

Minutes

Boylston Street Corridor Study Committee

October 14, 2020

(As approved at BSCSC Meeting on October 28, 2020)

Committee members present: John VanScoyoc (Chair), Wendy Machmuller, Rachna Balakrishna, James Carr, Tom Nally, Wendy Friedman, Carlos Ridreujo

Committee members absent: Deborah Brown, Joe Gaudino

Staff: Eddie Bates, Kara Brewton, Todd Kirrane

Members of the public: Alan Cohen, Anne Lusk, Anthony Flint, Bill Reyelt, Blake Cady, Carla Benka, Deane Cody, Linda Penkle, Matthew Hyatt, Nicholas Johnson

Meeting materials: 10.14.20 Planning Staff Presentation, Agenda

The meeting began at 11:00 A.M. Via Zoom.

1. Welcoming/Opening Remarks

John VanScoyoc opened the meeting stating that there is a quorum of members and it is being held via Zoom due to the Covid health crisis. John also asked that members of the committee provide a brief introduction and say a few words about themselves.

After the introductions, John said that this committee must focus on results and not re-invent the wheel as there has already been analysis conducted on the corridor by both citizens and outside consultants. John is asking this committee to synthesize the work that has already been completed and also combine that with an updated view on where the corridor stands at this current time in terms of development pressures and needs and visions for the future. The results of this will be in the form of recommendations and action steps to take.

He then welcomed Eddie Bates from the Department of Planning and Community to give a presentation on staff recommendations for the Boylston Street corridor based on the prior work which has been completed.

2. Boylston Street Implementation Proposal Presentation by Eddie Bates, Dept. of Planning and Community Development

Eddie gave a presentation to committee titled *Boylston Street Transformation: Process Overview and Preliminary Implementation Recommendations*. Eddie's presentation first focused on the studies and committees which have laid the foundation for this current committee. The presentation then discussed this committee's task and also the planning tools they can utilize to help transform this area of Boylston Street.

Eddie then explained staff recommendations for this corridor. He stated that these recommendations would be based on geography and not town-wide public policy directives.

The remainder of Eddie's presentation looked at specific areas of the corridor and recommended changes to zoning and design. The presentation also explored areas to protect, areas to enhance and areas to revitalize. Eddie also discussed a number of action steps, specific development scenarios and alternative ideas for specific sites in the corridor. These sites include the U-Haul site, the Valvoline/Dunkin Donuts site, and the Midas/ Liner Tire site.

The presentation also focused on the corridor's infrastructure. This includes proposed locations for cross-street improvements and also discussion on the CTPS study's preferred option for cross-section improvements on Boylston Street.

The presentation concluded with proposed steps to move forward.

John then asked committee members to provide their comments and questions on the presentation.

Tom Nally first spoke and stated that the recommendations in the presentation are reasonable, but require further details and is looking forward to an analysis on the current developments in the corridor.

Carlos Ridreujo thought that the presentation provided a good framework to work from. Also, the presentation brought to mind the relationship between the buildings and street and the differences between having the corridor that is more urban vs. suburban.

Wendy Friedman agreed that the presentation provides a good framework for further analysis. Wendy also mentioned that it was good to see that recommendations in the presentation took into account the input from the local community and also that it referenced the Homewood Suites development in not wanting to re-create the same structure and shape as that building in the corridor.

Wendy Machmuller stated that she enjoyed the presentation and was happy that the recommendations were based on geography and that the vision statement was presented multiple times as this was written based on much input from many different people. Wendy also asked the question on how to incentivize developments on aggregated sites.

James Carr added that the presentation was good and that in the next presentation, he would like to see this corridor put in a more regional context in regards to transportation, housing availability, and other similar topics. James also stated that it is important to review the Town's Comprehensive Plan and mentioned the 2018 update shows that many projects in the Town have been completed as of this date. The Town's Comprehensive Plan also does not include important words such as diversity and inclusion and any work forward must have these in mind.

Rachna Balakrishna spoke that the presentation was helpful and stated that the idea of a pocket park would be a great addition to the neighborhood. Rachna also mentioned that it is important, while development is currently happening in the neighborhood, to understand what type of impact this committee can have on future development and also what projects are currently in the planning stage.

Some members also asked whether this committee should be making recommendations for changes to the Audi site as the redevelopment there was recently completed. Kara Brewton from the Department of Planning and Community Development stated that it's important to look at least ten years out as there are examples of sites being redeveloped frequently. Exploring different massing situations on the Audi site, and if that site combined with the U-Haul site in a number of years, would be useful. Kara also provided an example from the Davis Path Study Committee on how to incentivize the aggregation of properties.

3. Discussion with Todd Kirrane, Transportation Division

Todd Kirrane from the Town's Transportation Division stated that between Nov. 2018 and Jan. 2020, CTPS conducted a study along the Route 9 corridor in Brookline. He mentioned that the section of Boylston Street which the committee is looking at is owned by the state. He also added that many people who work for the Town were involved in the CTPS study. He further explained that even though the Town has no jurisdiction on this section of roadway, that the Town provided CTPS with information on the Complete Streets and the Green Routes Master Network Plan to show them where the Town was heading in regards to street infrastructure improvements. The Town asked CTPS to focus on a multi-modal alternative for Route 9.

Todd further discussed the details of the CTPS study's preferred option #1 for this section of Boylston Street. He also stated that because the report was unaware of what future site developments the neighborhood will have, CTPS did not recommend any specific future pedestrian crossings.

