MEMORANDUM |

To:	Michael O'Dowd Project Manager	Date:	February 12, 2016
From:	Elizabeth Flanagan Howard Stein Hudson	HSH Project No.:	2013061.14
Subject:	MassDOT Highway Division Allston I-90 Interchange Improvement Project Place-making Subcommittee #3 Meeting Notes of February 3rd, 2016		

Overview

On February 3rd, 2016, members of the Allston I-90 Interchange Improvement Project Team and MassDOT staff associated with the job held the third place-making subcommittee meeting. Generally speaking, the place-making subcommittee is comprised of members of the task force in addition to consultants from the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA) and the Cecil Group. The purpose of the place-making subcommittee is, through the application of its members' in-depth knowledge, to assist and advise MassDOT, the BRA, and Cecil Group in determining desired future open space, mobility, and built form organizational systems for the greater project area that will be guided, or not precluded, by the current project.

The purpose of the meeting summarized herein was for the BRA and Cecil Group to continue the place-making discussion on the topic of development potential and built form. The Cecil Group led the meeting, starting with a recap of the previous session, then a targeted discussion on resiliency and sustainability, and then moved on to the main topic for the evening, looking at different guiding principles and typologies for development potential and the built form of the district.

The presentation on resiliency revealed that the project area is at risk for rising sea levels, which are projected to go as much as 9 feet above current levels in some scenarios. Hurricane or severe weather event storm surges would exceed those levels. The idea of using open space to work with, rather than in spite of, historic hydrologic patterns relative to impervious area was reiterated. From a storm water management perspective, the elevation of key infrastructure would prove beneficial to keeping it functioning.

For development potential, one concern raised by the Cecil Group was the challenge of flexibility with the limiting geometry of the triangular lots created by the intersections of Cambridge Street and Cambridge Street South. This conversation emphasized the role that transportation elements will have on development potential and the built form of the district as well. It was also pointed out that, although it is possible to get "stuck in a corner" as Steve Cecil put it, where the transportation network can limit land

uses. However, different sizes and shapes of lots can help foster the development of different types of uses, which was deemed desirable by the task force. Another aspect discussed by the taskforce was the idea that while the Beacon Park Yard development will belong to Harvard University, it will need to have ways across it, joining the river and community which are open and welcoming to residents as opposed to feeling like a closed part of a university campus.

Slopes of the road network throughout the project area were compared to analogous streets throughout Boston to help illustrate what different levels of grade will mean for pedestrians, cyclists, sightlines, and building frontages. While there is no legal limit to how steep a roadway can be task force members expressed a hope that an effort would be made to minimize slopes on man-made structures to facilitate accessibility, particularly along the route to West Station. It is worth noting that as discussed by project team rail consultant Mark Shamon at the October 15th, 2015 taskforce meeting, West Station has a fixed height which drives the slope of the streets approaching its elevated bus and kiss-and-ride loop. Pushing Cambridge Street south as close to the turnpike as possible to minimize the amount of roadway within the limited access line, as desired by the taskforce membership, means the angle of roadways between Cambridge Street south and West Station goes up. 3K4, MassDOT's current option attempts to provide a best balance of minimizing roadway within the limited access line while maintaining a slope to West Station which is in line with other roadways in Boston.

Next, Cecil Group introduced the concept of road width to building height ratios with examples of similar relationships throughout the city. A key point from this discussion was the desire to not have mega blocks or office parks developed, but rather allowing the street network to create a mix of parcel sizes and thus uses. From this stemmed an ongoing question of how the conversations happening during these place-making meetings will be incorporated into or upheld by the BRA in a master planning process. The BRA reminded the task force that the purpose of these meetings is not a master planning effort but rather to develop guiding principles for the infrastructure that will enable and not preclude desired future uses as well as serving as a basis for any future master planning effort.

The final topic covered was an outline of different built environment typologies including a concentration of density and form at a certain plaza or location; a tiered approach; a contextual approach; or a transportation oriented development (TOD) approach. Some ideas related to this were whether having building heights tiered either towards or away from the River could work, the importance of visual and physical access to the River, and whether a deck at West Station could provide a key open space and focal point while the district waits for incoming development.

Detailed Meeting Minutes[1]

C: Tad Read (TD): I think we'll get started. I think most of you know one another but we have some recent additions from the BRA. Gerald Autler, who many of you know well, will be taking over for David Grissino on the project. Also from the BRA is Jill Zick who does landscape architecture and urban design.

Especially if you're on the task force, feel free to grab a name tag and move up to the table. The place-making team presented two meetings ago on open space and last meeting on mobility. This meeting is on development and the built environment. I'll hand it over to Steve.

C: Steve Cecil (SC): We have tried to look at three basic elements of district building place-making: open space, from an urban design standpoint; connectivity, the street network, and connections; and now we're going to look at the inside of the block and understand how the district might be shaped. This is all headed towards a process where we'll be putting the pieces together. The infrastructure plan is providing answers and flexibility to have a great district in the future. One of the fundamental parts is how the traffic flow determines street widths and development. We want to make sure that that piece is being incorporated into the analytical reviews that we're doing. We're going to be looking at the kinds of shaping within the district that could occur and what that tells us about how we should inform the way infrastructure decisions should be made.

C: Josh Fiela (JF): We have three main parts to the evening. We'll try and leave the most room for the third part. The first piece is an open space recap; the second item was a request from last meeting that we talk about sustainability and resiliency directly; then we want to get into development opportunities in a contextual sense.

These are some of the slides we showed last time that relate to connectivity and some of the comments from previously and the environmental application form in 2014. You'll notice the notion of having a well-balanced street grid with appropriate connections and good desire lines and those connections are brought down towards I-90 and across, from a multimodal perspective, from the turnpike. We're also looking at creating a hierarchy within the street grid, maximizing connectivity for all modes of transportation, and considering complete streets design principles.

