

Sullivan Square Disposition Study

Public Meeting: 7-25-13

Breakout Group Notes

GROUP A

Public Comment: What is the purpose of the study? Is it to sell land or maximize transportation assets? Are we trying to sell land or build a community? We should be cautious of the proportion of open space to development. For example the Seaport District did not plan for enough open space.

Consultant Response: This is an opportunity for visioning and the scale will be discussed in future meetings.

Public Comment: Let's encourage different developers for the different parcels to ensure varying heights and more variety among the buildings. For example, Parcel 7 could take some density; part of Parcel 4 could be park space.

Public Comment: Maximize sun exposure to the open/green space.

Public Comment: Parcels should be released for development with the requirement that open space be included in all development.

Public Comment: Multi-dimensional open space, e.g. the New York City High Line.

Public Comment: Create a "square" (a larger park) as a destination for families and a place to linger.

Public Comment: Would like to see development scenarios that accommodate families (i.e. 3 bedrooms).

Public Comment: Strengthen/create corridor to river/waterfront development in order to lead people to connect with the water.

Public Comment: Want to make sure we aren't overlooking the frontages of adjacent parcels (adjacent parcels that aren't in the scope of the study).

Public Comment: Regarding the dam, has there been any consideration of an overpass?

Consultant Response: Only a pedestrian overpass, not a vehicular one.

Public Comment: Need more amenities so that people don't need to drive or travel long distances to get things they need, people should be able to get what they need locally.

Public Comment: Need more places for people to linger.

Public Comment: Regarding usage, light industrial might be able to bring jobs to the area and transit is an added bonus to bring the workers here.

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Public Comment: Need more restaurants at ground level.

Public Comment: Need very strong design guidelines.

Public Comment: Need for a connection to Assembly Square.

GROUP B

Comments Prioritized by Group

- The “big green space” for this new district should be a park in Parcel 4 and keeping 100% of this parcel as open space is desirable.
- This large open space/park should be surrounded by dense buildings to create the intimate feel of enclosure and activation found in parks such as Post Office Square.
- Ground floor retail along opposite sides of the streets surrounding the park is desired with the theory that this will create an active edge around the park and help activate the open space.
- In addition to the big open space/park on Parcel 4, green space woven throughout every parcel is a must...pocket parks, etc.
- A preferred corridor for retail is the walking path from the existing Charlestown neighborhood over to the Sullivan Square T stop (Edges of parcel 4 & 7-retail corridor).
- A fine grained scale as opposed to large building footprints is desired throughout the new neighborhood and sub-dividing the parcels to achieve this is a desired strategy.
- A fine grained scale is especially desirable on Parcel 7 and other land closer to the existing Charlestown neighborhood to try to mesh with what is already there and create a harmonious connection to the older areas.
- Building footprints and especially heights should be ramped up in areas further from existing Charlestown neighborhood, growing to the greatest building heights in areas immediately adjacent to I-93.
- Using larger buildings to screen the new neighborhood from I-93 is desired including high buildings over Sullivan Sq. Station.

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- Site lines through the neighborhood are a high priority. Desired site lines include:
 - o T station to the Schrafft Building;
 - o A corridor from the interior of the new neighborhood to the Mystic River; and
 - o A site line from the new neighborhood to the former Brazilian Church.
- A great deal of new retail is not a major priority as so much new retail will be created in Assembly Square's redevelopment.
- Parking should not be the highest priority to the neighborhood's design, but a realistic approach to parking is a must because it will become a problem is not addressed in the plan.

Introductory and General Comments

- 7 parcels should not equal 7 buildings – the community generally wants to see fine-grained development in the new neighborhood.
- Scale & vision not complete - Need to determine scale & density before thinking about retail & residential design.
- Need to know how development will affect surrounding residential area.
- What are the new neighborhood's "bones" - What stays?:
 - o Schrafft Clock-tower;
 - o union buildings;
 - o T station
 - o church building; and
 - o health facility.
- Open space:
 - o assumption: green space only possible on publicly owned parcels, public entities must provide as developers will not;
 - o Zoning could require a percentage of open space for every new development although there is concern that variances would then be granted to exempt this;
 - o Needs to be surrounded by dense buildings;
 - o Need some open space on every block; and
 - o Edges near open space are a priority.

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- Direct street access to Mystic River desirable.
 - Underground parking while desirable seems unlikely due to water table concerns, both under current conditions and when expounded by climate change.
 - Residential: urban feel/environment in the area desired.
 - One-story retail did not work around Bunker Hill Mall or Main Street and is not desired in the new neighborhood.
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 - Take note of sea level, ground level buildings prone to flood zone.
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 - Need to consider parking for commuters coming to Sullivan from elsewhere.
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GROUP C

Group preferred to start discussion with an overall vision for land use rather than specifically talking about open space concepts.

Difficult to conceptualize open space concepts without having an overall vision first.

Retail would be the best to have on the way to the MBTA's Sullivan Station.

Do not want higher density (such as what is now going up in the Innovation District). Low to mid density housing is preferred. Low to mid density is 5 stories or less.

One table participant described an area at the back of Sullivan Station as the 'Lost Village'. The housing in this area is an example of preferred density.

Want future development to be integrated. For example, front doors should have direct access to the street.

The nearby highway (I-93) is loud, dirty and unhealthy. Housing would not work close to the highway. However, there was a divided opinion about this. Other participants stated that people would be willing to pay for housing and would not take issue living near the highway.

Have dedicated bus lanes to and from Sullivan Station to allow for quick access.

Mixed-use development is preferred. For example, retail supported by housing and office. Perhaps light industrial use as well.

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Medium-scale retail is currently underserved in this area. Want smaller 'mom and pop' stores not commercial chains such as Cheesecake Factory or TGI Fridays. A strong desire was expressed for local stores.

Anything food-related would be preferred.

Need improved access to the water. Have low density development near the water in order to retain views.

Place commercial uses near the highway and residential uses further from the highway.

New development should be like the Somerville/Broadway/Bunker Hill neighborhood with neighborhood level supporting uses.

The area does have potential for a hotel. The DoubleTree by Hilton near Bayside was mentioned as a good example. However, one participant mentioned that a hotel would be a draw for tourists and this might not be the desired vision for this area.

Area should have nodes of activity.

There should be a pedestrian retail corridor to the MBTA station. This corridor could be along Broadway.

What should happen to the backside of Sullivan Station?

What happens to parcels 5 and 6? Should consider for open space.

One table participant mentioned that housing, jobs and affordability was his primary concern.