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To:	Ken Kirwin Project Manager	Date:	October 4, 2016
From:	Hannah Brockhaus Howard Stein Hudson	HSH Project No.:	2015136.00
Subject:	Department of Conservation and Recreation Mount Auburn Street Corridor Study Stakeholder Group Meeting 5 Meeting Notes of September 15, 2016		

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## Overview

On September 15<sup>th</sup>, members of the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) Mount Auburn Street Corridor Study project team and DCR staff associated with the job held its fifth Stakeholder Group meeting. The meeting took place at Russell Youth Community Center, located at 680 Huron Avenue in Cambridge. The stakeholder group is composed of local residents, representatives of major institutional and business stakeholders in the area, cycling, pedestrian, and green space advocates, as well as members, both elected and appointed, of local, state, and federal government for the project area.

The purpose of the stakeholder group is, through the use of its members' considerable local knowledge, to assist and advise the DCR 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 transit users, cyclists, and pedestrians, 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 final elements of the long term concept were presented, and additional edits for the long term concept were discussed. The long term concept at the intersection of Belmont and Mount Auburn was generally met with enthusiasm, apart from a few concerns over turning radius for lefts and bicycle lane placement. Several community members returned to whether or not lefts should be allowed into the Star Market parking lot from Mount Auburn Street. This was also a concept discussed by many groups later during the design charrette. There was also a lingering concern over weaving maneuvers between Brattle and Belmont, and how that would be impacted by the second bus lane. A few participants voiced concern over volumes being accommodated in the designs being evaluated for Fresh Pond Parkway.

The short-term draft concept for the intersection of Mount Auburn at Fresh Pond Parkway was also discussed. This concept would still improve safety for all modes and reduces transit delays through the

corridor while requiring less time and funding to implement. Attendees were supportive of the concept, so long as pedestrian refuge zones would be wide enough for the average bicycle to wait.

Burak Cesme from Kittelson Associates presented an initial look at the benefits provided by transit priority. It was noted that data used to analyze transit priority was only available for the 73 bus route, and this would be used as a metric for both major bus routes through the corridor. Finally, attendees participated in the plaza design charrette. Major themes included the need for westbound bicycle accommodations, a concern over maintenance of landscaping, and the desire for wide sidewalks, particularly on the Mount Auburn Cemetery side of the street.

## Agenda

- I. Welcome
- II. Mount Auburn at Belmont Long Term Draft Concept
- III. Remaining Edits to Long Term Draft Concept
- IV. Short Term Concept Draft at Mount Auburn at Fresh Pond Parkway
- V. First Look: Transit Priority Benefits
- VI. Plaza Design Charrette and Report Back

## Detailed Meeting Minutes<sup>1</sup>

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C: NCC - Good evening; thank you for coming out on such a pretty night. Given that it's September, the stash of nights like this is becoming limited so thanks for joining us. I'll note that we have our stalwarts Councilor Jan Devereux, Representative Jon Hecht with us and all the way from Belmont, Senator Brownsberger is here tonight. Thanks for coming, we appreciate you being here. Here are some of the usual housekeeping slides: your key staff at DCR, and the mission at DCR to remind us what we're here to accomplish.

This is our agenda for tonight. I want to draw your attention to the charrette down here at the bottom – we've pushed this a few times now and we will get to it tonight. This is a reminder of the study area. Our schedule is more or less on target, it's not sliding too badly, that's a credit to you. Thanks for working with us. To put it in your calendar, it will be on the last slide but we are targeting the next meeting for the first week of November and that will be immediately followed by a public meeting the

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<sup>1</sup> Herein "C" stands for comment, "Q" for question and "A" for answer. For a list of attendees, please see Appendix 1. For photos of maps from the design charrette, please see Appendix 2. For received comments, please see Appendix 3.

second week of November. I've been working closely with my colleagues at the City of Cambridge to ensure we are treading on as few toes as possible with regard to overlapping meetings.

I just want to take one moment because I am the public involvement person on this project. Hannah takes all these notes and writes them up, proofs them and then they go to me and I proof them as well. I've noticed over the past couple meetings is I see a lot of the same initials crawling up and down the side of the page. I want to make sure everyone here feels that they had an opportunity to be heard and given equal air time as we can. We have a very talented panel here, so tonight, I know we have some usual suspects, and all of you have much to say. For those of you, who haven't spoken so much, maybe speak up a little more. We want to hear from you. We want to make sure that this is a collective effort. With that, here's Pete.

### *Discussion of Long-Term Concepts*

C: PS: This is our standard disclaimer. All these concepts we are working with you to perfect. Nothing is gospel. We'll start with looking at the last little bit of our long term concept. We've cooked up the western section by the Watertown border. It's a bit wild at first glance but we're trying to respond to comments from bicycles. People feel like when they're coming along, drivers making a right turn onto Belmont Street tend to clip them when the bicyclist is trying to go straight. So we wanted to organize this corner. Also you'll note that under existing conditions, there's a double left turn here in practice. I'm not sure if that's intended or not. We envision a transit lane section here up to Homer Street. In order to do that, we need a right turn and left turn lane here. We've looked at the traffic and we think this can work. Of course we will do more serious modeling going forward. This is something for us to test, and if it doesn't work we will revise it. Another piece to test is how much benefit the transit lane has for bus. We will figure both of those out and make a decision with you guys. There's a slip through lane for bikes here, which is a way to get over to Holworthy Street in a protected intersection design and that's because the Greenway is down there. There's a bike box here so anyone that wants to go straight can be over here safely. Also a bike box on Belmont as well. We also create a lot more plaza space adjacent to the market; questions?

Q: Elizabeth Bierer (EB): Can you show where the existing turn is?

A: PS: It's along the same line right here. The bicycle lane dips into the curve a bit, but otherwise the line is preserved.

Q: Elizabeth Westling (EW): Where's the Star Market?

A: PS: The Star Market is here, to the right of this map extent, and the smaller businesses are along this side.

C: EW: Okay.

- Q: Mark Peterson (MP): Does that assume that you're not going to eat into any of the plaza space? Is there any possibility of using any of that space?
- A: PS: That's why we want to talk about that with you, to see how we might repurpose that space. There are definitely ways to reconfigure the space, so that's something to think about in the charrette section.
- Q: Tegin Bennett (TB): I have a question about the prospective bicycle lane as it approaches the box. I'm generally supportive of it. The bicycle lane to bicycle box is counterintuitive because it's left of the right turn lane. It's not a configuration I think I've seen, so maybe you could find some examples of where and how it works.
- A: PS: In looking at it, it's more common for the cut through to not be there.
- C: TB: Right, and how it transitions to the left and how it works.
- A: PS: I was trying to preserve space to get into the bike box.
- Q: Jonathan Hecht (JH): Pete, can you say more about the eastbound movements? It looks like to the west of Mount Auburn at Belmont is the beginning of a transit lane? It looks like two lanes of traffic merging into one lane.
- A: PS: That's actually a problem with the drawing. This would be a transit lane and one travel through lane. Cars would be encouraged to get into the lane ahead of the curve.
- Q: JH: Coming down Belmont Street, there's one left turn lane and one right turn lane. The 73 bus would get in the left turn lane?
- A: PS: They would actually get in the right turn lane. I forgot to explain that. This lane is right turn only, buses excepted, which is a rare thing. I'm not sure if it's been done in the US, but similar things have been proposed in the City of Boston, for the Melnea Cass project, which is also looking at transit priority. It's something to discuss with DCR and folks that are involved.
- Q: JH: The dedicated lane is both transit and bike?
- A: PS: It's marked as bus only, but that's a discussion point for the City of Cambridge and DCR: whether it's bus/bike or only bus.
- Q: EB: Could you explain why you are proposing the bus use the right turn lane? Is that for clearance?
- A: PS: Exactly. Nobody makes the right turn here; only maybe nine cars at peak hour. The idea is to give a bit of transit priority for the bus at the signal.

C: TB: If you call it a queue jump lane it's a more standard treatment in the U.S.: if you call it a queue jump lane but also allow right turning cars. If you treat it that way it's more standard and accomplishes the same thing.

A: PS: Good point.

C: Arthur Strang (AS): For the corner at Belmont Street and Mount Auburn in particular, I look forward to this design immensely.

A: PS: Thank you.

Q: MP: We have an eastbound bus lane that goes how far?

A: PS: Not far at all – it goes to Homer Street (the street that goes into the Star Market parking lot).

Q: MP: Isn't there another one west of the Fresh Pond intersection?

A: PS: There's another one that starts at Brattle Street and goes to Fresh Pond

Q: MP: So it ends for 100 yards and starts up again?

A: PS: Yes, because the traffic in between Homer Street and Brattle Street is intense. You pull off a bunch of cars at Brattle Street.

A: Burak Cesme (BC): Another point is that there's a single lane for through traffic in that section, because of the left turn lane.

C: PS: I should introduce Burak Cesme, from Kittelson Associates; they're our consultant for transit priority.

C: MP: I'm trying to imagine how it would work for the bus: you're speeding along and then get into traffic for a couple blocks.

A: PS: Further in the presentation we're going to have a fuller discussion of transit priority.

Q: Jan Devereux (JD): Currently if you're going east on Mount Auburn you're allowed to turn left into Star Market. In this design should you turn left at the light on Homer?

A: PS: Right now you're not supposed to, although people do.

Q: AS: Why? You can turn into your own driveway over a double yellow line. That's a driveway

C: PS: True. It's not a strong marking. We can look at whether we want to do that or not.

- C: Janice Gould (JG): I agree; coming down Belmont Street almost every car takes a left. But the big bike box there seems very large, and I worry about left turning radius with the box being so large.
- C: NCC: She's worried that the bike box is going to get clipped, right Janice?
- A: PS: You all are really sharp. We had a couple of geometric problems with this one before the meeting. This pork chop needs to be shaved off a little bit for that turn. Our engineer didn't use a program called AutoTurn for this turn, so this will be a wider turn radius. That would affect the left.
- C: JG: BB&N has a business office down and to the right of that intersection. I know buses come down that way, and make the left. I just want to make sure buses can make that turn.
- A: PS: It will be optimized, we noticed that.
- C: GS: I'm curious in the afternoon the primary demand is Belmont Street. There will be a lot of demand, and it looks like you're funneling traffic to a single stop light. I'm interested to see how that works, how far back the queues extend. The cars have to know where they're going.
- A: PS: Before next time, Bob will be crunching those numbers and once we finalize the concept, which I believe we can do now, we will run that in not just SYNCHRO but VISSIM as well.
- C: Sheila Fay (SF): As a bicyclist, I'm very glad to see the bike box. Stopping for the corner is crazy. My concern would be marking the directions for which lane to get into all the way back to Brattle Street. People in cars weave back and forth between Brattle and Belmont, that's what makes it unsafe for bicyclists.
- Q: PS: So marking these turn only lanes way back?
- A: SF: Mark them way back, and put up clear signs that show for Belmont get in the right lane, for Watertown get into the left lane.
- A: PS: Thank you. That's in the notes.
- Q: EW: Could you explain more about the bike boxes, particularly going toward Watertown? Are cars on left and the right of bike lane, coming to bike box? Are the bicyclists in front of you?
- A: PS: Yes, that's the safest place for bicyclists to be.
- Q: EW: Where do they go after they cross the intersection?
- A: PS: There's no treatment currently, so they would be in traffic.
- Q: EW: If you're a car in the right lane and there's a bicyclist in front of you, and everyone's going straight ahead, what do bicyclists do – do they stay in the middle of the road?

