

**Harvard Allston Task Force**  
Meeting Minutes  
Monday, July 16, 2007  
Honan Allston Library  
6:30 p.m.

**I. Attendance:**

**Harvard Allston Task Force**

Paul Berkeley  
John Bruno  
John Cusack  
Rita DiGesse  
Brian Gibbons  
Mike Hanlon  
Millie Hollum McLaughlin  
Bruce Houghton  
Harry Mattison  
Ray Mellone, Chair  
Brent Whelan

**Harvard University**

Phil Coleman, Turner Construction, Construction manager for Harvard  
Chris Conklin, VHB, Transportation consultant for Harvard  
Alex Dubanowitz, CSL, Construction mitigation consultant for Harvard  
Peggy Hayes  
Ken Johnson  
Ed LeFlore, CSL, Construction mitigation consultant for Harvard  
Kelley McQueeney, Environmental Health and Services Department  
Alison Reinhardt  
Chris Scharff, Turner Construction, Construction manager for Harvard  
Kathy Spiegelman  
Dennis Swinford

**City of Boston**

Gerald Autler, Boston Redevelopment Authority  
Bill Conroy, Boston Transportation Department  
Vineet Gupta, Boston Transportation Department  
Linda Kowalcky, Boston Redevelopment Authority

Harvard Allston Task Force chair Ray Mellone began the meeting at 6:40 p.m. He said the Draft Project Impact Report (DPIR) that Harvard filed for the proposed science complex responds to the information requested by the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA) in the scoping determination. The scoping determination was compiled from comment letters on the Project Notification Filing that were received by the BRA from the Task Force, members of the public and other City agencies . The BRA's scoping determination can be found in Section 9 of the DPIR and it includes references to the

corresponding sections to find Harvard's responses in the DPIR. Ray said tonight's meeting will focus on transportation and construction mitigation. The two handouts for the meeting were:

- 1). A copy of the scoping determination taken directly from the DPIR
- 2). Excerpts from the DPIR's transportation section and environmental protection section on construction mitigation.

Gerald Autler reminded attendees to sign-in and include their email address to receive updates on the Task Force meetings and process. He asked that attendees not use the side door of the Library when exiting the building.

Ray said part of the process is to look at the information provided by Harvard and determine whether it adequately responds to the scoping determination. Ray referred the audience members and Task Force members to page four of the scoping determination to read what information the BRA requested for the transportation component of the science complex project. He explained that you can refer to the corresponding section reference to find Harvard's response in the DPIR. Ray suggested the Task Force begin with the scoping determination to ask questions.

Brent Whelan asked about Harvard's proposal to provide an increase in Harvard shuttles on the Allston streets and whether the community would be able to make use of Harvard's shuttle system. He said this question was brought up before and he wanted to know where the issue stood- whether it had been ignored or denied by Harvard.

Kathy Spiegelman, Harvard University, said that at the request of the Task Force chair Harvard has invited several of its transportation and construction mitigation consultants to the meeting to respond to questions. She introduced Chris Conklin, VHB, who is a transportation consultant for Harvard. She said Harvard is well aware of the request and it hasn't been ignored. Harvard is investigating opening the shuttle services to users other than Harvard affiliates. Any plan would require coordination and collaboration with the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA). It may be that improved MBTA service will be more beneficial to neighborhood residents than shuttles between Allston and Harvard Square.

Chris Conklin said Harvard has a longstanding track record of advocating for and achieving improvements in the public transit service. Improvements to the 66 and 86 bus routes are being explored but that information is not in the DPIR.

Harry Mattison said the DPIR references insurance liability and costs as an issue. Kathy said it's no longer a cost issue and it has moved beyond that to broader coordination issues with MBTA. The liability issue is that currently Harvard students drive the Harvard shuttles. Mille Hollum McLaughlin asked when the Task Force can expect an answer from Harvard on this issue and Kathy responded that she doesn't know if Harvard can deliver an answer between now and the fall.

