

Expanded Comments on the City of Boston Placemaking Study

Comments submitted to the BRA on July 14, 2016

A Better City is pleased to comment on the Placemaking Study conducted by the City of Boston and its consultants, supported by MassDOT, as presented to the I-90 Allston Interchange Task Force on June 27, 2016 and further discussed with the Task Force on July 13, 2016. The Placemaking Study places due emphasis on the Interchange project as both a transportation initiative and a community development opportunity that over time will immeasurably improve the immediate Allston Neighborhood as well as create a vital new quarter for the City and region as a whole.

We hope that the dialogue begun by the Placemaking Study will continue during the preparation of the Draft EIR and beyond as the designs for the area are further developed and implemented.

- **The listed placemaking issues cover and summarize the range well.**

A Better City has developed and advanced an at-grade alternative in the “throat” area, which we believe is a key issue that will affect constructability, initial construction and on-going maintenance costs, and the nature of connections across the area, and we are pleased that your analysis has indicated that this is a key placemaking issue. Each of the other issues listed is also very important, several of which are critical to the success of West Station as a multi-modal hub that will support future development as well as enhance transit service for the adjacent neighborhoods and institutions.

- **The listed goals are all laudable and necessary.**

From a placemaking standpoint, the goal of creating a dynamic, mixed use neighborhood is paramount; however, the other two major goals listed of expansion of regional transit service and enhancement of interstate reliability are also critical to the success of the overall project. A further goal might be to mitigate the impact (both during construction and operation) of the transportation improvements and future development on the existing neighborhoods.

- **What items can or need to have priority functionally? Is there a sequence of dependencies for what needs to come first or to follow?**

It is evident that some components of the overall placemaking concept will need to be designed and implemented before other components can be advanced. Some effort should be made to think through the sequencing issues associated with such an implementation strategy.

- **How to set priorities related to funding opportunities and phasing of implementation?**

The implementation strategy and timing of advancing components of an overall plan are likely to be strongly influenced by when funding becomes available. Identifying elements of the plan and potential sources of funds would be a good first step in sorting out an implementation sequence. Additionally, what happens on the throat and whether the viaduct is replaced or removed as an at-grade roadway may likely have a huge impact on total project cost. It is important that we all learn more about the cost differences between the three alternatives and how those differences might impact what components can be afforded as well as the phasing of implementation related to available funding.

- **Interim conditions need further consideration.**

It is clear that any implementation strategy will take many years to complete. Related to any phasing plan, there needs to be a description of interim conditions and treatments for unfinished portions of the plan. These areas in progress need to be designed to enhance rather than detract from adjacent areas where development will be underway. Landscaping strategies or use of temporary structures need to be part of the description of interim conditions.

- **Complete streets principles should be applied as suggested.**

The Complete Streets model prepared by the City of Boston should provide the principles and illustrative details of treatment for streets in the area.

- **Establishing a street hierarchy is important and should be further highlighted. Adding internal secondary streets to blocks will help create some variety of development (slide 45).**

An example of secondary streets increasing the variety of block sizes and layouts can be found in Center City Philadelphia where additional streets and alleys are located within the larger grid framework. The grid in the Interchange area is not likely to be an orthogonal grid, but the size of blocks established by the principal connecting streets as well as the volume of traffic likely to be found on these major streets suggest that secondary streets within the blocks may better serve pedestrian routes, building entrances, or access to parking areas.

- **Enhanced parkland along the river where possible by realigning SFR can supplement narrower portions where necessary (slides 24 and 26).**

The benefits of having more generous open space in this area seem worthwhile, and we suggest that the City supports the idea that parkland expansions and Paul Dudley White (PDW) Path enhancements be considered holistically and in aggregate across the riverside corridor from Western Avenue to the BU Bridge (at least). Where promising additions should be made to the parkland and the Paul Dudley White Path where they make overall sense, such as relocating Soldiers Field Road away from the river in the so-called “bend” segment.

All three alternatives – including the 3K and two At-Grade concepts – appear to have some constraints on what can feasibly be added to parklands and the PDW Path in the narrow “Throat” area. We suggest that the City encourage that these expansions be assessed in totality across the project corridor, rather than on a linear in situ comparison.

Indeed, the additional parklands and PDW path-width that can be obtained outside of the Throat may influence the decision as to what may be acceptable in the narrow throat area when considering a choice between the viaduct and at-grade alternatives. As illustrated in slide 25, portions of the Esplanade down river have benefited by wider “park nodes connected by narrower corridors along the River’s edge.” We believe that the City should promote a similar node and corridor methodology to be adopted in its placemaking standards for this project.

- **The report should note Placemaking elements precluded by a replacement highway viaduct in the Throat that the two At-Grade concepts would not preclude (slides 24 through 27).**

A major focus of the I-90 Placemaking Study is to ensure that decisions made in the design of this project do not preclude various desirable future options. To that end, the City should revise the Final Report to note and highlight the many elements that would be precluded by a new elevated highway viaduct and that, to varying degrees, the two At-Grade options would not preclude them. These include:

1. Air rights development such as buildings, open space, and plazas above the four commuter rail revenue-service train tracks, I-90, and possibly Soldiers Field Road.
2. Enhancements to, expansion of, and pedestrian/bicycle connectivity improvements related to proposed development of the Boston University development parcel immediately west of the BU Bridge.
3. Enhancements to, expansion of, pedestrian/bicycle connectivity, and possible additional parkland improvements related to proposed development of the BU Student Village #3 along Buick Street.
4. Direct pedestrian/bicycle connectivity between Commonwealth Avenue and the PDW Path and riverfront parklands.
5. Connection to and development of the BU parcel between I-90, the Charles River, and the BU Bridge.
6. Reduced noise and visual impacts of I-90 on both sides of the riverfront including new parklands on the Boston side and across the river at Magazine Beach and the Cambridgeport neighborhood.

- **Importance of a multi-modal West Station that is well served with a range of connections and options that will support active ridership.**

To provide the opportunity for West Station to be most successful as a multi-modal hub, good connections for pedestrians, cyclists, bus riders, and car passengers all need to be available, from as many directions as possible. Generous bus bays, bicycle parking, drop-off areas, and places to wait will help make the station more inviting, and co-locating active uses and joint development at the station will integrate the station as an important node in the neighborhood.

- **The wider bridge connections to West Station will make it more inviting and approachable (slide 32).**

One of the most effective ways to support an approachable West Station is a solution such as the Long Street Bridge in Columbus, Ohio, illustrated in Slide 32. A wider bridge with landscape amenities and perhaps future joint development uses will help to knit the transportation node into the community fabric.

- **Support for a range of future development possibilities within the street grid is an important consideration (slide 43).**

As mentioned above, providing blocks that can be flexible for unknown future uses with the addition of secondary streets and well-proportioned blocks will allow a range of possible uses that may include residential, commercial, or institutional activities.

- **Reinforcing development opportunities along Cambridge Street will help to better connect the new development to the existing community (slide 39).**

Lining Cambridge Street with small scale commercial development on both sides of the street will provide a significant connection between the existing Allston neighborhood and new development in the Interchange area. Transitions in footprint of structures, building height, and uses supplemented by landscaping and complete streets elements can be most successful if the width of Cambridge Street can be minimized, consistent with the ability to accommodate the anticipated volume of traffic and required turning movements.

- **Need to plan for future air rights opportunities and allow space for future decks and substructure among transportation facilities.**

Assuming that most air rights development will take place after most transportation elements are constructed. Designs and dimensions need to be coordinated so that foundations and vertical structure can be located in an efficient spacing to accommodate future decks and buildings.

- **There needs to be a concept for implementation and installation of structures in the future amid active transportation facilities that will minimize disruption of operations.**

An overall concept should be devised that will minimize the impact of future air rights construction on highway and rail operations if these structures are added in the future.

- **Distribution of vehicular access to several streets to reduce the concentration of impacts and possible reduced width of roadways is desirable (slide 36).**

It would be very helpful if MassDOT's consultants can run the traffic model again to determine how much the traffic volumes are redistributed and determine the effect on roadway width and the need for turn lanes. Potentially, the service road and ramp configurations may need to be adjusted if the additional connecting roads are incorporated into the design.

- **Roadways, bridges, and sloped approaches should be as low to grade as possible to reduce costs and enhance development opportunities (slide 42).**

If possible, the slopes should be reduced to less than 5%.

- **Need to know more about the Soldiers Field Road connections to the I-90 ramps. The diagram seems to place a heavy burden on East Drive, and**

connections from the eastbound off ramp to SFR seem not very direct, perhaps intentionally (slide 22).

In theory there are many potential benefits for a direct connection from westbound Soldiers Field Road to reduce or eliminate the ramp to the River Street Bridge and relieve congestion at the SFR/Cambridge Street intersection.

A concern with an enhanced eastbound connection to SFR is that it might draw traffic off the Turnpike and onto SFR/Storrow Drive as drivers try to avoid tolls. What are the implications for toll collection policy at the gantry near the BU Bridge? Can drivers that passed through the gantry immediately west of this interchange be identified and allowed a reduced rate at the BU Bridge gantry to encourage those drivers to remain on the eastbound Turnpike?

- **What is the nature of the North/South connections?**
 - **Traffic impacts**
 - **Bus opportunities (slide 31)**

The diagram showing potential bus connections is vague and ambiguous. Some of the routes shown may be workable but others may not be for a several reasons. The Malvern/Babcock Street alignment may be the most promising, while the arrows connecting through portions of the BU campus may be unsatisfactory. The Kendall Square link noted in the slide may be better served by a future DMU route or a bus alignment that does not connect with West Station.

