

Minutes

Boylston Street Corridor Study Committee

June 21, 2021 12:00PM

Held remotely via Zoom

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

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

Staff present: Kara Brewton

Meeting materials included: agenda; powerpoint by Bulfinch 6-21-21; powerpoint by Committee 6-9-21.

Guests included: Bulfinch (Robert Schlager, Matt DeNoble, Mark DiOrio), Elkus Manfredi (David Manfredi, Tim Talun), Jessica Healey (Environmental Consultants Engineering – biosafety consultant), Robert Allen Jr. Law (Jennifer Dopazo Gilbert, Bob Allen), Alan Christ, Anne Meyers, Betsy DeWitt, Bill Reyelt, Brian McInerney, Carla Benka, Carol Levin, Charles Osborne, David Harellick, Donelle O'Neal Sr., Edith Brickman, Emily Jacobsen, Fred Perry, Hassan Makkeh, Hernan Santana, Jessica Healey, John Bassett, Jonathan Klein, Ken Lewis, Kim Smith, Linda Pehlke, Lisa Cunningham, Lucy Kolessin, Marilyn Newman, Martha Farlow, Michael Zoorob, Nate Tucker, Paul Saner, Rebeca Salguero, Ruthann Sneider, Sophie Broderick, Stuart Marquis, Tommy Vitolo, Valon Hidra, Virginia Smith

John VanScoyoc 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.

Presentation

John VanScoyoc noted that this was the first presentation by Bulfinch to the Boylston Street Corridor Study Committee.

The Bulfinch team presented three massing concepts, predominantly differentiated by different configurations of open space: one with the larger open space facing the Washington Street bridge over the tracks, one with more tree canopy along Washington Street closest to Route 9, and one with an expanded plaza facing Route 9. Nearby existing building heights given as a reference include: 2 Brookline Place (125'), Hilton Garden Inn (118'), the Brook House (135'), and the existing 10 Brookline Place building (100'). The existing building is leased by Dana Farber, and has about 8 or 9 years of remaining time on the lease with additional extension options. The team believes the retail space on the ground floor would likely be space targeted to MBTA riders (e.g., bicycle amenities, café, etc.) While no tenant has been identified, they are considering a biolab level 2. The total square footage would be approximately 500,000 square feet, and 9-10 stories in height. During the presentation, Bulfinch initially stated there would be approximately 750

underground parking spaces, or about 1.5 spaces per thousand square feet of gross floor area. Later during Q&A, Robert Schlager noted that they may be able to reduce the parking to perhaps 3 levels of underground parking, closer to 1.0 space per thousand square feet of gross floor area.

Representative Tommy Vitolo stated that the use and size of the proposed development was very intriguing. He would like to see less proposed parking spaces. He did not think anyone would hang out on Washington Street/Route 9 but did think people would spend time on the northern side of the building closest to the MBTA tracks. Other guests did not want the team to “give up on Washington Street”, stating that a well-designed space could be very welcoming, especially for those waiting for a bus, etc.

Wendy Friedman agreed with Tommy Vitolo that the height and size of the building seemed that work well and that less parking for the proposed building might be needed. On the other hand, she noted that the Committee had discussed how other users in the Corridor could utilize additional parking, especially if any on-street parking activity is removed with a redesign of Boylston Street. Tom Nally liked the version that shows the open space pointing towards Brookline Village, concept number one.

In response to questions from Rachna Balakrishna, Bulfinch noted there were four points of public access being proposed, and that the ground floor would be a publicly accessible arcade corridor with likely a restaurant space and smaller retail spaces. The existing zoning is General Business 2.0 and the existing number of parking spaces is approximately 240.

Jessica Healey explained that bio safety level 2 is the standard medical clinical biosafety level, designed to work with blood-borne pathogens, generally not airborne pathogens. Any medical doctor that does any labwork would be level 2, usually including human cells, blood, some pathogens but generally not ones that are in concentrated forms or community risk.

Wendy Machmuller like the third concept as it seemed to show the most open space. In response to her questions, David Manfredi noted that the open space amount and square footage of the building was very similar between the various concepts.

Deborah Brown thought the proposal was exciting. If we want to see broader business types along the corridor, the existing traffic congestion had to be addressed. She asked whether the areas designated for green roofs could be more robust. Finally, with regards to 2 Brookline Place, she did not see any benefits to the immediate neighbors at the Brookline Housing Authority. She would like for Bulfinch to consider what the real benefits would be to the immediate residents.

Joe Gaudino was also very excited about the proposal and thought the experience along 2 Brookline Place was greatly improved and agreed that Washington Street shouldn't be given up on. He liked the ideas of connecting Brookline Village & Boylston Street.

Eddie Brickman noted that people have difficulty crossing the tracks at the T-stop. She noted her experience working in the life sciences community, and one of the researchers she knew died due to direct exposure in an experiment with a pathogen that causes the plague combined with a pre-existing genetic defect that he had – even though all safety protocols were followed, this

researcher was not adequately protected. Although she agreed we needed housing and additional tax revenue, we need to be very careful about placing those near each other.