Paul Berkley asked if Harvard's bike racks are regulated and if people in the community can use the campus bike racks. He said that if the streets are going to be designed with bike lanes then there should be sufficient bike storage. Chris Conklin said he is not aware of any regulation restricting the use of Harvard's bike racks and Harvard wants to encourage bicycle use. Kathy said Harvard is planning on increasing the number of bike racks in as the development of the Allston campus is implemented.

Gerald Autler introduced Bill Conroy and Vineet Gupta from the Boston Transportation Department (BTD) and noted that BTD is conducting its own review of Harvard's DPIR and Vineet and Bill are at the meeting to listen and provide feedback to City Hall.

Bruce Houghton expressed concern about some of Harvard's proposals in the DPIR being labeled as "interim", for example, interim bike paths and greenways. He said it makes it sound like Harvard is not committed to bike paths and they could be taken away. He said it should be negotiated with BTD or the appropriate agency so these amenities aren't taken away without being replaced by more permanent solutions. Chris Conklin said because the science complex is being built on an existing site, the interim conditions may need to be modified to create a larger bicycle network as additional development occurs. Harvard has proposed a large bicycle network for the full build-out of its master plan. Kathy Spiegelman said Harvard's intention is to only make modifications to and add to the bicycle network, not take it away or reduce the network. John Bruno suggested language be added that the bike system and other interim uses can be enhanced and not diminished.

Gerald Autler said the City will be asking for continued clarification on Harvard's ideas and commitments for improvements to the public realm and transit service.

Mike Hanlon asked the following questions:

- What is the off-street loading plan for trucks and can the Harvard stadium be used for queuing trucks?
- Where will the washing of the construction trucks take place?
- Can Rena Street extension be given another name so there isn't confusion with the existing Rena Street?

Kathy Spiegelman said yes, Rena Street extension can be named something entirely different.

Ken Johnson, Harvard University, said that after discussing the truck routes with the Task Force, the BTD and studying several options, the DPIR has made two proposals to BTD for truck site access during construction:

1. Option A- Trucks come off the Mass. Pike, turn left onto Soldiers Field Road, left onto Western Avenue, and left into the science site. Then trucks return to the Mass. Pike by taking a right onto Western Avenue, a right onto Soldiers Field Road and then getting on the Mass. Pike (Figure 4.11-2 in the DPIR).
2. Option B- Trucks come off of the Mass Pike onto Cambridge Street and turn right into the Sears site from a temporary haul road (Figure 4.11-3 in the DPIR).

Harry Mattison asked if Harvard has a preference on the proposed route and Ken said that Harvard does not have a preference and is looking forward to the decision by BTM. He said the BTM has asked for additional intersection data and VHB provided this information about a week ago. From Ken's understanding, BTM is still evaluating the various options.

Brent Whelan referenced page 4-115 of the DPIR- section 4.11.8.2 where it says that 20 eighteen-wheel dump trucks are anticipated to exit the site per hour, or roughly one every three minutes, and during concrete mat placement 20-25 trucks are anticipated to exit the site per hour, approaching one truck every two minutes. He said the DPIR suggests the trucks will queue at the Sears site. He said it sounds like a decision has already been made to use the property right behind the residential neighborhood on Windom Street and the community has said numerous times this is not an appropriate location for trucks and queuing.

John Cusack asked if BTM had any initial response to Harvard's proposed Option A and Option B. John said he thought that Option A is the neighborhoods' preferred option.

Bill Conroy said the options are still being evaluated and some of the issues have to do with performance of different intersections. Commissioner Tinlin has asked for a detailed analysis for the AM and PM peak traffic and more information on how Harvard would provide a buffer to the neighborhood. BTM has not come to any conclusions yet. He and Vineet are taking the community's comments and feedback back to BTM to consider every option before coming to a conclusion. Bill suggested that the activities during different phases of construction will also need to be considered.

Brent Whelan asked if the geometry for trucks to make the right-hand turn onto the Sears site from Cambridge Street is even feasible. Bill Conroy said BTM has requested a detailed engineering study for this movement. He also suggested from his experience with the "Big Dig" that there are a range of temporary measures that can be taken that really do mitigate and buffer the abutters from impacts such as noise and dust.

