

Minutes

Boylston Street Corridor Study Committee

July 13, 2021 7:00PM
Held remotely via Zoom

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

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

Staff & consultants present: Kara Brewton

Meeting materials included: agenda; PowerPoint by K. Brewton (7/13/21)

Guests included: Alan Christ, Alan Cohen, Amie Lindenboim, Anthony Flint, Arran French, Bernard Greene, Bill Reyelt, Cynthia Drake, David Kroop, Deane Coady, Emily Jacobsen, Faith Michaels, Frances Shedd-Fisher, Heather Hamilton, Hugh Mattison, Kathryn Kirshner, Kim Smith, Lisa Cunningham, Malcolm Doldron, Mariah Nobrega, Martha Farlow, Martin Hegen, Nadine Gerdts, Natalia Linos, Nate Tucker, Neil Wishinsky, Olivia Fischer Fox, Peter Frumkin, Phyllis O'Leary, Rita Shonbaker, Ruthann Sneider, Sarah Axelrod, Scott Englander, Stephen Lacker, Virginia Smith, Wendy MacMillan

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. This meeting was being held with special focus for Town Meeting Members of Precincts 4, 5, and 6.

Discussion of Boylston Street Concepts

Kara Brewton began the meeting by giving an overview, specific to a couple portions of the Boylston Street Corridor, of areas that could be the focus of proposals to Town Meeting.

Presentation highlights below:

- Study area: Properties north and south of Boylston Street, from Barrington Road in the west to Juniper Street in the east
- Existing conditions: varying land uses (from various residential to park, school, auto, and small retail), past studies reviewed
- Goal: Address infrastructure needs on Boylston Street, work with consultant (Toole Design Group) to create design concepts (three concepts currently developed) potentially incorporating form-based zoning, mixed-uses, support for small businesses, parking management, climate consideration, reduced traffic speeds, and bike and pedestrian safety

- The Committee conducted an initial survey that was reviewed in detail during the June 2nd public forum; the survey received 424 responses and respondent demographics skewed to older homeowners
- Kara reviewed the results of the survey, including main outcomes, differences of opinion, and constraints and opportunities
- Potential recommendations are divided into three categories (no votes to date): preserve, enhance, transform
- Five key sites offered as opportunities to add significant housing or commercial development (see screenshot below)
 1. 10 Brookline Place: Detailed process available on Committee website
 2. Brookline Housing Authority: Detailed process available on Committee website
 3. Madris Site to Smythe Street: Kara reviewed 3D modeling and discussed opportunities to increase setbacks, augment view corridors, expand open space, set maximum heights, and keep/change curb cuts
 4. Boylston Place: Kara reviewed development potential on site, including opportunity for 2-6 stories providing up to 59 residential units and 20,000 square feet of ground floor commercial use (FAR ~3.0)
 5. Cameron-Smythe: Kara discussed current ownership of gas station and owner interest in extending or changing use, as well as opportunities to leverage small open space behind Dunkin Donuts into larger green space



Conversation with the Committee Included:

- Public engagement:
 - Concern about underrepresented groups in survey
 - Engagement included mailings to residents and business owners in the core Wilson Street area that included physical copies of the survey and links to digital survey; site visits to attract different interest groups, and a community clean up behind Dunkin Donuts to visually and physically engage with stakeholders; and specific outreach to 22 High Street, High Street Vets, upcoming meeting with town’s new Community Engagement Coordinator