What we're seeing is that the types of things we see in our conversations and analysis are consistent with these comments. There hasn't been much deviation or variation from those very first principles and concepts. Additionally, making sure that bus and commuter rail connections and possible future DMU's are part of the planning.

Lastly, looking at specific comments, certainly we have a lot of notes but these were the recurring themes from that conversation. Street widths were one; the comment was to have widths no wider than is necessary to accommodate traffic in the district. It should be a pedestrian and bike sensitive

[1] Herein "C" stands for comment, "Q" for question and "A" for answer. For a list of attendees, please see Appendix 1. For copies of meeting flipcharts, please see Appendix 2.

environment. That is something we are continuing to analyze as Steve suggested. It's a complicated topic area and we have another way of thinking about it which is the street widths in combination with the buildings.

The definition of a functional series of streets; making sure that the function of each street within the network is clearly identified is something we're working on with Nelson\Nygaard, and thinking about the hierarchy of the streets and typologies that will be taken into the next steps and alternatives.

We're exploring more direct regional connections. The direct connection from Soldier's Field Road westbound to I-90 westbound could potentially be combined with flyovers for pedestrians in that location approximately. Thinking of that is going into our tradeoffs analysis from a place-making and street network perspective, and looking at contextual patterns of hydrology and resiliency. We're thinking about north-south connection across turnpike, especially for buses. We want to make sure that the primary bicycle connections are as efficient and direct as possible, from neighborhoods to the river.

Those are the high level comments we'll be reflecting on to integrate into the scenarios. We want to kick off a discussion, before getting into development opportunity, to talk about sustainability, resiliency and energy efficiency. We have a few slides highlighting the corridor at the city scale for city considerations, this project area notwithstanding; that means looking at flood levels with projected rising sea levels, roughly 9 feet above current levels. The district is at risk, particularly the Cambridge Street Bridge and heading into the district.

Also, we're looking at hurricane hazards and the associated storm surges. This area is certainly at risk. The potential for a storm surge comes in much further than the 9 foot sea level rise. This is a bit more detailed information on hurricane flooding which has been projected by NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association) and the relationship to the surrounding neighborhood and our district. High water lines and some of the inlets from the Charles River making their way into the district; how might these relate to historic patterns? There's the potential an open space network could be derived from these storm water patters to have more natural hydrologic flows. That's in relation to impervious surfaces; there's potential for improvement given the current situation.

We want to open a conversation about resiliency and understand some of the district-driving characteristics that should be driving our planning. Thinking about ways flood resiliency can be built into the design of hard infrastructure and potentially some elements that we're talking about to mitigate flood risks. Also considering flood elevations relative to roadway elevations. We're potentially elevating roadways and possibly development, which could be beneficial. Integrating storm water flows and treatment into the storm water management plan: it's not just open space serving new development, but it could be open space that is related to those natural flows. If there are other sustainability and resiliency issues that don't show up here we'd be happy to hear them.

C: TR: Comments thoughts?

C: Pallavi Mande (PM): Great. Thanks for considering all of this. We've been discussing these issues in a contextual way so I'm happy to see that you have delved deeper into mapping those from the perspective of city wide linkages and frameworks. So, thank you. I talk about this all the time; I'll let others talk.

C: Fred Salvucci (FS): In the interest of conversation, let me disagree. You included in those flooding maps neighborhood districts that are all low and will be flooded. You just accept this? Everything we love about the Charles is manmade. The leader who symbolized the movement to do something about the previous natural state of the Charles, an open cesspool, was called Storrow. There was a second dam, MGH, Mount Auburn, Harvard, MIT, BU, and a lot of neighborhoods have very low elevations. Put 10 more feet on the dam. The idea that we're just going to say this is god's will- it's devastation for the neighborhoods and all this land. Last meeting people were talking about Back Bay as a street scale we want to see. I don't think you get that if we go in the direction you're talking about with flooding.

Secondly, I want to object to the phrase vis-à-vis the widths of the streets; you said as "narrow as feasible while managing traffic." I think we should be designing streets to what's acceptable to human scale, and if there are traffic problems, there are traffic problems. We shouldn't be building streets ultra wide based on some calculations. We ought to build streets we want to live. I mean, we don't want traffic all the time, we have to be reasonable. From the BRA, I think we hope to hear a way to achieve the Back Bay. If there are issues with congestion, disclose that. The environmental review is not to say everything will be ok, but to say these are the things that will be good or bad. I think it's the wrong approach. I want to be clear I'm not representing an institution.

A: TR: Thank you; we'll have a lot more comments on the streets.

C: Marc Kadish (MK): For street widths, without compromising sidewalks widths and the potential in the district for pedestrians, bike lanes, and even creating a place, you need sidewalk width; that will allow businesses to thrive and have all the things that create a great district. I don't know when that comes into play but it's a consideration.

C: PM: From our perspective, I agree. I don't think we intend to take this as god's will. I think they intend to look at historic hydrology as a guide. I think the Back Bay works well, just because there are things that have been done right; interventions like the Muddy River, which are not just open space projects but they build open space as infrastructure. I think the framing that resilience brings to this conversation is looking at open space as infrastructure and a network for management. It's not just the dam that's holding the water back. There are tunnels and other points in the city that water comes through before it ever overtops the dam. I just want to say that the conversation doesn't end at going back to nature but how can we knowingly design for where we know water is going to be going.

C: TR: There's a lot to cover, maybe we can move on.

C: JF: Some of these will show up again at the end but the focus of the evening is really about development potential and the considerations about building vertical; the building character and

envelope. We tried to break this down into a few key questions we had from the connectivity conversation from last time: how are the blocks and their shape, geometry, access, slope, shaping development characteristics; how does development then shape the street environment; how can West Station be integrated into the district; and how should the development be shaped within the district for overall built form.

As a reminder, right now we're focusing on development separately and our next step is to synthesize all that information and conversations back together. If you look at block shape, scale, geometry, slopes, access to the blocks relative to the highway, access to blocks relative to the one-way street option; these are all very important considerations. We took a look at the individual characteristic and then tried to overlay them to understand where the challenges are. Here, they really show up in the corners.

