

Bunker Hill Housing Redevelopment
Response to Public Comments

January 8, 2020

This memo provides a summary of the public comments received during Article 80 and BCDC public process and actions taken by the development team to address those concerns. We have also provided responses to outstanding questions in Table 2.

As of January 8, 2021, the Project team received a total of 110 written comment letters from the public. The comments were received in various forms, including submissions through the BPDA public comment form (66) and emails (44). The comments were categorized by position and topic as shown in Table 1 below.

TABLE 1. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENT LETTER TOPICS AND RESPONSES

Issue	# of Comments	Response
All-Affordable	16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supplemental Information posted 10/12/20: Bunker Hill Rent Comps, Phase 1 Unit Mix Information • Supplemental Information posted 10/27/20: Unit Size Information – Existing vs. Proposed, Overall Unit Mix Information, Market and Affordable Ratio Summary
City/State Funds	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supplemental Information posted 10/27/20: Public Subsidy Information, Estimated Annual Tax Payments – Market-Rate Units
Comment Period	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comment period opened in February 2020 and was extended by BPDA on 5/11/20, 10/1/20, 11/2/20, and 11/20/20
Community Center	19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developer, CRA and BHA will continue to engage with local service providers through the tri-party community center subcommittee as planning for the community center progresses.
Environmental Trees, Construction Impacts, General	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supplemental Information posted 10/28/20: Carbon Dioxide Emissions Comparison – Proposed Project vs. Existing Conditions • Supplemental Information posted 10/28/20: Preliminary Tree Assessment • Supplemental Information posted 11/18/20: Tree Assessment Summary and Tree Overlay • Presentation on tree assessment at 10/28/20 and 11/18/20 IAG meetings; materials posted to BPDA website • Information on management of construction impacts ((air quality, noise, rodents, truck traffic, safety), presented on 10/14/20; posted to BPDA website
Historic Issues	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The developer is committed to finding creative ways to acknowledge and commemorate the unique historic elements of this site. As the project and future open space planning progresses, we will work with the Charlestown Preservation Society, Charlestown Historic Society and the community to appropriately commemorate the rich history of the neighborhood.
Schools	1	
Support	19	
Transportation Traffic, Transit, Parking, Other	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information about transportation, traffic, and transit mitigation presented at 9/16/20, 9/30/20, 10/14/20, 11/18/20, and 12/8/20 IAG meetings; materials posted to the BPDA website • Supplemental Information posted 10/12/20: Parking Phasing Summary • Additional intersections studied at the request of the IAG; updated information presented on 10/14/20 and posted to the BPDA website
Urban Design Architecture, Density, Height, Miscellaneous	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supplemental Information posted 10/21/20: Open Space Summary • Supplemental Information posted 10/28/20: Updated Shadow Studies, Additional Streetscape Materials • Supplemental Information posted 11/13/20: Open Space Inventory

Retail	1	• Updated information on retail space presented at 12/8/20 IAG meeting; posted to BPDA website
Miscellaneous	4	
Grand Total	110	

TABLE 2. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENT LETTER POSITIONS

Position	# of Comments
Support	44
Neutral	38
Oppose	28
Grand Total	110

As indicated in Table 1 and 2 above, the largest share of comments expressed support for the project and accompanying community benefits. The comments expressing support came from both current Bunker Hill residents and Charlestown neighbors, including a letter of support from the Charlestown Resident Alliance with signatures from 120 current residents.

Comments on the inclusion of all-affordable buildings in the proposed plan make up the next largest category of comments, including a letter signed by 54 community members. After listening to feedback from the community and the CRA on this issue, the development team has committed to reducing the number of all-affordable buildings from five to three. We will continue to explore options to reduce that number to two.

Urban design and transportation concerns and comments represent the next largest percentage of comments received. The most commonly noted issues related to urban design were density and height. Many commenters made general statements that the density was too great for Charlestown, however, there have been other projects in Charlestown with a higher unit/acre density, including The Harvey and The Graphic. The height of the buildings near the Tobin Bridge and along Polk Street were also problematic for several commenters. Both height and density have been reduced in the current iteration of the Project, with the maximum height reduced from 21 to 10 stories, and heights along Bunker Hill and Medford Streets reduced from six to four stories. Since the DPIR, we have also reduced building heights along Polk Street from 7 stories to 4-5 stories across from residential buildings.