- Transportation Impacts:
 - Conversation about the impacts of losing a gas station
 - General consensus that study should focus on Boylston Street corridor as a merging of two neighborhoods, not a transportation corridor
 - General consensus that a traffic study is needed to understand how narrowing the street will impact traffic, speed, and alternate routes
 - General consensus that the area needs a road diet: one lane in each direction is more attractive than current layout, especially given proximity to Old Lincoln School and corresponding emissions, but some participants suggested considering a third lane that changed direction with corresponding rush hour traffic
 - Idea that the light at Cypress Street is an opportunity for traffic calming (consider how nearby one-way streets will be impacted by any traffic calming/road diet)
 - Conversation included general need to understand if traffic is or is not originating/terminating in Brookline, and impacts of potential bus lane on this road (could be an opportunity to try some temporary changes); also consider commute to LMA and associated shuttle as major sources of congestion and opportunities to convert commuters to other modes of transit
- Multi-Modal Corridor:
 - Transportation interventions should prioritize pedestrian safety and bike accessibility, as these are opportunities to remove more cars from a narrowing road, and will encourage more people to feel safe when walking on the street
 - Conversation about tradeoff between parking and wider/safer sidewalks: anecdote shared about parked cars being totaled by drivers passing and speeding in already too busy and too narrow lanes
 - Interest in increasing access to public transportation along Boylston Street
- Public Realm/Open Space:
 - Need wider sidewalks, potentially a green median, and lots of street trees to provide shade and combat urban heat island effect
 - Need uses that activate streetscape, pocket parks, fewer parking lots, fewer blank facades, etc.; also need additional crossings
 - Noise on the sidewalk is immense given high volume and lack of street trees (see Harvard St. near Coolidge Corner as an example of what Boylston St. could be)
- Community & Business Transformation:
 - Interest in a study on viability of retail/commercial expansion
 - Need clear goals on future development to help small businesses plan for the future
 - Discussion on Boylston Street as the site of two neighborhoods joining, an opportunity to think about community feel and branding (define this street of street as different from others in Brookline)

Closing

Kara noted that there is an upcoming site walk at White Place on Friday at 11am to look at some existing building relationships. Group will meet at the corner of Washington St. & White Place.

**Meeting adjourned at approximately 8:55 pm.

Chat:

00:31:38 wendy machmuller: June 9 Forum:
https://www.brooklinema.gov/DocumentCenter/View/24816/Boylston-forum_Jun-9-2021

00:45:25 Virginia Smith: Yes! I was glad to see it in the Preserve category.

00:45:32 wendy machmuller: Ginnie, yes, the Madras bldg? (Cypress/Rt 9) That is under the Preserve category. UHaul has no interest in leaving the site.

00:47:57 wendy machmuller: Presentation from Bulfinch:
https://www.brooklinema.gov/DocumentCenter/View/24953/21_0621_10-Brookline-Place_Final-to-BSSC

00:49:47 Virginia Smith: I would be very much in favor of a much larger (and nicer!) 22 High Street, but I think the proposal of a bio lab at Brookline Place is not the best (safest) use in a dense neighborhood with lots of family and is oversized and will cast a big shadow on Station Street and on the T.

00:49:48 wendy machmuller: And the BHA presentation that Kara mentioned:
<https://www.brooklinema.gov/DocumentCenter/View/24708/BHA-ppt-5-10-21>

01:05:15 Carlos Ridruejo: Stephen, thank you for thoughtful suggestions

01:09:37 wendy machmuller: Yes, we think we can pull some of that data from VHG for the dedicated bus lane

01:18:13 Virginia Smith: Great point, Heather, re: Route 9 turning into the one-lane Huntington Ave (with the T-line)

01:18:41 wendy machmuller: Stephen yes agree, the consensus for overall vision for this "corridor" is a focus on pedestrians not cars.

01:19:51 Nadine Gerdts: We do need to agree about what type of space we want to create — it pedestrians and bicyclists are to be prioritized to create a lively environment equivalent to Beacon St. then we need to work toward that goal in terms of reducing car speed - it should be doable.

01:21:34 wendy machmuller: And Stephen and Emily thank you for raising your hands, we will get to attendees as well!

01:22:45 wendy machmuller: Stephen, yes, a focus on pedestrians... there has been consensus about that back from the Visioning process.

01:24:57 wendy machmuller: Thanks for the link, Anthony!

01:30:58 Carlos Ridruejo: Thank you Lisa for highlighting these important common goals.

