



Copley Place Expansion Project
CAC Working Meeting #7
Tuesday, October 8, 2008
Location: Copley Place – 4th Floor Office Level

CAC Attendees:

David Berarducci, Resident of the South End
John Connolly, Back Bay Association
Meg Mainzer-Cohen, Back Bay Association
Morgan Pierson, St. Botolph Neighborhood Association
Ted Pietras, South End Business Alliance
Jolinda Taylor, Neighborhood Association of the Back Bay (NABB)
Ro Whittington, Tent City Corporation
Judith Wright, Pilot Block Neighborhood Association

Ex-Officio Attendees:

Massachusetts State Senator Dianne Wilkerson
Massachusetts State Representative Byron Rushing
Massachusetts State Representative Marty Walz
Elizabeth Corcoran-Hunt, Office of Representative Rushing
Karin Mathiesen, Office of Councilor Michael Ross

City of Boston Attendees:

Tabitha Bennett, Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services
Heather Campisano, BRA
David Carlson, BRA
John Fitzgerald, BRA
Mary Knasas, BRA
Inés Palmarin, BRA
Lauren Shurtleff, BRA

Simon Property Group Attendees:

Donna Camiolo, R.F. Walsh Project Management
Kristi Dowd, R.F. Walsh Project Management
James Greene, Rubin and Rudman, LLP
Jack Hobbs, R.F. Walsh Project Management
Jane Howard, Howard/Stein-Hudson Associates
Bill Kenney, Simon Property Group
Adrien Lane, Howard/Stein-Hudson Associates
Dave Newman, The Strategy Group
Aimee Savard, Elkus-Manfredi Architects
Susan Tracy, The Strategy Group
Bob Walsh, R.F. Walsh Project Management

Members of the Public:

George Cramer, Cramer's Hair Salon
Ann Hershfang, WalkBoston
Lynne Kortenhaus, Kortenhaus Communications, Inc.

Tom Palmer, Consultant
Sheila Pelosi, Resident of Tent City
Dan Salermo, Back Bay Sun
Jackie Yessian, NABB

Meeting Summary

On Wednesday, October 8, 2008, the seventh working session of the Copley Place Expansion Project Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) was called to order at approximately 8:05 a.m. at Copley Place by Judith Wright, Pilot Block Neighborhood Association and CAC Chair.

Judith began the meeting by announcing that the MTA had declined the BRA's invitation to send a representative to today's meeting. She then moved on to a discussion of the list of lease items prepared by CAC members Anthony Gordon, Ellis South End Neighborhood Association; Massachusetts State Representative Marty Walz; and Massachusetts State Representative Byron Rushing. The list was emailed to the BRA last week and then forwarded on to the MTA and Simon Property Group. The list represents the concerns of these CAC members regarding the negotiation of the new lease between the MTA and Simon Property Group.

Heather Campisano, BRA Project Manager, explained that more than half of the items on the list will be reviewed as part of the BRA/City of Boston's Article 80 process. These issues include:

- Site uses
- Community retail
- Design
- Transportation Access Plan Agreement (TAPA)
 - NOTE: This is an agreement between BTM and the proponent, signed after the project is approved and prior to the issuance of a building permit.
- Vehicular, pedestrian, and bicycle access and circulation around the site
- Boston Residents Construction Employment Standards (including the Boston Residents Jobs Policy)
- Affordable housing units
 - NOTE: This is covered by the Mayor Thomas M. Menino's Executive Order on inclusionary development.
- Other community benefits

Heather suggested that each of these items could become separate agenda items to be covered by the CAC over the next few months.

