

Centre Street and Walter Street Intersection Improvement

Public Comments

deadline 8/14/2020

Time	Name		Comment			
8/4/2020 10:06	Ian	Schneider	<p>Hi,</p> <p>Thank you for your design work and proposed improvements at the Centre St and Walter St intersection. Unfortunately, I do not think the proposed alternative meets the project goals or adequately responds to request from the community. As you mentioned, the community had several requests, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased traffic calming measures - Shorter crosswalk distances - Adequate lane markings and street signals - Increased bike safety <p>From my perspective, these requests were successfully incorporated into the preferred alternative design. The traffic calming measures are insufficient. For example, the current design will still allow drivers to make high speed turns across a bike lane and crosswalk.</p> <p>The crosswalk distances are still too long; there is no change versus the original design. Would you consider presenting a proposal to the public that reduces Walter St to 1 turning lane and Centre St to 1 through lane?</p> <p>The lane markings are not adequate, even in the design document. It's not clear - where is the bicycle lane? Can you please delineate this better, both in the document and in the final roadway markings?</p> <p>It's not clear if this design meets the proposed improvements for enhanced bike safety. It's hard to assess whether the intersection turning movements are safe. For example, will you allow right turns when bicyclists have a green signal and the right of way? That is unsafe and it runs counter to recommendations from other agencies. From my perspective, the Casey Arborway project did not meet it's goals because it did not create safe intersections, utilizing mixing zones instead of phased signals as recommended by MassDOT, NYC, and design firms all over the world. If phased signals are not possible here, that should be clearly described in the presentation, and alternatives should be explored (for example, raised crossings on Sophia Snow Place and at least the inbound half of Walter St).</p> <p>Thank you so much for your hard work.</p>	Somerville	MA	02145
8/10/2020 18:13	Dave	Newbold	<p>Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this proposal and for your responsiveness to the concerns expressed at the initial public meetings. I like and support the current alternative, although I am concerned about bike traffic coming North on Walter Street and wanting to take a left on Centre Street (and proceeding west on the VFW Parkway). It wasn't clear from the online presentation if bicyclists, like myself, would have to position themselves in the left turning traffic lanes or wait for a pedestrian walk signal.</p> <p>Normally I would take Weld Street when I am heading west, but I thought it was worth noting as I hope to see the day when Centre Street can become a viable commuting option.</p> <p>Thanks again for your work!</p>	West Roxbury	MA	02132

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Time	Name		Comment			
8/12/2020 18:38	Vickie	Henry	<p>I really wish you would not do anything except enforce the speed limit.</p> <p>If you must redesign this looks like you are making a much bigger intersection. Ugh. But if you must:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. I like the rotary design best.2. If you go with a traffic light, please time it to work with the light at Allendale and the VFW Parkway. Someone driving the speed limit on Centre Street should be able to through all 3 lights on a green.3. Are there continuous bike lanes? I don't see them. You have some skinny islands in the middle that won't be kept up - you could eliminate them and use that extra space for bike lanes. Do you really need a left turn lane into Sophia Snow? Couldn't you just allow left turns from a left lane and use the space for bikes? I don't even bike and I'm shocked by the lack of bike lanes.	Jamaica Plain	MA	02130

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deadline 8/14/2020

Time	Name		Comment			
8/14/2020 11:37	Paul	Schimek	<p>Walter Street southbound Keep proposed shared lane marking. Bicyclists can easily travel at the posted speed limit of 20 mph. If it were a bike lane, left-turning bicyclists would be encouraged to stay right.</p> <p>Walter Street northbound Create a single RTOL. The double-right turn lanes make this intersection more complicated for all, including for bicyclists uphill on Walter St wanting to merge left into the straight-or-left lane. There is no need for two RTOLs. Maintain the existing ordinary bike lane for bicyclists turning right, who currently have NO CONFLICT with any movement. Create a raised median pedestrian refuge for those crossing Walter Street.</p> <p>Centre Street Eastbound Keep the existing ordinary bike lane and do not ramp bicyclists onto the sidewalk. The proposed change in the geometry to make the corner closer to 90 degrees improves the right-hook problem but ramping bicyclists onto the sidewalk creates conflicts with right-turning traffic and/or delay. Create a RTOL lane to the right of the bike lane, so straight through bicyclists just keep going straight, as they do today. Create the space by eliminating the LTOL: the very light volume can be served by a U-turn at Allandale.</p> <p>Centre Street Westbound Maintain the existing ordinary bike lane. Do not direct bicyclists, who may be going fast downhill, onto the sidewalk up or down 8 RAMPS and through "mixing" areas. Some drivers feel it is their duty to "remind" bicyclists that bike lane/path use is mandatory (even though it isn't).</p> <p>At the project limit, the existing bike lane suddenly disappears and bicyclists and motorists, both going fast down hill, are expected to merge into a single lane with no clarity on who should yield. Extend the restriping to the intersection with VFW. Keep the 2 travel lanes + bike lane. The right travel lane should be marked as straight or right with a sharrow, the left lane as straight-only, and bike lane as right-only. Add a RTOL 100 ft before stop line.</p>	Jamaica Plain	MA	02130