John asked Todd if CTPS would be looking to the Town to provide alternative scenarios for the cross-section options they've recommended. Todd answered John that MassDOT owns the roadway and that the vision recommended by CTPS for this section of roadway is the future. Todd recommends this committee choose Option #1 as the future layout of Boylston Street. He further explained that he was unaware if there are any current plans from MassDOT to redo this section of roadway. It would be on the Town to act if they'd like to see this roadway transformed faster than MassDOT's normal paving schedule. The Town would need to contact MassDOT to ask them to put this project into their TIP.

4. General Discussion and Next Steps

John recommended for the next meeting, that this committee further discuss the elements in the presentation by Eddie at this meeting and to work out the implications of it and explore ways to proceed. John would also like Wendy Machmuller and Tom Nally to make a presentation on the process and findings from the Visioning Group. John then asked members to provide their comments on next steps.

Tom stated that committee members should take time to review the presentation and reflect on it.

Carlos emphasized the importance of exploring the regional context for future recommendations to this corridor before looking at changes based only in this neighborhood.

John also mentioned that in response to James's point about the missing piece of vision, diversity, inclusion and affordability, that he'd like to add these topics to the discussion at the committee's next meeting.

Wendy Friedman stated that at the next meeting, the committee should explore the regional context for this neighborhood.

Wendy Machmuller mentioned that she could assist the committee in identifying stakeholders. Wendy further explained that it is important to include local small business owners and residents in these discussions.

James added that he would like to explore allowing attendees on Zoom conferences to be able to show their faces on-screen for public meetings.

Rachna agrees with the approach of furthering discussion on Eddie's presentation and that exploring changes in specific areas of this corridor would be a good approach.

Carlos mentioned that this committee should also think about the future of Davis Path as the replacement of the bridge is currently estimated at \$20 Million and may be an economic restriction for the Town to complete in the near future.

The committee briefly discussed the Davis Path Bridge project and James Carr stated that he would bring up the project at the next Planning Board meeting.

Kara asked John to have a vote on creating a subcommittee to explore regional contexts for this neighborhood.

John proposed the creation of a subcommittee of Carlos and James to work with Planning staff on the question of how this committee can incorporate regional perspectives in its work.

VOTED: By unanimous roll call vote: JV, WM, RB, JC, TM, WF and CR. Motion was passed.

John stated that the next meeting would be two weeks from this meeting.

Meeting ended at 12:15 P.M.

CHAT SUMMARY

00:34:53 Kara Brewton: For everyone's reference: today's agenda is at:
https://www.brooklinema.gov/AgendaCenter/ViewFile/Agenda/_10142020-8539

00:36:21 Kara Brewton: ...and the Committee's charge, related links, and documents are at:
<https://www.brooklinema.gov/1605/Boylston-Street-Corridor-Study-Committee>

00:47:07 Kara Brewton: Yes, infrastructure improvements definitely includes coordinating with the plans for the Davis Path footbridge!

00:50:43 Kara Brewton: To answer Wendy Friedman's question, the proposal for 223-229 is "one 3-story building with 8,416 SF to contain 5 condominium-style dwelling units. Unit sizes would range from 1,268 SF to 1,507 SF with one unit on the first floor and two units each on the second and third floors. A private terrace is provided for unit 1 (ground floor) and a common terrace is provided for the other units."

01:35:13 Wendy Machmuller: Thanks Todd for your informative presentation

01:41:33 Wendy Machmuller: I'm sorry I've got to go... but I vote YAY on the subcommittee.

01:41:51 Wendy Machmuller: Thank you everyone. Lots to absorb but it's exciting

QUESTION AND ANSWER SUMMARY

Deane Coady 11:06 AM

what is the length of the corridor under this study?

Wendy Machmuller 11:07 AM

Hi Deane. From Washington to Cypress.

Kara Brewton 11:08 AM

The charge by the Select Board includes High Street to Brington, but may also include other adjacent areas as deemed appropriate.

Deane Coady 11:07 AM

could you make the agenda larger? I cannot read it.

This question has been answered live

Kara Brewton 11:11 AM

Here's a link to today's agenda for everyone's use:
www.brooklinema.gov/AgendaCenter/ViewFile/Agenda/_10142020-8539 and the Committee's website is at www.brooklinema.gov/1605

Eddie Bates (You) 11:11 AM

I apologize. It's available on the Town website if you'd like to view it again.

Anne Lusk 11:14 AM

Did you introduce Todd? I'm a fan! Thanks

Eddie Bates (You) 11:12 AM

Todd will be speaking later!

Anne Lusk 11:15 AM

Okay.

This question has been answered live

Deane Coady 11:41 AM

How to encourage developers to electrify heating/cooling systems for the new buildings? How to discourage fracked gas usage?? Perhaps invite Audrey Schulman from HEET to explain the newer ways to heat and cool as we transition off of fossil fuels - HEET looking for suitable microgrid sites, and a section of the corridor may be a good possibility.

Wendy Machmuller 12:00 PM

Yes, Deane! We need to keep this at the forefront, and align with Town's Sustainability Goals

Anne Lusk 12:07 PM

1) Cycle tracks 2) Trees 3) Lighting over the sidewalk and cycle track 4) Off street parking 5) EV charging 6) Residential 12 month nightly parking, especially for owners with properties on Boylston and Walnut. Thanks!

Wendy Machmuller 12:07 PM

Thank you Anne for the feedback

Anne Lusk 12:19 PM

For replacing the pedestrian bridge, have you looked at pre-constructed spans such as the bridges by Cortan? We put in many of those on the Stowe Recreation Path in Vermont