Q: PS: You might be talking about is what happens in a right arrow, and the through traffic isn't going?

Q: EW: Well, if you're in the right lane, do you have to turn right?

A: PS: Yes. These folks are protected. We could also do it so the bike box is only in front of through traffic, since right turning bikes can go through on the right side anyway.

Q: EW: Those bicyclists going straight ahead can move to right side of road once they cross the intersection?

A: PS: That's their choice.

Q: Gabriela Romanow (GR): Will there still be street lights there?<sup>2</sup>

A: PS: Yes.

Q: GS: Talking about that area, did you look at a separated bike lane instead of a bike lane on the road? I'm trying to imagine bikes trying to get from the right side into that middle lane (for through moving bicycles). For just the traffic, you have to use all your Boston driving skills to drive this area. So I could imagine it being very difficult to get into the bike box. The bike box itself is a great idea, but I don't know how you would get there by cutting through the Belmont Street traffic that runs all the way back in the PM peak. Have you considered a separated bike lane that goes all the way back by the retail area, reworking right of way altogether?

A: PS: If this was all in play, there might be a way to pull the right turning bicycle lane off the street sooner. You would still have the through lane.

C: GS: I just don't think it will work during rush hour.

A: PS: The only thing missing is we have to figure out how to get back into the mix of traffic.

C: GS: The lane extends further into Watertown.

A: PS: If you're willing to commit to that, but that's out of our scope. But we can certainly have that conversation.

C: EB: I like that idea.

Q: JD: In terms of turning right getting into the Greenway, I can't remember where the entrance to the Greenway is; are you talking to them?

A: PS: It's been a while since we've touched base with them. Of course DCR is involved in that project.

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<sup>2</sup> Pete and Gabriela clarified that she was referring to a traffic signal, rather than street light.

A: GS: The entrance is further down Holworthy 50 feet.

A: PS: It's not right here.

Q: GS: Bringing that up, that's a one way street, so is that bike lane one way going down? During the site walk, the question I had was how you get out, not in. You can ride on the road to the access point, but how do you get out, going down Mount Auburn? It almost needs a reverse lane.

A: PS: Interesting. There's a possibility of contraflow. Are there any other questions? That's good feedback. Generally you are okay with the concept?<sup>3</sup> Cool.

Q: AS: Since Watertown is here, is the Town of Watertown exploring the idea of a bus lane in Watertown?

A: GS: No.

C: AS: Okay, I was just wondering.

A: GS: The roadway doesn't have the capacity.

C: MP: There's not a huge backup once you're here.

C: PS: Something I forgot to mention is that in order to start the bus lane, we will need to coordinate with Watertown. I just want to note some remaining edits for the long term option that we didn't get to for this meeting but we will get to for next time. We had a meeting with BB&N to talk about pick-up/drop-off. They were talking to us about moving this gym driveway from here to square with the intersection so that people coming from the south and east can turn in. We're looking at that. We're also looking at geometric changes to line this up better. Over to the west, another product of our conversation with BB&N was a discussion about this parking as just for a place for parents to turn around and come back. Today you take a U-turn. They suggested that maybe you don't want to put parking there because it will become a staging area and will block up. That's something I wanted to show you guys as well.

Q: JD: So it will be just a turn around?

A: PS: Yes, so doesn't get gummed up.

C: JG: Because the current way you turn around is going away.

A: PS: This follows roughly the path of one of the two thoroughfares. This is westbound direction, and over here is eastbound. We narrowed it to one piece of asphalt so that means no U-turn.

Q: TB: What was the reaction going further south? It looks like you kept both options. Does that serve their needs; is there currently not enough capacity?

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<sup>3</sup> There was general agreement from attendees.



- A: PS: This was looking good. They're more concerned about the parking lot by the intersection.
- A: NCC: The big thing we took away from the discussion is that the driveway being tipped is an issue. Really, we need to look at geometry more. Pete has straightened this to give you more of a sense of what it would be like. It will probably look something like this, so that the driveway section stays where it is but where it connects to the intersection would change a bit. The idea is that the driveway which has limited use, just for people going to the gym, will become a part of the signal. It's tied together, a standard approach versus a strange geometry. One of the things we heard from folks at BB&N was that not only is it difficult getting kids to the river, but also that the effort to U-turn into that driveway gets parents hit. We're trying to get the driveway aligned better, keeping the access to gym from river side approach. The admissions offices are up there. When people are going to apply to BB&N they already have enough butterflies in their stomach, we don't want them having a tough time getting in and out of the parking area. The stuff down below, with the possible exception of removing the parking spaces to keep that space circulating, seems fine; it was well received.
- A: PS: We're going to fix the geometry of this parking area, and they also wanted us to think about maximizing parking spaces over here, which is another thing we'll look at
- Q: AS: Where's their bus parking?
- A: PS: That is a discussion. It would be on the left side.
- A: JG: They are currently at the gym and high school on the right side. There are overflow buses and commuter buses which fill the driveway. We try to not have them come early. The buses you see on the road are for visiting sports teams.
- Q: AS: I understand, I'm just wondering where they will be in the future. Is there still room for buses?
- A: JG: Yes, I don't think that's a problem.
- A: PS: We're coordinating with BB&N, so we will show them a new alternative of this to make sure it all flies.
- C: JG: What's tricky is the U-turn parents currently use is going away, so they're trying to adjust the driveway because otherwise you'd have to go all the way to Coolidge Hill, which is a busy area to turn around.
- C: PS: We'll be coordinating. There are a couple of things at Huron Avenue. We're looking at signal protected bicycle lane here. Tegin, since you're here maybe talk to Bob about that. He has your email. The idea is you move the bicycle lane to the side and give them protection from right turning cars with a signal instead of this configuration

C: SF: I didn't realize this issue last time. As a bicyclist trying to get westbound to Alewife, it is incredibly unsafe to make the left turn onto the bike path at Huron (which is on the sidewalk up there). If you're coming up that side it's crazy. Could we get a bike box there, and a signal protection or bump out on the right turn to Huron so cars aren't whipping around the corner?

A: PS: Okay. So, we need to facilitate a left turn onto Huron onto the bike path.

SF: Yes, because the new Greenway won't have access from Huron.

PS: Thank you for mentioning that. The other thing is that we got a request for a leading pedestrian interval. If you're running phases concurrently, while cars are going across, there's a walking signal for people going across as well. That helps to give more time for pedestrian crossing, but LPI helps that condition because sometimes you get people turning right and hitting pedestrians walking across. LPI gives pedestrians a head start, so that by the time cars get a green, you're halfway across the street.

Q: EW: Which one is Huron, which is Fresh Pond Parkway?<sup>4</sup>

A: TB: Just to clarify, I don't remember what it is now, but does that mean you're looking at concurrent phasing at this intersection instead of exclusive? This is the kind of intersection, where I would think there would be a desire to keep a protected phase?

A: PS: I'm not sure at the moment whether it's concurrent or exclusive. Ken?

A: Ken Kirwin (KK): It is now exclusive.

C: PS: Maybe that's a decision we need to revisit.

C: TB: Yeah, because this is a place where there are turning conflicts and high speeds. Also if a lot of people are looking to get to the bike path they might use the pedestrian phase to cross. This might not be the place to introduce conflicts into that.

A: PS: Yes, exclusive might make sense here.

Q: AS: Have you thought about excess of speed of cars in this area?

A: PS: We still have ramp markings, which means we're still looking at whether we will have table intersection design or stamped concrete design to help give the neighborhood feel. That hasn't gone away

C: AS: Still, won't the non-neighborhood folks ignore the appearance of that?

A: PS: There are maintenance concerns we need to work out. For such a high volume street maintenance concerns become bigger. A lot of the raised intersections in Cambridge are low volume streets.

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<sup>4</sup> The streets were pointed out.

- C: Brooke McKenna (BM): We would want to bring in emergency services to get their opinion. We definitely want to look at maintenance concerns.
- C: Nina Coslov (NC): Is the corner getting bigger here?
- A: PS: We looked carefully at the radius. We added a little bit over here (because there was extra space), a tiny bit on the other side, and this pedestrian refuge after you cross the bike lane. Other than that it's the same.
- C: Russ Windman (RW): Could you give a definition of stamped concrete?
- A: PS: It is thermoplast, like they use for a lot of striping, but it's a fancy design. You can think of Brigham Circle in Boston. The thermoplast is stamped into the concrete, so it's a bit recessed. It provides some texture but not so much that someone with a cane would have problems with it.
- A: NCC: Where it's been particularly effective is Huntington Avenue in the Avenue of the Arts section near the MFA and the Isabella Stewart Gardner. Having grown up in that area it was traditionally a speedway, you'd try to race the trolley with the car. The stamping visually raises the profile of the crosswalks and lowers speeds. The speeds on Huntington are much lower than they were. It can be effective. More discussions will take place.
- C: Tamar Zimmerman (TZ): bituminous rather than cement, correct?
- A: NCC: Yes. Its blacktop with a pattern stamped in it.
- C: JG: Could you go back to that turn around for one second? I was just worried about that turning radius: would it be possible to make the turn not as sharp?
- Q: PS: Are you thinking about buses?
- A: JG: Yes but more so minivans. I think that would make it easier. That turning radius looks a bit concerning.
- A: PS: It may be wider than you think, but we'll check turn to make sure large buses can make it.
- Q: GS: Would it be possible for that to share access with the other driveway? Could you combine them into a shared piece or something?
- A: PS: Maybe, we'll look at it. There might be a way to do that.
- Q: JD: Maybe it's because the contrast on the screen isn't very sharp, but I'm having a hard time figuring out what the turn-around accomplishes. You're coming out of the main parking lot?
- A: PS: No, it's actually meant for people coming down from Cambridge.

Q: JD: They would have to cross the street?

A: PS: Yes. The volumes on Greenough are not high, so we're having someone take a left turn here

Q: JD: There's no protected way to wait then? Right now you go into a little refuge.

A: PS: There's no longer a median there.

C: JD: Okay, I get it.

C: AS: This is a 15 miles per hour zone for the school area during the time parents turn around. If we would enforce it, it would be a lot safer.

Q: GS: Is Greenough Boulevard going west now one lane?

A: PS: Yes.

Q: GS: But that's two lanes.

A: PS: Yes, we're beginning to open it up. We'll go back to the one lane towards the west.

C: GS: I just noticed there are spotlights on the screen.<sup>5</sup>

C: AS: I have one more comment. In the thirteen years of MassDOT accident reporting there are about the same number of crashes on Mount Auburn and Fresh Pond Parkway. It's great we have a better design at all four. It's great we can get across but accidents arise, because people are very aggressive and unless we calm them that won't change.

A: PS: We're design guys. Last time we had state police here. That's an ongoing conversation. We can do the best we can. Design can and does affect speed.

C: AS: A speed table is design.

