
To:	Ken Kirwin Project Manager	Date:	June 8, 2016
From:	Hannah Brockhaus Howard Stein Hudson	HSH Project No.:	2015136.0
Subject:	DCR Mount Auburn Street Corridor Study Public Meeting 1 Meeting Notes of June 1, 2016		

Overview

On June 1, members of the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) Mount Auburn Street Corridor Study team and DCR staff associated with the job held the project's first public meeting. The meeting took place at the Shady Hill School Gym, located at 56 Coolidge Avenue in Cambridge. The purpose of the public meetings are to allow the public-at-large an opportunity to weigh in on the project, so that the project team and stakeholder group can incorporate their input in developing short- and long-term recommendations for the improvement of the Mount Auburn Street corridor and its abutting roadways. Through this project, the agency seeks to create a corridor which is friendlier to cyclists, pedestrians, and transit users and to strengthen connections between abutting neighborhoods and the key green space of the Charles River, while ensuring calm, efficient vehicle operations.

At the meeting documented herein, the DCR and consultant team introduced themselves and introduced the project. The second half of the meeting was devoted to breakout sessions, where the public could give commentary on existing conditions of the corridor according to mode of travel. There were five stations: Walking/ADA, Bicycling, Transit, Driving, and Neighborhood Environment and Local Businesses. Attendees had the opportunity to write down comments, concerns, and suggestions on sticky notes and place them on the map at the associated location. This exercise (in addition to the comments given by Stakeholder Group members at their meeting on May 5) will be used to generate the project's core values. The core values will serve as a basic yardstick by which all improvement options will be measured. The public can also access the wikimapping tool shown during the meeting, in order to give location and mode specific comments.

Agenda

- I. Team Introductions
- II. Project Timeline

- III. Public Process Overview
- IV. Stakeholder Group Formation
- V. Quick History Lesson
- VI. Previous & Current Planning Work
- VII. Work Accomplished So Far
- VIII. Existing Conditions: Break Out Sessions
- IX. Next Steps

Detailed Meeting Minutes¹

- C: Nathaniel Cabral-Curtis (NCC): Good evening, everyone. If everyone could take your seats, this is a short presentation, we'll have plenty of time for you to head to our breakout sessions and talk to the various members of the consultant team. For now, I'd like to turn this over to our friends from DCR, who will give us a brief welcome and introduction. Thank you all for coming tonight.
- C: Ken Kirwin (KK): Good evening. My name is Ken Kirwin, I work for DCR, and I am the project manager for the Mount Auburn Corridor Study. We have stakeholders who are working with us on this project. The project is intended to improve bus transit, reliability, and travel time. The consultant is Howard Stein Hudson, and they have done some preliminary work to identify existing conditions. They will be presenting that information to you tonight, and they will be looking for your feedback and ideas on what they present. At this point, I'm going to turn it over to the consultant project manager, Pete Stidman.
- C: Pete Stidman (PS): Thanks again. I want to emphasize that for this project we're trying to come up with short-term solutions, as well as long-term solutions. This meeting is designed to get out all of the information, gripes, and long-held annoyances, so that then we can move on in later sessions to talk about what we can do out here. Here's the mission of DCR. Now I'm going to turn this over to Nate for the agenda.
- C: NCC: Good evening, everybody. We're through the first thing on this agenda, the next thing we're looking at is timeline, there's a board at the back with this information. We'll then talk about the

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. For photos of the existing conditions boards presented, please see Appendix 3. For a listing of comments received at the June 1 public meeting, please see Appendix 4.

project progress so far. We'll then talk a little bit about the stakeholder group, which met for the first time last month. We'll be walking you through a quick history lesson of the area. We'll talk about what we've done to date in some detail, and then we'll have breakout groups. I do want to emphasize that the breakout groups will be the meat of the evening. You'll have plenty of time to talk to our various consultants and ask questions when we get there.

Our DCR Team has already introduced themselves; our leader is Ken Kirwin. We have a number of the members of the consultant team here. If you're on the consultant team, please raise your hand. There are a lot of them here tonight. We have different facilitators standing by at each table, who will help you out this evening. We have some stakeholder group members here in the audience, and if you're curious about who your stakeholder is in your neighborhood or related to your interest, we have a board in the back you can look at. Pete?

- C: PS: Here's the schedule. Obviously we're at the first public meeting. We've completed a lot of work on the existing conditions, and you are a part of that tonight, telling us what you know that we haven't seen already. You can take a look around the room at the work we've done on these boards. For a month after this, we're going to start looking at the volumes on the street, to figure out what's possible. I know there's been some interest in road diets, so we're going to take a look at those. Then we'll have an initial conditions report that compiles all of this. After that, we'll start working on our short- and long-term solutions for the problems we hear tonight. The draft final report is due out at the end of 2016, and you will have a chance to comment on that before we put out the final report in early 2017.
- C: NCC: I just want to take a moment to talk about the public process. This is a public meeting; we will be having more of these. This is a chance for the community-at-large to give us your thoughts, think about what you're seeing, and tell us what you like and don't like. There's also a stakeholder group, which was selected in part by DCR, to go through the detail associated with this project. There's a lot of detailed information to sift through. As you saw on the schedule, there's a few of those stakeholder meetings clustered over the summer and into the fall. The idea is for the stakeholder group to meet, discuss, and begin outputting things, and then you all can come to another meeting like this. The stakeholders are here to listen to you and hear what you have to say.

One of the reasons we put out the stakeholder board in the back of the room is that we do want all of you - and we have encouraged our stakeholders to be ready to embrace this - to engage with your stakeholders. Talk to them between meetings, give them your thoughts. You don't have to wait for one of these meetings to talk to your stakeholder representative. We also have a wikimap, which is a map online that you can go to and drop pushpins for different subjects and to make comments. You can pick an intersection and say I think this is a dangerous intersection, or I think bus and pedestrian improvements need to be made here, or I think the bus should move through here faster. That's a great tool for you to use on your own time. We look at it regularly, and we will be taking feedback from there, as well.

Just to give you a sense of how feedback is used, DCR is responsible for what comes out of this project, but they are balancing your input with what are the environmental impacts, what is the historic status of the resource being touched, what are the funding requirements, and also regional needs. It is the *state* Department of Conservation and Recreation, so they need to balance the flow through here not just from far away, but also from a few towns over. The bottom line is the more productive we can be, the more consensus we can achieve, the more influence we can all have.

This is just a map that shows stakeholders, our meeting tonight is approximately here². This just gives you a sense of the map of the area and where our stakeholders are located. I do want to note that we do have some representatives, namely the MBTA and Walk Boston, that are far enough out of the area that they blow off the scale if they were to be included on the map. As such, they do not appear on this image.

Pete, I'd like to bring you up for some history.

C: PS: I like to bring in history to help us all understand the area a lot better. The road we're dealing with- Mount Auburn- is one of the oldest roads in the area. It was laid out as a path in 1630, known as the Way from Charlestown to Watertown. In 1812, Brattle Street became a formalized street. 1831 was when we saw Mount Auburn Cemetery, and it was followed by Mount Auburn Hospital (1871), bringing us two of our major stakeholders that are here tonight. In 1899, Brattle was widened and you started to see a lot more traffic. Also around the same time, Fresh Pond Parkway was built, and this was not as we know it today, but just from Mount Auburn to Fresh Pond. In the 1890s, the street cars opened, and these eventually became the 71 and 73 Routes. In 1915, the Larchwood neighborhood was built. In the 1920s, Coolidge Hill was laid out, with of course the exception of the original farm house. In 1929, we saw Fresh Pond Parkway expand to connect to Concord Avenue and Alewife Brook Parkway. Route 2 was built in 1934, so you can see this progression that starts to build with more and more traffic. In the 1950s, they built Gerry's Landing and the Eliot Bridge that we have today. Now, in 2010, just recently, Mount Auburn Street towards Harvard Square was traffic calmed. We're seeing a different attitude in planning and design.

These are all of the local projects we're tracking. We have a greenway coming in, from DCR. Also the Belmont/ Trapelo reconstruction is just finishing up. The Mount Auburn Street Corridor Study in Watertown is at about 25%. Steve Magoon is here tonight from the town of Watertown, if you have any questions on that process. We also have a couple of historic districts – the Old Cambridge Historic District and, nearby, the Half Crown Marsh. The Old Cambridge District borders the Mount Auburn and Fresh Pond intersection that we're all concerned about. Lowell Park is undergoing a restoration. Greenough Boulevard is being rebuilt to include more accommodations for bicycles and pedestrians.

² The speaker pointed out the location of Shady Hill School to orient the public to the map being displayed.

And on Huron Ave., reconstruction is going on as well. A lot of things are going on. And one of the interesting things about this map is there is a big gap in the middle, and that's our project.

We also took a look at a lot of the other planning work that's going on. This is the full list. I'll go through some details of these studies that we thought were pertinent to this work.

There are a couple ideas floating around to look at both of three legged interchanges Charles River Connectivity Study floated around some ideas in order to look at the three legged interchanges. The Charles River Connectivity Study came up with the version on the right – on the left they're calling it out to study. The Cambridge Riverfront Plan from a little earlier also identified this as an area to study, noting connectivity to river from this neighborhood is poor.

Q: No Name Given: Can you go back to that slide to explain the lines. What's the green space there?

A: PS: That's the Eliot Bridge. The green space is parkland. This is a concept called the Charles River Connectivity Study, which is online.

Q: NNG: That's not Coolidge Hill?

A: PS: No, Coolidge Hill is a little farther north. That's BB&N across Greenough Boulevard.

A: NCC: It's roughly the same viewpoint, but you're looking at Greenough Boulevard as the almost vertical line here, with the VFW post and the Boat House on the right. That's the Eliot Bridge.

Q: NNG: What's the green line that's on the left?

A: PS: That's the existing path.

C: NNG: If you want us to understand what these things are about, you need to point things out on the screen. I can hardly read the words, and I'm in the front row. I'm not sure what the purpose of this is if you're not going to help us understand it. Maybe it's better to just talk to us and forget the slides.

A: PS: If you can humor me a little bit, I think we can get through this. It will get more interesting. A little farther on, we're going to get out into breakout groups and pay close attention to the existing conditions. This is just to show you guys that we're looking at the planning work that some of you were probably involved in in the past, and we're considering it. All these studies are online; this is not our work. We could spend a lot of time going over these, but I think it will be more efficient if we discuss what's out there today.

So the Cambridge Riverfront Plan, just pointing out that the two three-legged intersections need further study. The Lowell Park Cultural Landscape report came out in 2014. I know a lot of you are

involved in that. Do we have anyone here that's been involved in that?³ Great, so that's who you should direct any questions about that work to.

The MBTA Key Bus Route Improvement Program basically lengthened some bus stops and did some sign relocations. It did not look at bus pullouts, which can cause delay. There's a bus pullout in front of Star Market, where the bus is supposed to pull fully out of the traffic, but that makes it hard to get back into traffic, so bus drivers actually don't use it. So that's something we can talk about, because drivers are legally mandated to pull over.

Q: AR: I request that you don't use these code words, because most of us don't understand them - talk in English. What's a bus pullout?

A: PS: Sure, you guys are going to have to help me with that. Let me know when you don't understand something. A bus pullout is basically a curved out area within a sidewalk that a bus can pull into, so they can get out of traffic. The problem is that the bus has to get back into traffic, and if you have traffic lights, or rush-hour traffic, it takes a long time to get back out into traffic.

The Cambridge Transit Strategic Plan, which is more recent, noticed that the 71 fails the MBTA vehicle load standard. That's jargon, but it basically means that the bus is extremely crowded. Maybe some of you have experienced getting passed by in the am peak, when the 71 is too crowded to pick anyone up. I'm not sure if we'll be able to address it, but we can talk about it and put it in the notes.

One of their goals was to make transit times equal to, or quicker than, driving travel times. We've had a lot of interest in decreasing transit travel times. That's one of the things that sparked this study, and it's something that goes way back. I know Cambridge is very interested in that. This study calls for bus priority pilot projects and signal progression. The City of Cambridge and DCR are very interested in improving transit times. And Watertown is, too – just about everyone is interested in that.

Q: AR: Can you tell us where the bus routes start and where they end, where are they going? Do they go one way?

A: PS: When we get into breakout groups, we have the entire bus routes. Actually it's the other board.⁴ That's the 73, but the 71 Route goes down to Watertown Square - it takes a left on Mount Auburn, instead of a right onto Belmont. They're both relatively short routes, but very heavily used, as you can see on the boards in the back.