- **It would be worthwhile to find additional resources to study some of the suggested ideas in more detail such as:**
 - **Depressing part of SFR (slide 27)**
 - **East/west road connecting to West Station (slide 30)**
- **The analysis needs more consideration of the impacts of climate change, sea level rise, and resilience along with storm water management.**
- **There may be other items in the list of 61 points that should be highlighted for more discussion and illustration. Items listed on slide 45 regarding streets and streetscape are all important considerations that should be further illustrated.**
- **Any information on costs for some of the items listed?**



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Saving the Charles River since 1965

July 15, 2016

Gerald Autler,
Senior Project Manager/Planner
Boston Redevelopment Authority
One City Hall Square
Boston, MA 02201

Re: I-90 Allston Interchange Project, Placemaking Study

Dear Mr. Autler,

The Charles River Watershed Association (CRWA) appreciates the opportunity to review and comment on the above study. As a member of the I-90 Task Force, CRWA has been involved with the I-90 project for over two years and has more than a decade long successful track record of working with the North Allston neighborhood to improve access to and the health of the Charles River. Our advocacy efforts have not only resulted in creating greater public awareness around the health of the River but also resulted in demonstration projects that are improving the public realm and environmental quality of the neighborhood.

CRWA is highly invested in the North Allston neighborhood and is committed to ensuring that both the Harvard campus expansion and the I-90 projects result in significant improvement in the health of the River and the quality of life of the residents of North Allston. We have therefore been working in close coordination with MassDOT, DCR and various local and regional advocacy groups to ensure that the I-90 project not only front loads the environmental considerations in terms of infrastructure planning but also results in providing the neighborhood with increased parkland, improved access to the River and regional scale green infrastructure that is able to provide resilience in the wave of a rapidly changing climate.

In our presentation to the Task Force on 12/17/2016 titled "I-90 Interchange a framework for Placemaking" we offered a vision and approach to placemaking which is grounded in the existing infrastructure conditions of the site and its context and a future that calls for increases resilience and improved neighborhood access to the Charles River (a cherished community resource). We summarize the key principles of this vision in the attached handout A that also lays out the strategies to achieve the principles and the multiple benefits for each.

In order to align the "Lists of Standards for Placemaking" provided in the study with our shared vision, CRWA would like to offer the following comments to better reflect the Public Realm/ Open Space/ Mobility/ Connectivity/ Context Sensitivity and Sustainability principles for the I-90 Allston Interchange Project.

Parkland and Public Access to Charles River

- Standard #3 – The study should provide a more specific sense of size and location for the riverside park that will be created by setting Soldiers Field Road back from the river.
- Standard #4 – The study should provide specific areas for primary pedestrian and bicycle connections that link the river edge to not only the new district, but also the surrounding neighborhood.
- Standards #6 & #7 – In addition to widening the Paul Dudley White Path, the study should specify ways to improve the user experience and safety, such as adding a landscaping buffer that provides shade and mitigation for automobile traffic noise, and can simultaneously serve as a stormwater retention and treatment strategy.

Blue-Greenway and Green Streets

- Standard #36 – Specific details should be included regarding the types of stormwater management strategies that will be integrated into roadways as well as open space areas near the river and areas prone to flooding from intense storms that will be prioritized for green infrastructure retrofits.
- Standard #49 – The study should include the description of a linear open space corridor which would serve as a part of a larger network of open space connections across the site. This greenway would not only connect the existing residential neighborhood to the River, but also serve as a wet weather corridor that would provide stormwater management and flood resilience.

Climate Change Resilience

- Standard #57 – Given the fact that storm surges are already intensifying as a result of climate change, areas prone to flooding from storms and areas that are projected to contribute large amounts of stormwater runoff to the river should be listed as priority areas for stormwater retention and detention.
- Another major impact of climate change that is not mentioned in the study is the worsening of heatwaves. A solution for mitigating the urban heat island effect is to further integrate tree canopy and green space in areas of high impervious cover to mitigate high temperatures that are more pronounced in paved and built areas.

Placemaking to Restore Environment, Improve Quality of Life, and Provide Access to Nature

- Standard #3 – An important part of creating safe recreational opportunities on the Charles River that is not mentioned in the study is the water quality in the River, which is affected by both untreated stormwater discharges as well as combined sewer overflows after heavy rain. As a result, storm water management and compliance with the water quality standards (especially the Nutrient TMDL for the Lower Charles Basin) should drive the performance standards for the proposed development and infrastructure.
- Given the multiple benefits (both at the site specific and regional scales) of green infrastructure

for improving the quality of life for neighborhood residents, the placement of the parkland and greenway systems should be planned in concurrence with the planning for the street, highway and open space infrastructure rather than being added on as secondary elements in the future.

CRWA looks forward to our continued involvement with the City's planning efforts in North Allston as the I-90 project goes through the MEPA review process. We would be happy to provide our expertise to further the project sustainability and resilience goals. Please feel free to reach me at pmande@crwa.org or CRWA's Deputy Director at mvandeusen@crwa.org if you have any questions regarding the above comments or if we can provide any additional information to help shape the performance standards and environmental / regulatory context for this important project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pallavi Kalia Mande". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Pallavi Kalia Mande
Director of Blue Cities

CC:

Stephanie Pollock, Secretary of MassDOT

Leo Roy, Commissioner, Department of Conservation and Resreation (DCR)

Michael O'Dowd, Allston/ I-90 Project Manager, MassDOT

I-90 Task Force

Vision and Four Principles for I-90 Allston Interchange Project

1. Creation of new parkland and public access to the Charles River



Vision for new parkland and open space connection to the Charles River
Source: Varanasi Team, Beacon Yards Urban Design Workshop

Strategies and Benefits:

- Improve quality of life and access to open space for neighborhood residents
- Create stronger bicycle and pedestrian access through multiple connections to the river
- Improve water quality in the river by managing stormwater runoff
- Minimize the urban heat island effect caused by paved and built areas

2. Creation of a blue-greenway (network of open space corridors) and green streets

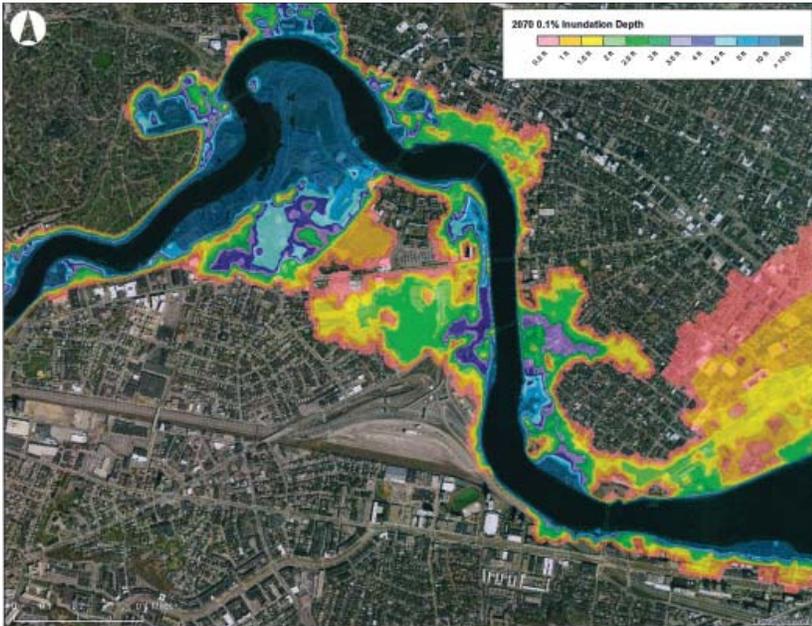


Proposed Daylighted Salt Creek with pedestrian and bike access
Source: Boston Globe "At Beacon Yards, Here Comes the Neighborhood"

Strategies and Benefits:

- Daylight Salt Creek to capture and treat stormwater flows and provide capacity for larger volumes
- Meet phosphorus reduction requirements for stormwater runoff to reduce nutrient pollution
- Create open space to absorb excess precipitation and provide flood storage
- Provide safe and inviting public access to the riverfront via pedestrian and bike ways

3. Planning and design for climate change resilience



Flood Vulnerability Assessment
Source: MassDOT

Strategies and Benefits:

- Provide flood storage for extreme weather events and increased storm surges
- Provide green space to decrease impact of projected heatwaves due to climate change
- Create a natural sponge to restore hydrology and decrease impervious cover
- Increase urban tree canopy to capture and store CO₂, a major contributor to climate change

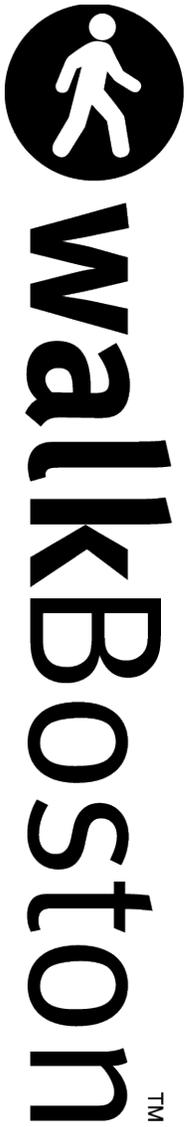
4. Place-making to restore the environment, improve quality of life for the neighborhood and provide access to nature in a dense urban core



Proposed Charles River Park (Connect Kendall Square, Framework Plan)
Source: Richard Burck Associates, Inc

Strategies and Benefits:

- Improve public health through new green space for active and passive recreation
- Increase development potential through new and improved open spaces and restored environmental conditions
- Create parkland with recreational value and improved ecosystem services for neighborhood residents



July 15, 2016

Gerald Autler
Boston Redevelopment Authority
City Hall Plaza
Boston, MA 02215

Dear Mr. Autler:

WalkBoston has participated in the I-90/West Station Task Force for more than two years, and has made numerous comments as MassDOT has worked on its various options. The presentation of the BRA's recommendations for the project is very welcome and exciting as food for thought.

