

ROSLINDALE NEIGHBORHOOD STRATEGIC • PLAN

Advisory Group Meeting
Wednesday, October 18, 2006
6:30PM
Longfellow House

Present:
Advisory Group Members
Sue Kim, BRA
Kristy Daniels, BRA
Adel Foz, Vollmer Associates
Carole Schlessinger, CSS
Chris Riale, CSS

Opening Remarks

At the opening of the meeting, Wayne Beitler announced that four student teams from the Wentworth Institute of Technology presented site plans for various sites along Washington Street in Roslindale between Cummins Highway and Healy Field.

Sue Kim commented that the Roslindale Neighborhood Strategic Planning effort is progressing and an outline of the document will be presented at the next advisory group meeting. Sections of the plan will be added to the document over the next several weeks/months.

The Roslindale Neighborhood Strategic Plan website will be updated shortly and the link will be put back onto the BRA website.

A member suggested that the agenda for each advisory group meeting be provided several days before the meeting.

Revised Alternative Redevelopment Site Plans – Carole Schlessinger

In response to the comments received on alternative redevelopment site plans presented at the September 28, 2006 advisory group meeting, several revised alternative redevelopment site plans were developed. Carole discussed site plans for the following sites:

- 1.) Pleasant Café Parking Lot

- 2.) Ashmont Site
- 3.) Whipple Avenue Site
- 4.) Roslindale Square Site

NOTE: All residential buildings are shown at three floors with an average 1,200 s.f. unit size to accommodate families.

- 1.) **Pleasant Café Parking Lot:** The housing site plan was revised to include some parking for the Pleasant Café and three residential buildings with four units each. Each building contains four units. 18 parking spaces for the residences were provided directly behind the residential buildings. 18 parking spaces for the Pleasant Café were provided at the southern end of the site - a parking ratio of 6 spaces per 1,000 s.f. of restaurant space. The café currently has 52 spaces.

General description:

- 12 housing units
- 18 residential parking spaces
- 18 restaurant parking spaces
- 1.5 parking spaces per residential unit
- 6 parking spaces per 1,000 s.f. restaurant space
- .45 FAR
- 16 units/acre

- 2.) **Ashmont Site:** For this site plan, retail space was provided on the ground floor of a double loaded residential building fronting Washington Street. The building is slightly set back from Washington, which provides space for outdoor seating, etc. The parking is provided entirely behind the building.

General description:

- 18 residential units
- 10,800 s.f. of retail space
- 27 residential parking spaces
- 33 retail parking spaces
- 1.5 parking spaces per residential unit
- 3 spaces per 1,000 s.f. of retail
- .36 FAR
- 9 units/acre

- 3.) **Whipple Avenue Site:** The site plan (developed for this meeting) shows 5 townhouse buildings. Each building contains 10 townhouse units. All parking is provided behind each structure. Whipple Avenue provides access to the rear parking lots.

General description:

- 50 residential units
- 75 residential parking spaces
- 1.5 parking spaces per residential unit
- 1.24 FAR
- 45 units/acre

Advisory group comments

One member asked if developing triple-decker housing is presently economical. Carole responded that building an individual triple-decker on each parcel is also a possibility.

4.) Roslindale Square Site:

Several schemes for each of the following options were developed. The schemes explore development potential with and without the library and MBTA substation. Also, retail and residential parking were segregated in these options. Retail parking is provided at grade and behind the proposed buildings. Residential parking is provided below grade.

- Option A:* Two schemes were developed for Option A. Each scheme retains the MBTA substation and library. One scheme provides housing only. The other scheme provides a mix of uses (residential and retail).

