Mystic Avenue Rezoning Study

Community Forum

March 28th, 2018
Medford City Hall

Sponsored by the City of Medford and the Metropolitan Area Planning Council with funding provided by the Massachusetts Housing Finance Agency, the Massachusetts District Local Technical Assistance Program and the City of Medford (CDBG funds)

Image: Google Earth
Welcome!

City of Medford

Mayor Stephanie M. Burke

Office of Community Development

Lauren DiLorenzo
Clodagh Stoker-Long
Tonight’s Agenda

1. Welcome and Introductions

2. Presentation
   • Corridor Context
   • What We Heard at the January Forum
   • Economic Development Survey Summary
   • Zoning Options: Balancing what is highly valued today with what is possible tomorrow

3. Questions, Feedback and Discussion

4. Next Steps, Thank You and Good Evening
Why Study Mystic Avenue?

• Commercial corridor adjacent to Medford Square
• Planning ahead to anticipate and manage changes along the Corridor
• Opportunity to:
  - Consider additional types of uses along the Corridor such as mixed use commercial and multi-family residential;
  - Continuing to support and expand existing businesses
  - Improve physical conditions, walkability/connectivity
• Maintain the tax-base
Corridor Context - Mystic Avenue

**CORRIDOR SUMMARY**
- 112 parcels
- 26,631 SF or 0.61 acre average parcel size
- 66.64 acres total parcel area
- 1,131,026 SF total building area
- $115,198,200 total assessed value
- 1949 average year built
- 1-story average building height

(Source: City of Medford Assessors Data)
What we heard at the January Forum

Why you decided to come to this forum:

Of those who answered, most described the reason for attending the forum as “interested in Mystic Ave”

- 67% Interested
- 20% Resident
- 13% Business
What we heard at the January Forum

Your relationship to Mystic Ave:

Of those who answered, most described themselves as a “resident”
What we heard at the January Forum

Strengths you identified for Mystic Ave:

(Commonly repeated answers, with most frequent at top)

- Location – Medford, Somerville, Boston, Tufts nearby
- Access – highway, roadway
- Businesses – family-owned, small businesses, longstanding businesses, strong employment
- Local services needed
- Large parcels of land
- Wideness of street/no congestion
- Car count and economic activity
- Gateway to city
- Bus service and access to transit
What we heard at the January Forum

Opportunities you see for Mystic Ave:

(Commonly repeated answers, with most frequent at top)

- Improved **walking/safety**
- Improved **biking/connections**
- More **diverse mix of uses**
  - residential – live/work/play
- Higher density development, better utilization of land
- Maintain/support existing businesses and local services
- Beautification, green, trees
- More consumer-facing/retail
- Connections to Mystic River
What we heard at the January Forum

Other uses you see as appropriate on Mystic Ave:

(Commonly repeated answers, with most frequent at top)

- **Mixed-use** of some kind
- **Mixed-use** with housing/retail
- Multifamily housing
- Affordable housing
- Hotel
- Dining/restaurants/pubs
- Commercial uses
- Food businesses – bakeries, breweries, kitchens, grocery
- Lab/manufacturing spaces
- “Maker alley”/”Innovation Zone”
- Restaurants/pubs
- Outdoor cafes
- No housing
- Theatre/arts
- Museums
What we heard at the January Forum

Describe your ideal future vision of Mystic Ave?

(20 most frequently used words in responses)
What we heard at the January Forum

Describe your ideal future vision of Mystic Ave?

