

Minutes

Boylston Street Corridor Study Committee

October 25, 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	N	Carlos Ridruejo	Y
Deborah Brown	Y *	Wendy Machmuller	Y	Mark Zarrillo	Y

**Deborah Brown joined at 12:56pm, Rachna Balakrishna joined at 12:04pm,*

Staff & consultants present: Kara Brewton, Sophie Robison

Meeting materials included: agenda, draft summary of consultant needs

Guests included: Jennifer Dopazo Gilbert, Brian Kane, Susan Kaplan, Paul Saner

Kara Brewton 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.

John VanScoyoc noted that the agenda includes a detailed working session on a document being prepared to acquire a consultant to flesh out proposals for Lower Boylston Corridor. Need to develop clear and specific agreement on the Committee current state of work, which was begun at the 10/20/21 meeting. Kara will lead this discussion.

Presentation

Kara presented progress on this work to date, including clarification of the Committee's intentions for additional, site specific study (which will be most reliant on consultant work). In considering changes made today, Kara asked the Committee to think critically about the existing economies for current property owners and what would motivate a current owner to make some of the changes desired by the Committee (ex. UHaul, Audi, and Buddhist Center sites).

Conversation with the Committee Included:

Regarding sites for analysis, the Committee agreed that the UHaul and Audi sites are not the highest priorities, but that all sites should be considered to maintain consistency (including: Buddhist Center, UHaul, Midas, and Audi sites).

The Committee discussed various concerns about the use of the word "symmetry" in the document language, eventually agreeing to remove the work.

Regarding the site at 20 Boylston/69 Walnut (to be called Walnut Crossing), the Committee discussed street trees and other MassDOT interventions. The Committee liked the idea of a consultant conducting a feasibility study at this site on the proposed FAR of 2.5-3.0.

In the proposed Scope of Work, the Committee felt that the following pieces should be included:

- Work will be wrapped up in spring 2022, and that the zoning recommendations may or may not be ready for spring 2022 Town Meeting
- There is an outstanding need for conversation with MassDOT on transformative streetscape redesign and the associated timelines
- Committee members and staff will create initial additional development scenarios, and consider form based zoning
- Specific suggested language to include: “In order to complete this work, the Committee requires the following consultant studies...”

The Committee agreed that the goal is to have this Scope to a consultant by November 17.

Consultant Choice

Kara discussed the options for consultant choice.

Deb Brown joined the meeting.

Kara shared that for the last 10 years or so, the Town has relied on consultant Pam McKinney, and her deep knowledge of real estate costs and trends across Boston and across various use types. Pam has recently retired and so Kara has conducted significant research to find an alternative consultant for this work. After consulting the State Diverse Business Registry, ZCapital Investments was identified, owned by a Brookline resident who is a principal at a real estate development company and provides real estate analysis services.

Carlos Ridruejo left at 12:59pm.

General consensus on using ZCapital for this project. The Committee expressed appreciation for Kara’s detailed research to find a replacement for the excellent services provided by Pam McKinney.

Closing

The next meeting is on November 8th, 2021. Kara will share the document with additional edits via email.

**Meeting adjourned at approximately 1:10 pm.