Bruce Houghton said he knows it will be difficult for eighteen-wheelers to make the turn into the Sears site from Cambridge Street and that, in his opinion, it will be very dangerous. Bruce also referenced comments on page 3-43 of the DPIR under Intersection 22. He said Houghton Chemical never has more than 10 trucks during peak hours and his trucks aren't the trucks blocking the I-90 off-ramp. He believes this is evidence of Harvard's inadequate traffic studies and poor understanding of one of the major intersections in the area. He said that in the past he has invited Harvard's transportation experts to sit down with him to discuss the situation and that he might be able to provide some insight. He invited Harvard to meet with him again. He said he will be writing a letter to the Task Force, the BRA and Harvard to provide first-hand insight of the situation described in the DPIR. He said he also didn't understand how the proposed routes relate to Stadium Way if Harvard wasn't pursuing building Stadium Way right

now. Ken responded that the proposed option B is a temporary truck haul route not Stadium Way.

Harry Mattison referenced figure 4.11-3 and asked if the route was on the CSX land. Ken said that conceptual graphic in the DPIR intends to show that the truck route is on Harvard controlled property. Brent Whelan asked if this meant the Sears slab would need to be demolished and Ken said that it would need to be studied further. He also said that alternatives to the turn into the Sears site from Cambridge street were being studied, including a ramp farther east on Cambridge Street that would allow the trucks to turn farther from the neighborhood and with a different geometry of turn.

An audience member suggested a third truck route option that has been brought up at several meetings in the past to build a temporary bridge from the Turnpike onto the CSX land to provide direct access to the site from the Turnpike without using the residential streets. He said the community hasn't received an answer from Harvard as to why this option is not being pursued even though it is relatively simple to do and would be better for the community.

Chris Conklin said Harvard and the engineers did evaluate the audience member's proposals but the roadway geometry couldn't physically fit in the allotted space and Harvard didn't include it as a proposal to BTM because it didn't feel that it was feasible. He said this analysis was shared at the May 23<sup>rd</sup> Task Force meeting.

Harry Mattison said he felt like the document was being re-scoped and the Task Force is still asking questions that there aren't answers to yet. Gerald explained that these issues are part of the construction management plan that will be negotiated and signed between Harvard and the BTM before construction begins. Gerald suggested that the Task Force focus on detailed issues in the DPIR that are not part of the Transportation Access Plan Agreement (TAPA). The TAPA is still being worked out with BTM and will need to be finalized before Harvard can get a building permit. The construction management plan is a parallel but separate process to the DPIR review and usually lags a little bit behind the DPIR review process. Gerald said BTM will be ready to provide more information further along in the process and usually at this stage the review is focused on the project design and environmental impacts. He said the construction management plan would be worked out over the next 2-3 months.

Brent Whelan asked what steps Harvard has taken to resolve the access issues with CSX and if BTM has been involved in the negotiations. Kathy Spiegelman said the representatives from CSX are aware of Harvard's long-term goals and short term needs of the property. She noted that the details of the discussions between Harvard and CSX are not a matter she is authorized to discuss. Kathy responded that the City is also aware of what Harvard would like to do but it is not part of the business negotiation between the two parties.

Harry Mattison said it would be helpful to see the engineering drawings and analysis of the community's proposed option to understand why it has been rejected. Chris said it had been presented on the 23<sup>rd</sup> but will make the presentation available again.

Brian Gibbons said truck routes are a critical issue and the Task Force needs an answer to move forward. Gerald said at this time all options are still being discussed and it is an on-going process. He said there will be a signed construction management plan before the project can be permitted by ISD and he thought some of the outstanding questions would be wrapped up by the end of the summer/September. Harry Mattison suggested the issue of truck routes be tabled until more information was available. Vineet Gupta said at the next meeting BTM could provide a better timeline of when it expects these issues to be resolved or when they would have more information.

