

**Columbia Point Master Plan**

**Community Meeting #1  
Existing Conditions, Issues & Opportunities**

**May 15, 2008  
Corcoran Mullins Jennison Community Center  
Mt. Vernon Street  
Boston, MA**

***Meeting Notes***

**IN ATTENDANCE**

**City of Boston Staff**

Jim Fitzgerald, BRA  
Patrick Hoey, BTD  
Tad Read, BRA  
Lauren Shurtleff, BRA  
Lauren Smyth, ONS

**Consultants**

Carole Schlessinger, CSS  
David Black, VHB

**Master Plan Task Force Members**

Fr. George Carrigg, St. Christopher's Church  
Patrick Connolly, Boston Teacher's Union  
Bill Cotter, Columbia-Savin Hill Civic Association (CSHCA)  
Annissa Essaibi-George, John McCormack Civic Association  
Matt Gordy, CSHCA  
Chris Hart, Adaptive Environments  
Sherina Hendrix, Dorchester Bay Economic Development Corporation (DBEDC)  
John Lowe, John McCormack Civic Association  
Paul Nutting, CSHCA  
Orland Perilla, Harbor Point Community Task Force (HPCTF)  
Mark Rooney, South Boston Neighborhood House  
Joe Sammons, Geiger-Gibson Community Health Center  
Esther Santos, HPCTF  
Philip Strazzula, Phillips Family Hospitality  
Don Walsh, Chairman, CSHCA/DBEDC

## **Ex-Officio Master Plan Task Force Members**

Mike Christopher, Office of Representative Martin Walsh  
Jane Lindsay, John F. Kennedy Presidential Library & Museum  
Patricia McCormack, Commonwealth Museum & State Archives  
Renie Smith, Office of Council President Maureen Feeney

## **Members of the Public**

In addition to the above, approximately 50 members of the public attended this meeting.

## **NOTES FROM AT-LARGE DISCUSSION AND FROM INDIVIDUAL TOPIC STATIONS**

The following is a transcription of comments made both at individual topic stations and during the at-large discussion.

### **Transportation**

- Structural Integrity of Morrissey Boulevard
- Speeding/trucks on Morrissey Boulevard
- Safety for pedestrians on Morrissey Boulevard
- Are we working with MBTA?
- Buses – Only the #8 and it is unreliable
- Insufficient parking for the Harbor Point residents
- The “chute” bike lane on Morrissey Boulevard
- Planters obstruct visibility for pedestrians and drivers (Mt. Vernon Street and other roads)
- Fix Kosciuszko Circle (control entries, e.g. circle on Arborway)
- Close Day Blvd Connection
- U-Turn overpass for EB-NB (focus on NB-SB-NB)
- Columbia Road should not have on street parking
- Too many traffic lanes - re: Para transit? “trolley” system
- Covered parking = good environmentally
- (no real community park - cover parking?)
- Bike Access in and out of CP
- Options for Kosciuszko Circle
- Regional vs. Local
- Kosciuszko Circle is unpredictable
- Kosciuszko Circle has to be demolished and rebuilt
- Impact of shows [at Bayside Exposition Center]
- Pedestrian lights/Car and driver behavior
- Reduce need for autos by creating walkable, bikable developments with easy connections to trains and buses

- Water transportation (Army Corps issues with depth of water)
- Mt. Vernon Street is wide (narrow, median?)
- On-street parking
- Harbor Point/City – no parking on the street
- Encourage outdoor cafes on Morrissey Boulevard
- Connection to Calf Pasture and Harborwalk from Mt. Vernon Street.