³ Approximately 4 people raised their hands.

⁴ A member of the consultant team brought a board mapping the 73 bus route closer to the back of the seating area to aid in answering the question.

This is the Cambridge Bicycle Plan, it's a heat map of people's comments – even though you don't see a lot of cyclists out there today, there's a good number of comments out here, especially down at the Three-legged interchanges.

This is the Strawberry Hill Neighborhood Plan, it's from 2007, so it's a ways back. But they pointed out Belmont and Holworthy Streets as a gateway to their neighborhood, and therefore wanted to make it more attractive. They also requested signal timing improvements.

The Watertown Bike Transportation Plan recommended a 4-2 road diet for Mount Auburn Street. A 4-2 road diet is when you go from 4 lanes down to 2 lanes. Other times a 4-3 road diet is proposed, that's when you have a turn lane in the middle. Sometimes when you have a roadway that's built wide, the traffic essentially doesn't need the full roadway. Some roads are built over capacity, so in those cases you can take away some capacity and still move traffic nicely. There's a lot of study that needs to go into that, though.

Q: NNG: Are you suggesting that Mount Auburn can be reduced by two lanes?

A: PS: This is Mount Auburn in Watertown – the Watertown Mount Auburn project ends just before the intersection with Belmont. That's going on now. But one of the things we're still studying is the traffic volumes. One of the things that we've learned is that the Fresh Pond Mount Auburn intersection is very inefficient, and that plays into the problems out there today; we know traffic backs up all the way to Belmont Street.

Next is the Watertown Comprehensive Plan. The reason I'm pulling this out is that the dot up in the top right corner is the intersection of Belmont and Mount Auburn. They're looking at it as a place to enhance in terms of the business district and economic development.

Now we get into the data that's out there, we have a couple of interesting slides here. This is the Highway Safety Improvement Program's crash clusters, which is a special designation that the state uses to call out particularly bad spots. The designation can help sometimes when you go to repair the situation with funding. We have a full crash map at the driving table, so you can check out some of the details.

This is an interesting thing called StreetScore, which some MIT kids thought of. They took Google Earth images and had people rate them on how safe they would feel in the area. They correlated these colored dots with scores. So, you can tell that the Larchwood neighborhood feels very safe and comfortable, but Fresh Pond Parkway feels less safe. It's the kind of thing that we already knew, but it's interesting to see it being described in this manner. They have a website that maps the whole city.

I just want to talk a little bit about what's happened so far. We did have a Stakeholder Group meeting with folks in the neighborhood. We did a walk through with the municipalities, DCR, and the MBTA,

just to come out and get to know the area better. We took the existing conditions inventory that you'll be seeing on the boards, still finishing that up, and we launched the wikimap. We already have a bunch of comments, and you can check out other people's comments, and comment on their comments, and really get a dialogue going.

Next are some highlights from the walk through. We witnessed a crash at Mount Auburn and Fresh Pond Parkway on that trip. We noticed challenging bicycle maneuvers at Belmont and at Brattle, and generally an unsafe feeling. We also noticed illegal left turns into the Star Market parking lot. There's actually a street you're supposed to be using. And we also noticed opportunities for place-making near Star Market at that plaza.

Q: NNG: What's place-making?

A: PS: That's basically making a place nice, making it so that people want to hang out there. It's often used as an economic development tool, because local businesses are benefitted when people are hanging out on the street. Where you can see your neighbors and sit down at a bench under a tree. The Brattle Street traffic island is another space where we saw that opportunity, there's a lot of space there. We saw lots of danger for pedestrians and bicyclists at Fresh Pond Parkway. The intersection of Fresh Pond and Mount Auburn, in particular - the geometry is inefficient and very skewed, so if you're a pedestrian or bicyclist, it takes a long time to get across, which affects the signal cycle, because you have to give the pedestrian more time to get across and therefore cars have less time to get through. That's a big problem creating bus delays and delay for other modes, as well. We have illustrations of that delay in the back. We saw poor sidewalk conditions in a lot of places. We went down to BB&N during school let-out, and saw an interesting situation there where parents are lining up in front of the school, and if they can't line up, they're circling the area, waiting for a spot to pick up their kids. So that's something to consider.

This is the wikimap. The easiest way to get to it is to google "wikimap Mount Auburn." You can see we're getting a lot of comments already. So check out what's there and add to it.

Okay. In a minute we're going to break out into breakout sessions. You're encouraged to go to all of them if you feel the urge. There will be people at each station with notebooks and sticky notes and we will be taking pictures and recording everything you give us tonight. So I encourage you to tell us everything, little details even - this historic marker is in the wrong place, or our sidewalk doesn't have a ramp, or whatever you're thinking about. We know some of the big issues, but get down to the details for us, and that will help us turn out something that you will like. We have different topic areas around the room. Over here we have traffic with Alex; neighborhood environment area over here with our friends from CSS, Tamar and Deneen, in the back; transit in the back with Andy Paul; bicycling session with Mike Tremblay; and a pedestrian and ADA session with Dan Nelson. Direct your comments to the right table.

C: Arthur Strang (AS): I think there were questions about jargon, but there's a larger question with how do we approach the problem. There's too much emphasis on traffic flow, and not enough on the other things that affect neighbors. In the last couple weeks, the Supreme Court of Massachusetts said that the state is not taking sufficient action in reducing emissions. More traffic is more emissions. We should think a little differently about the issues that will affect the neighbors.

C: NNG: I'll second that!

A: PS: We are taking notes tonight, so your comments are going in the record, Arthur.

C: Larry Tribe (LT): Elizabeth and I are here tonight. Apart from all the broader effects on environment, pollution etc., many of us live along or near Fresh Pond Parkway. Even though the project focus is Mount Auburn Street with buses, I'm curious which of these tables should we focus on if our concerns are like those that focus on the parkway - the danger for people who live near it and the environment effects of the third-of-a-mile stretch where people travel much too fast and it's a behemoth for safe living.

A: PS: You can hit the traffic session with Alex or the neighborhood environment session. We want to hear that, so give us all you have.

C: AR: I've been a staff environmentalist for various environmental groups for 40 years and one of things in these instances is that for especially greenhouse gases and pollutants, if you slow the traffic and gum it up and you have the same amount of traffic, you have many more pollutants. And my point is that you will. I know Larry is saying what he's saying with all the best intentions. But if you do decide to take draconian measures to reduce size of that road, I would like a study on the greenhouse gas increase and whether that would cause the City of Cambridge to fall short on area emissions.

A: PS: It's a good idea to look at the bigger picture. When we get to the stage when we're analyzing options for solutions, that's something you should keep asking for.

C: NNG: I think I've read their study⁵ and one of things they're trying to do is slow cars down, get people on buses, so there are less cars. I have to drive a construction vehicle, and so it would slow me down as well. But I think the idea is to get more people on the bus, more bikes - other means of travel other than cars. Fewer cars mean less smog.

C: PS: If you wouldn't mind, let's hold the comments and direct them at the people around the room so that we have a lot of time to do that, and then we will report back after.

⁵ The speaker is referring to Howard Stein Hudson's proposal for the project.

C: NNG: On the Lowell park map, I think the only part they're touching is the side near Brattle Street.

C: PS: Correct me if I'm wrong, but I believe they're only touching the one side because they're waiting to see what happens to Fresh Pond Parkway. Hannah's making a note of that. If you guys could circulate around the room, we'll come back after the breakout sessions and begin to formulate these into goals in terms of what we're looking for going forward.⁶

Reports from Breakout Groups

C: NCC: We've been joined by Representative Jonathan Hecht and Vice Mayor of Cambridge Mark McGovern. Elected officials, if you would like to address the crowd you are welcome to do so.

C: Mark McGovern (MM): Good evening, everyone. For those of you who don't know me, I'm the Vice Mayor of Cambridge. I talked to a couple of people in the breakout groups. Although the roads are state run, the city is very involved in this process, watching closely and actively participating. If there are things that you want to tell us, that we can help convey to the state in this process, please feel free to do that. I can give people my card, but if you email citycouncil@cambridge-ma.gov, you'll hit all of the councilors at once. My father lives on Fresh Pond Parkway, he's lived there for 30 years, so I'm very familiar with the area and the concerns that people have, so if there's anything I can do to help represent the community, please let me know. Thank you.

Q: NCC: Representative Hecht, would you like to speak?

A: Jonathan Hecht (JH): No, thanks.

C: NCC: Okay, thank you for being here tonight. I want to talk to you briefly about these key themes we've heard so far. These came from your stakeholders – at the first meeting, we had them all go around and state what they would like to see if this project was successful. It also came from emails that we've received from all of you and these are also being echoed in the wikimap.

We want to have improved safety for all modes. We want to look at both short-term and long-term fixes – we understand that you have issues now that you don't want to wait five years to improve upon. We want to improve transit operations – everyone wants to make the bus lines run better. We want to have improved bike and pedestrian infrastructure, connect neighborhoods to each other and to the river. We also want to have lower pedestrian and bicycle stress throughout the area. We want to have calm, predictable traffic. We don't want to have such a bottleneck where you'd get driver aggression, which is hard on pedestrians and bicyclists, and we've heard about air quality hot spots, we want to avoid that. We want people to not be cutting through the neighborhoods and going fast down your streets. We want

⁶ At this point the room broke out into breakout groups – Driving, Walking/ADA, Neighborhood Environment and Local Businesses, Transit, and Bicycling.

to have increased clarity for all modes. We heard about BB&N's young drivers, and we want to make sure they are doing the right things, and that they know what the right things are. We want to increase accessibility for local business, and also for the institutions around here that have a regional draw like Mount Auburn Hospital. And, finally, we want to present opportunities for place-making. We're going to have report backs from our breakout captains. As you think about emailing us or going to the wikimap, think about these goals and how they are aligned or not with what you thought or heard tonight.

At this point the various consultant team members stationed at breakout tables were asked to come up to the microphone to convey the comments they received.

Driving: Alexandra Siu

- Reduce cut-through traffic, particularly through the Larchwood neighborhood.
- Make the intersection of Mount Auburn and Brattle Streets safer for bicyclists and vehicles, particularly at the merge.
- Improve guidance and therefore safety through the intersection of Mount Auburn and Fresh Pond Parkway, such that motorists especially can easily determine their correct path.
- Improve safety of pedestrian crossings through the intersection of Mount Auburn and Fresh Pond.
- Reduce congestion and delay for all modes.
- Maintain access for all modes through major intersections, especially considering the needs of an aging population.

Neighborhood Environment and Local Businesses: Tamar Zimmerman

- Overall, make things quieter, less barren, cleaner, and more attractive.
 - Particularly along Mount Auburn Cemetery, narrow sidewalks can make walking along the edge scary. Consider buffering with a protected bike lane or trees.
- Improve safety at the entrance/exit of Mount Auburn Cemetery.
- Improve the Star Market Plaza, to make it more attractive. Consider the pros and cons of keeping the parking spaces along the frontage road between Star Market and Holworthy Street.
- Improve the wayfinding signage throughout the corridor, particularly at the illegal left turn into Star Market.
- Examine whether the many utility lines along the corridor could be buried.

Transit: Andy Paul

- Optimize transit as it moves through the corridor. Consider dedicated facilities, such as queue jump areas or dedicated bus lanes.
- Address the bunching of buses that occurs through this corridor, in order to accommodate more reliable headways
- Think strategically and holistically. Look at locations of transit, schedule changes, and all possible adjustments.

Bicycling: Mike Tremblay

- Address maintenance in the short-term, particularly cleaning of shoulders and refuges after winter season and lighting.
- Consider bicycle facilities on Mount Auburn Street and Fresh Pond Parkway, particularly noting existing bicycle desire lines when assessing feasibility (for example, a potential contra flow lane at Brattle Street, east of the intersection with Fresh Pond Parkway.)
- Improve bicycle crossings at major dangerous intersections including: Fresh Pond Parkway at Mount Auburn Street and Brattle Street, Mount Auburn at Aberdeen, Mount Auburn at Belmont, and the two three- legged interchanges. Improvements could include bike boxes and/or two- staged, left-turn boxes.
- Prioritize education around not only safety, but the best route for major desire lines, providing an alternative to biking on high stress routes.
- Consider expansion of Hubway network, connecting with the existing station at Mount Auburn Hospital.