01:32:50 wendy machmuller: And still do, Walnut backs up every weekday morning

01:34:37 Carlos Ridruejo: Mass DOT will have the final say on what happens on this portion of Boylston Street.

01:35:03 wendy machmuller: MASCO is very opposed to a dedicated bus lane, and I don't imagine that they have any interest in reducing lanes. But these are people coming from west in, and as Wendy F said, the shuttles can be better utilized.

01:36:41 Scott Englander: The Longfellow Bridge reconstruction project — which over 2 years reduced or eliminated its capacity to various degrees. What we saw was that most of the traffic simply “evaporated.” I.e., people found other alternatives or just eliminated low-value trips.

01:37:05 Carlos Ridruejo: Appropriate traffic studies will be conducted when Mass DOT considers our proposals.

01:39:35 wendy machmuller: I recall that Toole Design didn't think a reversible lane would be successful in this area

01:40:17 wendy machmuller: Or advisable. Maybe someone else on the Committee can recall why that is the case.

01:40:40 Nadine Gerdts: I think it is helpful to envision a better road that is joy to bike down — that the need to get rid of cars becomes a reality and the T improves and cars aren't necessary to get to the LMA or downtown — we need to think long term

01:41:18 Scott Englander: Anthony: Thanks for that link — great article. I'm pasting it here again for attendees as well: <https://www.fastcompany.com/90653986/traffic-devastates-local-streets-in-more-ways-than-you-d-think>

01:41:25 wendy machmuller: Thank you Nadine, yes!

01:46:10 Scott Englander: Traffic isn't something that just happens to us — it is a direct result of what we design for. If we design to prioritize people and de-emphasize traffic, we'll get more people and less traffic.

01:52:30 Virginia Smith: I seem to remember an idea that was floated when we were looking into expanding the high school, which was to sink Route 9, cover it, and have green space on top. Probably lots of problems associated with it and far too expensive, but that would certainly bring together the two sides of Route 9 in a people-friendly, environmentally friend, place.

01:52:48 Virginia Smith: friendly

01:53:57 Wendy Friedman: Virginia, that was my personal dream of how/where to put a 9th school.

01:59:11 Kara Brewton: @Stephen - what Toole Design's charge is regarding Boylston: to further develop up to three different concepts for Boylston Street design (in concert with their communication with MassDOT, past traffic studies, etc.) but NOT including a full technical analysis - as I mentioned before, the goal is to document WHETHER there is community support for significant change - the Committee for example might recommend two or three options that need to be further developed with MassDOT moving forward.

02:00:47 Virginia Smith: Thank you, excellent and thought-provoking meeting.

02:01:06 NataliaLinos: Thank you for this discussion!

02:01:18 Emily Jacobsen: Thanks to all the committee members. So many great ideas.

02:01:36 Kim Smith: Thanks everyone!

02:01:56 Wendy Friedman: Thanks everyone for joining us and sticking it out!

Minutes

Boylston Street Corridor Study Committee

July 19, 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	Y
Deborah Brown	Y	Wendy Machmuller	Y	Mark Zarrillo	Y

Staff & consultants present: Kara Brewton

Meeting materials included: agenda; PowerPoint by K. Brewton (7/19/21)

Guests included: Jennifer Gilbert, Paul Saner, Carla Benka, two anonymous callers

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.

Discussion of Boylston Street Concepts

The purpose of tonight's meeting is to continue reviewing proposals that could be the focus of those presented to Town Meeting. Kara Brewton gave a presentation focused at how draft zoning could be applied in different areas of the Boylston Street Corridor. She also reported back to the group on a site visit the previous Saturday to the White Place area. An outline of potential draft zoning was presented.

