

Due to a zoom technical difficulty, BPDA staff has done their best attempt to transcribe the Q and A section of the meeting. With both English and Spanish audio playing, it was difficult to get direct quotes. We have done our best to copy as much as we could, but *NOTE THAT THE FOLLOWING TRANSCRIPTION IS NOT A WORD FOR WORD REPLICATION OF THE MEETING QUESTION AND ANSWER SECTION*

- Louis Elisa: There is an ongoing effort to save as many of the trees as possible by the Melnea Cass Conservancy. We should be making efforts to ensure that incoming developments have the appropriate setbacks to preserve mature trees.
 - Jill Zick (BPDA Landscape Architecture): There are a lot of great large trees on the site and our goal is to preserve as many of them as we can, but there are trees in spaces where developers would want to place buildings. There are some trees that have structural issues. In the RFP we ask that an arborist does an assessment of the health of the trees on site. We also have language in the RFP anticipating that some trees will have to be removed, and in this case, regardless of the condition of the tree, we ask for an inch-for-inch replacement that can be on or off-site (in the immediate area)
 - Louis Elisa: There is already a conservancy in place to handle tree loss. If you're writing guidelines, tree preservation cannot be a suggestion and the conservancy will be looking at their decisions. We need say that we want to preserve trees to the extent possible and every effort has to be made to preserve the trees. The real concern is preserving mature trees and even with an inch for inch replacement we don't get the same canopy benefits
- Louis Elisa: Future designs need to take into consideration Northeastern's developments when thinking about the massing of this building. These changes will affect the whole ecosystem and ten stories will create a tunnel. There should be a softer and more inviting edge on Tremont and Melnea Cass with more inviting green space, better circulation, and more aggressive setbacks
 - Meghan Richard (BPDA Urban Design): We do understand that Northeastern is proposing a rather tall building. Are you asking that we show the building so that you can see how the Crescent Parcel massing relates to that building? From previous meetings, we heard that creating one single building along the edge would create even more of a wall effect, and having Northeastern's very tall building there would exacerbate that. We really tried to massage our design so that the bulk of the height wouldn't be directly across from Northeastern. We're trying to create welcoming open space while also balancing feasible development
 - Louis Elisa: If you look at the drawings you have and what Northeastern is proposing it will create a real tunnel. You might want to consider stepping back from the edge and more towards the interior. Otherwise, you'll have this environmental gauntlet with shadows
 - Jeong Jun Ju (BPDA Urban Design): Where we're preserving trees is actually across from the site of Northeastern's proposal, and where we have a building

placed is across from the Renaissance Building. We can't control the Northeastern building but we tried to work with our proposal to soften up the corner of Melnea Cass and Tremont. We keep it open at the intersection to create a gateway. The gateway connects to other existing open space. We put the taller building next to the Whittier site and the smaller building along Melnea Cass

- Bill Singleton: On the other side of this massing, how open and inviting is this to the neighborhood behind. If the building just has this glassy, brick corporate look to it, it might serve as a wall. If it's inviting though it could be a good addition
 - Morgan McDaniel (BPDA: Real Estate): You raise a good point about materials and massing. We're putting language in the RFP asking them to respect the neighborhood as a frontage side of the building. If there are proposals that come in that don't meet this requirement it will be the job of the PRC, which is made of community members to determine what we're looking for.
- Bill Singleton: What are the community benefits with the RFP?
 - Morgan McDaniel (BPDA: Real Estate): We didn't go through the development objectives because we've done so a number of times in the past but there are likely new people here. To recap the core of PLAN: Nubian Square planning objectives are that all housing proposed must be $\frac{1}{3}$ low-income, $\frac{1}{3}$ moderate-income, and $\frac{1}{3}$ market rate. Additionally developments should encourage economic growth that will create new jobs, implement good job standard, diversity, and inclusion, reflect and respect the history of arts and culture in Roxbury, incorporate contextual architecture and design. Another objective asks developers to think creatively about what they can offer to the community.
 - Dana Whiteside (BPDA: Development Review): Morgan's point about community benefits are all high-level benefits this project will bring. Once the PRC starts evaluating the proposals that are submitted, they can also identify additional benefits that can be of value to the community. That being said, we want to keep and eye towards making sure the project actually works
 - Bill Singleton: We always welcome economic development but not at the expense of different kinds of people. We're trying to encourage diversity
- Meghan Richards (BPDA Urban Design): I just want to re-emphasize something Morgan mentioned during the presentation. The RFP is just the beginning of the project and any proposal will be evaluated and vetted by the PRC, and then from there the project would go through the traditional Article 80 process, which will have further community input. What we're showing are just ideas for the design but we're still very early and conceptual.
 - Dana Whiteside (BPDA Development Review): Further to that point the PRC, helps with the designation of a developer but also becomes the impact advisory group for the actual project. As Meghan was saying this is all part of a larger community process, which includes providing an opportunity for the Roxbury Strategic Master Plan Oversight Committee (RSMPOC) to engage. The RSMPOC has their own great ideas and communication strategy. Marisa Luse