Walking/ADA: Dan Nelson

- Prioritize short-term improvements for safety, especially striping and signal timing.
- Reduce overall crossing time at major intersections.
- Reduce conflicts between cars and bicycles, where possible.
- Reduce neighborhood cut-through, which reduces the walkability on neighborhood streets during peak hours, which can, in turn, reduce the attractiveness of walking/biking/walking to transit for commuting.
- Increase the clarity for maneuvering by foot through many phased intersections.
- Where possible, increase the width of pedestrian refuge islands; narrow islands are problematic during winter.
- Improve sidewalk conditions for ADA concerns. Problematic areas currently include trees and their roots, as well as other obstructions which reduce the width or smoothness of the sidewalk.
- Prioritize improving pedestrian conditions at major dangerous intersections.

Q: PS: Does anyone have an issue that they didn't hear back? Maybe we've done a good job at collecting your goals?

C: James: In the pedestrian piece, I was happy to hear about the refuge issue. Has there been any thought of adding infrastructure along the lines of a traffic island that would fit into the other goals in terms of bus and traffic? And that would be an amenity for safety for pedestrians.

A: PS: Yes, pedestrian refugees are a way to reduce crossing distances.

- C: Dan Nelson (DN): There were suggestions for an overpass or (an underpass) as another way to get through some of the more dangerous intersections.
- C: PS: We'll be exploring all of these ideas with the Stakeholder Group. The next step will be to take all the input that you've given us tonight back to the Stakeholder Group and formalize goals for the project, which you'll be hearing about. You can follow along the website. You can follow along with the project and read the meeting notes from different things going on.
- A: NCC: The next Stakeholder Group meeting will be near the end of June, you are welcome to attend.
- C: PS: They are public meetings, but you can also talk to your representative on the group and save yourself some time. The next public meeting will be in the fall - how the goals translate into solutions.
- Q: James Williamson (JW): If you have the next meeting here, can you do something to make it easier to get here via public transit, like a shuttle?
- A: PS: We'll look into a spot that's accessible via public transportation.
- C: JW: There were plenty of signs in the building, once you were in the gym, but no signs pointing to where the gyms were.
- A: NCC: I can't promise you a shuttle, but I can promise signage. Of course then you have to make sure it's not wet, windy, or rainy and then they would end up as litter, but we'll look at it.
- C: PS: We will definitely look into signage and public transportation accessibility. Thank you to those who stayed.

Next Steps

The next Public Meeting will be held in October of this year, following the initial conditions report and once proposed improvements are being evaluated. The next Stakeholder Group meeting has been scheduled for June 23, 2016, from 6 – 8pm at the Russell Youth Community Center, located at 680 Huron Avenue. That meeting will focus on the shared values and priorities derived from the first public meeting, as well as the Stakeholder Group meeting held on May 5.

Community members are encouraged to submit comments to the project wikimap, at <http://wikimapping.com/wikimap/mtauburn.html>, as well as to submit comments via DCR's portal at <http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/dcr/public-outreach/submit-public-comments/>.

Appendix 1: Meeting Attendees

First Name	Last Name	Affiliation
Nathaniel	Cabral-Curtis	HSH
Ken	Kirwin	DCR
Keri	Pyke	HSH
Dan	Nelson	HSH
Alexandra	Siu	HSH
Michael	Tremblay	HSH
Andy	Paul	Kittelson Associates
Deneen	Crosby	Crosby Schlessinger Smallridge
Tamar	Zimmerman	Crosby Schlessinger Smallridge
Hannah	Brockhaus	HSH
Pete	Stidman	HSH
Anne	Fiesinger	DCR
Joanne	Bauer	Stakeholder Group
Stacey	Beuttell	Stakeholder Group
Elizabeth	Bierer	Stakeholder Group
Jane	Carroll	Stakeholder Group
Aaron	Dushku	Stakeholder Group
Xander	Dyer	Stakeholder Group
Arcady	Goldmints-Orlov	Stakeholder Group
Jonathan	Hecht	Stakeholder Group
Melissa	McGaughey	Stakeholder Group
Mark	Peterson	Stakeholder Group
Ann	Roosevelt	Stakeholder Group
Steve	Magoon	Town of Watertown Planning Dept
Arthur	Strang	Stakeholder Group
Tim	Whyte	Stakeholder Group
Niels	Peetz-Larsen	Community Member
Cornelia	Cremens	Community Member
Andrew	Olmsted	Larchwood Resident
Jessie	Scanlon	Cambridge Resident
Katherine	Davis	Community Member
David	Davis	Community Member

Barbara	Armistead	Cambridge Resident
Amy	Armistead	Cambridge Resident
Peggy	Bames Lenart	Fresh Pond Residents Alliance
Elizabeth	Van Ranst	Community Member
Carolyn	Reckman	Community Member
Annette	Hodess	Community Member
Paul	Hodess	Community Member
Margaret	Loss	Community Member
Charles	Dewing	Community Member
Peter	Allard	Community Member
Larry	Tribe	Community Member
Eugenie	Johnston	Community Member
Shelee	Hadley	Community Member
Eva	Moseley	Community Member
Lora	Farkas	Community Member
Annkatrine	Gates	Community Member
Andy	Compagna	Bike/Ped Committee
Everett	Briggs	Community Member
Franziska	Amadier	Riverbend Park Trust
Tiron	Pechet	Community Member
Toby	Fairbank	Community Member
Karen	Klein	Community Member
Gail	Flyth	Riverview Condominium
Kathleen	Murphy	BB&N
Jill	Slosburg-Ackerman	Community Member
Andrea	Williams	Cambridge Bicycle Committee
David	Tellier	Community Member
Carlos	Robles	MassRIDES
Debby	Galef	Community Member
Elaine	Sullivan	Community Member
Chris	Summerfield	Community Member
Andrew	Cox	Community Member
Peter	Kroon	Community Member
Maria	Saiz	Watertown Bike/Ped Committee
Ray	Dupuis	Watertown Police

Fred	Hewett	Community Member
Kristin	Mahon	Community Member
Carol	Weenhouse	Community Member
Claudia	Majetich	Community Member
Donna	Caligaris	Community Member
Diane	Brancazio	Community Member
Ernesta	Kraizkieuriz	Community Member
Linda	Kaboolian	Community Member
Marc	McGovern	Cambridge Vice Mayor
Heidi	Legg	Community Member
Jil Anne	Bailey	Community Member
Jessica	Nahigian	Community Member
Saj-nicole	Joni	Community Member
James	Williamson	Community Member
Raminta	Holden	Community Member
Mary	Cay	Community Member
Angeline	Kounelis	Stakeholder Group
Elizabeth	Westling	Community Member
Judith	Kohler	Community Member
Joseph	O'Loughlin	Community Member

Appendix 2: Flip Chart Notes

Driving

- Concerns of cut-through traffic – mapping programs direct traffic through the Larches
- Mt Auburn at Brattle is hard on bicycles – make safer at the merge.
- Improve guidance and safety at Fresh Pond at Mount Auburn, also safer pedestrian crossings.
- Improve way-finding.
- Maintain mobility and access for all modes.

Neighborhood

- Want things quieter, cleaner, greener (including buses.)
- Make cemetery edge greener and less barren.
- Ease crossing at the entrance/exit to Mount Auburn Cemetery for all modes.
- Green the area around Star Market.
- Improve Star Market way-finding.
- Can utility lines be buried?

Transit

- Get bus into dedicated lane or a queue jump.
- Accommodate more reliable headways, get rid of bus bunching.
- Avoid overcrowding, such that buses don't skip stops.
- Look holistically.

Cycling

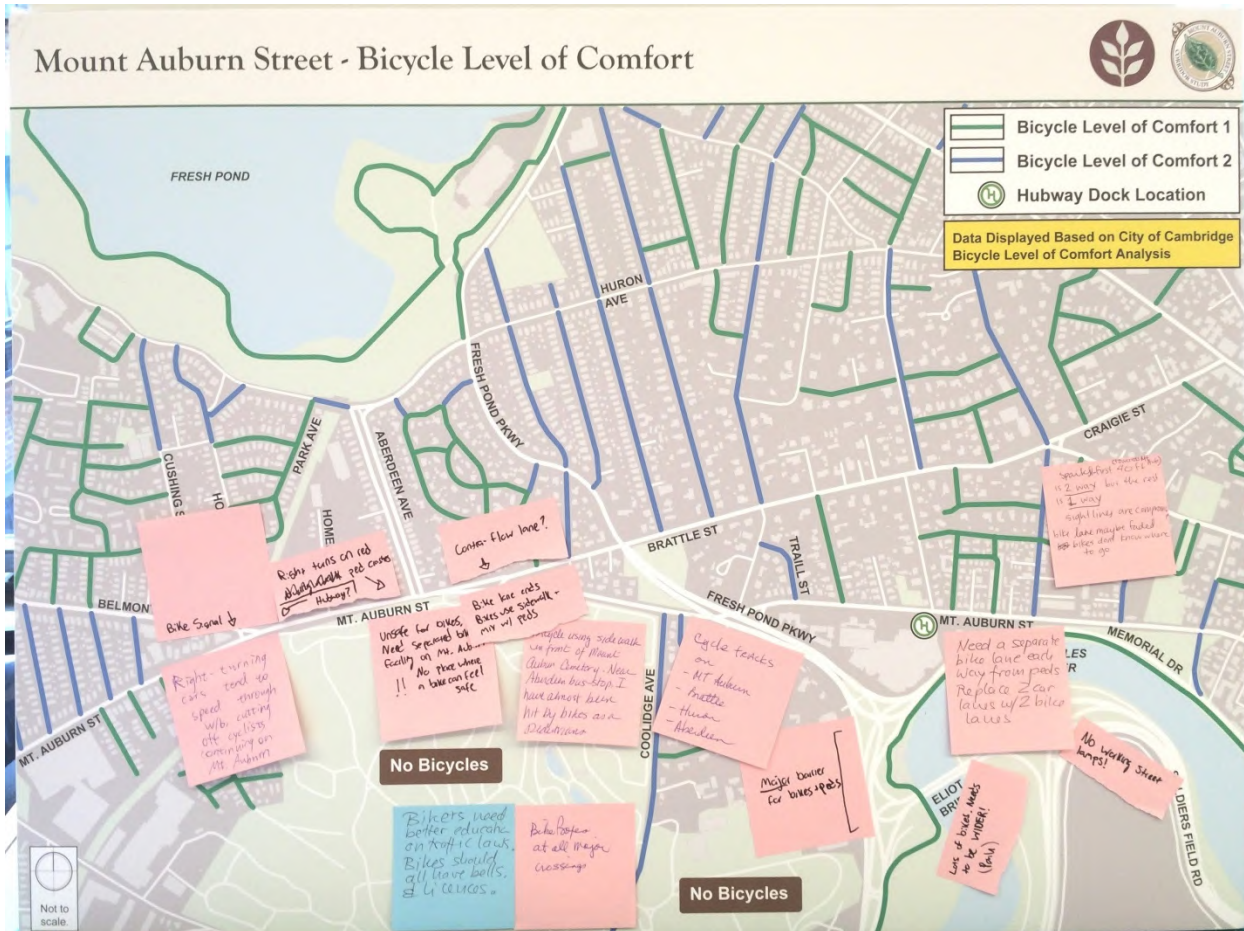
- Improve maintenance of what we have now – brush, sand, trash, etc., as well as lighting.
- Get bicycle facilities separated from pedestrians.
- Analyze bicycle desire lines.

- Lack of cycle facilities – cycle tracks.
- Get more Hubway Stations, especially at the Star Market Plaza.
- Mount Auburn at Aberdeen and Mount Auburn at Fresh Pond Parkway are most dangerous intersections for cyclists.
- Formalize Aberdeen connection.
- Bike boxes and two-stage, left turns.
- Cycle signals at harder intersections.
- Cycle underpasses or overpasses.
- Find and advertise low-stress routes for cyclists.

