



**MassDOT Turnpike Air Rights Parcels #12-15
CAC Working Meeting #7
Wednesday, February 15, 2012, 6:00 p.m.
Location: St. Cecilia's Parish Hall**

CAC Attendees:

Brandon Beatty, Back Bay Resident
Kathleen Brill, Fenway Civic Association (FCA)
Fritz Casselman, Neighborhood Association of the Back Bay (NABB)
David Gamble, Boston Society of Architects (BSA)
Valerie Hunt, Fenway Neighborhood Resident
David Lapin, Community Music Center
Meg Mainzer-Cohen, Back Bay Association
Jan Sprawka, Fenway Studios
Gil Strickler, St. Cecilia's Parish
Steve Wolf, Fenway Community Development Corporation (FCDC)

Ex-Officio Attendees:

David Blaisdell, Office of Massachusetts State Representative Marty Walz
Elizabeth Corcoran-Hunt, Office of Massachusetts State Representative Byron Rushing

City of Boston Attendees:

Jonathan Greeley, BRA
Emily Mytkowicz, BRA
Lauren Shurtleff, BRA
Rachel Szakmary, BTB

State of Massachusetts Attendees:

Robin Blatt, MassDOT
Martin Polera, MassDOT
Bill Tuttle, MassDOT

Members of the Public:

Paul Anderson, Prudential Financial
Kenan Bigby, Trinity Financial
Alexandra Brax, The Chiofaro Company
Barbara Burley, The First Church of Christ, Scientist
Donald Chiofaro, The Chiofaro Company
Dharmena Downey, Fenway CDC
Margaret Driscoll, Resident of 360 Newbury
Frank Edwards, Trinity Financial
Lilly Jacobson, FCDC
Christopher Janes, Resident of 360 Newbury
George Kickham, Dalton Street Garage
Michael Liu, The Architectural Team
David Manfredi, Elkus-Manfredi Architects

John Martin, Elkus-Manfredi Architects
Steve Mitchell, The Chiofaro Company
Ted Oatis, The Chiofaro Company
Martin Schaefer, Resident of 360 Newbury
Tina Schaefer, Resident of 360 Newbury
Carol Sharp, Resident of 360 Newbury
Peter Sougarides, Samuels & Associates
Charles Talanian, Back Bay Resident
Bill Taylor, The Four Seasons
Adam Weiner, Weiner Ventures
Brooke Wiley, Resident of 360 Newbury

Members of the Press:

Ashley Fairey, The Boston Courant

Meeting Summary

On Wednesday, February 15, 2012, the seventh working session of the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) Turnpike Air Rights Parcels 12 – 15 Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) was called to order at approximately 6:15 p.m. in St. Cecilia's Parish Hall by Jonathan Greeley, BRA Planner. Jonathan reviewed the agenda, noting that the purpose of this meeting is to provide the CAC with an opportunity to internally discuss all of the proposals for each parcel.

Jonathan reiterated that the role of the CAC is to make a recommendation to MassDOT regarding which proposals best meet the goals laid out in the Civic Vision for Turnpike Air Rights. Upon receiving designation, the selected developer(s) would then begin the BRA's Article 80 development review process, which allows for additional community review of any proposal.

He then reviewed the tentative schedule moving forward, which is subject to change. Following tonight's meeting, MassDOT will be issuing an Amendment to the 2008 Request for Proposals on Friday, February 17. The responses will be due to MassDOT on March 16. The next four CAC meetings will include:

Working Session #8 (Early March): Berklee College of Music presentation; engineering presentation on structural considerations for tunnels and bridges; and any other outstanding items

Working Session #9 (Late March) and **Working Session #10** (Early April): Updated developer presentations and CAC review of updated submissions

Working Session #11 (Late April): Discussion of CAC recommendations

Following the eleventh working session, a formal recommendation letter to MassDOT from the CAC would be due in early May.