Centre Street and Walter Street Intersection Improvement

Public Comments

deadline 8/14/2020

Time	Name		Comment			
8/14/2020 13:55	Arborway Coalition	Sarah Freeman	<p>The Centre St./Walter St. Intersection is an important piece of the transportation network adjacent to the Arborway, and we are very glad to see intersection improvements moving forward. This location has been a problem for some time. It has been the site of many crashes, and it seems to contribute to the congestion on Centre St.</p> <p>The existing lack of crosswalks reflects the car-centric transportation planning & design of the mid-20th century. New crosswalks will be welcome additions.</p> <p>Bicycle accommodation(s) are an important part of regional active transportation & carbon reduction, which will improve public health & environmental health. The creation of safe bike facilities along Centre St. and the addition of bike lanes across Centre St. to create safer connections between Walter St. & Centre St. would be important multi-modal access improvements.</p> <p>If there is a need for a vertical barrier on Centre St. (north of Walter St. or elsewhere), which was discussed during the July 30, 2020 virtual public meeting, please explore options that would be consistent with the historic parkway character (i.e. something other than jersey barriers)</p> <p>Re: Access to Little Blessings Day Care & Preschool: At the July 30 meeting, it became apparent that access from Walter St. or from Centre St. south of Walter St. needs to be addressed, e.g. via a U-turn at Allandale St.</p> <hr/> <p>The Arborway Coalition is a collaboration of JP residents & other interested parties working with City & State agencies & local neighborhood associations to preserve the Arborway as a green multi-use parkway connecting 3 Emerald Necklace parks designed by Frederick Law Olmsted: Jamaica Pond Park, Arnold Arboretum & Franklin Park. Our goal is to improve access to these parks for all users and to keep the parkway clean & green. We support public safety, public health/physical activity promotion and historic landscape preservation on the Arborway & beyond.</p>	Jamaica Plain	MA	02130

From: Kathleen McCabe <mccabek@aol.com>

Sent: Monday, August 17, 2020 10:47 AM

To: Montgomery, Jim (DCR) <jim.montgomery@mass.gov>; Parenti, Jeffrey (DCR) <Jeffrey.Parenti@mass.gov>

Cc: Parks, Mass (DCR) <mass.parks@mass.gov>; Michael Rush <mike.rush@masenate.gov>; Edward.Coppinger@mahouse.gov; nika.elugardo@mahouse.gov; matthew.omalley@boston.gov; ricardo.arroyo@boston.gov; michelle.wu@boston.gov; george.rooney@boston.gov; dmatton@hshassoc.com; sforti1@comast.net

Subject: LANA comments re: Centre/ Walter Street "Preferred Option" design

Good morning,

Attached please find our detailed comment letter regarding the proposed preferred alternative for the Centre/ Walter Street intersection design. While we believe the proposal has many good elements and represents a step forward, there is still work to be done. Frankly, we were underwhelmed by the proposed preferred alternative. We believe DCR is missing a once-in-a-generation opportunity to make the needed improvements to this intersection. We would like to see the option presented on July 30th further refined. Access management issues are a key concern, plus how the proposal impacts our neighborhood and traffic (vehicular, pedestrian and bicycles on Walter Street), and the landscape remain concerns. Please see our detailed letter which is attached for specifics.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of our comments. We appreciate your efforts on this project, and believe in needs further advancement and full funding to do the job right.

Best,

Kathy McCabe
Vice President
Longfellow Area Neighborhood Association



Longfellow
Area
Neighborhood
Association, Inc.

P. O. Box 222, Roslindale, MA 02131

longfellowarea@gmail.com

August 17, 2020

Commissioner Jim Montgomery
MA Department of Conservation & Recreation
251 Causeway, 9th floor
Boston, MA 02108

ATTN: Jeffrey Parenti, PE, Deputy Chief Engineer & Project Manager
RE: Centre/Walter Street Intersection

Dear Commissioner Montgomery:

Please accept these comments and observations regarding the proposed “preferred alternative” for the Centre/ Walter Street intersection that was the subject of the July 30, 2020 virtual meeting at Sophia Snow House.