The following items on the list will not be covered by the BRA/City of Boston's Article 80 process. These will likely be included in the lease between the MTA and Simon Property Group:

- Term of the lease and any provisions regarding renewal/extension
- Rent
- Easement agreements
- Tunnel inspection and maintenance responsibilities, and who bears the cost for such inspection and maintenance
- Other provisions that include an expiration date on something the MTA and/or Simon Property Group have agreed to in the lease ("sunshine clauses")

The following comments were raised in response to the discussion:

- John Connolly, Back Bay Association, stated that the CAC's relationship with the MTA is clear, and agreed that most of the items the group is concerned about are under the purview of City agencies, not the MTA.
- Jolinda Taylor, NABB, expressed her disappointment with the MTA for not attending today's meeting, noting that she is interested in understanding how the MTA's possible consolidation could affect this project, as well as the long-term goals for the site.
- Ted Pietras, South End Business Alliance, expressed his opinion that because the project sits on MTA air rights, the CAC should be involved in the lease negotiations.
- Meg Mainzer-Cohen, Back Bay Association, stated that this issue is clearly a non-starter and expressed her desire for the CAC to move on to other topics that they can have an impact on. She also noted that it is the responsibility of the elected officials on the CAC to reach out to the MTA, rather than the BRA, since their jurisdiction extends to the State.
- Massachusetts State Senator Dianne Wilkerson agreed with Meg Mainzer-Cohen and stated that she would work with the other elected officials to encourage the MTA to involve the community in the process.
- James Greene, Rubin and Rudman, LLP, reiterated that the BRA/City of Boston's Article 80 process is entirely separate from the project's lease negotiations.

Next, Judith turned the meeting over to Jack Hobbs, R.F. Walsh Project Management, who noted that today's presentation will focus on the project's impacts to transportation, parking, and pedestrians. He then introduced Jane Howard, Howard/Stein-Hudson Associates. Jane noted that today's presentation is based on several years of analysis, and stated that the goals of the project were to minimize the impacts to neighborhood traffic and enhance pedestrian safety around the site. She stated that the original project at Copley Place is an excellent example of transit-oriented development (TOD), and added that the site's proximity to the Massachusetts Turnpike helps to minimize its impacts to traffic. No new parking spaces will be provided with the project's expansion, and the loading will all be covered by the existing loading space, accessible from Harcourt Street. The project's mixed-use and TOD components will work to reduce auto trips through a high transit and walk share, as well as reducing the number of external trips through internal capture. Jane added that projects similar to this one in downtown locations tend to reduce the number of auto trips, compared to projects located outside of city centers.

The mode share assumptions for the project are as follows:

	Auto	Transit	Pedestrian
Residential	24%	19%	57%
Retail	29%	16%	55%

These numbers are developed by the State's Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS), and are derived from U.S. Census data. Each neighborhood in Boston has its own scheme, based on the distance to transit, census data, and trip generation estimates.

Jane noted that the Project Notification Form (PNF) includes a detailed transportation study, and was prepared according to BTM guidelines. For the purposes of the study, the proponent compared three build conditions: Existing, No Build (2013), and Build (2013). Projects that have either been proposed or approved in the immediate area were included in the analysis. Jane

noted that the analysis does not reflect the mitigations proposed by other projects, however, so the analysis represents a worst-case scenario.

The project's study area includes 9 intersections, and includes a weaving and queuing analysis of the intersection at Stuart and Dartmouth Streets. Overall, the project will have no impact to 8 of the 9 identified intersections; the only intersection that will be adversely impacted will be the intersection of Huntington Avenue and West Belvidere Street. Additional analyses will be performed in response to the concerns of the community and the relevant agencies.

One proposed improvement is already being considered by the proponent at the intersection of Stuart and Dartmouth Streets, where sign upgrades, a new street geometry, and the coordination of signs at crosswalks could be introduced.

In terms of pedestrian benefits, project improvements will considerably shorten the time and distance of pedestrian crossings. Exclusive pedestrian crossing signal phases will be introduced at the intersection of Stuart and Dartmouth Streets, and signals could be coordinated with the pedestrian crossing at the entrance to Back Bay Station. Additionally, the traffic near the project will be moving slower than it currently moves. Overall, traffic operations will continue to function at Level of Service C, which is very good for urban conditions.

