



**Task Force Working Meeting #5**  
**Thursday, April 24, 2008**  
**Location: Boston College High School,**  
**150 Morrissey Boulevard, Dorchester, MA**

**Task Force Attendees:**

Fr. George Carrigg, St. Christopher's Church  
Patrick Connolly, Boston Teacher's Union  
Bill Cotter, Columbia-Savin Hill Civic Association (CSHCA)  
Annissa Essaibi-George, McCormack Civic Association  
Matt Gordy, CSHCA  
Chris Hart, Adaptive Environments  
Sherina Hendrix, Dorchester Bay Economic Development Corporation (DBEDC)  
John Lowe, McCormack Civic Association  
Victoria Maguire, Graduate of UMass Boston  
Paul Nutting, CSHCA  
Orlando Perilla, Harbor Point Community Task Force (HPCTF)  
Joe Sammons, Geiger-Gibson Community Health Center  
Phil Strazzula, Phillips Family Hospitality  
Don Walsh, CSHCA/DBEDC, Chair

**Ex-Officio Attendees:**

Boston City Council President Maureen Feeney  
Mike Christopher, Office of Representative Walsh  
Justin Holmes, Office of City Council President Maureen Feeney  
Meagan Maloy, Office of Senator Jack Hart  
Drew O'Brien, Office of U.S. Senator John Kerry

**City of Boston Attendees:**

David Black, Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc.  
Jim Fitzgerald, BRA  
Tad Read, BRA  
Carole Schlessinger, Crosby, Schlessinger & Smallridge  
Lauren Shurtleff, BRA  
Lauren Smyth, Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services

**Members of the Public:**

Frank Baker, Resident of Dorchester  
James Baker, Resident of Dorchester  
Linda Ballard, Blessed Mother Theresa of Calcutta Parish  
Greg Dicovitsky, Transit Realty Associates  
Valerie Harms, Resident of Harbor Point  
Gail Hobin, UMass Boston  
Mary Hogan, Blessed Mother Theresa of Calcutta Parish  
Paul Lynch, Ironworkers Local 7  
Julia O'Brien, Massachusetts Department of Conservation & Recreation  
Catherine O'Neill, Corcoran Jennison Companies  
Seth Riseman, Utile, Inc.  
Bob Sloane, WalkBoston

## **Meeting Summary**

On Thursday, April 24, 2008, the fifth meeting of the Columbia Point Master Plan Task Force was called to order at approximately 5:10 p.m. in the Loyola Function Room at Boston College High School by Don Walsh, CSHCA/DBEDC and Chair of the Task Force. Don reviewed the agenda, adding that there would be time at the conclusion of the meeting to discuss how the Task Force felt its work was going.

Tad Read, BRA Senior Planner, began the first section of a PowerPoint presentation, which can be found on the BRA's Columbia Point Master Plan website. Tad reviewed the demographic and housing conditions on Columbia Point, calculated with data from the 2005 Claritas U.S. Census update.

The following question was raised in response to Tad's presentation:

- Annissa Essaibi-George, McCormack Civic Association, asked where the owner-occupied housing on Columbia Point is located, since the data presented tonight only includes Harbor Point in its figures, which is made up entirely of rental housing. Tad agreed to follow-up.<sup>1</sup>

Tad turned the presentation over to Carole Schlessinger, BRA Consultant, who continued with an overview of the land use and open space data that had not been covered at the original existing conditions Task Force meeting on March 6, 2008.

Questions or comments in response to Carole's presentation included:

