

**Columbia Point Master Plan**

**Community Meeting #2  
Visioning**

**June 14, 2008  
Boston College High School  
150 Morrissey Boulevard  
Dorchester, MA**

***Meeting Notes***

**IN ATTENDANCE**

**City of Boston Staff**

Casey Flynn, ONS  
Patrick Hoey, BTD  
Tad Read, BRA  
Lauren Shurtleff, BRA

**Consultants**

David Black, VHB  
Chris Riale, CSS  
Carole Schlessinger, CSS  
Skip Smallridge, CSS

**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  
John Lowe, John McCormack Civic Association  
Victoria Maguire, Graduate of UMass Boston  
Orlando Perilla, Harbor Point Community Task Force (HPCTF)  
Esther Santos, HPCTF  
Don Walsh, Chairman, CSHCA/Dorchester Bay Economic Development Corporation

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

Boston City Council President Maureen Feeney

Mike Christopher, Office of Representative Martin Walsh  
Jane Lindsay, John F. Kennedy Presidential Library & Museum  
Patricia McCormack, Commonwealth Museum & State Archives

## **Members of the Public**

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

## **NOTES FROM INDIVIDUAL TOPIC STATIONS**

The following is a transcription of comments made by each of the groups for each of the topic stations.

### **Multi-modal Transportation (Access)**

#### Group #1

- Limited benefit for water transportation
- Water taxi or ferry possible? Connect to downtown or Harbor Islands. Pier limitations? Explore.
- Need engineered solutions for:
  - Kosciuszko Circle
  - Morrissey Boulevard
  - I-93 effect on both
- Keep vehicles off water's edge
- "Intercept" visitor traffic
- Connect/align new connection to Harbor Point Boulevard
- Create "local" street network from Morrissey Boulevard to Mt. Vernon Street.
- Alewife analogy – build an MBTA hub.
- Re-knit with infrastructure the western edge of the peninsula with the central area of the Point
- Morrissey Boulevard – make it unattractive to folks wanting to use it as an alternate route
- Capacity question
- Two-way UMass Boston roadway circulation impact and opportunity
- Need money to study Kosciuszko Circle
- Need pedestrian concourse/elevators should be extended all the way into Columbia Point!!
- Concourse should be wide, attractive, & safe!
- Ruggles analogy: pedestrian mall, bus, rail.
- ADA Accessible connections
- Crossing Morrissey Boulevard for pedestrians needs significant improvement

#### Group #2

- Plan for Kosciuszko Circle needed! Let's design a solution!
  - Uninhibited by DCR
  - Uninhibited by money question

- Development will increase volumes
- Morrissey Boulevard! What do we envision? Future needs?
- Concern over the connection for vehicles along the water's edge.
  - Pedestrians vs. vehicles
- Crossing Morrissey is very difficult!
  - Need to improve for pedestrians!
- Mt. Vernon Street "people mover" from JFK/UMass Station to connect
- Alleviate volume on Morrissey Boulevard
- Tramways? Connect north & south and east & west
- Multi-modal uses
- Specific engineered ideas/solutions need to be included in the Master Plan

#### Group #3

- Kosciuszko Circle
  - AM/PM peaks – what are the REAL counts? LOS?
- PM Southbound through Circle is delayed
- Morrissey Boulevard queue (AM/PM) congested
- Traffic must work for everyone (local *and* regional)
- Pick up/drop-off at JFK/UMass Station causes problems at Columbia Road.
- New connections should not create "cut-throughs"
- Population issues?
- Design of streets
  - Scale
  - Parking & enforcement
- Existing conditions are having an effect on the smaller residential roadways (congestion on Dorchester Avenue & Morrissey Boulevard)
- How do we define Morrissey Boulevard: regional or local?
- JFK/UMass shuttles: integrate & expand into Columbia Point – MBTA as well as UMass Boston
- Increase public T service to the Point
- Connect (two-way) between Mt. Vernon Street & UMass Boston west roadway
- Congestion is impacting the transit operations (bus operations)
- Crossing Morrissey Boulevard as a pedestrian is very difficult!
- Pedestrian crossing at UMass Boston and also at JFK/UMass Station area is unsafe and unattractive too!
- Need for roads to connect Mt. Vernon Street to other points
- Connect Mt. Vernon Street to Morrissey Boulevard (pedestrian & vehicle)
- Impact of I-93 conditions on Kosciuszko Circle (accidents, traffic, etc.)
- Geometric changes to Kosciuszko Circle needed
- "Bypass" around Kosciuszko Circle (or underpass?)
- MBTA buses queue on Columbia at JFK/UMass Station
- MBTA buses are "mixed" in with general traffic
  - Can we provide "dedicated" lanes?
  - Priority for buses?
- Monorail