There are a number of challenges at the intersection between Cambridge and Cambridge Street South, the triangular geometries, and the geometric challenges down towards the throat. Those are the hot spots. In the core of the district, there's generally a lot of flexibility about what the future might bring. When we did these studies, we were also looking at a very generalized development footprint. The next part of synthesis will be to get a little more detail and get beyond looking at these prototypes. If you look at slopes of the roadways, there are some portions that show up very light in this diagram which are between 0 and 2 or 3% slope, which is negligible. Then there are some areas in the 3 or 4% range which would be noticeable. We have some analogue examples around Boston to show you what that would feel like. Then there are some areas around 5 to 8 or 9% which are the bridge approaches that get you to West Station.

None of those slopes are as steeps as Beacon Street on Beacon Hill. I think that's still a nice picturesque place, maybe because of or in spite of its' slope. That's s 16% slope. Park Street as you go up to the State House is a 9 or 10% slope. But even those slopes have been integrated into the overall development. It's more like Market Street in Brighton, it varies between 2 and 4 % but that's a street where the slope is visible but not creating a dramatic impact on frontages or to walk-ability or bike-ability.

The streets you see in the locus map here are the portions of the new street network that would be the same slope as the example. The others, which are steeper, are more akin to Beacon Street as you climb up the other direction towards the State House and that does have some impacts; the slope is noticeable if you're walking, it's potentially difficult to bike up. In terms of supportable development on frontages it's still able to do that, it's still a reasonable place. Given the range of slopes and the isolation of them in the overall district, we don't see this necessarily as an overall district driver in terms of development opportunity.

Q: Jessica Roberts (JR): Isn't the max slope 5% for ADA regulations about pedestrian bridges?

A: JF: Yes, for it to be considered an accessible slope without a handrail.

C: JR: Obviously, someplace like Beacon Hill you don't have an option but for the new streets I would think we'd want to aim for something that is accessible.

C: Jill Zick (JZ): I do accessibility for the BRA and I just want to correct that. As long as the street follows the natural grade, it can be any slope but the cross slope can't be more than 5%. It has to follow the street grade. It doesn't matter for the street.

C: JR: But none of these are natural streets.

C: JZ: Doesn't matter. At-grade is the grade of the street.

Q: Galen Mook (GM): I guess the question is why is 5% the magic number and should we build to that? Not required but desirable because it's more accessible?

C: JZ: Agreed, but there is no limit to the grade of the street legally. I just want to make that clear.

C: Richard Parr: From our perspective there is a limit to slope. We shouldn't agree to build something like that from scratch. We have a decision that we can make here. I understand the process is to take all of our input back and synthesize it but that's something we're not happy with that.

C: James Gillooly (JG): Just be reminded, we've pushed South Cambridge Street closer and closer to railroad tracks which is going to create differences in grade. You do have to achieve the height to get over the tracks and turnpike. There's a competition between those two objectives.

C: RP: Then that's a discussion we should have about how far Cambridge Street South should be pushed.

C: TR: To be clear, the trade-off is that if you pull Cambridge Street South further away, you're also extending the ramps, and extending the portion of the streets that can't function as normal streets. The idea of pulling it closer to the turnpike is to have a greater portion of the street grid that is usable.

C: FS: There's another way to control. My understanding is that Secretary Pollack decided all three options for the throat are going into the final Environmental Impact Report (EIR), two of which are at-grade. If there's an at-grade solution chosen, then the Turnpike grade is lower and the ramps can be lower, even if Cambridge Street South hugs. Two of the 3 options going into the EIR would allow for significantly lower slopes. We need an urban design approach that considers each option. The issues focused on Agganis Way have major ramifications west of here. We need to remember there are 3 scenarios and explore the implications.

C: JF: It's my understanding that it's not the variations in the throat but West Station driving those slopes.

C: FS: On the northerly side, it's the first thing streets have to get over.

C: SC: Accessibility is one of the factors; there are other considerations we need to evaluate and there will be trade-offs and balances. If you say the new district will be below 5%, it precludes a number of options that have benefits. There are other ways of achieving accessibility.

C: Amy Mahler (AM): I would like to jump in; in Lower Allston and Lower Brighton, the part closer to here from Stop and Shop closer to the river, less than 10% of the population is 60 and over, but as you go further towards the Charles River it gets higher to 15 to 19%. There are definitely hot spots that have much higher elderly populations. We are sort of blessed in this area with the presence of an elderly population but also a hyper mobile crowd.

Q: TR: Is that a comment to grade?

A: AM: It could be, but I think accessibility generally.

C: JR: One half of the neighborhood can't access the other half without a very steep grade. Everett Street and the Franklin Street pedestrian bridge, which supposedly we're rebuilding, have steep grades. Currently that's way over ADA limits so to propose new connections that are not ideal from accessibility standpoint, I understand there are trade-offs but that's something we should flag.

C: GM: This is nitpicky but I think important. All of your analogous comparisons of grades were two lanes roads that are quiet. The livability of a road depends on grade but also the width. With a wider street, you're encouraging drivers to speed and with a slope, it's dangerous. I want you to think about finding comparisons for grades with 5 or 6 lanes and see if that's as pleasant. Cambridge Street doesn't have that great a slope but it's still wide and encourages speed.

Q: SC: Are you suggesting there's a suggesting there's a relationship between width and slope?

A: GM: More that width plays into livability so comparing similar widths. Just comparing grades won't do it.

C: JR: People accelerate up the hill on Cambridge Street.

C: GM: It's a sightline issue too. Drivers don't speed as much on Mass. Ave. as Longfellow because of the slope. It's strange.

C: Ari Ofsevit (AO): One other thing; with 3K-4 looking at the elevation at the turnpike, there are some differences. The iteration that was evaluated was 3 feet lower than the ABC plan. If you get that 3 feet lower and depending on West Station, we've seen plans where West Station had ample room where it could be lowered. There's something to look through there with figuring out the slopes.

