

## **Holton Street Corridor – CWP MODULE 1**

### **SUMMARY NOTES from All Groups - May 13, 3009**

#### **General/Process**

- We need to talk about housing and commercial uses first, before discussing amenities – such as parks. Land use should not be an open question when discussing infrastructure.
- It's fine to focus on a few streets, parks, etc., those are easier issues to deal with -- however, we need to look at the housing/land uses and then discuss parks and streets to see if the new streets and parks support the land use. It needs to be an interactive process.

#### **Parks & Open Space**

- The plan needs a spine that connects the new park to the river or library park. The plan needs a green corridor that goes to Library Park.
- We should see if University Park (Cambridge) has a residents group to see how the open space developed there is working.
- A park might work best south of Holton. A large park should be developed as they are very hard to site and come by. The north/south connection needs to be improved --Telford to the river and maybe even crossing the pike.
- Commercial uses/businesses could "take over" a new park with softball teams, etc. It would be better to have the parks next to restaurants, cafes, and residential buildings so that it's the residents that use/take ownership of the parks.
- Parks in Brookline are surrounded by housing and that is a successful model. Commercial uses near a park create a different kind of park. Businesses do not adopt/care for a park like residents will.
- On Western Ave you might think of a different kind of open space – hard-scape and benches for the elderly. Scale would be small – a small plaza.

- A new park system should support both passive and active uses. It would be best if the parks supported the residential uses.
- The original Charlesview plan showed parking underground. Is it possible to put parks over Charlesview underground parking?
- A-B already has large parks and recreation fields in the neighborhood. Most users are from outside the neighborhood. No need for more programmed parks.
- Large parks will require parking.
- Large continuous parks can be a barrier in a neighborhood; don't want to see the neighborhood divided by a large park.
- Small to medium sized parks with various uses and users are a better fit, more beneficial for the neighborhood
- Nice to see small green spaces throughout the neighborhood
- Smaller parks easier to patrol for safety
- Dog park?
- Park next to school is good configuration of uses. Park serves school; school is anchor that takes active stewardship of park.
- Diagram shows that some parks would require displacing the supermarket
- Questions about timeframe for implementation of early-phase open spaces

## **STREETS**

- East-west secondary street network is a good way to connect neighborhood (repeated several times)
- Dislike the proposed road network, not consistent with the character of the neighborhood
- Telford Street should not be a major thoroughfare. Emphasize pedestrians and bikes, a "non-motorized" street.
- Streets should reinforce the idea of a residential neighborhood
- Like the idea of Western Avenue having some interesting architecture
- Need to study Lincoln Street before changing it. Why is it currently a one-way street? Can a two-way work?

- Will changing Lincoln Street encourage traffic from the west to cut through the neighborhood?
- Let's think of Telford as supporting bike and pedestrian uses first, autos second.
- Green connection to the river remains important. If Everett Street is not going to be the connector, then the connection of Telford to the river becomes very important.

## **LAND USE**

### ***Housing***

- Desire for more residential in neighborhood, not commercial
- Housing should be family housing
- Low density housing preferred, even around parks. 5-8 story buildings would be a housing "wall"
- 5 unit bldg currently being built on Litchfield Street is too big for area
- Presentation emphasized multi-family housing. Want single or two family housing with yards and green space.
- Many questions about location of Charlesview, density, filing schedule, etc.
- Noted that current Charlesview has some market rate units, not all subsidized
- Support for "1/3, 1/3, 1/3" income model (low/mod/market)
- Some dislike for residential units above retail/commercial, not in neighborhood character
- Increase homeownership opportunities. A-B currently has 20% owners, 80% rental. Goal should be 40/60 or 50/50.
- Get rid of absentee landlords.
- Community is concerned about Charlesview relocation.
- Community wants new housing to be 1/3 low income, 1/3 moderate income, and 1/3 market. This could mean building approximately 600 new units of housing. To get the diversity we need, enough land is needed to build 600 units. We also

- want a community center, education center, park and plaza. The process needs to begin to define these puzzle pieces.
- There should be a diversity of housing types – both use and affordability. All housing built needs to be of high quality and well maintained.
  - Alumni housing, faculty housing, graduate housing, housing for the elderly – are all appropriate. Artist housing and co-housing would also be appropriate.
  - There should be a mix of incomes in any new housing built. Do not like the Charlesview proposal because it puts the wealthier folks close to the river and all of the Section 8 units in one place.
  - We need additional family housing. We have schools and we need to keep our families. Parks could support the residential housing.
  - Family housing: driven by policy or by unit/building type?
  - Housing is more important to understand than parks. Drives other decisions.
  - What types of housing? – e.g. mix of income levels , Harvard affiliates, family friendly, mixture of types, walkable from ground floor, yards...
  - If neighborhood is built in an integrated way with different housing types and incomes mixed-up, it will be knit together physically.

### ***Other Land Use***

- Commercial/mixed use should stay on Lincoln and Western – the heights of those buildings can be higher.
- Commercial uses should be located on Western and Lincoln – we need to save the rest of the land for housing. We want to build a residential community.
- University Park (as shown in the presentation) feels like a canyon – the buildings are too high.
- Not happy with the BRA's idea of so much density
- Keep commercial uses on Western Ave and Cambridge Street
- No commercial between Western and Cambridge, not even university use
- BRA needs to better define "mixed use" and label it on our maps

- What kind of employment opportunities does the BRA see in area? What kind of density does that require?
- Shouldn't commercial be focused on Western Avenue?
  - Difference between commercial and retail clarified; Western Ave. building will have ground floor retail
  - Can there be ground floor retail along entire Western Ave frontage?
  - Why not use Charlesview frontage to create retail in the short term vs. waiting for rest of "concourse." Uses can be switched later.
- What about retail further down Western Ave (to the west) like at Mahoney's?
- Would McDonald's, Petco, Shaw's be relocated?
- Many questions about the supermarket: proposed new location, terms of lease, parking, proximity to neighborhood, etc.
- Keep the supermarket. "We need a supermarket before we need a park."
- Keep in mind parking for supermarket
- Show proposed commuter rail
- Harvard should develop a biotech high school, a community center, and support the Gardner School that might need a larger space as they expand to the 8th grade.
- A senior center should be developed.
- Harvard should build a school and Harvard students could teach at the school.
- Keep Harvard uses/campus within their existing boundaries – but affiliate housing would work well in this area.

### **ADDITIONAL COMMENTS**

- Environmental remediation necessary in much of Holton Street corridor before housing can go there
- Recognize historic character of the neighborhood
- Questions about how to measure density. Suggestion of "persons per acre."

- A/B has a 19% homeownership rate which is much less than the rest of the City and the nation. This should be improved. Homeownership brings stability to a neighborhood.
- Any new development should meet LEED Platinum requirements. In addition, any new developments should include recycling, composting, green roofs, and bike paths.