- I-93 exits/on-ramps?

## Land Use & Open Space

### Group #1

- Monuments, such as at Farragut Circle, will make space identifiable
- Concern about dual planning process
- UMass Boston plan (open space) is looking internally and not open
- UMass Boston housing is proposed where open space is shown
- Encourage coordination with UMass Boston, make plans work together
- UMass Boston housing plan should be included in overall housing plans
- Bayside open space shown by water is encouraged
- Need definite answer about Kosciuszko Circle – is it historic?
- Types of uses
  - Big box vs. small-scale
  - Do not want to see big box
  - Will have impact on traffic, etc.
- Make waterfront a destination
  - Combine retail with pedestrian connections
  - Focus on Mt. Vernon Street link to water
- Possibility of separating bikers from walkers on Harborwalk?
  - Was attempt to encourage walkers closer to water – dual paths
  - Pavement materials has impact
- MBTA parcel – best place for high density
  - Bayside nearest to T – good location for density
- Make effort to reintegrate Columbia Point with rest of Dorchester

### Group #2

- Open Space
  - Water features
  - Points of interest along open spaces
  - Basketball courts
  - Movie theater
  - Playgrounds
  - Dog park
  - Variety of open spaces – gardens, trees, playgrounds, water feature
  - Green roofs, walls
- Use space under highway
  - Safety improvements
  - Use dead space
- Locations for water taxis
- Farmer's market
- Better use of connections to Pattens Cove
- Boardwalk from Savin Hill to Columbia Point
  - Through natural areas, least impact
  - Make safer crossing for Morrissey Boulevard

- Reconfigure open space
  - Expanding but no reducing
- Get rid of Boston Teachers Union building
- State police buildings – future use? Move those.
- Housing is rental in Corcoran Jennison plan
  - Encourage same ownership with affordability
  - Mix rental and ownership
  - Keep option open for ownership or rental based on market
    - Put in amenities that would be needed for ownership
- Morrissey Boulevard as jobs corridor
  - Keep jobs – don't push out
  - Include T site as job site
  - Residential zoning would discourage more jobs
  - Life science industry – link with UMass Boston

#### Group #3

- Affordable housing – important
  - Maintain and encourage new affordable units
- Keep Calf Pasture area wild/natural
- Waterfront access
- Height of buildings – restrictions
- Better pedestrian access to Moakley Park
  - Allow big playing fields to stay there
  - Encourage smaller, family parks on Columbia Point
- Improve JFK/UMass Station access
  - Connection to Mt. Vernon Street
  - Improve underpass flooding
- Pedestrian/bike improvements along Morrissey Boulevard
- More connections that encourage more visitors to JFK Library/BC High baseball games, etc.
- Employment – development impact on current employees on Columbia Point
  - New retail will benefit workers on Columbia Point
- UMass Boston
  - Retail/hotel no longer in plan
  - No dorms – impact affordable housing negative in rest of Dorchester
- Ensure 400 affordable units at Harbor Point are locked in
  - Make condition of Article 80
- All new housing should be 30% affordable
- Higher bedroom count for families
- Market rate units going up and pushing out families
- Turnover of residents makes it difficult to create identity
- No access road splitting community
  - Make local road
  - Location of road crucial
- Housing: age, economics, diversity, etc.