A1: General Description:

- 45 residential units
- 67 residential parking spaces
- 1.5 parking spaces per residential unit
- 1.5 FAR
- 54 units/acre

A2: General Description:

- 16 residential units
- 24 residential parking spaces
- 9,600 s.f. of retail space
- 37 retail parking spaces
- 1.5 parking spaces per residential unit
- 3 spaces per 1,000 s.f. of retail space
- .79 FAR
- 19 units/acre

Carole commented that there is minimal incentive for a developer to build a new library on the Square site. A developer would have to build approximately 154,000 s.f. or 128 housing units to cover the cost of building a new library.

- b. *Option B:* Three schemes were developed for Option B. Each scheme removes the existing library, rebuilds it onsite (either at mid-block with residential above or within the MBTA substation), and provides a mix of housing and retail.

B1 General Description:

- 24 residential units
- 36 residential parking spaces
- 8,400 s.f. of retail space
- 27 retail parking spaces
- 1.5 parking spaces per residential unit
- 3 spaces per 1,000 s.f. of retail space
- 1.1 FAR
- 21 units/acre

B2 General Description:

- 29 residential units
- 43 residential parking spaces
- 7,200 s.f. of retail space
- 21 retail parking spaces
- 1.5 parking spaces per residential unit
- 3 spaces per 1,000 s.f. of retail space
- 1.3 FAR
- 26 units/acre

B3 General Description:

- 22 residential units
- 33 residential parking spaces
- 13,000 s.f. of retail space
- 39 retail parking spaces
- 13 additional surface parking spaces
- 1.5 parking spaces per residential unit
- 3 spaces per 1,000 s.f. of retail space
- .92 FAR
- 19 units/acre

Advisory group comments

One member commented that he would rather see the MBTA substation demolished than the Roslindale Branch Library.

Another member said she would like to preserve the MBTA substation because of its architectural significance, building materials, age, and longtime physical prominence in the Square.

Carole commented that the chances the City will fund a new Library for Roslindale in the near term are very low. Carole requested that the final report include several redevelopment site plans for the Square site that show potential building configurations with and without the library and with and without the MBTA substation.

One member stated that the MBTA substation has been determined to be eligible for nomination for listing on the National Register.

Carole explained that relocating the library to another portion of the Square site would not provide significant benefit. However, removing the MBTA building would potentially provide more development flexibility on the square site.

- c. *Option C:* Three schemes were presented for Option C. Each scheme retains the library and removes the MBTA substation. Two schemes show all housing (including one with an L-Shaped double loaded building) and the other shows a double loaded mixed use (retail with residential above) building fronting Washington Street.

C1 General Description:

- 40 residential units
- 60 residential parking spaces
- 1.5 parking spaces per residential unit
- 1.05 FAR
- 38 units/acre

C2 General Description:

- 16 residential units
- 24 residential parking spaces
- 9,600 s.f. of retail space
- 30 retail parking spaces
- 1.5 parking spaces per residential unit
- 3 spaces per 1,000 s.f. of retail
- .63 FAR
- 15 units/acre

C3 General Description:

- 55 residential units
- 82 residential parking spaces
- 1.5 parking spaces per residential unit
- 1.14 FAR
- 54 units/acre

- d. *Option D:* Two schemes were developed for Option D. Both Options remove the library and MBTA substation and provide either 1. Mixed use

with housing over a new library at the corner of Cummins and Washington or 2. Double loaded housing at the corner of Poplar and Washington with residential parking at grade in the rear and a new stand alone library at the corner of Cummins and Washington.

D1 General Description:

- 36 residential units
- 54 residential parking spaces
- 11,000 s.f. of retail space
- 33 retail parking spaces
- 1.5 parking spaces per residential unit
- 3 spaces per 1,000 s.f. of retail space
- 1.06 FAR
- 28 units/acre

D2 General Description:

- 25 residential units
- 37 residential parking spaces
- 1.5 parking spaces per residential unit
- .75 FAR
- 19 units/acre

Advisory group comments

One member requested that this option's development feasibility and cost be explored in more detail.

