MEMORANDUM |

To:	Michael O'Dowd Project Manager	Date:	October 19, 2015
From:	Nick Gross Howard Stein Hudson	HSH Project No.:	2013061.14
Subject:	MassDOT Highway Division Allston I-90 Interchange Improvement Project Task Force Meeting #14 Meeting Notes of October 15, 2015		

Overview

On October 15th, 2015 members of the Allston I-90 Interchange Improvement Project team and MassDOT staff associated with the job held the 14th task force meeting. Generally speaking, the task force membership is reflective of the initial task force with the addition of representatives from the Charles River Watershed Association as well as newly seated members in replacement for previously seated organizations.[1] The task force is composed of local residents, business owners, transportation, and green space advocates, as well as representatives of local, state, and federal governments. The purpose of the task force is, through the application of its members' in-depth knowledge, to assist and advise MassDOT in determining a single preferred alternative to be selected by the Secretary of Transportation for documentation in a joint Environmental Assessment and Environmental Impact Report (EIR) document.

In contrast to the previous task force meetings which have typically included a presentation and a full group discussion, the meeting summarized herein was done in a work shop format with four breakout tables allowing more detailed interactions between taskforce and consultant team members. The three designs being evaluated, Allston Turnpike At-Grade – advanced by Ari Ofsevit, I-90 Grounding Feasibility Study – advanced by A Better City, and MassDOT Option 3K were presented at each table with a fourth table focused on West Station and the rail components. Each table had an assigned recording secretary who documented the conversations of each group. At the end of the meeting, each recorder reported on their notes and highlighted the thoughts provided of each group.

In summary, the highlighted opportunities for West Station and the rail components included storm water and pollution measures to be taken as well as allowing a no-pay crossing at West Station for pedestrians and bicyclist to cross the rail yard. It should be noted that the height of the proposed station generally remains the same regardless of the station alternative. The key characteristic swapping East Drive and

[1] A listing of task force membership can be found at: http://www.massdot.state.ma.us/highway/HighlightedProjects/AllstonI90InterchangeImprovementProject/TaskForceMembers.aspx

Stadium Way on the MassDOT 3K alternative was well received. The top feature considered with this design was better pedestrian and bicycle connections provided with 3K-3 when Cambridge Street South is shown further south, closer to the Turnpike. The top features of the Allston Turnpike At-Grade alternative proposed a viaduct designated for pedestrians and bicycles as part of the Grand Junction viaduct. It is generally considered that this alternative would allow for lower elevations, flatter grades, and better increase the potential for future development. The key takeaways for the I-90 Grounding Feasibility Study included a clearer shared-use path, lower elevations, cost savings, and significant permitting challenges. It was noted that a construction staging plan and cost saving estimates would be provided at the taskforce's December meeting.

Agenda

I. Opening Remarks
   a. Discussion of Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA) process
II. Break-out Sessions
   a. MassDOT Concepts
   b. Turnpike Under – Ari Ofsevit
   c. I-90 Grounding Feasibility Study – A Better City (ABC)
   d. Rail and Transit
III. Reporting Out from Break-out Sessions

Detailed Meeting Minutes[2]

C: Ed Ionata (EI): Welcome everyone to the Allston I-90 Interchange Improvement Project workshop. Tonight we are going to breakout into four different groups. Your agenda should have a number on it which represents the table you will start at. Each table has a different alternative. We are going to rotate tables every 25 minutes so that everyone will have a chance to see each alternative. At each table there will be a recorder who has volunteered to stay at their individual table all night. Nate, can you remind us who the recorders are?

C: Nathaniel Cabral-Curtis (NCC): At the MassDOT table we will have Paul Nelson. At the ABC table we will have Tony D'Isidoro. At the Turnpike Under alternative we will have Rich Parr, and I will be at the rail and transit table in the next room.

C: EI: Most people will rotate but some people may be wedded to a specific alternative and it is okay to stay at a table. At the end, each recorder will give a brief report on the outcomes discussed. We want to hear what you think the advantages and challenges are. The MassDOT alternative is the only one

[2] 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.

the task force hasn't seen in a detailed presentation. The MassDOT alternative is called 3K. It is a variation on the 3J concept. That variation is a result of an idea brought up by the task force. It also surfaced during the Boston Society of Architects (BSA) charrette. The Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) Secretary scoped us to study the idea of flipping the eastbound ramp connection from East Drive to Stadium Way. This flip reduces the height of the overpass and looks to be more accommodating for pedestrians and bicycles.

