

BOYLSTON STREET CORRIDOR STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS - COMMITTEE COMMENTS

AREA	PRESERVE	ENHANCE	REVITALIZE	STAFF NOTES	AGREE?	DISAGREE?	COMMITTEE MEMBER NOTES
Cypress Street Block		X		Improve the commercial facades in this block area	CR, WM, RB, WF, JG	JV	JV - Not certain of what is meant by "improve"?
Ace Ticket Building Block	X				JV, RB, WM, TN	WF, JG, CR	<p>TN - The buildings on the southwest corner of Cypress Street and Boylston Street provide a scale transition to the residential neighborhood to the south, and the curved front works well with that of the Madris Building across the street. The current L-0.5 zoning makes it unlikely that these building would be redeveloped, but it may be prudent to prepare design guidelines related to a range of possible zoning densities that may be proposed in the future for these sites.</p> <p>WF - I think it's important to get community input on this. Most people I have discussed this building with see it as needing much improvement. It is not well maintained and could benefit from enhancement or event revitalization.</p> <p>CR - I would like to preserve the building, but we also need to incentivize the area somehow so that the owners restore the actual structure which is in a deteriorated state.</p> <p>WM - but also revitalize the facades</p> <p>JV - The daily flow of Boston-bound cars offers opportunity to "announce" a transition. "Welcome to Historic Brookline Village," perhaps.?</p>

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Madris Building Block	X	X		Both preserve the Madris building and also emulate scale of the Madris building on the block	RB, TN, WF, JG, CR, WM, JV	JV	TN - The Madris Building is a model of a mixed use building that could be replicated elsewhere in the corridor. Very importantly it has a context sensitive design: a curved form following the curvature of the intersection and a reasonable height and FAR for its location at a prominent intersection and crossroads for vehicles and pedestrians. The one story buildings to the west and uphill from the Madris Building and their parking areas on Brington Road provide an opportunity for possible redevelopment. The height of any new buildings could step down to the residential neighborhood to the west. The current L-0.5 zoning may be unnecessarily restrictive for these parcels that have more development potential, and is already not reflective of the most significant building on the block. JV - Preserve, yes. Emulate, not certain. Would need more info as to how the increase in scale would impact Brington Road.
Audi Dealership Block			X	Emulate scale of the Madris Bulding on this block area	RB, TN, JG, WM, JV	CR, JV	TN - Even though the car dealership has recently done an extensive renovation, we should still prepare design guidelines in case there are new development plans in the future. Issues that arose from the Audi planning process were concerns by East Milton Road abutters with blocking light and air from their back yards by building too close to their property line. Another concern was blocking windows on the three story mixed use building on Cypress Street. Finally, the curb cut providing access east and west on Cypress Street conflicts with traffic movement at the Cypress intersection. WF - This one confuses me. Isn't the new structure here at scale with the Madris Building? If revitilization meant increasing scale, I would argue for the same scale to also be applied to the Ace Ticket Building JG - N/A now that the renovation has been completed? CR - Long term, yes. Since Audi has just invested heavily in this area, I can't imagine anything would happen here in the medium term (20 years) WM - really long term though since they just renovated JV - What does the owner have in mind? Vertical car storage? Whatever the plan, it should be appropriately scaled to adjacent homes and the opposite-facing Cypress block.

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Mobil Site	X			This site is an important neighborhood asset	RB, WM, JV, WF	TM, JG, CR	<p>TN - While the service station provides an important support function for the neighborhood, it is possible that it may become a development site in the future along with the adjacent small buildings on Cypress Street; therefore, it is important to develop design guidelines for this site. It is likely that some people will express concern about a "canyon effect" of tall buildings on this site now that the tall Ninth Grade Building for the High School is taking shape across the street along with the four story Madris Building. Careful thought and study should be given to height, FAR, and form considerations and alternatives on this site. CR - This block used to be multi family housing in the late 1960's. I think the long term range plan should be to fill in the missing urban fabric in this corner. WM - yes preserve, but we need to think longer-term about this site; mirror scale of Madris? JV - For now. But let's have a conversation with Elias Audy.</p>
Cameron Street Neighborhood	X			Important to preserve scale and existing housing stock	WF, TN, RB, CR, WM, JV	JG	<p>TN - It should be noted that Cameron Street is significantly lower than Boylston Street, which may be helpful to providing access to a lower level of parking. It also means that both more traffic and more shadows from buildings on Boylston Street may impact the residences along Cameron Street. We should understand more about the characteristics of this residential area, the mix of housing, and methods for protection of valued parts of this housing stock. WM - developers need to respect existing character of neighborhood JV - For now. But let's survey the residents and property owners to see if there is a shared consensus as to the condition of the housing. If residents could be guaranteed continuity, would they prefer upgraded housing?</p>
Old Lincoln School	X	X		Preserve the current building but enhance the open space elements	WF, WM, CR, TN, JG, RB		<p>TN - It is likely that this building and yard may be needed to provide "swing space" for renovations of other schools across town as it has already for several years. It is a valuable resource for that purpose, and consideration of any potential repurposing needs careful thought. Concerns have been raised about the blank wall along the sidewalk, and thought should be given on how to relieve that condition to add vitality to the streetscape. WM - landscape would go a long way; railings could be more artistic JV - Pre-Covid, the BPS were taking the position that OLS "IS the 9th School." We will need to coordinate closely with them as to their vision of the long term use of the site."</p>