C: JF: The run of the slope is the other consideration. It could be stretched out all the way to the original Cambridge Street. The other consideration is thinking of a future with some buildings, the underground parking would be above current grade but below future grade, and the amount of parking

storage that could bring forward. We won't get into that in super detail but we will be trying to approximate that so we can think of it at a district perspective.

As you flatten that slope it might have additional benefits for additional parking storage, north towards Cambridge Street. That's something we're looking at as an overall trade-off. Natural grade today is not exactly at 0 either so thinking about what it means to build up from that.

The other major consideration from a parcel to parcel standpoint is access to the parcels and the blocks. The signal lines and transition points from highway ramp to city block; that variation based on the 3K schemes under consideration are there. The 3k variations also apply to the throat considerations. Thinking about that signalized intersection south and the potential for air rights towards West Station.

If you apply that to the blocks themselves, you have flexibility and accessibility. You have the potential for curb cuts where they would fit with other considerations. Where it could potentially be difficult is along that demarcation line; it wouldn't be impossible but there would maybe be more considerations for access and how the turn lanes are associated with the highway and things of that nature. But then as you move towards the turnpike where those red lines are, there will be limitations on the ability to get into those parcels and blocks from those locations. As you move across the turnpike towards West Station you have similar hard lines potentially associated with highway access in those locations.

A few conclusions: Cambridge Street South wants to continue migrating as close to the highway as it can, which would help to minimize the amount of red that we were showing. Another consideration is that a connection potentially from Cambridge Street towards West Station could be independent of that highway ramp system which would allow for better access into potential air rights areas. That would allow for an additional way to crack open areas shown in red, focused around the highway. Potentially, there are similar access limitations for those that abut Soldier's Field Road so there might be consideration and benefit for some sort of frontage road for better circulation and development blocks along the river.

We tried to think through if, as in 3K-2 with one-way pairs of Cambridge Street and Cambridge Street South flowing to and from the river what that would mean, the interstitial streets being 2-way. What we think happens is basically that those troubled blocks become even a little more troubled for access. If you drive past as a user, what do you have to do to get back to it. For those two blocks, the penalty for driving past your turn is pretty severe. It really does hinder those two troubled areas.

In terms of integration for West Station, the same demarcations, one observation is that West Station is not positioned as the center of this district from a number of infrastructure reasons. You have to do some things to pull the urban design and place-making buildings across towards it. There's about an 800 foot length between West Station and that first demarcation of access that I just talked through. These are the areas of potential air rights that can be bridged to close that gap between the terra firma district and West Station to make it more integrated from a development perspective. From an access standpoint, we're focused on Cambridge Street South which is furthest from West Station and the

access bus way to West Station itself. That underlies the importance of the connection to this large area. We're thinking about ways to help West Station become less of an island. It's surrounded by air rights, and we want to make sure those air rights are at least accessible from the highway and streets.

Now thinking about development shaping the environment: we've been looking at street sections independent of built environment vertically. We've drawn the same illustrations as last time; 200 foot sections, a typical section of street within 3K-4. We're not going off script or making judgments. We're looking at a ratio of the enclosure of space. You know when a street feels right. The minimal threshold is a 1:3 ratio where the building is adequately enclosing the space. If you're below that it falls apart. But ideally it wants to be more like a 1:2. Every two lengths of street you have one height of buildings. Cambridge Street from building front to building front is 123 feet so you're talking about a building height of 61 feet. The retail ground floor would be taller.

Q: TR: That's the design in 3K-4? This is not something you're recommending, it's in the current 3K-4?

A: SC: We're trying to make a general observation. This has traditionally been the minimum. It starts to feel like a good place; 5 stories. It's used as an example to get to this scale where you feel comfortable.

C: JR: Cambridge Street currently has a lot of 2 or 3 story buildings on the north side that are residential that I assume won't be torn down…

C: JF: That in combination with the other side of the street which is undefined from a vertical perspective contributes to the feel of the street which currently is not very enclosed.

C: AO: I know you're just taking this off 3K-4. This is going to be one of the widest streets? Do we need all that space? We're not going to have 6 stories all the way down so can we make the street narrower, 100 feet total width? We see what happens in the Seaport where it's not build out but even if it was, the buildings can be as tall as they want, it's still going to be an inhospitable width. Especially if you have trouble crossing. I know you're going off the baseline but the baseline is really wide.

C: RP: So I understand the 1:2 ratio thing; right now there's residential; if Cambridge Street and Cambridge Street South became a one way pair where you need less street width maybe that would get it down to the level that the residential on one side of the street is now. I know that was mentioned by Galen last meeting as something worth exploring. That would be one way to get this down to the ratio we want. I don't want to rush Harvard's plan, but we're going to have to live with this street without anything for a while and that's going to be uninviting until it gets built.

C: FS: I like this discussion. As to the centrality of West Station, the graphics make it look like the edge. The first comment from the public was we want West Station and North Allston to be connected to South Station as one community, if you draw the map to show Cambridge Street to Commonwealth Avenue, then West Station is very central.

If you think of the pace development is likely to happen, to the north of current rail line, there's going to be a lot of construction for a long time. This is a big deal to construct. To the south, they are lucky that the streets are already defined and they're not a zillion feet wide. That land is going to be developable at higher density much earlier than what can happen on north side. I think that's mostly a good thing. West Station will get population with a lot of people. There are a lot of buildings on the south side that are going to get developed at some point.

C: Carol Ridge-Martinez (CRM): And there's already a lot of development happening.

C: FS: I think it's more positive than negative. I think the West Station area will get populated by people, even when north side is still dominated by construction. Streets are going to be a little unpleasant but it won't feel like Siberia because a lot of population will be coming from the south side.

C: AO: Currently Cambridge Street, sidewalk to sidewalk is 96 feet. This will be adding 27 feet? That's a lot.