C: Michael O'Dowd (MOD): Good evening everyone and thank you all for coming out. I want everyone to have an opportunity to voice their opinion on the concepts that have been developed. We want to know what you like and what you don't like. You've seen presentations on the two at-grade concepts. Please familiarize yourself with the work the project team has done on the 3K concept. After each group has had a chance to sit and review each concept we will have time for the recorders to report out. We want to take the information that we receive tonight to HNTB and let them evaluate the concepts further with your thoughts in mind. For those people who have been quiet in the past, please speak up. Is Tad Read here with us tonight?

C: Prataap Patrose (PP): He is not here yet. I am happy to talk about the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA) process. My name is Prataap Patrose and I am Deputy Director for Urban Design with the BRA. The BRA has gone through the necessary request for proposal (RFP) process and selected the consultant, The Cecil Group. They will be coming on board and attending the next task force session to begin engaging with you. We will host another meeting in December to talk about place-making.

C: MOD: Thank you Prataap. I saw some members from The Cecil Group here tonight. If anyone has any questions, please feel free to ask them. Since we last met, we sat down with Ari and ABC to discuss their concepts further. HNTB has tried to apply as much engineering to the at-grade concepts based on the information we have. HNTB was able to put a drawing together that reflect the ideas from Ari and ABC's thinking. On October 29, two weeks from today, I would like to invite you all to participate in the MassDOT workshop from 1:00PM to 4:00PM at 10 Park Plaza in conference room #1 on the second floor. It will be a similar type forum to what we are doing tonight. On October 29, HNTB will have even more information to share with you such as the strengths and weaknesses of each of the presented concepts.

C: EI: Thank you Mike. I would like to add that task force members have priority when we breakout into the groups. Members of the public are welcome to observe. We have some floating resources around the room such as Jim Cerbone from MassDOT environmental and Stacy Donahoe from MassDOT historic resources. If you have a question, please feel free to ask them as well. Let's get started.

RAIL AND TRAIL WEST STATION

Key characteristics:

- Full build West Station vs. low cost West Station build comparison. Generally speaking, most group members strongly supported the idea of building West Station fully as encouraging transit use.

Opportunities:

- Storm water and pollution control measures
- Allow no-pay crossing of West Station
- Increase visibility of access on south side
- Walls and joint rail replacement with welded rail and ballast mats to help reduce noise of the rail yard.
- Ability to phase full build

Challenges:

- Low cost means no bus layover and mixing at curbs
- Positioning of noise walls
- Cost of full build alternative
- Loss of public space with pre-pay crossing
- Tight ramps into station from south side
- Increase cost due to emergency access point on south side
- Noise, vibration, and air issues for Allston neighborhood
- Minimum build requires 2nd round of construction
- Noise barriers for Pratt Street

Top Features:

- 18'6" over top of rail at most
- 3K option does away with three-level station
- Noise cancellation in the rail yard
- West to east delivery to Houghton Chemical
- Height of station the same regardless of option. West Station's height is fixed due to trains and cannot be made lower, even if the entire project is on the ground. As such, the station will always have streets ramping up to connect it to the rest of its surroundings.

Suggestion & Comments

- Get noise wall closer to road and further from homes

- Contain noise on highway (double wall echo chamber)
- Potential noise walls to the north
- More width and focus on treatments for bicycle ramps
- Sidewalk widths must be volumetrically designed
- Can station be lowered? No, it is fixed due to train height.
- Take 76 Ashford Street property for better ramp on Malvern Street.
- Connect Malvern and Babcock Street with real street
- Look at Porter Station as preferred design for West Station (built into the landscape)
- Deck over entire rail yard for noise mitigation (specifically space between bus loop)
- Don't preclude DMU services

MassDOT Option 3K

Key characteristics:

- Swapping of East Drive and Stadium Way Connector

Opportunities:

- Take riverfront from Magazine Beach to widen the throat area (permitting through Army Corps of Engineers is a challenge)
- Install siphons to help the gravity-fed utilities and work with a lower roadway elevation
- Wider shared-use path in the throat area
- Address use of Lincoln Street as a ramp to the Turnpike
- Connection to Malvern Street could help limit traffic to only commercial
- Connections to Commonwealth Avenue or other connections to the highway to reduce cut-through traffic
- Flyover from Walter Brown (Babcock Street) to Soldiers Field Road (SFR), and interchange

