

Sullivan Square Disposition Study

Public Meeting: 10-29-13

Meeting Notes

- Public Comment: What is the car count for on street parking?
 - **Consultant Response:** We don't have an exact number.
- Public Comment: There will be a positive net gain with parking since there isn't any there now.
- Public Comment: One of the selling points of the surface option was the gain in parking and the buffer for pedestrian safety.
- Public Comment: There was a reference to the streets getting congested with the extra parking. What about the impact of the potential casino?
 - **BRA Response:** What happens between the curbs is BTM's domain. We want to be careful with exact numbers here, the BRA is not promising a specific number of spaces. This conversation will continue as BTM will pick up their process again soon and decisions regarding the casino will be considered then.
- Public Comment: The parking proposed in the BTM plan is good. The plan without on street parking is not as safe or pleasant for pedestrians.
- Public Comment: I'm concerned with how built out we are showing the MBTA parcel. We need to make sure there is space for pick up/drop off and a proper taxi stand.
 - Consultant Response: Yes, we've been talking to the MBTA about that.
- Public Comment: What about concentrating the parking? I have a business and I don't think the lack of parking hurts it. We need to be more forward thinking about the alternative transit options available here.
 - Consultant Response: That is true and we support alternate transit options. Part of the philosophy with on street parking is that it provides a buffer for pedestrians.
- Public Comment: We are trying to meld this area with the rest of the neighborhood. There will be a fair amount of retail envisioned. With this plan we are trying to build in a certain level of flexibility so we can accommodate different options, there is no question that we want to see transit oriented development here.
- Public Comment: If the casino comes it seems like a moot point because they have offered to pay for the improvements to Sullivan Square.
 - BRA Response: The casino developers have offered a lot. It will be up to BTM and the new Mayor to decide if things will change. We are moving forward under the assumption that this is the street configuration for the future.
 - Consultant Response: This process is important to make sure that the sentiments of the community are documented for future administrations.
 - BRA Response: That's where the BRA Board meeting in December comes in, so that we approve the study that can be used for future advocacy for the area.

- Public Comment: We want long-term parking more limited than short-term parking
 - Consultant Response: We are carrying 222 spaces for the MBTA's facility, per the MBTA's requirement to maintain that number of parking spaces in any redevelopment scheme for the land they own right in front of the station.
- Public Comment: We don't want to see Wellington in Sullivan Square and we want that to be made loud and clear.
- Public Comment: Height on Parcel 6 is not going to be perceived as an option for the neighborhood. That parcel is considered a transitional parcel from the higher buildings near the T station to the neighborhood.
 - Consultant Response: We had differing viewpoints on that parcel, we will present alternatives later on.
- Public Comment: Parcel 6 should definitely be a transition space from the T to the neighborhood, and should not be in competition with the Schrafft's Center. I like the idea of a prominent corner, but that kind of height is not necessary.
- Public Comment: The height of that corner will feel constraining when people come down from the hill.
- Public Comment: Do you have shadow studies of the massings?
 - Consultant Response: We have been conscious of the sunlight but don't have that for tonight. We can have it for the next meeting.
- Public Comment: Do we want the height to be so low on the far end of Parcel 6?
 - Consultant Response: Originally, we didn't show any building there.
- Public Comment: If we increase the height at that end of Parcel 6, what could be the use?
 - Consultant Response: It's not wide enough for a corridor and not big enough for commercial space. It's also not an ideal location for retail.
- Public Comment: I agree that it's not meant for retail.
- Public Comment: We could use more 3 bedroom units all over the city, could those be put in that part of the building on Parcel 6?
 - Consultant Response: We can look at that, but we want to point out that it's not economical. We can show it, but it doesn't mean that it will get built.
- Public Comment: We should have a master plan for the neighborhood. If this is a kernel of the master plan, that's ok.
 - BRA Response: Right now we are only talking about new parcels. There's always the zoning that's in place and we want to make sure through this process that we have something for the future of these parcels.
- Public Comment: Is there some kind of historic commission to make sure that the new buildings will relate to what's already there?
- Public Comment: We talked about materials and there is a desire to see more contemporary design here. We do not favor a fake historic look.
- Public Comment: Can you address views of the water?
 - Consultant Response: You'll see some of the bridge but you probably won't see the water. You'll be able to tell that the roadway leads somewhere, especially if we do the double tree path which will channel the view in that direction without obstructing current views.
- Public Comment: How high are the buildings on the parcel with the two buildings?

- Consultant Response: Five stories.
- Public Comment: Could make height on Parcel 4 higher towards the back, transitioning towards the T station.
- Public Comment: How does the park that's shown work in relation to the Mystic River area being developed?
 - Consultant Response: We want to make connections that make sense and are pleasant.
- Public Comment: The highest part of Parcel 6 shouldn't compete with the Schrafft's building.
- Public Comment: How tall is the new development in relation to the Schrafft's building?
 - Consultant Response: About 60 feet. From the Lost Village you won't be able to see very much of the new development.
- Public Comment: In the report, there should be snapshots of commercial spaces that already exist in Charlestown for context.
 - Consultant Response: Yes, we plan to do that.
- Public Comment: I would like to see a streetscape scene included to convey what we're trying to accomplish. City Square is a great example.
 - Consultant Response: Point taken.
- Public Comment: What about affordable housing? That hasn't really been discussed here. We would like to see much more than what is currently required by the city.
 - BRA Response: The city's Inclusionary Development Policy requires 10% affordable units in any development that has a total of 10 units or more, and requires zoning relief or is built on land owned by the city. Point well taken, we can include that as a recommendation but we can't reconcile that definitively now.
- Public Comment: Are there certain standards for density?
 - Consultant Response: It varies greatly depending on the area. The FAR here is very low according to market analysis, not extremely TOD, would be difficult to get dollars from the developers.
- Public Comment: We don't want to wait 10 years for this to happen.
 - BRA Response: Saying 10 years has just been shorthand. We are certainly hoping that it will happen sooner and we'll make a recommendation to that effect. There will be more opportunity for advocacy of the timeline when BTM picks up their process again.
- Public Comment: What about a DIP here?
 - Consultant Response: We've looked at that, master developers and so on. The final report will have an implementation section with different recommendations and routes for implementing the plan.
- Public Comment: I'm worried about the traffic related to the potential casino.
 - BRA Response: The planning here is based on the road configuration that BTM produced from their process. BTM can decide to change the layout if they feel it's necessary later on or if the casino comes.
 - Consultant Response: And, this part of the process will be documented before a decision on the casino is made.