We are very pleased to see the BRA's suggested placemaking standards for the Allston lands that will be transformed by the I-90/West Station highway-transit project. Most of these standards are well aligned with the community preferences that have been discussed and described by the community. We hope that the City's work will be rapidly integrated with the MassDOT process that is already underway to plan for the Beacon Park Yards and its environs.

The City's recommendations entail the first planning effort that has analyzed the potential for land development in specific portions of the very large parcel and to review how those parcels might be accessed for development. This is particularly critical for the air rights elements of the plan, where opportunities might be lost if the MassDOT's present plan is not altered to accommodate the eventual goal of developing these parcels.

The City's recommendations also address the community's core goal of seeing the establishment of a large park along the Charles River, which could be created by moving Soldiers Field Road away from the river. The I-90/West Station Project can provide this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

Finally, WalkBoston is very pleased that the City has identified the need to create more north-south connections between Commonwealth Avenue and Cambridge Street.

We urge the City of Boston to work diligently on gaining the incorporation of the BRA's recommendations for the transformative elements of the project that will have the greatest impact on the project. These include:

1. The Charles River Edges and Connections – one large riverfront project with many elements
- 2A. North-south streets as links for bus traffic – perhaps a bus-only street?
- 2B. North-south streets as links between Commonwealth Ave. and Cambridge St. that also connect with the proposed Harvard development north of Cambridge St.
3. New streets to promote air rights development and encourage bus, pedestrian and bicycle access, such as the proposal for an E-W street between Cambridge St. and West Station.
4. Local street connections that make sense for the neighborhood such as the direct North Harvard St – Cambridge St. South connection.
5. Creation of blocks that are scaled appropriately to attract development.

MAKING MASSACHUSETTS MORE WALKABLE

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Many of these project elements are not usually included in highway studies. Therefore, it is crucial that the City and the BRA remain involved with the development of the project as it continues into the production of the DEIR. The DEIR should include many of the ideas you have carefully advanced.

Best regards,

Wendy Landman
Executive Director

Bob Sloane
Senior Project Manager



Gerald Autler <gerald.autler@boston.gov>

I-90 Allston Placemaking Comments

1 message

Peter Smith <psmith@igc.org>

Sat, Jul 16, 2016 at 9:10 AM

To: gerald.autler@boston.gov

Cc: Peter Smith <psmith@igc.org>, Wendy Landman <wlandman@walkboston.org>, Steve Cecil <stevececil@cecilgroup.com>

I-90 Allston Placemaking Comments

Mr. Autler (cc: Wendy Landman),

As former chair of the BSA's Urban Design Committee I was pleased to review the recommendations of the team for Placemaking at the new development in Allston.

One concern I had was the perspective they showed which indicated bicycles in a lane next to traffic rather than between parked cars and the pedestrian walkways.

If we are going to catch up to the zero deaths world-wide movement for bike riders and pedestrians then we have to make planning decisions that reflect total safety for people.

I hope you will pass my comment on to those who are continuing this excellent effort to make this new neighborhood someplace of which all in Boston can be proud.

Best wishes,

Peter

Peter Smith, Principal
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- Effective Cycling instructor

July 18, 2016

Mr. Gerald Autler

Boston Redevelopment Authority

By e-mail to gerald.autler@boston.gov

Dear Mr. Autler:

I have reviewed the BRA's documentation from its June 27, 2016 public meeting concerning the Allston-Brighton Interchange Placemaking Study.

I am in agreement with the comment letter submitted by the People's Pike citizen's group, and have signed onto that letter. I strongly support almost everything which the BRA has suggested.

One difference though: the suggestion on page 27 for a primary, at-grade pedestrian and bicycle connection to the Charles River's edge over a depressed Soldier's Field Road does not go far enough.

"Transformation of Cambridge Street into a vibrant neighborhood street with protected bike lanes" (page 7, item H)" is impractical considering the huge volume of turning and crossing motor traffic. Most car-bicycle collisions occur at intersections. If measures to "[p]rotect bicyclists as they approach and cross intersection" (page 40, item 25) separate bicycle and motor traffic streams at grade, these measures will compromise bicyclist safety, mobility or both. The word "protected" is used incorrectly by bicycling advocates. "Protected," used correctly in traffic engineering, means that traffic signals stop all conflicting traffic -- but then the signal phase for the bikeway will be very short, greatly increasing bicyclists' travel time and encouraging noncompliance. Merging a bikeway with the roadway before the intersection, as on Western Avenue in Cambridge, allows bicyclists to merge into the stream of motor traffic to avoid "right hook" conflicts, though these occur if bicyclists do not merge in. Jogging the bikeway away from the roadway, as planned for Commonwealth Avenue, lets turning motorists see bicyclists out the passenger-side window -- but backs up traffic on the roadway; and motorists do not reliably yield after turning. In times of traffic congestion, bicyclists will have to thread their way through backed-up traffic. This is not protection. Please consider a parallel bicycle route on small streets one or two blocks to the north.

I strongly support an east-west green corridor (page 50, item 49) "[c]omfortable, attractive connections for pedestrians and [bicyclists] above I-90" (page 50, item 61); a truly bicyclist-friendly route might be achieved in connection with decking over the highway, as suggested on page 7, item G, offering an opportunity for a grade-separated bikeway and pedestrian path from Linden Street west of the Cambridge Street bridge, all the way to the river. In connection with this, please see my earlier comments to MassDOT at

<http://john-s-allen.com/pdfs/Allston%20Interchange%20Project%202015-12-22.pdf>

Very truly yours,

John S. Allen

Member, Waltham Bicycle Committee and Board of Directors, Charles River Wheelmen: my own opinions.

Gerald Autler,
gerald.autler@boston.gov
Boston Redevelopment Authority
July 18, 2016

RE: BRA Placemaking Study

Dear Mr. Autler,

Thank-you for this opportunity to comment on the BRA's approach to placemaking in Allston Landing. We are all aware of the enormous complexities of designing in this area – probably the most challenging set of conditions in the greater Boston area. That said, Allston Landing as a very large tract of land that presents a serious opportunity for city-building and community-making within the context of future Harvard land-use programming.

My comments on your proposals to date:

1. Vision - Placemaking standards should not be seen as a substitute for a “vision” for Allston Landing – even if the vision, a vision for open space, can only be described at the level of infrastructure at this time (the prioritizing of your 61 Placemaking Standards should be made transparent - in doing so I suggest your #49 be moved up to become part of #4).
2. A riverside park - As described in the attached graphic, a large riverside park, defined by siting Soldiers Field Road 300' back from the River should be an achievable goal. A new 4+ acre park along the river should include a large flat open space (approx 250'x400'), intended for multipurpose use and bounded on the south by a slope, with amphitheater, and pathways up to the air-rights platform; on the west and by the river, by a continuous Allston Esplanade from River Street to the BU Bridge for bikers, walkers and river-side activities.
3. The Peoples Pike - The ‘kit-of-parts’ nature of this Placemaking study limits its focus to how the various parts combine to make a greater whole. It suggests a “parcelized” approach to open space – discreet parks that can be dropped into a neutral building grid. This fragmented approach features the street grid as the key structuring element with open spaces as parts that can be plugged in. I strongly recommend that systems of open space be considered as “infrastructure” elements that help structure the overall development framework, in both its role (it's pedestrian and storm water corridors), and scale (it's actually big), and not as additive, dispersed parts. The 20% open space approach mentioned in the Placemaking Standards (#48), is actually quite a lot of land and can easily support a wide and continuous open space circulation system.
4. Storm water mitigation - The Placemaking study does not emphasize the potential of storm water treatment systems as a significant placemaking strategy where parkland, pathways and a day-lighted, ‘best practices’ storm water treatment system are interwoven. Nearby examples of successful stormwater / open space systems include Olmsted's Muddy River and the recent DCR stormwater landscape at Alewife – both bundling amenity and stormwater together as an integrated amenity.

Thank-you for your attention to our interests,



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KEY MINIMUM DIMENSIONS FOR OPEN SPACE INFRASTRUCTURE

ALLSTON LANDING
HEART OF THE BASIN
07.13.2016

Gerald Autler
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Boston Redevelopment Authority
July 18, 2016
RE: BRA PLACEMAKING STUDY—Ari Ofsevit comments

Dear Mr Autler,

In addition to other comments regarding the Boston Redevelopment Authority's Allston Placemaking study, I wish to comment on the supposed "need" for a large rail yard in Boston. Any such rail yard will reduce the amount of land available for development and raise the cost (due to rail clearances, decking, ventilation, etc.). While MassDOT claims they need space to store trains during the midday, this "need" could be mitigated simply by running more trains in service: the tracks and stations are there, yet the trains are planned to sit, unused, in Allston. There is also the potential to build some train storage in the right-of-way adjacent to the Framingham/Worcester line between the Boston Landing station and the proposed West Station, which would also move rail storage much further from existing residences. Combined, these could obviate any need for a costly rail yard, and simplify the future development of the Allston area.

The need for storage of train sets is predicated on continuing to provide poor service at non-peak times. Currently only two MBTA commuter lines operate hourly service at non-peak times: Fairmount and Lowell. (The inner portion of the Eastern Route from Beverly also has hourly midday service. By comparison, most other legacy Commuter Rail lines in New York, Philadelphia, Chicago and San Francisco provide hourly service or better. Lines in Chicago which do not are owned by freight railroads and constrained by significant freight operations, which is not an issue in Massachusetts.) The increased capacity of storage yards proposed for the South Station expansion would be used only for midday storage, as overnight needs are met primarily by yards at the end of the lines. In many cases trains would only sit in the yards for three or four hours in the middle of the day.