The Longfellow Area Neighborhood Association (LANA) views the “preferred alternative” as a utilitarian solution and a step forward. However, we believe DCR and its engineering consultants still have work to do to improve the solution. We are underwhelmed by the proposed “preferred alternative”. This is one of the primary “gateways” to the Roslindale neighborhood. The proposal while creating some modest improvements clearly falls short of this once-in-a-generation opportunity. Our review of this proposed “preferred alternative” is based on the comments we submitted to you in early March. We are appending our earlier comments to this letter for your reference.

Of particular note we believe DCR and its engineers should be actively working with Sophia Snow House and Trinity Lutheran Church for a share access at the intersection. The current “preferred plan” with in an ingress/egress for Trinity Lutheran and the day care center just before the new Centre/Walter intersection on the outbound lane, with a ingress/egress for Sophia Snow just after the intersection is an illustration of poor access management. This really needs to be rectified and requires DCR and its consultants to invest some time in this solution.

The proposed redesign of the Centre/ Walter Street intersection proposed a four-way signalized intersection with 3 lanes approaching from Walter into Centre Street. The design makes some key considerations for pedestrians with crosswalks and crosswalk oases. Bicycle improvements seem strained, and the proposal lacks details. The impacts of intersection changes on Walter Street beyond 200 feet of the intersection appear to have not been considered (or at best there is no information). Overall, the presentation overlooks that Centre Street is part of the DCR/Metropolitan Parkway System and

the eastern part of Centre Street and Walter Street are part of the greenbelt protection district per the Boston Zoning Code. Landscape is woefully ignored in the proposed preferred alternative.

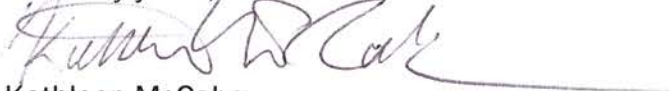
Following is a summary of the comments LANA filed with DCR and the preferred alternative responds to the issues LANA raised.

LANA COMMENT from March 5, 2020 LETTER	How the July 30 th "Preferred Alternative" Addresses LANA Comment
1. Full Funding of Project based on what is needed, not just funds available.	There is no reference in the presentation about budget and available funds. The project design in the presentation appears to be narrow and constrained, reflecting an approach based on available funds, rather than fully addressing needs.
2. Need for a holistic approach and to work with Boston Transportation Dept.	No reference.
2.-a. Concern re: delays and queuing on Walter Street	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledged as a project goal • Although there are 3 westbound lanes leaving the LANA area on Walter at Centre, it is not clear how far they extend, since there is no scale on the diagrams. It looks like the 3 lanes are at the intersection and there is a relatively short "throat" for the 3 lanes, which then become 2 lanes by the Hebrew Rehab driveway exiting onto Walter that is closest to Centre. • It appears that the parking adjacent to the Arboretum is lost and becomes a traffic lane and perhaps a bike lane (but the drawing is not clear).
2.-b. Traffic calming of traffic turning onto Walter Street from Centre.	Not addressed
3. Crosswalks & sidewalks for pedestrians, including "oases" when crossing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crosswalks across Centre and Walter are all shortened enhancing safety. • Oasis islands for pedestrians provided on both Centre & Walter
4. Safe connectivity for Bicyclists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bike lanes are provided, but details on the preferred alternative slide are limited. It is difficult to assess how bike lanes are going to work approaching the intersection for either north or south on Centre. • It appears that there are proposed approaching the intersection on Walter St from LANA (westbound), the bike lane going north has 2 options – one along the perimeter sidewalk, and a second "bike turning route" that appears to coincide with the sidewalk along the edge of the Arboretum. Typically, bikes and peds do not mix well, so this may be a poor element. • There is a sharrow (shared bike/motor vehicle lane) provided for bikes leaving the intersection traveling

LANA COMMENT from March 5, 2020 LETTER	How the July 30 th "Preferred Alternative" Addresses LANA Comment
	eastbound on Walter. This does not provide for bike safety with turning vehicles.
5. Lighting at the intersection is important. Use night sky standards.	No information provided. There was no info provided on this issue at the February 2020 meeting either. There will be a signalized intersection, but no information on lighting design or standards. Lighting needs to be addressed.
6. Signal alternatives. Access management issues.	LANA recommended DCR work with Sophia Snow and Trinity Lutheran Church on a centralized ingress/egress. There is no evidence that this occurred. A new curb cut to allow a 4-way signalized intersection proposed with driveways to users which generate lots of turns at key time periods is proposed. This still needs significant attention and work .
7. Reflect a Parkway Quality & Design.	There is no parkway quality in the proposed intersection design. This issue appears to have been ignored.
7.-a. Impacts on small parking area at entrance to Arboretum & Weld Street.	No information to determine the impacts.
7.-b. Opportunity to provide connectivity to Allendale Woods and the Charles-to-Charles Open Space Corridor.	This comment appears to have been ignored.
8. Suggested that intersection planning address current traffic volumes and proposed increased traffic attributable to Faulkner expansion	No information to determine whether this issue was considered.
9. Recommended taking an expansive view as to right-of-way lines to make best possible design for pedestrians & bicyclists.	This suggestion appears to have not been considered.