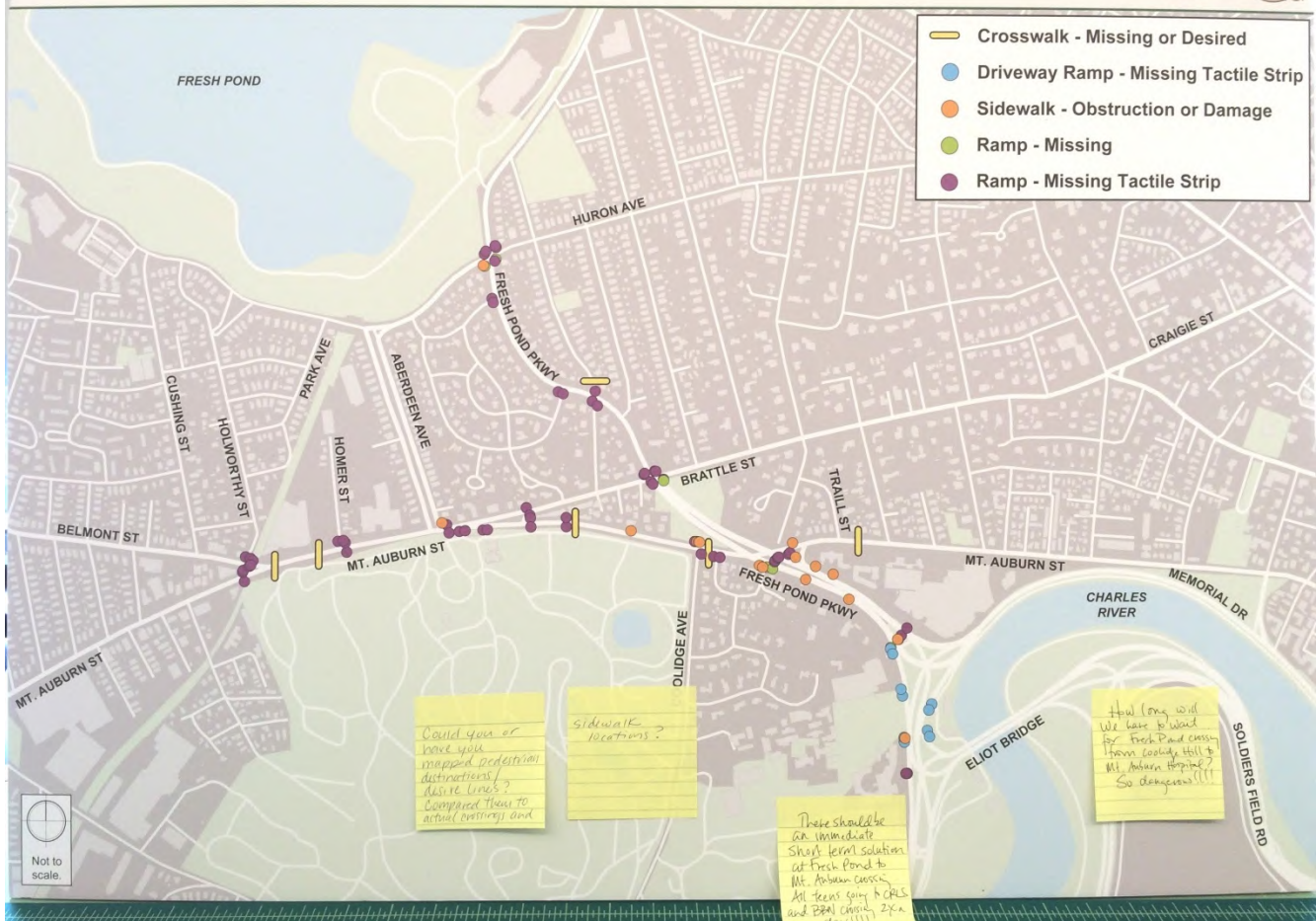
Pedestrian/ADA:

- Parkway intersections unsafe for pedestrians.
- Signal phasing/timing can be unclear.
- Pedestrian facilities inadequate.
- Improve timing/striping now, not in five years.
- Cut-through traffic during peak hours impacts neighborhood walkability.
- Shorten crossing/single-phase crossings.
- Repair sidewalks – currently uneven due to tree roots, etc.
- Improve pedestrian refugees – potential for underpasses?

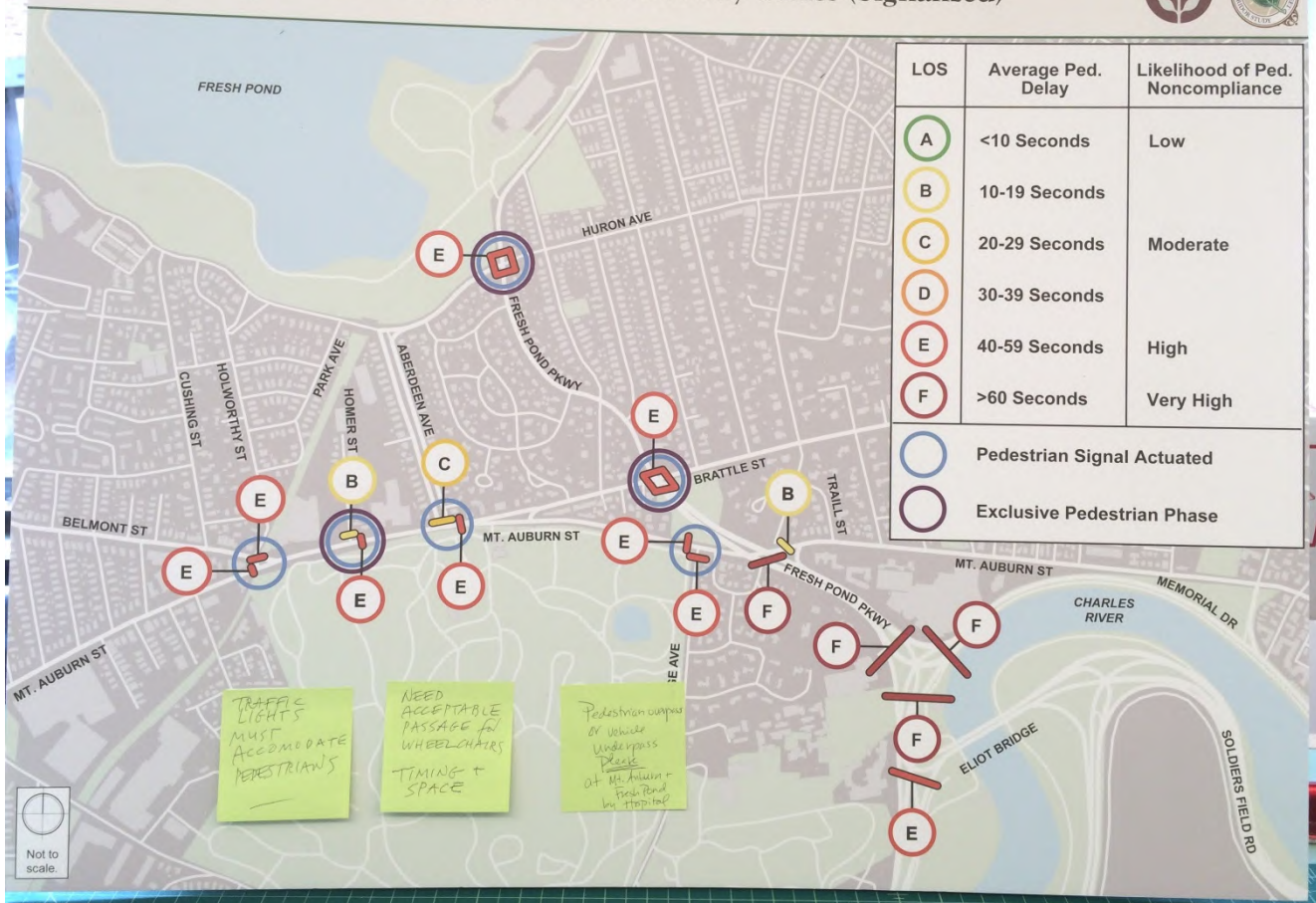
Appendix 3: Existing Conditions Boards



Mount Auburn Street - Pedestrian & ADA Conditions



Mount Auburn Street - Average Pedestrian Delay Times (Signalized)



Mount Auburn Street - Curb Use and Edge Character



Mount Auburn Street - Curb Use and Local Businesses



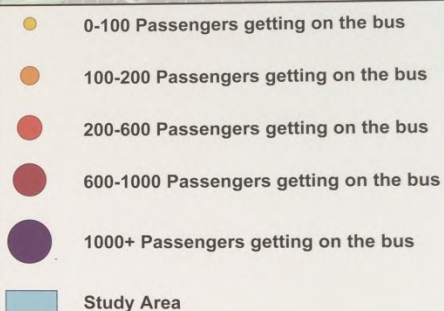
- No Stopping
- Bus Stop
- Parking by Permit Only
- Handicapped Parking
- 2-hour Metered Parking
8 a.m. - 6 p.m.
- 2-hour Parking, No Meters
8 a.m. - 6 p.m.
- Loading Zone
- Unrestricted
- No Parking After Dark



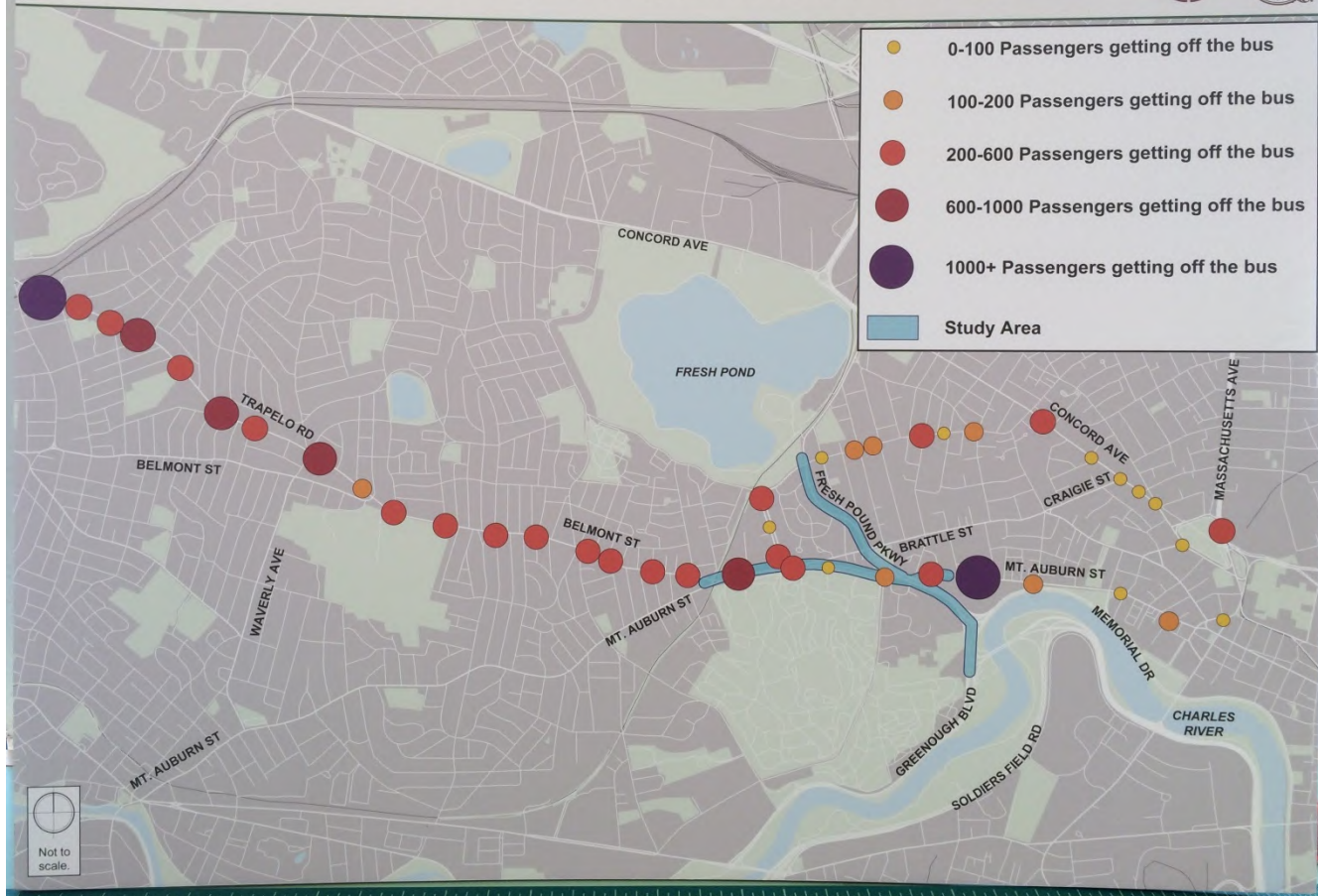
Mount Auburn Street - Weekday Total Passenger Counts, Routes 72 and 73 Inbound