Following from the density and height issues, many commenters were concerned that increased density on site will exacerbate traffic, transit, and parking issues. A detailed traffic study was undertaken as part of the DPIR and additional intersections were studied during this public comment period. The developer has committed \$500,000 to a Transportation Fund that would be used to study potential enhancements to the Charlestown transportation network, including launching a shuttle pilot to the Community College T-Station. Additionally, the developer has proposed approximately \$2.6 million in off-site transportation improvements, including adding a two-way protected cycle track on Medford Street, enhancing the pedestrian experience at Lowney Way and the pedestrian underpasses to the Chelsea Street crossings at 5th Street and Constitution Road, rebuilding and restriping Bunker Hill, Vine, Decatur and Medford Streets adjacent to the project, re-striping Bunker Hill Street at Polk and Green Streets and adding turn-only lanes to Vine Street at Chelsea Street as part of the infrastructure improvements. Lastly, given the 8 – 10 year construction timeline for the project, the development team is committed to provide progress reports at the end of each phase that include tracking of parking utilization and traffic impacts in order to compare the actual impacts to projected impacts of the project.

The parking ratio on site when the project is completed will be commensurate with what exists today. The developer will also continue to pursue opportunities for additional parking under the Tobin Bridge. Additionally, there will be transit incentives in the form of T passes and BlueBikes memberships with a new lease to encourage a reduction in vehicle ownership and vehicular trips.

Finally, in response to comments and concerns about preservation of existing trees on site, the developer commissioned a detailed tree survey and published the report. This report detailed the condition of the existing trees on site and made

recommendations for removal or preservation. We now estimate that we will be able to preserve approximately 81 of the existing trees on site. 7 trees are intended for preservation in Phase 1. Each subsequent phase will go through its own Article 80 and BCDC design review process during which we will be able to design buildings to accommodate existing trees to the extent feasible and practicable and assess which trees on individual building sites will be able to be preserved. The redevelopment will also include the planting of over 500 new trees over the course of the project, including 75 that will be planted in Phase 1.

We have also committed \$1,500,000 to a community benefit fund to be administered by the BHA that can be used to provide support to off-site public amenities and non-profit organizations within ½ mile of the site, to support programming through the temporary and permanent community center, or for improvements to parks within a ¼ mile of the site.

Potential Parks Improvement Examples Include:

- Collaborate with Mystic River Watershed Association and the Charlestown Community to determine potential locations for tree planting and other open space enhancements
- Collaborate with Mystic River Watershed Association, the Boston Parks Department and the Charlestown Community to enhance Barry Field
- Creation of a tree nursery to nurture plantings for the project’s later phases

TABLE 3. PROJECT UPDATES IN RESPONSE TO COMMUNITY FEEDBACK TO DATE

Issue	Update
Density	3,200 units reduced to 2,699 units
Height	22 story max height reduced to 10 story max height, 4 – 5 stories along Medford and Bunker Hill Streets
All-Affordable Buildings	Reduced from 5 to 3 all-affordable buildings <i>with commitment to explore opportunities to reduce further</i>
Public Open Space	1.95 acres large-format publicly accessible open space increased to approximately 2.8 acres and additional public pocket parks
Bike Lanes	New protected bike lanes on Medford, Concord and Tufts and bike lanes on Bunker Hill Street subject to BTM approval
Parking	Parking ratios commensurate with current ratios on site
Sustainability & Resiliency	PHIUS+ Passive House certification, Solar + Storage
Retail	<i>20% retail at affordable levels</i>
Design	Article 80 and BCDC Design Review process per phase
Tree Preservation	<i>Site plan reoriented to preserve 80+ trees</i>