Ray referred to page five of the scoping determination to discuss the parking management element.

Bruce Houghton had several questions and comments:

- The proposed Harvard shuttle should start running during construction so construction workers can get back and forth to the red line at Harvard Square.
- He asked for clarification on Harvard's projected parking numbers of 500 spots for the building, 10% short of the 540 spots Harvard estimates that will be needed. He said only 350 spots are in the building and the remaining 150 spots are across the street at a site that Harvard will probably develop in the future. He asked if Harvard would commit to replacing the 150 permanent spots before any development is done there.
- He also asked for clarification about where visitors to the building would park if the garage is full.

Chris Conklin said the 540 number is based on BTM's mode share number of 59%, but that Harvard anticipates a 50% mode share for the occupants of the building which puts the parking supply for the building in alignment with the anticipated demand and that parking is not undersupplied. Chris said the parking across Western Avenue will be added to Harvard's pool of its parking inventory.

Gerald said that for any future development on the surface parking across the street Harvard will need a new IMP, and as part of the process of getting approval of that IMP Harvard would need to prove that the demand for parking is being met, especially if the future development displaces existing parking.

Brent Whelan said Harvard should be held to using the existing statistics for mode shares rather than expressing a desire for a lower mode share which it may not be able to achieve. Gerald said BTM looks at how realistic Harvard's assumptions are and they can be tested and adjusted. Vineet said BTM uses standard parking ratios to evaluate assumptions such as 1 space/1,000 square feet of development. Vineet said there are several factors that get incorporated into the analysis such as information on the uses and occupants of the building and the management of the spaces. He said parking supply

directly affects the traffic generation and the more parking generates more trips and impacts the intersections and roadway within and around the neighborhood. It is usually BTB's goal to balance the supply of parking and the impact this has on existing roadway infrastructure.

Bruce Houghton said Harvard should provide the maximum parking spaces needed for the project and if the parking is underutilized then the unused spaces can be applied to the next project.

Harry Mattison and Kathy Spiegelman discussed the various aspects of Harvard's parking management strategies. Harry suggested Harvard should try to see if it can reduce the mode share to 50% for its existing buildings in Allston first to see if it can be done. He asked what Harvard's back-up plan is if the parking demand for this building isn't met. Kathy said the projected demand is also based on the characteristics of the occupants in the building, not just the existing Harvard buildings in Allston (i.e. the Business School). Harvard derived the 50% mode share because Harvard's science buildings tend to have a lower mode split than other Harvard buildings, and while a science building in Allston may have a slightly higher mode share than a science building in Cambridge it will be less than the mode share for Harvard's Business School and athletic facilities. Kathy said if Harvard has not provided enough parking for the building occupants, even though she doesn't think this will be the case, Harvard would be able to provide additional parking from its pool. Kathy explained that Harvard does not manage parking building by building but rather through a pooled inventory of parking. She said Harvard has more spaces in its pool of parking than the demand is right now and once spaces are added to the pool they aren't typically taken away. She said a balance has to be created to provide enough spots without encouraging people to drive. She said oversupplying parking also doesn't meet Harvard's and the community desire for sustainability.

Paul Berkeley asked if the business school Spangler parking lot has a surplus of parking spots and if it would be used. Kathy said it does have a surplus and could be used. She also said the area to the north of Western Avenue that is proposed for construction worker parking could remain.

Mike Hanlon asked if Harvard was going to appeal to the City to demolish the WGBH building and use that site for parking. Kathy said at this time Harvard is not prepared to demolish the building and has considered using it for other temporary uses but there may be some opportunities for parking around the building.

Ray asked that BTB note that Harvard's parking demand management is an issue that has not been thoroughly scoped.