Presentation highlights below:

- **7/16 Site Walk Main Takeaways:** future development should match height of Brookline Bank, reuse existing building when possible, and provide landscaping (flexibility could be built in on whether this in the front or rear of the building)
- **Proposed Zoning for Eastern Part of Corridor:** implement special overlay allowing Floor Area ratio (FAR) to be exceeded under certain conditions (i.e. public benefits), allow flexibility of rear setback, require buildings to accommodate small café space on ground floor, reduced parking requirements by use types, keep allowed height of 40' per G-1.0 district
- **Madris Site:** change zoning to G-2.0, increase building maximums (similar to Madris Building), allow 2-2.5 FAR with shadow impact considerations, require 20% landscaped space in residential G-2.0, parking relief by special permit if all affordable units on-site
- **Boylston Place Site:** provide parking relief (already G-2.0), other needs addressed in design guidelines

- **Valvoline/Dunkin’ Donuts Site:** change multi-family district from 1.0 FAR to G-2.0 zoning (which would allow a 4-5 story building), consider adding “no build zones”/required open space in exchange for additional FAR/height
- It was noted that Town Meeting is moving towards reducing parking requirements throughout the Town, and therefore a parking relief incentive along Boylston Street may only be unique to the study area for a short period (i.e. not a significant enough incentive)

Conversation with the Committee Included:

- Overall Zoning Feedback:
 - General consensus that this draft is moving in the right direction
 - Remove some current ambiguities in zoning language. Example: be more explicit about the requirement for ground floor commercial use to ensure that created storefronts are viable (and not too small)
 - Agreement on changes to parking requirements, strong interest in keeping requirements for loading
 - Further discussion wanted regarding building articulation in the western study area (best rooted in design guidelines)
 - Brief discussion of changes to the south side of Boylston Street. Concern that given current timeline, lack of input/interest to date, and lack of interest from current property owners in changing existing uses, this is not the highest use of the Committee’s remaining time.
 - Regarding affordability requirements: Discussion of how the current bylaws require inclusionary zoning (i.e. range of affordability) town-wide. The proposed changes in this corridor would incentivize that affordability to be built on-site (instead of met via cash-in-lieu system)
- Landscaping/Open Space
 - Need to make sure that what’s built creates street activation. Concern expressed over landscaping requirements given desire for street trees and their ability to mitigate the urban heat island effect and create a pleasant pedestrian experience. Need to further discuss how commercial uses provide open space in particular.
 - Consistent landscaping will unify the streetscape, giving it a distinct feel and brand.
- FAR & Max Built Out
 - General consensus that there is a need for modeling that shows the difference between current maximum build, and proposed maximum build. This modeling should include: setbacks, height (using incentives, and not using), FAR, shadow impacts
 - Further information needed on how shadow impacts are assessed and how other municipalities assess this.
 - Discussed how dimensional requirements interface with special permits. Noted that there are two distinct conditions that the Committee is considering with this proposed zoning: the eastern part of the corridor could permit additional development without special permits and the western part of the corridor could permit more significant increases in allowable FAR, by special permits.

- Consider increasing FAR for the UHaul and Audi dealership site, especially if they were combined for redevelopment, which could help the streetscape experience
- Likelihood of Development
 - Committee members would like to consult with the developer community on how they would respond to these provisions, and their likelihood of using various incentives
 - Consider carving out parking relief by special permit for the whole corridor; this could provide incentive to currently auto-oriented businesses to become less car-oriented without committing to additional height
 - Lack of consensus on if these incentives are substantial enough to create desired change; parking relief is a big lever but outstanding question on longevity of unique incentive

Closing

Kara confirmed a quorum for a meeting on 7.26.21. Agenda still being confirmed, but will include continuation of tonight's discussion with added modeling and further refinement of draft zoning, as well as any additional information gathered on how the proposed G-2.0 zoning will impact future development. Kara will send an electronic meeting invitation and share the presentation and materials from tonight in the next few days.