TABLE 4. OPEN QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

Comment	Response
Can density on site be reduced?	2,699 units is the density required to replace 1,010 units of deeply affordable housing on-site. The trade-offs to reducing density further, by means of creating more all-affordable buildings or moving more replacement affordable units off-site, are not sufficiently outweighed by the benefit of reduced density. Creating more all-affordable buildings is an outcome to which the community and residents have objected strongly. Moving additional affordable units off-site creates disruptions in the lives of people who currently live in the Bunker Hill development, and the BHA and CRA firmly reject this approach.
Are you building 10-story all-affordable buildings?	No, the proposed 10-story buildings are mixed-income.
Are all of the all-affordable buildings by the Tobin Bridge?	No, the all-affordable buildings are not concentrated by the Tobin Bridge. Building M, the all-affordable building in Phase 1, is on Medford Street between Tufts and Corey Street. The first building by the Tobin, Building F, is a mixed-income building.
Can you define the different types of buildings you are proposing?	We are proposing a combination of mixed-income buildings with a minimum of 22% affordable replacement units and up to 3 all-affordable buildings
How does the development team define all affordable unit(s) and is there a difference between all affordable units and affordable units according to development team?	Affordable units on site are all replacement units for existing public housing and therefore are all "deeply affordable," sometimes referred to as "affordable" for shorthand because there is no other type of affordable unit within the project. When the term all-affordable is used it refers to a building containing 100% affordable units. There is not a different type of affordable unit.
How does the development team define a mixed-income building?	A mixed-income building in this project includes both market-rate and affordable units.
What is the ratio of market to affordable units currently in the mixed-income buildings?	The mixed-income buildings are currently proposed as 78% market-rate and 22% affordable. It has always been our goal to increase the percentage of affordable units in mixed income buildings over time.
What types of mixed-income buildings are included in the project?	In addition to the proposed 78/22 buildings, we have also introduced the possibility of a future mixed-income building that is 20-25% market-rate and 75-80% affordable. This is an alternative we have proposed to use in order to fulfill the commitment of only having 3 all-affordable buildings if the market conditions are insufficient to enable the remaining affordable units to be incorporated into the remaining buildings after Phase 3, all of which would then be 72% market-rate/28% affordable. (Note: this is in contrast to 78/22 and is the ratio that would allow all of the remaining affordable units to be incorporated into predominantly market-rate mixed-income buildings starting in Phase 4.)
Is there a minimum number of market rate units required in a given building for it to qualify as mixed-income?	There is not a standard for a minimum number of market-rate units to qualify as mixed-income, and throughout the city there is a broad range of mixed-income building types. We have identified a maximum of 80% replacement affordable units in a mixed-income building, as detailed in our 10/28/20 presentation of the alternatives for achieving the commitment we have made to a maximum of 3 all-affordable buildings.
What is the maximum amount of deeply affordable units allowed in any given building?	The all-affordable elderly/disabled building is planned to have 170 units. There are no plans for more than 170 affordable units in any other buildings.
How many deeply affordable/affordable units will be replaced in Phase 1?	In Phase 1, there will be approximately 57 affordable units replaced in Building F and 102 affordable units replaced in Building M for a total of approximately 159.
How many market-rate units will be built in Phase 1?	There will be approximately 199 market-rate units built in Building F.

Regarding the people that will live in this development, especially residents of lower socio-economic status, what are the plans for food, education of the children, health, and healthcare?	This project will have a resident services coordinator(s) who will work to connect residents with both existing services in Charlestown and future programming provided through the community center.
What are the plans for affordable food sources in the development/retail space?	We have engaged a local Boston firm, Graffitto, as our retail consultant and we are committed to working with them to develop retail spaces and layouts conducive to and a marketing framework targeting local grocer / affordable retail / laundromat.
What are the plans for accessible healthcare? The MGH clinic in Charlestown or the NewHealth clinic clearly do not have the capacity for that kind of population increase.	With respect to health services, the residents are currently served by a number of community health centers and that will continue. In addition, there will likely be health and wellness programs offered at the Community Center. Prospective new market-rate residents will access a variety of health centers and medical facilities located in and outside of Charlestown. Through the community center programming process, we intend to explore health/wellness services and ways to connect residents to existing services in Charlestown. We will also have a resident services coordinator as part of the project.
What is the plan for ensuring that construction trucks take the truck route along Chelsea, and not drive up Bunker Hill Street (a residential street with high pedestrian traffic, particularly children)?	We will have a detailed construction management plan that details which streets trucks will use to get to the site. Truck traffic will use Medford and Chelsea Streets to access the site, not Bunker Hill Street.
The City of Boston (Mayor Walsh) dedicated money to this project. What was that money for?	The City has allocated an initial \$30M towards infrastructure costs associated with the redevelopment.
When the project mentions "deeply affordable units" what does that translate into for monthly rent amount for each unit?	The rent for a deeply affordable units is 30% of monthly income, the same rent residents pay today in BHA owned deeply affordable public housing.
A project of this magnitude will bring in more traffic congestion into the town. Has a detailed traffic/environmental study been completed?	A detailed traffic study was done as part of the DPIR submission to the BPDA, with additional intersections studied during the IAG and public process. The project has also received its final approval from the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) office.
Will they be committing funds to add police, fire and ambulance service with the added number of residents?	This project will generate significant tax revenue through the creation of market-rate housing that the City may utilize for fund municipal services.
Why is an affordable unit more expensive than a market-rate unit? I mean, why is it bigger and have more bedrooms? Why would it be more luxurious?	Affordable units have more bedrooms on average because it reflects the need for family housing for current BHA residents as well as the needs of the BHA housing waitlist. These units are of an equal quality as the market-rate units, but because of the difference in number of bedrooms the average affordable unit is larger and therefore more expensive than the average market-rate unit.
Why would you consider putting all affordable units in a building? Is it somehow cheaper than a mixed-unit building?	All-affordable buildings allow us to use Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) financing to subsidize the creation of those affordable units. In a mixed-income building, the affordable units are subsidized by the market-rate units in that building rather than relying on tax credits. Based on current market conditions, the mixed-income buildings can support 1 affordable unit for every 3.5 market-rate units. A detailed explanation of this math can be found in the supplemental information post on 10/27/20 at bunkerhillhousing.com.
What is the process for finalizing the plan related to trees?	Each subsequent phase will go through its own Article 80 and BCDC design review process and BCDC approval. At that time, we will be able to assess which trees on individual building sites will be able to be preserved. We currently estimate that approximately 81 trees on site will be preserved.