(Commonly repeated answers, with most frequent at top)

- Gateway/transitional corridor that is inviting and attractive
- A thriving business district will all types of commercial, industrial, and a diverse variety of businesses
- Mixed use with sidewalks, bike paths and greenway
- Incorporate businesses contributing jobs and tax base
- More destination places like restaurants and entertainment
- More attractive Mystic Ave – greener and more ped. friendly
- Continuity, stability and cohesiveness to the corridor
- Parking-friendly corridor, but with businesses facing the street
- Reflect the historic City of Medford and traditional materials
What we heard at the January Forum

Your design preferences:

Most preferred images for what is appropriate:

(Overall) 1

2

3

4
What we heard at the January Forum

Your design preferences, most appropriate for Mystic Ave:

Potential uses ranked:

1. (1 overall)

2. (4 overall)

3. (10 overall)

4. (14 overall)
What we heard at the January Forum

Your design preferences, most appropriate for Mystic Ave:

Potential building massing/design ranked:

1
(3 overall)

2
(8 overall)

3
(11 overall)

4
(12 overall)
What we heard at the January Forum

Your design preferences, most appropriate for Mystic Ave:

Potential **building height** ranked:

1
(6 overall)

2
(7 overall)

3
(9 overall)

4
(15 overall)
What we heard at the January Forum

Your design preferences, most appropriate for Mystic Ave:

Potential site characteristics ranked:

1 (2 overall)

2 (5 overall)

3 (13 overall)

4 (16 overall)
Business Composition on Mystic Ave

Mystic Ave Businesses by Type

- Industrial: 39%
- Info, Real, Fin, Ins., Prof: 16%
- Health Care and Ed: 14%
- Other: 10%
- Retail: 5%
- Arts, Rec, Food: 6%
- Admin / Waste Management: 4%
- Other: 10%

N = 238
Source: InfoGroup USA 2016

Industrial Business Categories
- Construction
- Manufacturing
- Wholesale Trade
- Transportation
- Warehousing
- Auto Repair and Body (not sales)
Economic Development Survey Summary

Business Clusters – Construction Trades

Manufacturing

Wholesale Materials

Finishing Supply

Contractors

W. J. McDonough Fences

Heritage Wholesalers Building Materials

Murray Design Bath & Kitchen Showroom

Thor Construction

morgan Awnings

Murray Supply

Kneeland Construction Corp

NorthEast Electrical Distributors
Economic Development Survey Summary

Business Clusters – Automotive

Repair / Body
- Volsar Inc.
- Foreign & Domestic

Sales
- Colonial
- York Kia of Medford

Accessories
- Krank It Up
  Car Audio & Electronics
- Auto Zone
- Automotive Services of Boston
- Grava
Economic Development Survey Summary

Healthcare, Social Service, Specialty Retail, Banking

Fresenius Kidney Care

Atlas Wines & Liquors

Rootdown Hydroponics

WSC Walnut Street Center

Century Bank
Mystic Ave Employment by Sector
N = 2040
Source: InfoGroup USA 2016

- Industrial: 37%
- Info, Real, Fin, Ins., Prof: 18%
- Health Care and Ed: 17%
- Arts, Rec, Food: 6%
- Retail: 4%
- Other: 15%
- Admin / Waste Management: 3%

Mystic Ave Businesses by Employment Size
Source: InfoGroup USA 2016
N = 233

- 10 Employees or Less: 200 firms
- 10 to 20 Employees: 50 firms
- 20 to 40 Employees: 10 firms
- 40 to 100 Employees: 2 firms
- 100 Employees or More: 0 firms
Mystic Ave Business Survey: Key Findings

Who we talked to:

Surveys by Business Sector
Source: Mystic Business Survey
N = 14

- Auto: 5
- Service: 2
- Manufacturing: 3
- Retail: 2
- Wholesale Supply: 1
- Restaurant: 1
Mystic Ave Business Survey: Key Findings

Tenure:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tenure</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 Years or less</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 - 10 Years</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 - 20 Years</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 - 30 Years</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 30 Years</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Mystic Ave Business by Tenure on Mystic Ave

Source: Mystic Ave Business Survey

N = 14
Mystic Ave Business Survey: Key Findings

Tenure:

Mystic Ave Businesses by Property Ownership
Source: Mystic Ave Business Survey
N = 14

- **Own**: 64%
- **Rent**: 36%

For those businesses that offered information on rental rates, the average cost per square foot was ~$1.1 / Sq Ft*

