

Meeting Summary

Project: MHD 77866 - Rose Kennedy Greenway Ramp Cover Project (Parcels 6, 12, 18)

Subject: Public Meeting No. 5

Date: Wednesday, April 15, 2015

Location: Boston City Hall/BRA Board Room

On the above noted date a public meeting was held at City Hall in the BRA Board Room (9th floor). There were about 30 attendees, including residents, MassDOT, BRA, City, and State officials. An attendance list has been attached for reference.

The meeting was recorded by Matt Conti of NorthEndWaterfront.com, and the video can be found on their website at: <http://northendwaterfront.com/2015/04/greenway-ramp-parcel-concepts-ready-for-environmental-review-video/>. The presentation/PowerPoint slides have also been posted on the BRA website at: <http://www.bostonredevelopmentauthority.org/getattachment/727a605f-db69-4f36-a45a-4234afd3c8b3>. The presentation was used to provide a brief review of concepts developed through the previous four public meetings for the Parcel Cover Study and to show the next steps moving forward as the project enters the Notice of Project Change (NPC) and environmental review processes (*The notes contained herein are not intended to be a complete record of the topics presented or discussed. The entire presentation can be viewed at the sites noted previously.*)

1. Opening Comments

Lauren Shurtleff (BRA), John Romano (MassDOT) and Roch Larochelle (HDR, Inc.) each made introductory remarks summarizing the overall purpose of the study and noted that this public meeting will be the final meeting for this study-phase of the project.

Matt Littell (Utile, Inc.) followed with a brief description of various refinements to the cover concepts last presented in January, 2015. The presentation included a series of updated schematics and abstract visuals for Parcel 6 (Haymarket/Government Center Garage), Parcel 12 (Quincy Market/Dock Square Garage), and Parcel 18 (Rowes Wharf area). Matt reminded all in attendance that the purpose of this study was to frame the design process but that much design work remains to be completed after this initial study is completed. He continued that for this phase of the project, the team has been focused on a broad range of potential cover or screening solutions while not focusing on specific materials or uses. Roch added that this was done to allow for flexibility in design as the project moves out of the MEPA approval phase and into the Design-phase.

Roch Larochelle followed by providing a brief overview of the comments received by MassDOT/BRA during the comment period after Public Meeting No. 4 was held. Roch noted that based on the input received throughout the study process and through the formal comment period, it is clear that there is general consensus among community members, stakeholder groups and elected officials in support of the proposed cover concepts as developed by the Team, with input from the community, and that the Team should move forward with those concepts through the MEPA process and preparation of a Notice of Project Change (NPC) for the Greenway.

Roch next provided a brief overview of the next steps for the project, which include the preparation of a summary report, completion of an air quality analysis and submittal of the Notice of Project Change (NPC) in support of the MEPA environmental process. Once the cover concepts are accepted by MEPA, the project will then move into a formal design phase and the public involvement process will resume with Public Meeting No. 6. The following anticipated project schedule was presented to the group:

- Summer 2015 Study Report Preparation/Air Quality Analysis
- Summer/Fall 2015 MEPA/NPC Filing
- Fall 2015 MEPA Comment Period
- Winter 2015 MEPA Certification
- Winter/Spring 2016 Design Phase Begins/Public Process Resumes

2. Public Comment and Discussion

Following the team's presentation, John Romano (MassDOT) opened the meeting to questions and comments from the audience:

Parcel 12 Discussion (Quincy Market/Dock Square)

- Dave Goggins, NEWRA, asked if there was a height-differential between the one- and two-path options developed for Parcel 12. John and Roch both noted that there was a two-foot difference in height between the two, due to the relocation of an overhead-mounted guide sign on the northbound off-ramp (Ramp CN-SA). Locating this sign outside of the tunnel structure allows for the overhead signage clearance envelope to be removed, thus lowering the proposed cover. John again informed the group that, while the final sign configuration would require Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) approval, the team has already met with the State Traffic Engineer concerning these signs, which are proposed to be reduced in size from 6-feet to just 3 ½ feet in height. He also noted that the existing under-sign lighting can also be removed as it is no longer required.
- Bob Venuti, North End Resident, asked about removing a portion of the proposed pedestrian connection at the southeast corner of Parcel 12 and replacing it with a stairway to keep the Commercial Street pedestrian connection open across the Artery corridor, an original intent of the project. Matt responded that ramps are required at all locations anyway, even with stairs, and that the proposed cover would stop short of the existing pedestrian cross-connection at the south end of the parcel.
- Bob Venuti asked if there was a caution sign or any other kind of improvement that could be made to the southbound off-ramp (Ramp CS-SA)? The attendee noted that, while there was a traffic signal at the end of the ramp today, they believed that the condition is dangerous given the speeds that vehicles are exiting the tunnel given a green light. John responded that the team would review this issue again, and that he would bring up this issue with the State Traffic Engineer now to see if there is a solution that can be implemented. The attendee added that the existing traffic signal is difficult to see as-is, and that they were afraid that additional screening could exacerbate the problem. Another attendee noted that the proposed cover walkway would provide a safer alternative route for pedestrians at this location, which would also help alleviate their concerns.