C: PS: I just wanted to note some remaining decision points we will analyze going forward that we didn't get to yet. A road diet on Mount Auburn between Brattle and Fresh Pond Parkway would remove either an east or westbound travel lane. That's something we will model in both directions to see which one works best. We've also had a request for a road diet on Fresh Pond Parkway between Huron and Brattle. We'll look at that 4 to 3 road diet, which is two lanes in each direction to one lane in each direction with a turn lane in the middle. Then we will look at lefts allowed or no lefts allowed on Larchwood and Fresh Pond. We will also look into whether to t-up or not t-up Brattle at Mount Auburn. We will look at those things and come back to you.

Q: JD: What does t-up mean?

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<sup>5</sup> At this point lights were dimmed.

A: PS: It means just what it sounds like. Right now Brattle comes in at an angle for cars entering, so we would turn that to be similar to where cars turn into Brattle on Mount Auburn: squaring the intersection.

Q: EB: On that last one, are you saying there was internal discussion over it?

A: PS: No, there was pushback here, from Councilor Aaron Dushku.

C: EB: I've driven that many times and merging onto Mount Auburn is pretty chaotic I thought the design was a big improvement and better possibility for improving street plantings.

A: PS: What this means is that we will test both, and see how they each work. We'll have a clearer picture for the councilor and for everyone else.

C: BM: Cambridge Traffic definitely supports improving that intersection. Also, we get a lot of resident complains to stop the lefts onto Larchwood.

A: PS: Yea, we've heard that a lot too.

Q: Gabriella Romanow (GR): Isn't there way too much traffic for a road diet on Fresh Pond Parkway? Won't it cause backup?

A: PS: We believe so but we want to show it.

Q: GR: What about the first one, on Mount Auburn. Do the volumes show that you could do a road diet?

A: PS: We feel confident that the volumes would allow the road diet, we just want to explore both options - eastbound and westbound road diet. There's also a third option which is to reduce the number of lane, but close to the intersection they spread out to provide turning capacity.

Q: GR: When you're going from Mount Auburn across Fresh Pond Parkway from Star Market toward the hospital, right now we have one lane straight across and two that turn right. We still have that?

A: PS: Yes, at the intersection you would. This is just talking about the straightaway. We'll look at that together to see how the traffic queues are.

C: EW: Could you go back to that list? I'm in favor of road diets but I think they only work if you have certain parameters along with them. One would be left turn lanes or left turn signals, either stopping cars or letting them go. And another would be help for bicycles and pedestrians. The problem is much of what you're contemplating here, if you don't have special lanes where you can turn left then you're treating Fresh Pond Parkway like a highway, where there's an exit and there won't be another for a long time.

- A: PS: Can I stop you there? I did mention a 4:3 road diet, which means two lanes in either direction down to one lane in either direction plus turn lane in the middle. That's a left turn lane. Left turns are provided for. In that approach.
- C: EW: I want to make sure you don't get into what I call highway mode. For those of us who live here, you have to be able to turn right and left, and drive around the neighborhood in a way that's convenient.
- A: PS: Right; and we've heard your point. We're going to model it and look at it together.
- C: AS: I have a question about whether or not changing capacity of road ways is an important one. There are war stories from people caught in traffic jams. No instrument was telling them how to go. Someone had a heart attack at Fresh Pond Parkway shopping center, and traffic was stopped every direction around there. Traffic did grow and back up and after a while people don't come that way. They found some other way. The thought that we should be willing to take all the traffic that will come; that's important.
- A: PS: That's why we're exploring it. And another thing to think about is diversion: what was happening on the side streets when that incident was happening. We're going to model it, look at it together, see what's going on and discuss it.

*Presentation of Mount Auburn at Fresh Pond Parkway Short-Term Concept*

- C: PS: DCR wants to do something in the short term to help bus delay. The stuff we're going through in the long term concept has a represents a major reconstruction project that will cost a lot of money. So, what can we do in the short term with a modest budget or perhaps with a contract that DCR already has? This is existing conditions, at our main intersection. This is the intersection where most of the bus delays are occurring. This is the long term concept for reference here. Just so you don't think we've forgotten it, we still have to adjust. This is what we conceive of as a short term option with some adjustments. It's a sketch. It accomplishes a good deal of the same goals: we still have the bike way going down to river; it shares the driveways here; the pinch points getting down to 8 feet but most of it is 10 feet wide; still accomplish road diet on one side; still zip up the three legged interchanges, so we add new parkland by extending the curb out. This traffic island needs a little work on this plan but still accommodates bicyclists and pedestrians and we do things like still improving crossing distance.

This is the original measurement for crossing distance: 137 feet for this crucial crossing. In the long term option we've taken that down to 64 feet because we can take out the medians here. The reason they are so tough is because they have catenary for the MBTA trackless trolleys. We can keep the two medians and by doing a road diet here, we can get the crossing down to 93 feet. That's still about 50% shorter than it was in the existing condition. We're not doing crosswalks on the north side in the short term condition. We're going to focus in on the crossing. This takes you through the signal, phase by phase, during the pedestrians-only time. If you're standing at the corner and get a walk signal, you

have 30 seconds before traffic starts going again: 7 seconds of walk, 16 seconds for flashing don't walk, and then don't walk for 7 seconds. What's the average crossing time, 3 feet per second?

A: Bob Stathopoulos (BS): That's slower pedestrian traffic, if you have elderly people crossing.

C: PS: We know there are many elders in the area, so walking 3 feet per second it takes you 22 seconds to this median. It's a two phase crossing, but not a three phase crossing like it is today. Phase 2 allows 20 seconds of time. The time it takes to cross is 16 seconds. This is a driveway. We have to mark this well, but there's very little crossing at the crosswalk. The total average cross time from when you get the walk signal to when you get to the other side of the street is 46 seconds. In the other direction the total time allowed is 20 seconds, the time it takes to walk is 7 seconds, and the total time allowed is 60 seconds. The time it takes to walk is 7 seconds. The final phase is 30 seconds and it takes 16 seconds to walk. It's still a long crossing but it's improved.

Q: BM: Does the short term concept offer any improvement to the refuge areas, since it's a multi-phase crossing?

A: PS: We've extended the refuges into the intersection a little bit, in order to take up some pavement. That will be new condition, so that would improve the surface, but otherwise no.

Q: BM: Space wise?

A: PS: Space wise it's the same.

Q: TB: Is the refuge wide enough for a bike?

A: BM: I don't think so, no.

C: TB: Again I think it's great to take moderate steps, but I worry if bikes can't fit in the median.

Q: PS: We could look at standard bike width, or more?

A: TB: I don't think you want to make much wider because it's a short term plan, but at least the length of one reasonably sized bicycle, would be a good measure. What about between the driveway and the first median – what's the width of that?

C: PS: By ADA it has to be six feet here for the waiting area.

C: EW: Today at that first refuge, there was a woman with a child and a dog on a leash. I thought, I hope they don't step out another inch because it was so close. Where you have to wait there is on the same level as the cars. There isn't much room.

A: PS: We can look at maximizing median space.

Q: NC: Is that the road up to Coolidge Hill?

A: PS: Yes; over here is the Coolidge Hill Circle.

Q: NC: If you're coming from eastbound on Fresh Pond Parkway to go up Coolidge hill, are you still able to go up and make a right?<sup>6</sup>

A: PS: Right.

C: NC: The right turn from Fresh Pond Parkway to Mount Auburn looks narrow. Right now, when a smaller truck tries to make that move it stops the whole intersection. That's something to consider if you want to make it narrower.

A: PS: Trucks aren't supposed to be on the parkway, so we don't design for them. If we did this would be cut much wider.

Q: GR: Will you be adding dotted lines?

A: PS: The dotted lines are meant to be guidance for the through lanes.

Q: GR: They will be painted on, correct?

A: PS: Yes, and probably not as crooked as this. In fact, we want to straighten this out. We may cut out this median more to make it a straight shot.

Q: EW: What scale are you using for this? And next time can you put cars in your drawings so that we can get some idea of scale?

A: PS: For reference? When we do the VISSIM, you'll see cars in the simulation. That's in November. We also looked at stop bar distances for the long term and the short term. We're still accomplishing some improvements. This is not as vastly improved, but the horizontal one is. The current crossing time is much worse, over 100 seconds.

Q: AS: These designs look good. What kind of additional flow is possible with a smaller intersection? There will be less gridlock on all routes, correct, because it takes less time to cross?

A: PS: It takes less time to cross. The operation in terms of traffic would be roughly the same except for the transit lane, and the bus getting an earlier signal so it gets through better. The tightening allows more time for pedestrians, that's the real effect.

Q: AS: So, that's what the time is being used for?

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<sup>6</sup> Nate and Pete clarified the movement Nina was asking about.



A: PS: Yes. We're maintaining the traffic as it is today. This is the first time we're going to look at transit priority as one whole. I'm going to invite up Burak from Kittelson Associates.

#### *Discussion of Transit Priority*

C: BC: Good evening everyone. As Pete mentioned we are looking at the impact of transit priority preferential treatments. Here we are looking at different segments on Mount Auburn Street. These are existing am peak travel times based on MBTA data. Here you see two segments we're looking at: the first segment from Belmont Street where earlier Pete presented a bus lane. We want to include existing travel times, speed for the segment so we can understand how much preference the treatments can offer. The second segment which is what we defined as number 4 to 6, is really congested- in the morning peak, travel time is 4.5 minutes which results in 4 miles per hour in the eastbound direction. The first segment between Belmont and Homer Street is a little better. Travel time is close to 2 minutes for buses. Still, that's less than 10 miles per hour - most buses travel at 8 miles per hour in this section.

The next slide is also from the MBTA data system for telling where the buses are. What we're looking at the travel time segments based on travel time distribution based on different time periods. For example at Coolidge Ave to Fresh Pond Parkway, you see how much congestion effects bus travel time. During off peak times you can see how it goes down. If we focus on bus travel time for the 73 bus between Brattle and Coolidge Ave, we have a similar pattern. In off peak time 6:30 am or midday, travel times are a bit shorter, but during morning peak it takes more than 2 minutes more.

Here we are looking at some improvements, in the form of time savings for the segments. We are looking at the result for bus lane. I want to start with the more congested segment, between Brattle and Fresh Pond Parkway. You can see with the bus lanes, again these are preliminary high level findings, as Pete mentioned. Once we have the simulation model we'll be able to simulate buses, bicycles, pedestrians, and cars, and we will be able to get more refined results. But from the preliminary analysis, putting a bus lane between segments 4 and 6 (Brattle to Fresh Pond Parkway) the speed goes from 4 miles per hour to almost 11.5 miles per hour. You can also see peak travel time drops from 4.5 to 1.5 minutes. It might not seem as significant with only 2 minutes of travel time savings, but remember that this segment is shorter than a half mile. You're getting travel time improvements over one third of a mile; most of the time, transit agencies look at minute savings per mile. When you look at that scale it's close to 8 minutes per mile saved. If we focus on first segment (Belmont to Homer), the peak hour speed increases from 8.4 to 9.2 miles per hour. The reason the benefits are smaller in this segment is that in the existing conditions this segment isn't as congested as closer to Fresh Pond Parkway. I'll stop here if you have any questions?