In summary, the current plan would result in an expensive rail yard which would further increase the cost of development in Allston. There is a better way to build Allston more in line with the goals of the BRA study, and to serve the growing needs of transportation in the Commonwealth.

Increased Midday Service to Gateway Cities and Fairmount Line

The need for these yards could be reduced dramatically simply by running more trains in service during the midday hours. While some MBTA lines are primarily commuter-focused stopping at suburban park-and-ride lots, others provide a necessary connection between some of the larger communities in the Commonwealth—many of them so-called "gateway cities"—and Boston. In addition, the state has invested in several new stations along the Fairmount Line, yet only provides hourly service in one of the most densely-populated areas of the City of Boston. Most (70-75%) of the costs of operating Commuter Rail—track, signals, capital equipment, stations and other overhead—is fixed; the cost of providing additional service midday with existing equipment is relatively low, so even though ridership is lower than at rush hour, the cost per passenger, if calculated based on these marginal costs, is relatively affordable. Any savings from the capital expenditure of building a rail yard in Allston could be reinvested in rail operations, by operating trains which would otherwise be stored.

In addition, this would allow much better service to currently-underserved communities in Massachusetts. By using existing train sets, we could provide service every hour to Brockton, every 30 minutes to Worcester and (with some cooperation and support from Rhode Island) Providence—the second and third largest cities in New England—and service every 15 minutes on the Fairmount Line. (Currently, there are service gaps on these lines of at least 2:20 midday.) This would provide far better service to the Gateway Cities of Brockton, Attleboro and Worcester and surrounding communities, the Metrowest corridor, as well as to the core of the Fairmount Corridor. Given that this project proposes a new facility in an otherwise transit-rich area, it would be far better suited for transit-oriented development than to store trains used to allow suburbanites to access the city with a detrimental

effect for local residents. This is not, however, a zero-sum game; increasing midday access during the midday does not come at the expense of rush hour commuters, as the trains would otherwise sit unused.

Operationally, this would absorb the trainsets which would currently be slated to be stored in Allston. Some midday shuffle at South Station may be sensible: the “heaviest” train sets with eight-car strings of bilevel coaches could be sent from the Worcester and Providence Lines to the storage yard, and smaller trains of five or six coaches could come off of the Needham and Old Colony Lines to better provide midday service without hauling extra rail cars (although it should be noted that the extra cost to move empty cars is minimal). Hourly service to Brockton would require one additional train set, half-hourly service to Providence and Worcester three or four (depending on speeds and stopping patterns) each and fifteen minute headways to Fairmount an additional four or five. This would require 11 to 15 total trains, equaling the amount of midday storage proposed in Allston, and without requiring any additional capital expenditure. By running more service, we could eliminate the need to build a costly rail yard, provide more service to underserved communities in and around Boston, and increase the development potential in the City of Boston at the same time. (This model of using existing rolling stock to provide expanded service could be extended further west to provide four roundtrips daily to Springfield and Amherst, further reducing the need to store trains midday in Boston, although as this would move beyond the state ownership of the line, it would have to be coordinated with freight schedules.)

Potential for Train Storage between Cambridge Street and Everett Street in existing right-of-way

If some storage is needed, there is ample room to the west of the current proposed yard in the existing right-of-way, between approximately Pratt Street (West Station) and Everett Street (Boston Landing Station). The rail right-of-way here is 93 feet wide, not wide enough for any development but wide enough for significant rail storage capacity. (For comparison, the southernmost three tracks of the MBTA’s Worcester layover yard including vehicle access to each track and the two adjacent mainline tracks also take up 93 feet of width.) Locating a facility in this location could provide storage for at least 9 and as many as 12 train sets, without using several acres of prime real estate and making construction of the rest of the main Allston parcel more difficult.

Rather than abutting a residential neighborhood, this area abuts commercial and industrial uses, and surface parking. Additionally, access to this parcel would be far easier than what is planned for the West Station area; it could be provided at-grade from the stub-end of Harvard Street adjacent to the Pizza Regina in the old Allston train station, or from one of the adjacent parcels’ parking lots (which could also be used for staff parking for the yard). It would make development of the air rights in this part of the project far easier, which would mean that the City would be able to reap the property tax benefits of developing the land more quickly. Combined with using some train sets to provide midday service to and within the City of Boston, it would be a much better use of resources than simply storing empty trains for several hours each day.

Simplify construction and placemaking in the project area

This plan will also make construction of many positive elements in the West Station/Beacon Park Yards project area much simpler. Without the width of the rail yard, the highway alignment could be moved south of where it is proposed, which would allow the grades on any streets climbing to meet it to be reduced. West Station itself—and the trackage below it—could be moved to the north, allowing shallower grades from Allston for streets which connect through the area, a top priority of the community. It would also reduce the cost for the new tracks in and out of West Station by reducing the need for interlockings accessing the rail yard, allowing the station to be built sooner rather than later, and providing benefits for the community from the start of the project, not just the end. Eliminating the need for a rail yard would also make more feasible the construction of an “at-grade” solution in the “throat” area, further enhancing the placemaking potential of the area.

Just as importantly, it would greatly simplify decking over the parcel, and allow this to take place at the start of the project, not over an already-built rail yard. While ventilation would still have to be provided over any active uses, a deck would no longer have to be built to withstand the use of a diesel rail storage yard below. Without the rail yard, space between West Station and the Turnpike below grade could be used for loading docks and parking, uses

which would otherwise take up prime real-estate at street-level. While the goal of this project should not be to provide an excess of parking, some will be necessary, and putting it below street level is preferable to surface or aerial structures.

While some additional storage may be necessary for any expansion of South Station (other than a North South Rail Link, which would more easily allow trains to run through the station to more distant termini), combining “live storage” with smaller layover yards would remove the need for a major facility in Allston and perhaps Readville as well, reducing the number of empty trains moving through Boston neighborhoods, and increasing service across the Commonwealth. The facility at Widett Circle is the closest to South Station and involves the least complex track connections and switching moves (most are already in place), reducing both construction and operational costs.

The goal of the BRA should be to create an Allston which is well-connected by all modes, is a driver of innovation, business and tax revenue for the city, and which has a net positive effect on the neighborhood. A large rail yard does none of this, and even if it is decked over, it makes other uses more costly to build and maintain. If there is a way to eliminate the need for a rail yard—and indeed, there is—we should examine it closely.



Gerald Autler <gerald.autler@boston.gov>

Comment on BRA I-90 Placemaking

1 message

Galen M. Mook <gmmook@gmail.com>
To: Gerald Autler <gerald.autler@boston.gov>

Mon, Jul 18, 2016 at 1:40 PM

Hi Gerald,

In addition to the two group letters that we're sending in today, I wanted to point out just a few other issues I think the BRA must tackle concerning the place-making strategies with this project:

* **Comm Ave to the River:** A bike/ped connection directly between Comm Ave and the Paul Dudley White bikepath, likely closer to the BU Bridge in the parcel that is owned by Boston University, or nearby from the Buick Street intersection that connects Student Village area in BU directly to the river.

* **People's Pike / MultiUse Paths:** Recommend a network of bicycle/pedestrian multiuse paths **separate** from the streetscape in the project area (north of the Pike and between Cambridge Street and the river), one that particularly separates the pathway from dangerous intersections, and recommend that it be built at the onset of the surface street construction (as it's much easier and cheaper to do as one network built early on).

I will refer you to the example of my hometown, Reston, Virginia, which built from a blank slate in the 1960s using this ideology.

<https://www.reston.org/Parks,RecreationEvents/Pathways/tabid/418/Default.aspx>

and in particular this system: <https://www.reston.org/portals/3/2013%20PARKSREC/Blue%20Trail%20Guide.pdf>

Note the use of underpasses to avoid heavy traffic streets.

Reston has 55 miles of pathways and 95 bridges, in a town of 65,000 people (projected to grow to 80+K in the coming decade) that expands to closer to 90,000 during the workday.

* **Beacon Yards:** Require a contingency plan for the land that is being considered for rail yard. If the MBTA's full expansion is not fulfilled, or the plan changes and use of the tracks can be significantly modified, there must be a plan in place to develop these acres. This land is too valuable to be a parking lot for trains, and the State must ensure that the land be developable per the "technologically feasible and economically viable" standards designated in the Harvard University Letter of Intent. We have not had a robust discussion of the best use of this land, or a commitment for decking over the area, and to leave this to the MBTA without searching for solutions is negligent on all parties.

Thank you for all the work you and your team is doing on this transformational project.

Best,
Galen Mook

Allston Resident
Task Force Member

July 18, 2016

Mr. Gerald Autler
Senior Project Manager/Planner
Boston Redevelopment Authority

Dear Mr. Autler,

We are writing to provide comments on the draft I-90 Allston Interchange Placemaking Study. The draft recommendations of the BRA and its consultant team led by The Cecil Group are a great step forward. We urge the BRA to insist that MassDOT improve upon the existing Option 3K and include at least one new option (3L) in the DEIR that implements findings of the Placemaking Study, including, but not limited to:

1. A direct connection between Soldiers Field Road outbound and East Drive
2. Expanded Charles River Parkland created by:
 - a. Replacing the Soldiers Field Road off-ramp to the River Street Bridge with an East Drive connection
 - b. Moving Soldiers Field Road further from the river than proposed by 3K
3. A new street connecting West Station and the I-90 ramps with the Cambridge Street overpass near Linden St
4. One or more new streets connecting Cambridge Street, West Station, and Commonwealth Ave.

