

Meeting Summary

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

Subject: Public Meeting No. 3

Date: Wednesday, October 29, 2014

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 public meeting was recorded by Matt Conti of NorthEndWaterfront.com and can be viewed at <http://northendwaterfront.com/2014/10/concepts-discussed-to-cover-greenway-ramp-parcels/>.

The presentation/PowerPoint slides have been posted on the BRA website at <http://www.bostonredevelopmentauthority.org/getattachment/364dfdb2-ff11-405f-942f-e2b3030bbea1>. The presentation was used to provide a brief review concepts developed through the first two public meetings for the Parcel Cover Study and was then opened to active public participation where attendees were invited to interact and engage with the design team to discuss goals, concerns, vision and ideas for the development of each of the three parcels.

The following items were discussed; however, it should be noted that this summary is not intended to be a complete record of the topics discussed. The entire presentation can be viewed at the sites noted previously.

1. Opening Informational Session

- Lauren Shurtleff (BRA) and John Romano (MassDOT) opened the meeting with introductions and a brief overview of the purpose of the meeting. John stated that while potential costs had not been discussed at the two previous public hearings, MassDOT will ultimately have to weigh the potential costs of covering each parcel in more detail moving forward and noted that this project will ultimately need to compete with other projects within the MassDOT's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for funding authorization.
- Matthew Littell (Utile) followed by providing an initial review of the parcel concepts that have been discussed to date at previous public meetings, and discussed the varying potential definitions of "cover", including visual screening, decking, or even buildings.
- Roch Larochelle (HDR) went on to describe the various design considerations for each of the three parcels, and displayed plan and cross-sectional views of the potential limits and vertical elements of cover over Parcels 6 and 12. Emily Ashby (Utile) also presented 3-dimensional views from a model developed for each parcel during Roch's discussion.
- John Romano (MassDOT) wrapped up the initial presentation with a brief discussion on the ground rules for the workshop "tabletop" session. He then opened the meeting for public comments. Several major discussion topics have been summarized below.

2. Public Workshop and Discussion

Attendees gathered around the boardroom table where maps and concept information for each parcel were provided. The group then walked through each parcel in an interactive manner starting with Parcel 6 (Government Center Garage area), followed by Parcel 12 (Haymarket) and then Parcel 18 (Financial

District/Rowes Wharf). For each parcel, the group was posed with the following three questions which served as the basis of the group discussion:

- a. *What is your vision for this parcel? Should the parcel be a gathering place, an area through which you pass through, or both?*
- b. *What are desirable uses for the parcel? Undesirable uses?*
- c. *What type of pedestrian access should be on this parcel? Would you prioritize north-south or east-west connections? What adjacent or nearby amenities or places should it be connected to?*

Throughout the workshop discussions, key points/takeaways for each parcel were recorded on flipcharts by team members.

Additionally, the following points were discussed for each parcel:

Parcel 6 Discussion (Haymarket/Government Center)

Anne Fanton, a former member of the Central Artery Environmental Oversight Committee, inquired about the overall size of Parcel 6, and for the proposed Parcel 6 cover shown in the initial presentation. John stated that the deck was approx. 30,000 square feet in size, and approx. 500-550 feet in length, or about 2 – 2 ½ North End blocks. Anne asked if the public could do more than just walk across it, and if there were other uses possible at the parcel such as for athletic purposes. John, Matthew and Roch all stated that the elevations of the proposed cover vary considerably across the site and are generally higher from west to east so there is no “level area” to consider for such possible uses (see cross-sections in presentation). Tom Nally, A Better City, asked for a longitudinal section across the parcel for the next public hearing to provide a different view of the parcel along the street.

- Bud Ris, North End Resident, commented that he did not see any use for the Parcel 6 deck other than for walking. There was also some discussion about the possible integration of solar panels to provide a “green” approach for parcel amenities.
- An attendee asked about how much weight the potential decking could support. John noted that the tunnels and boat sections below had originally been designed to support the former YMCA building proposal so supporting a deck alternative is likely possible as well. It was noted that any alternative will need to go through a more thorough design analysis to determine actual loading once an alternative is selected for the site. This remains true for each of the parcels included in this study.
- An attendee asked the design team to draw the desire lines for each parcel first, and then draw the deck afterwards to suit the desire lines. John noted that the former YMCA building concept also had an angled walkway through the proposed building to suite the intended desire line. Francine Gannon, North End Resident, seconded John, and stated that the ultimate need at Parcel 6 is a walkway connection.
- An attendee asked to view the Utile model of Parcel 6, looking north towards it from Parcel 8.
- Bud Ris noted that a walkway should be a key objective for this parcel and not a building as public space is critically needed in this area.
- An attendee asked if we were showing the maximum amount of cover for Parcels 6 and 12. The project team answered yes, based on the best available information at this time and noted that any additional cover beyond these limits could involve cost-prohibitive changes to the tunnel ventilation system. Roch stated that regardless of what alternative is chosen through this study, the air quality and resulting ventilation issues would need to be investigated in further detail to verify that air quality standards are met before any of the designs are completed.
- Another attendee asked if that’s what the jet fans were for, and that they believed that the original plan was to cover all of the ramps in their entirety. The Team replied that the jet fans were provided for this purpose but based on the maximum cover that had been defined at that time. Any resulting designs from this study will need to verify the adequacy of the ventilation system relative to air quality standards.

