

# Meeting Notes

Project: Commonwealth Avenue – Phase 3/4

Subject: Community Meeting #2

Date: October 27, 2015, 6:30-8:00 PM

Location: Brighton Marine Health Center, 77 Warren Ave, Boston, MA

Attendees: See attached sign-in sheet

## **INTRODUCTION AND PRESENTATION**

Zach Wassmouth of Boston Public Works introduced the project, the design team, and City staff and elected officials in attendance.

Jerry Friedman of HDR and Deneen Crosby of CSS provided a Power Point presentation (see <http://keepbostonmoving.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Comm-Ave-Phase-3-4-Public-Meeting-2-Presentation.ppsx> )

## **DISCUSSION / ATTENDEE COMMENTS**

1. Plans and slides should not use “green” color to represent the Allston Green District. Green color usually implies park land or open space.
2. Concerned with proposed parking loss at businesses (multiple commenters)
3. Request for trees along the T rather than low plantings. Many attendees agreed citing precedents elsewhere (other Comm Ave phases; Beacon Street in Brookline)
4. Not “politically possible” to remove parking.
5. Review lessons learned from Brighton Avenue reconstruction. This area “developed too fast with small sidewalks and large median”.
6. Question about extent of parking loss. HDR responded could be approximately 1/3 of existing spaces.
7. Naples Road resident: Comm Ave just feels too dangerous to bike on so she drives through this area instead. Suggest provide angled parking on main line and use the carriage way for two-way cycle track.
8. Consider reversing directions on selected Carriage Road segments to discourage/eliminate through travel in them.
9. Gordon Street resident: Bikes to work. Likes the improvements. Gives proposal an “A-“. Concerned with bikes being located on the left side and conflicts with cars
10. Recommendation to look at Queens Blvd in New York City for an example of a similar corridor.
11. All plaza improvements are on south side. Investigate incorporating plaza space on the north side of Harvard Ave. intersection. Solutions should be holistic.
12. Resident near Royce/Brainerd intersection. There is a lot of cut thru traffic NB from Harvard to Brainerd to cut through CVS parking lot. CVS shares parking lot with Boston Sports Club.

13. Business owner (owns two restaurants at northwest Harvard corner): business owners will be concerned about loss of parking, but he is ok with loss of parking if we can make wider sidewalks that allows seating areas (tables/umbrellas, etc.).
14. Likes the project. It will increase safety.
15. Concern about snow removal along protected bike lanes. Will this be maintainable? Zach responded that the City will only construct a project that is maintainable.
16. Likes the greenery that is proposed. Project will increase “health, wellness and livability”. Very happy with proposal. Acknowledged that there will be a parking loss, but will have better pedestrian and bike accommodations. “Streets are for people.”
17. Questioned the “consistency with adjacent segments” reasoning for providing two lanes in each direction. Not providing same consistency for bikes. Added 5’ is not enough for bikes. He is constantly carrying large loads in a trailer with his bike so wouldn’t use the bike lane if just 5’. Doesn’t like having the bikes on the left side either. Peds don’t expect to see bikes on left.
18. Pedestrian accommodations improved.
  - a. Curious about Packard’s Corner and how peds and bikes are being accommodated here. Need to remove remnant stub of MBTA “A” line.
  - b. Harvard Avenue looks vastly improved. Suggests minimizing crossing length and maximizing crossing time as much as possible here.
  - c. Traffic calming here is important
  - d. Agrees with other concerns related to bikes on left side. Will be tricky to reach homes and businesses.
  - e. Do cars really need 11’ width?
  - f. Suggests putting bikes next to parking lane.
  - g. Look into concept of shared use of Carriage Roads.
19. Boston Police Officer: Consider placing a traffic signal at Brainerd/Harvard intersection. Zach responded that he would relay suggestion to BTM.
20. Concern about two other intersections that weren’t discussed (Kelton/Warren and Allston). What are the plans for these two intersections, which have issues as well? Jerry responded that we are looking at the Warren intersection. Looking to see if we can adjust phasing to split the outbound carriage and main line throughs. Also, we are going to perform a Road Safety Audit for Allston, which involves getting together different people to analyze the problems and help develop solutions.
  - a. Suggested to further develop the intersection and bike accommodations.
  - b. Consider reducing width of carriage travel lane width.
  - c. Recognize safety issues associated with higher speed “downhill” traffic from Warren to Allston.
21. Brighton resident: Gave the proposal an “A+”. Added comment to give bikes and transit signal priority.
22. Concern about plaza concept at Harvard Avenue restricting traffic at Harvard.
23. Will presentation be available online? Zach responded yes.
  - a. Likes consideration given to carriage lanes, but consider that there are large vehicles along here and the need to pass these vehicles when they are parked.
  - b. Worried about cars in carriage lanes taking sharp lefts across cycle track.
  - c. “Pie in the sky suggestion: Consider an underpass?”
  - d. Consider neck downs at Harvard Avenue? Would like this but need to be sure it doesn’t increase gridlock.

24. Resident on corridor: Team is seriously underestimating impact of lost parking. He doesn't drive but this will be a problem.
25. TransitX Rep: Suggested replace Green Line with Transit X Pod System. Privately funded.
26. Resident: Worried about loss of parking, which will hurt business. Cars are a must in this region as transit system inadequate for trips across City and to suburbs. Suggested providing diagonal parking spaces outside the Plaza on the main line. Doesn't agree with City approving/encouraging new developments without adequate off-street parking.
27. Likes the multi-modal elements to the project. Provided data (did not site source) 4.7% of trips in corridor are bicycle in this area, compared with 2.1% in rest of City. 41% of households don't have access to cars.
28. Fan of proposal. Hearing other concerns. Look at Mainline as he doesn't like that it is maintaining 4 lanes and not really changing.
29. Resident between Harvard and Packard's:
  - a. Likes the proposed crosswalk at Packard's Corner. Please keep.
  - b. Likes the protected left turns at Harvard. Allows traffic to flow more freely.
  - c. Left turns from Linden to Comm Ave inbound is a mess. Please take a look at this.
  - d. Pavement markings need to be maintained/restriped. Hard to see.
30. Resident near Washington Street: Dog walkers use the carriage way median for their dogs. Consider placement of trash can there.
31. Understands we are trying to restore of historic layout. Feels the original layout is a mistake and shouldn't be repeated.
32. Question if this project will be upgrading utilities. Zach responded we will work with utility owners to establish utility needs. Will want any utilities in need of upgrades done prior to or during construction. So there could be some utility work performed.
33. Consider dis-incentivizing students bringing their cars to area.
34. Suggest finding areas along Salt Creek that has been totally undergrounded that can be daylighted. Can be useful in reducing future flooding (similar to Muddy River project).

Zach closed the meeting by stating that people can submit any questions or concerns on forms located in the front or via online.