An audience member referenced page 3-95 section 3.7.2 in the DPIR and said he thought the community had decided at one of the community meetings to remove parking from North Harvard Street and Western Avenue. The Task Force members discussed whether this had been proposed or what was decided. Paul Berkeley said there had been

discussion about putting restrictions on parking during peak hours so that traffic could flow more smoothly. Vineet said restrictions were discussed but there were mixed opinions about what to do with the parking regulations further away from the intersections. John Bruno said he thought what was proposed was implementing “no parking” on North Harvard Street from the Harvard Business School road to the intersection at Soldiers Field Road. He said there isn’t any parking on the road on the other side of the river and in his opinion he thought Allston residents would like the same thing.

Audience member Tim McHale asked if Harvard could pay for a full-time parking enforcement officer. He said the construction worker traffic should be included in Harvard’s traffic calculations analysis going forward since construction will continue beyond this project. He asked how many parking spots the Boston Building Code requires for commercial spaces. Vineet said the existing zoning code sets minimum requirements but it varies by building block in the City. He said he retail was about 1 spot/350 square feet and office space was 1 spot/1000 square feet.

Mike Hanlon asked where people would park if they were coming to the science building to access the retail within the building. Kathy said that the retail uses weren’t going to be destination locations and would be accessed mostly by the occupants of the building and by people walking by or in the area. She said the retail owners are included as part of the occupants of the building who will need parking.

There was discussion about Harvard policy to charge its employees for parking and what effect this will have on the parking management plan- whether people who can’t afford the parking will choose to park on the residential streets and risk getting a ticket. In response to a question, Kathy couldn’t say for sure what the Harvard parking rates will be in 2011.

Harry Mattison asked for past examples of Harvard projects that met Harvard’s parking estimates for the building.

John Cusack asked if BTM could provide information on the number of linear feet/shift that a traffic enforcement officer covers. Vineet said BTM could provide this information.

Gerald said the minutes for previous meetings were distributed to his email distribution list last Friday. He said during the review period of the DPIP he would try to distribute the minutes within 48 hours of every meeting.

Brent Whelan asked if Harvard had an answer to the complaint that was raised at the last meeting about painting taking place on Rotterdam Street at 2:00 a.m. Kathy said she could put the answer in writing to the Task Force but it was a contractor who was working for Harvard Real Estate Services who was not authorized to work at that time. Kathy apologized on behalf of the contractor, Harvard Real Estate Services and the University and acknowledged that Harvard has to work to better coordinate multiple

projects going on at the University. Kathy said Harvard brought magnets to the meeting that includes the phone number and web site of the construction mitigation hotline that can be accessed 24 hours a day and encouraged people who have a question or concern to call the number.

Ray Mellone suggested the next meeting continue the discussion on transportation and construction.

Brent Whelan asked where the discussion of community benefits falls in the review process. He said the information provided under the Project Description section in the DPIR was inadequate.

Ray Mellone said he would prefer and it is typical to discuss community benefits after the review of the DPIR is complete. He said the Task Force members and the community still have to discuss its community benefits matrix so the discussion should wait until after the DPIR review. Ray said there are certain benefits that will be associated with this building project but there are also community benefits that need to be established and associated with the long-term 50 years of development of the master plan such as preserving the character of the neighborhood.

Bruce Houghton said he was uncomfortable with negotiating community benefits after the building is approved. He said the DPIR is thorough but lacks a lot of information and details on community benefits that could be worked out and defined more. For example, there is no completion date tied to the proposed Library Park or information about who owns and manages the park. Additionally the document says Harvard is studying the educational programs and benefits that could be put in place rather than moving forward and starting the programs.

Gerald said there will be a signed Cooperation Agreement between Harvard and the City before the permit is issued. He noted that at the BRA Board vote they will be looking to see that some very meaningful and thoughtful community benefits are being proposed by Harvard. Even though the Cooperation Agreement is typically signed after a BRA Board vote, the Board will be expecting that there will be community benefits on the table. He said after the BRA board vote, Harvard and the City will have to collectively come to an agreement on community benefits. Gerald recommended that the Task Force review the technical aspects of the project and return to the discussion of community benefits after they complete that review.

It was agreed that the next meeting would begin with a continued discussion on transportation. Ray agreed to allow some time to discuss the process for reviewing community benefits.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:50 p.m.