Additionally, we support the suggestion by Ken Miller of the Federal Highway Administration, that the DEIR may benefit from having more than one new option for the entire project area to consider the various ways that the BRA's recommendations can be implemented.

The following suggestions are made in the spirit of making the very good draft Placemaking Study even better:

- New Charles River parkland should be large enough for the thousands of people who will live and work in the area. The 400' wide parkland proposed by the River Remarkable team should be considered.
- An east/west green corridor should be a fundamental part the project's street network and a "Transformative Standard". Design studies in the final report should show options for a linear park (comparable to the Comm Ave Mall in the Back Bay) including a Cambridge Street alignment and a grade-separated route south of South Cambridge Street with underpasses beneath the sloping north-south roads.
- A "People's Pike" bike/ped route should be a "Transformative Standard" that provides an off-road, stress-free, and enjoyable route for walking and cycling through the project area. This route should be well-connected to existing neighborhoods to the north and south. For the proposed east/west street connecting Cambridge Street and West Station to serve this role, direct connections to North Harvard and Pratt Streets are needed.
- The Franklin Street Footbridge should be a key early action item. The southern landing should align with Harvard Ave and have a width comparable to Columbus Ohio's Long Street Bridge with greenspace and/or public art to make it both a connection and an attractive and enjoyable place of its own.
- Decking over the highway and railyard has an essential placemaking role for these 30 acres and the quality of life and health for nearby neighbors. If decking is not built before the highway and railyard are operational, the much greater cost, safety, and logistical challenges may preclude it from ever being built. It should not be relegated to a "Consideration for Future Master Planning".
- New north-south streets connecting Comm Ave and Cambridge Street should be physically able to be used by buses, shuttles, commercial traffic, trucks, and private vehicles. The number of lanes in new streets north of I90 should be based on these options for connecting Comm Ave directly to I90.
- The Allston community has repeatedly and clearly expressed opposition to streets wider than 4 lanes. Streets wider than 4 lanes prioritize regional vehicle traffic at the expense of pedestrian safety and the quality of the urban environment, and are not consistent with the City's Vision Zero policy or Complete Streets guidelines. The proposed addition of multiple new streets in the area of the interchange will significantly increase vehicle capacity even if those streets are built with a more context-sensitive design of 4 lanes or less.
- Consistent with Vision Zero, 25 mph should be the design and posted speed on all streets. Someone struck by a vehicle going 25 mph is half as likely to die as someone struck at 30 mph and vehicle stopping distance improves by 45 feet (23%) when traveling at 25 mph versus 30 mph.

- To create a street hierarchy, Cambridge Street and others that more directly impact the residential community should be the smaller streets in the hierarchy
- Options for improving paths along the Charles River Basin should note precedents including:
 - The [Chicago Riverwalk](#)
 - Portland Oregon's [Vera Katz Eastbank Esplanade](#)
 - The [Schuylkill Banks Boardwalk](#) in Philadelphia
 - The [Hudson River Esplanade Riverwalk](#) in Manhattan's Riverside Park
 - [Klyde Warren Park](#) in Dallas
- MassDOT proposes to use 10 acres for midday MBTA train storage. Given the uncertainty regarding South Station Expansion, North-South Rail Link, and opportunities to increase frequency of service on the Worcester, Providence, and Fairmont lines, the Allston plan should consider a future when little or no midday layover is needed in Allston. The placemaking study should raise these issues and consider how these 10 acres can be put to productive use if it is not needed for train storage either before or after the construction of the I-90 project.
- An elevated highway viaduct would preclude many valuable placemaking outcomes. The final report should note elements incompatible with a highway viaduct including:
 - a. Air rights development (buildings, plazas, etc) in the "throat"
 - b. Direct Bike/ped connections from Comm Ave to the river
 - c. Connections to the parcel owned by Boston University next to the BU Bridge
 - d. Reducing the slope of new streets
 - e. Extending the Cambridge Street/West Station Street to the Charles River Parklands
 - f. A north-south street between Cambridge Street, West Station, Agganis Way, and Comm Ave
 - g. Transforming Agganis Way from a one-sided access road to a welcoming and desirable place
 - h. A dramatic reduction of the noise and visual impacts of I90 on the Magazine Beach parkland and Cambridgeport neighborhood

We ask that the BRA work with MassDOT and the Task Force to begin work in October 2016 to create new options 3L (and possibly 3M, etc) for inclusion in the DEIR. We thank the BRA for its contributions to date and look forward to a DEIR that contains new and widely supported options based on the BRA's Placemaking Study.

Sincerely,

Richard Fries, MassBike
 Wendy Landman, WalkBoston
 Harry Mattison, Charles River Conservancy & Allston resident
 Steve Miller, LivableStreets Alliance
 Galen Mook, Allston resident
 Ari Ofsevit, LivableStreets Alliance
 Rich Parr, I-90 Allston Task Force member
 Carol Ridge-Martinez, Allston/Brighton CDC
 Jessica Robertson, Allston Resident
 Stacy Thompson, LivableStreets Alliance
 Emma Walters, Allston Village Main Streets
 Becca Wolfson, Boston Cyclists Union



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Gerald Autler
Senior Project Manager/Planner
Boston Redevelopment Authority

July 18, 2016

Dear Mr. Autler,

I am writing on behalf of the Allston Village Main Streets Board of Directors with comments on the draft I-90 Allston Interchange Placemaking Study. We thank the City of Boston and believe that these recommendations are a fantastic step in the right direction.

The following are suggestions we believe would make the Placemaking Study that much better aligned with the needs of the community and our commercial district:

- 1) North-South Connections
 - a) These North-South connections should not be limited to shuttles and buses. Commercial and private vehicular traffic should be allowed as a means of dispersing traffic from already existing neighborhoods (Linden Street, Harvard Avenue, etc). Allston Village is already inundated with heavy commercial and private traffic that decreases the safety and walkability/bikeability of our commercial district and the surrounding residential neighborhoods. It is imperative that we plan for additional vehicular connections ahead of time.
 - b) Connect Commonwealth Avenue directly to I-90
 - c) Link Commonwealth Avenue and Cambridge Street as well as additional links connecting Cambridge Street to Western Ave.
- 2) Franklin Street Pedestrian Footbridge
 - a) Should be an early action item
 - b) Should connect Franklin Street (North of Pike) to Franklin Street (South of Pike) allowing for a 'reconnection' of a street that was divided by the Pike and allowing for a direct alignment with Harvard Ave/Allston Village
 - c) Should include greenspace and public art that celebrates Allston and helps create an enjoyable public space that welcomes cyclists and pedestrians to Allston Village
- 3) "People's Pike"
 - a) A "Transformative Standard" that provides an off-road, safe route for people walking and cycling through project area
 - b) Should connect to existing neighborhoods to the north and south allowing for easy, stress-free connections from multiple points in Allston.

We thank the BRA and the City for its contributions and thank MassDOT for providing the funding for this study. We look forward to seeing revised design alternatives in MassDOT's DEIR that include the recommendations from the City's study.

Sincerely,

Emma Walters
Executive Director
Allston Village Main Streets

HARVARD UNIVERSITY



July 20, 2016

Mr. Gerald Autler
Senior Project Manager
Boston Redevelopment Authority
One City Hall, Ninth Floor
Boston, Massachusetts 02201

Dear Mr. Autler,

We would like to recognize the work of the Boston Redevelopment Authority, the Boston Transportation Department, and the Cecil Group in producing the Placemaking Study for the Allston I-90 Interchange Project. We are also grateful to MassDOT for funding this study and the Allston I-90 Interchange Task Force for its thoughtful participation in a complicated process.

The standards that are put forward in the report offer a meaningful roadmap to refine the current MassDOT interchange concept and ensure that future placemaking opportunities are not precluded by today's transportation infrastructure decisions. This is a challenging assignment given the evolving nature of planning in this area. We believe that the recommended standards in the Placemaking Study strike an appropriate balance to ensure that steps are taken now to provide an appropriate amount of flexibility to continue discussions about the future of Beacon Park Yards.

We were pleased to participate in this effort and look forward to future discussions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kevin Casey".

Kevin Casey
Associate Vice President for Public Affairs & Communications
Harvard University

Cc: Harris Band
Joe Beggan

Gerald Autler,
gerald.autler@boston.gov
Boston Redevelopment Authority
July 18, 2016

RE: BRA PLACEMAKING STUDY- *RiverRemarkable* Work Group Comments,

Dear Mr. Autler

We thank the BRA for undertaking this important work and for the opportunity to review and comment on the effort to date. As you will read time and again in this review, we believe that the redevelopment of the former Beacon Yards and adjacent lands represents an opportunity of a lifetime to shape important new directions in sustainable and climate sensitive urban development for our community.

As background, the *RiverRemarkable* Work Group, a volunteer group of local designers and planners, is developing a holistic vision of this exciting urban area, aka the Allston Landing Vision Study. This is a pro-bono, on-going effort and is being done at the request of a number of community members of the Allston/I-90 Task Force to imagine what this development could be from the community and the river's point of view. Lead participants of the planning team include:

John R. Shields, FAIA- *Vision Director*
Richard (Skip) Burck, FASLA- *Landscape Planner/Architect*
Paul Lukez, FAIA, LEED, AP- Chair, BSA, Urban Design Committee- *Urban Design/Architecture*

Interested advisors include members of the Allston community, DCR, MAPC, the City of Boston, the Charles River Conservancy, CRWA and highly-regarded transportation planners and environmental experts. Positive informational briefings have been held with several Boston City Councilors and Department Heads in both City and State government.