Comparable properties in Somerville and Cambridge are listed for double.**

* N = 3
** Loopnet Search 3/27/18
Mystic Ave Business Survey: Key Findings

Prior Location:

Mystic Ave Businesses by Prior Location
Source: Mystic Ave Business Survey
N = 14

- Always been at this location: 29%
- Elsewhere on Mystic Ave: 21%
- Elsewhere in Medford: 36%
- Somerville: 4%
- Cambridge: 4%

Source: Mystic Ave Business Survey
N = 14

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Municipalities that Supply Workers to Mystic Ave

Source: Mystic Ave Business Survey

N = 14
Mystic Ave Business Survey: Key Findings

Business Investment:

Mystic Ave Business Investment
Source: Mystic Ave Business Survey
N = 14

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than $50k</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50 - $100k</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100 - $200k</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$200 - $500k</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$500 - $1M</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than $1M</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Business Investment:

In the Next 3 - 5 Years Do You Anticipate Your Business:

Source: Mystic Ave Business Survey
N =14

- Growing: 100%
- Staying the same: 0%
- Declining: 0%
- Not going to be in businesses in 3-5 years: 0%
Benefits to Being Located on Mystic Ave:

Source: Mystic Ave Business Survey

N = 14
Balancing what is highly valued today with what is possible tomorrow

**Inputs** (community forum and city feedback, MAPC analysis, existing conditions)

**Criteria to meet** (specific objectives that zoning should address/accomplish)

**Feedback and Discussion**

**Zoning Options** (explore different ways to meet criteria with varying potential outcomes)

**MAPC Zoning Recommendations and Draft Ordinance**
Inputs – Existing Conditions Analysis

Density – Floor Area Ratio (FAR)

Legend

- 0 - 0.25  - Mystic_C2
- 0.26 - 0.50  - Buildings
- 0.51 - 0.75  - ParcelBoundary
- 0.76 - 1.00
- 1.01 - 1.25  - Buildings-Context

IMAGE: MAPC
DEMOGRAPHICS

Medford Total Population (2010): 56,173
Medford Total Population Projection (2040): 64,380

Medford Total Households (2010): 22,810
Medford Total Households Projection (2040): 27,163

Medford Vehicles per Household (2014): 1.43
HOUSING

Existing

Total Housing Units: **23,207**

- Single-family Homes: 10,589 (46%)
- Two or more units: 12,618 (54%)


Projected Demand

Total Estimated Unmet Demand: **1,443 units**

- Single-family Demand: 467 units
- Multi-family Demand: 976 units

(Source: MAPC Stronger Region Housing Projections, 2020; Census Building Permit Survey, 2010-2014)
Inputs - Review of Existing Zoning

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**Existing C-2 Zone**

**Uses Allowed:** Public entertainment and recreational uses/facilities; Schools, for profit and not-for-profit (trade schools); Business, professional, medical offices; Retail sales, consumer service business; Eating place, other than drive-in; Service station, parking garage, auto sales/rental; Manufacturing, including assembly, fabrication, processing (Special Permit Board of Appeals); Second hand auto sales (Special Permit City Council)

**Dimensional Requirements:** Maximum lot coverage 50%, maximum height 30 ft., maximum height 2 stories
1. Preserve Mystic Avenue as a jobs center
2. Encourage re-use of vacant/underutilized land
3. Improved amenities for surrounding neighborhood
4. Provide for mixed use development
5. Provide for housing options
6. Encourage better urban design and connectivity options “Complete Streets”
Why Zoning Options?