has a tagline for the group about getting engaged, getting involved and taking action and you'll have opportunities with them to share your voice and be heard.

- Alison Pultinas: I'm glad you're thinking about how the building faces Raynor Circle. It's really important that it not be a back door and thinking about the trees I think it's wonderful that protecting the trees. I, like Louis, would say there needs to be stronger language than just guidelines. We need to prioritize the heritage trees, which the state says need to be protected.
- Alison Pultinas: I am also concerned about the wind tunnel effect. I'm not sure what heights reduce that effect but there's already a very strong wind coming from Ruggles Station and if it gets worse from a 12 story building at Whittier and a 25 story building at Northeastern that's not good at all for public open space.
 - Dana Whiteside (BPDA Development Review): We should put language in the RFP acknowledging wind, but also once the RFP is released and a developer is designated, the project undergoes environmental review, including wind impacts, and it's something the development team has to submit during the article 80 large project review process
- Alison Pultinas: There also needs to be more thought put into access and how pedestrians are crossing Tremont to get to Ruggles Station. The crosswalk at Melnea Cass is not good. The best one to use is at Ruggles Plaza but that's not where there's going to be open space so you don't want to encourage jay-walking.
- Alison Pultinas: I know with Whittier they showed a bike lane and I don't know if that's something you've thought about for Crescent too
- Kelly Sherman (BPDA Downtown and Neighborhood Planning): There's a question in the chat from Yvonne Laylyre. She wants to know if there's any legal protection for the heritage trees
 - Jill Zick (BPDA Landscape Architecture): There is protection for trees on public property. In this scenario, however, the BPDA is considered a private owner of this land, which is why we've added language about trees on this site just to be clear for developers who are submitting proposals for this parcel. We've taken these comments about protecting the trees very seriously and we want to protect as many of these trees and specifically the largest. I hope when you read the draft RFP that we do take this seriously and we request the preservation of the majority of the trees understanding that development may impact some of the trees located on the site. But I think we've tried to be really clear that there is an area of open space where the largest trees would be preserved and we preserve the trees within the boundaries of the site. In the rendering, we try to show how a lot of the trees on the site would be preserved.
- Nina LaNegra: This intersection encapsulates the history and the fact that we have beautiful trees is because we stopped a state plan for a highway. However, the state and city still seem intent on building some version of the highway and pretending it's something the community wants, which it does not want or like. On the other side of this impending siege of Roxbury, and I call it a siege because they're trying to take our trees, build these massive buildings, and take affordable places to live. We have an opioid crisis, gentrification meeting us from the South End. There's currently a meeting about

Melnea Cass being held by the city councilor President Janey that I should be at but instead, I'm here, because I should be here too. We're being stretched thin and it's really like an attack on people that live and work in this area. So far there has been no discussion of what Northeastern is planning to build some massive ugly structure to house 1000 students and what impact that will have on all the people who live and work in this area and the destruction of communities, affordable housing, and quality of life.

What plans, if any are there to get Gerald Autler and Northeastern to these meetings?