General Comments

- An attendee asked about air quality concerns with the proposed covers. John responded that the team is currently working through an evaluation of the potential air quality impacts associated with extending the tunnel covers. John added that there are now new air quality standards that will need to be considered. It was further discussed that there may be a need to make some changes to the ventilation systems, however that will need to be worked out during the actual design phase.

- The attendee then noted that the air quality could only be better as a result of this project, to which John reminded him that the air quality would not necessarily be better and explained that, in the future condition, we would have people standing directly above the tunnel portals, which we don't have currently. It was explained that these items will be evaluated as part of the ongoing air quality analysis that the team is currently working on.
- Bob Venuti asked where MassDOT expects to get the money for construction once the design is completed. John replied that, assuming MEPA approval, the project is currently funded through the design process, but past that it would then compete with other priority projects in the five-year rolling Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). He added that he assumed that the project will be split into separate contracts for Parcel 6 and Parcel 12, due to cost concerns. Bob then asked if the Central Artery/Tunnel (CA/T) mitigation requirements would help to boost this project to the top of the CIP; John stated that he could not answer that question himself and the project will need to go through the process.
- Anne Fanton, Former member of the Central Artery Environmental Oversight Committee, asked Lauren if she could let the audience members know the status of the environmental process at mid-summer, and not just when the project has been filed with MEPA. Lauren and John both agreed that they would have no problem providing periodic updates throughout the environmental review process via e-mail to the group.
- Another attendee asked if the next public meeting would not occur until 2016. John replied that this was likely the case.
- An attendee asked if full design through construction documents is covered, and, if so, if it was covered with State money. John stated that the full design was covered, and Alwin Ramirez (MassDOT) added that it was covered with State funding.
- David Roderick, North End Resident, noted that, during the original conceptual Artery planning, the intent was for 75% open space and 25% development for the Greenway parcels. John noted that this was the reason for the NPC filing – and added that the fact that the team is altering the original agreement to provide for more than 75% open space will be favorable from a permitting perspective. Bill Tuttle (MassDOT) added that increasing the percentage of open space would not require sacrificing any other areas of the Greenway for development, and that since we were increasing the amount of open space there should be no concern moving forward.
- Anne Fanton asked if any of the proposed concepts would preclude any future development on the parcels. John noted that both MassDOT and the BRA are co-proponents of this project as currently conceived. If the open space on Parcels 6 and 12 is constructed as currently planned, any future development would require the approval of the City/BRA, State and Legislature to do so. George Batchelor (MassDOT) added that Article 97 would come into play once the parcels become open space, which would also discourage any future development on the parcels.
- Another attendee noted the importance of maintaining good records of the decisions that have been made throughout this process and to make sure that the financial infeasibility of building on the parcels was noted in the MEPA filing and the NPC.

The meeting was concluded at 7:10 PM.

Meeting Attendees

City of Boston/State of Massachusetts Attendees:

George Batchelor, MassDOT
Robbin Bergfors, MassDOT
Stephanie Denezio, MassDOT
Roch Larochelle, HDR Inc.
Matthew Littel, Utile
Lara Merida, BRA
John Mallloy, MassDOT
Kevin Morrison, HDR Inc.
Alwin Ramirez, MassDOT
John Romano, MassDOT
Lauren Shurtleff, BRA
Skip Smallridge, CSS
Bill Tuttle, MassDOT

Members of the Public:

Matt Conti, NorthEndWaterfront.com
Anne Fanton, Former Member of the Central Artery Environmental Oversight Committee
Dave Goggins, North End/Waterfront Residents Association
Laura Jasinski, Rose Kennedy Greenway Conservancy
Tom Nally, A Better City
Tom Palmer, Tom Palmer Communications
Keiko Prince
Julie Proulx, The HYM Investment Group
David Roderick, North End Resident
Bob Venuti, North End Resident
Nina Zannini, Paul Revere House