OPERATING
HOURS
FOR BUS



Mount Auburn Street - Weekday Total Passenger Counts, Routes 72 and 73 Outbound



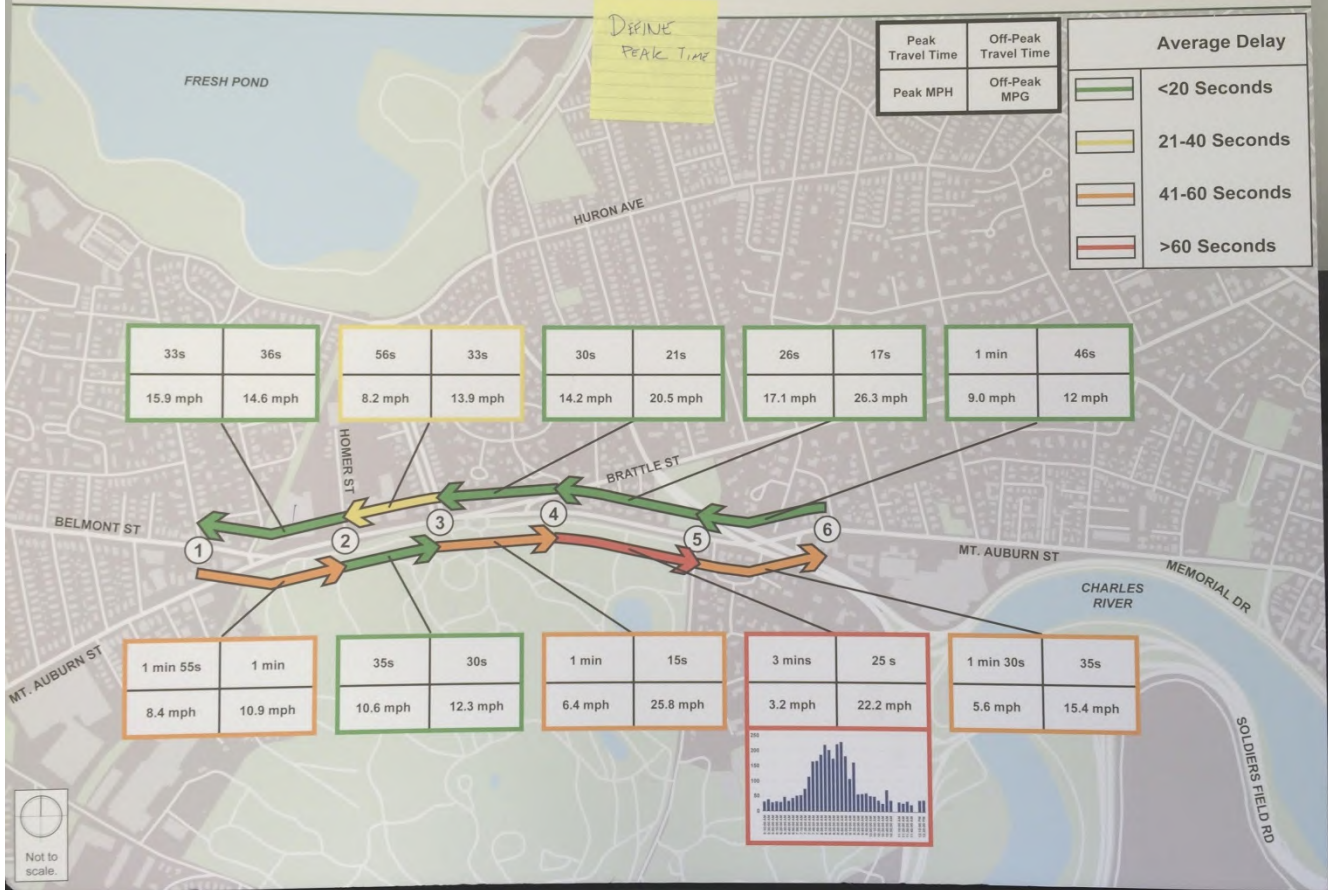
Mount Auburn Street - Average a.m. Peak Hour Bus Delay (seconds)

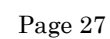


Define
Peak Time

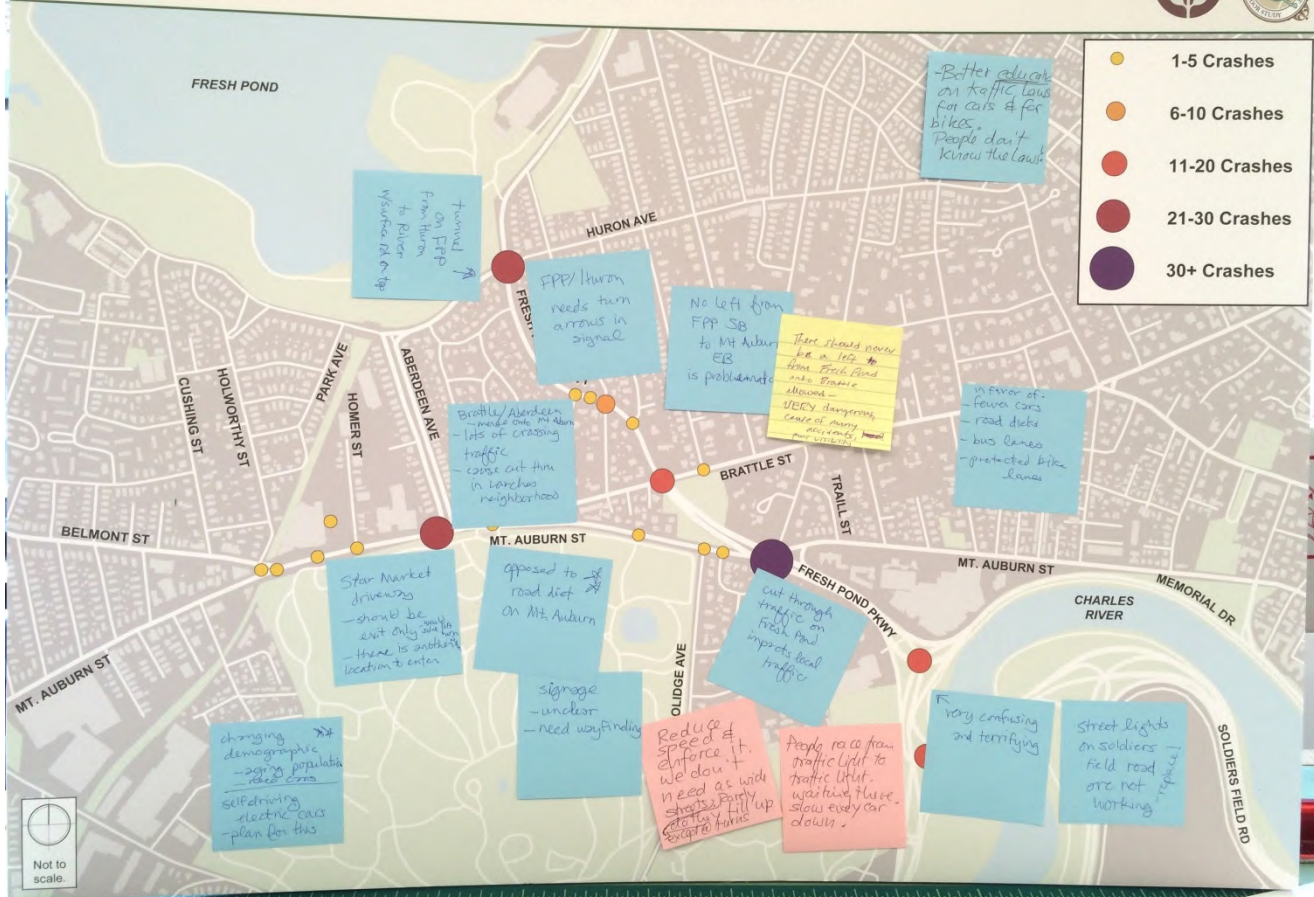
Peak Travel Time	Off-Peak Travel Time
Peak MPH	Off-Peak MPG

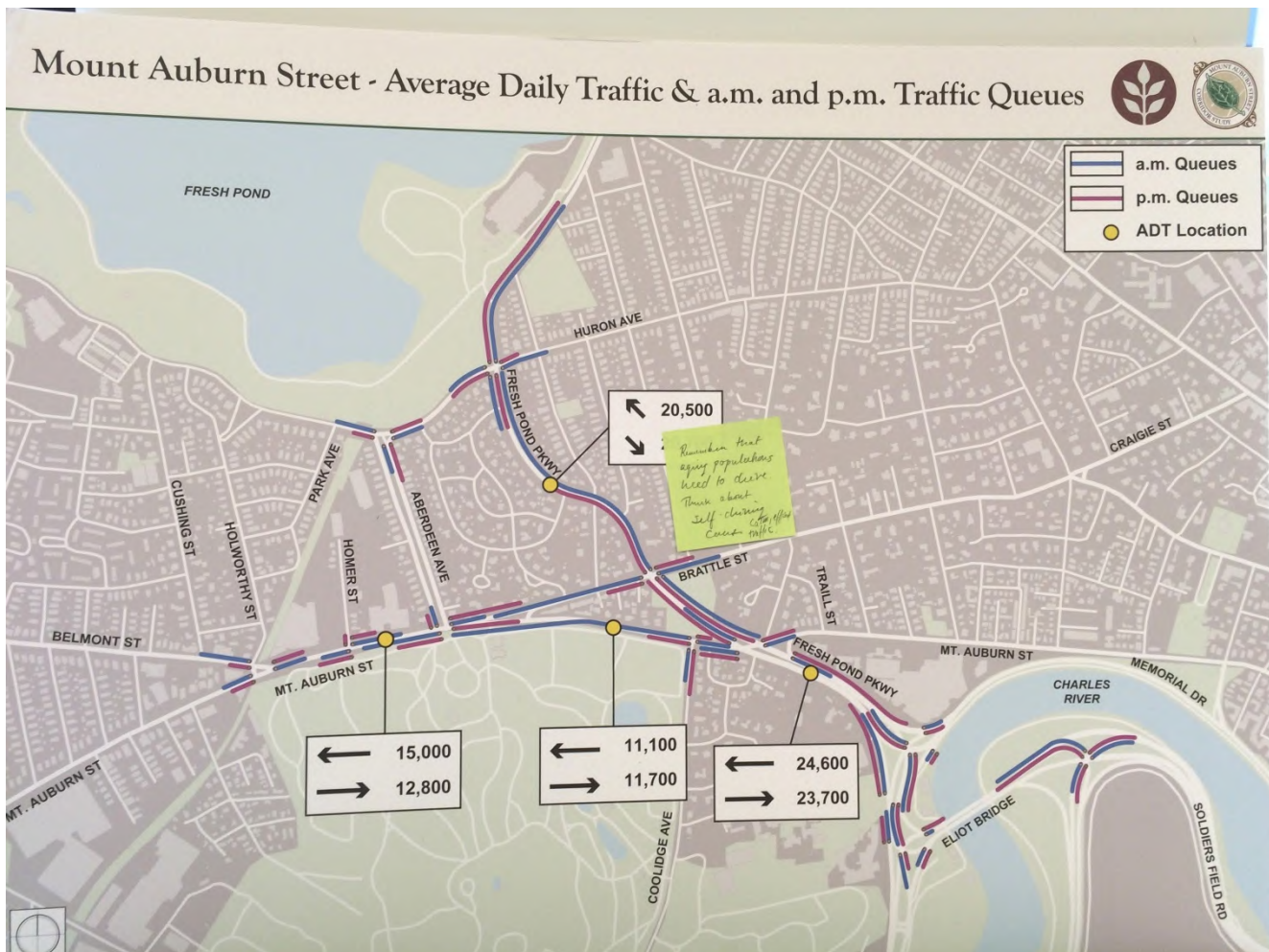
Average Delay	
	<20 Seconds
	21-40 Seconds
	41-60 Seconds
	>60 Seconds





Mount Auburn Street - Crash Propensity Map 2011-2013





Appendix 4: Received Comments

People for Riverbend Park Trust – flyer distributed at Bicycle station.

Position Statement of the trust’s major concerns related to the work of being planned by the DCR and others for the area of Mt. Auburn Street/Fresh Pond Parkway/Gerry’s Landing Road.

The solution should place a renewed emphasis on the historic development of this area, especially on the Charles River Reservation that once extended as pure greenspace all the way from the river to Mt. Auburn Street. The solution should therefore make the area more park-like from the river to Brattle Street and be more pedestrian and bicycle friendly in addition to providing efficient vehicular passage.

