

Harvard Allston Task Force
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, May 23, 2007
Honan Allston Library
6:30 p.m.

I. Attendance:

Harvard Allston Task Force

Paul Berkeley
Mary Helen Black
Cathi Campbell
John Cusack
Rita DiGesse
Brian Gibbons
Mike Hanlon
Millie Hollum McLaughlin
Bruce Houghton
Harry Mattison
Ray Mellone, Chair

Harvard University

Chris Conklin, VHB- Harvard transportation consultant
Will Donham
Peggy Hayes
Kevin McCluskey
Dan Rabinovitz
Dave Raszmann
Alison Reinhardt
Kathy Spiegelman
Maile Takahashi

City of Boston

Gerald Autler, Boston Redevelopment Authority
Bill Conroy, Boston Transportation Department
Vineet Gupta, Boston Transportation Department
Paul Holloway, Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services
Bob Kroin, Chief Architect, Boston Redevelopment Authority
Thomas Tinlin, Commissioner, Boston Transportation Department

Harvard Allston Task Force chair Ray Mellone began the meeting at 6:45 p.m.

Ray mentioned the discussion that occurred at the small group meeting on construction mitigation on May 14, 2007. Community members and Task Force members were upset that hard copy materials were not distributed at the meeting or in advance from Harvard after the request for these things had been made at the Task Force meeting on May 7, 2007. Ray said Harvard did not violate the requirements set forth by the Article 80

process however, it can be seen as a lack of courtesy to the neighborhood. He said that the Task Force and the community are not the only players in the process and City agencies and Harvard are also included. He said the discussion at these meetings needs to be reasonable and productive. He expressed concern that the community voice could be limited in the discussion process if it didn't work together to be reasonable and productive. Ray said that as chair of the Task Force it is his job to direct the Task Force so it can move forward productively. Ray advised attendees to deter from taking a rhetorical and negative tone. He said Harvard and the community have to have mutual respect for each other in order for the process to be successful. He said the community has to negotiate on good faith and discuss issues rationally. Ray said that at times Harvard's proposals and discussions may be disappointing but people shouldn't take it as a personal insult.

Gerald said many people have questions about the process and when and how there is opportunity for public input. He said he has a draft of a document he is working on to help explain the process and he would like to get the Task Force's feedback on whether the document will be helpful. Gerald said each step of the review process is not an exact science but it is clear what needs to happen when the review process gets to the end. The stages can be different for every project. Gerald said City Hall has a lot of the same questions as the community has and it is trying to work through the process.

Gerald introduced representatives from different city agencies in attendance at the meeting:

- Thomas Tinlin- Commissioner, Boston Transportation Department
- Vineet Gupta- Boston Transportation Department
- Bill Conroy- Boston Transportation Department
- Bob Kroin- Chief Architect, Boston Redevelopment Authority- Urban Design and Planning Department

Gerald handed out meeting minutes from past meetings and asked them to review and approve them for the next meeting.

Gerald passed out proposed meeting dates for the rest of the calendar year and said there could also be small group meetings in addition to regular Task Force meetings.

Commissioner Tinlin introduced himself and thanked the community for continuing to attend these meetings and staying involved. He said the community process is important with all development projects so that the government and the developer are held accountable.

Tinlin mentioned some of the things his department does to participate in the public review process.

- Attend community meetings. Tinlin introduced Vineet Gupta and Bill Conroy who have attended several Harvard Allston Task Force meetings and said they were an example of BTM planners and engineers who attend the public

meetings to hear the community's feedback and analyze the various traffic assumptions.

- Review construction mitigation plans.
- Challenge traffic assumptions put forth by the developer. BTD asks the developer to prove to the engineers that the change won't have a detrimental impact on the neighborhood.
- Regardless of who the developer is, all of the developers are treated with the same level of scrutiny. It's important that the appropriate impacts are kept to a minimum.
- The city employees are public representatives who want to work on behalf of the city and the neighborhoods. Throughout the process the community will always have a seat at the table.
- BTD takes its role in the review process very seriously and he will be more involved throughout the process.

