



## **MassDOT Turnpike Air Rights Parcels 12-15**

### **CAC Working Meeting #20**

**Tuesday, March 7, 2017, 6:00 p.m.**

**Location: Saint Cecilia's Parish Hall**

#### **CAC Attendees:**

Brandon Beatty, Back Bay Neighborhood Resident  
Kathleen Brill, Fenway Civic Association (FCA)  
Fritz Casselman, Neighborhood Association of the Back Bay (NABB)  
Brian Doherty, Building & Construction Trades Council of the Metropolitan District  
David Gamble, Boston Society of Architects (BSA)  
Valerie Hunt, Fenway Neighborhood Resident  
Meg Mainzer-Cohen, Back Bay Association  
Barbara Simons, Berklee Task Force  
Gil Strickler, St. Cecilia's Parish

#### **Ex-Oficio Attendees:**

Kate Bell, Office of Boston City Councilor Josh Zakim  
Massachusetts State Senator William Brownsberger

#### **City of Boston Attendees:**

Evan Bradley, BPDA  
Phil Cohen, BPDA  
Yissel Guerrero, Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services  
Lauren Shurtleff, BPDA

#### **Commonwealth of Massachusetts Attendees:**

Mark Boyle, MassDOT

#### **Development Team Attendees:**

Kevin Lennon, Elkus Manfredi Architects  
Donny Levine, D. Levine Management, LLC  
Lisa Martancik, Weiner Ventures  
Marilyn Sticklor, Goulston & Storrs  
Adam Weiner, Weiner Ventures

#### **Public Attendees:**

Richard Giordano, Fenway Community Development Corporation  
Parker James, Charlesgate Alliance  
Peter Manuelian, Back Bay Resident  
Mark O'Leary, Massachusetts Convention Center Authority (MCCA)

Sue Prindle, NABB  
Martyn Roetter, NABB  
Beth Treffeisen, The Boston Sun  
Lauren Thomas, Back Bay Resident  
Jacquelin Yessian, NABB

**Project Website:** <http://tinyurl.com/Parcels12-15>

### **Meeting Summary**

On Tuesday, March 7<sup>th</sup>, 2017, the twentieth working session of the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) Turnpike Air Rights Parcels 12 – 15 Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) commenced at approximately 6:10 p.m. in the St. Cecilia’s Parish Hall with an introduction by Lauren Shurtleff, BPDA Senior Planner. Lauren reviewed the agenda and noted that today’s meeting would function primarily as a CAC discussion session for questions and comments on Weiner Ventures’ proposal for Parcel 15, which was officially filed with the BPDA in a Project Notification Form (PNF) as the 1000 Boylston Street project on January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2017. The next step in the process will be the Scoping Determination, to be issued by the BPDA, which will in turn be followed by a Draft Project Impact Report (DPIR) from the proponent.

Adam Weiner, Weiner Ventures, gave a brief introduction to his team’s presentation, which can be found on the project website, listed above. Adam explained that the presentation would be similar to those shown at previous CAC meetings and would serve to refresh the CAC and the public about the 1000 Boylston Street project. Adam described the makeup and context of the Parcel 15 site, consisting of four parcels (Parcel 15, the Prudential air rights parcel, the Cambria Street air rights parcel, and a terra firma parcel on Scotia Street), two of which (Parcel 15 and the Prudential parcel) create a gap in the urban fabric along Boylston Street. Adam then provided an overview of 1000 Boylston’s program as proposed, consisting of two buildings with a shared seven-floor podium, including two levels of retail, four levels of parking with 303 spaces, 182 rental units, and 160 condominium units.

Adam also presented a number of new project renderings requested by the CAC and the community. Renderings depicted 1000 Boylston alongside nearby planned and under construction developments and provided views from Copley Square, Commonwealth Avenue, the Massachusetts Avenue Bridge, Kenmore Square, the Back Bay Fens, and Huntington Avenue. After concluding the presentation with photographs of current conditions at the project site, Adam turned the meeting over to the CAC for discussion.

### **CAC Discussion**

- In response to a question from a CAC member about expectations regarding an outcome from today’s discussion, Lauren replied that a shared comment letter from the CAC, requesting additional information or studies, would be helpful for the

BPDA and the development team. All comment letters will be included in the Scoping Determination and responded to in the DPIR by the proponent.

- In response to a request from a CAC member, Lauren replied that the BPDA could provide the group with a timeline outlining the zoning process that lies ahead at a future meeting.
- A CAC member described a summary of topics to guide the night's discussion. He asked CAC members to share the summary with their representative groups.
- A CAC member expressed their support for the project's height and massing, noting that it fits in with the concept of the High Spine, in that it would preserve adjacent historic districts, while concentrating growth, and provide needed housing.
- A CAC member described community concern that the building's height and massing were possibly contrary to the Civic Vision for Turnpike Air Rights. Other CAC members noted that the Civic Vision has yet to produce a successful air rights development.
- A CAC member expressed understanding for neighborhood concerns about height, but added that the project's podium will offset the dominance of the project's height. He added that from an urban design and planning perspective, this is not the appropriate location for open space or a park.
- A CAC member expressed concern about the project's height, but was comfortable with the project's two-tower massing, adding that the pedestrian-level wind impacts will be important to see in the DPIR.
- A CAC member supported the project's height and reminded the group that the project meets the CAC's request to cover the entire Boylston Street gap.
- A CAC member expressed concern over the project's tower setbacks. Another CAC member seconded this concern and asked for further information on the setbacks of the project's two towers.
- A CAC member stated that they supported the project's height and massing, and felt they were appropriate.
- Another CAC member also called for clarifying the project's setbacks. He expressed concern about canyonization along Boylston Street and the construction of a high-rise structure (the project's east tower) over the Prudential air rights parcel. He indicated feeling uncertain about the project's economics and requested that the developer share more financial information and cost drivers for the project's second tower.
- CAC member described concerns with the amount of parking proposed for the project as well as the effectiveness of the garage's proposed screening.
- A CAC member stated that the project felt oversized and that they didn't see a shared design language between the two towers and the tower base, expressing that the tower's base is horizontally-oriented and that extending the towers to the ground in places might improve the project's proportions. The CAC member then clarified that they would like the fenestration on the project's base and towers to be more alike.