#### Group #4

- Waterpark
- Connect open spaces with pedestrian and bike paths
- Put attraction at each open space (waterpark, weight lifting, etc.)
- Recreational areas needed
  - Basketball courts – existing need major improvements
- Community center
  - Place to hold classes (arts, language)
  - Keep people busy
  - Help keep Harbor Point safe
  - Encourage UMass Boston to share facilities with the neighborhood
  - No indoor basketball court or pool
  - Place for seniors
- School was once a community school
  - BPS said they need greater numbers to reopen as a community school
- Residential uses
  - Harbor Point good example of successful mixed-income
  - Ensure affordable options in new development
  - First-time homebuyer opportunities
- Retail
  - Restaurant
  - Whole Foods/Trader Joe's
  - Will market support Whole Foods? Will housing type impact type of retail attracted to Columbia Point?
- UMass Boston plans
  - Need to be coordinated with this plan
  - Will UMass Boston be tied to Corcoran Jennison plans?
- No fast food
  - Other types – snack bar, Chinese food, etc. better
  - Fast food might attract too many students and push out residents
- Contact State officials about UMass Boston plan
  - If UMass Boston plan doesn't work with rest of plans – this will impact sustainability
- Industrial space might not bring activity like retail would
  - Book store
  - Cards, book, school supply shop – something for everyone in family
  - Similar pedestrian feel of Derby Street in Hingham or Wrentham Village Outlets, but smaller
- Make pedestrians priority – slow traffic
- Ensure ADA access; ensure people can cross streets, etc.

## **Urban Design & Placemaking**

### Group #1

- Connection across Morrissey Boulevard important near BC High, better at-grade connection?
- Quincy Shore Drive – as an example of lateral connections

- Morrissey Boulevard – lane removal? Lane width?
- Need better T access, integrate better access into any new development adjacent to station.
- Need better, safer, more convenient access across Columbia Point, particularly out to water from JFK/UMass Station
- Corcoran Jennison site should have most density and Synergy site
- Generate active street frontage and development nodes
- Extend to Bayside Property, link to Bayside plan
- Concerned about new street at northern part of Corcoran Jennison site near Harborwalk
- Harbor Point as good example
- Link existing green spaces south through project area to Morrissey Boulevard

#### Group #2

- End of Mt. Vernon Street is a knuckle and should be celebrated, recognized with a potential new street grid
- Calf Pasture Pumping Station – focal point
- “Magic place” at Calf Pasture Pumping Station area
- Create pattern/rhythm on Mt. Vernon Street
- Want to rename Mt. Vernon Street
- Mt. Vernon Street should be more special, pedestrian-friendly
- Would like to examine benefit of placing lower buildings at water’s edge and putting taller buildings back – to preserve water views for those within Columbia Point
- Orientation, wayfinding, signage, & preserve view corridors
- Maintain “seaside” quality pastels, maintain reasonable heights, preserve water views
- Better involved of larger institutions
- Large buildings and institutional spaces better incorporated into potential & existing street grid
- BCHS not against opening parks/athletic fields to more uses
- Maintain reasonable heights
- How to ensure Synergy complies with urban design principles?
- Concern about dead end at Mt. Vernon Street and lack of connections to other areas within Columbia Point
- Concern about development too many through roads
- Downsize scale, make pedestrian-friendly
- How can existing “open spaces” change or reconfigure?
- In urban design guidelines, ensure that existing “special places”, views, and interesting spaces are preserved, enhanced and maintained
- Integrate existing spaces into urban design plan
  - Ex. Pattens Cove, Morrissey Boulevard
- Will architectural character blend with existing structures? How will old blend with new?

#### Group #3

- Water important piece of any design discussion

- Create/maintain links to water
- “Ah-ha” moments
- Need appropriate scale & density of development on/near water
- Lower buildings fronting Mt. Vernon Street, taller buildings where appropriate at center of site
- More trees on Mt. Vernon Street/boulevard?
- Battle heat-island effect
- 700 block of Commonwealth Avenue as an example
- Partnerships? MBTA
- Need connections across neighborhood
- Like European urban plaza – where to put it? Want to build it closer to T Station and areas where there is more activity
- Preference for lower buildings at water’s edge
- Existing grade and topography should play role in design decisions
- More information centers/kiosks, proposed Kennedy Center for the Study of the Senate, JFK Library, anchors