Q: EW: Does travel time include stopping at bus stop and picking up passengers?

A: BC: Yes

- C: Phil Groth (PG): This is actually APC data, not MBTA, if you're using the stop level data. Especially when you do modeling, it would be really interesting if you need to look at variability. That's the second bonus of transit priority.
- A: BC: We haven't done that yet but certainly that's something we'll get to: travel time variability and the deviation between headway divisions between buses. As a reflection of how reliable the buses will be with bus lanes.
- C: PG: Burak, for recovery time, layover time, we usually use the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile. If there's a difference between the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile, then that's additional savings we can see from the layover.
- A: BC: That's a great point and that's not just useful for transit agencies but also passengers. If you improve the reliability of transit that will relieve overcrowding and relieve the average time you wait at a bus stop. Agencies tend to report the 90<sup>th</sup> or 95<sup>th</sup> percentile. Depending on the context, you may also look at headway variables between buses.
- Q: MP: To make sure I understand the difference between the two slides, it's the intervention of the dedicated bus lane and priority signal?
- A: BC: It's not just the priority signal, but also assuming there are bus lanes. Here you are looking at existing travel times and existing speeds with no bus lanes treatments out there. This one considers bus signal priority and bus lanes.
- Q: MP: Could you go over what the priority signal is?
- A: BC: A signal priority is basically always trying to push buses, giving them more green time at signals to make sure they go through the intersection. For example if a bus is approaching the intersection its telling the controller, or signal, hello, I'm a bus, I'm coming, what can you do for me. The signal either tries to extend the green, so the bus gets through, or if the bus is standing at a red light, the signal can truncate the red light, so buses have an early start.
- Q: GS: Are you going to do the modeling for the 71 and 73?
- A: BC: Correct. We did not have data from the 71.
- A: PS: The trackless trolleys don't collect APC data, so we will only have the one we have data for, the 73.
- C: PG: The 73 is the one you have. For the 71, you only have two data points in the whole corridor. There's no granularity within the corridor. For the 73, you get every stop.
- A: PS: We've assumed that for this section they will be signal.
- C: GS: The 73 isn't trackless, so it can jump ahead if there's a bus stopped. It's not quite presenting an accurate picture.

A: PG: That's a good point. For the record, we're getting 350 new buses, and taking APC off the old buses and getting it installed on trackless trolleys. Hopefully in the future this won't be an issue.

A: PS: For our next project.

Q: NNG: Are you modeling with the same traffic, or are you making any assumptions of changing behavior?

A: BC: We haven't modeled that specifically. We tried several tools, including a spreadsheet model which stops times acceleration delays. We also looked at existing data and data to be comparable to bus running times peak and compared that to nonpeak times. This was all to replicate what would happen if you put a bus lane in. We haven't modeled this in VISSIM yet but once we have a full VISSIM simulation model, we'll be able to get more refined results.

Q: AS: Who else can use bus lane? For example, Mount Auburn Hospital has shuttles.

A: PS: Right now that's undetermined.

Q: As: Will that affect results, if we allow all private buses and commuter vans?

Q: PS: I imagine it would. That's a good question. Do you have a preference?

A: AS: The more people that can use them the better. The streets are full.

C: PS: Okay. We will look at that in the model.

A: BC: My guess at this point is that unless bus holding is really high it won't affect results that much. But if you also allow ridesharing cars would affect the bus lane.

C: MP: As someone who has ridden the Sunday morning bus for a long time, this is a dream come true.

C: PS: Thank you. To sum that up, this is total time saved over the course of route: about 3 to 4 seconds. These are preliminary results; we will show you more analyzed results with VISSIM. This may mean that service improves not just for time spent on the bus, but also how long you wait, bus bunching that happens. It's a good improvement. We'll learn more in November.

C: SF: My question as a bicyclist, who rides this all the time, is what's for bikes? There was a comment about using bike lane as bus lane. I can tell you that if it isn't allowed, I'm going to do it anyway. It will be the only safe place for me to ride.

A: PS: That's documented in the notes.

C: SF: There is no other way through this area

C: GS: And the buses are only going 10 miles an hour.

A: PS: Especially at peak. That's noted. Between now and November we will be taking about that more.

### *Plaza Charrette*

C: NCC: After two meetings, we made it!

C: PS: Plaza Design Charrette: we've been waiting for this for a while now. We have a couple of plazas: one by Star Market, and one in our alternatives at Brattle and Mount Auburn. Nate will be working to spread these maps around room, we will break into groups. I hope you all will be creative with what you want to see here. I have some slides that show how it looks today. If you want to see any of these while you're drawing, let me know. On this end is Homer, a bus pull out. This is an aerial view. Right now we have parking through here. All of these are catenaries, the poles here, owned by the MBTA. They are marked on the maps too. Catenaries aren't to be touched when you're designing; you have to work around them, and you probably want to leave a couple feet around them. This is a closer shot at the bus stop, another angle. This is inside parking area. There's a lot of space.

Q: JD: Who owns it?

A: PS: The City of Cambridge. I assume there's a sidewalk, which is public as well, but we haven't marked it. There may be some right of way closer to the buildings. Here's our other plaza as it is today. On the map we have it shown in the future condition. You may want to think about the trees that are here now. Here are some possible goals based on other stuff we've heard. People talked in the past about a gateway to strawberry hill neighborhood and Belmont; bringing social activity which could help businesses, bringing more customers; the cemetery across the street. We also have Tamar from CSS here, who's a landscape architect. I'm going to bring up Tamar; she's going to talk about some themes to think about.

C: TZ: Can you all hear me? Just hold on a few more moments before we start drawing. What we're looking for are concepts and ideas and there are pictograms to show you different design elements like benches and trees to scale on the side of the drawing. That can give you a sense of how large things are. There are a few things to think about. First, buffers: are there areas to be separated, or do you want protection from something, like the street, shielding views. Secondly, pedestrian routes: where do people need to walk to or walk through. Third, particularly at Star Market, vehicular routes; if there should be parking or a way to go through? Look at the size of what's out there for scale. Fourth, stopping and gathering points for people - places to come. Where should people gather? Where should we have seating, resting spots to stop and perch? Finally, focus points of orientation. Pete mentioned that Mount Auburn Cemetery is across the street, should we focus or orient the space on that direction. Consider those different things when you're sketching. We're not looking for a design; we're looking for concepts and ideas. Express them as you can.

## Report Back<sup>7</sup>

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*Tegin Bennett / Jane Carroll*

### Brattle/Mount Auburn Plaza

- Even though a one way bike facility is drawn on the north side following the sidewalk, the end result will probably be that it's used two ways – can we better accommodate that?
- Is the regained space from narrowing the roadway better used on the cemetery side or shifted to the other side where people might use the facility in the other direction? According to Jane, placemaking on the Cemetery side didn't make much sense because they have that inside the Cemetery
- Landscaped buffers
- Hubway station
- Give a transportation function to the plaza as opposed to a pleasant area to sit (which it wouldn't be)
- Sidewalk - adding pedestrian facility to allow more direct connection across the sidewalk, safe from the roadway.

### Star Market/Holworthy Plaza

- Retain half of the space for a pull-in and drop-off - maybe the back end? Needs inspiration
- Widen the sidewalk on the Star Market side because of how busy it is – potentially get rid of parking on one side of the pull-through
- Bike lane cutting through the Plaza?
- Landscaping would be nice, but who would maintain?
- Restaurant with outdoor seating at the plaza – they would be responsible for maintenance

*Gideon Schreiber / Sheila Fay*

### Brattle/Mount Auburn Plaza

- make sure sidewalk on the cemetery side preserved or widened – gets a lot of use and is difficult to travel on, particularly during winter because of a lack of snow removal

### Star Market/Holworthy Plaza

- Planters buffering with the catenary poles
- Bike lane next the catenary
- Bike signal bike highway
- Get rid of entrance to Star Market on Mount Auburn – less openings help safety and extend green plaza area further
- Hubway by Star Market bus stop

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<sup>7</sup> Attendees that were still present were invited to provide a two minute description of the discussion and drawings their group had decided upon.

- Did not re-add bus pull out - buses don't use it, cause problems
- Like idea of extended sidewalk outdoor seating, anything like that

*Elizabeth Westling/Janice Gould*

#### Brattle/Mount Auburn Plaza

- Disagree with the island taking more land
- Westbound traffic coming down Brattle should go straight
- North side of plaza - big sidewalk
- Bike path between North sidewalk and
- Allow merge to start and continue through this space; rip up island<sup>8</sup>
- Couldn't determine a good use for the space, may as well use it for traffic
- Through traffic in right lane, potential left turn lane, question over bus lane<sup>9</sup>
- Signal would make sense here<sup>10</sup>
- Like the idea of widening sidewalk on Mount Auburn side as a big tourist attraction - getting people of bike or bus

#### Star Market/Holworthy Plaza

- broad sidewalk from Homer to Holworthy - 12-14 feet wide at least, to be a new home of vendors: coffee shops, ice cream shops, sidewalk vendors, flower market
- Hedging/Greenery in front of the Star Market parking area and behind current bus stop (to shield the ugly parking)
- Brattle to Holworthy new unimpeded bikeway.
- Like idea of taking out the driveway if possible, or bicyclists will cross the driveway
- Moving west to Holworthy, more trees
- Outdoor benches: places to sit, have coffee while shopping
- Maybe a CVS Pharmacy?

## **Next Steps**

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The next Stakeholder Group meeting will be held on November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016 at the Russell Youth Community Center, located at 680 Huron Avenue, Cambridge. The next public meeting is scheduled for November 14<sup>th</sup>, at Shady Hill School's Gym (56 Coolidge Avenue, Cambridge). Members of the Stakeholder Group are encouraged to attend and encourage their friends, coworkers, and neighbors to also attend.

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<sup>8</sup> Nate pointed out that we will be determining to t-up or not to t-up based on VISSIM modeling.

<sup>9</sup> The concept for the intersection of Brattle and Mount Auburn shows a through lane and a left turn only lane, with a pedestrian buffer after Brattle comes in, in order to enforce the turn only lane. There is no bus lane in the approach to Mount Auburn at Belmont in order to accommodate the movements and traffic volumes present between Homer and Brattle.