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Route 9 Walkability		X			WM, CR, TN, JG, JV, RB	WF	<p>TN - Calling the corridor "Route 9" is a self-fulfilling prophesy!! We should always refer to it as Bolyston Street if we want it to be perceived as a "street." Walkability has many dimensions including pavement, sidewalk width, buffering from traffic, building edge conditions and transparency, adjacent uses, trees, lighting, and signage. We should decide which components are most beneficial, cost effective, and physically feasible here. WF - I would move this into revitalize, since walkability is extremely limited along the corridor.</p> <p>CR - Need to have wider sidewalks to we can also have some business activity as well WM - yes yes yes yes yes JV - In line with CTPS study with enhancements aimed at slowing traffic and more frequent pedestrian-activated crossings</p>
Davis Walking path and Bridge		X			WF, WM, CR, TN, JG, JV, RB		<p>TN - Davis Path in conjunction with Walnut Path help to provide pedestrian access in the middle of this long superblock. They need to be treated with great respect and be designed to be more inviting. Replacement of the pedestrian bridge provides an important connection to Emerson Garden and the neighborhood along Davis Avenue and beyond. CR - Long term yes. Short term, we need to figure how to fund this. Perhaps developments in the corridor would help fund the bridge</p> <p>WM - we need to think beyond just replacing what was there, make it a feature of the park; form and function JV - Would like to learn more about the options into turning this into a "signature" project for the area (such as Northeastern U. footbridge)</p>

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Route 9 Cross-Sections		X			WM, CR, TN, JG, JV, RB	WF	<p>TN - The Boylston Street cross section is limited by building faces along much of its length, making it difficult to accommodate all the ideal uses that we would like to see in the cross-section. I would like to see generous, tree lined sidewalks with curbside parking both as a buffer and as a resource for small scale ground floor commercial uses, separated cycle tracks, a narrow median or at least a cobblestone divider, and four 11 foot wide travel lanes to calm traffic a bit. Ideally, there should also be dedicated bus lanes, but given that there is no regular bus service for most of the length in this segment, it might be a hard sell to introduce those lanes. That ambitious vision cannot all happen in the space available, so we will need to make some hard choices. What is most important, and what is feasible? WF - I'm not sure the difference between revitalize and enhance when it comes to cross-sections, but I think all crossing could be made safer for pedestrians, and there is a need for additional crossings west of Cypress.</p> <p>WM - Cross sections? Ped Xing? JV - "BOYLSTON STREET" (quoting Tom Nally)</p>
Bicycle Infrastructure			X		WF, WM, CR, TN, JG, JV, RB		<p>TN- Ideally, all major streets should have separated cycle tracks, or at least bike lanes. See above the hard choices we need to make in the roadway cross section. JV - Consistent with gateway east.</p>
U-Haul Site			X	Explore redevelopment options	WM, CR, TN, JG, JV, WF, RB		<p>TN - It has been said that this U-Haul location is one of the most active and likely one of the most profitable in the area. While it is tempting when we see open pavement for part of the year to suggest that it be at least partially filled with housing, commercial uses, or even a local parking resource, convincing the land owner or incentivizing such changes may be a significant challenge. Nonetheless, we need to prepare zoning and design guidelines for the use, form, height, setbacks, and FAR in anticipation of redevelopment of this site. At present it appears that the highest and best use is the existing use.</p> <p>WM - in the meantime, how can we incentivize landscaping here? JV - Can the street-level use be preserved with development above?</p>

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Valvoline/Dunkin Donuts			X	Explore redevelopment options and and possible open space options	WM, CR, TN, JG, JV, WF, RB		<p>TN - The two automobile oriented uses may not be the highest and best uses for this site. As described under Cameron street, part of the site slopes back toward Cameron Street, suggesting that a lower level of parking may be possible, and a building or buildings could occupy the Boylston Street frontage. Design guidelines, and zoning also need to be devised for these parcels.</p> <p>Developable land is the most limited and precious resource, and we need to encourage its wise and efficient use.</p> <p>This is a prime site for redevelopment, and we should not miss this opportunity. WM - yes, but these extg businesses do provide a great service for the time being JV - Dunkin' would be plausible first floor retail in a combined retail/housing structure. Valvoline not so much.</p>
Midas / Liner Tire			X	Explore redevelopment options	WM, CR, TN, JG, WF, RB		<p>TN - These two automobile uses may also not be the highest and best uses for these sites. Zoning and design guidelines need to take into account the close proximity of the back of the current buildings on these shallow parcels to the back yards of the houses on Walnut Street.</p> <p>WM - yes, and this is a sensitive site with the abutters JV - Perhaps I will learn more of the intentions of the new owners when I attend their grand opening.</p>

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Boylston East		X		<p>Preserve current zoning unless parcels are aggregated and preserve historic buildings. Maximum height no higher than Homewood Suites</p>	<p>CR, TN, JG, RB, JV, WF</p>	<p>WM</p>	<p>TN - The building scale, height, and rhythm of building fronts on the street are features that need to be protected and preserved, even if the current buildings themselves are replaced over time. The height of Homewood Suites may be too tall to be used as a model, and its monolithic façade is a poor model for an appropriate street front. We should study the history of the 20 Boylston Street development as it reflects the current market and regulatory environment on this site. This development can suggest what is feasible and what we can expect on other nearby sites under these conditions. We should consider what is good, not so good, and what may be inappropriate for other sites.</p> <p>CR - We have to see what tools we have to preserve buildings indefinitely, and at the same time incentivize rehabilitation and upkeep of the buildings.</p> <p>WM - agree with all except preserve current zoning "unless" - theoretically a developer could buy one parcel and max it out. We need to revisit and revise and establish design guidelines with teeth</p> <p>JV - We should have discussions with owners of Dana Farber site. Also, BHA as to plans for the Walnut/High property (high-rise potential?). This would require expanding the area-scope of the Corridor Study Committee.</p>