C: JF: We've walked through this same logic for each street so maybe I'll walk through that. We've tried to find similar analogies around town. This is 123 feet with 61 foot height of Cambridge Street; think the back side of Beacon Hill by MGH. 5 stories, although it varies a little, 125 feet from building to building generally.

C: CRM: It does have those nice medians.

C: AO: Nicole freedman said if they did it again they would have better bicycle facilities.

Q: GM: You happen to know the slope of Cambridge Street as it goes towards Seattle, do you?

C: JF: It's about 3.5.

C: GM: I think that's a good target.

C: AO: I think that's only 100 feet wide, building to building. I'm looking at Google.

C: JF: We'll check it.

Next is Cambridge Street South in isolation- 108 feet sidewalk to sidewalk. Thinking again about that ratio, it's about 3 stories minimum to get a sense of enclosure, ideally up to 4 or 5 stories.

Q: CRM: When does it get too high? It could start feeling like tunnels.

A: SC: This isn't science, its sense of place. Rule of thumb is 1:2 or 2:1. This would be the bottom end. Even you have two times the width of the street; there are a lot of great places in the world. Beyond that, it's a canyon. If it's lower though, it feels dispersed. Successful design standards use setbacks for that 1:2 ratio. The buildings start to step back to stay comfortable in that range.

C: JF: That's how we've depicted some of these diagrams. It could go up higher.

C: CRM: After a while even the stepping doesn't work.

C: SC: 1:2 and 2:1.

C: JF: Trying to look around for other similarities: 108 foot width, 54 foot height- Brighton Street in Allston, 4 stories in height. That's about the dimensions that we're talking about.

West Street Connector, the first connector from neighborhood to river, is 100 foot overall, building up you'd want a minimum of 30-50 feet to get to the comfortable level.

This is an intersecting example: Harrison Avenue in Chinatown, 100 foot wide street, building to building, but some buildings just go up and up. That's when it starts to feel like a canyon.

Q: John Shields (SJ): I do have a question; it seems to me like there's too much emphasis on this width-height ratio. When I walk some of the streets you mentioned, I'm glad to get off of them. It has more to do with width and street level activity than height. Are there trees? That's better. I wonder if the analysis is dealing with the wrong information.

A: SC: I don't think it's wrong but it's one aspect of it. It's one notion of understanding the relationship of streets. This is not how to make the decision but starting to look at development at the block level.

C: TR: I think you're pointing out that landscaping and what's on the street make a big difference.

Q: CRM: What's on the first floor? No parking on that first floor. That's my vote.

A: SC: That's a conversation. People have been saying that where there is on street parking it separates you from traffic but it can reach a point of adding too much width.

C: JF: Of those fundamental urban design elements that are designing buildings, this is the one we can focus on the most. We can't say these are the uses, etc.; it's more about establishing the fundamental dimensions.

Q: JS: Is the question still number of lanes and width?

A: SC: We want to find the answer. We want to find the minimal number of lanes. We're trying to narrow as best we can for a better district building strategy. We're pushing that way.

C: Bruce Houghton (BH): My thought relative to that is there has to be some consideration to which streets and what buildings you'll accommodate around it. Particularly on Cambridge Street where I see the highest potential for development, the community, Harvard and the BRA coming to some consensus about where housing and where people can be rather than an office development, that would most

likely be along Cambridge Street which would actually balance Cambridge Street against the residential purposes that are already there.

If there are residences on both sides of the street, one would assume that it's also desirable to mix in retail. We want it to be some place that people want to go, not just a big office park. Housing, mixed retail, and those kinds of things; I'm not saying what kind of retail, you certainly don't want that retail to be consumed with parking that is currently that is often along Western Ave; essentially a great big parking lot set off from the street.

And think about what kind of things you need for that retail to be successful. It needs to be an area where you can come and stop. If you design something where people zoom through and there's no place to stop, the retail won't exist. And likely no one wants to live where windows on the first floor look out at parking. I don't know how you accommodate that but you also want to think about not just the street but what the elements are and what we hope will exist or what the zoning is on those buildings so you back up with a certain amount of setback. But even then, you have to talk about whether you want retail to exist on Cambridge Street and how does it exist? How do people get there? It won't just be people who live there; it will be people who are driving through, stopping, maybe there are restaurants. I'm saying that the type of buildings you want to exist should be taken into consideration relative to what kind of street you're building and not just as if they are only for cars. They're for the people and the purposes on either side.

C: MK: People are going to be darting across the street. You're going to have to get some traffic slowing.

C: JR: There's also the also question of for everything except the existing north side of Cambridge Street it might be long time until anything is built. So on street parking might be empty for a long time. Developers, when they come, can move the curb back.

C: SC: That's an important point; we can plan to adjust as we move along. We already know we have a complicated place. It's dangerous to look at one section. Maybe it varies along the way for building use, type, footprints; we're not looking at this as a monotone. We can't extrude a cross section and assume it's going to be the same the whole way. The ratio is too simple of a notion.

C: JF: Let me wrap up. Seattle Street Connector; we talked about Mass Ave. and Cambridge last meeting so it's interesting to bring it up as an example. This is comparable to that Seattle Connector. Stadium Way Connector is 100 feet, 4 stories or so. Mass Ave. at Central Square, about 100 feet with some 4 stories- there's a lot of variation and lastly, East Drive connector, 120 feet, about a 5 story building goal. Columbia Road is 115ft and has some frontages of 4 or 5 stories.

The last thing we want to talk about it about is typologies and thinking about how we can work with them to ground and frame the work we're doing in the next step and development scenarios. This is to think about district form and built form typology. Hopefully these diagrams can be understood. We're trying to think about the district as an overall shape and how that relates to surrounding context. We've thought through a collection of meaningful types: consistent applications of the DC approach

(nothing taller than the Washington Monument); concentration of density and form at a certain plaza or location; a tiered approach- could be certain tiering along the Charles River, where it's higher at the River and lower as you go away; a contextual approach, which matches the existing outer boundary and maybe building up to center; or finally a transportation oriented development (TOD) approach with density at the transit stop- that's a model we all know pretty well.