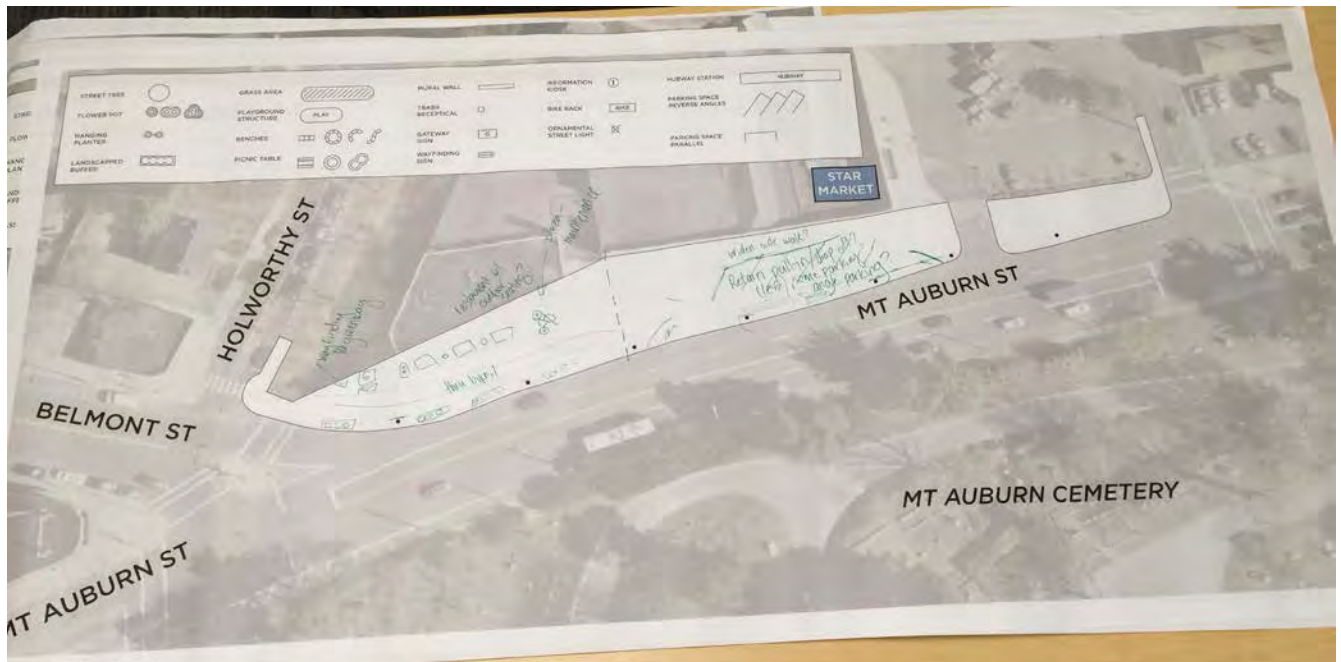
<sup>10</sup> Nate noted that during the presentation of the concept for this intersection, Pete noted that a signal would be warranted at the intersection.

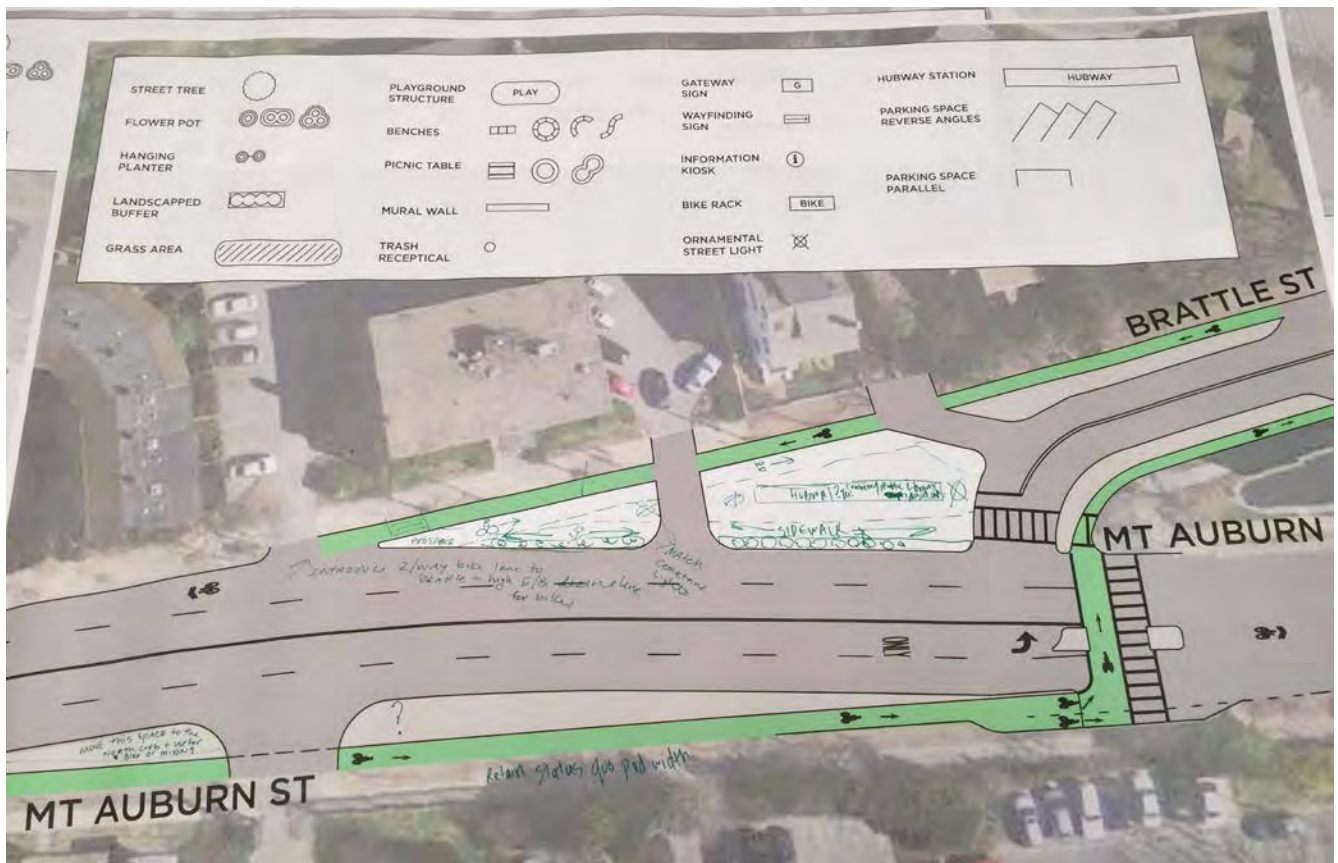
## Appendix 1: Meeting Attendees

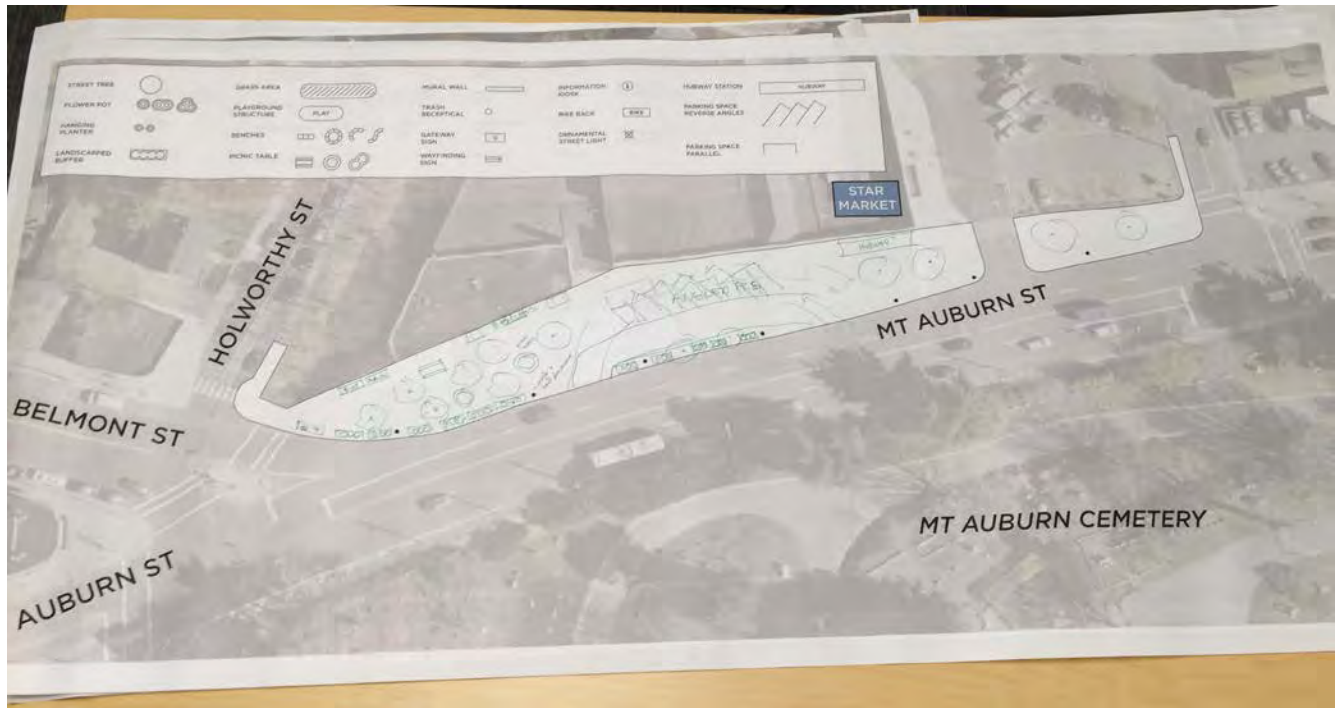
First Name	Last Name	Affiliation
Jinane	Abounadi	Community Member
Tegin	Bennett	City of Cambridge
Elizabeth	Bierer	Stakeholder Group
Hannah	Brockhaus	Howard Stein Hudson
William	Brownsberger	Stakeholder Group
Nathaniel	Cabral-Curtis	Howard Stein Hudson
Jane	Carroll	Stakeholder Group
Burak	Cesme	Kittelson Associates
Nina	Coslov	Stakeholder Group
Jan	Devereux	Stakeholder Group
Sheila	Fay	Stakeholder Group
Janice	Gould	Stakeholder Group
Phil	Groth	Stakeholder Group
Jonathan	Hecht	Stakeholder Group
Ken	Kirwin	DCR
Rob	Lowell	DCR
Melissa	McGaughey	Stakeholder Group
Brooke	McKenna	City of Cambridge
Kelsey	Perkins	Stakeholder Group
Gabriela	Romanow	Stakeholder Group
Gideon	Schreiber	Stakeholder Group
Bob	Stathopoulos	Howard Stein Hudson
Martha	Stearns	Stakeholder Group
Pete	Stidman	Howard Stein Hudson
Arthur	Strang	Stakeholder Group
Russ	Windman	Community Member
Elizabeth	Westling	Community Member
Tamar	Zimmerman	Crosby Schlessinger Smallridge