Pedestrian improvements will also be made to the intersection of Huntington Avenue and Exeter Street, with safe havens, clearly delineated sidewalks, and additional wayfinding and warning signage. Neckdowns and bumpouts will also be introduced to calm traffic. Jack Hobbs noted that each of these elements is still in the concept phase, and will need to be fully designed and vetted with the community before any decisions are made.

Currently, Simon Property Group controls 1,429 spaces in the Copley Place garage. Occupancy studies have revealed that excess space exists within the garage. On average, 300 spaces are vacant at the peak hour (2:00 p.m.) in the garage daily. As part of the project, 297 of these spaces will be dedicated to residential parking for the 280 units within the building. The spaces in the Tent City garage will not be impacted by the project, as those are reserved separately. The same is true for the overnight parking reserved for neighborhood residents. The spaces that will be discontinued are currently utilized by monthly users not affiliated with Copley Place, and the idea is that other garages in the vicinity will absorb those users. These spaces were leased because Copley Place found it had excess space in the garage. In addition, a parking management plan will be created to handle the garage more efficiently.

The project is anticipated to add approximately 40 to 60 additional peak hour trips on weekdays to the transit system, and 75 peak hour trips on weekends. These trips are dispersed in both directions and across several systems: the Green Line, the Orange Line, and the Commuter Rail.

All loading functions will occur within the existing Copley Place loading docks, accessed off of Harcourt Street. The loading area includes room for trucks to turn around.

Questions and comments in response to the presentation included:

- In response to a question from Meg Mainzer-Cohen, Adrien Lane, Howard/Stein-Hudson Associates, indicated that they have not yet begun to consider what type of special paving treatments could be used at the intersection, but they will be reviewing those in the

project's final design phase. Jane added that a white pattern impression on the asphalt could be utilized, such as at Brigham Circle.

- In response to another question from Meg Mainzer-Cohen, Adrien indicated that they will be reviewing the weaving and queuing on Stuart Street in greater detail.
- Morgan Pierson, St. Botolph Neighborhood Association, asked if it is possible to install a pedestrian bridge at the Huntington Avenue and Exeter Street intersection. Jane responded that pedestrian bridges are generally discouraged in the City of Boston, noting that most local residents would not use one in this location. Some of the cut-throughs that exist now at this spot will be eliminated, thus removing the option to cross through dangerous traffic.
- Meg Mainzer-Cohen noted that the Prudential Project Advisory Committee (PruPAC) has been discussing improvements to the intersection at Huntington Avenue and Exeter Street, and added that it will be necessary to coordinate both processes as they progress.
- In response to a question from Morgan Pierson, Jack responded that the parking ratio of 1.06 is based on a market analysis and added that BTM considers this an acceptable ratio for residential development with good transit service.
- Ted Pietras commented that the users of the proposed project are not generic users and are more similar to those at other high-end buildings across the City. Jane replied that the proponent conducted surveys at other high-end residential buildings and checked them against garage volumes at the peak hour and found very similar results to what the project is proposing. Adrien added that the retail component of the project is likely to generate more trips than the residential component.
- Morgan Pierson stated that the St. Botolph Neighborhood Association is very concerned with truck idling, noting that the trucks lining up to enter the loading area presently do not turn off their engines while waiting.
- Judi Wright asked if the proponent will be able to provide an estimation of the increase in the number of trucks that will need to access the site. Jane responded that there are currently four trash compactors, with enough capacity to absorb the site's expansion. The assumption is that the same number of trucks will be entering the site since the Neiman Marcus already exists, but that they will linger longer in order to deliver more inventory. The proponent will be checking these numbers to verify this assumption.

Before closing the meeting, Judi Wright asked that the CAC members come to the next working session with a list of topics they would like to cover in the next few meetings. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:55 a.m.