The solution should:

1. Be designed in such a way that lines of motion for pedestrians, bicycles and vehicles are readily comprehended through visual clues, thereby keeping the need for signage at a minimum.
2. Make passage through the area more meaningful to the users by giving increased emphasis to the many monuments/markers in this historical area. Both the Watertown and Cambridge Historical Societies should be approached to rethink the position, form and content of monuments and markers and assure the necessary creation/care/refurbishment/replacement as needed.
3. Make it possible to create designated bike lane(s) on Memorial Drive as envisioned in the Cambridge City Policy Order of 22 February 2016 in order to free the river banks for safe, peaceful, pedestrian use only, a goal the Trust has been advocating for since even before the Citizens’ Advisory Committee meetings for the Master Plan for the Charles River of the late 1990s. People on foot, particularly the very young and the elderly, need to be able to enjoy the river landscape without the danger of speeding bikes using the same space.
4. Make this major entrance to “Boston: a memorable, beautiful experience rather than the present “any old high-speed highway anywhere” experience. One should have the sensation of having arrived in a special place with a different character from that of the open road or the commercial strip. Green, park-like space should be given visual prominence over paved areas.
5. Reduce – considerably - - the speed limit on all streets involved in order to enhance one’s enjoyment of being in a special place.
6. Create a dense planting of evergreen trees and shrubs along the Mt. Auburn Hospital side of Gerry’s Landing Road, well back near the fence, in order to shield off what now is received as “backyard work area.” In addition, change the hard surface curb cut paving into the hospital grounds that cuts through the former uninterrupted grassy area to one of brick paving over which grass will grow - - a paving method that permits vehicular use without interrupting the visual impression of a greensward.
7. Use traffic light installations modest in size and largely only vertical in shape to avoid ugly interference with the beauty of surrounding trees. Recent work along Belmont Street at major intersections - - where the former stanchions were far more modest in size and color and more in keeping with the scale of the surrounding shops, dwellings, and vegetation - - illustrates how urban scenes can be disturbed significantly, in particular by the insertion of dark-colored overhead horizontals.

The same problem with scale and shape is true with the recently installed light where old Memorial Drive meets Memorial Drive - - to the detriment of the beautiful historic allée of London plane trees planted in 1897, following the plans of Charles Eliot and the Olmsted firm. Utility boxes placed there above ground have destroyed important sight lines into and from the parkland.

Therefore, in the present work, much thought needs to be given to basic issues of appropriateness for the surroundings. The insertion of infrastructure should not destroy historical structure.

8. Place all utility boxes underground. This would not only make the landscape appear more park-like, but would also avoid the problem of graffiti and the tacky appearance of utility boxes painted by amateur artists.

9. Keep signage to a residential scale, not the scale of the open highway.

10. Elicit the cooperation of all utility companies servicing the area to assure that betterment efforts are thoroughly understood and respected by the numerous stakeholders, now and in the future.

Suggestion for alleviating bus overcrowding – flyer distributed at Bicycle Station

To alleviate bus overcrowding as the buses approach Harvard Square we suggest that consideration be given to bus/mini-bus/minivan service in peak transit hours to run from Harvard Square to a turn-around in Aberdeen Road or a connecting street just beyond the Mt. Auburn Street/Belmont Street split. A potential more distant turn-around would be where Belmont Street splits before one gets to Cushing Square. One would go left at the split going out and come back through Cushing Square (or vice versa). Such a system would assure that passengers close to Harvard Square could get on a vehicle, even at peak times, and not have the ordinary buses, when overloaded, pass them by.

People for Riverbend Park Trust

From: PStidman@hshassoc.com
To: arthurstrang@msn.com; ncabral-curtis@hshassoc.com
Subject: RE: DCR Corridors Study and DCR Parkways Project
Date: Fri, 20 May 2016 18:05:08 +0000
Hey Arthur,

I actually helped spark that planning process in my former role. I will check in with them and see if anything was produced here, but my understanding was that any parkway with planning coming up on it was excluded from the plan. I'll have the answer for you by the public meeting. Thanks.

-Pete

From: Arthur Strang

Sent: Friday, May 20, 2016 2:00 PM
To: Pete Stidman
Subject: DCR Corridors Study and DCR Parkways Project

Hi Pete,
Has the DCR shared any information from their Parkways project?

That Project was to set engineering specifications for each Parkway to accommodate safe walking and biking paths, lanes, striping, traffic lights, paving and traffic management.

First meeting announcement:
<http://www.mass.gov/eea/docs/dcr/news/public-meetings/materials/projects/2015-10-27-parkways-study.pdf>

Slides at first meeting:
<http://www.mass.gov/eea/docs/dcr/news/public-meetings/materials/projects/2015-11-27-dcr-open-house-rev-.pdf>

Best,
Arthur

Dear friends and neighbors,

Hope your Memorial Day Weekend is going well.

We attach a short memo that we're submitting in advance of the public meeting for the DCR Mount Auburn Street Corridor Study, set for June 1 from 6 to 8 PM at the Shady Hill School Gym at 56 Coolidge Avenue, Cambridge, to discuss the future of the communities adjacent to Fresh Pond Parkway.

Although the attached memo expresses only our own views, it reflects conversations with many neighbors and articulates values and concerns relevant to all of us.

Hope to see you at the meeting, and we'd especially welcome your feedback in advance.

Best,

Elizabeth Westling and Larry Tribe

[Memo follows on the next page]

BACK TO THE FUTURE ALONG FRESH POND PARKWAY

May 31, 2016

Elizabeth Westling and Larry Tribe

Introduction

This is a time of ferment in the evolution of our nation, our state, our neighborhoods, and our living environment. Planning efforts are underway that will profoundly affect the quality of life – and sometimes life itself – not just for those of us who live in this area but for the many people who traverse our roads, whether walking or jogging or traveling by bus, car, truck, or bike, to reach schools or shops, offices or hospitals or for healthful exercise and pleasurable recreation.

We are determined to press a new paradigm for these changes – a road not yet taken, to borrow from Frost – focused on the environment writ large rather than on narrow measures of speed and efficiency that are often unsustainable if not self-defeating. But this paradigm shift should not be confused with an imagined utopia lacking precedent in our own past.⁷

Vision

In the memorandum of May 12, 2016, Howard Stein Hudson Associates writes to the DCR of the contractor's vision for the DCR Mount Auburn Street Corridor Study: "Through this project, the agency seeks to create a corridor which is friendlier to cyclists, pedestrians, and transit users and to strengthen connections between abutting neighborhoods and the key green space of the Charles River, while ensuring calm, efficient vehicle operations."

Based on requests and comments made at the public meeting discussing the 2016 DCR Mount Auburn Street Corridor Study, we have already seen great emphasis placed on the need for the diversification and safety of all modes of transportation; reduced speed and volume of all vehicular traffic; and finally, the increased use of traffic calming measures for the express purpose of enhancing a healthful quality of life.

⁷ Not two blocks from Fresh Pond Parkway, we still have one of the most beautiful "rustic" cemeteries ever built. Consecrated in 1831, the Mt Auburn Cemetery was "planned by Frederick Law Olmsted with the assistance of the Massachusetts Horticultural Society. It incorporated curvilinear roads, hillocks, ponds and plantings in the natural and picturesque manner of British Landscape gardening." Witold Rybcznski, *A Clearing in the Distance: Frederick Law Olmstead and America in the 19th Century* (2000), p.45. Though it may seem strange to us now, 19th century families flocked to the cemetery as their premier recreational space. With picnic basket in hand, hordes of Sunday visitors made their way to the Mt Auburn Cemetery to enjoy the benefits of nature.

We wholeheartedly endorse the spirit of these well-expressed holistic aspirations and make them the foundation of our proposals:

Proposals for Fresh Pond Parkway

We propose a restriping of the lane lines on the one-third mile segment of Fresh Pond Parkway from Huron Avenue to Mt. Auburn Street from the existing 4-lane roadway to a 2-lane roadway with marked left-hand turns.

Our main goals are to decrease speed, reduce accidents, reduce aggressive vehicular behavior, and minimize adverse environmental effects. Though the evidence is not iron clad, there is definitely a relationship between lane width and velocity. When events occurring along “four-lane undivided urban roadway[s] of various widths were analyzed to determine the effects of lane width on speeds and collisions,” the correlation between speed and lane width proved impressive.⁸

Typically a “road diet”—when 4 lanes drop to 3 or 2 – is called for when there are no significant capacity issues. It may seem counter-intuitive to adjust the lanes downward when the Parkway is at or over capacity at least twice a day, but that is precisely the approach required if these adverse effects of maximizing vehicular velocity and volume are to be limited: implement a road diet from 4 lanes to 2 with a center lane that includes left-hand turn carve outs, so traffic can continue to run in a smooth and organized manner, at decreased speeds, through this thickly settled residential neighborhood.⁹

Re-striping the Parkway back to a basically 2-lane roadway along the approximately 1/3 of a mile stretch between Huron Avenue and Mt. Auburn Street will force drivers to slow down briefly. Drivers will essentially have to travel single-file while traversing this residential neighborhood. But that is just as it should be: this road-bed was never built or banked to accommodate 4 full lanes of traffic at the high speeds that modern

⁸ Clinton L. Heimbach, “Some Partial Consequences of Reduced Traffic Lane Widths on Urban Arterials,” Transportation Research Record 923, Transportation research Board, 1983,

⁹ Roughly a half century ago, the area around Alewife and Fresh Pond saw the development of the Alewife T station and its accompanying parking facility, and the road to Lexington and Concord became an 8-lane highway to accommodate commuters to and from the Western suburbs. But to protect the neighborhoods along the Northern edge of Cambridge and the Southern edge of Somerville, the 8-lane Route 2 was halted at the Parkways. Yet the onslaught of increased traffic anticipated by the Boston-bound highway, far from abating, rose dramatically and Fresh Pond Parkway became a 4-lane thoroughfare.

cars can take along a curved path, especially when they are 4-abreast, and especially through the front yards of abutters.¹⁰

Striping in left-hand turn carve-outs from a center lane would also have a beneficial effect on the number of rear-end collisions on the Parkway. Research has shown that many collisions, some of them fatal, are related to left-turning vehicles.¹¹ That same research provides evidence that “[p]rojects where narrower lanes were installed to provide space for installation of a center two-way left-turn lane generally reduce accidents by 24 to 53 percent.”¹²

As matters stand now, because of the curvilinear nature of the Parkway, trying to execute a left-hand turn from the Parkway is extremely dangerous. Any vehicle waiting for the on-coming traffic is at great risk of being rear-ended because the curvature of the road obscures the line-of-sight of vehicles coming up from behind, and their speed makes it hard to stop in time to avoid dangerous collision.¹³

This rear-ending problem also occurs when vehicles try to turn right into their private driveways. Entering or exiting the Parkway to or from one’s own driveway must be made safer than the current lane arrangement allows. There are 44 private properties fronting the Parkway between Huron Avenue and Mt. Auburn Street. These are all zoned as single family residences with driveways, entrances, exits, and curb use. If the Parkway were striped with two good-sized traffic lanes with shoulders that allowed a little leeway for vehicles to slow down before making the turn into their own driveways, a badly needed margin of safety would be provided. The option of maximizing vehicular

¹⁰ In this era of mounting national and global sensitivity to the unintended dangers of environmental damage, it is more than slightly ironic that urban and highway planning so often continues to focus on the simple arithmetic of maximizing the number of vehicles that can traverse the Parkways and other major roads from the Western suburbs to Boston and points north as quickly as possible — almost as though our communities were a means to the end of moving ever more cars ever more rapidly across the landscape from point A to point B, with those who live nearby amounting to little more than road kill.

¹¹ Michael Skene, “‘Traffic Calming’ on Arterial Roadways?” Institute of Transportation Engineers Compendium of Technical Papers, 1999.

¹² Douglas W. Harwood, “Effective Utilization of Street Width on Urban Arterials,” National Cooperative Highway Research Program Report 330, Transportation Research Board, August, 1990.

¹³ In the recent past, the Commonwealth has spent \$88 million to improve the traffic flow at the Concord/Lincoln line, \$3 million to improve the flow at the Route 2/16 intersection, and \$288 million to improve flow on the Mass Pike by straightening the road and removing a toll booth at the Allston exit. Because the area between the end of Route 2 and the Eliot Bridge was and remains so thickly settled, the costs for the kinds of improvements made by the Commonwealth to these other highway areas would be prohibitive in this area. Fresh Pond Parkway was never improved to accept the increased volume of traffic brought in by the Route 2 freeway. And the curvature of the Parkway was never upgraded for cars that routinely go between 35 and 50 mph. Almost every tree and most of the guard rails have impact scars left by cars and trucks defying the laws of gravity on the Parkway’s curves.

flow without regard to the needs of those living along the Parkway would, in the end, be tantamount to landlocking all who live here.

