

After several discussions with the mayor about issues of architectural development and integrity throughout the city of Beacon, he has asked CityArts, Beacon's municipal arts and cultural development committee, to provide assistance and support in helping himself, administration and the city council to navigate the TOD process in regards to the architectural selection process, overall plan and cultural and environmental issues. We are not only happy to oblige but also specifically equipped to do so. We have an initiative within the committee called "Beacon as Campus" which looks at the physical structure of the town itself in terms of architecture and urban planning, and toward furthering the arts and cultural development for our residents and visitors therein. Tara Roscoe, a LEED certified associate with Studio Architecture in Manhattan and Washington, D.C. who has recently moved to Beacon, leads this charge for the committee.

For a city as small as Beacon, we have an impressive record of world-class architectural excellence. Richard Morris Hunt, architect of the Howland Cultural Center and the world famous Biltmore Estate in North Carolina, is still studied as a pivotal contributor to American architectural history. The architects who transformed an old packaging factory into Dia: Beacon have received architectural acclaim around the globe for this amazing structure, put us squarely on the world stage as evidenced by the recent Chinese delegation visit, and have set a high bar for future large projects. Beacon's TOD will be the flagship development project that will have the most visual and experiential impact on the total waterfront development. The world is watching our next move and expects something equal to or greater than Dia. Our residents deserve to expect nothing less and the City should ensure they receive nothing less.

Cookie cutter developments may be fine elsewhere, whether or not they become well integrated into their communities, serve as bedroom "micro climates" with no relationship to the larger area, or even remain vacant. Beacon deserves better. Developer-driven design often promises much, but delivers much less, and when the MTA and chosen developer have finished their processes and are counting their profits, it is the people of Beacon, their children, and their children's children, who will be living day to day with the results. For whether our ancestors are buried on nearby soil or we've only recently unpacked the last of our boxes, all Beaconites know this city by another name: HOME.

Architecture itself is one of the seven Classical Arts. CityArts urges the City to understand the cultural and environmental impact of this huge new project, our ability to exceed expectations and create something amazing, and make every effort to fight for the highest quality outcome. We have one shot at this, and opportunities missed will pay negative dividends for generations to come. Effective, beautiful, livable, sustainable, strongly designed waterfront communities are happening the world over, and Beacon should take every opportunity to claim its place in that company, and to serve as an example and living design classroom to others of how it can be accomplished.

To that end, the City needs to claim their right, in addition to the zoning ordinance under consideration and the planning and approvals boards and processes, to be an ACTIVE participant at every level to shape the initial profile of the plan and to raise expectations. We will be working closely with the mayor and the City as this project develops to help this happen, but initially at this stage, we have the following recommendations to the mayor and to the council:

The City, via the mayor, administration and council as appropriate, should have, **MUST** have, a seat at the table in creating the RFP for the TOD and co-signatory authority with the MTA. Our TOD does **NOT** have to be the same as other TODs. We have the power to retain control of this process at the municipal level, and should make every effort to do so.

The City, via the mayor, administration and council as appropriate, should have, **MUST** have, co-signatory authority for selection of finalists for overall concept plan and for final proposal selected. Special permit granting authority is not enough and only gives us a passive voice in the process. This should include the ability by the city to reject any and all proposals deemed unfit for our land and our citizens.

Specific requirements for a successful proposal should aim to the highest outcome possible –

LEED Gold Certification or above for both overall plan and any subdivision, including base building and interior scope

Architecture firms considered should show a track record of successful, progressive designs that work well with distinctive geographic environments and provide imaginative solutions to specific site challenges

In a city fast gaining an international reputation as both a home to contemporary culture and environmental awareness, the proposal should showcase both architectural and environmental prowess to produce a world-class development specifically suited to Beacon's character, strengths and surroundings

Architecture firms considered should be able to demonstrate through peer review records (awards, editorial) a strong and inventive design aesthetic

Public and private spaces within the winning proposal should be integrated in innovative ways which create opportunities for community-building among TOD and other Beacon residents; design can either separate residents from pedestrians and visitors or cross-pollinate the two living streams into one flowing vibrant whole

Overall plan should both design and cover costs for one end of an integrated sustainable inner-city transit mechanism or system that will link the TOD district directly with the Main Street corridor and beyond to the rest of Beacon; simply stating the need for linkage will not result in an actual transportation solution

The plan should also specifically demonstrate space for Public Art; costs associated with the acquisition and installation should be underwritten by the developer

Completion of specific design, environmental, public space and transit features in the chosen design **MUST** be tied to any Certificates of Occupancy, so that the features and priorities important to the city are not removed from the project on the back end due to cost or other considerations. These specifics must be identified and communicated to the winning developer(s) prior to official approval of the plan by the city.