## **Land Use & Open Space**

- market, accessible walkways to recreational areas (Harborwalk, beach)
- public facilities and bike facilities
- Can zoning be changed?
- Save the Harbor/Save the Bay report on Water Issues
- Access from the T to Columbia Road – special emphasis on needs of students of elementary school age
- John Paul II academy - Columbia Campus 400 K-8
- Russell School
- Attractive and safe open outdoor places for you to congregate
- Buildings should front the street, parking hidden
- Supermarkets within walking distance of residents
- Retain 30% of subsidized housing in new development (current for Harbor Point)
- High Density discourages families and is not attractive to everyone
- Tax break for existing residents to prevent them from being “priced-out”
- There is already way too much open space
- NO DORMS
- Veterans Family housing
- The relatively few number of dorms being suggested will install within the community the vibrancy experienced by all the other areas of Boston, notably Cambridge and the Northeastern areas
- Density is a plus
- Water issues
- Access to safe recreation
- Former veteran/elderly housing
- Dorms and no dorms?
- Exercise course
- Restaurants – waterfront
- Use the waterfront to bring people towards it, don't wall or gate it off
- Condos – owners are needed
- Luxury waterfront land for luxury waterfront housing – this can help subsidize housing for the elderly, etc.
- More community connection-events that involve all of Columbia Point
- Housing needs to serve middle and lower income families
- (families make vibrant neighborhoods)

- Incorporate elderly housing
- Consider higher than 15% affordability (middle/low income) component for new residential development.

### **Issues, Opportunities, & Constraints**

- Too much community involvement in the process will create a mediocre development and dilute this opportunity for true positive growth in an area which is often regarded by outsiders to be blighted and crime ridden.
- Better bike and pedestrian connections throughout (on- and off-road)
- Make Morrissey Boulevard a true urban boulevard – wide sidewalks, trees, more crossings, bike lanes, Harborwalk connection to Neponset Harborwalk to the south, calmed traffic, fewer lanes, and more “human” scale.
- Re-envision Kosciuszko Circle – better, safer for all users.
- Opportunity to create a new Boston, cutting edge, green, transit-oriented community with recycling bins on street corners next to trash cans. Compost pickup? Etc.
- Denser communities are Greener.
- Explore educational opportunities – high school.
- Higher density can also raise concerns/problems.
- History of hazardous waste dumping – should explore.
- Information kiosks for local services.
- Limited community meetings prior to residents presenting their concerns/issues.
- Communication – not all residents get harbor views, don’t know about meetings.
- Opportunity for creative parking solutions on the point, *i.e.*, parking gardens rather than all surface parking.
- Alternatives for promoting car-free transportation with students.
- Opportunity: new icon for Dorchester, something positive when people in greater Boston think of Dorchester.
- Bring a ferry to the Point from Boston – for tourists and community.
- Concern about squeezing out middle income and low income residents/families. How can planning avoid this? Some that high-end retail may change the character, making inaccessible to current and new low income residents.
- High density is not desirable for everyone.
- Opportunity exists for this development to spread benefits throughout Dorchester, *i.e.* traffic mitigation (for residents of Dorchester, not commuters).
- No dorms at UMass Boston.
- Bring dorms to UMass Boston.
- Help Dorchester with affordable housing
- Make the T safer; make walking to/from T safer.

- What is the term of affordability of the deed restricted housing at Harbor Point?
- Sense of isolation in Harbor Point from the rest of Columbia Point.
- Student residents often create noise, inconsiderate, unruly. What does the future hold for more students?

### **Connections & Placemaking**

- Reduce chaos for pedestrians.
- Introduce Red & Yellow pedestrian crossing lights.
- Build a vertical crossing from Mt. Vernon Street to Morrissey Boulevard/Shaw's Supermarket.
- Build a pedestrian bridge across Morrissey Boulevard to connect Savin Hill with Columbia Point by the UMass Boston entrance.
- Address drainage on Mt. Vernon Street & Morrissey Boulevard (rain puddles).
- Mt. Vernon Street needs defined striping so that vehicles have a clearly defined path. Also needs clearly defined crosswalks.
- Morrissey Boulevard should be a true urban boulevard with wide sidewalks, bike lanes, and calmed traffic.
- Mt. Vernon Street should be a "main street", active for pedestrians and bicycles, with passive places to sit.
- Preference for at-grade crossings – no pedestrian bridges.
- Plan for Urban Ring – Phase 3.
- Harborwalk connections north of UMass Boston and south along Morrissey Boulevard to Neponset River walk.
- More people-centric, less auto-centric.
- Connections suitable for elderly, ADA, etc.
- Less open space but more trees and tree-lined streets.
- Plantings that offer four season color.