## ***Appendix 2: Plaza Design Charrette Maps***





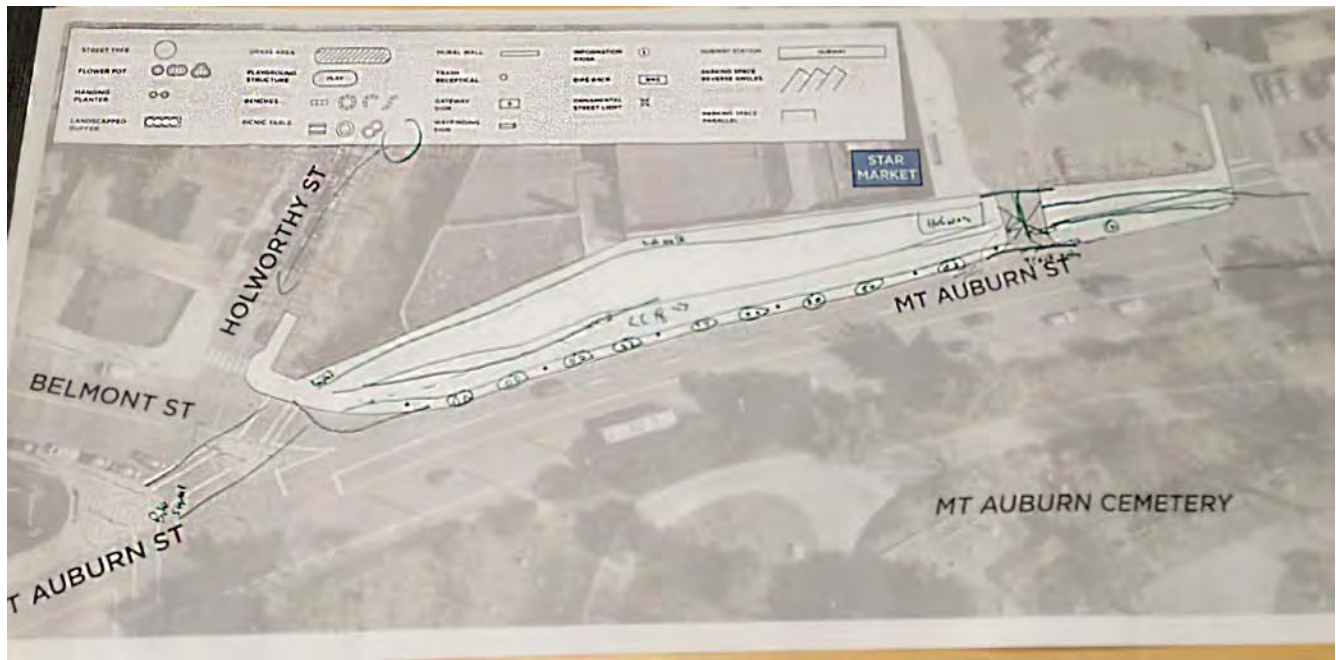


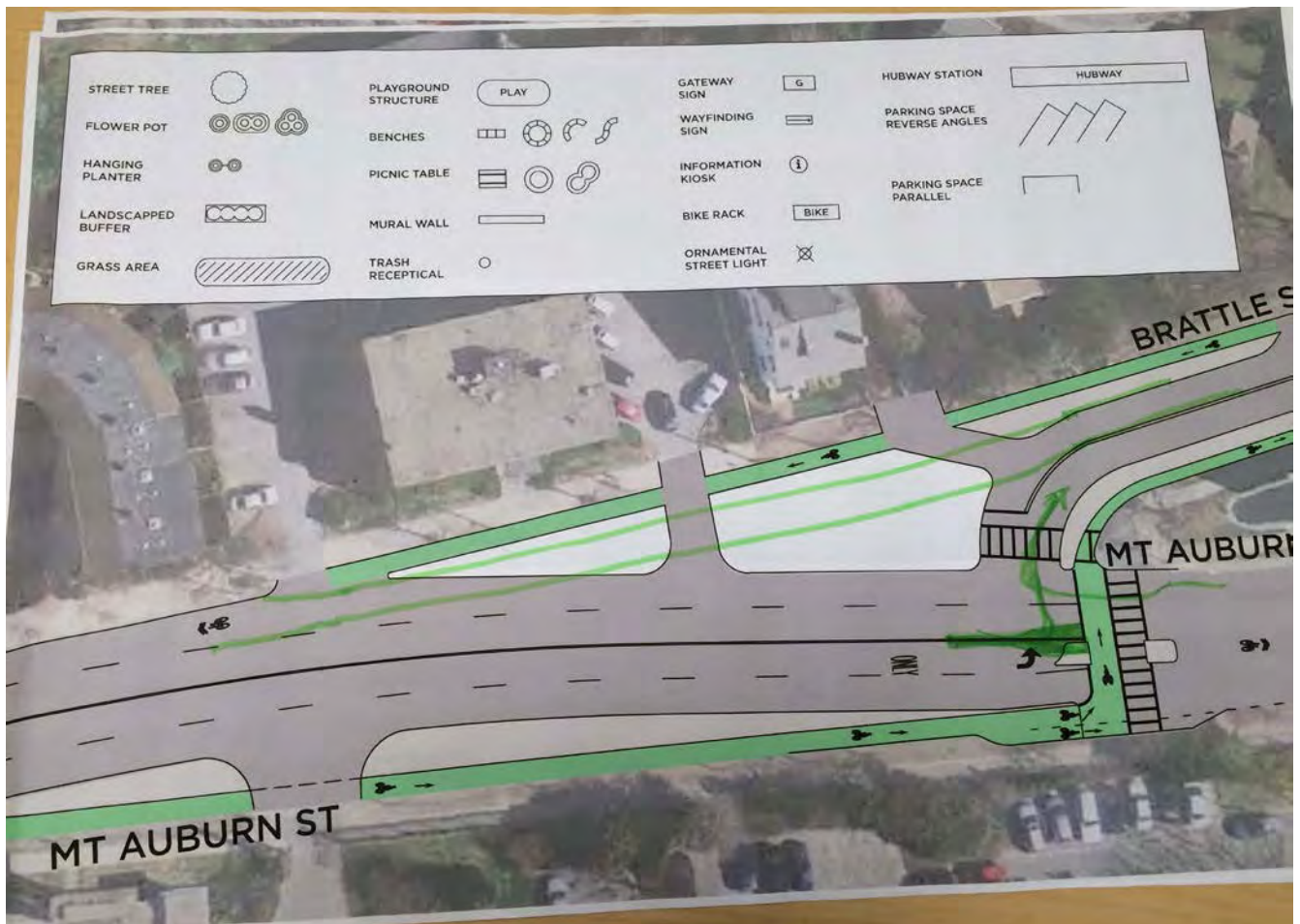


















## ***Appendix 3: Received Comments***

**From:** Nathaniel Cabral-Curtis  
**Sent:** Wednesday, October 26, 2016 12:33 PM  
**To:** 'tajwarahad@gmail.com'  
**Subject:** In Response to Your Inquiry to the DCR Mount Auburn Corridor Study

Good Afternoon Tajwar,

I hope this note finds you well and having a good day. Your note to Nadeem Mazen came to me via the City of Cambridge. I am the public involvement specialist for the Department of Conservation and Recreation's (DCR) Mount Auburn Corridor Study which is looking at the Fresh Pond Parkway beginning at Huron Avenue and going down to Gerry's Landing Road in front of Buckingham, Browne and Nichols, and Mount Auburn Street from Belmont Street to Traill Street near Mount Auburn Hospital. You and I have something in common: I graduated from BB&N in 1998 and I know the Gerry's Landing Road interchange very well. I used to bicycle and walk over it to get to school and it was one of the first major intersections in which I was regularly a driver beginning in the fall of 1997.

The goal of the DCR Mount Auburn study is to develop both short and long term options for improving safety and mobility for all modes within the study area noted above. The study also seeks to calm traffic, improve bus service on Mount Auburn Street, and strengthen bicycle and pedestrian connections throughout the study area with a particular focus on the connections between the neighborhoods around the Fresh Pond Parkway and the green space of the Charles River. Aiding us in developing goals, objectives, and concepts to meet these ends has been a committee of neighborhood stakeholders including a representative of the BB&N parents' committee who expressed most if not all of the concerns you note in your letter to Nadeem.

Working with our stakeholder group, we have developed a solution for the improvement of the Gerry's Landing Road intersections which provides for calm, efficient traffic operations using two conventional, signalized T-intersections, returns the green space currently isolated on a multiplicity of traffic islands to active use, and greatly shortens bicycle and pedestrian crossings thereby easing access to the river not only for residents seeking to walk and cycle along the river but also BB&N's cross country and crew teams. If you'd like to see what we've come up with, you can see the proposed concept at <http://www.mass.gov/eea/docs/dcr/news/public-meetings/materials/projects/2016-8-18-mt-auburn-stakeholders-presentation.pdf> beginning on slide 38 and some refinements based on stakeholder inputs here <http://www.mass.gov/eea/docs/dcr/news/public-meetings/materials/projects/09-15-16-dcr-mt-auburn-stakeholder-presentation.pdf> beginning on slide 12. We recently presented this concept to BB&N's chief of operations who termed it "beautiful" and "clearly done with our best interests at heart."

If after you have looked over our ideas you have further questions and concerns, I urge you to be in touch with me directly. We will also hold a public meeting to discuss this and other improvements for the study area on November 14<sup>th</sup> at 6PM at the Shady Hall Gym. As we are now both alums and no longer cheeky seniors, I will urge you to get to Shady Hill the correct way, from Coolidge Hill Road rather than hopping the fence the way we both might have once done.

Regards & Good Wishes,  
-Nate

**Nathaniel Cabral-Curtis**  
Associate | Manager of Public Involvement



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**From:** Pete Stidman  
**Sent:** Monday, October 24, 2016 8:40 PM  
**To:** Nathaniel Cabral-Curtis  
**Subject:** FW: Hello + I Need Your Guidance

Let's chat before you answer. We should probably involve Ken in the response as well I think.

Also, any progress scheduling the pre-meeting?

-Pete

**From:** Barr, Joseph  
**Sent:** Monday, October 24, 2016 7:32 PM  
**To:** Nathaniel Cabral-Curtis; Pete Stidman; Kirwin, Ken (DCR); Mary Catherine McLean  
**Subject:** RE: Hello + I Need Your Guidance

Nate,

I think it would be good to provide a response, if you are able to pull something together that everyone is comfortable with. I've already heard back from a City Councillor and the original email writer, asking that something be moved forward quickly, so it would be good if you can provide a sense of where things are headed with the study effort.

Thanks.

Joe B.

Joseph Barr, AICP  
Director of Traffic, Parking, and Transportation  
City of Cambridge  
617-349-4743 (office)  
[www.cambridgema.gov/traffic](http://www.cambridgema.gov/traffic)

**From:** Nathaniel Cabral-Curtis  
**Sent:** Monday, October 24, 2016 1:33 PM  
**To:** Barr, Joseph; Pete Stidman; Kirwin, Ken (DCR); Mary Catherine McLean  
**Subject:** RE: Hello + I Need Your Guidance

Good Afternoon All,

I hope this note finds everyone well and having a good day. Would folks like me to generate a response for the writer, or are we just taking this as a memo to file?

Regards & Good Wishes,  
-Nate

**From:** Barr, Joseph  
**Sent:** Monday, October 24, 2016 1:20 PM  
**To:** Nathaniel Cabral-Curtis; Pete Stidman; Kirwin, Ken (DCR) ; Mary Catherine McLean  
**Subject:** FW: Hello + I Need Your Guidance

Hi,

We received the email below regarding Gerry's Landing Road, so I wanted to make sure you had this info for the ongoing Mt. Auburn Street/Fresh Pond Parkway study.

Thanks.

Joe B.

Joseph Barr, AICP  
Director of Traffic, Parking, and Transportation  
City of Cambridge  
617-349-4743 (office)  
[www.cambridgema.gov/traffic](http://www.cambridgema.gov/traffic)

**From:** Peterson, Lisa  
**Sent:** Monday, October 24, 2016 6:37 AM  
**To:** Nadeem Mazen  
**Cc:** Tajwar Ahad <Molly LaFlesh; Barr, Joseph  
**Subject:** Re: Hello + I Need Your Guidance

Thank you for your email. We will look at this closely.