- Dana Whiteside (BPDA Development Review): I'm glad to hear what you said. I want to acknowledge your understandable frustration, and just want to say that I hear you and feel you. We as a city team will do our best to be mindful of that try not to perpetuate this feeling of there being an onslaught. I think there's opportunity for more conversation around how this development on Crescent parcel needs to be coordinated with Northeastern. From my perspective, this team that has been working on the RFP has been mindful of that and an important next step will be a view and or discussion about what coordination should look like. I don't want to diminish what you said, but the good news is that because this parcel is not developed there is an opportunity to look at how the two developments can be better informed. I also think your suggestion of an update about where the Northeastern project is would be beneficial for this community's review of the RFP. In reference to Angela's point being mindful is not enough, we'll also do some follow through on those considerations.
- Gail Sullivan: I am not from the neighborhood, I live in JP and I'm an architect. I know what it's like to be on both ends of these meetings and I have a question about the process of the urban design that goes into the RFP. When you release drawings like you have shown it becomes very prescriptive for the development teams and it may not deliver the most and the best from the developers for the local neighborhood. What's important about this parcel isn't just that it's at an intersection but instead is the nexus of a major boulevard, a lot of institutional development, and a much smaller neighborhood. How do we make development that is beneficial to the neighborhood and the city and also provides green space? This body won't decide that because you need to wait for developer RFPs, but that best thing would be to have written in language that sets very strong goals for what development ought to do, but more flexibility on the manifestation of how they do that, and that preserves the neighborhood's right to have more input down the road.
 - Dana Whiteside (BPDA Development Review): From a process standpoint, you raise a lot of really good points and what I hear is an opportunity for us to look at the language, I think the intent - to your point - is certainly not to be prescriptive, but maybe the result - in terms of what we're showing here visually tonight - is giving that impression. So apologies upfront, if that is the case. The idea certainly was to show what might be there, but then to allow for discussion around the reactions, et cetera. I like to think in terms of opportunities, and tonight - to me - is the the opportunity here to hear wonderful points like yours, Louis's, Allison's, Angela's, Devon's, LaNegra's, and others, that enable us to go back to the drawing board to fine tune and add finesse to what we have already done. And I

think we certainly think about what the site should do, as opposed to saying where it should go, and I think that's a wonderful opportunity. My colleagues who are architects can speak better to this than I can, but we should certainly take that into advisement, and see how to apply that. Thank you all.

- Meghan Richards (BPDA Urban Design): I just want to clarify, I believe - and Kelly, you can correct me if I'm wrong - I believe the draft RFP is on the website currently?
 - Kelly Sherman (BPDA Downtown and Neighborhood Planning): I think so, if not it will be up there on Friday
- Meghan Richards (BPDA Urban Design): Ok, because we only actually include, I believe two diagrams in the actual RFP, it really is a written language, written guidelines, that are not meant to be this prescriptive. These diagrams are to talk about what one possibility of how to interpret them is. Clearly the idea of where we came up with the open space was because we heard feedback from previous four meetings going over the draft RFP was that preserving the mature trees - and certainly what we have heard tonight - is that that is really important. So Jill went out to the site and did a survey of the mature trees to get a sense of where they are so that we could try to - this was our first attempt at looking at what kind of typical building plate, like layouts you could possibly have that could start working with preserving existing mature trees, you know, the majority of them, and where they tend to be located. And then the idea that we also had heard that there wasn't enough public open space, was also a way to preserve the trees, making that public open space, and start to come up with. So it's really not a thing that's meant to be this is exactly what this is. It's just a sort of idea to talk about, and this is I think our first time doing things virtually. We normally have our draft RFP when we're there in person, we have diagrams, we talk about how they relate. This is our first attempt at doing this virtually so I think that is definitely a learning lesson for us.
- Jill Zick (BPDA Landscape Architecture): Actually I want to jump in just because I was addressed specifically in the chat, and just clarify the comments that I made earlier about - the question was in regards to heritage trees and being protected on the site. Heritage trees aren't protected by the state. For the purposes of jurisdiction, BPDA absolutely is a public agency, and in service to this community, I couldn't agree with that comment more. But I just want to be clear, from the perspective of the state and jurisdiction over heritage trees, the parcels that we own and put out for RFP are considered private, so those trees are not technically protected by the state, which is why, again, we have attempted to put very strong language in the RFP about protecting any of the mature trees on site. And again, that is the reason why I went out and spent a bit of time to identify and locate, type, and actually measure all of the trees so we had the best information we could go forward, so we could educate ourselves and provide that specific language within the RFP so that respondents really understood this is a community priority and we stand by it. So I hope that's helpful in providing some clarity and I'm sorry if I wasn't clear previously.

