

Copley Place Retail Expansion and Residential Addition Citizens Advisory Committee, Re-Entitlements, Meeting #2



Date & Time: July 10, 2013 8:00 am to 9:30am
Location: Copley Place, Fourth Floor Office Tower

Affiliation	Attendees
Boston Redevelopment Authority	Mary Knasas (MK), John Fitzgerald (JK), Lauren Shurtleff (LS), David Carlson (DC), Heather Campisano (HC), Lara Merida (LM)
Simon Property Group (SPG)	Patrick Peterman (PP), Gaylon Melton (GM), Chuck Schneider (CS), Liz Zale (LZ), Bill Kenney (BK)
Collaborative partners (CP)	Donna Camiolo (DMC), Jack Hobbs (JH), Kristi Dowd (KD)
Elkus Manfredi	Rob Halter (RH)
Carol R Johnson Associates	Chris Jones (CJ)
Rackmann Sawyer & Brewster	Lou Miller (LM)
Howard/Stein-Hudson Associates	Michael Santos (MS)
Kortenhaus Communications	Lynne Kortenhaus (LK), Rick Stockwood (RS)

Distribution (in addition to above)

Purpose: CAC second meeting to present the landscape improvements along the perimeter of the building, the SWC Park improvements and updated design improvements to the elevations along Stuart, Dartmouth, and the SWC Park.

<u>Item</u>	<u>Mtg Date</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Due Date</u>	<u>Subject</u>
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I. Open Remarks

2.01	7/10/13	INFO	INFO	Judi Wright opened the meeting and turned the presentation over to Simon for opening remarks and an overview of the agenda.
2.02	7/10/13	INFO	INFO	Patrick Peterman welcomed the CAC back and indicated that he would like to address some housekeeping items as a follow-up to the last CAC meeting. Patrick indicated that the handouts provided to the CAC members are in response to the requests for additional information requested in the last CAC meeting. The items included a chart comparing the approved and proposed project, comparative traffic summary and information regarding comparable projects in the surrounding area. Patrick informed the CAC that Simon met with Boston Transportation Department yesterday and BTD confirmed that they will not issue residential permits to residents of the project. Simon will meet with MassDOT today. Simon met with the Commission for Persons with Disabilities to review the proposed plan and obtain their feedback. Simon will be filing the Notice of Project Change shortly which has a 45 day comment period, but Simon will extend that by 30 days.
2.03	7/10/13	INFO	INFO	Gaylon Melton provided an overview of the meeting agenda which includes reviewing the improvements around the perimeter of the building including Dartmouth Street, Southwest Corridor Park and back around to Stuart Street. Gaylon noted that the plans presented today will represent further development of the design and the comments from the community. The team has worked to add landscaping, shade trees, and gathering spaces along the Southwest Corridor Park. The team has tried to address accessibility issues and improve visibility to the existing retail tenants. Gaylon informed the CAC that the Art Subcommittee held an initial meeting and will meet again on 7/17/13.

II. Design Presentation

2.04	7/10/13	INFO	INFO	Rob Halter provided the design presentation and began with Dartmouth Street reviewing the existing and proposed conditions. Rob noted that seating will be incorporated into the planters with backs. Sidewalk widths were noted and discussed as ranging from 12' at the narrowest point which is from planter to building face (with
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Item Mtg Date Action Due Date Subject

18' from curb to building face) and 28' at the widest. The proposed plan will either maintain or improve upon existing widths.

2.05 7/10/13 INFO INFO Rob presented the entry to the Southwest Corridor noting the existing line of the building face will be maintained. The brick paving will be replaced with concrete which will improve the conditions and provide for better accessibility. Rob noted that the entries to the retail will be recessed. The footprint of the SWC entry to the mall will be maintained.