<p>How does the character of the new buildings tie into/reflect the historic character of the rest of the neighborhood? Is there a precedent study of the local architecture feeding these designs?</p>	<p>The ‘Morse Code’ approach to the new buildings establishes a basis for design based on the historic character of Charlestown. It is a precedent study that analyzes Charlestown’s unique pattern of exterior elevations, window rhythms, materials, and colors for both its ‘fabric’ and ‘object’ buildings, and extracts design principles that can be applied to the new blocks. It is not meant to replicate historic facades - the goal is to establish a framework to guide today’s designers with a kit of parts and rules that can create a relationship to the historic buildings. You can view more detail about this in the BCDC presentation from 11/17/20 here: https://bpda.app.box.com/s/27mv0i7msbkq5k45weo4p5ntzcm10e4</p>
<p>What is the tallest residential building in Charlestown now? How does this compare to the proposed 10-story buildings?</p>	<p>The two tallest buildings in Charlestown are Flagship Wharf and Harbor View - both at 11 stories.</p>
<p>Has there been a study showing that the types/sizes of full price units being developed are in demand for the neighborhood, are they just being made to match affordable units, or is there some other metric that simply suggests the unit sizes will maximize profit?</p>	<p>The unit mix for the market rate buildings was determined based on an analysis of the market demand in the neighborhood. The unit mix for the affordable units was determined based on the needs of the BHA waiting list.</p>
<p>What is the developer doing to acknowledge the historic nature of the site in the redevelopment?</p>	<p>The developer is committed to finding creative ways to acknowledge and commemorate the unique historic elements of this site. As the project and future open space planning progresses, we will work with the Charlestown Preservation Society, Charlestown Historic Society and the community to appropriately commemorate the rich history of the neighborhood.</p>
<p>The bike paths end at Chelsea St, what is the plan to get to City Sq (C-Town Bridge) and Rutherford Ave bike paths? What is the plan in meeting up with the community pathway?</p>	<p>The project is installing new bike lanes on Medford, Bunker Hill, Tufts and Concord Streets, and will continue to work with MassDOT and the City to explore options for connecting under the Tobin to existing bike pathways in the Navy Yard and elsewhere.</p>
<p>Is there any way to consider talking to MBTA to detour buses to Medford street going towards Sullivan?</p>	<p>We will continue to work with the MBTA to explore solutions for improving bus service around the project.</p>
<p>What will this project look like from the street?</p>	<p>A video walk-through of the proposed development can be found in the recording of the public meeting from 9/9/20. This gives a better sense of what it will feel like for a pedestrian. The flythrough starts at 1:11:42 in this presentation: https://bpda.app.box.com/s/xwo2e3x32od3eadq52hqejarusiqtrv. The buildings are shown with preliminary (as with Buildings F and M) or placeholder architecture to allow people to get a sense of what the larger project could feel like when completed. Each future building will go through an Article 80 and BCDC design review process.</p>