Challenges:

- Potential use of Seattle Street as cut-through
- Crosswalks are very long; cross-section for roads lacks creativity and does not address City outlook on future travel patterns (Less VMT, less car ownership)
- Signals along Cambridge Street south could delay bicycles
- Residential streets north of the interchange could become Linden Street situations with significant cut-through traffic
- Connections along Cambridge Street South still steep for cyclist
- Underground culvert for Salt Creek
- Roadway circulation needs should not trump land use potential
- Induce Seattle Street cut-through with connection across Cambridge Street
- 4' taking of Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) property

Top Features:

- Better pedestrian and bicycle connections provided with 3K-3 (Cambridge Street South)

Suggestions & Comments:

- Modern roundabouts for intersections
- Develop more detail on pedestrian and bicycle accommodations
- Decking over bus-loop area with landscaped plaza
- Model station design based on Back Bay Station or Porter Station (integrated into landscape)

Allston Turnpike At-Grade

Advanced by Ari Ofsevit

Key Characteristics:

- Viaduct for shared-use path (pedestrian & bicycles)
- Lower elevations and flatter street grid
- West Station further west, closer to residences.
- Keeps park land
- Keeps access to Houghton Chemical
- Grand Junction (rail) over Turnpike
- More in tune with urban design
- Easier for future development and street grid
- Shared-use path from BU side to Charles River

Opportunities:

- Connections between BU and Esplanade
- Works better with 3K swap of East Drive and Stadium Way
- Bicycle path lower, headlights from cars improved
- Cut down noise (lower & covered Turnpike)
- Potential for bus lane up along rail on viaduct
- Lower cost
- Better urban design

Challenges:

- Constructability and environmental permitting
- Geometry issues with Grand Junction operating speed. Rail needs to be lowered into Grand Junction
- Cost to be determined
- Desired bicycle connection from Lower Allston
- Utilities

- Access to rail yard
- No north-south vehicular access

Top Features:
- Keeps parkland along Charles River
- Works with current width and footprint
- Cost savings
- Lower and less noise pollution
- Potential for easier permitting
- Depressed viaduct
- Shared-use path
- Lessen impacts on neighborhood

Suggestions & Comments
- Soldiers Field Road (SFR) on viaduct next to rail

I-90 Grounding Feasibility Study

Advanced by A Better City

Key Characteristics:
- More clear shared-use path
- Lower everything (Task Force theme)
- Cost savings
- Reduce environmental offset challenges to the Charles River
- Permitting challenges but should not be a fatal flaw

Opportunities:
- Possibility of land fill in Charles River to widen
- Trying to lower height (cost savings)
- Use space along Charles River
- Access to Beacon Rail Yard
- Harvard elevated
- Air Rights
- Separation of shared-use path

Challenges:
- Houghton Chemical access missing
- Not elevated
- Flat access to Beacon Rail Yard
- Permitting and facilitation with property owners

- Charles River Water Shed (CWRS) concern over damage to Charles River
- Soldiers Field Road (SFR) underground at neck
- Not realistic to take land on south side given BU development
- Linden Street to River connection – too many crosswalks present
- Next iteration will be integrated with 3K3

Top Features:

- Impact on grades – most reduced
- Tunnel access to yard – Houghton spur
- Tunnel option would impact utility infrastructure
- Access to West Station and Turnpike (concern over current pass through problem)

Suggestions & Comments:

- Concern of appropriate paths (bicycles)
- Who controls Charles River?
- MEPA, Soldiers Field Road (SFR) & Charles River historical
- More land on South Side
- Construction staging and cost estimate to come in December
- People's Pike status
- Move Army Corps issue
- Regulatory process should be recognized but not drive design
- Hybrid-melting all 3 plans and taking the best of each
- Executive summary – comparison of concepts would be helpful

Report outs from Recorders

C: Richard Parr (RP): Hi everyone, my name is Rich Parr. I was responsible for recording comments at the Turnpike At-Grade concept advanced by Ari Ofsevit. One of the key components that this concept relied on was shifting West Station further west. In this scenario, the central platform is shared by the Grand Junction and commuter line. People liked that this concept preserved parkland and did not encroach into the Charles River. People also liked having a shared-use path on the rail line which was shown as a continuous connection along the Boston University campus property line. With that said, there were some concerns raised about that connection. One of the things people considered to be an advantage was that this concept worked better with the new MassDOT 3K concept that flipped the East Drive and Stadium Way Connectors. In terms of cost, most people believed that this concept would be more expensive than the ABC concept; the exact price is unclear. People also commented on the idea of covering or decking over portions of the Turnpike to prevent noise pollution. That is a quick summary of what was discussed. Thanks.

