

# ROSLINDALE NEIGHBORHOOD STRATEGIC • PLAN

**Advisory Group Meeting**  
Thursday, September 28, 2006  
6:30PM  
Longfellow House

**Present:**  
Advisory Group Members  
Sue Kim, BRA  
Kristy Daniels, BRA  
Pam McKinney, Byrne McKinney & Associates  
Carole Schlessinger, CSS  
Chris Riale, CSS

## **Opening Remarks**

At the opening of the meeting, Wayne Beitler announced that Wentworth Institute of Technology students will soon be presenting their streetscape plan for a section of Washington Street above the Roslindale Municipal Building.

*The October 19<sup>th</sup> Advisory Group Working Session will be rescheduled for Oct. 18*

*The date of the next community meeting has not been set.*

Wayne asked the group about other topics to be discussed at the next community meeting. One member mentioned that bicycle, transit, and parking need to be addressed. Vollmer Associates will address these issues.

## **Market Analysis for Potential Redevelopment Uses –Pam McKinney**

Pam briefly noted several important questions to be asked:

- 1.) Where is the marketplace heading?
- 2.) What is motivating the development world lately?
- 3.) What are you looking for? What do you want? What don't you want?

## Residential Market in Roslindale - General

Residential uses are the driving market forces in Roslindale. Developers view Roslindale as a residential community. This implies there are niche markets.

Markets move westward when neighborhoods closer to Boston become less affordable – Roslindale is presently affordable. Pam commented that this trend will continue in the future.

Development pressure will remain in Roslindale for at least the next 5 – 10 years. Residential markets are going to expand in Roslindale in the near future.

In-migration from the suburbs and the workforce is what fuels Boston’s economic engine.

In general, housing development is most likely to be in the 3-story range, allowing for “stick built” construction rather than steel.

#### For Sale market

10 years ago, 2+ families were attracted to Roslindale’s household composition and the fact that you could have more space for less money than in the neighborhoods closer to downtown.

Demand pressures are growing in the smaller households market and developers will most likely react by building smaller residential units. Developers are aiming at individuals making between 80 – 120 percent of the median household income. This is considered a moderate income level and those within this cohort will most likely buy “affordable” housing units.

The market motivation will be to get the most density possible. When considering density, it is important to understand what the limits are from a design perspective and to be aware of what a developer may go after – larger scale rather than smaller scale projects.

Although there is a lot of development pressure, Roslindale’s character is “safe”. There are not a lot of places to increase the housing stock.

Roslindale is still the “best deal in town”.

Triple Deckers in Roslindale are reducing in number because they have been converting to condo units – South Boston is facing a similar situation.

Pam commented that more housing in the Square could positively affect the Square’s character.

#### Rental Market

Roslindale’s/Boston’s rental housing stock will always be undersupplied. One of several reasons is that rental units are being converted to condos, with increasing frequency.

It is very hard for the rental market to get a foothold in Boston. The reason is that it is so expensive to build rental housing. In order for a rental project to be economically

feasible, owners must charge high rents (in the range of \$1,800 – 2,200 per month or more for a one bedroom)

It will be difficult – not impossible - to build more rental housing in Roslindale. Roslindale is a more attractive place for home ownership than renting.

### **Retail Market**

Roslindale Square: much of the retail is operated by entrepreneurs. The scale and diversity of retail attracts the consumer. It is important to preserve this character.

Floor plates of more than 10,000 – 15,000 s.f. begin attracting larger retail establishments. Roslindale should be careful where they locate these higher profile retail establishments.

American Legion Shopping Center: redevelopment pressures are not particularly high for the American Legion Shopping Center site. A developer most likely will not see more opportunity on this site because it is already built out to maximum potential. The only potential improvements would be marginal landscaping, unless a full redevelopment of the site for mixed-use could achieve sufficient density. Pam will look into the densities required to make this economically feasible.

For every 1,000 s.f. of housing can support 10 s.f. of retail space. The retail market zone is within approximately a 10 mile radius of the establishment in an urban setting.

### **Alternative Redevelopment Site Plans – Carole Schlessinger**

Carole discussed several redevelopment site plans for each of the following sites in Roslindale (see Draft Conceptual Site Plans 9.28.06: ):

- 1.) Roslindale Square
- 2.) Ashmont Site
- 3.) Pleasant Café parking lot

Residential buildings are shown at three flows with an average 1,200 s.f. unit size to accommodate families.

#### **Roslindale Square site plans**

Option 1a: Maximum density with at-grade parking. One mixed use building (ground floor retail with 2 floors of residential above) lines Washington St. and one 3-story single loaded residential building lines Cummins Highway. Parking is at the center of the parcel. The option includes:

- 9,600 s.f. retail
- 24 housing units

- 46 parking spaces
- 1.1 parking spaces per residential unit
- 2 parking spaces per 1,000 s.f. retail
- 1.12 FAR
- 29 units/acre

Option 1b: similar design – reduced density

- 6,000 s.f. retail
- 18 housing units
- 46 parking spaces
- 1.5 parking spaces per residential unit
- 3 parking spaces per 1,000 s.f. retail
- .82 FAR
- 21 units/acre

#### Advisory group comments

The MBTA recently gave the BRA permission to perform environmental testing on the MBTA substation in the Square. One member commented that no contaminants were found at the substation.