**Meeting adjourned at approximately 1:18 pm.

Minutes

Boylston Street Corridor Study Committee

July 27, 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	Y

Staff & consultants present: Kara Brewton

Bulfinch Team included: Robert Schlager, Mark DiOrio, Brian McInerney, Matt DeNoble (Bulfinch); David Manfredi & Tim Talun (Elkus Manfredi), Bob Allen & Jennifer Dopazo Gilbert from Robert Allen Law;

Meeting materials included: agenda; powerpoint by Elkus Manfredi (7/27/21)

Guests included: Carol Levin, Frances Shedd-Fisher, Fred Perry, Jonathan Klein, Joshua Currier, Mary Sabolsi, Michael Alperin, Paul Saner, Susan Rothstein, Valon Hidra

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 of 10 Brookline Place

Existing Conditions –

David Manfredi showed an existing building section, which is a cast in place concrete building, with 11' floor-to-floor heights in the 2nd to 5th floors, 13'1" at the top floor. Typical floor-to-floor heights for lab space is 14'6". Additionally the structural grid is very tight whereas the proposed use would have a 33' proposed grid spacing with a center core. Showing photos from the perimeter, the blank wall along Route 9 is actually the top of the parking garage, which makes it difficult to reuse for street level entries.

Trip Generation associated with the proposed development, including travel mode deductions similar to assumptions made for the 1 & 2 Brookline Place development:

Vehicles – existing is 66 in the AM, 64 in the evening; whereas the proposal is 105 in the AM and 122 in the evening peak hours.

Transit – existing is 97 in AM, 96 in evening whereas proposed is 157 in AM and 194 in evening.

Bikes – 47 in AM and 46 in evening; proposed is 76 in AM and 93 in evening.

Parking existing supply – 109 spaces in upper level and 128 spaces in lower level currently; 253 total including valet parking.

Building Height & Shadows – the existing building is 100' tall, surrounding heights include the Brook House at 135', Hilton Garden Inn at 108', 2 Brookline Place at 125'. Massing Scheme 1 proposes 125' to main roof plus 35' mechanical penthouse. East side of the proposal would be 140' to main roof plus 35' mechanical penthouse.

Looking at shadow studies, on March 21st at 9 am, the proposed building would cast additional shadows on buildings west of Kent St. lot (but not up to roof). On June 21st there would be no impacts except to the restaurant on the southeast corner of Station Street and Washington Street as well as to 2 Brookline Place. Shadow impacts on Sept. 21st would be very similar to March 21st. On Dec. 21st at 9 am, additional shadow impacts would go further northwest including the buildings north of Station Street.

Robert Schlager noted that the existing 175,000 sf building was originally designed for Combined Insurance of America. It is approaching its 50-year lifecycle and doesn't lend itself to class A office building. Dana Farber has a lease for another 9 years plus two, 10-year extension options. Permitting timeframe in addition to Town permitting would include state/ MEPA permitting (2-3 years), construction will take 24-30 months plus 12 months of tenant improvements.

In response to Q&A:

- The proposed building mechanical spaces on the rooftop have not yet been designed, as not certain about use, but could be as low as 17' or as high as 34'. These are usually setback 20-30' from the cornice line.
- Existing building grid is 20' x 20'
- About whether a cost-benefit analysis has been completed for a partial demo and extensive renovation, and considering the embodied energy included with construction waste – Bulfinch notes there are two main factors why they would not keep the existing building: 1) the building doesn't comply with current seismic standards for earthquakes; 2) floor to floor heights of 11' doesn't allow for a 9' floor to ceiling height combined with higher standards of higher air flow and other utilities like internet. For demolition, they are looking at hydro-demolition, which uses water jets to crush the concrete to 1" to 4", and would take about 6 weeks.
- Façade did have holes punched in last big renovation. Understand the environmental circumstances of demolition causes, at a certain point there is only so much you can do and now time to move on to new ideas. Current building creates a gap between Brookline Village at Station Street and the area around Route 9. Also want to say this is a unique opportunity, surrounded by lots of roads and the T on one other side. Adjacent buildings are far enough that we can absorb a lot of height at this site. Was originally enticed about potentially pursuing air rights over the T to look bridging over the tracks, to have a more cohesive pedestrian experience. Bulfinch looked at crossing the tracks. It would be difficult to get the T to allow that. Have a site in Cambridge/Somerville/Medford at 640 Boston Avenue, directly adjacent to residential property, and they have been working for 12 years to connect the two sites across the T. But, they would be happy to try here.
- Bulfinch is happy that so far they feel like they have received positive feedback about the design and approach to demolition from this Committee
- This would start construction somewhere in the 5-10 year range hopefully. Construction timeframe would be finished 9-13 years 100% occupied, from today. Have not yet spoken with brokers about leasing the property; they won't until the design is better tied down and need to work with Dana Farber with their needs first.