• It’s complicated and we don’t yet have an answer
• All valid approaches to complex dynamics
• Each option provides a distinct vision for the future of the district
• Each option has different advantages and disadvantages and may match different preferences
• Each option provides a perspective that informs the zoning elements: uses, heights, dimensional requirements, setbacks, open space, parking and loading, etc.
Zoning Options

Three Concepts:

• Jobs Innovation District

• Medford’s Southern Gateway

• Node-Focused (Neighborhood Centers)
Zoning Options

Geographically Varied Options

• Jobs Innovation District
• Medford’s Southern Gateway
• Node-Focused (Neighborhood Centers)
Jobs Innovation District
Zoning Option Details

Jobs Innovation District

Concept

Focus

• Support and grow existing businesses
• Attract new and innovative uses
• Introduce residential uses
• Maintain land/"space" in City used for industry/non-office commercial
• Uniform approach that includes mechanisms for protection and benefits for property owners
Jobs Innovation District

Key Features

• Allow for moderately increased density for entire corridor and a bonus or benefit mechanism

• Introduce residential uses under certain conditions

• Refine allowable uses to expand “work” for future opportunities, for example allow manufacturing, R&D as-of-right

• Don’t allow less intense job uses, such as self-storage
Jobs Innovation District

What may happen?
(Potential outcomes relative to other zoning options)

**Housing**
- Adds modest number of new housing units
- Adds housing in locations that meet criteria for suitability

**Business**
- Focus on maintaining and expanding the existing businesses and jobs in the corridor
- Bonus/transfer mechanism provides potential benefit to existing property owners

**Neighborhood**
- Corridor experiences incremental improvements

**Other Considerations**
- Provides most direct check to balance the dynamics of growth and preservation of jobs
Zoning Option Details

Medford’s Southern Gateway

Concept

Geography

Apply approach from about Harvard Street to the municipal boundary.
Medford’s Southern Gateway

Focus
- Create a sense of arrival for the City of Medford at the Somerville Border
- Introduce new housing and retail opportunities in a gateway district
- Strengthen pedestrian orientation and access to Mystic River and open space
Medford’s Southern Gateway

Key Features

- Allows for significant changes in density in the southern end of the corridor supporting redevelopment for new mixed-use, residential/commercial buildings

- Balances with refined C-2 with use restrictions in northern commercial core of the corridor to preserve jobs and new business opportunities
Medford’s Southern Gateway

What may happen? (Potential outcomes relative to other zoning options)

**Housing**
- Adds significant numbers of new housing

**Business**
- May displace more existing businesses and likely increase commercial rents in southern study area
- Retains northern portion of corridor for businesses and reduces potential for conflict with new uses

**Neighborhood**
- Presents a new opportunity for a neighborhood center in the southern portion of the City
- Property value pressures may enter the neighborhood

**Other Considerations**
- Strong potential to be combined with other public realm, open space, or transportation investments
Node-Focused (Neighborhood Centers)

Concept

Geography

- Moderate or higher density node
- Lower density node
- Higher density node
Node-Focused (Neighborhood Centers)

Focus

- New mixed use residential and commercial opportunities at key nodes within the corridor
- Refine underlying zoning to support existing uses elsewhere along the corridor
- Create the framework for new neighborhood centers to develop over time
Node-Focused (Neighborhood Centers)

**Key Features**

- Increased density at key nodes allows for residential units and new ground floor commercial redevelopment where most likely
- Defining limited nodal geographies, balances redevelopment pressure with use restrictions and support for business growth elsewhere in the corridor
Node-Focused (Neighborhood Centers)

What may happen?
(Potential outcomes relative to other zoning options)

**Housing**
- Adds significant numbers of new housing in specific locations

**Business**
- May displace a few existing businesses and may increase commercial rents in the area
- May preserve and support diverse jobs
- May introduce too many conflicts with new uses

**Neighborhood**
- May create a pattern of neighborhood centers that could complement existing nodes on Main St

**Other Considerations**
- Could be combined with public realm investments to reinforce walkability in each node
Questions, Feedback and Discussion
Next Steps, Thank You and Good Evening

Draft Zoning Recommendations from MAPC
Draft Zoning Ordinance from MAPC
Process of Review with City
Thank you!

If you have comments or questions, please contact Cynthia Wall
cwall@mapc.org