Jonathan then turned the meeting over to Bill Tuttle, MassDOT Deputy Director of Real Estate and Asset Management. Bill explained that concurrent to the CAC process, MassDOT will also be interviewing each of the development teams internally. MassDOT will consider the recommendations from the BRA and the CAC and bring their final recommendation for each parcel to the MassDOT Board in July or August. Bill reminded the group that the process will not

be opened back up to the general public, and also stated that no new bidders will be allowed nor will any existing development team be permitted to add a parcel to their proposal. Bill also mentioned that he had spoken with Paul Anderson of Prudential Financial and confirmed that they are committed to working with The Chiofaro Company and no other development team at this time in regards to Parcel 15.

Fritz Casselman, CAC Co-Chair and NABB, asked for a show of hands to see how many members of the public versus development teams were in attendance tonight. Approximately ten people raised their hands, indicating they were members of the general public.

Jonathan also brought the CAC's attention to two comment letters received from the public: one from the Fenway CDC and the other from a resident of 360 Newbury Street, Christopher Janes. These were submitted in response to the call for informal public comments at the last CAC meeting.

Next, Jonathan provided a PowerPoint presentation (available on the BRA's project website: <http://www.tinyurl.com/Parcels12-15CAC>) prepared by the BRA in order to provide the CAC with an overview of each development proposal presented thus far, separated by parcel. The CAC discussed each parcel independently and also asked questions of the development teams that were in attendance. The following represents a summary of all of the comments made:

Parcel 15: The Chiofaro Company

- Brandon Beatty, Resident of Back Bay: This proposal's structure is almost exclusively over air rights. This is the largest project we have seen that proposes to build this much over air rights.
- Gil Strickler, St. Cecilia's Parish: The bulk of the structure is towards Boylston Street and is set back less than the other proposals.
- David Gamble, BSA: While a general tendency in urban design is to set back the density, this proposal represents an efficient use of the site and could be appropriate given the right architecture.
- Brandon Beatty: Residential uses comprise a majority of the other proposals and have a high traffic impact. Perhaps an office use is appropriate here from a transportation context.
- David Lapin, Community Music Center: This proposal does conform to the guidelines set in the Civic Vision, however, while a taller building belongs here, this proposal is not mitigated by any public amenities. The architecture as presented is dull and unimaginative. With Prudential Financial behind the developer, though, it is likely that the whole site would be utilized.
- Kathleen Brill, FCA: It does cover the whole area and bridges the existing gap, but the architecture and uses proposed is not exciting.
- David Gamble: The architecture discussion will come later, though, since these are really just massing models.
 - o Steve Mitchell, The Chiofaro Company, replied that the massing architecture is just conceptual at this stage and should be considered a placeholder.
- Steve Wolf, FCDC: The proposed façade is a bit like the Hynes Convention Center. It would be good to see a bigger push for green and sustainable elements by the developers for all of the projects.