C: Anthony D'Isidoro (AD): My name is Tony D'Isidoro and I was responsible for recording comments at the I-90 Grounding Feasibility Study advanced by ABC. One of the nice things about Rich going first is

that there was a lot of overlap in terms of themes. As Glen Berkowitz described to everyone, the key feature of this concept was to lower all of the transportation related items as low as possible. The second theme was related to cost. Everyone believed that this concept would be less expensive than the MassDOT concept. The third item was to reduce the environmental impact.

When we talk about lowering the Turnpike to an at-grade solution we are talking about the elimination of shadowing effects, noise pollution, and grade conflicts. One of the key features that people were excited about was the solution of the Grand Junction overpass. People thought this was a very viable option to resolve the crossing of the Grand Junction issue. In relation to that, this concept brings the Grand Junction line down to grade quickly on the south side. There were some environmental issues that were discussed. One of the bigger challenges facing this concept was that it encroaches onto the Charles River. It was mentioned that the Charles River and Soldiers Field Road (SFR) both have historic significance. Glen feels that if this task force works together and provides a united front, there is precedence to have that sort of permit be evaluated.

There was some discussion on the idea of expanding on the south side and our representative from Boston University said it would be very difficult based their investment made over the past few years. We talked about the Houghton Chemical connection and how it was not shown on this particular concept. We heard that by December, there would be a cost estimate put together for this concept including construction and staging. There was a concern that there was not a clear shared-use path connection from the Linden Street neighborhood to the Charles River. A lot of the discussion focused on the environmental challenges that this concept has. Overall, there seems to be a general consensus to bring as much of the transportation infrastructure as low as possible. Thank you.

C: RP: Tony reminded me of two things that I forgot to mention. The first is the idea to put the bus way on the elevated Grand Junction viaduct over the Turnpike to Cambridge. The second idea is that if you have a Grand Junction viaduct over one barrel of the Turnpike, would it be possible to bring SFR up onto another barrel?

C: AD: Glen just reminded me that ABC is interested in an integrated, hybrid approach. The preferred alternative may end up including pieces from all of the concepts presented tonight. The intent is to integrate all three concepts to create the best concept achievable.

C: Paul Nelson (PN): Hi, my name is Paul Nelson and I was responsible for recording comments for the MassDOT Option. The MassDOT table introduced each group to a new set of designs for the interchange referred to as 3K. The key characteristic of the 3K series is the swap of the East Drive Connector and Stadium Way. Option 3K-4 is different from the other concepts in that it curves Cambridge Street south further towards the south to increase the bicycle and pedestrian connectivity.

One of the opportunities identified was a possible connection across the interchange to Commonwealth Avenue. Another opportunity suggested was a fly over from Soldiers Field Road westbound to the I-90

interchange. In addition to the Commonwealth Avenue connection, it was suggested to look at other locations along the Turnpike and create new connections to relieve some of the traffic that is not destined for the Allston area out of the interchange. There were a lot of questions relating to grades which all seemed to tie back to the elevation of the rail. An additional concern was that the roadway circulation needs should not trump the land use potential for the area; thinking of cross-sections and designs for the intersections that aren't as car dominated.

There was some concern about the possibility of takings with this option. As far as suggestions, Harry brought up the idea of decking over the bus-way loop with a landscaped plaza and modeling the station design on a Back Bay or Porter Square type station. The second group was concerned about the use of Linden Street as a cut-through. There was also a concern voiced that the connection along Cambridge Street South is still steep for cyclist because they would still have to climb up to Stadium Way. In thinking about underground utilities, the idea of siphons was suggested. There was a suggestion for a wider shared-use path in the throat area. There was also a concern that the addition of signals along Cambridge Street and Cambridge Street South would delay bicycle times.