We believe that it is essential to look at this area comprehensively at this early phase of the work given the site's regional importance and in order to better inform the narrower planning activities of the initial MassDOT effort. The simple reason is that we do not want early transportation-related decisions to diminish the full potential of this area's redevelopment for all: the community, the river and its parklands; the land-owners; the public (abutting, visiting... local and regional) and the environment.

The Allston Landing Vision Study Design Principles complement the Standards of the BRA Placemaking Study in several key ways, as seen in Attachment 1. Graphics that show the Allston Landing Vision as developed thus far, based largely on site analysis, interviews, discussions and a resulting set of Design Principles are found in Attachments 2 and 3.

Overall Comments

The Work Group applauds the work of the BRA and its consultant, The Cecil Group, for the depth and creativity of this effort. The Placemaking authors have identified the development's key parts and suggested specific improvements that can help form the basis for the next round of formal design refinement.

However, the 'kit-of-parts' nature of this initial Placemaking study's scope of work, understandably limits its focus to see how the various elements interact to make a greater

whole. That's the purpose of the programming and design process at which the Allston Landing Vision makes a first stab.

Also, while the BRA Placemaking Standards are a fine way to raise the issues, much is left unsaid in terms of the size, scope and quality expected of MassDOT regarding each. This is particularly true regarding other elements of public infrastructure that deal with quality of life: e.g. new riverside pathways, parkland and storm water treatment methods.

Indeed, the minor tweaks currently proposed in the MassDOT I-90 effort could be seen as meeting the Placemaking Standards criteria without doing much for the greater good of the larger opportunity. To date, the rail, pike and street layout have been seen as the primary formative elements of the evolving plan, with open space and even storm water treatment as secondary, additive and necessarily adaptive to this very narrow definition of urban infrastructure. That is a mistake.

The draft Allston Landing Concept Vision, with its Design Principles (Attachment 2) represent the first cycle of a comprehensive physical planning and design process that sets a more definitive physical layout (systems approach in the case of storm water treatment) for the MassDOT planners to incorporate into their plans. Coupled with the Placemaking Standards, it begins the comprehensive process of setting the parameters for all public infrastructure.

While closely aligned in most ways, there are at least four core assumptions on which the Placemaking Study and the Allston Landing Vision Study appear to differ:

1. **Throat Alternatives Alignments-** The Placemaking study assumes MassDOT's 3K-4 Alternative, with its elevated viaduct and a slightly shifted Soldiers Field Road as the base transportation system layout, while the Allston Vision assumes an at-grade solution for rail and Pike corridors and a greatly reconfigured Soldiers Field Road, allowing significant new riverside parkland and potentially waterside development. That said, most elements of the Allston Landing Study can be easily incorporated into the 3K-4 scheme.
2. **Air-rights-** The Placemaking study assumes modest and long-term development of air-rights over the Pike and rail, while the Allston Landing Vision, assumes fewer phases, a shorter timeframe and, most likely, a more extensive air-rights platform, similar to that of the Prudential Center and Copley Place.
3. **Storm Water Treatment-** The Placemaking study does not emphasize the potential of storm water treatment systems as a significant placemaking device, while the Allston Vision uses the example of Olmsted's Muddy River Way and the recent DCR integrated landscape at Alewife to bring amenity and attractiveness into the site and to maximize abutting land values.
4. **Open Space-** The Placemaking study's graphic proposals suggest a "parcelized" (kit-of-parts) approach to open space – discreet parks that can be dropped into a neutral building grid. This atomized approach features the street grid as the key structuring element and the inboard open spaces as parts that can be plugged in. The Allston Landing Vision views open space as equally important "infrastructure" elements that form the overall development framework, in both its role (it's pedestrian and storm water corridors), and scale (it's actually big), and not as additive dispersed parts.

Five specific cornerstone open space projects proposed in the Allston Landing Vision, if they are to be realized at all, must necessarily be integrated into the final MassDOT Allston/I-90 design (See Attachment 3). Each of these are consistent in concept with the BRA's Placemaking Standards. Each is discussed in greater detail in Attachment One to this letter:

1. **A substantive Riverside Park-** A new 5+ acre park along the river should include a large flat open space (approx 250'x400'), intended for multipurpose use and bounded on the south by a slope, with amphitheater, and pathways up to the air-rights platform; on the west and by the river, by a continuous Allston Esplanade, from River Street to the BU Bridge, for bikers, walkers and river-side activities.
2. **Riverside Connections to the rest of the Basin-** The 'Allston Esplanade' is a 20 to 40 foot wide corridor running through the park adjacent the river with safe bike and pedestrian paths and accessible to waterside amenities, such as docks, landings, seating areas, public boathouse and a year-round restaurant/dining terrace. This corridor should be attractive, tree-lined, pleasant and free of noise, shadow, visual and micro-particle impacts of the Rail and Pike corridors, most especially in the "Throat" area.
3. **A Park connecting Allston to River Park-** The 'Peoples' Pike', where parkland, pathways and a day-lighted, 'best practices' storm water treatment system are interwoven into a linear park running from the Cambridge Street Bridge to the river.
4. **A Plaza connecting West Station to the River Park and the River-** An urban plaza/belvedere linking, both visually and physically, the main entry/exit of the new West Station, down to the new park and river
5. **The 'Houghton High Line'**- An elevated linear park corridor giving the air-rights platform a 'front porch' overlooking the river, while potentially providing rail access to Houghton Chemical and providing a direct access from Comm Ave and the Grand Junction Bridge, to the river and its parklands.

While it can be said that in as much as no one knows how Harvard intends to eventually develop the land, joint responsibility falls to all of us now: the City; the State and the community, to insure that we provide the best urban design, complete with as much properly sited open space infrastructure, as is possible. It's essential not only for public health and welfare, but its amenity value also will maximize the economic value of adjacent private development.

In summary, we appreciate the framework and building blocks that the BRA Placemaking Study has given us. It's an essential first step to making Allston Landing a great 21st century example of collaborative urban planning. However, we worry that, unto themselves, the Standards, without programmatic goals and sizing, allow for a low bar of adherence. With the Allston Landing Vision Plan, and reasoned public discourse, we can push and refine the program to realize the highest quality riverside community development possible while meeting the goals for transportation improvements.

We look forward to working with you fully seize the opportunity to make this happen.

Attachment One of this letter responds directly to each of the Standards and other Considerations set forth in the BRA Standards presentation of June 27, 2016.

Sincerely,

John R. Shields, FAIA
Director, Allston Landing Vision Study

ATTACHMENTS

- 1- Response Comments
- 2- Allston Landing Vision, Summary Diagram (Draft)
- 3- Allston Landing Vision, Core Open Space Projects

CC:

Matt Beaton, Mass Secretary of Energy and the Environment
Leo Roy, Commissioner, Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR)
Karl Haglund, Senior Planner, DCR
Stefanie Pollack, Secretary of MassDOT
Kate Fichter, Deputy Director, MassDOT
Michael O'Dowd, Allston/I-90 Project Manager, MassDOT
Jay Livingstone, State Representative
John Hecht, State Representative
Moran, State Representative
William Brownsburger, State Senate
Michael Capulano, Representative, US Congress
Joseph Kennedy, Representative, US Congress
Brian Golden, Executive Director, Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA)
John Barros, Chief of Economic Development, BRA
Sara Meyerson, Director of Planning,
Rebekah Emanuel, Director of ImagineBoston 2030
Tim McGuinness, Director of Waterfront Planning, BRA
Sheila Dillon, Executive Director, Department of Neighborhood Development
Dwan Packnett, xxx, Department of Neighborhood Development
Michelle Wu, President, Boston City Council
Michael Ciommo, Boston City Council
Carol Ridge-Martinez, Allston Brighton CDC, Allston/I-90 Task Force
Jason DeRossier, Allston Brighton CDC
Paola Ferrer, Allston/I-90 Task Force
David Loutzenheimer, MAPC, Allston/I-90 Task Force
Pallavi Mande, Charles Rive Watershed Assoiation, Allston/I-90 Task Force
Harry Mattison, Allston/I-90 Task Force
Tom Nally, A Better City (ABC), Allston/I-90 Task Force
Alana Olsen, Allston/I-90 Task Force
Bruce Houghton, Houghton Chemical, Allston/I-90 Task Force
Fred Salvucci, Allston/I-90 Task Force
Steve Cecil. PIC, RiverRemarkable Landscape Director
Paul Lukez, RiverRemarkable Urban Design/Architecture Director
Ari Osevit, Livable City Alliance, Allston/I-90 Task Force
Glen Berkowitz, ABC Transportation Consultant
Michael Dukakis, Charles River Conservancy
John Wofford, Charles River Conservancy
Richard Bowers, Charles River Alliance
Christine Letts, Charles River Alliance
Bob Sloane, Walk Boston
Joseph Beggan, Harvard Chief Transportation Planner, Allston/I-90 Task Force
Xxx ??? Harvard

Attachment 1

Itemized Response to the draft BRA Standards

The Placemaking Study has developed a list of specific “Standards” which the I-90 process should incorporate into their process. Standards are identified a one of 2 types:

Transformative Standards: These standards require modifications or refinements in the 3K-4 alternative. The design alterations would become part of the entire project and would be integrated into the initial construction, with several noted exceptions where subsequent phasing may be appropriate.

Other Placemaking Standards: These standards can be met by the current 3K-4 Alternative or any reasonable variation.

Each BRA Placemaking Standard is discussed below.