2.06 7/10/13 INFO INFO Chris Jones presented the landscaping plan. Chris noted that the area is all deck. Due to this the trees struggle to survive in the shallow planters. The team is now looking to create elongated planters which provide for more soil to allow the trees to thrive. The planter shape should provide the feeling that the pedestrian pathway is wide and there is only a moment where there is a pinch point of 12'. Chris presented the Southwest Corridor plan and indicated that the team was able to develop a singular level platform eliminating the slopes and stairs. This allows for universal accessibility. Chris noted the improvements to the lawn space and the plan to prune the existing plantings to clean up and provide better visibility. The vents will be protected by planters with tall trees and the covers will be changed out so the area is accessible. The planting around the vents will create pockets of gathering spaces, i.e. sitting area to play chess. A large civic space is proposed at the entry to Southwest Corridor. The paving materials will likely be concrete and the design team can work with the texture and color to make the concrete interesting. Chris noted the placeholder for the public art. Chris reviewed the rendering perspectives of the proposed improvements to the Southwest Corridor.

2.07 7/10/13 INFO INFO Rob presented the elevations to delineate the façade design changes for the SWC entry and neighborhood retailers. Anthony Gordon commented that it seems like the SWC entry interferes with the pedestrian traffic flow. Rob responded that the entry footprint is not changing from what exists today. The interior is being improved to provide for new escalators and accessible access.

2.08 7/10/13 INFO INFO Rob concluded the presentation with reviewing the Stuart Street façade elevation and indicated that the same expression of the Southwest Corridor is being used here. The intent of the change in fenestration is to blur the difference between the mechanical uses and retail uses.

III. Questions & Answers – CAC Members

2.09 7/10/13 INFO INFO Mark Schmid asked how cabs are protected on Dartmouth Street. Rob responded that the bulb outs on Stuart/Dartmouth creates a protected drop-off lane, in addition to slowing down traffic and improving pedestrian conditions. Mark asked if the bulb outs would create more traffic issues for cars coming off the pike. Michael Santos of HSH responded that the bulb outs have been reviewed with BTM and will improve the pedestrian conditions. The traffic operations will not be worsened by this change. Meg Mainzer-Cohen commented that the CAC asked for these changes.

2.10 7/10/13 INFO INFO Ted Pietras asked if Dartmouth Street would be reduced to 1 lane. Rob responded that 2 lanes will continue to be maintained.

2.11 7/10/13 INFO INFO David Berarducci commented that the windows on the 2nd level of the SWC entry look opaque. Rob responded that the glazing is intended to be fritted and provide for shading. The design intent is to break down the scale of the entry so it is not overpowering the Southwest Corridor space and create a stronger band of the retail so it is more pronounced. Rob noted that SWC entry is still a two level open space on the interior. The glass on the 2nd level will appear to glow at night from the interior lighting.

2.12 7/10/13 INFO INFO Anthony Gordon posed a question as to whether the design change to the SWC entry is as friendly to the outside as the prior plan was. Gaylon responded that the reason for the change was the concern with looking at a blank wall at the 2nd level. Ted Pietras commented that the last plan proposed ads on that blank wall to liven it up.