Someone brought up the idea to take land from Magazine Beach and add it to the throat section on the Boston side of the Charles River to provide additional width. This would be difficult because it needs to be permitted through the Army Corps of Engineers. In general it was thought that the MassDOT concept lacked creativity and did not address the projected future travel patterns of less vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and car ownership. In terms of the swap of the East Drive Connector and Stadium Way, there was a general positive impression received because the Turnpike is lowered by 10 feet.

C: EI: Before we go to Nate for the final report, I would like to thank Ari and Glen for helping us out and I would like to give a special thanks to the volunteers, Paul, Rich, and Tony who got very quick training and did a great job.

C: NCC: In terms of the rail and transit side, we learned that the team is analyzing two different types of stations. The first is a full cost station and the second is a low cost station. Some of the challenges are the cost differential between the full build and the low cost alternative. We discussed a full vehicular connection from Cambridge Street to Commonwealth Avenue. We also talked about more width and an end treatment for the ramp heading into Malvern Street. We had a desire to ensure that crosswalks are volumetrically designed based on CTPS forecasts. There was talk about on-board fare collection. We learned that the station's height is fairly fixed, regardless of which scheme is picked in the end.

There was some discussion about moving 76 Ashford Street to get a better ramp coming down to the street. There was a lot of discussion about how we make the connections to the station feel tight, both from the north and south sides so they are integrated into the community. We got instructions to look at Porter and Back Bay as stations that people like. We spent a lot of time talking about noise reduction in the rail yard, including when the trains would be in the yard in the middle of the day, and mitigation efforts. We talked about how the access options for Houghton Chemical are generally the

same for how the trains move in. All of the patterns are roughly the same but the at-grade option has additional cost. We wanted to look at other rail road stations and yards and where MBTA trucks accessing the yard would be coming from. One of our groups wanted to know how we could control storm water so there was some discussion about permeable pavement and other control measures.

C: EI: Thank you Nate. Our next task force meeting will be October 29th at 1:00pm at MassDOT, 10 Park Plaza. It's going to be in Conference Room #1 on the second floor at MassDOT. The meeting after that will be November 19th back here.

Next Steps

The next task force meeting will be held at 1:00 PM on Thursday, October 29 at MassDOT, 10 Park Plaza, 2nd floor Conference Room #1. All task force sessions are open to the public.

Appendix 1: Meeting Attendees

First Name	Last Name	Affiliation
John	Allen	Waltham Bicycle Committee
Glen	Berkowitz	Consultant
Jorge	Briones	Task Force Member
William	Brownsberger	Task Force Member
Chris	Calnan	TetraTech
Jim	Cerbone	MassDOT
James	Curley	Boston University
Anthony	D'Isidoro	Task Force Member
Donny	Dailey	MassDOT
Bill	Deignan	Task Force Member
Stacey	Donahoe	MassDOT
Josh	Fiala	The Cecil Group
James	Gillooly	Task Force Member
Joseph	Grilli	HNTB
Bruce	Houghton	Task Force Member
Ed	Ionata	TetraTech
Marc	Kadish	Task Force Member
Ken	Kruckemeyer	LivableStreets Alliance

Wendy	Landman	Task Force Member
Robert	LaTremouille	FOWG
Peter	Leis	Allston Resident
Trent	Lethco	ARUP Group
Sharon	Long	Allston Resident
Oscar	Lopez	Task Force Member
David	Loutzenheiser	Task Force Member
Sean	Macaluso	Task Force Member
Amy	Mahler	Task Force Member
Erik	Maki	TetraTech
Christine	Marini	Boston Police Department
Harry	Mattison	Task Force Member
Galen	Mook	Task Force Member
Paul	Moyer	Gill Engineering
Paul	Nelson	Task Force Member
Mike	O'Dowd	MassDOT
Ari	Ofsevit	LivableStreets Alliance
Alana	Olsen	Task Force Member
Qian	Pan	The Cecil Group
Richard	Parr	Task Force Member
Prataap	Patrose	BRA
Jason	Quimet	VHB, Inc.
Tad	Read	Task Force Member
Carol	Ridge-Martinez	Task Force Member
Matt	Robare	Allston/Brighton TAB
Jessica	Robertson	Task Force Member
Stefanie	Seskin	Task Force Member
Mark	Shamon	VHB, Inc.
Steve	Silveira	Task Force Member
Leah	Sirmin	FHWA
David	Tudryn	Michael Baker Intl.
Margaret	Van Deusen	Task Force Member