Lisa

Lisa C. Peterson, ICMA-CR  
Acting City Manager  
795 Massachusetts Ave  
Cambridge, MA 02139  
617-349-4300  
[www.cambridgema.gov](http://www.cambridgema.gov)

On Oct 24, 2016, at 3:38 AM, Nadeem Mazen <[nadeem@nadeemtron.com](mailto:nadeem@nadeemtron.com)> wrote:

Thank you so much for your concern and your extremely detailed message, Tajwar. Molly, can you please make sure we get back to Tajwar and to BBN administration on this item? I will bring this up with the Cambridge City Manager and our Traffic and Planning department shortly. I wish you all the best at Northeastern and hope to run into you again soon!

Nadeem Mazen

On Sun, Oct 23, 2016 at 8:26 PM, Tajwar Ahad <[tajwarahad@gmail.com](mailto:tajwarahad@gmail.com)> wrote:  
Hello, Nadeem!

I hope you are doing well. My name is Tajwar Ahad, and I'm a freshman at Northeastern University studying communications and computer science. I grew up in Cambridge my whole life and went to school at the Buckingham Browne & Nichols school on a very generous scholarship. I don't know if I sound familiar at all – I worked as a cashier at the Whole Foods on Prospect St this past summer, and we briefly chatted.

I wanted to reach out to you because I need help with fixing a dangerous area in our city: the roads that surround the Buckingham Browne & Nichols school. This is really personal to me. BB&N is located on Gerry's Landing Rd – a busy road traversed by cars carelessly traveling at high rates of speed. Because of other motorists' carelessness and the lack of stop lights in the area, I have been in not one, but two car accidents on Gerry's Landing Rd.

The first accident happened when I was in third grade. My mom would dread picking up my sister from the main building at BB&N because she'd have to pull out of the pickup line and into a road frequented by uncontrolled, rapid traffic. We got clipped by a sedan while we were pulling out, and while no one was hurt from the accident, it was extremely jarring nonetheless, and a huge hazard considering that this was a school zone. After many accidents that were similar to this, a stop light was installed right behind the pickup area to help control traffic. This seems to have worked, as the number of accidents I've heard happening at this location has decreased ever since.

The second accident happened in May of this year – and this time, I was driving. I had to pull into the parking lot of our school's gym for morning assembly, and in order to enter the parking lot, I had to cross three lanes of rapid, uncontrolled traffic. The only traffic control device was a stop sign, which was useless. I came to a complete stop and remained stopped for a few minutes because cars would zoom by constantly. Eventually, the first two lanes of traffic came to a complete stop and signaled their headlights for me to cross the road. I looked past these lanes of traffic and saw that the third lane was completely empty and that all other cars were stopped, so I thought it was safe to cross. I start crossing the road, and as I was crossing the third lane of traffic, a pickup truck slammed into the right side of the compact sedan that I was driving. Because he came out of nowhere and was not seen when I looked past the stopped cars a few seconds prior to the collision, he was either traveling at a really high rate of speed, or he was in the middle lane and switched into the third lane. Luckily, I was not hurt in the accident, but I think I was also extremely lucky.

I spoke to my dean about why there isn't a stoplight in front of this crossing area to help cars cross safely. He mentioned that he reached out to the City of Cambridge to set up a stoplight at this intersection numerous times but to no avail. Having been in an accident at this accident, I can honestly say that the experience was life-threatening. My question is, what must be done in order to install a stoplight at this intersection? Is it a lack of funds? I'm just frustrated that people are getting hurt financially, physically, and mentally because the City of Cambridge won't install a stoplight at this intersection, putting students and families who regularly cross this road at tremendous risk.

Please let me know what must be done for this to happen! I don't want to be a bystander and let this intersection remain uncontrolled any longer. If you know the appropriate person to direct this letter to, please do, and provide me with their contact information so that I can get in touch with them. If you have any questions or concerns, please email me at [tajwarahad@gmail.com](mailto:tajwarahad@gmail.com) or contact me by phone at [857-928-3810](tel:857-928-3810).

Thank you so much for reading this long email, Nadeem! I think this is a pressing issue that must be addressed promptly. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Best Regards,

Tajwar Ahad  
Northeastern University '20



September 27, 2017

*RE: Mount Auburn Corridor Study – Comments on Concepts Presented on August 18, 2016*

WalkBoston submits the following comments on the draft concepts for the Mount Auburn Corridor Study presented on August 18, 2016. We understand that the concepts may have changed since the presentation, but we feel it is valuable for these comments to be captured. We have organized our comments according to specific intersections.

While we appreciate the detail with which the consultants have addressed road crossings for people walking, we feel that the overall pedestrian pathway network has not been adequately addressed. Overall, there needs to be more attention paid to the areas of overlap where people walking and people biking intersect.

#### **Intersection of Mt Auburn Street at Brattle Street**

Under the assumption that vehicular traffic volumes at this intersection warrant a traffic signal, the plan diagram (shown on slide 9 of the August 18 presentation) shows both a crosswalk and bike crossing at the east side of the intersection. At the southern end of this dual use crossing, the sidewalk appears to narrow and there is limited (if any) area for people walking to wait for the signal. We would like some assurance that there is a continuous sidewalk and adequate space for pedestrians waiting to cross.

The northern end of the dual use crossing appears to require pedestrians to cross the bike lane to reach the sidewalk running east on Brattle Street and to use the crosswalk when walking west along Mount Auburn Street. There is also no delineated path for people walking west along Mt Auburn Street to safely cross the proposed driveway connections or the proposed bike path leading west from Brattle Street. While we realize this diagram is preliminary, we would like to see that people walking are given the same connected network as people biking and driving.

#### **Gerrys Landing, Memorial Drive, Eliot Bridge, Greenough Blvd**

The shortened crossing distances and single-phase crossings in the Two-T Alternative concept are significant improvements to the pedestrian infrastructure that exists today (shown on slide 4 of the August 18 presentation). Our concerns in this area lie in the interactions between cyclists and pedestrians at the crossing locations. The diagrams indicate that cyclists and pedestrians will be sharing waiting areas and in some cases crossing paths to reach destinations. We would like to see a finer-grained delineation of space for each user group. Furthermore, the bike paths appear connected, but the sidewalk network is either disjointed or not present.

### **Intersection of Fresh Pond Parkway at Huron Ave**

The plan diagram (shown on slide 52 of the August 18 presentation) shows a raised intersection at Fresh Pond Parkway and Huron Avenue. Given the vehicular traffic volumes in this location and the allowance of trucks, we were surprised to see this proposal. Furthermore, the pedestrian refuge island at the intersection's southeastern corner seems to interrupt the bike lane without providing benefit to walkers. If there is extra room at this location, we would rather see a curb bump-out or wider sidewalk.

### **Mid-block Crossing on Fresh Pond Parkway at Larch Street**

The mid-block crossing proposed across Fresh Pond Parkway near the Larch Street intersection (shown on slide 55 of the August 18 presentation) seems dangerous even with the introduction of a raised crossing and Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFBs). Pedestrians using this crossing may presume cars will stop once the beacons (RRFBs) are flashing which could lead to tragic consequences. The sight lines along this curvy section of Fresh Pond Parkway and the traffic speeds make this proposal inadvisable. We would suggest that more study be done to substantiate the need for the crossing, and for a safer location to be identified should the need be justified.

### **Intersection of Fresh Pond Parkway and Brattle Street**

The proposed tightening of curb radii at this intersection is welcomed, but we question the proposed raised intersection once again given traffic volumes.

At the August 18 presentation, the guardrail along the western edge of Fresh Pond Parkway was discussed. Some people in the Stakeholders Meeting felt that the "highway scale" guardrail makes drivers feel that they can speed. Furthermore, the railing is not in character with the "park-like and historic" space adjacent to it. Neighborhood residents advocated for the guardrail to be installed to protect children and other pedestrians walking along Fresh Pond Parkway.

Several harrowing stories were told about high traffic speeds and erratic drivers. In October 2015, before the installation of the guardrail, a car jumped the sidewalk and crashed into the brick wall, highlighting the dangers of this section of unprotected sidewalk. Feedback from neighbors, specifically parents of children walking to school, has been very supportive of the new guardrail. If there is a solution that protects walkers and is more in character with the surroundings, then it could be considered. However, safety must be prioritized in this location given its proximity to Shady Hill School and Buckingham Browne and Nichols School.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit these comments and for inviting us to be a member of the stakeholder group. We welcome any questions you may have about these comments and look forward to your response.

**From:** Doug Brown  
**Sent:** Tuesday, October 11, 2016 10:41 AM  
**To:** Pete Stidman  
**Cc:** Nathaniel Cabral-Curtis; 'McLean, MaryCatherine (DCR)'; Hannah Brockhaus; 'Fiesinger, Anne (DCR)'  
**Subject:** RE: Mt. Auburn St. Corridor - September Meeting Presentation

Not entirely sure, but I know that because of the particular neighborhood geometry (all streets converging at that location), I often find myself trying to execute such a turn. One thing that aggravates the situation is that Holworthy can't be accessed because of the placement of the traffic island, so cars looking to go north on Holworthy are also left without a legal turn option. Do we have any historical traffic counts for that intersection?

**From:** Pete Stidman  
**Sent:** Monday, October 10, 2016 12:48 PM  
**To:** Doug Brown  
**Cc:** Nathaniel Cabral-Curtis; McLean, MaryCatherine (DCR); Hannah Brockhaus; Fiesinger, Anne (DCR)  
**Subject:** RE: Mt. Auburn St. Corridor - September Meeting Presentation

Hey Doug,

Sounds like a good topic for the next meeting. Probably not by email, but in preparation how many people do you think are making this move, given the possibility that they could use Arlington Street or School Street, which are arterial streets, not neighborhood streets? At first glance, it seems to me that the demand for this move for people starting eastward of these arterials would be low, thus not a major generator of traffic on a side street even if a side street were occasionally used. But I'm not there every day. What's the demand you think?

-Pete

**From:** Doug Brown  
**Sent:** Monday, October 10, 2016 12:26 PM  
**To:** Pete Stidman  
**Cc:** Nathaniel Cabral-Curtis; McLean, MaryCatherine (DCR); Hannah Brockhaus; Fiesinger, Anne (DCR)  
**Subject:** Re: Mt. Auburn St. Corridor - September Meeting Presentation

Thanks, Pete. So then what's the plan for people looking to get from mt auburn street to Belmont st? Are they supposed to do a u-turn? Use the pull out in front of star market? Cut through neighborhood side streets? None of those seem like preferable alternatives.

-Doug

Sent from my iPhone

On Oct 10, 2016, at 12:09 PM, Pete Stidman wrote:

Hey Doug,

In the current configuration, the new intersection does not allow left turns from Mt Auburn onto Belmont street. Disallowing these turns allows for a transit lane that will help buses move through this area faster. If we allow left hand turns here, the likelihood is that they would significantly delay traffic. Also, it strikes me that there may not



be a high demand for a left turn here as all the streets between Arlington and St. Mary's allow this move, and Arlington is signalized as well.