- Jonathan Greeley responded that it is too early in the process to really judge each proposal's sustainability since most of this has not been thought out yet, but that these considerations will come up later in the process.
- Jan Sprawka, Fenway Studios: The massing along Boylston Street appears to be very harsh; it looks like a canyon or a wall. The eventual architectural elements could help, but the massing is overbearing.
 - Michael Liu, The Architectural Team, replied that they were seeking to continue the street wall established at the Hynes Convention Center.
- Valerie Hunt, Fenway Neighborhood Resident: The massing is overwhelming and the proposed office use will not contribute to street life or activity.
- Meg Mainzer-Cohen, CAC Co-Chair and Back Bay Association: A greater setback here would be helpful and in line with the setbacks generally used in the Back Bay. The office use is good in that it involves daytime activation. Down the street, 888 Boylston Street has already been permitted and has not yet broken ground, so there is some concern over whether another office tower is needed or is feasible in this area.
- Brandon Beatty: It is important to keep in mind that many residential units have been approved across the City recently. At some point, the capital to finance all of this residential construction will dry up. The development teams and the CAC are making predictions about what the market will be in a few years.
 - Jonathan Greeley confirmed that currently 4,000 to 5,000 residential units have been permitted by the BRA for development in the City.
- Kathleen Brill: While it is good to have a discussion about uses, these can ultimately change, however, if the market changes too.
- Meg Mainzer-Cohen: The full coverage including the Prudential Financial parcel is positive.
- Fritz Casselman: The wall along Boylston Street feels like a wall between the neighborhoods, though.
- Steve Wolf: Would it make sense to set the development back further? The sidewalk looks wide.
- Meg Mainzer-Cohen: A stronger podium with a setback would be better in this location.
- David Gamble: The arcade is not shown in these renderings and arcades are not always successful. A sidewalk can be too broad. For example, it is unsuccessful at the Hynes Convention Center because there is no active use behind it.
- Brandon Beatty: What is the cost premium associated with just building the deck over the Turnpike?
 - An engineer for The Chiofaro Company responded that it is approximately \$1,000 per square foot for the deck alone.
- Brandon Beatty: General land costs in the City of Boston run between \$80 - \$100 per square foot of the entire building. This is an important data point to consider in order to judge economic feasibility.
- Gil Strickler: The Berklee College of Music's massing is a good model to follow for Boylston Street. This proposal goes against this.

Parcel 15: Carpenter & Company

- Fritz Casselman made a comment about the podium and setback of the proposal.
- Brandon Beatty: The look and the hotel use are both desirable, however, this proposal is dependent on the Dalton Street Garage. Also, the tunnel element here is still unknown.

- Kathleen Brill: The use, height and design presented are favorable, though there is some concern about feasibility and site control.
 - o Jonathan Greeley stated that he has spoken with representatives from Carpenter & Company and they indicated that if they are designated to move forward, they are confident that they will be able to achieve the site control that is needed.
- David Lapin: This is a beautiful proposal but feasibility is ultimately paramount.
- David Gamble: The reuse of the garage looks appropriate in section view but in perspective view looks underwhelming and could actually use more height. A modest setback can have a huge effect.
- Gil Strickler: It is almost as if because the building is set back so far from Boylston Street, the height is easier to accept. One could imagine a taller building here.
- Valerie Hunt: This is a good proposal, but the agreements with property owners are still unsettled.
- Steve Wolf: This is a good mix of uses. It is important to keep in mind though that office use is the highest generator of traffic, and this neighborhood is already coping with elevated traffic levels.
- Meg Mainzer-Cohen: The edge along Boylston Street may not be strong enough. The balance is off and more height with the tower closer to Boylston Street might be preferable. The hotel use is desirable.
- David Lapin: We need more information on feasibility in order to move this discussion further.
- Meg Mainzer-Cohen: Site control is hugely important, as evidenced by the ultimate failure of the Columbus Center proposal.
- Brandon Beatty: Boston is severely deficient in hotel rooms, though, so the uses here are very good.
- Steve Wolf: Parcel 14 is still an open issue. It should not become an orphan.
 - o Lauren Shurtleff, BRA Planner: The next CAC meeting will involve the Berklee development team and the use of Parcel 14 will be discussed.
- Fritz Casselman: The truck access to the Hynes Convention Center is also a critical piece.
- Jan Sprawka: This proposal suggests some street life. The connection to Dalton Street, which is not currently a primary street, is great.

Parcel 15: Weiner Ventures/Samuels & Associates

- Kathleen Brill: The uses proposed are great, and the design concept generally seems feasible given site control and the amount of development that will occur over terra firma. The one downside is the potential hole that would remain to the Turnpike below.
- Brandon Beatty: From an execution standpoint, this is probably the easiest proposal.
- David Lapin: The creativity here is in joining the two parcels, 12 and 15. This really fits in with the Civic Vision.
- David Gamble: Is it safe to say that to cover the entire parcel the project would require more density?
- David Lapin: This proposal is already at the maximum allowed height.
 - o Jonathan Greeley stated that the height of this building allows for a lower massing configuration on Parcel 12.
- Gil Strickler: The height is justified because of the development of Parcel 12, which feels like a real amenity.

