

**Stadium Way Area Neighborhood Meeting**  
**March 29, 2007**  
**6:00 PM**  
**Honan Public Library, North Harvard Street**

**Harvard Allston Task Force Members**

John Cusack, *Meeting Chair*  
Rita DiGesse  
Mike Hanlon  
Harry Mattison

**Harvard University**

Harris Band  
Ruth Bonsignore, *VHB, Transportation consultant for Harvard University*  
Mike McBride  
Kevin McCluskey  
Alison Reinhardt  
Nancy Stack, *Gilbane, Infrastructure consultant for Harvard University*  
Rod Emery, *Edwards & Kelcey, Streetscape consultant for Harvard University*

**City of Boston**

Bill Conroy, Boston Transportation Department  
Vineet Gupta, Boston Transportation Department  
Representative Mike Moran

**Introduction – John Cusack**

John Cusack said this was the third meeting with Rena Street and Windom Street area neighbors regarding Harvard's Allston street proposals. John encouraged everyone to attend the next Task Force meeting on April 9<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m. at St. Anthony's to hear reports from him, Ray Mellone and Paul Berkeley on the smaller group meetings that occurred throughout March.

**Introduction – Harris Band**

Harris explained that the meeting is meant to be a working session to discuss the proposals with the neighborhood and get their feedback. He introduced other Harvard staff in attendance and said that members of Harvard's consultant teams were also in attendance to take notes and listen to the community's feedback. Harris said that Harvard's master plan presented concepts for streets as a starting point to initiate discussions with the community. Harris said that the plan was being tweaked as Harvard received feedback from the community. Examples of two revisions to the plan are:

- 1). Shifting proposed graduate student housing to the edge of the proposed new Rena Street to make a more cohesive Rena Park.
- 2). Depicting the proposed housing along Stadium Way behind current Windom Street residents as town houses as a way to provide visibility and permeability from the neighborhood.

- Mike Hanlon asked about the proposed stream in Rena Park and what would happen to Oxford Street. Harris said that Harvard was studying the possibility of day lighting a stream in Rena Park which, was also suggested by the Charles River Watershed Association (CRWA).
- An Eatonia Street resident said that Eatonia Street residents use that street as a through street to North Harvard Street and he wanted assurance that it would remain a through street. Harris said that the graphics depicted in the master plan were symbolic and meant to represent concepts not actual plans. He said that the locations of the proposed houses at the end of Eatonia Street could be shifted so it remained a through street.

### **Stadium Way Discussion**

Harris said that the intention of building Stadium Way is to keep traffic off the neighborhood streets.

Harris said that in response to neighbors' concern about the speed of traffic on Stadium Way, the planners are studying the possibility of putting one or two roundabouts along Stadium Way to reduce speed.

Harris showed an approximate section drawing of Windom Street to Stadium Way to address neighbors' questions about how close Stadium Way will be located to the homes on Windom Street. The approximate distance from the back of a house on Windom Street to Stadium Way is 163 feet.

- A community member whose home is the last house on Hopedale Street (Ed Studdert, 69 Hopedale Street) pointed out that Stadium Way would be a lot closer to his home than 163 feet. Harris acknowledged that this was true and that Harvard would be happy to work with him to discuss specific solutions for his home.

Harris showed three different designs (cross-sections) of Stadium Way. In response to neighbors' comments to create a larger buffer between the Windom Street residents and Stadium Way, the third design allowed for 32 feet of landscaping, a pedestrian pathway and a tree way before Stadium Way started.

- John Cusack asked if this was 32 feet back from the 163 feet to Windom Street homes and Harris said he would have to verify this.
- Suggestion that there needs to be a separate lane for bike riders, especially if there are going to be two roundabouts on the street. Harris said that the planners were still trying to figure out the best option but that they want to try to keep the paved area as narrow as possible.
- Question about if there was a possibility of public transportation vehicles using the proposed shuttle lane. Harris said yes, it was a possibility and that potentially the urban ring could use these lanes.
- Question about the timing of development of Stadium Way and if it would occur simultaneously with the proposed housing along Stadium Way. Harris said that ideally the planners would like to build Stadium Way as soon as possible because it will help to reduce traffic on neighborhood streets. He thought that the development of the proposed housing would happen simultaneously as Stadium Way.