1. Add I-90 and Soldiers Field Road connections

(Placemaking Study “Transformative Standard”)

Provide additional access between Soldiers Field Road and new streets leading to the I-90 ramps, in order to reduce vehicular traffic on Cambridge Street and within the new district; this will also help support new development. **

- The intersection of Cambridge St. at River St. is simplified
- The Paul Dudley White Path can be widened near River St.
- The land in the “corner” near the Charles River will be more adaptable to various types of uses

Response: Agree- *Additional limited access from new streets to Soldiers Field Road (SFR) gives this road more of a parkway feel and purpose, while increasing area-wide flexibility and reducing vehicular traffic on Cambridge Street. With the removal of the westbound off-ramp at Cambridge Street, parkland can be widened and safe bike and walking paths at this busy constriction point.*

Issues and Concerns: Care must be given to the several road/rail engineering design issues: safe rail access to Houghton Chemical; non-impeded People’s Pike linear park to the river; new street elevations, etc.

The Allston Landing Vision Plan shows two connection points... 1) a two-way connection just east of the Embassy Suites Hotel, that can either accommodate traffic to and from the east bound lane or could become a signalized intersection serving both directions, and 2) a west-bound off ramp running under SFR, connecting with the westbound I-90 frontage road/boulevard.

2. Realign portions of Soldiers Field Road along the River**

(Placemaking Study “Transformative Standard”)

Soldiers Field Road can be pulled further away from the Charles River, creating more useable open space, public access and pedestrian/bicycle connectivity. **

- Realignment will require new solutions to access to Houghton Chemical and the MBTA maintenance facility.

Response: Agree- *With the reconstruction of Soldiers Field Road as a parkway and the recommended lower speed limits (30mph, see Note 27), the R.O.W. can swing several hundred feet away for the river, allowing space for a large new and flexible regional public open space directly on the river.*

Issues and Concerns: Decisions on the size, shape and program for this open space must be made soon, given that MassDOT's current recommendations on the SFR layout provides only a narrow strip of new parkland.

The Allston Landing Vision Plan shows one of several solutions to the Houghton Chemical connection. Several solutions are possible for access to the MBTA facility.

3. Create Park Space on the Charles** *(Placemaking Study "Transformative Standard")*

Provide the space for a new park along the Charles River with revisions to the Soldiers Field Road alignments.**

- The space along the Charles will expand the Esplanade and be a neighborhood and district destination.

Response: Agree- *This can become a major Boston open space, providing valuable frontage and park/river access for new development. Uses might include amphitheater, sledding hill, events set-up space, passive recreation (frisbee, lawn games, picnic, sunning), a host of waterside activities and even a waterside restaurant.*

Issues and Concerns: Either the DCR or Boston Parks and Recreation must take active responsibility to partner with MassDOT on this civic priority.

The Allston Landing Vision Plan proposes a large flat open space (approx 250'x400'), bounded on the south by a slope, with amphi-theatre, and pathways up to the air-rights platform; on the west and by the river, a promenade with amenities, such as docks, public boathouse and restaurant.

5. Provide a primary, at-grade pedestrian and bicycle connection to the Charles River edge** *(Placemaking Study "Transformative Standard")*

As part of the roadway interchange and intersection design along Soldiers Field Road, provide a connection to the open space along the River for pedestrians and bicyclists. **

- Depressing a section of Soldiers Field Road will create the opportunity for the continuation of at-grade pedestrian and bicycle links directly into the new river edge park land.

Response: Agree to direct connections- *This is a long-standing request for the community and all appear to be committed to it. The completion of a 20+ mile bike/pedestrian pathway system around the Charles River Basin will provide the spine for a regional network. Today, the most problematic segment runs from River Street to the BU Bridge, along this site. A strong connection in this area would serve not only the development site, but all of Allston and Brookline.*

Issues and Concerns: It must be safe, attractive and easy to access and use, day and light, in all seasons

The Allston Landing Vision Plan interweaves parkland, pathways and a day-lighted, 'best practices' storm water treatment system into a linear park running from the Cambridge Street Bridge to the river. Natural topographic differences will allow most of the crossings to be grade-separated similar to those found on the historic Fenway Carriageway.

5. Consolidate supporting infrastructure to reduce barriers for new streets, open space and development*

Response: Agree- Anything to reduce barriers for new street, open space and development is helpful.

Issues and Concerns: Unclear how the specific barriers are defined

The Allston Landing Vision Plan strives to integrate and double-up program components where possible... e.g. the multi-purpose linear park; the BU High Line with the Houghton Spur...

6. Improve non-motorized paths along the Charles River Basin *

Response: Agree- The completion of a well-built and well maintained 20+ mile bike/pedestrian pathway system around the Charles River Basin is a major goal for 2030 and it will provide the spine for a regional network. Today, the most problematic segment runs from River Street to the BU Bridge, along this site.

Issues and Concerns: The "Throat Area" land is too narrow for comfortable walker/biker passage in any of the schemes. The at-grade schemes have the advantage of effectively mitigating noise and micro-particle pollution from the rail and Turn Pike corridors, but require expanding the parkland into the river... The Turn Pike viaduct scheme takes less riverbank but still encroaches onto current DCR property and would have more serious noise and micro-particle impacts.

The Allston Landing Vision Plan, favors the at-grade approach, similar to that found in Philadelphia and Portland (OR), making a dramatic 'in river' promenade, but recommends that more study be done before selecting a preferred approach. It recommends that MassDOT fund an independent DCR study to find a best solution.

7. Maximize the quality of constrained open space in 'throat' area

Response: Agree- Whichever 'Throat' configuration is chosen, the experience for park users must be greatly improved over today's conditions. At minimum, special measures must ensure that the pass-through experience for park users is unencumbered to the maximum extent possible by rail/road impacts.

Issues and Concerns: See 6 above...

The Allston Landing Vision Plan, recommends that MassDOT fund an independent DCR study to find a best solution.

8. Retain the fundamental urban interchange approach developed in Alternative 3K4 *

Response: Agree, with caveat- The general urban interchange approach seems good.

Issues and Concerns: major issues remain regarding the attendant components: i.e. Soldier Field Road reclassification and reconfiguration; Throat Area configuration; Houghton and MBTA maintenance facility access.

The Allston Landing Vision Plan maintains the fundamental I-90 interchange approach, but does shift west bound ramps away for the Pike to facilitate 5% grades for cross streets up to the air-rights platform.

It also calls for a major realignment of Soldiers Field Road and gives priority to an at-grade solution to facilitate air-rights development in the throat (see 6 above)

9. Provide for an additional east/west street connection between Cambridge Street and the West Station Area**

(Placemaking Study “Transformative Standard”)

Provide for a direct street connection with bicycle and pedestrian accommodations at or near the Cambridge Street Bridge over I-90 and the West Station area, using air rights. **

- The design of the project should anticipate future, phased construction of a new street above the rail and highway alignment that will link West Station area and Cambridge Street near its bridge over I-90.

Response: Agree- *This is a big urban design move that opens the area in several ways, facilitating vehicle, bike and pedestrian movement toward West Station, while dramatically improving air-rights development feasibility above the Pike and Rails.*

Issues and Concerns: Phasing, costs and benefits must be calculated now. Impacts on the Cambridge Street Bridge must be mitigated.

The Allston Landing Vision Plan sees this as the major spine along which air-rights development can take place early, starting at West Station.

10. Connect West Station to the River *

‘RiverRemarkable Work Group Response: Agree- *Indeed, we think West Station should be renamed “Allston Landing” and designed so that when emerging from the station one can look out and see the river and all the water related activity going on there. An easy downhill walk, from this elevated, air-rights location, should lead one to the river’s edge and its pathways.*

Issues and Concerns: This is the most logical place for the initial air-right platforming to occur.

The Allston Landing Vision Plan envisions that the major entry/exit to the station would be located as close to the river as possible with an open and active plaza area that leads to a belvedere from which it’s an easy stroll down to the park and river.

11. Reinforce air rights potential *

Response: Agree- *Every design move must strive to facilitate and maximize air-rights development potential above the Pike and Rails.*

Issues and Concerns: It is assumed that the rail/pike design will allow substantial air-rights development above. This should include the Throat area, however, much depends on BU’s commitment to this area, as well as the ultimate desirability of a “High Line” styled public promenade.

The Allston Landing Vision Plan sees the entire area over the rail and Pike corridors as an air-rights platform. This includes the ‘Throat’ area, that can become an attractive extension of the BU campus and a Boston version of an active “High Line” styled promenade paralleling the river. It can also become the corridor for the infrequently used Houghton Spur...

12. Provide visual and sound barriers to limit impacts on adjacent, developed parcels *

Response: Agree- In the at-grade scheme, both visual and sound impacts, as well as micro-particle pollution, can be more easily mitigated, with buffer walls at the perimeters, than with the 3K-4 scheme.

Issues and Concerns: The 3K-4 scheme, with adequate effective barrier height, would loom heavily over the adjacent parkland.

The Allston Landing Vision Plan imagines the rail/Pike corridor bounded its entire length on both sides by strong visual, sound and anti-pollution buffers, coupled with a reduced speed (30mph parkway adjacent parkland).

13. Ensure that West Station design includes usable public open space *

Response: Agree- A significant public plaza in front of West Station (aka "Allston Landing"), would allow people to orient themselves to the entire new development, provide active events space and act as vestibule to the new, water-side park and river.

Issues and Concerns: This is a central meeting place requiring movement corridors for all types of conveyance (bus, car, truck, bike). Care must be taken to ensure adequate and safe space and passage for pedestrians and public activities.

