

Boylston Street Corridor Study Committee Mission

VOTED July 9, 2019

Drawing on the community visioning process undertaken in 2018, the Boylston Street Corridor Study Committee will comprehensively examine opportunities for preservation of housing stock, redevelopment, and infrastructure improvements along the Boylston Street Corridor. The committee's work will focus on the area of Brookline immediately surrounding Boylston Street (State Route 9) from Brington Road eastward to High Street, but may also include other adjacent areas as deemed appropriate.

Existing Conditions

The committee will review existing conditions, including zoning, parking requirements, design guidelines, infrastructure capacity, pedestrian and bicycle safety, connectivity, open space, existing housing stock (especially values and rental rates), existing businesses, market opportunities unique to the corridor, parcel geometry and ownership, and other issues related to the built environment and user experience.

Boylston Street Visioning Group Recommendations

The committee will also review the community input, prioritization of issues, and preliminary recommendations developed through the Boylston Street Visioning Group process. Special attention will be paid to studying improvements that help realize the community's vision of transforming the corridor into a place defined by walkability, multi-modal transportation, and contextually-appropriate urban character - a mix of uses, open space, and an active public realm.

Town Policy Objectives

- Improved streetscape
- Housing - especially for households between 100 and 120% Area Median Income, which may include preservation of existing housing stock
- Strategies to increase housing rental and ownership opportunities for historically excluded populations in Town, particularly African-American and Hispanic families
- Plan for denser development adjacent to MBTA stations while balancing appropriate scale and use for each neighborhood
- Appropriate opportunities for new businesses and other uses in the corridor, especially ones that provide a "third" social surrounding opportunity (i.e., third to home and work)
- Increase daytime population presence along the corridor (employees, customers)
- Strategies to incentivize business ownership by minority groups underrepresented in Brookline, women, and/or members of the LGBTQ community
- Growth of commercial property taxes
- Sustainability

Analysis

After reviewing the Existing Conditions, Visioning Group Recommendations, and Town Policy Objectives, the committee will study the feasibility of different policy recommendations, redevelopment scenarios, and infrastructure improvements aimed at improving the appearance, function, connectivity, and safety of the corridor, while contributing to recommendations and objectives described above.

Planning Methods

Tools that will be utilized in this study include:

- Inclusive community engagement processes
- Conceptual building massing of redevelopment scenarios
- Financial feasibility of policy recommendations and redevelopment scenarios
- Conceptual capital infrastructure improvements that may be made by private developers or by the Town, including open space
- Phased redevelopment that may be proposed along the corridor over time, including potential accessory uses that could provide support to other parcels (e.g., shared parking)

Community Engagement Process

In undertaking its work, the committee should involve and keep updated members of the Economic Development Advisory Board, Housing Advisory Board, Parks & Recreation Commission, Commission on Diversity Inclusion and Community Relations, Climate Action Committee, Planning Board, and the Select Board. The committee should also solicit input from the general public, as well as key stakeholders including major property owners, real estate developers, business owners, residents (renters and homeowners), and other users of the corridor.

Recommendations

The committee shall develop a set of recommendations and implementation measures. Such implementation measures may include proposed capital improvements to infrastructure, creation of policy programs or regulation change to incent desired outcomes, changes to zoning, and revised design guidelines, among others.

Committee Goal

Given the substantial amount of planning and community outreach that has already occurred along this corridor, thus forming a strong foundation for the Committee's work, an aggressive timeline is appropriate. The BSCSC should work to deliver a final report to the Select Board with recommendations, implementation measures, and if appropriate, a zoning proposal and revised design guidelines prior to the close of the 2020 spring Town Meeting warrant.