

Sullivan Square Disposition Study

Public Meeting: 11-21-13

Meeting Notes

- Public comment: This study is part one, then they'll continue with Rutherford Ave for a full picture of the area, correct?
 - **BRA Response:** Yes, putting it back in context, you the community, have worked on the road configuration, we are working on the vision for parcel disposition. The date we've been throwing around is 10 years but there will be future planning processes that this document provides recommendations for.
- Public comment: I thought there were going to be specific recommendations for funding sources?
 - **BRA Response:** There aren't specific funding options in the document but there are implementation strategies that were provided by Pam McKinney. We will discuss the implementation section of the document later in tonight's presentation.
- Public comment: So what does the BRA Board vote on this study accomplish?
 - **BRA Response:** The Board will be approving the documentation of these guidelines.
- Public comment: So, if a developer wanted to come in and build then they technically could because this doesn't provide enforcement the way, say, zoning would?
 - **BRA Response:** No, it's not zoning. Since these guidelines pertain to publically owned land, any development proposal would have to come back out to the community. However, if there is development proposed as of right on privately owned land then they would not be required to go out to the community for input.
- Public comment: So is the MBTA parcel a private parcel?
 - **Consultant Response:** No, the MBTA is a public agency. It's not owned by the BRA if that's what you meant. There are many possibilities for how they would go about developing the parcel. For example, they could do a 99 year ground lease with a private developer.
- Public comment: It seems like in model you are showing of the redeveloped T station that the pedestrians are crossing 3 bus lanes, which seems antithetical to this process. Is there a principle we can include in this document to that affect?
 - **Consultant Response:** Sure, there are multiple ways this could be done. We can include the principle in the document.
- Public comment: I agree that the less bus lanes pedestrians need to cross, the better, but I think that the consultants have done a good job considering all of the constraints. I think it's time that we engage the MBTA.
- Public comment: I thought the whole point of this process was to provide easy access to the station for pedestrians. I think that needs to be right up front.
 - **Consultant Response:** That has been our goal throughout this process.
 - **BRA Response:** We are working to design the station so that it fits with the goals of the MBTA, especially if the Urban Ring happens in the future. We want this to be compatible. There would be performance standards that would have to be met.
 - **Consultant Response:** We've stated in the document that all the needs of the MBTA will have to be accommodated, how exactly that would look is to be determined. The MBTA likely will not put out an RFP yet, it's to their interest to wait for the new roadway to improve their access and increase their property values to attract developers.
- Public comment: So what is the green space shown in the park? Just grass?
 - **Consultant Response:** It won't look exactly like this; it's all for future design.

- Public comment: In City Square they do an outline of where the Great House was. Wouldn't it be easier to do that here to show the Middlesex Canal?
 - **Consultant Response:** We had tried that but it doesn't actually line up here. It really only lines up in one place on a different parcel. What you see here in this model is a placeholder, not, literal. What we tried to do was include general principles such as a tree lined boulevard, fountains, green space.
- Public comment: Concern with height on parcel 6 located where it is because of its proximity to the park and how that might impact that space. Can you do a shadow study?
 - **Consultant Response:** We have looked at that and talked about it in the text but we can include that as a principle in the document.
- Public comment: It is important that the height on that parcel doesn't feel like a wall and that the building is blocking you when you come down from Main Street.
- Public comment: A shadow study is helpful, but I wouldn't mind seeing more height towards the water side of Parcel 6.
 - **Consultant Response:** Yes, we've shown that as an option and we can run a shadow study.
- Public comment: Is it possible to include in the report that the massings show the general maximum building envelope for the area? Not just these parcels but the area in general.
 - **BRA Response:** We have language as a general principle where the height should be - lower towards the neighborhood, higher towards the highway. Second part to your question is referring to the private parcels so the zoning prevails here but we can state that these guidelines apply only to the publically owned parcels.
- Public comment: Multiple, smaller vertical elements in the buildings might not be negative here to mix the uses and vary the building forms and types.
- Public comment: With the road configuration and this amount of envisioned development, do you see this as a better alternative or will it present new problems?
 - **Consultant Response:** Clearly there has been an extensive process that you, the community, has participated in to arrive at this configuration. The amount of traffic that would be generated by the development will be considerably less than the current amount that passes through now. BTM is confident that this is a better option
 - **BRA Response:** We are sorry that BTM couldn't be here this evening but we have not committed to parking ratios for this report. Traffic is not part of this study's scope and there will be subsequent processes to address just that.
 - **Consultant Response:** We have aggregated the parking in one area so that there are less curb cuts and vehicular access into each parcel/building would be very limited.
- Public comment: What about parking if the MBTA parcel isn't developed first? Where will the parking be for other parcels that could get developed before?
 - **Consultant Response:** That is a more sophisticated question that would need to be addressed by phasing strategies.
 - **BRA Response:** We can note that there is concern and different opinions among the group about where the parking should be located.
- Public comment: There are a few populations that really need to be able to park: handicapped and elderly; service vehicles; drop offs; and deliveries.
 - **Consultant Response:** The way it's currently done throughout the city is that deliveries are allowed to take place during certain hours of the day.
 - **BRA Response:** This report seeks to document the different preferences that are out there for the future disposition.
- Public comment: So the BRA will own these parcels, correct?
 - **BRA Response:** No, the City of Boston Public Works Department will own them since they will be former roadways. BRA is just assisting in the planning process.
- Public comment: So which City of Boston entity will be putting out the RFPs if not the BRA?

- BRA Response: There are different possibilities including land swaps, BRA assisting Public Works in disposal on behalf of the City of Boston. We can't speak for the Public Works Department and it will have to be decided later on.
- Public comment: This area needs to be looked at regarding sea level rise. There is reason to believe that by raising the whole area by certain amount it would protect the area and the buildings.
 - Consultant Response: That is beyond the scope of this process but we can recommend it for the future.
- Public comment: Review of zoning should be considered in future processes.
- Public comment: The central park area seems small. Why is it not extended to the parcel next to it.
 - BRA Response: What you see here is a result of many months of work. This plan documents the preferences stated in discussions held at public meetings over the last several months. The topic of open space was discussed from the first meeting. The broad choice was given between a single large open space, multiple linked open spaces, or a combination. What you see here is the result of that discussion. We are not doing zoning here, so this isn't set in stone. The documentation of this vision is a result of all the work that led us here.
- Public comment: I invite you to attend the Neighborhood Council meeting on December 3rd.