Paul Saner noted the Economic Development Advisory Board (EDAB) has an active Subcommittee that is looking at Life Science and Research & Development uses more broadly. As an aside, the only location right now where biolabs are allowed is at 2 Brookline Place, even though Boston Children's Hospital opted to not move forward with that use at that location. The Subcommittee is investigating best municipal practices as well as market feasibility. 10 Brookline Place is likely one of the very few sites where this use could be located, especially given its proximity to the Longwood Medical Area. EDAB is looking to develop with the Health Department and Public Health Advisory group additional bio-related regulations and hopes that the community including Edie Brickman would help with that regulation development.

Robert Schlager thanked the Committee for their initial thoughts and questions and looked forward to working with the community on these ideas. This would be approximately a half a Billion investment; they want to get it right over the next several months, and likely years. He is unaware of any biolab building in the area that has had a safety issue any more so than any office building. Jessica Healey added that the example given earlier was a personnel accident; no material left the lab or was exposed to the larger community. In the 15 years she has been in the biosafety business, she has responded to four lab-acquired infection, all of which were researchers accidentally self-inoculating themselves: three resulted in exposure to the pathogen that causes food poisoning, and one was with staph infection.

Charles Osborne also thought this was an exciting proposal. In the height analysis, he thought it was important to also identify those on Station Street. The proposed building is kind of a flat-iron building type, pointing towards the heart of Brookline Village. He thought it was important to keep that pedestrian entrance experience separate from where the vehicular access would be located.

John VanScoyoc thanked everyone and noted that this was the first time the Committee saw a proposal in response to the Committee's memo and that the next meeting was Monday. Additional meetings will be finalized by email.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 1:30 pm.

Chat messages & Q&A are attached here.

Copy of Q&A function in Zoom

#	Question	Asker Name	Asker Email	Answer(s)
1	How tall are the Children's hospital building and the hotel?	Anne Meyers	annermeyers@gmail.com	live answered
2	I would like to say something about safe	Edith Brickman	erbrickman@rcn.com	.
3	Edie Bickman	Edith Brickman	erbrickman@rcn.com	Hi, Edie - I see your hand raised, too! Thanks.
4	Labs are one of the greatest drivers of greenhouse gas emissions, and in fact if we don't get this piece of the current greater Boston building boom right, we are dooming any possibility of reaching our (already woefully insufficient) climate targets. What is the plan to make this lab ultra low-emissions as is being done in other projects like the Binney Street project in Cambridge (Shepley/Bulfinch, BR+A, NBBJ, Alexandria Real Estate)?	Lisa Cunningham	lisaclimatebrookline@gmail.com	live answered
5	Agreed with Tommy's comments - especially the parking. What does 750 cars coming in and out of Brookline every day do to Brookline's already choked traffic conditions. Park and ride and use the T.	Lisa Cunningham	lisaclimatebrookline@gmail.com	live answered
6	We need parking for residents. Many apartment buildings in Brookline Village do not have parking spopts, and we park on DFCL parkin lot.	Hernan Santana	hernan.santana@tch.harvard.edu	live answered
7	https://www.architects.org/client-conversations-video-archive?utm_source=BSA&utm_campaign=7e44c95579-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2021_04_13_07_27&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_c10ff3af4a-7e44c95579-374151536	Lisa Cunningham	lisaclimatebrookline@gmail.com	live answered
8	Also, height comparison on Station street please. from Chat Also, clarity on Main Entrance(s) and differney uses of surrounding streets..	Charles Osborne	charles@bellalta3.com	live answered
9	Can we get in contact with the Soup Factory? We definitely want them to come back.	Donelle O'Neal Sr. TMM4/AC	donelle617@gmail.com	I second this!
10	what is the current parking/sq ft ratio today compare to the proposed one?	Hernan Santana	hernan.santana@tch.harvard.edu	Thank you, Hernan, for these parking related questions - including for existing renters here. If we don't get to them today, we will ask for answers to these as a follow-up!
11	What type of BS level for COVID-19 research?	Hernan Santana	hernan.santana@tch.harvard.edu	Anything that involved working with live SARS-CoV-2 would be Biosafety Level 3.
12	I believe there are millions of square feet of lab space currently being developed right now with ultra low emissions. Maybe I missed the answer on this one - I have to leave the call but would be interested from hearing back from the committee on this issue. Here's the issue in a nutshell. http://www.sealevel.info/co2_and_ch4.html	Lisa Cunningham	lisaclimatebrookline@gmail.com	live answered

Copy of Chat function in Zoom

- **Wendy Friedman**53:30

I don't think we should give up on Washington St yet! The hotel has shown that people can sit comfortably along Washington, if you're surrounded by other open space.

-  **Rachna Balakrishna**01:12:52

Is the entrance to the parking garage on Pearl Street?

-  **Wendy Friedman**01:17:07

Yes, Deborah - another reason to focus some green space on the south side. There are a lot of residents between High St and the Muddy that need to be considered.

-  **Rachna Balakrishna**01:20:44

Approximately how long would construction take?

-  **Kara Brewton**01:21:56

To all our attendees, we will capture all the questions and comments raised in both the chat box and the Q&A features, in case we don't get to them all today.

-  **Kara Brewton**01:27:49

I like this idea - Linda Pehlke noted "Study pedestrian flows and retail viability after 1-2 Brookline Place opens to understand best place for open space and retail."

-  **Wendy Friedman**01:30:44

Agree, Kara. We will learn a lot over the next year as things open and commuting levels increase to pre-COVID times. Also, changes if/when the bus lanes go in will also occur.