

# **Boylston Street Corridor Study Committee**

## **Suggested Draft Updated Design Guidelines**

Recommended by Boylston Street Corridor Study Committee: 4/7/22

The following proposed design guidelines are consistent with the vision discussed by the Boylston Street Corridor Study Committee that emphasizes the importance of establishing pedestrian and bicycle friendly environment along the edge of the street that will support residential and business uses, and centers equity and inclusion in their development.

The Planning Board originally adopted guidelines for this corridor in 1994. This set of guidelines supplant those from 1994 guidelines and are intended to supplement base zoning requirements as well as any requirements of an overlay zoning district proposed for portions of this corridor. While the guidelines do not have the force of zoning, they provide a set of expectations for both potential applicants and the public that can serve to guide a design review and provide a more predictable process.

The guidelines address the relationship of building forms, height, setbacks, and screening on sites being considered for development as a transition to adjacent property and structures and aim to minimize adverse impacts on the surrounding communities.

The guidelines also address the public realm, with the goal of creating an active, vital streetscape. As such, they call for wider sidewalk reservations along the edge of property fronting on streets to accommodate public amenities, such as trees, benches and other street furniture, bicycle parking and pedestrian scale lighting, and a transparent edge to provide visual access to active ground floor.

### **Guidelines for the Brookline Hills and Boylston Street East Overlay Districts**

#### Equity Goals

Applications must consider how their project can protect the rights of all people affected by their project by intentionally identifying, engaging, and addressing the needs of historically disadvantaged groups; this is in furtherance of the Government Alliance on Race and Equity's Racial Equity Toolkit and involves the following best practices:

1. Practice equity-centered design by purposefully involving minoritized communities throughout a design process. Equitable design acknowledges that equity doesn't happen by chance but with intent and focus.
2. Require robust community engagement so as to allow marginalized voices to directly affect how the solution will address the inequity at hand.
3. Encourage decision-makers to serve and benefit all Brookline residents regardless of status in ways that reduce or eliminate inequity.

4. Encourage social impact assessments and equitable development in order to ensure more affordable housing, Community Benefit Agreements for residents in distressed and high need communities, a reimagining of public spaces and greater employment.

#### Streetscape

1. Articulate the building facade along Boylston Street in segments similar in width to adjacent buildings.
2. Minimum setback 12' from the property line to accommodate sidewalks and street trees along Boylston Street for public use.
3. Provide other streetscape improvements such as trees, benches, lighting, bicycle parking, and sidewalk material in accordance with standards set by the town and/or the state related to Complete Streets models.
4. Encourage on-site accent lighting at the first floor in order to support a more inviting and safe pedestrian experience.
5. Locate active retail and office uses along the frontage of buildings facing Boylston Street or Cypress Street with ground floor space accessible from the sidewalk.
6. Provide generous transparent glazed storefronts type windows along the Boylston Street sidewalks.

#### Open Space

1. Properties with more than 100' of Boylston Street frontage shall include publicly accessible, usable open space.
2. Locate open space in relation to adjacent yards, residential units, and public spaces that would benefit from natural light and views.
3. Consider providing common spaces at ground level, visually connected to outdoor space, whether on building frontages or addressing the interior of the block.
4. Encourage rooftop terraces and gardens to add visual interest to the tops of buildings and provide needed open space for residents.

#### Bicycle Accommodations

1. For Major Impact Projects near the Boylston Street and Cypress Street intersection, consider providing publicly accessible bike repair stations.
2. For all commercial buildings with greater than 5,000 square feet of space, mixed-use buildings, and residential buildings, provide e-charging locations for bicycles in an accessible area.
3. Opportunities to sponsor shared bike stations and bike maintenance stations should be considered, including properties owned by the Town and public utilities.

#### Vehicular Parking

1. On-site parking should not be located between the public sidewalk and buildings. Screen edges of parking where possible.
2. Minimize traffic circulation impacts on adjacent residential streets.

3. Expanded setbacks shall not be used to provide off street parking.

#### Heights

1. Massing within 50 feet of adjacent residential structures shall transition to a height of less than 45 feet measured from the grade at the adjacent structure.
2. Massing shall be designed to maximize light and air to adjacent properties.
3. Minimum building height of three stories is preferred in General Business districts
4. Planning Board may require wind impact and shadow studies.