It was also commented that a previous reuse attempt was unsuccessful. The substation was found to be too small for the proposed use.

A member commented that a similar MBTA substation in Egleston Square is being reused by BNN Cable.

One member felt that the MBTA building should be preserved for two reasons: 1.) the building is aesthetically important to the Square and 2.) the building could potentially house the Roslindale Branch Library – which would then free up an additional key parcel in the Square. Members agreed that it would be valuable to look at options with and without the MBTA building.

A member stated that many Roslindale residents would like to preserve the MBTA substation.

Option 2: Similar design as Option 1 but shows an extra residential building and an open courtyard area on the interior of the parcel. In addition, all parking is subgrade. Spaces not required by the proposed new buildings could provide parking for the library and/or the redeveloped substation.

- 8,000 s.f. retail
- 32 housing units
- 90 parking spaces

- 1.5 parking spaces per unit
- 3 parking spaces per 1,000 s.f. retail
- 1.30 FAR
- 38 units/acre

#### Advisory group comments

One Advisory Group member stated that a subgrade parking lot could potentially be funded by deeding the parking spaces.

A few members discussed flooding as a potential obstacle for the development of subgrade parking on the site due to a subsurface stream. CSS will look into this.

General design related comments included: set building on Washington St. back to create more space for outdoor activities. Maintain views to the Church where possible. Buildings should be “stick built”.

Pam was asked if the redevelopment site plans were realistic. Pam said yes. She also stated that scheme’s building frontage on Adam’s Park is very attractive.

An Advisory Group member requested that housing over the library be looked at as an option. In response, Carole and Pam both commented that housing over the library would complicate things and may “chill” developers. CSS will explore the potential to redevelop both the library and the MBTA substation buildings.

Carole asked the members if they were comfortable with the scale and density of the proposed redevelopment programs. The general consensus was that the site plans/programs were appropriate for the Square.

#### Ashmont Site Plans

Option 1: without Dunkin Donuts remaining. One residential building lines Washington St. with parking in the rear.

- 18 housing units
- 27 parking spaces
- 1.5 parking spaces per unit
- .24 FAR
- 9 units/acre

Option 2: without Dunkin Donuts. 3 residential buildings configured in the shape of a “U” with private open courtyard. Parking in rear.

- 24 housing units
- 36 parking spaces

- 1.5 parking spaces per unit
- .32 FAR
- 11 units/acre

Option 3: With Dunkin Donuts. 2 residential buildings oriented perpendicular to Washington Street with parking in rear.

- 28 housing units
- 42 parking spaces
- 1.5 parking spaces per unit
- .37 FAR
- 13 units/acre

Option 4: Without Dunkin Donuts. 2 residential buildings oriented perpendicular to Washington St with parking provided at the rear and sides of the buildings. This option represents maximum development potential on the Ashmont site.

- 30 housing units
- 45 parking spaces
- 1.5 parking spaces per unit
- .40 FAR
- 14 units/acre

Carole also presented a retail only capacity analysis indicating that a single use retail establishment such as Trader Joe's or CVS could be accommodated.

Single retail use with Dunkin Donuts

- 15,000 s.f. retail
- 45 parking spaces
- 3 parking spaces per 1,000 s.f.
- .16 FAR

Single retail use without Dunkin Donuts

- 25,000 s.f. retail
- 75 parking spaces
- 3 parking spaces per 1,000 s.f.
- .27 FAR

#### Advisory group comments

The Ashmont parcel has been subdivided and the Dunkin Donuts parcel is now a separate parcel. CSS will confirm ownership.

Pam commented that Option 1(18 units) is not dense enough to attract a developer.

There was considerable interest in building a Trader Joe's on the Ashmont site.

Carole asked the members if they were comfortable with the scale and density of the proposed redevelopment programs. They agreed that the scale, density and uses are appropriate for the Ashmont site.

#### Pleasant Café Parking Lot Site Plans

Option 1: Five 4-unit residential buildings fronting Washington St. with parking in the rear.

- 20 housing units
- 30 parking spaces
- 1.5 parking spaces per unit
- .76 FAR
- 28 units/acre

Option 2: Two residential buildings fronting Washington Street with tandem garage parking in rear.

- 20 housing units
- 30 parking spaces
- 1.5 parking spaces per unit
- .91 FAR
- 28 units/acre

#### Advisory group comments

One member stated that the peak parking demand for the Pleasant Café occurs on Friday nights.

Schemes should provide replacement parking for the Café. Pam believed 6-8 parking spaces per 1,000 s.f. of restaurant space is a sufficient parking ratio. CSS will assess the development potential of the remainder of the parcel.

After a member asked about the development of office space in Roslindale, Pam responded by saying there is no market for it.