- Harris said that traffic for the first science building could use Windom Street because there will be a net reduction in traffic with WGBH leaving but the Harvard planners don't think this is the right option. Harry Mattison asked why this wasn't the best option until the neighborhood knew more about Harvard's future build-out plans. He asked whether Harvard had studied the number of trips currently going on Windom Street and the projected future number. Harris said, for the first science building it is a reduction in the number of trips. Harris said that Harvard is never going to know all of its development at one time so it has to propose a flexible infrastructure to respond to future conditions.
- Question about if the shuttle buses could only go in one direction on Stadium Way. Harris said it wasn't impossible but ideally it would be helpful to create a shuttle loop and to encourage public agencies to provide better transit access.
- Questions about Harvard's traffic studies.
  - WGBH employees have left and there hasn't been a reduction in traffic.
  - Harvard has conducted computerized traffic models but doesn't understand the actual traffic dynamics within the neighborhood. The neighborhood doesn't want to see Stadium Way built on false pretenses.
- Representative Mike Moran encouraged Harvard to find a solution to allow traffic to exit off the turnpike ramp onto Harvard property. He offered his assistance on reaching out to the Massachusetts Turnpike Authority to see if this could be possible.
  - John Cusack showed on the map the proposal to extend Rotterdam Street and turn right on an old existing street along the Genzyme building to the Turnpike. He agreed that this proposal only worked to get traffic off the science site.
  - Harris said that Harvard proposes this exact same option in its Master Plan and that Harvard completely agrees with this proposal if it is possible. He said the Turnpike needs to be convinced this move is safe and that contemporary safety standards are higher today which may be why the road is no longer active.
- John Cusack asked for the dimensions of the potential temporary Stadium Way alignment by the Task Force meeting on April 9<sup>th</sup>.

### **Rena Street/Travis Street Area Discussion**

Harris reviewed the different options for connections to Rena Street and the proposed new Rena Street Extension

- 1). New Rena Street extension as a two-way street with access prohibited to the existing Rena Street. Cars can turn onto Travis Street from both the existing Rena Street and the new Rena Street extension. Retain access to Kingsley and Bertrum Streets via Travis Street.

- 2). New Rena Street extension as a two-way street with Rena Street and Kingsley Street dead-ended. No connection between existing Rena Street and Rena Street extension. Traffic from Rena Street extension can turn onto Travis Street.
- 3). Rena Street extension as one-way westbound street.
- 4). A new road “Academic Way” located west of the proposed science site that provides access to Western Avenue from the new Rena Street extension. This was a community suggested alternative. Harvard hasn’t rejected this idea but it will diminish open space and create an additional curb cut on Western Avenue.
- 5). Seattle Street connection with official vehicle access.
- 6). New Rena Street cul-de-sac with bicycle/pedestrian/emergency access through to Travis Street.
- 7). New Rena Street cul-de-sac with bicycle/pedestrian and official vehicle access through to Travis Street.

Harris said that ideally the planning team would like to provide emergency vehicles and shuttle access to the building along the perimeter of the science sites.

Representative Moran said that the option to dead-end Rena Street and Kingsley Street seem like the best options and doing anything other than that is not what the neighborhood wants.

Harris said that the Harvard planning team thinks that the new Rena Street cul-de-sac option minimizes traffic on the neighborhood streets plus provides open space and pedestrian pathways.

There was some confusion about how traffic flow would work if the existing Rena Street was dead-ended. A community member thought that it would be difficult to make the existing Rena Street a two-way street and worried about losing parking spots on both sides of the street if this happened. Harris clarified that Harvard is not proposing to dead-end Rena Street but rather to create a cul-de-sac on the new Rena Street extension and allow for pedestrian, bicycle and official vehicle use to the edge of the existing Rena Street and to turn up Travis Street. He said under this proposal traffic flow on Rena Street, Kingsley Street and Travis Street would remain as it is today.

Harris showed examples of how pedestrian, bicycle and official vehicle access could be enforced through the use of roadway treatments, automatic gates and bollards.

- Questions about how it would be enforced and if it would be done through card access. Harris said he wasn’t sure of the exact details but that it would be more than a sign.
- Questions about whether the cul-de-sac option would only be an initial solution and if the road would eventually be extended. Harris said that the planning team thinks it will work in the long-term however, he could foresee moving the location of the cul-de-sac further

west toward Rena Street to eventually serve the proposed graduate student houses. He said that the planning team is increasingly respectful of the problems that could be created if the exiting Rena Street was fully extended.

- Mike Hanlon expressed concern for how people were going to access the proposed graduate student housing and suggested putting a road to the south of Rena Street. Harris said the housing isn't designed yet so options are still being studied.
- Suggestion to have the shuttle go south on Stadium Way to Cambridge Street and then North Harvard Street to avoid a grid lock trying to get on Western Avenue from Travis Street. Harris said the planning team thinks it is a reasonable request to ask for a shuttle to be allowed to go down Travis Street once every 15 minutes and that it wasn't increasing any significant traffic on Travis Street.
- Question about why the loading dock of the science building needed to be on Rena Street and why a loading dock couldn't be created to the east of Stadium Way to serve all the future buildings like is done at the Harvard Business School. Harris said that from an operational and safety standpoint locating the loading dock on the new Rena Street was the best solution and would help to get traffic off of Stadium Way.
- Harry Mattison suggested that using Academic Way for official vehicle use wouldn't encroach on green space as was depicted in some of the options for restricted access roads. He said that it would also allow for access around the building for emergency vehicles. Kevin McCluskey said that Academic Way could provide 100 feet of green space between the sites for science one and two and asked the community to consider the benefits of this green space. Harry asked if Harvard could add Academic Way to the set of options being evaluated for area circulation. Harris said yes.