#### Façades, Entrances, & Fenestration

1. Facades facing residential neighborhoods shall be sensitive in character and employ material appropriately, such as minimizing glazed curtain walls.
2. Facades shall be articulated, especially if greater than 100' in length.
3. Provide architectural elements such as balconies, bay windows, dormers, roof gardens, and terraces where appropriate.
4. Where appropriate, reinforce street corners or termini of view corridors with special architectural elements.
5. Relate the window-to-wall ratios and the proportion and rhythm of doors and windows to those prevalent in the district.
6. Enrich and refine facades with details such as lintels, sills, and other window trim, railings, string courses, cornices, and rake and eave details.
7. Avoid exterior blank walls on ground floor facades. Where spaces such as utility rooms, fire control centers, etc. require windowless walls, other means of creating visual interest should be provided, including changes in plane, materials, details, and provision for planting.
8. Where ground floor uses are non-residential, 65% of the ground floor facade should be constructed of transparent materials, or otherwise designed to allow pedestrians to view activities inside the building or displays related to those activities.
9. For multifamily buildings of 5 or more units (not including townhomes), there shall be one residential entrance per structure along the Boylston Street facade, and all entrances shall be recessed from the building façade.
10. Where new units are proposed on an existing lot shared with a historic structure, the new building should, if possible, distinguish itself as new construction through materials, architectural details, and form.
11. Incorporate signage mounting locations in building façade design.

#### Sustainability

1. Encourage sustainable development practices that meets or exceeds USGBC LEED Silver Certification Standards.
2. Southern-facing facades should be designed to seasonally optimize the solar heat intake through materials, screenings, awnings, etc.
3. Minimize the urban heat island effect by providing light colored roofing materials.

4. Encourage the design of buildings to minimize on-site fossil fuel free combustion, utilizing best available technology and in accordance with the Town's Climate Action Plan.
5. Preserve, enhance, and augment tree canopy plantings in a way that meets or exceeds the Urban Forestry Master Plan's goals.
6. To the greatest extent practicable, tree removals should be offset by new tree plantings sited near the removed tree.
7. In larger projects, provide interior common spaces for shared amenities, services and facilities such as storage, recreation and gathering space, or in larger buildings areas that can serve residents in the event of extreme weather or power outages. Consider providing amenities that serve the broader community.
8. Use operable windows for residential units and common spaces to provide passive ventilation and improve indoor air quality.
9. In site design, orientation, and facade arrangement, minimize the demand for heating and cooling by considering the effects of solar gain on different sides of the building. Design interior spaces for passive heating, cooling, and ventilation. This approach is intended to conserve energy while also improving resilience in the event of power outages or other mechanical failures.
10. Incorporate sun shading devices or shutters with positive ventilation, solar screens, canopies, porches, or brise-soleil to shade strongly sunlit facades.
11. On roofs, exterior walls, and paved surfaces, use materials with high solar reflectivity to minimize heat absorption and localized heat island effect. As an alternative, employ vegetated coverings such as green roofs or green walls.
12. Employ renewable and low-carbon energy features where feasible, such as solar photovoltaic systems, solar heating systems, or geothermal heating and cooling systems.
13. Consider low operational and embodied energy in material selection.
14. Select and design building systems and equipment within units to facilitate conversion to all renewable energy systems in the future.
15. Use materials with no volatile organic compound emissions in all walls, floorings, ceilings, furniture, acoustic and thermal insulation, and on exterior applied products.
16. Where possible, use and integrate recycled content materials without compromising durability and material quality.
17. Integrate cool roof or green roof systems on buildings where possible to contribute to strategies for stormwater management and green infrastructure.
18. Minimize paved and impervious surfaces. Use permeable surfaces wherever possible for pedestrian pathways, parking areas, and other paved outdoor spaces.

#### Public Art

1. Incorporate public art as an integral component of the development's architectural and landscape design.

2. Where possible, integrate arts related uses such as artists' galleries, art displays, or artists' studios on the ground level of developments.