- Valerie Hunt: The only negative is the hole that is left. Otherwise, the uses and low massing along Massachusetts Avenue are desirable.
- Meg Mainzer-Cohen: The proposal does a great job of connecting Back Bay to Fenway and does a lot for the neighborhood. The Prudential Financial site is more of an opportunity than a drawback.
 - o Adam Weiner, Weiner Ventures noted that they did not include the Prudential Financial parcel because they did not want to make any assumptions. If they are designated, they will explore the possibility of incorporating the other parcel.
- David Gamble: This represents a great mix of uses but three floors of retail might be too much. With the Berklee building next door and the relationship between the Parcel 12 and 15 developments, this would really serve as a gateway to Boylston Street.
 - o David Manfredi, Elkus-Manfred Architects, confirmed that the retail use would only be on the first floor and would accommodate a 120-seat restaurant, as an example. Parking would be located above and additional retail would be placed on Parcel 12.
- Meg Mainzer-Cohen: Would you be able to tell from the outside that there is parking above the street level?
 - o David Manfredi replied that it would not be visible.
- Steve Wolf: The Scotia Street frontage is very gritty now. Would this be able to be improved?
 - o David Manfredi confirmed that this area would be improved.
- Meg Mainzer-Cohen: The planter at the corner near Parcel 14 is constantly being replaced. The trucks entering the Hynes Convention Center can barely make the turn as it is.
 - o Jonathan Greeley noted that the fate of Parcel 14 is still to be determined. Berklee will be present at the next working session to discuss their plans, which includes part of Parcel 14 or the roadway that is adjacent.
- Meg Mainzer-Cohen: How central is Parcel 14 to this proposal?
 - o Adam Weiner responded that it was incorporated into the proposal in order to maintain control over access to the Hynes Convention Center, but that there would be no physical structure on Parcel 14.
 - o David Manfredi followed up that a conversation with Berklee will be important no matter which developer is ultimately designated for Parcel 15.
- Fritz Casselman: The concern here is that the residential housing would become corporate rentals, and thus not add any activity to the neighborhood and would be dark most nights. This is a concern for other proposals as well and should be considered.

Parcel 12: Weiner Ventures/Samuels & Associates

- Valerie Hunt: While there is very little not to like about this proposal, it should be noted that it is dependent on Parcel 15. Also, the residents of 360 Newbury Street would likely favor this proposal over the other one.
- Fritz Casselman: An arcade along Massachusetts Avenue could work. A small Target or other retailer would also be nice.
 - o David Manfredi replied that there is only 40,000-SF of retail in this proposal, which is far less than a retailer like Target would consider. Instead, the design intent is to have several smaller tenants. Additionally, arcades have not been successfully developed here in Boston. The problem is generally that the storefront and signage gets pushed back from the street.

- Steve Wolf: The renderings are great, but the drop off between the two scales of the building seems too abrupt and might not be the best mediation between scales.
- David Gamble: Both pieces could be better integrated.
- David Lapin: What is envisioned with the arcade? People will avoid walking outside whenever possible.
- Meg Mainzer-Cohen: The Stuart Street Planning Study identified a number of arcades throughout Boston.
- Steve Wolf: Taking people off the street might not be a good strategy.
- Gil Strickler: The bus stop will also have to be incorporated, which this proposal hints at. The sidewalks will have to be very generous.
- Jan Sprawka: The Boylston Street side of this proposal does not respect the height present along the rest of the street.
- Kathleen Brill: Given the existing zoning, this layout is the better of the two proposals.