Thank you for considering these comments. We look forward to hearing an update as to how these comments and concerns are being incorporated into the final plans. Thank you for your attention to these matters.

Sincerely yours,



Kathleen McCabe
 Vice President
 Longfellow Area Neighborhood Association

Attachment: LANA Comment Letter dated March 5, 2020

cc: Senator Mike Rush
 Representative Ed Coppinger

Representative Nika Elugardo
City Councilor Matt O'Malley
City Councilor Ricardo Arroyo
City Councilor Michelle Wu
Commissioner George Rooney, BTB
Jeffrey Parenti, DCR
Howard Stein Hudson, consultants to DCR



Longfellow
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March 5, 2020

Commissioner Jim Montgomery
MA Department of Conservation & Recreation
251 Causeway Street, 9th floor
Boston, MA 02114

Attention: Joe Parente, DCR Managing Engineer

RE: Centre/ Walter Street Intersection, Roslindale

Dear Commissioner Montgomery:

The Longfellow Area Neighborhood Association is the voice of residents who live on the east side vicinity of the Centre and Walter Street intersection. Improvement of the safety and aesthetics of this intersection for pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicle travelers has been a long-time concern. We are glad to see that the engineering and design is advancing. We look forward to continued public input before the design is finalized. We are anxious to see the desired improvements realized.

Our comments based on the initial presentation made in February are:

- 1) The project should be fully funded based on what is needed, and not just funds available. We are very concerned that this project be fully and adequately funded, so that it is done right with high quality design and construction benefitting the roadway and the landscape, so that it is lasting and not in need of frequent future repairs. Based on our experience, we know this is a once in a generation improvement. Let's make sure it is done well! We have been waiting too long.
- 2) LANA believes a holistic view of how the Centre/ Walter Street intersection functions within the Centre Street corridor stretching from the circle at Centre and Arborway south towards VFW Parkway and Weld Streets, as well as how Walter Street functions extending southeasterly including the Walter/Bussey Street, Walter/Weld Street, and Walter South/Street intersections. So that this occurs, we encourage DCR engineers and consultants to work closely with the Boston Transportation Department.
 - a. We remain concerned about the delays and backups caused by the Centre/ Walter Street intersection and queuing along Walter Street that regularly occurs in the morning rush hours extending upwards towards Weld Street and beyond. Any solution of the Centre/ Walter Street intersection must address this issue.
 - b. Traffic calming of traffic turning on to Walter Street from Centre is an important parameter.
- 3) Crosswalks and sidewalks for pedestrians' safe passage and access, including "oases" when crossing wide swaths of pavement are very much needed.
- 4) Bicyclists must be safely accommodated. Bicyclists need safe, separate lanes that enable them to be visible and connect with other bike paths.

