

## Minutes

Boylston Street Corridor Study Committee

January 23, 2023 6:00PM

Held remotely via Zoom

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

John VanScoyoc, Chair	Y	Rachna Balakrishna	Y	Wendy Friedman	Y	Deborah Brown	Y
Carlos Ridruejo	Y	Mark Zarrillo	Y	Wendy Machmuller	Y	Matthew Oudens	Y
Tom Nally	Y						

\*Arrived late or left early

Staff & consultants present: Kara Brewton, Victor Panak

Attendees included: Arlene Hill, Carla Benka, Arthur Little, Chris Dempsey, Dianne Mueller, Frances Shedd-Fisher, Joan Lancourt, Jevin England, Luciana Schachnik, Martin Hegen, Nancy Lincoln, Paul Harris, Paul Saner, Peter Taxidis Terry Teague, Ken Lewis, Eli Epstein, Bill Reyelt, Virginia Smith, Kimberley Richardson

Meeting Materials:

- Meeting agenda 1/23/23
- Staff powerpoint presentation 1/23/23

Meeting Recording:

<https://brooklinema.zoomgov.com/rec/share/imlKLny7VPaK76mfgfR8MwchNkqmfN7kMJVqt2Yiavh2FKaK-GV5KuRmnQqaO23x.EUwp0xHrIkPJkkO5>

### **Committee Chair and Staff Updates**

Ms. Brewton opened the meeting.

Mr. VanScoyoc discussed the question of what quantity of housing is sufficient for this corridor and discussed how the corridor relates to the requirements of the MBTA Communities Act. He suggested using the density standard of 15 units per acre from the MBTA Communities Act as a standard to explore for this district.

Ms. Brewton provided the Committee with a presentation on housing density in different areas of Brookline.

### **Discussion of financial feasibility model and building envelope options for sites in the corridor, which may include:**

**Madris Site: 131 Cypress St & 361 Boylston St**

**Audi Site: 308 Boylston St**

**Boylston Place: 345 Boylston St, 14 Boylston Pl, 116 & 120 Cypress St**

**Dunkin' Donuts & Valvoline: 265 & 275 Boylston St**

**Ace Ticket: 358-374 Boylston St**

**U-Haul Site: 270 Boylston St**

Kara Brewton presented a financial analysis on the feasibility of different building envelope options in the corridor, noting specific financial targets that indicate feasibility, and specific trade-offs that the Committee has to consider. She demonstrated that a massing scheme for the Madris Site block previously presented by Mr. Oudens would not work financially, even at a bare minimum of affordable units (15%). Ms. Brewton proposed a massing scheme for the block that has an overall FAR of 2.0 and 46 units per acre.

Mr. Nally felt that the proposed massing and uses is a reasonable approach but that additional retail on the first floor would be preferable. He felt that the proposal successfully acts as a transitional area.

Mr. Zarrillo also spoke positively about the massing scheme but felt that additional affordable housing should be incorporated.

Ms. Balakrishna questioned the desirability of having residential units on the first floor along Boylston Street. She asked what the Town could do to incentivize the owner of a property to include retail uses and expressed concerns with the lack of retail on the first floor in the proposed scheme. Ms. Brewton suggested that additional massing would need to be allowed to make ground-floor retail financially feasible.

Ms. Brown was concerned with how livable the area would be without ground-floor retail. She also felt that any rezoning that stays below an overall FAR of 2.0 is not serious or worthwhile.

Mr. Ridruejo expressed frustration that, on the one hand, the financially feasible massing options in the corridor would be unpalatable to the neighborhood and, on the other hand, the scheme that would be appealing to the neighborhood would be financially infeasible and/or lack any important elements like retail or affordable housing.

Ms. Machmuller felt that the presented massing and uses scheme was appropriate for this area and represented a reasonable compromise between all of the competing priorities.

Ms. Friedman echoed the comments from Mr. Ridruejo and suggested that the Committee consider the greater corridor and figure out where compromises can be made to achieve the goals of the Committee. She asked several clarifying questions about the massing scheme.

The Committee continued to discuss the possible trade-offs between including affordable housing, including ground-floor retail, and not harming the character of the Brington Road neighborhood. The Committee also discussed how the neighborhood might react to different density levels.

### **Other Business**

The Committee briefly discussed next steps and outstanding work. The Committee agreed to meet on February 1, 2023 at 5:30pm.

**The meeting was adjourned.**