Parcel 12: Trinity Financial

- Brandon Beatty: This proposal's massing represents a massive amount of development over air rights.
- Steve Wolf: The massing here works better, but this may be a minority opinion.
- David Lapin: The massing here is not good and creates a canyon. The proposal looks like a placeholder and lacks specificity and it is therefore difficult to comment.
- David Gamble: The density really belongs on the Boylston Street edge of the parcel, not the Massachusetts Avenue side.
- Kathleen Brill: This proposal bridges the Turnpike. It is important to consider our goals for Parcel 12.
- Brandon Beatty: Retail uses might be more appropriate here.
- Gil Strickler: The proposal looks too tall, and too residential.
 - o Jonathan Greeley noted that the proposed development is 40' taller than the Trinity proposal for Parcel 13 across the street.
- Meg Mainzer-Cohen: It would be helpful to see what this looks like from the Turnpike coming inbound.

Parcel 13: Trinity Financial

- Fritz Casselman: If this proposal could be physically built, it would be a nice way to fill the space.
- Brandon Beatty: They are not proposing to fill the entire parcel, and this is disconcerting. It is also curious that another development team bidding on these parcels once owned an adjacent building and chose to sell it and step away from this parcel.
- Kathleen Brill: Decking is expensive even just to cover the space, because it requires closing lanes and undergoing construction at night.
- Valerie Hunt: The proposal looks good the way that it is. It would be much more difficult to cover the entire parcel.
 - o Jonathan Greeley: All of the parcels have decking challenges. Parcel 13 has the additional challenge of accessibility. This is a very complicated site and the design is still in the early stages. From Trinity's perspective, this proposal is more feasible than decking over the entire parcel.
- Gil Strickler: If this proposal were to be constructed there would be a 50' gap between 360 Newbury and Parcel 13.

- Meg Mainzer-Cohen: It is also worth considering the change to the view from Newbury Street, outside of Sonsie, for example. Also, the proposal feels very long and monolithic. What would the back of this building look like?
 - o Kenan Bigby, Trinity Financial, stated that the rear of the building is a corridor, since the apartments would be single-loaded. He added that the design is not yet finalized.
- David Gamble: It seems like they are trying to break down the massing. The massing works on its own, but when one considers the additional development of Parcel 12, it becomes overwhelming.
- David Lapin: This proposal is much more serious than their proposal for Parcel 12. It is doubtful that the residents of 360 Newbury Street would find anything here to be mutually agreeable. It is also unclear if the values of the units in 360 Newbury Street would be diminished if this were to be built. It would still be a building on Newbury Street, after all.
- David Gamble: There are two separate considerations to take into account, the audible versus the aesthetic impacts.
- Kathleen Brill: It is good that they are collaborating with the Boston Architectural College; this would be a great use for the site. The developer has already engaged in an in-depth public process. There will be many opportunities to discuss the design and mitigation in the future.
- Jan Sprawka: The impact to the streetscape would be positive, and the size of the building and its massing are also appropriate. This parcel requires the most attention.
 - o Kenan Bigby stated that Trinity's proposals for Parcels 12 and 13 are not interdependent.
- Meg Mainzer-Cohen: Have you looked into fully covering the parcel?
 - o Kenan Bigby replied that the challenge is that the Turnpike below runs right up against the structure that supports 360 Newbury Street.
- Brandon Beatty: Could you cantilever over the entire site?
 - o Kenan Bigby responded that this would not be possible.

Questions and comments made by the public in response to the CAC's discussion included the following:

- Lilly Jacobson, FCDC, asked if the Weiner Ventures/Samuels & Associates team would include affordable housing in their proposal, since it was part of their 2008 proposal and not in their recent presentation. Adam Weiner responded that they would comply with the Mayor's Executive Order on Affordable Housing were they to be designated.

In closing, Jonathan noted that he will be in touch with the CAC members soon to schedule the next working session.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:15 p.m.