Here we're thinking abstractly. We're not thinking of a single massive landform building across the whole district. But if you have a waterbed and sit on one end and the other goes up. So we can think of a height and apply it to the whole district. That could be applied with an open space plan or at the center of the district. It could be that the riverfront has built form that is raised and then steps back towards the neighborhoods or the opposite, stepping down as you get to river. We could build up a little more context sensitive approach matching the outside edges and building up matching, for instance, BU. Focus on a spine of infrastructure and TOD; building up density reflecting transit and the structural orientation of district.

We want to hear your reactions to these typologies. We now have 3 sets of typologies to synthesize. Building off of the conversations we've had, we can build off the base line ideas that we've heard: an improved waterfront park and how big can that be; a realignment of Soldier's Field Road; direct bicycle connection to the Charles River; north-south bus connection maybe on Malvern; the reduction of street widths; resiliency and sustainability as a way to maybe derive some of these locations. Those are the baseline considerations that would be integrated in some fashion.

So we can try to align with other typologies. For example, combine a consistent street grid with a linear park and maybe a tiered approach for the build form. Or a hierarchical street grid, build in a focal open space, and look at overall contextual form.

We'll be using these to identify ways that the district might be imagined in the future; we know what's being precluded or enhanced by current design. We want to make sure those explorations resonate with the conversations we've been having here. I know we've head the typologies are a little abstract but we're trying to apply them.

Comments about previous collection or where we're headed?

C: JG: This is fascinating; there are many potential outcomes. If you were for instance to take the high rises and put them by the water's edge- I'm not really suggesting that, but it's interesting- you would have side streets to go with that; you'll show us the nuances where if you do this with the development, it pushes you to do something else with the network and open spaces?

C: SC: Exactly. You start pushing things around you find that interstitial streets start to have really different roles and scales. The whole notion of what kind of open space we're going to have. Rittenhouse Square, in Philadelphia, is a wonderful open space. It has tall buildings that step down again. The ability to have blocks that make sense and access to the development from the highway- you find some

combinations don't work. Maybe you don't want that kind of combination so it's ok, but be aware. It can evolve fruitfully or we're going to get caught in a corner. You can rearrange the pieces.

Q: CRM: Can you give an example in Boston of being caught in a corner? I'm having trouble.

C: SC: In a way, the Back Bay is really probably a good example because of the historic buildings, scale and the alleyways that are there. Look at Boylston Street- only on the outside of the Back Bay are tall buildings generated. They put together a whole block- wiped out the alleyway to get that next step up. That turned out to be reasonable but it's limited. The taller buildings are where the pattern breaks. It's not necessarily a bad corner but some patterns are more adaptable than others. We want to look far enough into the future.

C: David Loutzenheiser (DL): There are a number of different housing types in the Back Bay. At Fenway, they're all monolithic buildings on new parcels. I want to frame that because it's where it seems we're going.

C: SC: If we have a range of parcel size then we'd think there would be a range of building size. It's setting up the board.

C: CRM: That's something I think is important. Make sure that however we design this we don't end up in corners we regret around the River. When I look at concentrating heights, I don't know the answer. Tier towards or away from the river? It might make some sense but I want to make sure that whatever we develop for the street grids, we don't cut off public access to the river. That's a constant theme. We don't want it to turn into a place that we don't have access to the River . It's Harvard land, but we should make sure that we can get through it somehow.

Q: TR: Visual and physical access to river?

A: CRM: Yes.

C: JR: Having spaces between towers, a view down the street, and also some of these secondary pedestrian ways; the Harvard Business School campus is impenetrable from a neighborhood perspective. There are no straight ways to walk. Having- even not a street but a walkway- with a logical way to access the River.

C: CRM: And public. So people who live there later don't think that they own it. Much of what's happened at Harvard- we want to make sure it remains as access to all of us.

C: Margaret Van Deusen (MVD): The view from the river, parkway views as well, what happens along the edges there, all have a tremendous impact. Obviously the BU towers have had an immense impact.

C: CRM: Or if you're in a kayak.

C: FS: Thinking about how does this grow and what other corners do you not want to get stuck in, we should recognize that some things are not decided at the front end. Other things can adapt. To give a few examples: most of the one way streets in the city use to be two way and as things changed, particularly on a commercial street, over time, you can start with streets of reasonable scale two way and later on recover by becoming one-way. They're resilient.

In the Back Bay, Newbury and Marlborough I'm sure use to be two-way. But Commonwealth Avenue was always a two-way boulevard. There are places you kind of need a Commonwealth Avenue statement, but other places are just streets that can become one-way. I think the Prudential Center was a success economically but from an urban design standpoint it was horrible, almost hidden behind a moat for decades. We lived through a long period of horror. With the right planning, we should have been able to get economic stimulus with something more integrated to Back Bay. To make these Back Bay observations, that's a good place to look.

Bruce mentioned having some great public space next to west station. That's in interesting idea, rather than having a green square in the middle; it might work. How the open space relates to the transit is a good question.

The other thing is if we don't build the decks at the front end you're going to be looking at a hazard for the next 50 years. That's very difficult to build later. Only now that the land use is high enough, maybe Mass Ave. is going to plug that whole. Figuring out how to get decks built to cover noise and protect the traveling public. We could build open space over decks to implement the idea that open space next to transit is appropriate but could also be a device that covers and protects adjacent land parcels from noise and the intrusion of an open pit. That could be good for decades when things around being built there yet. I don't think this is like the Innovation District after the Big Dig. I think we need a careful strategy to avoid big canyons.

C: TR: Thanks Fred.

C: Harris Band (HB): It will be many decades before this will be built out. Infrastructure will be built in a relatively short time. It's great to think about what development patterns will be optimal, but transportation is so constrained that development patterns will be a product of that network rather than coming up with utopian development pattern. There are different priority levels of those categories. The streets are going to define the nature of the place.

C: SC: I'm fascinated by early photos of the Back Bay. The grid goes in and you can guess what the pattern is going to be.