- Kelly Sherman (BPDA Downtown and Neighborhood Planning): Thanks, Jill. I think Hussein Ali might have a question, if so feel free to unmute yourself otherwise we will go to someone else, but I have seen his hand pop up a few times not sure if its just a technical difficulty.
- Hussein Ali: Thank you Kelly, I have a question. My question is in terms of maybe the time frame. I know there is a proposal you guys planned to submit on Friday to the public. So what is the time frame in terms of maybe... (1:10:36). And then the second question, in terms of the new development is going to be 26 floors, so then how does that differ in terms of the two buildings next to each other. Then the higher one is very different, and I guess is it housing or are you considering to use more economic opportunities for this project?
 - Dana Whiteside (BPDA Development Review): Let me just say, and Hussein thank you for your question, I'm just going to ask a clarifying question that may be for Jun's benefit or even mine if helpful. Hussein were you asking about the design and massing or were you asking about the time... (1:12:00).
- Hussein Ali: Both. In terms of the timing what is the time frame for the time the proposal will be up and hopefully we can receive notification of that process and where you're at in that process? And second, in terms of the project itself it's been mentioned that how does the 8 or 9 floor building compare to the 26 floor opposite building? How does it fit into the area in terms of use. Will it be commercial or housing?
 - Jeong Jun Ju (BPDA Urban Design): I know Northeastern is proposing an overwhelmingly tall building but unfortunately I'm not a part of that kind of institutional master plan, so I don't have a good sense of where this proposal is and don't know when it will be built. We do have Tremont Street which is a wide thoroughfare. So maybe for our approach, we were more hopeful about the open space and preserving trees. Let's say across the street Northeastern is implementing their institutional master plan; across the street we tried to preserve the neighborhood scale and context. One of the key comments from the neighborhood that we heard previously is that that "this doesn't look like part of the neighborhood", so that was a big part of our change of how to make the crescent parcel development and we also noticed the trees and we used the trees and open space as a way to preserve more connections. We tried to minimize traffic impacts and bring more purpose to Raynor circle and lowered the building height near the Madison Park Development. So again this is the ideas we're talking about tonight but they're not necessarily all requirements for the RFP. We tried to keep the same ideas that come up from the last meeting. I know in some ways it's wishful thinking at Tremont Street because of its scale, but in a way we have some distance from what's happening on the Northeastern side and could be more like what's happening on the lower Roxbury side and whittier is happening and there's new development in Madison Park and we're trying to work with what's happening in this area and using these ideas to drive the massing and height and also for use its likely that it will be mostly residential and have commercial on the ground floor

