

Minutes

Boylston Street Corridor Study Committee: Urban Design & Massing Subcommittee

March 23, 2022 8:00 AM

Held remotely via Zoom

Subcommittee members (in attendance noted by Y/N):

John VanScoyoc, Chair	Y	Wendy Friedman	Y	Tom Nally	Y
Rachna Balakrishna	N	Joe Gaudino	N	Carlos Ridruejo	Y
Deborah Brown*	Y	Wendy Machmuller	Y	Mark Zarrillo	Y

Staff & consultants present: Kara Brewton, Arran French

Meeting materials included: agenda, draft design guidelines

Guests included: none

Kara Brewton opened the meeting, noting that it was being held remotely on the Zoom platform due to COVID, and after checking that all participants' audio/video were working well, and Kara announced that the meeting was being recorded.

Today's meeting will focus on design guidelines. Wendy Friedman will focus on bureaucratic process for design guidelines.

Design Guidelines Regulations

Kara reviewed the oversight that various Town Boards, Committees and Departments have on the administration of design guidelines once adopted. She provided details about the variance process as well, and how this differs from by-right or special permit application processes. Kara provided examples of applications in other districts with design guidelines and how developers used design guidelines, which she emphasized are purely suggestion, not law. In this way, Kara discussed the impact that design guidelines can have and how they are helpful, but also somewhat subjective.

Mark Zarillo shared that design guidelines allow an applicant to shape their project in the community's vision before the project even gets to a formal town board or committee. Tom Nally shared that he feels design guidelines should only include content that a Design Advisory Team is qualified to comment on and judge. There were questions asked to seek clarity on what should/should not land in design guidelines. Tom shared that it's about how a project relates to its surroundings (ex. Transparency, materials, colors, etc.). Several scenarios were discussed.

The Committee reviewed:

- Signage standards, especially given lessons learned from nearby recent developments
- How equity is incorporated in the design guidelines and discussed the differences between equity in process and equity in design itself
- How lighting and signage can make a pedestrian feel (and how to define pedestrian feel)

- Height transitions between commercial and residential areas. The Committee discussed that many of the standards originate in the 1993 design guidelines, and were reviewing if the best practice has changed since those were published
- Sidewalk widths necessary to create vibrant, pedestrian friendly spaces, and how sidewalk widths impact parking and traffic
- How easements and curb cuts are considered in the design guidelines
- Façade articulation and outdoor amenity standards (ex. Outdoor dining, benches, dog parks, etc.)
- The addition of height guidelines, where the zoning indicates stories
- Notes identified by Kara that show things that were removed from the zoning and could end up in the design guidelines (i.e. no-build areas, tree canopy, entrances per structure, transparency, etc.)

Closing

**Meeting adjourned at approximately 10:09 am.