C: HB: But that's so regular. It was a blank slate. Our transportation challenges for the streets are very idiosyncratic. Primordial definer of character is the street network.

C: TR: If you don't give some thought to how it will get built out in the long term, you may be building streets that are scaled inappropriately

C: HB: I'm not arguing that at all. I think we have to figure out a street and open space system and see what that means in terms of development. I don't think it's useful to say what I think development should look like.

Q: JS: That gets back to street width. Mike maybe this is for you. You're building streets essentially that allow people to get off the Mass Pike conveniently. That's the baseline for first 20 years?

A: Michael O'Dowd (MOD): Yes, but also modeling to reflect what the development potential is for the district as well as outside of this district.

Q: JS: Is it MassDOT's intention to lay all those streets out?

A: MOD: 3K-3 and 3K-4 are reflective of what DOT would build to accommodate development in and beyond the district. It is a regional interchange. It has regional purposes, but we are still trying to integrate this into a proposed district which may come on line in 20 years or several years after implementation but also within the neighborhood and community.

C: JS: But lanes are going to dictate what can be built.

C: MOD: What we've been trying to do is be consistent with how the property owner has assumed development for this area and the type of uses they anticipate. We're trying to be flexible with layout to accommodate that. It provides a fair amount of flexibility for future development of the existing property owner. If you look at what Steve and Josh have laid out, you're probably in the 4 million square feet range.

A: JF: Yes, that's consistent with diagrams we have.

C: MOD: Looking at what Josh and the Cecil Group have laid out, what we've laid out accommodates that as well as regional traffic in and without the district.

C: JS: That explains the lanes.

Q: BH: I have a technical question. We're talking about aspirations. You have property that is private ownership. Right now with how Allston is being developed, it's not this way at all. It's building by building. I sense there's some concern that there's no cohesive plan. Is there a vision for Allston? This is Allston but also not. It's going to change and define Allston. Are we talking about fairy land? Does the BRA have an expectation and when does it occur, that the BRA says regardless of private ownership, we're going to put zoning on the property to specify use, open space, all the things we're talking about? There's an interim plan- it's nice and dusty.

Q: TR: What is that?

A: BH: The framework. Is the framework the guiding plan? I'm not sure what its long term value was. It seems more building by building. Even this building was a separate element; it worked out well, but is

that how this project is going to go? How is City of Boston going to integrate and zone this area and when do they do that to meet the expectations of the community? Or is this a plan on a shelf that 20 years from now people will pull out and go through it all again. Will BRA do something much sooner to say this has some teeth for how this area is going to be developed? Regardless of who owns it and what those pieces are there will be a long term guiding housing and open space and transportation, etc. how is it delivered?

A: TR: I don't want to answer without a conversation with Harvard.

Q: BH: Does City of Boston have authority to place expectations of zoning on pieces of property for any private land owner to limit height, setbacks. Are you going to do that based on these discussions?

A: TR: That is not a part of this process.

Q: BH: So you will take these thoughts and go back to Harvard?

A: TR: what we're producing here is not a plan. It is a planning study to identify good planning goals for this district related to transportation, mobility, open space, and place-making that should be designed into the infrastructure and not precluded. This is not a plan. That we might reach a point to work with Harvard to make a more concrete plan for the future is possible.

Q: BH: So the expectation of Boston is to go only as far as the streets? And everything in-between will be done later and hopefully some consideration of these discussions will be had.

A: TR: we're talking about West Station, the People's Pike; the multimodal infrastructure is the goal of the project. What other elements of the project should we be thinking about?

C: NNG: Boston is now the 6th city in the world to attract foreign capital. This area could rapidly develop. It's right near all the brain power. What Fred said about the deck, I support that. It would be good to get that in first but development might come quickly

C: FS: In the South Cove area, the orange line station was built and not used at all for 15 to 20 years. It was a very gutsy move. Without that, the Southwest Corridor might never have happened. That decision was important, analogous to West Station. It may not be booming when it opens but it will be essential. The other thing that happened at South Cove was the affordable housing built as part of that plan. There was a lot of fighting between Chinatown, Tufts Medical and the BRA but its close enough for government work. Good infrastructure decisions, better street grid. It's not as beautiful as Back Bay, but a lot of important things were built. Hospital was able to grow and serve the community; it dealt with all these same problems of investing now for payoff 15 to 20 years later. I don't think people understand how important it was to have that housing built when it was.

C: TR: We're at 7 and it's time to wrap up. Comments?

C: PM: Even though the City is not looking to make a master plan, we've been having conversations about what the vision is, and we're trying to get to a framework for sensible infrastructure that can withstand what is coming to this area in the coming years. From the perspective of how this area might come up, we can look at Kendall Square as a not-so-historical framework. There were a lot of missed opportunities for open space. There are vestiges of open space. The community is fighting over their use. If the conversations about resiliency and streetscape had happened like we're having now, Kendall may have been different. A framework conversation about the need to keep a resilient, flexible network needs to be at the forefront. We need to get that infrastructure right.

C: GM: I want to jump back to Jess's comment that it would be great to have pathway between buildings. I grew up in Reston out of DC, and they laid out a pathway network along with streets. There was a plan for that along with streets. This is a much smaller parcel. I know we're talking about cycling tracks; we don't really know how effective they're going to be. We know how effective shared use paths are though. If you doing a streetscape, also throw in a pathway network. We've never actually seen what a People's Pike might actually look like. Where is it going to go? I encourage you to think of not just one People's Pike but many.

C: JR: To use the Back Bay example, if alleys were lovely bicycle and pedestrian streets or corridors.

Q: TR: Would others like to see that as well?[2]

C: GM: It doesn't have to be just one pathway.

My second point is to think about what Harris was saying about how streets dictate development and Bruce about the teeth of BRA…we're trying to build as few roads as possible; two major arterials and a couple of cut through to get to the train station. I see that as a need for development opportunity but the flip side is that if we leave large parcels, we're encouraging maximum development in those parcels, like the Seaport where large collector roads and giant boxes filled with whatever zoning allows. It could go that way if BRA doesn't have a plan in place to prevent it.