The additional leeway provided by the center left-hand turn lanes and a wider right shoulder would combine to give the needed space for cars to pull over when emergency vehicles use the Parkway as a direct route from Arlington to the Mt. Auburn hospital in Cambridge.¹⁴

We propose that, where signal lights exist, they should be retrofitted with left-hand turn green arrows.

Where there are existing left-hand turn lanes and green arrows for those vehicles needing to turn left, the traffic is far better organized and much better behaved. The system that we must currently abide requires adhering to very old-fashioned signage that prohibits drivers from making left turns between certain hours, e.g. 4-6 pm. But changes in the needs of this area have overtaken that design, and many drivers simply disregard the signs, resulting in backed up traffic, horn honking, side swiping, and darting out of lanes – a behavior pattern that is very dangerous indeed.

We propose new signage appropriate to a residential context.

The pattern of roadway development that has characterized the past several decades – the pattern that threatens to dominate our future unless we take matters in hand and insist on change – is emphatically *not* a pattern that meets contemporary standards for design work, as described in classic volumes like that of Charles W. Harris and Nicholas T. Dines, “Time Saver Standards for Landscape Architecture” (2nd ed.). Those standards typically group highways and streets into four basic categories: freeway systems, major arterial systems, collector street systems, and local street systems.

It is important to understand the four basic road design categories because Fresh Pond Parkway is a “parkway” in name only and only by virtue of its 19th century heritage. It is certainly **not** a modern parkway which would put it in the freeway category. In fact, the Parkway is not even a major arterial roadway. It qualifies as a collector street because of the number of driveways; entrances, exits, and curb use.¹⁵

¹⁴ Emergency vehicles--ambulance, police, and fire trucks – use the Parkway 24/7, with sirens frequently blaring.

¹⁵ It is interesting to note that when the City of Cambridge sends out its trash collection trucks once a week, the collection cannot begin serving the Parkway residences until the City provides a “tailgate” service truck so the trash collectors will not be hit by speeding traffic.

Access density—number of intersecting driveways and intersections—is supposed to decrease vehicular speed.¹⁶ But somehow, the Fresh Pond Parkway corridor breaks all the rules. Although the stretch of road between Huron Avenue and Mt. Auburn Street is very thickly settled, the actual vehicular speeds—even when the vehicular volume is very high—are often in excess of 55 mph, well above the legal limit. That scofflaw behavior is encouraged by the difficulty that state police report they have enforcing speed limits in real time.

In order to relieve this problem, we propose that the DCR post new signage:

- Strictly Enforced 25 mile per hour speed limit
- Speed Controlled by MA State Police Radar
- NO TRUCKS or BUSES
- You are entering a residential neighborhood, be prepared to stop for vehicles entering and turning

We propose a new pedestrian path/bikeway.

Everyone affected would benefit significantly from the creation of a two-way pedestrian path/bike lane on the Western side of, and running parallel with, the Parkway. This route would permit walkers and bicycle users to commute along with vehicles, using a shared but protected pathway. At the Mt. Auburn intersection, the new stretch of pedestrian path/bikeway would cross over to the pre-existing Charles River pathway.

On Fresh Pond Parkway, this enlarged pedestrian path/bikeway should accommodate all existing trees and, in fact, should include more new plantings of trees like those now being installed on the attractive Greenough Blvd. corridor between Greenough Boulevard and the new bike path.¹⁷

Shared Values

Russ Windham, one of our Parkway residents, often quotes John Muir when talking about the complexities of life on the Parkway: "When we try to pick out anything by itself we find it hitched to everything else in the Universe". This sentiment has borne

¹⁶ Kay et al Fitzpatrick, "Design Factors That Affect Driver Speed on Suburban Arterials," Research Report 1769-3, Texas Transportation Institute, June 2000.

¹⁷ This heavy degree of planting would complement the Parkway homeowners' own residential gardens and help return the Parkway to the green corridor that our 19th century forebears envisioned. Greening the Parkway will re-focus our values away from cars and back on people, flora and fauna.

itself out time and again as we contemplate plans for the improvement of our environment. But we should not be discouraged by the complexity or interconnectedness of plans that will profoundly affect our quality of our lives.

We must raise questions about how we want to live, raise our families, commute to and from work, and inhabit our recreational space. We certainly understand that we must *share* our roads with commuters who must traverse our neighborhoods to arrive at their destinations. All we ask is that those same commuters remember that they are *driving not through empty space but through our community and, ultimately, through our homes*.

Our desires must all converge to elevate our shared quality of life; to make our neighborhoods and our region more enjoyable and livable for all, not less; and to make our roads safer, more beautiful, and more compatible with the larger ecosystem, in the shared interest of all who would use them.

Hi MaryCatherine,

Thanks for your kind reply. Yes, we did indeed enjoy a relaxing holiday weekend. Hope you did too.

Just FYI, although you responded only to me, the memo we circulated on Sunday May 29 was signed *both* by my partner Elizabeth Westling *and* by me, and she is its principal author. We live as a couple at 33 Fresh Pond Parkway and so are equally concerned about these matters. But of the two of us, she is the expert in landscape and urban design and landscape history and I'm just a constitutional lawyer. So Elizabeth is truly my "better half," at least in this context! ☺

We look forward to meeting you tomorrow at 6 PM at Shady Hill.

All best,

Larry Tribe

P.S. I hope you won't mind if I forward some of the emails people are sending to us about the meeting and about the issues raised in our memo.

Laurence H. Tribe
Carl M. Loeb University Professor and
Professor of Constitutional Law
Harvard Law School
Hauser 420
1575 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02138

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Thanks for your kind reply. Yes, we did indeed enjoy a relaxing holiday weekend. Hope you did too.

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**Laurence H. Tribe
Carl M. Loeb University Professor and
Professor of Constitutional Law
Harvard Law School
Hauser 420
1575 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02138**

**From: McLean, MaryCatherine (DCR) [mailto:MaryCatherine.McLean@MassMail.State.MA.US]
Sent: Tuesday, May 31, 2016 12:10 PM
To: Larry Tribe <larry@tribelaw.com>
Cc: Fiesinger, Anne (DCR) <anne.fiesinger@state.ma.us>; Hannah Brockhaus
<hbrockhaus@hshassoc.com>; Nathaniel Cabral-Curtis <ncabral-curtis@hshassoc.com>
Subject: RE: Memo re proposed changes to the Fresh Pond Parkway area between Huron Ave. and Mt. Auburn Street**

Hello, Larry-

I hope you enjoyed a relaxing holiday weekend!

Thank you for your memo submitted on Sunday, May 29th; we at DCR and our consultant team are in receipt of it and are reviewing it now. We appreciate your kind words regarding what was discussed at the initial stakeholder meeting, and the thought and care evident in what you wrote. As you may know, we are holding a public meeting at Shady Hill School on June 1st at 6:00 PM. There will be a brief presentation followed by a workshop session where you can meet directly with the applicable members of our consultant team and discuss your ideas with them. Please also note that your memo and its transmittal email will be part of the meeting minutes comment appendix for the 6/1 meeting.

**Best,
Mary Catherine**

From: Larry Tribe
Sent: Tuesday, May 31, 2016 3:45 PM
To: McLean, MaryCatherine (DCR)
Cc: Robboy, Anita; 'elizabeth westling
Subject: a Coolidge Hill response

From: Coolidge Hill Yahoo Group
Sent: Tuesday, May 31, 2016 11:44 AM
To: CoolidgeHill
Subject: Re: [CoolidgeHill] FW: Memo re proposed changes to the Fresh Pond Parkway area between Huron Ave. and Mt. Auburn Street

I plan to be at the meeting on June 1, but may not be able to stay for the 2 hours. Thanks to Anita for forwarding the memo from Elizabeth and Larry. I may not have read it carefully enough, but didn't see anything that addressed my major concern. I live at the corner of Mt.Auburn and Coolidge Hill Rd. Making a left turn out of Coolidge Hill onto Mt.Auburn is nearly impossible. Making a right turn off of Fresh Pond onto the entrance onto Coolidge Hill Road(the one between the pillars) is also very difficult. Are the entrances/exits Coolidge Hill Road/Mount Auburn going to be addressed at the meeting? Is anyone besides me concerned about them? If you are, please email me. If not, I will assume I'm the only person bothered by the current situation on/off Coolidge Hill onto Mt. Auburn.

Karen

On Tue, May 31, 2016 at 10:43 AM, Robboy, Anita wrote:

Dear Coolidge Hill Neighbors,

I am forwarding the email below from Larry Tribe and Elizabeth Westling, together with the Memo they wrote regarding the issues raised, with the hope that as many neighbors as possible will join in 'the cause' and, in every event, be better informed. Thanks, Anita

Anita Wyzanski Robboy

BACK TO THE FUTURE ALONG FRESH POND PARKWAY

May 31, 2016

Elizabeth Westling and Larry Tribe

Introduction

This is a time of ferment in the evolution of our nation, our state, our neighborhoods, and our living environment. Planning efforts are underway that will profoundly affect the quality of life – and sometimes life itself – not just for those of us who live in this area but for the many people who traverse our roads, whether walking or jogging or traveling by bus, car, truck, or bike, to reach schools or shops, offices or hospitals or for healthful exercise and pleasurable recreation.

We are determined to press a new paradigm for these changes – a road not yet taken, to borrow from Frost – focused on the environment writ large rather than on narrow measures of speed and efficiency that are often unsustainable if not self-defeating. But this paradigm shift should not be confused with an imagined utopia lacking precedent in our own past.¹⁸

Vision

In the memorandum of May 12, 2016, Howard Stein Hudson Associates writes to the DCR of the contractor's vision for the DCR Mount Auburn Street Corridor Study: "Through this project, the agency seeks to create a corridor which is friendlier to cyclists, pedestrians, and transit users and to strengthen connections between abutting neighborhoods and the key green space of the Charles River, while ensuring calm, efficient vehicle operations."

Based on requests and comments made at the public meeting discussing the 2016 DCR Mount Auburn Street Corridor Study, we have already seen great emphasis placed on the need for the diversification and safety of all modes of transportation; reduced speed and volume of all vehicular traffic; and finally, the increased use of traffic calming measures for the express purpose of enhancing a healthful quality of life.

¹⁸ Not two blocks from Fresh Pond Parkway, we still have one of the most beautiful "rustic" cemeteries ever built. Consecrated in 1831, the Mt Auburn Cemetery was "planned by Frederick Law Olmsted with the assistance of the Massachusetts Horticultural Society. It incorporated curvilinear roads, hillocks, ponds and plantings in the natural and picturesque manner of British Landscape gardening." Witold Rybczynski, *A Clearing in the Distance: Frederick Law Olmsted and America in the 19th Century* (2000), p.45. Though it may seem strange to us now, 19th century families flocked to the cemetery as their premier recreational space. With picnic basket in hand, hordes of Sunday visitors made their way to the Mt Auburn Cemetery to enjoy the benefits of nature.

We wholeheartedly endorse the spirit of these well-expressed holistic aspirations and make them the foundation of our proposals:

Proposals for Fresh Pond Parkway

We propose a restriping of the lane lines on the one-third mile segment of Fresh Pond Parkway from Huron Avenue to Mt. Auburn Street from the existing 4-lane roadway to a 2-lane roadway with marked left-hand turns.