Gerald introduced Bob Kroin, Chief Architect of the BRA. Bob's comments included:

- Streets have a lot of impact on the environment and character of the neighborhood and are a public domain. Streets can facilitate or inhibit social interactions, for example, if streets are really wide it may prevent people from making eye-contact with other people walking by.
- There are issues in Harvard's proposed master plan that have to be dealt with that we don't have all the answers to yet. For example, will the master plan be designed to accommodate and support various modes of transportation for 12 million square feet of development over 50 years? Can the development be done so it doesn't preclude options in the future and in actuality paves the way for long-term solutions?
- Harvard needs to be more specific about the land on Western Avenue between Hague Street and Travis Street.
- Can a portion of the proposed Stadium Way be initially developed and can Harvard provide a better understanding of how it will function with the CSX land to the east of it?
- There need to be more discussions about the Rena Street extension to Stadium Way. It could allow for the creation of more possible routes and modes of transportation and less congestion.
- There should be a pedestrian crossing at Western Avenue and Stadium Way and wherever else needed to increase pedestrian safety.
- Harvard should consider a pedestrian pathway extending north from Seattle Street if it doesn't interfere with future development.
- Rena Street Park should be started to begin to connect the open spaces and ultimately Library Park should be developed.
- The current plot plan for the science complex doesn't exactly match the current block plan which could create the potential for a lot of "raw" edges. Edges should be buffered with landscaping to make it more pleasing.

Gerald said City representatives are happy to come to the public meetings and share their perspectives and can come back to future meetings. Gerald said that prior to the start of

this meeting the BRA and Harvard met with the Task Force interim-use sub-committee comprised of Harry Mattison, Millie Hollum McLaughlin, Mary-Helen Black, and Bruce Houghton, to receive an update from Harvard on progress with the interim-landscape plans. This wasn't a closed meeting and wasn't intended to exclude anyone.

Kathy Spiegelman, Harvard University, made some comments:

- Harvard echoes City Hall's sentiments that the community's participation in the process is important and meaningful.
- Over the last month there have been small group meetings focused on specific topics including a meeting last week on May 14th to discuss construction mitigation. Not all of the material was able to be discussed so Harvard has been asked to begin the meeting with that presentation.
- Task Force members and community members have asked for materials in advance. Harvard is going to send materials to the Task Force in advance prior to meetings for distribution, post materials on its web site and leave hard copies at the library. Kathy suggested starting all Task Force meetings with any outstanding issues from the previous meeting.
- Kathy distributed a handout with summary information on the construction mitigation traffic plan.
- Harvard plans to file the Draft Project Impact Report (DPIR) for the proposed Harvard Allston Science Complex in June.
- Several months ago Harvard extended the comment period for the Project Notification Form for the Harvard University Art Museums art center and the Institutional Master Plan Notification Form for the new master plan and it will officially submit a notice to the BRA to extend the deadline beyond June.

Harvard has made several changes to its originally proposed transportation plan as a result of community feedback. These changes include:

- Turning the proposed Rena Street extension into a cul de sac so that it doesn't connect to the existing Rena Street.
- Postponing the final alignment of Stadium Way.
- Relocating some of the proposed parking spots for the Allston Science Complex north of Western Avenue.

Kathy distributed a summary hand out that will be available on Harvard's web site at www.allston.harvard.edu

Ken Johnson gave a brief overview of the key components of Harvard's construction mitigation program:

- Neighborhood communications
- Truck Routes and Worker Parking
- Noise and Vibration
- Dust and Emission Control
- Rodent Control- Harvard has hired a company call Best Pest to oversee the pest control management program including pre-construction surveys of the current level of activity and how it can be managed effectively.

- Construction Debris

Questions and Comments:

- What is on-site refueling?

Ken Johnson: It is similar to when an oil truck delivers oil to your home. It will come to the site every few days and refuel trucks that are on-site.

- There should be a neighborhood-wide coordinated strategy for pest management.

- The level of pests is already high. It has to be a neighborhood wide approach so rats don't just relocate to other areas in the neighborhood.

Ken introduced Chris Conklin from VHB, Harvard's transportation consultant, to provide an overview of Harvard's construction traffic plan.

Chris said a number of enhancements have been made to the handout that was distributed to the Task Force before the meeting on May 14th. Chris presented several slides on Harvard's construction traffic management plan (the full presentation is available at www.allston.harvard.edu):

- Truck Routes

- Several alternatives have been studied and will be presented.
- The preferred option is a temporary construction road on the Sears site.
- Soldiers Field Frontage Road route is under consideration.

- Parking

- Sufficient parking for construction workers will be provided.
- Parking will be available both north and south of Western Avenue.

- Heavy Vehicles

- Heavy vehicles include many different types of vehicles.
- Heavy vehicle volumes are consistent with existing use of the access routes.

- Construction Workers

- Construction worker trip generation is similar to that of the existing site traffic.
- Construction workers arrive and depart outside the peak hours of traffic.