- The current HVAC system is 15% of what it needs to be for lab use and outside air exchange for a building design today.
- Two chillers are proposed for each side of the building, enclosed in a mechanical penthouse. Penthouse would also keep any exhaust moving directly up. They are exploring geothermal and electric hot water heat pumps. They would look to utilize gas still for the laboratory part of the project, but think they can get to 95% fossil-fuel free.
- Committee members asked whether the atrium could be designed to focus more on the T
- Committee members asked whether we could at least widen the sidewalk over the T; Bulfinch's landscape architect, Mik Yong Kim is looking into that.
- Access to building would be through the building, northeast corner of site with café space or bicycle store, western corner of site with kiosk with some interpreter exhibit.
- Bulfinch will look at whether they could buy restaurant on the southeast corner of Station & Washington Street for a potential larger footprint
- Why so much taller than 2 Brookline Place and the hotel? The need for 100% fresh air for some of the tenants drives the height of the floor-to-floor heights and mechanical equipment. Bulfinch believes that height and density can be sustained without impacting the surrounding area.
- Relationship of building with rest of lower Boylston – Bulfinch notes that this will happen by having outdoor space on upper level decks, you'll see green space from further west in the corridor.
- When asked about whether and how the Town could expedite permitting if they committed to fossil fuel free (FFF). Bulfinch noted that the permitting and construction timeline beyond local permitting is such that there not be much of an incentive. Bulfinch believes there design will be 95% FFF, would not be surprised that by the time we get to construction documents, opportunity to be 100% FFF for life science type of buildings. Bulfinch has adopted as a company policy to build LEED for all their buildings. This building will be gold LEED certified, and could be platinum.

[Rachna Balakrishna had to leave for another meeting].

- In response to a question about helping out neighbors/ could the Brookline Housing Authority (BHA) benefit or could there be a synergy between the two developments. Jennifer Gilbert noted that there has been some discussion between Bulfinch and the BHA to further that idea.
- At least 15% of the parking spaces will have electric vehicle charging stations, per LEED standards. The percentage could be up to 25% or so.
- Bulfinch would be willing to attend additional community meetings.
- The estimated tax revenue is 2-3 times existing conditions, say \$15 per square foot. \$15 x 450,000 – would result in a few million dollars on the real estate tax side.

John VanScoyoc thanked everybody for participating and concluded the meeting.

** Meeting adjourned at approximately 1:35 pm.

Minutes

Boylston Street Corridor Study Committee

August 9, 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	Y
Deborah Brown	Y	Wendy Machmuller	Y	Mark Zarrillo	Y

Staff & consultants present: Kara Brewton

Meeting materials included: agenda

Guests included: Charles Osborne, Lisa Soltani, Danny Danesh, Jennifer Dopazo Gilbert, Jonathan Klein, Paul Saner, Deane Coady, Kimberley Richardson, Arran French, Fred Perry

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.

Thinking Big

John noted that today Deborah Brown will challenge the group to “Think Big” with three questions:

1. How different do we want the street to look in 20-50 years?
2. How does our zoning accommodate this change?
3. What do we do along this stretch of Boylston as a template for redesigning Brookline and bringing Brookline into the future?