C: TR: Given the time constraints of planning, the thing we could do best was this study. That doesn't mean that in the near future we might not work with Harvard to make a plan for this area. We've done that before.

C: GM: I'm not trying to say that the BRA won't be there in the future.

C: JR: I don't think we're disputing the need for an infrastructure plan. I think people are saying this area needs to be next on the list to set the table for future development.

C: GM: But as we talk about street widths, if we maximize parcel space, we run the risk of boxes.

[2] There was general agreement with people nodding or saying "yes."

C: Gerald Autler: we're trying to lay down solid principles for guiding development. One principle can be breaking down block size so that we avoid that. I hear you loud and clear, as in other Allston meetings, a desire for planning meetings. This administration is very pro planning and recognizes the value. We don't have the resources to do all the planning people want to see around the City but there's recognition that Allston, even without I-90, is a little father out than some other places and attention is needed.

C: CRM: That's good. We have to start thinking about it more comprehensively.

C: GA: I don't know if it will be in the next round but…

Q: JR: How can you subdivide some of these superblocks? If it's 300 feet long, is the only way to chop it up to have two major office buildings? How much flexibility within the parcel do you have? I think Cambridge Street South did some of that. Think through that sufficiently. Could be something we're precluding if interstitial streets are too close together?

C: CRM: The weird places that would be difficult to access need to be looked at carefully. Between that and superblocks.

Q: DL: What's the process for nailing down the open space framework before MassDOT submits?

Q: TR: Nailing down?

A: DL: Some sort of schematic that says we want access to the River, xyz...some level of resolution.

A: TR: I'm going to take a stab. We want to have a couple of alternative schemes for open space that this plan would not preclude. Those would be the starting point for a master plan. The idea is to have compelling options that the roadway system does not preclude.

C: SC: When we try and figure out what to do, we go back to driving elements, instructions. We don't know exactly what it's going to be, but these are rules, if you will, that the framework will guide these characteristics. This phase of the infrastructure will lead to those outcomes. We'll try and come up with specific examples. We're beginning to merge into the next conversation. The framework of principles allows you to see if they're being done. Some of this is creating flexibility but some of it's not creating corners we can't get out of.

C: BH: I'd like the BRA to take a more aggressive stance. The natural tendency with big open development areas with supreme access to the turnpike and an institutional owner is a development park. It's going to biotech- that's not wrong or bad, but if you're laying out something without strong concepts for open space, and mixed use… It could turn out to be Post Office Square downtown unless the community is actively involved fighting otherwise. I'd love to hear BRA say mixed use within this area.

C: TR: You're talking about a master plan. We hear you. You want planning. We hear you. Harvard will not be building out this area without a very thorough master plan. Hopefully that will happen sooner rather than later.

Q: Tony D'Isidoro (TD): What about the vacuum during the interim?

A: TR: We hear you.

Q: TD: I know. But what do we do in that vacuum in areas that could define future of neighborhood?

A: TR: Many neighborhoods are going through the same thing. We have finite resources but we really do hear you.

C: HB: It's important to understand what we're doing here. The BRA is here to test infrastructure planning in a way that optimizes leaving as many opportunities open as possible. We want to make sure streets allow for the correct subdivisions but you don't know what they're going to be. This particular project is focused on the turnpike. We need to make sure that infrastructure is optimal. The master plan is a multi, multi-year process with principles. It's a lot of time and a lot of process and the economy shifts 6 times throughout the process. From Harvard, we share these goals but we're not there yet.

C: GA: Two meetings: February 23rd and March 23rd. February 23rd at Jackson Mann; March 23rd back here.

C: NCC: I will send all of you an email.

C: JR: February 23rd is the North Main Street meeting…some of us are basically required to be there.

C: TR: Ok, that will have to change.

Next Steps

The next task force meeting is being rescheduled from February 23rd to accommodate task force members unable to attend the scheduled date. The following meeting will be held on March 23rd at the Fiorentino Community Center located at 123 Antwerp Street, Allston. The March 23rd session will conclude the BRA place-making effort with a synthesis of the guiding framework typologies and themes to come out of the previous open space, mobility, and development potential conversation.

All task force sessions are open to the public.

Appendix 1: Meeting Attendees

First Name	Last Name	Affiliation
Gerald	Autler	Boston Redevelopment Authority
Harris	Band	Harvard University
Joseph	Beggan	Harvard University
Nathanial	Cabral-Curtis	Howard Stein Hudson
Steve	Cecil	The Cecil Group
Deneen	Crosby	CSS
Tony	D'Isidoro	Allston Civic Association
Josh	Fiela	The Cecil Group
Elizabeth	Flanagan	Howard Stein Hudson
James	Gillooly	Boston Transportation Department
Karl	Haglund	DCR
Bruce	Houghton	Houghton Chemical
Ed	Ionatta	Tetra Tech
Marc	Kadish	Allston Board of Trade
Jim	Keller	Tetra Tech
Bob	LaTremouille	Friends of the White Geese
Elizabeth	Leary	Boston University
David	Loutzenheiser	MAPC
Amy	Mahler	Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services
Clancy	Main	Office of City Councilor Ciommo
Pallavi	Mande	Charles River Watershed Association
Galen	Mook	Allston Resident
Michael	O'Dowd	MassDOT
Ari	Ofsevit	LivableStreets Alliance
Etty	Padmodipoetro	Urban Ideas Lab
Richard	Parr	Allston Resident
Tad	Read	Boston Redevelopment Authority
Carol	Ridge-Martinez	Allston/Brighton CDC
Jessica	Robertson	Allston Resident
John	Shields	Charles River Alliance
Skip	Smallridge	CSS
Margaret	Van Deusen	Charles River Watershed Association
Emma	Walters	Allston Village Main Streets
Jill	Zick	BRA