Truck Route Options

- Option 1- Soldiers Field Frontage Road
 - Still being considered as a possible option
- Option 2- Turnpike Ramp Route
 - Concern about adding additional trucks
 - From an operations perspective this is not a good option
- Option 3A- I-90 Eastbound Flyover

- Suggested by the neighborhood
 - For the cost and time requirements to do this option, it is not going to have very many long-term advantages
 - Completing construction will take about half as long as the science project itself.
 - It has limitations on capturing truck traffic and has negative impacts on the adjacent facilities.
- Option 3B- Loop Ramp Flyover
- Has the same negative impacts on Genzyme's operations.
- Option 3C- Loop ramp flyover in CSX land
- May be an ok option from the long-term perspective but it's not going to be achieved in the time frame of the first science complex.
- Option 4- Sears Site construction road
- Preferred option by the engineering team
 - The entrance ramp would be moved as close to the bridge as possible
 - Aids in the staging and queuing of traffic
 - Avoids negative impacts on the adjacent facilities

Questions and Comments:

Harry Mattison: What are the dimensions of the haul road from the end of Hopedale Street?

Harris Band: It is 96 feet. If it's a one-way road it will need to be about 20-30 feet wide. The plan proposes pushing it as far northward and additionally there will be landscape buffers and fencing.

John Cusack: In the small group meeting the idea was discussed that cutting between the CSX easement was unnecessary.

Chris Conklin: This is still an open question and Harvard is happy to discuss it in more detail with the community.

Paul Berkeley: Will construction workers be exiting the job site at the same time? If so will a detail officer be provided?

Chris Conklin: Yes.

Bruce Houghton: CSX trucks are forced to cross over 2 lanes of traffic which causes traffic problems for everyone else. Harvard needs to work with them to come up with a better engineering solution.

Chris Conklin: The traffic engineers have come to the same assessment.

Harry Mattison: Can Harvard provide detailed drawings for how the haul road will work near the end of Hopedale Street?

John Cusack: The Cambridge Street traffic analysis is pointless because there's no reason to drive on that route to the job site. Why does traffic need to go past Hopedale at all?

Chris Conklin: The analysis is for truck activity not just worker activity.

Harris Band: The perimeter route needs to be reviewed carefully by the City of Boston Transportation Department. Harvard needs to offer several scenarios for BTB's review.

Harry Mattison: Heavy trucks will be driving behind people's backyards- this does not protect the quality of life of the neighborhood.

Commissioner Tinlin commented:

- At this time the Boston Transportation Department doesn't have a preferred alternative. The BTB engineers will be questioning all the assumptions put forth by Harvard. Ultimately certain people are going to be more affected than others and unfortunately bear a bigger burden.
- Having a central location for construction worker parking isn't necessarily a bad thing.
- BTB will be challenging and testing the traffic engineer's assumptions in order to lessen the impact on the community as a whole.

Audience member: It would be helpful if Harvard installs a noise abating fence.

Audience member: Western Avenue and Soldier's Field Road are already bad intersections. If there is an increase in truck volume it's going to get worse and perpetuate the problem.

Ray Mellone: BTB should make sure the sequencing of pedestrian lights on Soldiers Field Road is effective.

Commissioner Tinlin: BTB will bring these comments back to the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), who oversees Soldiers Field Road.

Commissioner Tinlin: Any developer has to put forth a transportation access plan agreement. After construction there will be more interfaces with BTB to make sure the traffic light sequencing is still effective.

Audience Member Ed Studdert (resident at the end of Hopedale Street): Harvard told me there weren't going to be construction trucks traveling on Stadium Way. Now I see this plan- Harvard was lying to me.

Harris Band: Apologized for the miscommunication and acknowledged Harvard did meet with Mr. Studdert and was under the impression he understood the proposed plan to locate the temporary haul road in that location and that it would include construction truck traffic.

Harry Mattison: Will the haul road serve for the construction of the proposed science complex and future development?

Chris Conklin: The road will be used for the duration of the construction of the proposed science complex. The traffic plan will have to be re-reviewed for future projects.

Audience Member: Has Harvard considered using the rail line to get materials off site? Harvard owns all the CSX land, why can't it use that land?

Ray Mellone: How will Harvard enforce compliance so construction workers do not park on residential streets? Can we come up with an innovative program? For example, issuing residential stickers to residents even though it won't be strictly regulated like traditional residential parking programs?

Ken Johnson: As part of Harvard's construction mitigation program, construction workers will be required to register their vehicles and will be issued ID tags to hang in their cars.

Mary Helen Black: The people in the neighborhood shouldn't be responsible for policing the cars. Construction workers can take off ID tags and park on residential streets; it needs to be something more permanent like a sticker. The enforcement shouldn't be complaint driven.