Deborah Brown shared a variety of ideas with the group in a written document prior to the meeting and reviewed those ideas/recommendations in a verbal presentation. Highlights from her presentation are below:

- Identified need to make permitting more efficient, perhaps creating a “one-stop permitting” system. Acknowledged that this is not the purview of this Committee, but still relevant as the Bulfinch development [proposed at 10 Brookline Place] is, for the most part, perceived as a model project.
- For this project, it is essential to establish anchors so the corridor can become dynamic and iconic. We need to think bigger than a 2.0-2.5 FAR – are there additional financing or density bonuses for affordable housing, etc.? Can we create a multi-family district along the corridor? The Mobil and Audi sites could support multifamily development and higher Floor Area Ratio (FAR), as well as green space.
- Assert that the Town should consider use of eminent domain for sites, such as the UHaul, which are not interested in building to the “highest/best use” (i.e. FAR of 4.0+). The group did not reach consensus on the use of eminent domain as an appropriate idea.
- While the Brookline Housing Authority provides low income housing, there are many other housing needs to be met by the private market or other nonprofits
- Need to ensure that the development meets and exceeds ADA accessibility guidelines

- Incorporate the Old Lincoln School into a community center (existing in the Town but not sufficient: teen & senior center)
- The lack of income diversity along the corridor and among abutters is an issue in developing an inclusive proposal. Concerns about change should not preclude a true transformation of the site.

Conversation with the Committee Included:

Meeting the Committee’s Charge/Mission (Zoning vs. Planning):

- General consensus that there is some conflating of zoning and planning in this work/conversation. Zoning defined as a regulatory tool (a result of legislation to regulate health, safety, and welfare of development), while Planning (in this case an area plan) defines values and direction. In a plan, we think about how many units per acre, not per parcel. Does the group need to step back and create a “Plan” or can the group proceed with the zoning recommendations?
- This Committee is intended to be a planning exercise. Identified need for visual tools (do not need to be formal/professionally designed) to see how this work could be codified.
- Consideration of a sub-committee tasked with aligning Town resources and getting Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) more involved in this process. No consensus reached.
- While the Committee’s mission does mention housing, it doesn’t get specific about exact number of additional housing. “Improve 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...”

Need for a Planning Process (Corridor & Town-Wide):

- We can’t control parking on a State road – but we can plan for what the streetscape could look like and bring MassDOT along in the coming years
- Unclear data on how much housing and commercial can be absorbed by the Corridor, and where that development should specifically be centralized
- While parcels like UHaul and Audi have made it clear they’re not looking to redevelop in the next few years, a Planning process could be beneficial to guide those sites as they navigate business, change and development along the corridor in the next 20-50 years.
- Discussion of how the Corridor could benefit from State and other funding (ex. ARPA). Outstanding need to identify relevant funding sources and associated deadlines.
- General consensus that this work need to feel “integrated” into larger planning efforts. Lack of Comprehensive Plan since 2006 makes this difficult and the Precinct Plans are minimally used.

Notes on Development:

- Potentially open to higher FAR on certain sites. General acknowledgement that specific zoning is actually more restrictive to conversation about the vision for density along the corridor
- Some outstanding concerns about 10 Brookline Place from neighbors, but feel that density is OK
- Discussion included acknowledgement that the narrowness of many parcels along the corridor makes larger development difficult, and that while it’s good to look at the larger corridor, there are some sites that are more ideal for dramatic increases in density (ex. Cypress & Boylston)

There was a general acknowledgement that this work will not be ready for fall 2021 Town Meeting. Given later timeline, the group seems to be interested in proposed two options at the Spring 2021 Town Meeting:

1. Short-Term: Present specific zoning proposals to Spring Town Meeting and identify intended outcomes from these changes.
2. Long-Term: Create a vision for the Corridor that can incorporate a future Town Master Plan and the Housing Production Plan.

Conversation with the Attendees Included:

- Charles Osborne: Posed the question of whether we are being too general. While integrated planning is needed, there is a need for a strong basis to make development decision (especially related to circulation & mobility). Discussion of immediate versus visionary possibilities and establish a clear set of criteria for decision making.

Closing

John VanScoyoc closed the meeting and noted that tonight's input would be considered in developing future agendas.

**Meeting adjourned at approximately 1:16 pm.