-Pete

**From:** Doug Brown  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 22, 2016 1:11 PM  
**To:** Nathaniel Cabral-Curtis; 'McLean, MaryCatherine (DCR)'  
**Cc:** Hannah Brockhaus; Pete Stidman; 'Fiesinger, Anne (DCR)'  
**Subject:** RE: Mt. Auburn St. Corridor - September Meeting Presentation

Much appreciated.

**From:** Nathaniel Cabral-Curtis  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 22, 2016 12:55 PM  
**To:** Doug Brown; 'McLean, MaryCatherine (DCR)'  
**Cc:** Hannah Brockhaus; Pete Stidman; 'Fiesinger, Anne (DCR)'  
**Subject:** RE: Mt. Auburn St. Corridor - September Meeting Presentation

Yes. We have them and you will see them attached to the next set of meeting minutes.

**From:** Doug Brown  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 22, 2016 12:55 PM  
**To:** Nathaniel Cabral-Curtis; 'McLean, MaryCatherine (DCR)'  
**Cc:** Hannah Brockhaus; Pete Stidman; 'Fiesinger, Anne (DCR)'  
**Subject:** RE: Mt. Auburn St. Corridor - September Meeting Presentation

Thanks, Nate. I also previously submitted some suggestions about the Fresh Pond Parkway-Huron Avenue intersection. Can you confirm that you received those, as well?

-Doug

**From:** Nathaniel Cabral-Curtis  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 22, 2016 10:20 AM  
**To:** Doug Brown; 'McLean, MaryCatherine (DCR)'  
**Cc:** Hannah Brockhaus; Pete Stidman; 'Fiesinger, Anne (DCR)'  
**Subject:** RE: Mt. Auburn St. Corridor - September Meeting Presentation

Good Morning Doug,

I hope this note finds you well and having a good day. I will forward this to our traffic engineers for review.

Regards & Thanks,  
-Nate

**From:** Doug Brown  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 22, 2016 12:19 AM  
**To:** 'McLean, MaryCatherine (DCR)'

**Cc:** Hannah Brockhaus; Nathaniel Cabral-Curtis; Pete Stidman; 'Fiesinger, Anne (DCR)'

**Subject:** RE: Mt. Auburn St. Corridor - September Meeting Presentation

Regarding page 10 of the attached presentation, will a left turn be permitted from the eastbound lane of Mt Auburn Street on to Belmont Street westbound? I would be in favor of allowing this turn, as the current prohibition encourages cars to make illegal u-turns through the Star Market plaza in order to then proceed on to Belmont Street, and the reworking of the intersection makes this a more regular intersection.

Thanks,

Doug Brown

**From:** Doug Brown [mailto:douglas\_p\_brown@yahoo.com]

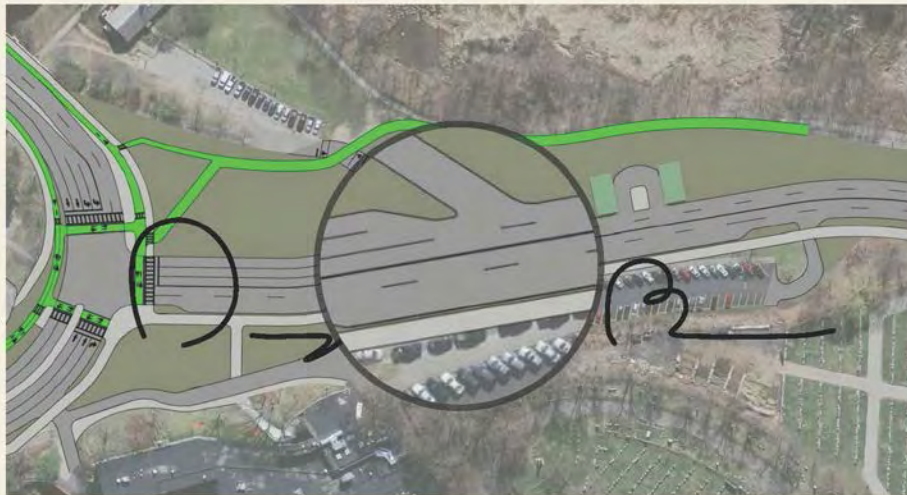
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 21, 2016 11:44 AM

**To:** McLean, MaryCatherine (DCR)

**Cc:** Hannah Brockhaus; Nathaniel Cabral-Curtis; Pete Stidman; Fiesinger, Anne (DCR)

**Subject:** Re: Mt. Auburn St. Corridor - September Meeting Presentation

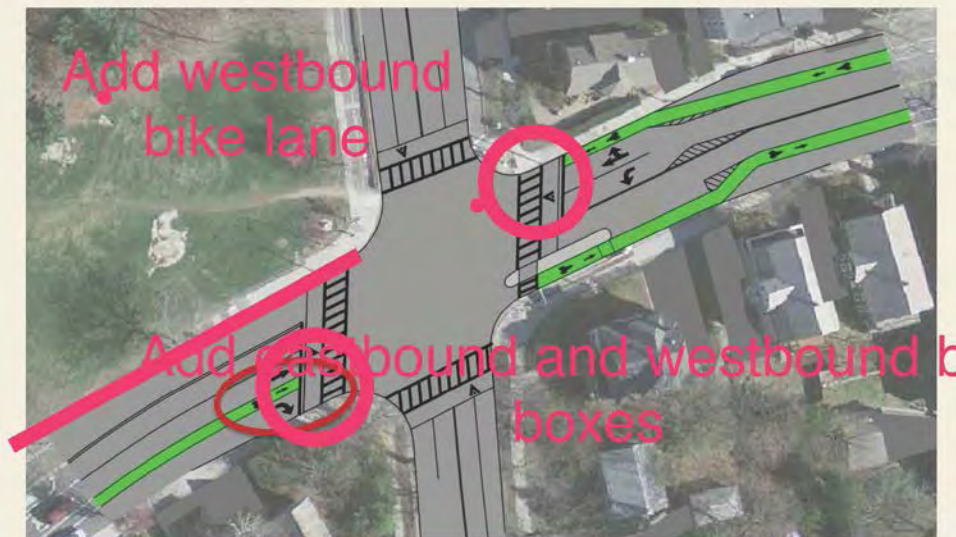
### Two-T Alternative - Remove parking from turn-around



Mount Auburn Street Corridor Study



### Fresh Pond Parkway at Huron Avenue – Signal Protection



Mount Auburn Street Corridor Study



**From:** Nathaniel Cabral-Curtis  
**Sent:** Monday, September 19, 2016 10:24 AM  
**To:** McLean, MaryCatherine (DCR); Hannah Brockhaus; Pete Stidman; Nathaniel Cabral-Curtis  
**Cc:** Fiesinger, Anne (DCR); Kirwin, Ken (DCR); Lowell, Robert (DCR)  
**Subject:** RE: dangerous pedestrian crossing at Mt. Auburn Street near Elmwood Ave.

Good Morning MaryCatherine,

I hope this note finds you well and having a good day. If I read the gentleman correctly, some of the short-term improvements discussed by Pete on Thursday night last week would go some way to addressing these issues. Signal timing changes and some additional signage, though perhaps not flashing since this would likely require underground electrical connections – a more long-term thing, could definitely be looked at as part of our short-term improvement package. We can pass on the signal issue to Bob for analysis.

Regards & Good Wishes,  
-Nate

**From:** McLean, MaryCatherine (DCR) [<mailto:MaryCatherine.McLean@MassMail.State.MA.US>]  
**Sent:** Monday, September 19, 2016 9:35 AM  
**To:** Hannah Brockhaus; Nathaniel Cabral-Curtis; Pete Stidman  
**Cc:** Fiesinger, Anne (DCR); Kirwin, Ken (DCR); Lowell, Robert (DCR)  
**Subject:** FW: dangerous pedestrian crossing at Mt. Auburn Street near Elmwood Ave.

Good morning, team! I hope everyone had a relaxing weekend!

I received the message below from Stuart Levinson who attended the Stakeholder meeting on Thursday. While he appreciates the work we're doing with the study, he is looking for more immediate action. I responded to his message and connected him with Mike Harris, our Director of Governmental Affairs, so he may therefore reach the appropriate legislators in Cambridge. However, I still wanted to ensure you all received his email. Please let me know if you have any questions regarding Stuart's concerns.

Thank you!  
MC

**From:** Stuart Levinson [<mailto:stuartlevinson@gmail.com>]  
**Sent:** Monday, September 19, 2016 8:09 AM  
**To:** McLean, MaryCatherine (DCR)  
**Cc:** Green Frog 🐸  
**Subject:** dangerous pedestrian crossing at Mt. Auburn Street near Elmwood Ave.

Mary Catherine,

I am not sure who to send this message to about a very dangerous crosswalk at Mt Auburn Street. Please direct me to the appropriate people within Cambridge city government.

If you walk down Elmwood Street toward Fresh Pond parkway, and then use the crosswalk to cross over Mt. Auburn Street, you will find a crosswalk light turning white (OK to cross) only to have City Buses and cars continue to come through on a regular basis, more often than not. Students and others, unaware, and assuming

it's safe to walk given the crosswalk light, are walking into oncoming traffic. It is very dangerous for everyone, especially students.

I attended a recent Mt. Auburn Stakeholders Meeting in hopes of raising this issue, but despite the progress they are making and great long-term ideas, their work is years out... perhaps 5 to 10 years away if the project is even funded and approved.

What can we do now to solve this problem? This doesn't require major re-work to solve this issue today. Along with other concerned neighbors we are asking:

- to time the crosswalk light appropriately so that it gives city buses and cars time to pass from Fresh Pond Parkway onto Mt. Auburn street.

- a flashing sign that says pedestrians are crossing! Cars and buses are coming from a long way over to get to Mt. Auburn from Fresh Pond and they're moving quickly, trying to make it through the intersection. Pedestrians need a flashing sign here.

We can't wait until the entire Mt. Auburn Corridor study is completed. This is an immediate safety issue.

Who are the right people to engage? Who should know about this so I can push for action to make it more safe?

thank you,

Stuart

**From:** Bennett, Tegin  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 15, 2016 9:46 AM  
**To:** Pete Stidman  
**Cc:** Nathaniel Cabral-Curtis; Deignan, Bill  
**Subject:** Mt Auburn congestion video

Hi there,

In advance of tonight's meeting, I wanted to send along a 3.5 min video from a morning this week, which shows the AM IB queuing (at about 7:30am) backing up all the way from FPP to the Mt Auburn/Brattle split past Aberdeen and the Shaws. It hasn't been this way over the summer, but this has been the norm for Sept. I wanted to send this so you know why some of us are a bit surprised by the proposal to take a lane from the general traffic in the IB direction (instead of the OB direction, where the queues don't seem to back up nearly as far). I know there are left turn lanes as well but the whole segment between Aberdeen and FPP was stopped, so it's hard to imagine where the traffic will go if there is one lane. I would love to understand this better! And I'd certainly love to see a bus lane that works to get around all of this congestion.

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/ywvg6ax11ygahx4/MtAuburn.mp4?dl=0>

Best,  
Tegin