Ken Johnson: We fully agree with you.

Harry Mattison: What is Harvard's commencement parking plan?

Kevin McCluskey: Some parking will be provided at Harvard properties along Western Avenue. In the past I don't think commencement parking has been a huge issue. Harvard will distribute the parking plan to the Task Force.

Harry Mattison: If Harvard didn't own the Sears site what would be the construction mitigation parking plan? Can Harvard provide that plan as an alternative so the community can have a better understanding for why the plan is the way it is now?

Ray Mellone: This is a hypothetical situation and the fact is Harvard does own the Sears site. We can't assume a hypothetical situation would be a better option.

Harry Mattison: There may be parking options that Harvard is using for commencement but is not proposing for construction worker parking, such as Brighton Mills.

Ray Mellone: A big concern is for Harvard to work with the Studderts to straighten that situation out so they don't bear the brunt of the construction impacts.

Kevin McCluskey: I apologize to the Studderts for the miscommunication. I do have to stress that there will be buffers in place however; this doesn't take away from issues that still need to be solved.

Audience Member: The mitigation for construction projects in Cambridge is not working well because the construction workers are all currently parking in Allston. Harvard's statistics show that there will be 21 trips of construction trucks per hour- that is equivalent to one every three minutes. Last week the community made clear it didn't want any construction parking at the Sears site. I'm opposed to any parking in the residential community. If Harvard didn't own the Sears site it would have to be more creative.

Audience Member: What about parking the cars in the athletic fields like Harvard does for lacross games?

Ken Johnson: Parking for lacross games is a temporary situation. Plus cars are parked in the "thumb" of the athletics area which goes against the principle of locating the parking in the vicinity of the work site.

Harry Mattison: I thought Harvard was going to provide a shuttle for the workers even if the parking was at the Sears site.

Ken Johnson: That suggestion was made and is being considered.

Audience member (resident of Hopedale Street): In the morning the traffic backs up on Windom Street and it is difficult to even get on Cambridge Street. All the statistics are saying the situation is going to get worse. This is a big problem and I urge Harvard and the engineers to come up with a solution, particularly, in the area of Cambridge Street and the Mass Pike.

Audience member: Is the approval of the haul road part of the Article 80 process?

Gerald Autler: Article 80 mandates a number of elements about transportation. The actual construction management plan may not appear in the DPIR and BTM will be responsible for approving and signing off on the plan. The two documents are related through the scoping process.

Audience member: When does the public get to provide formal input into what's acceptable for the roadways?

Commissioner Tinlin: The construction management plan is overseen by BTM. BTM discusses it with the proponents. The developer has to develop a plan through this process and come up with a solution that provides the least amount of impact to the area affected. The construction management plan is not a formal filing. The public can comment and challenge the plan at forums like this community meeting. BTM's charge is to keep impacts to a minimum. The construction management plan will also be monitored throughout the project. The City can shut down a project at any time if necessary.

John Cusack: If the haul road involves DCR property does it have to sign off on the plan? It would be good to keep as much of the construction routes as possible on the surface road but I don't want to get too far along in that proposal only for the State to put a stop to these plans.

Commissioner Tinlin: DCR will have authority if it is a DCR roadway. There can be special waivers and they'll look at what the proposed numbers mean in the mix with existing traffic.

Audience Member: Request to Harvard representatives to take back the following suggestion to those involved with the Harvard/CSX negotiations. Suggestion for a road to be built parallel to Western Avenue that comes off of Windom Street and north of the Genzyme building. That area is all parking and it could provide another traffic option to alleviate congestion on Western Avenue.

Chris Conklin: It might be more of a benefit if there could be a south roadway connection to the west side of Genzyme.

Audience member: Harvard could have construction worker parking at alternative locations from the neighborhood and require workers to take the shuttle.

Chris Gordon: If parking is located too far away from the site workers will find ways around it and try to park as near to the site as they can- including on residential streets.

Audience member: Isn't Harvard proposing network parking or satellite parking for its staff and employees for the build out of the master plan? Isn't this the same idea as what the neighborhood is suggesting?

Chris Gordon: Construction worker parking on remote sites has been proven unsuccessful on construction jobs all over the country.

John Cusack: There needs to be guaranteed enforcement. 90% of the people in this neighborhood signed a petition for a residential parking program but enforcing it is a money issue for the City.

Commissioner Tinlin: The discussion about residential parking should be a separate meeting. I haven't seen the petition yet. There's a whole bunch of issues that need to be discussed in a separate conversation.

Ray Mellone adjourned the meeting at 8:45 p.m.