<u>Item</u>	<u>Mtg Date</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Due Date</u>	<u>Subject</u>
2.13	7/10/13	INFO	INFO	Gene Kelley commented that the SWC entry design change seems to reinforce the Stuart Street entry as the main entry which it has always been. Gene feels that the neighborhood retail is now front and center. Gene furthered that he feels it highlights the plaza and draws you into the retail tenants.
2.14	7/10/13	INFO	INFO	Judi Wright asked what the dark band material was between the 1 st and 2 nd level of the SWC entry. Rob responded that it is a continuation of the metal band. Gaylon responded that it is concealing existing structure. Judi commented that she liked the previous design. Gaylon indicated that the team is trying to balance the transparency and light and will work on how this is addressed. The CAC asked for an example of the fritted glass.
2.15	7/10/13	INFO	INFO	Nikki Fortes asked to clarify the location of the dog park because her concern is that it is at someone's front door. Rob clarified that it is not a dog park; only a dog station located further down near Yarmouth Street and is located away from residential entries. Rob furthered clarified that the dog station is a pole and holder for bags for people to clean up after their dogs. This was requested by the CAC.
2.16	7/10/13	INFO	INFO	Anthony Gordon commented that grass is a not good for dogs, if there is to be a dog park Anthony recommends gravel. Dan d'Heilly furthered that it is a constant maintenance battle with grass. Rob clarified again that a dog park is not proposed, only a dog station. Dan d'Heilly recommended that the dog station be moved past Tent City and situated near the existing dog park.
2.17	7/10/13	INFO	INFO	Mark Schmid commented that he likes what has been done with the landscape leading up to the Southwest Corridor. Mark stated that the climate in Boston is not conducive to support the public gathering space for outdoor activity that is proposed and fears it will become a windswept barren space in the colder weather and only a travel space. Mark commented that it should be thought through carefully how the spaces are articulated not only in paving but other elements.
2.18	7/10/13	INFO	INFO	David Berarducci commented that he feels the team has done a good job of creating the sub spaces along the Southwest Corridor and it should be acknowledged that this is a travel space. David feels that the biggest improvement is the grading and this is a huge improvement for the neighborhood retailers.
2.19	7/10/13	INFO	INFO	Judi Wright requested that dimensions be added to the Southwest Corridor plan for the future.
2.20	7/10/13	INFO	INFO	Nikki Fortes noted the two trees shown at the location of the Hubway rack and asked what will happen to the Hubway. Rob responded that one tree is shown there in error. The plan is to maintain the Hubway in that location. Nikki commented that she is concerned with a heavy canopy on the trees that may block the visibility of the Tent City retail. Rob confirmed that the trees do not have a heavy canopy and they are tall so the canopy is up high.
2.21	7/10/13	INFO	INFO	Byron Rushing praised the team for the improvements to the grades along Southwest Corridor. Byron wanted to remind the team that the original design of this area of the Southwest Corridor always had Back Bay Station in mind and the art at Back Bay Station is design to be seen from the Southwest Corridor. Byron would like the team to look at how Back Bay is viewed and make sure that no trees are blocking the view. Byron commented that he would like the team to continue working on the view of the SWC entry and the top portion with the fritted glass. Byron likes how the retail wraps around. Byron suggested that the next time these perspectives are reviewed, the CAC and team should walk the site at the same time.
2.22	7/10/13	INFO	INFO	David Berarducci asked what was occurring at the vents. Chris Jones responded that the tree planters are situated to act as barriers so vehicles do not drive on the vents, and the vent grating will be replaced so it is accessible.

<u>Item</u>	<u>Mtg Date</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Due Date</u>	<u>Subject</u>
2.23	7/10/13	INFO	INFO	Anthony Gordon asked whether people could walk along the Stuart Street elevation. Rob responded no. Meg Mainzer-Cohen commented that based on prior meetings the group was not able to solve this issue. Rob responded that this will be addressed in the traffic subcommittee.
2.24	7/10/13	INFO	INFO	Meg Mainzer-Cohen raised the notion of possibly eliminating some of the planters along Dartmouth Street to make more accessible and pedestrian friendly. Judi Wright commented that she feels the trees provide protection from the elements. David Beraducci commented that he feels the planters anchor the building and the seating will be needed with the new activity of people that will come to the area with the new retail. David commented that he feels the narrowest point of 12' is adequate for the volume but maybe if it is still an issue, this one planter could be removed. Anthony Gordon commented that the planter should be removed.
2.25	7/10/13	INFO	INFO	Dan d'Heilly commented that the entry to the Southwest Corridor still lacks commemoration and still feels like a mall entry versus a park entry. Rob responded that the team previously discussed considering a marker after the forecourt area. This has not yet been addressed. Judi Wright agreed that the CAC needs to think about some sort of sign. Meg Mainzer-Cohen commented that there could be a possibility to use the concrete to designate the entry to the park. Dan commented maybe it is a map in the ground, but it needs to not be an obstruction.
2.26	7/10/13	INFO	INFO	Judi Wright asked if there was a report on the horses. Judi has been receiving a lot of negative feedback on keeping them. Gene Kelley commented that he is taken aback by the lack of respect for the horses with the planting and trees blocking them but the CAC acknowledged the horses were put in the planter as a result of 9/11. Gene commented that the art water feature is interior even though the atrium is public. Gaylon responded the water feature is challenging over the MBTA and would only be a seasonal water feature if outside. The interior water feature will be all-season.
2.27	7/10/13	INFO	INFO	Gaylon indicated that Simon is looking for as many comments as possible in regards to the art. Simon does not have a model process to follow for this project but will meet with art subcommittee as much as possible. The plan is to send out an RFP to select an artist. Simon is not viewing the horses as a replacement for their obligation for public art. Simon is looking for feedback from the community on whether they should be sold or relocated somewhere else.
2.28	7/10/13	INFO	INFO	David Berarducci commented that the CAC should not focus on whether they like the horses or not but rather focus on a celebratory piece of art and something about Boston. David commented that a determination needs to be made on how the budget will be allocated and expended for the art.
2.29	7/10/13	INFO	INFO	Dan d'Heilly commented that he is receiving strong feedback to not keep the horses. Mark Schmid commented that he supports keeping the horses.