- An attendee noted that the focus of parcel development in light of budgetary constraints should be on Parcel 6 for pedestrian connectivity, since most people feel that Parcel 12 may have an easier solution and that Parcel 18 works as-is.
- An attendee asked if Parcel 6 is really the start of the Greenway. John stated yes and no – there are additional parcels adjacent to and to the north, but not all of them are set aside for park uses. It was noted however that with current and past development, it is now possible to continue northerly from Parcel 6 along Beverly to Causeway Street past the new Converse Building, over the Charles River Dam locks to Paul Revere Park.
- Matthew Littell noted that while a walkway area was roughed in on their Parcel 6 model, once the need for pedestrian circulation has been satisfied, there are programming options that could potentially be accommodated on the proposed cover. An attendee reiterated that the design team should focus on whatever would enhance the walking experience first, before concentrating on more passive uses.
- Steve McLaughlin queried the attendees, who agreed with his take-away that a linear path along Parcel 6 that enhances the pedestrian experience is what the public wants right now.
- An attendee asked if any building options had been considered, and offered an idea for a museum kiosk of some sort for Parcel 6. John noted that MassDOT would be willing to entertain any private development proposals, but that no non-profits or private developers had come forward recently with a proposal. He added that the air-rights costs are very high for each of the parcels. He also noted that the loss of one floor to one-and-a-half floors of the 55-foot max height zoning limitation, due to the need to maintain vertical clearances over the ramps, plus the lack of convenient loading and parking areas and site access, further reduce the attractiveness of each parcel for any potential development entities. An attendee added that there is interest in placing buildings on the parcels, provided that they could be 400+ feet in height, which is not allowed under current zoning.
- An attendee recommended an outdoor interpretive exhibit for the Big Dig project be added to Parcel 6.
- An attendee asked if a café or public restrooms could be added to either Parcel 6 or Parcel 12, and asked if MassDOT had any aversion to public restrooms. John stated that MassDOT would not likely be willing to provide funding for any restrooms on the Greenway. Roch noted the continual maintenance and operation requirements for any such restroom. Another attendee mentioned that Fanueil Hall, adjacent to Parcel 12, had restrooms accessible to the public already.
- An attendee inquired about the utilities and utility stubs provided for each of the parcels, and noted further that there had been difficulties at other parcels due to a lack of convenient locations for utility connections. It was noted that the Team has been mapping existing utilities in the area and that it would be a goal of any proposed cover feature not to preclude any future connections thereto.
- An attendee reiterated that the focus should go back to what was stated at the first meeting, and that the only reason the State has to “cover” the ramps is due to their visual impact. Another attendee disagreed, stating that it may be reasonable to say what can and cannot go on the platforms, to ensure an attractive and positive experience. John noted that programming is really not an issue at this point, and that MassDOT’s focus now was simply to ensure that they don’t preclude other things from happening.

Parcel 12 Discussion (Quincy Market/Dock Square)

- Francine Gannon stated that there should be a pedestrian connection all the way from North to South along the entire corridor. She also believes that Parcel 12 is just as important as Parcel 6, disagreeing with an earlier attendee’s comment concerning budget priorities.
- An attendee mentioned the former Boston Museum proposal for Parcel 12, and noted that one of the ideas then was to use a pedestrian bridge to make the connection across the parcel. They then suggested that some of the spirit of that bridge idea could be incorporated into some of the parcel cover/deck options.
- An attendee added that Parcel 12 has been subject to numerous studies over the years, and that a building is not feasible due to the restrictive 55-foot height limit allowed by zoning. They added that Parcel 12 should be a park and that it should be a centerpiece along the Greenway.

