



Arborway Parkways Improvements Project

Dear Arborway Stakeholder,

Since my swearing in as Acting Commissioner, I have been getting up to speed on the many exciting capital initiatives being undertaken by the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) including the Arborway Parkways Improvements Project. I understand from staff that this complex transportation planning project to improve safety and enhance accessibility has received valuable input from community stakeholders, municipal partners and advocacy groups during the design process. I write to you today with an update on the status of the project.

Since our last communication in June, DCR and Howard Stein Hudson have been working toward developing an additional design alternative to present to the public at our next open meeting, including coordinating with National Grid on their plans to replace the gas main. DCR staff has also conducted observations of vehicle, traffic, and pedestrian movements in the corridor and adjusted traffic controls to accommodate those findings.

During this period, DCR has received dozens of comments from the public, mostly by e-mail. Nearly all comments have been focused on the short-term pavement marking changes DCR implemented in May. We heard from abutters, neighbors, drivers, pedestrians, bicyclists, and visitors to the Arboretum. While we cannot respond to all of the comments individually, please know that your feedback is important to the design team.

Based on your input, DCR put in place short-term improvements during the spring of 2021 to attempt to add bike access through Murray Circle. While vehicle volume has varied widely throughout the pandemic, DCR has learned a great deal about the viability of some of our proposed long-term design elements now that many are returning to work and school reports from constituents and our own field observations. Accordingly, DCR's engineering team continues to evaluate the impacts of the short-term improvement on safety, pedestrian and bicycle access, and traffic operations and will make further adjustments as needed based on these findings.

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As I mentioned above, our consultant Howard Stein Hudson has prepared an additional design alternative based on public feedback provided on design concepts presented at Public Meeting #2. DCR plans to present this new alternative at a public meeting to be scheduled for mid-January. I hope that you will be able to join us at the meeting to provide much appreciated feedback to help shape a preferred alternative that can progress to design development, and ultimately, construction documents.

In closing, I would like to thank the community for the high degree of public participation in the design process for this exciting project. DCR looks forward to continuing the dialogue with you as we seek to address issues of safety and enhanced access along the Arborway.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Cooper
Acting Commissioner