IV. Questions & Answers - Public

2.30	7/10/13	INFO	INFO	A member of the Commission for Persons of Disabilities commented that planters at Neiman Marcus and Tent City create pinch points and blind sides. Rob responded that there is 18' clear at the end near the SWC entry.
2.31	7/10/13	INFO	INFO	George Cramer commented that he is concerned with the landscaping being adjacent to his retail business because it may invite homeless to hang out there. George asked if the path of travel could be flipped so pedestrians walk along the face of the building.
2.32	7/10/13	INFO	INFO	Janet Hunkel (PMAC) commented that she will be attending a community meeting tonight to discuss the new Southwest Corridor plan and asked for clarification on how the space works for different users. Rob walked through the plan on how people will come from the Back Bay Station and enter the SWC entry, people coming both from Back Bay and the South End paths of travel into the Southwest Corridor, locations of

Item Mtg Date Action Due Date Subject

the intimate zones. Chris discussed the transition from the forecourt area which is more urban to areas where the landscaping emerges and transitions to the residential areas.

2.33 7/10/13 INFO INFO A member of the public asked to clarify the locations for chess playing and asked how the Tent City residential entries will be protected from the activity. Rob responded that the existing landscape buffer is being maintained between the residential entry zone and pedestrian travel zone. Meg Mainzer-Cohen asked for clarification on the distance between the residential entries and the landscape buffer. Rob responded 40'. Rob clarified that the existing walkway will be maintained to protect privacy and will be improved for accessibility.

2.34 7/10/13 INFO INFO Ann Hershfang commented that the concrete sidewalk is terrific. She thinks the removal of the one tree and planter with the 12' pinch point is a good idea. Ann commented that fixed tables and benches proposed for the new walkway tend to be obstructions because pedestrians have to walk around them. Ann feels the entry to the Southwest Corridor needs a plaque. People do not know the Southwest Corridor is there and this needs to be announced. Ann suggests focusing on people coming from Back Bay Station and walking to Harcourt versus those going into Copley. Ann suggested a plaque like Roxbury Crossing. Ann to send photos of this plaque. Ann commented that the Southwest Corridor Conservancy sent a letter to the MBTA requesting a plaque. Ann will send a copy of this letter to John Fitzgerald at the BRA. Ann would like to work with Simon on this and asked if a subcommittee could be set up. John Fitzgerald recommended that this become part of the Art Subcommittee which Simon and the team agreed.

V. Next Steps

2.35 7/10/13 INFO INFO John Fitzgerald reviewed the schedule moving forward indicating that the Notice of Project Change is expected to be filed in the next week. The filing will kick off a 45 day comment period with a 30 day extension agreed to by Simon for a total comment period of 75 days. During the comment period Simon will continue to work on the comments received from the CAC and continue meeting with the Art and Traffic subcommittees. The comment period is expected to end late September. The plan would be to hold one more CAC meeting and the Public Meeting before the end of the comment period. John indicated that the BRA likes to hold the Public Meeting at least 2 weeks before the end of comment period. After this point Simon would be eligible for the BRA Board meeting in October. John to provide a copy of this tentative schedule to the CAC.

2.36 7/10/13 Simon/CP The Simon team will provide information on when subcommittee meetings are scheduled so the CAC and community are aware. The next Art Subcommittee meeting is 7/17/13. The Simon team to follow-up on a date for the Traffic Subcommittee for some time before the end of July. The BRA confirmed that the minutes of the subcommittee meetings will be posted to the BRA website with the CAC meeting minutes.

2.37 7/10/13 INFO INFO The next CAC meeting is scheduled for September 11th at 8am.

These notes will become part of the project record as written, unless corrections or additions are received in writing by 7/12/13.