- Orlando Perilla, HPCTF, commented that it is important to consider the Harborwalk's maintenance, public safety, and accessibility in the Master Plan. He later added that the Master Plan should also address safety improvements to Mt. Vernon Street, since it is currently very wide and dangerous, as well as the possibility of adding a street from Harbor Point to Morrissey Boulevard in order to facilitate better connections across Columbia Point.
- Joe Sammons, Geiger-Gibson Community Health Center, noted that the playground by the Dever School is often used by children living at Harbor Point.
- In a follow-up comment, Joe Sammons added that many residents pass through Joe Moakley Park on their way to the South Boston Neighborhood House's daycare center.
- Chair Walsh indicated that Joe Moakley Park is used as more of an athletic field than as a park. He added that while the Savin Hill Yacht Club is just outside of the project area, it is seen as a valuable resource to the community.
- Joe Sammons stressed that the Master Plan should build on some of the ideas outlined in the Mt. Vernon Street charrette, held in 2005. He also asked that the Master Plan consider a better connection to Joe Moakley Park, and include strategies for keeping the level of affordable housing on Columbia Point sustainable.
- Mary Hogan, Blessed Mother Theresa of Calcutta Parish, expressed a desire to see the Savin Hill and Columbia Point neighborhoods better connected as a result of the Master Plan.
- Chris Hart, Adaptive Environments, emphasized that the public outreach process for the Master Plan is very important on Columbia Point, since the Master Plan represents a real opportunity for connecting the community.

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<sup>1</sup> After the Task Force meeting, BRA staff looked into the matter and discovered that data from a census tract that overlaps with a portion of the Savin Hill neighborhood (specifically, census tract 091000) had been inadvertently included. The data for resident population and housing for the Study Area has since been modified to include only data from census tract 090900 (which lies fully within the boundaries of the Study Area).

Next, Chair Walsh turned the meeting over to David Black, BRA Consultant. David reviewed the study area's traffic operations and gave an overview of the utilities on Columbia Point. When explaining the Kosciuszko Circle's vehicular volumes and levels of service, David cautioned that driver behavior plays a crucial part in the rotary's function, which is not always represented in the numbers. Regarding crash data, David also cautioned that the numbers do not include unreported crashes, and also fails to explain the safety level of each intersection.

In the ensuing discussion, the following questions or comments were raised:

- Chris Hart noted that the Kosciuszko Circle was laid out several decades ago with a set of geometric decisions that continue to influence driver behavior through the rotary, which in turn created the approaches as they are today. David acknowledged this and stated that as a general rule, traffic engineers narrow lanes when they want to slow traffic, but at the same time they also want to move traffic along. The rotary represents these two opposing conditions.
- Chair Walsh commented that the traffic signal on Morrissey Boulevard at Freeport Street is timed too short, adding that only 10 cars are typically able to move through the intersection per cycle.
- Joe Sammons stated that Mt. Vernon Street has a problem with its street lighting, as well as with its storm drainage system resulting in ponding water, both of which impede pedestrian movement.
- John Lowe, McCormack Civic Association, asked who controls the traffic signal located at the exit of the Shaw's supermarket, noting that it does not function well. David agreed to check and follow-up with the Task Force.
- In response to a question from Bill Cotter, CSHCA, David replied that it is tough to say whether there is a trend in the number of crashes, in terms of whether they are increasing or decreasing, since the relationship between traffic volumes and crashes is not a simple one. David added that it is important to look at each situation, noting that the project team has not found any of the study area intersections to have particularly high crash numbers.
- Chair Walsh commented that the increased number of vehicles that will come to Columbia Point as a result of future development will require that the Kosciuszko Circle's traffic be better managed. David agreed, but stressed that they must also make pedestrian movement, bicycle riding, and transit an appealing option for people coming to Columbia Point.
- Paul Nutting, CSHCA, noted that there are currently two obstacles to overcome in terms of traffic, the first being the separation of local and regional traffic and the second being the elimination of duplicative moves around Columbia Point.
- Joe Sammons asked if the traffic and roadway improvements can be tied to new development as it comes into Columbia Point. David responded that an important part of the scope of the Task Force is to consider the possible options for community benefits and mitigation, which represents how a project can compensate for or fix a problem.

At the conclusion of the question and comment period, it was determined that the next Task Force meeting will be held on May 29<sup>th</sup>, after the first community meeting on May 15<sup>th</sup>, but before the second meeting on June 14<sup>th</sup>. This Task Force meeting will provide Task Force members with an opportunity to discuss their progress thus far, and also provide some feedback to the project team on their ideas for the second community meeting.

The next meeting is scheduled for **Thursday, May 29, 2008, from 5:00 p.m. to**

**7:00 p.m. at Boston College High School – Loyola Function Room, 150 Morrissey Boulevard, Dorchester.**

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:20 p.m.