Our main goals are to decrease speed, reduce accidents, reduce aggressive vehicular behavior, and minimize adverse environmental effects. Though the evidence is not iron clad, there is definitely a relationship between lane width and velocity. When events occurring along “four-lane undivided urban roadway[s] of various widths were analyzed to determine the effects of lane width on speeds and collisions,” the correlation between speed and lane width proved impressive.¹⁹

Typically a “road diet”—when 4 lanes drop to 3 or 2 – is called for when there are no significant capacity issues. It may seem counter-intuitive to adjust the lanes downward when the Parkway is at or over capacity at least twice a day, but that is precisely the approach required if these adverse effects of maximizing vehicular velocity and volume are to be limited: implement a road diet from 4 lanes to 2 with a center lane that includes left-hand turn carve outs, so traffic can continue to run in a smooth and organized manner, at decreased speeds, through this thickly settled residential neighborhood.²⁰

Re-striping the Parkway back to a basically 2-lane roadway along the approximately 1/3 of a mile stretch between Huron Avenue and Mt. Auburn Street will force drivers to slow down briefly. Drivers will essentially have to travel single-file while traversing this residential neighborhood. But that is just as it should be: this road-bed was never built or banked to accommodate 4 full lanes of traffic at the high speeds that modern

¹⁹ Clinton L. Heimbach, “Some Partial Consequences of Reduced Traffic Lane Widths on Urban Arterials,” Transportation Research Record 923, Transportation research Board, 1983,

²⁰ Roughly a half century ago, the area around Alewife and Fresh Pond saw the development of the Alewife T station and its accompanying parking facility, and the road to Lexington and Concord became an 8-lane highway to accommodate commuters to and from the Western suburbs. But to protect the neighborhoods along the Northern edge of Cambridge and the Southern edge of Somerville, the 8-lane Route 2 was halted at the Parkways. Yet the onslaught of increased traffic anticipated by the Boston-bound highway, far from abating, rose dramatically and Fresh Pond Parkway became a 4-lane thoroughfare.

cars can take along a curved path, especially when they are 4-abreast, and especially through the front yards of abutters.²¹

Striping in left-hand turn carve-outs from a center lane would also have a beneficial effect on the number of rear-end collisions on the Parkway. Research has shown that many collisions, some of them fatal, are related to left-turning vehicles.²² That same research provides evidence that “[p]rojects where narrower lanes were installed to provide space for installation of a center two-way left-turn lane generally reduce accidents by 24 to 53 percent.”²³

As matters stand now, because of the curvilinear nature of the Parkway, trying to execute a left-hand turn from the Parkway is extremely dangerous. Any vehicle waiting for the on-coming traffic is at great risk of being rear-ended because the curvature of the road obscures the line-of-sight of vehicles coming up from behind, and their speed makes it hard to stop in time to avoid dangerous collision.²⁴

This rear-ending problem also occurs when vehicles try to turn right into their private driveways. Entering or exiting the Parkway to or from one’s own driveway must be made safer than the current lane arrangement allows. There are 44 private properties fronting the Parkway between Huron Avenue and Mt. Auburn Street. These are all zoned as single family residences with driveways, entrances, exits, and curb use. If the Parkway were striped with two good-sized traffic lanes with shoulders that allowed a little leeway for vehicles to slow down before making the turn into their own driveways, a badly needed margin of safety would be provided. The option of maximizing vehicular

²¹ In this era of mounting national and global sensitivity to the unintended dangers of environmental damage, it is more than slightly ironic that urban and highway planning so often continues to focus on the simple arithmetic of maximizing the number of vehicles that can traverse the Parkways and other major roads from the Western suburbs to Boston and points north as quickly as possible — almost as though our communities were a means to the end of moving ever more cars ever more rapidly across the landscape from point A to point B, with those who live nearby amounting to little more than road kill.

²² Michael Skene, “‘Traffic Calming’ on Arterial Roadways?” Institute of Transportation Engineers Compendium of Technical Papers, 1999.

²³ Douglas W. Harwood, “Effective Utilization of Street Width on Urban Arterials,” National Cooperative Highway Research Program Report 330, Transportation Research Board, August, 1990.

²⁴ In the recent past, the Commonwealth has spent \$88 million to improve the traffic flow at the Concord/Lincoln line, \$3 million to improve the flow at the Route 2/16 intersection, and \$288 million to improve flow on the Mass Pike by straightening the road and removing a toll booth at the Allston exit. Because the area between the end of Route 2 and the Eliot Bridge was and remains so thickly settled, the costs for the kinds of improvements made by the Commonwealth to these other highway areas would be prohibitive in this area. Fresh Pond Parkway was never improved to accept the increased volume of traffic brought in by the Route 2 freeway. And the curvature of the Parkway was never upgraded for cars that routinely go between 35 and 50 mph. Almost every tree and most of the guard rails have impact scars left by cars and trucks defying the laws of gravity on the Parkway’s curves.

flow without regard to the needs of those living along the Parkway would, in the end, be tantamount to landlocking all who live here.

The additional leeway provided by the center left-hand turn lanes and a wider right shoulder would combine to give the needed space for cars to pull over when emergency vehicles use the Parkway as a direct route from Arlington to the Mt. Auburn hospital in Cambridge.²⁵

We propose that, where signal lights exist, they should be retrofitted with left-hand turn green arrows.

Where there are existing left-hand turn lanes and green arrows for those vehicles needing to turn left, the traffic is far better organized and much better behaved. The system that we must currently abide requires adhering to very old-fashioned signage that prohibits drivers from making left turns between certain hours, e.g. 4-6 pm. But changes in the needs of this area have overtaken that design, and many drivers simply disregard the signs, resulting in backed up traffic, horn honking, side swiping, and darting out of lanes – a behavior pattern that is very dangerous indeed.

We propose new signage appropriate to a residential context.

The pattern of roadway development that has characterized the past several decades – the pattern that threatens to dominate our future unless we take matters in hand and insist on change – is emphatically *not* a pattern that meets contemporary standards for design work, as described in classic volumes like that of Charles W. Harris and Nicholas T. Dines, “Time Saver Standards for Landscape Architecture” (2nd ed.). Those standards typically group highways and streets into four basic categories: freeway systems, major arterial systems, collector street systems, and local street systems.

It is important to understand the four basic road design categories because Fresh Pond Parkway is a “parkway” in name only and only by virtue of its 19th century heritage. It is certainly **not** a modern parkway which would put it in the freeway category. In fact, the Parkway is not even a major arterial roadway. It qualifies as a collector street because of the number of driveways; entrances, exits, and curb use.²⁶

²⁵ Emergency vehicles--ambulance, police, and fire trucks – use the Parkway 24/7, with sirens frequently blaring.

²⁶It is interesting to note that when the City of Cambridge sends out its trash collection trucks once a week, the collection cannot begin serving the Parkway residences until the City provides a “tailgate” service truck so the trash collectors will not be hit by speeding traffic.

Access density—number of intersecting driveways and intersections—is supposed to decrease vehicular speed.²⁷ But somehow, the Fresh Pond Parkway corridor breaks all the rules. Although the stretch of road between Huron Avenue and Mt. Auburn Street is very thickly settled, the actual vehicular speeds—even when the vehicular volume is very high—are often in excess of 55 mph, well above the legal limit. That scofflaw behavior is encouraged by the difficulty that state police report they have enforcing speed limits in real time.

In order to relieve this problem, we propose that the DCR post new signage:

- Strictly Enforced 25 mile per hour speed limit
- Speed Controlled by MA State Police Radar
- NO TRUCKS or BUSES
- You are entering a residential neighborhood, be prepared to stop for vehicles entering and turning

We propose a new pedestrian path/bikeway.

Everyone affected would benefit significantly from the creation of a two-way pedestrian path/bike lane on the Western side of, and running parallel with, the Parkway. This route would permit walkers and bicycle users to commute along with vehicles, using a shared but protected pathway. At the Mt. Auburn intersection, the new stretch of pedestrian path/bikeway would cross over to the pre-existing Charles River pathway.

On Fresh Pond Parkway, this enlarged pedestrian path/bikeway should accommodate all existing trees and, in fact, should include more new plantings of trees like those now being installed on the attractive Greenough Blvd. corridor between Greenough Boulevard and the new bike path.²⁸

Shared Values

²⁷ Kay et al Fitzpatrick, "Design Factors That Affect Driver Speed on Suburban Arterials," Research Report 1769-3, Texas Transportation Institute, June 2000.

²⁸ This heavy degree of planting would complement the Parkway homeowners' own residential gardens and help return the Parkway to the green corridor that our 19th century forebears envisioned. Greening the Parkway will re-focus our values away from cars and back on people, flora and fauna.

Russ Windham, one of our Parkway residents, often quotes John Muir when talking about the complexities of life on the Parkway: "When we try to pick out anything by itself we find it hitched to everything else in the Universe". This sentiment has borne itself out time and again as we contemplate plans for the improvement of our environment. But we should not be discouraged by the complexity or interconnectedness of plans that will profoundly affect our quality of our lives.

We must raise questions about how we want to live, raise our families, commute to and from work, and inhabit our recreational space. We certainly understand that we must *share* our roads with commuters who must traverse our neighborhoods to arrive at their destinations. All we ask is that those same commuters remember that they are *driving not through empty space but through our community and, ultimately, through our homes*.

Our desires must all converge to elevate our shared quality of life; to make our neighborhoods and our region more enjoyable and livable for all, not less; and to make our roads safer, more beautiful, and more compatible with the larger ecosystem, in the shared interest of all who would use them.

I'm happy to help.

-Doug

Sent from my iPhone

On Jun 2, 2016, at 4:52 PM, McLean, MaryCatherine (DCR) <MaryCatherine.McLean@MassMail.State.MA.US> wrote:

Good afternoon, Stakeholders-

I hope this note finds you well.

We have a member of the community who is interested in learning more about the Mount Auburn St. Corridor Study. If any of you feel comfortable reaching out to this person then please feel free to contact me directly and I will connect the two of you.

Thank you,
Mary Catherine

Mary Catherine McLean
Department of Conservation and Recreation
251 Causeway Street, Suite 900
Boston, MA 02114
o: (617) 626-1443
marycatherine.mclean@state.ma.us

Sure, thank you.

On Jun 2, 2016, at 4:52 PM, McLean, MaryCatherine (DCR) <MaryCatherine.McLean@MassMail.State.MA.US> wrote:

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251 Causeway Street, Suite 900
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o: (617) 626-1443
marycatherine.mclean@state.ma.us

From: Arthur Strang
Sent: Wednesday, June 08, 2016 11:10 AM
To: McLean, MaryCatherine (DCR); Pete Stidman; Nathaniel Cabral-Curtis
Cc:
Subject: DCR Corridors Study—Comments 2, Questions that call for answers

Answers to the following questions can better ground the conclusions and recommendations we make for The DCR Corridors Study.

- 1) Huron Avenue is an example of reduced road capacity. During the past 3 or more years of sewer-separation construction, how many less commuters per rush hour have driven on Huron Avenue? How many less parking spaces have been used on Huron Avenue? What has been the reduction in emissions on Huron Avenue?
- 2) Cambridge has about 14 streets carrying large numbers of commuters in and out of the city. Half of these streets have undergone road diets (reduced lanes), and transformative complete streets (design for separated walk and bike lanes). What has been the impact on the modes, on air quality of the neighborhoods, on safety, and on climate change emissions?
- 3) Where does the quantity of traffic come from and go to, on the two Corridors we study? What sources from the Route 2 corridor and north of Cambridge and west of Watertown? What destinations in Watertown and Cambridge, and to the south and east of us?
- 4) How will the substantial increase in commuters in Watertown and Cambridge and neighboring communities be moved in the next decade? What is the list of relevant transportation projects in the MASSDOT draft Capital Investment Plan 2017-2021? Similarly, what are the relevant projects in the universal list of projects kept by the Boston Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)?
- 5) Because of the improvements costing over \$300 million in the Fitchburgh Commuter Rail, how many additional commuters per hour will be attracted along the Route 2 Corridor? (This investment is equivalent to more than ten miles of a new added lane to a highway, capable of carrying over 2000-4000 cars per hour.)
- 6) What kind of study and what information is required to evaluate the efficacy of scheduled van service along the Parkways? What end points: as far as Tufts University, Medford and The Longwood medical area, or as close as the 4 markets and the Alewife T in Cambridge alone?
- 7) What does the report State of the Built Environment (especially streets, buses and the Red Line) issued yesterday by A Better City, tell us about the substantial increase in commuters expected on our streets, parkways, buses and Red Line between now and 10 years from now?
<http://www.abettercity.org/docs-new/A%20Better%20City-%20State%20of%20the%20Built%20Environment.pdf>

Thanks, MaryCatherine. Two quick additions to the list of goals:

- Offer short-term and long-term solutions.
- Improve safety, attractiveness and comfort for pedestrians.
- Improve safety, access, parking and comfort for bicycles.
- Improve transit speed.
- Reduce cut-through traffic in the **HURON VILLAGE**, Larchwood and Coolidge Hill Neighborhoods.
- Maintain mobility for motor vehicles.
- Reduce crashes and severity of crashes.
- Acknowledge in our designs the needs of major local institutions such as BB&N, Shady Hill, **TUFTS HEALTH PLAN**, Mt. Auburn Cemetery and Mt. Auburn Hospital.

Please include:

Reduce emissions for the planet and in our neighborhoods.

Reduce impacts on our neighborhoods along both Mount Auburn Street and Fresh Pond Parkway, especially noise.

Thank you,

Arthur Strang