- Dana Whiteside (BPDA Development Review): It seems like we should give some sort of update on where to check in with where we are in this process. Right now we're in the draft phase of this RFP. I shared a link in the chat to the PLAN: Nubain Square Page. That is the place where all documents live for PLAN:Nubian Square including draft RFPs. This draft I believe will be available by Friday but again it's a draft. From a process standpoint we'll take comments we receive from tonight and comments from review of the draft, and before we issue the RFP, we'll take this to the RSMPOC for a vote to proceed with the issuance of the RFP. So the process we're engaging in right now is useful and important for community feedback, reaction etc that will inform what the upcoming draft will look like and take, once it's been Determined that it's appropriate, we would take it to the Oversight Committee. Once we have permission to issue it there is a response period generally of about between 45-60 days, which is how long development entities have time to submit and respond to the RFP. Once those responses are submitted there's a review period and the Project Review Committee is chosen to help look at responses to the RFP and then they make a recommendation. So to answer your question, Hussain, there's still a lot of time in the process for feedback. Does that answer your question?
 - Hussein Ali: Yes, it does, but to make it a little more easy, it would be helpful to see the border community, or big picture, what's being proposed. And I know it's the other side of the area but definitely having a sense of what's happening traffic wise or whatever buildings they're proposing because it still impacts our area. Whether it be opportunity wise or housing or traffic it would be useful to see possible drawings for the area. When tomorrow a community member comes in and wants to know what is coming in it's not helpful to only have one side of the story. And you're the BPDA so I don't see any reason why the BPDA can't show whats up there and what's being proposed there, so the community can make a decision based on whatever is being proposed.
 - Dana Whiteside (BPDA Development Review): That's a very fair point, thanks. I think what we'll want to do is more sure that more of that information is included so thank you very much.
- Hussein Ali: In terms of Crescent Parcel and Parcel 3, knowing that the two projects are up in the air, how do you bring the two projects together. They're very close in proximity. Are we going to finish this process and then move on or are we going to run the other process at the same time?
 - Dana Whiteside (BPDA Development Review): I would venture that it's important to get through this crescent parcel process now. P3, for those who aren't familiar, there was a previous proposal for P3 but that project has been withdrawn and is no longer under consideration by us. Through the PLAN: Nubian Square process we will engage the community and stakeholders in a review of design and use considerations for a new P3 RFP. That process has not started yet; we're looking at the next few

months. We'll have more detail as we go forward, but from my vantage point we'll do them in a sequenced way. This also might go back to not wanting to have a siege of information and so the plan is to get through this process first and get this RFP out the right way in the appreciate amount of time and then going on to P3. The idea too with getting that particular RFP created, is that it will be a new RFP which is similar for what we're doing now for crescent parcel. We'll think about design and think about uses and those considerations. And then getting that parcel out, again at the right time. So, sequential is what I'm saying.

- Meghan Richards (BPDA Urban Design): I just want to add that, for Crescent, we've been working with you guys and the community on this RFP since a year ago. So the idea of tonight was, we had had that last workshop we had scheduled, to go over the guidelines from our March 23rd meeting, which we obviously had to cancel, and this was our first opportunity to come back and meet with you guys and talk about it. We used some of that time while we were all not able to host meetings to really look at the comments and further improve the RFP and really take into consideration the comments. I think P3 as Dana said just at the very beginning stage and we will initiate that process once this RFP is out. That will be coming in the future but the focus right now was on Crescent. I also want to add that Kelly worked really hard on an information sheet on P3. It will be posted on the PLAN: Nubian Square webpage and it will include information on the process and how it will be initiated.
- Dana Whiteside (BPDA Development Review): It may be a good idea to post the P3 materials we have, even if they aren't translated yet, for those who are curious about it.
- Kelly Sherman (BPDA Downtown and Neighborhood Planning): Sure! I'll try to get them up on Friday when I get everything else up.
- Dana Whiteside (BPDA Development Review): If the materials are finalized we should try and get them up. And Hussein, to get back to your and Meghan's point; we have been working on Crescent Parcel for quite some time with the community and this meeting was supposed to tie up loose ends from the meetings we've had over the past year. If folks are curious about P3 we haven't started the process yet, but at least by getting the materials up you'll see at least the general high level considerations surrounding the site. Also this should include lessons learned on our previous take on P3 and some of this information may be useful so we do an enhanced job of putting out an RFP. But again, I want to reiterate, that process will be done with the community and getting input and the RFP for P3 will not go out without community input
- Ayanna Hines: My Question is that I keep hearing about community engagement. Whittier Residents, many of them lifetime, as well as in the village, and many of them not in the neighborhood because the Whittier Housing buildings aren't there. What efforts

are you all making to do some very intentional outreach and meeting coordination with the immediate community.