- 5) Lighting at the intersection is important since there is little ambient light from nearby users at night. DCR needs to better maintain lights so the bulbs work. Night sky standards should be applied, so light is directed to travelways for cars, bikes and pedestrians. The February 13, 2020 meeting presentation is silent on this issue.
- 6) Signal Alternatives I and II are preferred over the roundabout/rotary option.
 - a. Both signalized options could be enhanced if there was a central entry to the Sophia Snow House and Trinity Lutheran Church. We suggest that DCR work with all parties for better access management and a centralized ingress/egress to these two facilities. Since DCR regulates curb cuts, it should play an active role in encouraging better and more sensible access management on the approaches to the Centre/Walter intersections.
 - b. We suggest that you post the full-size images of all the options on the DCR web site. The squeezing of the 3 options into one powerpoint slide renders them impossible to read.
- 7) The Centre/Walter Street intersection is part of the parkways and abuts or is a connector to major open space areas. As such, the final design of the intersection should reflect a parkway quality and design. The plans need to have additional detail and attention to the landscape design. The analysis as conveyed in the February 13 presentation slides focused on roadway and neglected the landscape. Both should be addressed. Centre Street and Walter Street are important connectors for both people and vehicles to the Arnold Arboretum and Allendale Woods, an urban wilds in the City of Boston and part of the Charles-to-Charles Open Space Corridor connecting several DCR reservations.
 - a. How does each of the alternative plans affect parking along Walter Street and specifically the small parking area at the entrance to the Arboretum at Walter near Bussey Streets? Will morning queues block easy in and out access to this parking area?
 - b. Centre / Walter Street intersection improvements provide an opportunity to address pedestrian connectivity to Allendale Woods and the Charles-to-Charles Open Space Corridor. The next iteration of the plans should address this point.
- 8) The technical summary presented in the February 13, 2020 presentation slides indicates that there has been a reduction in average daily traffic counts (ADTs) at this intersection since 2013. This does not reflect residents' experiences with this intersection. We are experiencing longer periods of rush hour delay and back-ups on Walter Street, particularly in the morning. Rush hour starts before 7:15, since this is a major accessway to the Longwood Medical Area. Many people are striving to get to a 7 am work shift and pass through this intersection prior to 7 am. The AM rush continues through 9 am. Moreover, evening rush hour, doesn't stop at 4:15 pm, rather it's just keeps going through 6 pm. Analysis of traffic volumes at the Centre/Walter should not only address current volumes but also anticipated increased traffic attributable to Faulkner Hospital.
- 9) We would encourage DCR take an expansive view as to the existing right-of-way lines at the Centre/ Walter Street intersection, including perhaps some small adjustments in the right-of-way, if necessary, so that pedestrians and bicyclists can optimally be accommodated with safety.

Commissioner Montgomery

March 5, 2020

LANA Comments RE: Centre/Walter Streets Intersection Design

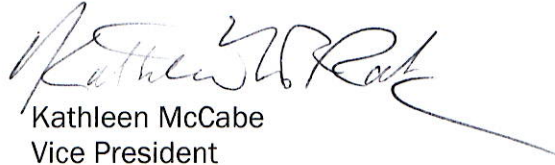
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Thank you in advance for addressing these concerns. We look forward to hearing the details on how DCR's proposals for improving the Centre and Walter Street intersection address these concerns. Please keep us informed of your progress.

Sincerely yours,

LONGFELLOW AREA NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

By: 
Sue Forti
President


Kathleen McCabe
Vice President

cc: Senator Mike Rush
Representative Edward Copping
Representative Nika Elugardo
City Councilor Matt O'Malley
City Councilor Ricardo Arroyo
City Councilor Michelle Wu
BTD Commissioner Greg Rooney
Vineet Gupta, Director of Planning, BTD
Charlotte Fleetwood, BTD
Joe Copping, Neighborhood Liaison

From: Charles Denison <cdenison@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 18, 2020 12:44 AM
To: Parks, Mass (DCR)
Subject: Centre St/Walter St project feedback
To whom it may concern,

These comments are pertaining to the Centre St/Walter St intersection project, as presented on July 30, 2020.

The proposed design is an improvement over the current configuration. However, it has a severe flaw in terms of the bicycle facilities that if left as proposed will lead to conflict and crashes. The current design shows the bike lanes merging with the sidewalks, particularly in the southbound direction where it shares the pedestrian crosswalk, but also in the northbound direction as well, where although it has a separate bike crossing, it still shares sidewalk space on either side. This is dangerous and worse than the current configuration.

Along Centre St, providing physically separated bike lanes is good, but only if they can be designed in safe way. Please follow the guidance of the MassDOT Separated Bike Lane Planning & Design Guide to ensure that the separated bike lanes are continuous and remain separated from the roadway and the sidewalk throughout the project, both approaching the intersection as well as through it. Having the bike lanes merge with the sidewalk space is hazardous:

- It may cause bicyclists to fall, as there are multiple curb ramps and sloped driveways to contend with.
- It will result in conflicts between bicyclists and pedestrians, especially when some people are waiting to cross perpendicular to the roadway while through bicyclists are trying to proceed past them.
- Drivers will not be looking for bikes in the pedestrian crosswalks.

Here are examples from the MassDOT guide about designing physically separated bike lanes at intersections:

<https://www.mass.gov/lists/separated-bike-lane-planning-design-guide>

If there is not enough width to provide proper physically separated bike lanes in both directions, providing striped on-road bike lanes as there are today is a much better solution. They can be marked clearly and colored green through the intersection itself.

Lastly, I would ask that the minimum number of lanes be provided as possible, that the travel lanes be as narrow as possible, and that the corner geometry be made as tight as possible. This will increase safety for everyone and reduce the amount of distance for both pedestrians and bicyclists to cross. It will also maximize the amount of space that can be provided to sidewalks and bike lanes.

Thank you.

Charles Denison
4 Concord Sq Apt 3
Boston, MA 02118