#### Other Guidelines related to Site Design and Nuisance Issues

1. Locate and design parking, trash storage, and mechanical equipment to minimize their impacts on abutting residences and the public.
2. Locate utility functions such as gas, electric, and water meters, transformers, switchgear, and fire safety equipment where they will be least visible from the street. Where possible, conceal them within the building or in side or rear yard setbacks. They should be planned for early in the design process to minimize their impacts.
3. Locate mechanical elements such as HVAC units, condensing units, ventilation outlets, mechanical exhausts, louvers, and similar objects to minimize their visibility from the public realm and from neighboring sites and buildings. Screen these elements with plantings, fences or other materials that complement the site design and the building's architecture.
4. Reduce the noise impact of rooftop mechanical equipment with sound damping materials and screens and proper acoustic and sound isolation methods.
5. Screen trash and recycling areas with landscaping and/or fencing and ensure that noise and odor-generating functions are fully enclosed.
6. Select lighting fixtures that minimize energy consumption.
7. Lighting design to minimize light pollution to neighbors and the general environment, including dark sky standards.
8. Employ timers, automatic dimming, motion sensors or other mechanisms to avoid excessive lighting throughout the site, including where parking is located below a structure.

#### Signage

1. Encourage the use of blade signs for ground level commercial uses serving the public.
2. Incorporate signage mounting locations in building façade design.
3. Refer to Planning Board Sign and Façade Design Guidelines for further guidelines.

## **Site-Specific Guidelines**

### **361 to 375 Boylston Street [Madris Site]**

- Maximum height to have similar roofline as the existing 131 Cypress Street building
- Maintain existing sidewalk width as transition to adjacent residential properties
- No curbside parking due to roadway width constraints
- Maintain the existing easement to provide public access through the interior of the site

- Maintain the easement areas as no-build zones

**370 to 376 Boylston Street** [Ace Ticket Building]

- Encourage wider sidewalk along Boylston Street
- No curbside parking along Boylston Street due to roadway width constraints

**345 Boylston Street, 116-120 Cypress, and 14 Boylston Place** [Mobil Site and adjacent]

- Maximum height to have similar roofline as 323 Boylston Street
- Setback of 12' from the property line adjacent to Cypress and Boylston Streets for an enhanced pedestrian environment for new development between Cypress Street and Smythe Street
- For property on the east side of Cypress Street, the setback should be considered in the context of and transition to other buildings on Cypress Street on both the same and the opposite side of the street; a canyon effect should be avoided
- Any additional height above three stories shall set back from the street lot line one-half the width of the street right of way up to a maximum of 50 feet
- Provide an east/west break in massing between Wentworth Place and Boylston Street above the second floor to provide a view corridor for adjacent residential buildings
- Access to parking preferred from Wentworth Place

**308 Boylston Street** [Audi car dealership]

- Maximum height 82 feet
- Building height should step down from 6 stories along Boylston Street to 4 stories east of the residential properties on Milton Place
- No curb cuts on East Milton Road
- Setback of 12' from the property line along Boylston Street for an enhanced pedestrian environment for new development
- Provide a pedestrian refuge at the corner of Boylston Street and Cypress Street to accommodate pedestrians waiting for the traffic signal
- Widen the Cypress Street sidewalk that takes into account adjacent buildings' setbacks

**265 to 275 Boylston Street** [Dunkin Donuts/Valvoline Site]

- Maximum height 70 feet
- Minimize access from Cameron Street; as much as possible access shall be from Boylston Street

- Non-residential properties that abut Cameron Street but are accessible from Boylston Street shall have no curb cut on Cameron Street
- Setback of 12' from the property line along Boylston Street for an enhanced pedestrian environment for new development between Cypress Street and Smythe Street
- Applicant should engage with the neighborhood before proposing a detailed landscape plan to ensure the existing tree canopy is protected or replanted to the extent possible

**270 Boylston Street [U-Haul Site]**

- Maximum height 82 feet
- Setback of 12' from the property line at Boylston Street for an enhanced pedestrian environment for new development between Cypress Street and the Old Lincoln School

**120 to 128 Boylston Street [Tire and Midas Muffler Site]**

- Façade setback from curb should match adjacent setbacks
- Façade articulation should be provided to reduce the approximate 245 feet length of the site frontage on Boylston Street (if properties were combined)