- Dana Whiteside (BPDA Development Review): Are you speaking in terms of this particular parcel, or just in general?
 - Ayanna Hines: With this particular parcel, what I have seen and regularly heard from residents is shocks from the backend because they weren't attending meetings because and it's not because they aren't aware, but I think there's the perception from some of the residents that the meetings are so high level that it does not feel comfortable for them to engage. And I think when efforts have been made to come directly to them, and not just expect them to engage in a general process, and there is more of an invitation for them to get involved and having them understand that their voices can actually be heard, and again in the case of Whittier residents who are still relocated and are not here and those who are coming back for phase three in 2023 that's a lot of time for meetings to be happening in the process to not be hearing their voice.
 - Dana Whiteside (BPDA Development Review): I think that's a good point. I'm actually starting to work now on the Whittier Project among other things I'm involved in as well, so it's nice to meet you virtually. I think you raise a very good point, and I think the opportunity exists for us to think creatively about outreach. We do make a very concerted effort to make sure all abutters and stakeholders have notice about these meetings. But if I'm hearing you correctly you're referring to the way in which meetings are held and specific conversation with the Whittier audience.
 - Ayanna Hines: I would also include Madison Park Village because in my opinion they are the most immediate residential neighbors to the parcel. Again, I cannot underscore enough, my concern that Whittier Residents are not here and for them to come home, only to see to this new world that they had no idea or input in is concerning
 - Dana Whiteside (BPDA Development Review): You raise a good point Ayanna and I won't presume to have an answer at this moment but I will say that I think the opportunity exists to look at ways to be better about that engagement. One of the things off the top of my head, I know in my experience with Whittier and Madison Park Village and others that have many residents in various developments, a lot of times those entities will have, for lack of a better term, a Community Service Coordinator, or organizer, or Resident Task Force, etc. Again, thinking out loud, not presuming to have an answer at this moment, but something I think we can work on is maybe make sure materials being prepared for these meetings are printed and delivered to those groups, so they can at least read them in advance. We should have a conversation offline about how to engage these residents

in specific conversations, but I hear you. With these relocation projects, like happening at Whittier, it can be disconcerting to hear about meetings, not be able to go because you're not there, and then come back and have a project all of a sudden in your backyard, literally, and not having felt a sense of engagement. It's an important concern. I will put my email in the chat, and if you or others are concerned about that particular issue and want to reach out to me I can certainly continue this conversation with you all as well.

- Ayanna Hines: Certainly, and the other issue I was going to raise, I just saw it was mentioned in the chat, and this is also a very real issue, it's that with these meetings now virtual, that is another barrier that keeps the higher level of this engagement. I think we cannot make the assumption that everybody has that access, and it's something that we are constantly trying to make sure that there is equity in folks' ability to be able to be a resident, in all forms of what that means in the community. I think that is something in this process that needs to be addressed as well.
 - Dana Whiteside (BPDA Development Review): Thank you Ayanna, that resonates completely with us as well. I'll just say, we as a City team, have really had that as a concern, that even as we try to engage in these unprecedented times, this issue around, I'll call it the 'digital divide', is a valid concern. And I think the ability to be creative about getting information out to folks, particularly those who may not have access to the technology we're using is important and we need to work on that, so thank you for raising that.
- Kelly Sherman (BPDA Downtown and Neighborhood Planning): Thank you Dana, and thank you guys. So it is 7:49, so in the interest of letting you all have your lives back, you are free to go, this is the end of our presentation. One thing I want to add, is we'd like everybody to provide comments, if you have them, by October 23. If you would like to have comments saved, I am going to stay on for a couple of minutes and anybody can just drop them in the chat. Once it is in the chat, it will be saved on record when we post this recording, so anybody can see any comments you have. Additionally, if you have other questions or comments that you think of later, feel free to email me at kelly.sherman@boston.gov or Morgan McDaniel, our emails are on this slide. And once again, thank you very much for being here. We know this is a late night and this is a lot of time dedicated to making your city better and we really deeply appreciate your input, and we hope to continue getting your feedback, so thank you so much. Staff, thank you so much for being here, everyone did a great job. Interpreters, thank you so much for sticking around to help us. We really appreciate it. I will stay on until 7:55 if anyone wants to drop their comment in the chat, but otherwise thank you all for being here.
- Dana Whiteside (BPDA Development Review): Thanks everyone for your time, really appreciate it.