#### Group #4

- Height of buildings impacts visual and physical access to water
- Keep tall buildings out of water’s edge
- 7 stories is acceptable closer to the water, like Harbor Point
- Vary building heights
- Taller buildings near JFK/UMass Station
- Maybe taller buildings at center of Bayside development
- Shadow studies needed
- Want interesting colors and architectural quality so people have a nice walk from place to place within Columbia Point
- Mt. Vernon Street should have more pedestrian amenities
- Mt. Vernon Street should be boulevard/episodic
- Better internal access needed
- Need better, safer walk from JFK/UMass Station to surrounding areas
- Want wider sidewalks, more green on sidewalks, street trees
- Pedestrian bridge at MGH links to waterfront – good example of a good pedestrian bridge

### **Sustainability**

#### Group #1

- Green roofs should be in this development
- There is an aesthetic concern about windmills
  - Solar panels okay
- Rain gardens should be integrated
  - Olmstead Green as a good example
- Boston Green Roundtable is a great resource
- Make Columbia Point a model for stormwater cleansing and graywater resource
  - The Master Plan should specify integrated landscape



- Landscape becomes a memorable and environmental amenity
- “Green infrastructure” can make landscape visually iconic
- Landscape unites the parcels
- Maintenance is very important
  - Need a maintenance plan with funding
- Give trees the space to live
- Establish a Commonwealth Avenue type of landscape
- Harbor Point green was designed to be like Commonwealth Avenue, but it’s gated, should be opened
- Vietnam memorial no longer an urban wild
- Provision of greater habitat zones
- Extension of Harbor Point Boulevard

#### Group #2

- Does Columbia Point have built-in LEED requirements
  - Can we go beyond LEED standards
- Is there extra cost to sustainability?
- Make sure there is plenty of open space and water quality continues to increase
- Aggregate sustainability measures to lower the cost of sustainability (economies of scale)
- Wind power
- Test stations were proposed for Columbia Point, Corcoran Jennison did not cooperate
- Columbia Point should be a leader in sustainability
- Provide lots of glass for transparency and reflection of water
- Make sustainability at Columbia Point an educational opportunity for visitors and locals
- Education for homeowners about sustainability
- Utilize expertise at UMass Boston for sustainability
- Utilize distributed generation for UMass and the rest of Columbia Point
- Can residents share in distributed generation?
- Building mounted wind generators
- Establish the definition of sustainability
  - Social, community, economic, not just environmental
  - Making jobs as well as being environmentally-friendly
- Solar arrays over parking and buildings
- Specify green roofs
- Provide zipcar/flexcar opportunities - connect the network
- Zipbike
- Bike facilities for all

#### Group #3

- Solar, wind, tidal energy generation
  - Savin Hill Cove has 8’ tide drop
- Geothermal energy
- Co-generation of energy

- Use green roofs
- Parking lots designed for sustainability
  - Runoff, heat island effects
- UMass Boston has state mandates for LEED
- Covered parking with green roof and stormwater collection integral to structure
- Concern about the cost of sustainable practices to rents – initial cost of sustainable practices
- Site and design buildings for ventilation and solar gain
- What about the rise in sea level due to global warming
- Ocean water used to cool buildings and heat at UMass Boston
  - Can we extend to the rest of Columbia Point?
- Policy put in place to connect parcels and developments to achieve higher levels of overall sustainability
- What is the state's minimum LEED standard as it relates to UMass Boston
- Provision for bike parking indoor and provide showers for bike commuting
- Provide Zipcar opportunities for the Point
  - It should be increased, already a strategy
- More trees

#### Group #4

- LEED
- Wind power being studied for Harbor Point
  - Could be expanded to all of Columbia Point
- Rainwater collection for community gardens and the whole community
- Design buildings to take advantage of winds and solar gain/block
- Do a wind study for the design
- Solar power for public way lighting
- Do height restrictions affect wind turbines? FAA regulations
- Wind turbines on buildings, new technologies
- Zipcar should be implemented
- What is the tradeoff between less parking – does it mean more development? Or green space?
- Make sure green spaces do not collect stagnant water – make sure parks are funded for maintenance
- Accommodate hazardous waste in Columbia Point