

Minutes

Boylston Street Corridor Study Committee

July 12, 2021 12:00PM
Held remotely via Zoom

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

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

**Deb Brown arrived at 12:12pm*

Staff & consultants present: Kara Brewton

Meeting materials included: agenda; staff presentation on test building scenarios (7/12/2021)

Guests included: Fred Perry, Charles Osborne, Paul Saner, Wendy Machmuller, Linda Pehlke, Jennifer Dopazo Gilbert, Deane Coady, Carla Benka

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.

There was some discussion before the meeting formally began, as the Committee was waiting on a quorum. This conversation included seeking clarification about the various setbacks being considered, and the involvement of the Fire Department in review of the zoning options.

Once a quorum was achieved, Kara gave a presentation on what the proposed building envelope could look like at two test sites (87-99 Boylston, and 31-49 Boylston).

Boylston East Study (87-99 Boylston Street)

The major points highlighted for this site were the proposed 15' setback from the property line, the 60' deep building requirement for multifamily development, and the loss of existing tree canopy in the rear lot. This site's elevation is 12' different from White Place to Boylston. While the existing buildings could contain approximately 10 units in the 850-900 square foot range, the proposed three story building could result in approximately 10-13 units in the 850-1,150 square foot range. This change is so minimal this it is not likely that any new development would occur.

Kara proposed whether a fourth story would be appropriate at this site, as it would yield 13-18 units at an FAR of ~2.6. This FAR would significantly improve streetscape conditions by making room for sidewalk and street canopy. The Committee discussed the pros and cons of this approach, including the benefits of rear tree canopy and the different options for negotiating change or loss in tree cover. The Committee also discussed whether or not there should be a requirement for commercial uses on the ground floor, or simply require that the ground floor be suitable for commercial use in the future. The Committee acknowledged that there was some

precedent for buildings over four stories along the corridor and agreed that a site visit would help shed light on the implications of taller building.

Boylston East Study (31-49 Boylston)

The major points highlighted for this site were the proposed 15 foot setback, limited building length of 85 feet (ex. Hotel is 160' with 0' setback), and a 25 foot rear setback for floors 4-6 in lieu of a sky-plane. Here, White Place is 2 feet higher than Boylston Street. The existing buildings could contain approximately 16 units, while the proposed building could contain 26 units at an FAR of ~2.6.

The Committee liked this proposal and would like to see a 360 degree model to better understand what six stories looks like from the street and what the visual continuity of roof lines would look like. Committee members supported the idea that there is a strong need for an overall public realm feel to avoid a haphazard collection of buildings.

Comments from the Public

Charles Osborne commented about the relationship between Boylston Street and Back Bay in Boston, which was discussed earlier during the meeting, and how the uniform base parcel size established unity and harmony in that neighborhood. He did not feel that three stories was sufficient to truly provide safety, health, welfare, and environmental harmony along Boylston Street.

Closing and Next Steps

- There will be a site walk during the regular Committee meeting time on July 16th, at 11am. The Committee will make an effort to inform and invite White Place residents to participate.
- The Committee agreed on an approach for the upcoming presentation to Town Meeting members on the current proposals from the Boylston Street Corridor Study Committee.

**Meeting adjourned at approximately 1:10 pm.