- A CAC member expressed concern over the project's wind impacts at street level and described a desire to see more street furniture and benches included.
- A CAC member noted that the podium parking garage screen presented an opportunity for a significant piece of public art.
- A CAC member felt that the project's proposed streetscape improvements presented a major improvement but referenced recent discussions for the Back Bay/South End Gateway Project regarding pedestrian capacity on sidewalks with street tree planters. She requested measurements and elevations of the project's proposed streetscape improvements. Another CAC member agreed, noting congested pedestrian conditions in other parts of the Back Bay.
- A CAC member noted no objections in previous meetings regarding the change in use from a hotel in the initial project proposal to residential in the current proposal. She expressed concern over how the project will comply with the City's Inclusionary Development Policy (IDP) and encouraged the group to discuss the topic in their comment letter.
- A CAC member noted that all renderings requested by the community had been provided by the developer and asked the group to submit any additional requests for the comment letter.
- In response to a question from a CAC member regarding the zoning and Planned Development Area (PDA) process, Phil Cohen, BPDA Project Manager, replied that all of the components found within a PDA are specific to the project to which they are associated. Marilyn Sticklor, Goulston & Storrs, added that the PDA process will be outlined in the project's Draft Project Impact Report (DPIR).
- CAC members discussed including language in their comment letter encouraging the developer to set higher standards on energy efficiency and sustainability. One CAC member requested that the developer provide a list of any remaining items on the LEED checklist that they find infeasible, with explanations of how they could be achieved.
- A CAC member commented that the project contains too many parking spaces, noting traffic concerns and the abundance of public transportation options nearby.
- A CAC member stated their opinion that the access to parking on Dalton Street is well-placed and will have a smaller impact on traffic than if the parking access was placed elsewhere.
- Another CAC member expressed traffic concerns over cars turning in and out of the Dalton Street entrance and asked the development team to consider a right turn in/out only setup for the garage.
- A CAC member requested an analysis of the project's loading requirements and the impacts to the Hynes Convention Center and Berklee College of Music's existing operations, noting that all of this must be coordinated for the project to succeed.
- A CAC member suggested that the site might be a good fit for a bikeshare station.
- A CAC member posited that if the proponent were to increase the tower setbacks, wind conditions might improve.

- A CAC member asked the development team if their shadow study includes the towers' zoning heights or the towers' topmost architectural features. The development team confirmed that the latter is required by the BPDA.
- A CAC member requested that the development team complete a shadow study for December 21<sup>st</sup>. The development team agreed to provide the study.
- CAC members requested an analysis of solar glare impacts on the Massachusetts Turnpike, on other buildings, and on any pieces of public art near the project.
- A CAC member expressed concern about the cleanliness of air released from the Massachusetts Turnpike below. Another CAC member agreed and asked for clarification on where air from the Massachusetts Turnpike would be released.
- A CAC member noted the presence of organic soils onsite in the project's geotechnical study. She added that past development projects excavating in similar soils in the Fenway resulted in the release of poorly-smelling hydrogen sulfide, and requested the development team to prepare for a similar odor situation onsite.
- A CAC member noted that websites with accurate construction information for the neighborhood have been helpful for past projects and would also be helpful for 1000 Boylston.
- A CAC member asked if foot traffic would be blocked on Boylston Street during the project's construction. The development team confirmed that it would not be blocked.
- The development team confirmed that the project will not provide onsite parking for contractors during construction.
- A CAC member asked if the project would contribute to improvements to the MBTA Green Line and Hynes Convention Center Station. Lauren replied that the air rights development project proposed for Parcel 13 includes the renovation of the Hynes Convention Center Station, and added that the project proposed for Parcel 12 could also potentially contribute to the Station's upgrade in the form of a subterranean connector below Massachusetts Avenue.

### **Public Comment**

- A member of the public expressed concern over how the project will comply with the City's IDP.
- A member of the public requested more information on the project's shadow impacts to the Back Bay neighborhood.
- A member of the public requested a study of other options for covering the Parcel 15 gap and suggested that a park or wall should be considered for the site instead of a development project.
- A member of the public requested that the proponent study the wind impacts on cross streets within the Back Bay, such as Exeter Street and Fairfield Street.
- A member of the public requested pedestrian use figures near the project site, citing busy conditions on Red Sox home game days.

- A member of the public suggested that traffic studies account for the impact of and to the Boston Fire Department Station across the street from the project.

Lauren concluded the meeting by reminding attendees to direct comments to Phil Cohen, BPDA Project Manager, at [phil.cohen@boston.gov](mailto:phil.cohen@boston.gov) by March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2017. She added that following the issuance of a Scoping Determination by the BPDA, the proponent will work to release the DPIR and Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR).

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:00 p.m.