- Francine Gannon added that Parcel 12 should be a gathering place, and a desirable point to take in the skyline views and orient yourself along the corridor, and that a building use for the parcel was a non-starter within the community – the entire corridor should be devoted to park uses.
- An attendee representing RUFF (Responsible Urbanites For Fido) submitted a proposal for a dog park between Ramp CS-SA and Surface Artery SB (in the "half moon" section) for consideration, which the proposed Parcel 12 deck would overlook. John noted that under this program, the parcel cover option may only include the ramps and not necessarily include the redevelopment of the half moon section of the parcel.
- Another attendee noted that while the Cross Street side of the parcel was extremely narrow – a 'high wall' which separates the neighborhood, the west side along the Surface Artery could accommodate the proposed dog park.
- Steve McLaughlin noted that he would like to prevent the appearance of a 'canyon' on Cross Street. Tom Nally mentioned additional screening to conceal the edge of the proposed deck. John added that the deck would raise the nearly 6-foot high wall to a height of maybe 15-feet, which might exacerbate the 'canyon' feel along Cross Street. Steve seconded that the potential area of cover shown on the plan would appear massive from Cross Street, and that it may be a good idea to modify or minimize the cover area a bit to focus on the immediate need of a pedestrian crossing while minimizing the wall affect along Cross Street.
- Another attendee suggested beams across the ramps to form a sort of trellis over the opening instead of a continuous deck, which would appear less massive.
- Francine Gannon asked why Parcel 12 ended up with a chain link fence above the boat section walls, when all other parcels (except for Parcel 6) received more decorative railings. She suggested a trellis for Parcel 12, similar to that found nearby in Christopher Columbus Park.
- An attendee noted that some form of traffic calming should be considered for the SB-off ramp as speeds for vehicles exiting are quite high and a concern for crossing pedestrians.
- Once again, Steve McLaughlin queried the attendees, who agreed with his take-away that a linear path along Parcel 12 that enhances the pedestrian experience is what the public wants right now.

Parcel 18 Discussion (Financial District/Rowes Wharf)

- There was some discussion that the existing parcel landscaping was well developed and mature and that the current pedestrian facility provides a strong connection through the Greenway.
- Anne Fanton noted that she agreed with the general conclusion that minimal intervention if any was necessary at this parcel. She added that anything built on the parcel should be privately funded.
- Tom Nally suggested that additional screening could be added at the southern end of the SB off-ramp (CS-P) as they felt that the current screening was very porous in nature. Tom added that there might be an opportunity for a vertical element of some sort for Parcel 18.
- Francine Gannon disagreed with the idea of more screening on this parcel, as she believes the sight lines at the end of the SB off-ramp are very tight to begin with.
- An attendee discussed his concerns with traffic exiting the tunnel on the southbound off-ramp (CSP) and not being able to see the traffic signal at the top of the ramp. His concerns are that a pedestrian would be struck there without some sort of a flashing light or other signal in advance of the ramp terminus.
- Another attendee inquired about potential walking paths across the cover for the SB off-ramp; Matt and John both noted that this deck is already waist-high at its lowest point, and that such paths would result in significant elevation changes though the current.

3. Workshop Wrap-Up

John noted to the entire audience that the Team had heard everyone loud and clear, that the pedestrian interface was key for both parcels 6 and 12 and that there was no desire for significant changes to Parcel 18. John also noted that the Team had taken notes and that the flipchart sheets that were recorded for each parcel represent major take-aways from each parcel for the Team to consider moving forward.

He also reminded the group that MassDOT could not promise other work on the parcels that was not contained to the proposed covers themselves.

John asked the audience if there were any additional questions. Upon hearing none, he invited all to attend the next meeting that will be held on January 8th, 2015 and that MassDOT/BRA would be soliciting formal comments for a 30-day period following that meeting.

The meeting was concluded at 7:45 PM.

Meeting Attendees

Ex-Officio Attendees:

Patrick Lyons, Office of Massachusetts State Representative Aaron Michlewitz

Maria Puopolo, Office of Massachusetts State Senator Anthony Petrucelli

City of Boston/State of Massachusetts Attendees:

Emily Ashby, Utile

Robbin Bergfors, MassDOT

Meera Deean, Utile

Mark Gravalles, MassDOT

Roch Larochelle, HDR, Inc.

Matthew Littel, Utile

Steve McLaughlin, MassDOT

Kevin Morrison, HDR, Inc.

Alwin Ramirez, MassDOT

John Romano, MassDOT

Lauren Shurtleff, BRA

Bill Tuttle, MassDOT

Members of the Public:

Matt Conti, NorthEndWaterfront.com

Cyrus Dahmubed, IQubed Design

Anne Fanton, Former member of the Central Artery Environmental Oversight Committee

Phil Frattaroli, North End Waterfront/Neighborhood Council (NEWNC)

Dave Goggins, Responsible Urbanites for Fido

Francine Gannon, North End Resident

Leslie Horn, Responsible Urbanites for Fido

Laura Jasinski, Rose Kennedy Greenway Conservancy

Dave Masculli, Responsible Urbanites for Fido

Sy Mintz, Wharf District Resident

Tom Nally, A Better City

Julie Proulx, The HYM Investment Group

Bud Ris, North End Resident

Bob Sloane, Walk Boston

Richard Vita