### **Windom Street Area Discussion**

Harris presented several options for street proposals in the Windom Street area.

- 1). Hopedale Street connection to Stadium Way; Windom Street cul-de-sac.
- 2). New Rena Street connection to Windom Street.
- 3). New Oxford Street with connection to Windom Street and Stadium Way.
- 4). New Amboy Street extension to connect to Stadium Way.
- 5). New Oxford Street and new Amboy Street extension to connect to Stadium Way.

There was discussion about whether the new Oxford Street and the new Amboy Street extension should be one-way or two-way. Some neighbors expressed concern about the speed of traffic on Amboy Street now. John Cusack suggested that if the traffic light is positioned at the bottom of Stadium Way then people will want to get on Stadium Way. Harris said that the planning team

would study the different one-way and two-way options and discuss these the next time the group meets.

- John Cusack reiterated that the neighborhood was in high agreement that extending Hopedale Street to Stadium Way should not be an option.
- Suggestion that the burden of traffic on Windom Street would decrease once the tenants of the Comcast building were gone.
- Several audience members seemed to be in agreement that Stadium Way could be helpful in decreasing some of out the cut-through traffic on the neighborhood streets. John Cusack suggested that certain engineering solutions might disrupt the routes the neighbors currently use by adding 1-2 more turns or taking them out of their way 200-400 feet but that it would be worth it if the solutions kept traffic out of the neighborhood. Harris agreed and said that there was a balance between the conveniences of a route verse the quality of life.
- Vineet Gupta of the Boston Transportation Department (BTD) said that BTD has been listening to the neighborhood and has a clear idea of what the neighborhood wants. He agreed that sometimes the neighborhood is going to have to sacrifice driving an extra two blocks if it is going to mean it will keep the traffic out of the neighborhood. Vineet said that it was a good idea to have the loading dock for the science building on Rena Street to keep access away from Stadium Way however; he said he thought it was worth looking at putting the loading dock to the east of Stadium Way.
- Harris said he was convinced the cul-de-sac solution for the new Rena Street extension was the best solution. An audience member expressed concern for how enforcement for official vehicle use would be regulated. Harris said that Harvard could work with the neighbors to develop language that was mutually acceptable and make it part of the official approval process.
- Concern that Harvard is not pursuing the option to create direct access to the science site from the Turnpike and isn't working with the Massachusetts Turnpike Authority and rather is just doing what's best for Harvard. Harris said that Harvard has not been able to figure out how to provide inbound access from the Turnpike. He said that it may be feasible and the consulting teams are looking at that option. Harris said that Harvard understands that in order to move forward with any of its projects the neighborhood needs to feel comfortable with the proposals. He said that Harvard doesn't want to be in opposition with the neighborhood and that if it had a solution for how to provide access to the site from the Turnpike, it would pursue it.
- Question about whether there would be a traffic light at Stadium Way and Western Avenue. Harris said yes.
- Harry Mattison expressed concern that final decisions were being made when not all of the alternatives had been discussed such as reconfiguring the Massachusetts Turnpike

exit. He suggested that there were alternatives that Harvard hadn't looked at or wasn't telling the community about. He said it would be helpful to see a written analysis from Harvard about why coming off the turnpike to the site won't work. John Cusack said that regardless of that option, Stadium Way also needs to be a corridor to keep traffic off the neighborhood streets.

- Concern about the process and what would be presented at the meeting on April 9<sup>th</sup>. There was a feeling that Harvard was presenting information to the community in a “we’ll tell you, when we tell you” manner. Questions about if this information will be filed in the Draft Project Impact Report (DPIR) and when Harvard was planning to submit this to Boston. Harris said that Harvard continues to refine its proposal over time as it has discussions with the community and that this was an important step in the process. Harris said that the Harvard planning team was hoping to have a conversation with the city in the next few weeks about what circulation schemes make sense. He said BTD was taking the neighborhood’s concerns very seriously. He said Harvard was hoping to show the best circulation schemes in the DPIR. Once the circulation schemes are clearer, then Harvard can begin to come up with design proposals to share with the neighborhood.
- Concern about private conversations taking place between Harvard and individual neighbors (in reference to a potential conversation between Harvard and Ed Studdert, 69 Hopedale Street) and that Harvard should keep in mind that these are neighborhood issues. Harris clarified it wouldn't be a private conversation but that it was more appropriate to discuss the community member's situation individually rather than during a community meeting.