Carole ended the presentation by explaining that the Roslindale Square site plan exercise was to gain a better understanding of how removing and rebuilding the library and/or removing the MBTA building would affect the site's development potential.

A member asked how Roslindale should deal with chain stores in the Square. Carole responded by saying that Roslindale can place restrictions on the size of floor plates in the Square, limiting the feasibility of developing larger chain stores.

Stony Brook & American Legion Highway Shopping Centers – Carole Schlessinger

American Legion Highway shopping center site: Carole commented that a developer would have to build approximately 736 new housing units, or 1,104,000 s.f., just to "breakeven" on demolishing the existing buildings and redeveloping the site. Additional density would be required to make the redevelopment financially appealing to developer.

Stony Brook Plaza site: Similarly, the “break even” point for demolition and redevelopment is approximately 320 housing units, or 480,000 s.f. The plaza is owned by five separate entities, further complicating redevelopment.

Carole went on to say that CSS can make aesthetic improvement recommendations for these shopping centers.

Advisory group comments

One member commented that this be made clear at the next public meeting.

Another member commented that Porter Square in Cambridge is not so much an example of attractive aesthetic treatments for shopping centers (which was admitted to be quite nice), but rather it is an example of a circa-1960s/1970s strip mall that did not need to be completely redeveloped to become much better integrated into the surrounding urban fabric. It only needed the addition of one or two buildings along the Mass Ave edge to significantly improve the site while retaining almost all the original parking area.

Prioritization of Traffic and Parking Analyses – Adel Foz

Adel first asked the advisory group: what pieces of the transportation analysis do you want done and how would you rank their importance to the plan?

Adel commented that the advisory group can choose as many items as they want, as long as they were within the budget.

The traffic and parking analysis items were listed as the following:

- 1.) Land Use and Transportation Demand
- 2.) Pedestrians
 - a. Site specific, a few intersections in Roslindale can be studied.
- 3.) Bicycling
- 4.) Public Transportation
 - a. GIS analyses
- 5.) Roadway Volumes
 - a. Determine main through routes and study current traffic volumes
 - b. Level of service analysis.
- 6.) Major Intersections
 - a. Analyze highly trafficked intersections in Roslindale.
- 7.) Public Parking

- a. Turnover analysis and license plate surveys can be performed. The turnover analysis is the critical piece. License plate surveys are time consuming and will only reveal if parking is by residents or non-residents of Roslindale.

8.) MBTA Commuter Parking Lot

Other tasks:

- 1.) Peripheral Intersections
- 2.) Roadway Safety
 - a. Analyze most up-to-date roadway safety data

Advisory group comments

Most members agreed that Washington Street be looked at – in particular, they were interested in how to improve flow through the Square.

One member commented that roadway safety is important. Adel responded by saying roadway safety can be looked into; however, most of the roadway safety data available is at least one year out of date.

Some members commented that the intersections at Poplar and Washington Streets, Beech and Washington Streets, and intersections within the Square are dangerous for pedestrians and should be on the list of intersections being studied.

Another member commented that the “public parking” analysis may not be worth it – “what will it get us?” A member responded by saying it will provide Roslindale with evidence that there is a public parking issue (or that there isn’t).

One member suggested that converting Washington Street in the Square to a two way street be looked at.

Near the end of the comment period, the following traffic and parking study priority list was vocalized:

- Traffic issues in the Square
- User survey of the Square parking lots
- Pedestrian and bicycling issues
- Roadway safety

One member asked what the parking ratios should be for new residential development.

Carole commented that the advisory group should determine an appropriate parking ratio for new residential development, which will be applied to site plans included in the final report.

Wayne Beitler ended the discussion and commented that another meeting be scheduled to discuss parking in more detail.

Closing Remarks

One member wanted to know what will be presented at the public meeting. The consultants said that the public meeting presentation material will be presented at the next advisory group meeting, rescheduled for November 15th, 2006. The next public meeting date is scheduled for November 29, 2006.