Housekeeping
Project Website

bit.ly/westerncorridor

- Presentations (including tonight’s!)
- Recordings from virtual meetings
- Project documents (e.g. Zoning Toolkit and Housing Toolkit)
Zoom Tips

Your controls should be available at the bottom of the screen. Clicking on these symbols activates different features:
Virtual Meeting Protocols

- During the presentation you can ask questions through the chat feature. Depending on the question, we will answer it in writing in the chat box, verbally, or wait until the Q&A period.

- Following the presentation there will be time for verbal Q&A. Please be respectful of each other’s time so that all may participate in the discussion.

- You can always set up a conversation with the project team through Joe Blankenship, joseph.blankenship@boston.gov.
Meeting Recording

- The BPDA will be recording this meeting and posting it on its website at bit.ly/WesternCorridor. The recording will include the presentation, Q&A, and public comments afterwards.
- Also, 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 turn off your microphone and camera.
May / June Public Feedback & How the Plan is Responding
Timeline

Fall 2019/Winter 2020
Visioning
- Review of existing planning materials
- Defining key planning principles

Spring 2020
- Hiatus in public process due to Covid-19

Summer 2020
- Developing a Framework
  - Planning framework
  - Real estate economics and community benefits

Fall 2020/Winter 2021
- Deep Dives
  - Sustainability/resilience
  - Arts + culture

Spring/Summer 2021
- Draft Recommendations
  - Refined planning framework and draft recommendations - revised based on community feedback
  - Multimodal improvements (short- and long-term)

Fall 2021/Winter 2022
- Final Recommendations
  - Urban Design refinements
  - Transportation Updates
  - Draft Report
  - Report and Rezoning
What we heard about Transportation & What we are doing

- Analyze traffic impacts of development in Allston Yards and potential development along Leo Birmingham Parkway at Nonantum Circle
- Evaluate feasibility of a transitway along Western Avenue
- Develop strategies to address parking, pick up/drop off & loading/unloading along Western Avenue
- Report back in Fall

What we heard about Urban Design

- Concern about the **impacts of the scale of new development** on Western Ave
- Questions about **shadow impact** on Soldiers Field Road and open spaces
- Desire for holistic vision for **Barry’s Corner**

What we heard about Urban Design & How the plan is addressing these issues

- Concern about the **impacts of scale of new development** on Western Ave
  - Enforce lot coverage to ensure light, air and views between buildings
  - Setbacks along street to create view corridor
- Questions about **shadow impact** on Soldiers Field Road and open spaces
  - Ensure tallest parts of the building is located in the middle of the parcel
- Desire for holistic vision for **Barry’s Corner**
  - Concept 1: Reconfigure Spurr St.
  - Concept 2: Open Space
  - Concept 3: Community Hall

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Updated Urban Design Recommendations
Urban Design - Recap

Land Use
Encourage residential and retail throughout the study area.

Concentrate lab/office uses and height to Barry’s Corner and closer to Lincoln Street.
Urban Design - Recap

FAR
Floor area ratio (FAR) is the ratio of a building's total floor area (gross floor area) to the size of the parcel upon which it is built.

Land Use recommendation:
- 75% residential / retail
- 25% commercial / lab / retail

See March 30, 2021 presentation for more information.

Floor area ratio (FAR) is the ratio of a building's total floor area (gross floor area) to the size of the parcel upon which it is built.

This represents the draft recommendations for illustrative purposes only. It is not meant to reflect current development proposals in the study area.
Urban Design - Recap

Height

Allow greater heights toward the river, Barry's Corner, and Lincoln Street.

Limit heights closer to existing residential fabric.

Limit heights in the Holton Street corridor to connect the residential neighborhoods east to west.
Urban Design - Recap

Lot coverage

Limit lot coverage to ensure that streets and open spaces can be built through new developments.

Allow greater lot coverage near Barry’s Corner, where parcels are smaller and greater intensity of activity is desired.
Urban Design - Recap

Setbacks on Existing Streets

Create setbacks along Western Avenue to allow multiple modes of transportation and generous sidewalks.

Create a generous path for people walking and biking between the river and the commuter rail station.

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Urban Design - Recap

Greater Setbacks

Community feedback: Concern about **height** and density, especially as it abuts existing residential

Response: More separation between residential subdistricts and tallest building elements
What we heard about Urban Design & How the plan is addressing these issues

- Concern about the *impacts of scale of new development* on Western Ave
  - Enforce lot coverage to ensure light, air and views between buildings
  - Setbacks along street to create view corridor
- Questions about *shadow impact* on Soldiers Field Road and open spaces
  - Ensure tallest parts of the building is located in the middle of the parcel
- Desire for holistic vision for *Barry’s Corner*
  - Concept 1: Reconfigure Spurr St.
  - Concept 2: Open Space
  - Concept 3: Community Hall

Urban Design

Community feedback:
Concern about the impacts of scale of new development on Western Ave

Response:
1. Enforce lot coverage to ensure light, air and views between buildings
2. Setbacks along street to create view corridors

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Urban Design

Community feedback:
Concern about the impacts of scale of new development on Western Ave

Response:
1. Enforce lot coverage to ensure light, air and views between buildings

2. Setbacks along street to create view corridors
Urban Design Recommendations

Existing
Urban Design Recommendations

Future

This represents the draft recommendations for illustrative purposes only. It is not meant to reflect current development proposals in the study area.
Urban Design Recommendations

Enforce lot coverage to ensure **light, air and views** between buildings
Urban Design Recommendations

Enforce lot coverage to ensure **light, air and views** between buildings

- View of Potential Open space between buildings

*This represents the draft recommendations for illustrative purposes only. It is not meant to reflect current development proposals in the study area.*
Urban Design Recommendations

Enforce lot coverage to ensure **light, air and views** between buildings
Urban Design Recommendations

Enforce lot coverage to ensure **light, air and views** between buildings

- View of Potential Open space between buildings
- View of Potential New Street

West of Telford St.

This represents the draft recommendations for illustrative purposes only. It is not meant to reflect current development proposals in the study area.
Urban Design Recommendations

Require setbacks along street to create view corridors to the river

Telford St. looking North

Existing
Urban Design Recommendations

Require setbacks along street to create **view corridors** to the river.

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Urban Design Recommendations

Require setbacks along street to create **view corridors** to the river.
Urban Design Recommendations

Require setbacks along street to create **view corridors** to the river

*Everett St. looking North*

This represents the draft recommendations for illustrative purposes only. It is not meant to reflect current development proposals in the study area.
What we heard about Urban Design & How the plan is addressing these issues

• Concern about **effects on Western Ave** of new development
  • Enforce lot coverage to ensure porosity between buildings
  • Setbacks along street to create view corridor
• Questions about **shadow impact** on Soldiers Field Road and open spaces
  • Ensure tallest part of the building is located in the middle of the parcel
• Desire for holistic vision for **Barry’s Corner**
  • Concept 1: Reconfigure Spurr St.
  • Concept 2: Open Space
  • Concept 3: District Hall

Urban Design Recommendations

Community feedback:
Questions about shadow impact on Soldiers Field Road and open spaces

Response:
Ensure tallest part of the building is located away from the street, open spaces, and existing residential areas

FAR: 4.25
Lot Coverage: 44%
Public Realm Concepts for Barry’s Corner
Opportunities

- Create a vibrant mixed-use area with a major new public space at North Harvard Street.
- Transform Western Avenue into a pedestrian-friendly, neighborhood-serving Main Street.
- Create a main street-like environment with approximately 200,000 square feet of community-serving retail and services, with housing, academic, and other uses located on upper floors.
- Transform Smith Field into a year-round neighborhood park while preserving its recreational facilities.
- Introduce seamless connections from the residential neighborhood to the Charles River and Herter Park.
- Develop a significant new cultural facility or other community center as a neighborhood and regional attraction.
Barry’s Corner

1. Western Ave.

2. Spurr St.
Concept 1: Reconfigure Spurr St.

- **Temporary Street Closure – Short Term**
  - Close vehicular traffic for events only
  - Paint roadway
  - Moveable Seating
  - Programming
Precedents: Tactical Urban Pop-ups

Annual Allston Village Street Fair

Brighton Center
Allston Brighton Mobility Study tactical urbanism pop-up, Summer 2021
Precedents: Activation

*Pop-Up Market, Seaport*

*Farmer’s Market, Ed. Portal*
Concept 2: Open Space

- Long Term Options
  - Lawn
  - Plaza
  - Seating
  - Public Art
  - Resilience: Storm Water Retention
Precedents: Open Space

Spurr St Parcel

Lafayette Sq., Cambridge
Precedents: Open Space

Spurr St Parcel

Davis Sq., Somerville
Concept 3: Community Hall

- **Long Term Options**
  - Community center
  - Retail
  - Outdoor seating
  - Farmer’s Market
Precedents: Activation

*Pop-Up Beer Gardens, Allston*
*Permanent Pavilion, Post Office Sq*
Precedents: Activation

District Hall, Seaport

Farmer’s Market, Brighton Common
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Housing Approach
Creating Income-restricted Housing

The Western Avenue Corridor Study and Rezoning will:

- Create incentives for greater density in exchange for higher percentages of IDP units
  - 15% baseline - 17% or 20% possible depending on FAR

- Create residential incentives to build housing where mixed use zoning is proposed

- Potentially generate almost 1,000 new income-restricted housing units

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total housing units, est.*</th>
<th>% Income restricted housing</th>
<th>Income-restricted units, est.*</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5,500</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>840</td>
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<tr>
<td>5,800</td>
<td>With 17% in Barry's Corner at FAR 4.00</td>
<td>900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6,000</td>
<td>With 20% in Barry's Corner at FAR 4.25</td>
<td>990</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* This is an estimate of the number of units that could be produced through the plan recommendations long-term (20-30 years) at full build-out. For residential development, this assumes 80% net-to-gross ratio and 900 SF units on average. This estimate assumes that development sites with current non-residential proposals remain non-residential.
Inclusionary Development Policy - Scope & Impact

- IDP percentage adjustment apply universally to all projects within the study area
- IDP units do not have an ongoing subsidy
- The IDP doesn’t influence housing type
Income-restricted Housing beyond IDP

- Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing
  - Requires certain large projects to create a strategy for addressing the housing needs of protected classes

- Partnering with CDCs on City-owned land for creation of affordable housing

- Partnering with local institutions for the donation of land to support housing
  - Examples: Charlesview and the 90 Antwerp Street Project

90 Antwerp Street
60% of the housing units at 90 Antwerp Street are income-restricted housing.
Next Steps
Next Steps

• Fall Public Meeting (date TBD)
  • Continue Transportation Review
    • Development impacts
    • Transitway feasibility
    • Parking/pickup/loading policies

• Release draft report for public review and comment
Thank You
Q&A