The Allston Landing Vision Plan imagines an orientation plaza in front of the station entry, a 'woonerf-styled' multi-use court and wide passages harboring a variety of outdoor kiosks and small event venues to the river belvedere (High Line)

14. Do not preclude the potential for a future street connection to the south of West Station *

Response- Agree...

Given the scope of this project, it seems inevitable that eventually there will be demand for such a connection.

Issues and Concerns: Given the narrowness of the existing streets connecting to Comm Ave. and the likely demand, volumes would be high and congestion, an on-going problem. However, this congestion exists today on largely residential Linden Street and will likely only get worse as this area is redeveloped, so the issue needs to be further studied as part of this effort.

The Allston Landing Vision Plan includes three possible connection corridors.

15. Provide a north/south link for shuttles and buses *(Placemaking Transformative Standard)*

Provide a north/south transit link for buses and shuttles between the North Allston/Harvard Area, West Station, and areas to the east and south, including Kendall Square and the Longwood Medical Area.**

- *Buses and shuttles should not terminate their routes at West Station, but should be able to continue across the I-90 and rail alignment. The project should establish feasible ways to accomplish this north/south link by evaluating potential routes and alignments.*

Response: Agree- If West Station, aka “Allston Landing”, is to become a significant transportation hub, through shuttle and bus access is an obvious requirement. Such a service corridor would also alleviate congestion on Linden Street and, encourage the use of public transit.

Issues and Concerns: (See 14 above).

The Allston Landing Vision Plan sees

16. Provide added width to the connecting bridges to West Station

Provided added dimension (such as landscaped aprons) to the bridges that span above the highway and rail alignment to provide visual and landscape amenities to support a pleasant pedestrian and bicycle environment.*

(Placemaking Study “Transformative Standard”)

Response: Agree, with caveat- If air-rights planning and decision-making is beyond the construction timeframe Say (10 years) for the infrastructure, then such pre-programmed added width makes sense. However, this is where the initial air-rights development (both public and private should occur, whether or not any other air-rights areas are developed. Thus our recommendation is to incorporate construction of the core air-rights platform into this MassDOT project from the outset. This would not only catalyze and facilitate initial private development, but also provide the necessary platform for the public open space connections between the bus station, West Station (aka Allston Landing) and the river and riverside park.

Issues and Concerns: What’s the final size and shape of the Phase I platform? How many stories should it support? How will its construction be financed?

The Allston Landing Vision Plan proposes that the initial platform represent approximately 40% of the total feasible air-right area.

17. Allow a systematic method for locating and constructing air rights development *

Response: Agree- As seen above, We anticipate that this will be a phased development, with the area around West Station ,aka Allston Landing, being built first. Development of air-rights in the Throat will depend largely on BU, given that they control the development edge. Further air-rights development will be largely market driven.

Issues and Concerns: See 16 above...

The Allston Landing Vision Plan foresees this as a very desirable development location for the region and expects full build-out by 2030.

18. Provide a third north/south arterial Street

Provide three north-south arterial streets across Beacon Yards aligned with three north-south streets now being planned for the Harvard Institutional Master Plan (IMP) area.**

(Placemaking Study “Transformative Standard”)

Response: Agree- This strengthens the larger urban grid and provides more flexible traffic movement while potentially allowing for narrower streets in this direction.

Issues and Concerns: None

The Allston Landing Vision Plan will be modified to incorporate this recommendation.

19. Design and build Cambridge Street and its intersections with the minimum necessary general purpose travel lanes, at the minimum necessary lane widths *

Response: Agree- Use Complete Streets dimensions

Issues and Concerns: None

The Allston Landing Vision Plan will be modified to meet these recommendations

20. Consider a direct North Harvard Street intersection alignment

A more direct intersection between Cambridge Street South and North Harvard Street at Cambridge Street would limit neighborhood impacts and reduce unnecessary turning movements, congestion, and street and intersection widths along Cambridge Street.**

- *If a simpler intersection and other changes in the street network will reduce impacts on North Harvard Street, then a more direct street alignment should be considered*
- *If a more direct alignment proves to have fewer impacts, then the odd-shaped blocks in Concept 3K-4 can be reorganized to provide better opportunities for development*

Response: Agree-

Issues and Concerns: None

The Allston Landing Vision Plan includes this recommendation

21. Strengthen Cambridge Street for early redevelopment along its southern edges

Provide the opportunity for an improved Cambridge Street as an early phase redevelopment target. **

- *Creating an active and developed edge along Cambridge Street will occur better and sooner if the blocks are well proportioned and have adequate depth for retail uses*

Response: Agree- However, what are the assumptions for retail depths with regard to parking?

Issues and Concerns: How are retail parking areas designed to minimize impacts on adjacent, non-retail uses?

The Allston Landing Vision Plan does not yet address block uses, but does imagine a significant amount of housing, including work force and affordable along Cambridge Street and the parallel Salt Creek linear park.

22. Minimize impact of highway access on active street frontage and pedestrian connectivity *

Response: Agree- The well scaled street grid should disperse traffic quickly, though a few streets will be scaled and signed for heavier through use.

Issues and Concerns: Heavy through traffic is a real probability.

The Allston Landing Vision Plan recommends lower speed limits on narrower travel lanes, with wider sidewalks.

23. Avoid creating medians where possible *

Response: Agree-

Issues and Concerns: None

The Allston Landing Vision Plan shows one heavily canopied 'ceremonial' boulevard terminating at West Station, aka "Allston Landing" and the east/west access road as a boulevard, but these can change.

24. Keep the pedestrian crossings short along Cambridge Street *

Response: Agree- This is the best chance to unite Allston with the new Allston Landing development

Issues and Concerns: None

The Allston Landing Vision Plan proposes the narrowest possible street section

25. Protect bicyclists as they approach and cross intersections *

Response: Agree-

Issues and Concerns: None

The Allston Landing Vision Plan would give strong priority to dedicated bike lanes

26. Create a street hierarchy *

Response: Agree- This is a big site and its street network must serve multiple purposes.

Issues and Concerns: None

The Allston Landing Vision Plan imagines a lacework of streets built around a strong urban grid.

27. Use a maximum design speed of 30 mph for parkways and neighborhood collectors

Response: Agree- This idea is long overdue and indeed should be reclassified as a Placemaking Study "Transformative Standard".

Issues and Concerns: Many studies conclude that volumes can actually increase on roads where speeds are lower and better monitored. Will MassDOT and DCR agree to rethink Soldiers Field Road and Storrow Drive as high volume parkways? How can we best enforce the reduced speed limits?

The Allston Landing Vision Plan proposes a new Soldiers Field Road with curves and profiles that demand slower driving. In addition a vigorous program that educates drivers to the new roadway and a

strict law enforcement program, perhaps including video/electronic surveillance, should be introduced. It is also recommended that if automatic toll equipment were used here as well as on the Pike, many motorists would no longer use Soldiers Field Road to avoid tolls.

28. Assume a network of Internal secondary streets *

Response: Agree- This is in line with the hierarchy standard (26) and will allow for even greater traffic dispersion.

Concerns: None

The Allston Landing Vision Plan sees the local street infrastructure as a grid of lacework.

29. Phase street and intersection improvements *

Response: Agree- but only in as much as they cannot all be done at once without major disruption of the entire area.

Concerns: These must be mindful of Harvard's development plans to the north, BU's needs toward Comm Ave, Boston's improvement plans at key intersections on Commonwealth Avenue, Houghton Chemical's access needs, Soldiers Field Road realignment and other factors yet to be identified.

The Allston Landing Vision Plan imagines full build-out by 2030.

30. Use multiple methods for efficient traffic distribution *

Response: Agree- Insist on 'best practices'

Concerns: None

The Allston Landing Vision Plan assumes 'best Practices' and mindfulness of new trends and directions in movement planning and equipment.

31. Limit slopes of new streets and associated sidewalks and bike facilities

(Placemaking Transformative Standard)

Limit the maximum slopes for the new roadway network to less than 5%.* Slopes with grades less than 5% accommodate easy walking, people in wheel chairs and bicyclists.

Response: Agree- We can all live with this.

Issues and Concerns: None

The Allston Landing Vision Plan uses 5% as its maximum allowable grade for streets and pathways.

32. Organize streets to create blocks that can be flexibly and efficiently developed

(Placemaking Transformative Standard)

Provide a street grid that defines blocks that are scaled consistently and provide continuity of block width and length. The placemaking standards for street alignment and connectivity will lead to better proportioned blocks that can be adapted to a wide variety of development and open space solutions.

Response: Agree- However, the Placemaking Study does not set a range of sizes for maximum program flexibility, e.g. the New York Block.

Issues and Concerns: Need some sense of where various use types are going to be developed

The Allston Landing Vision Plan proposes a general program of development for the four key sub-areas identified: the Parklands; the Salt Creek corridor (including Cambridge Street); the main air-rights area and the Throat air-rights.

33. Enable active block frontages *

Response: Agree- Make them as open and transparent as possible, with service to the rear. The traditional 'street/alley/street configuration still works well in most cases.

Issues and Concerns: Developer coordination

The Allston Landing Vision Plan assumes that these issues will be worked out in the block by block development.

34. Provide streetscape and landscaping at the perimeter of any vacant future development parcels *

Response: Agree- This is necessary for creating a strong positive image from the outset.

Issues and Concerns: None

The Allston Landing Vision Plan assumes this policy going forward

35. Provide permanent streetscape and landscape amenities where future redevelopment is not anticipated *

Response: Agree- Again, important to impart a strong positive image

Issues and Concerns: None

The Allston Landing Vision Plan assumes this policy going forward.

36. Plan for integration of roadway and district stormwater solutions *

Response: Agree- The CRWA has made a series of state-of-the art recommendations

Issues and Concerns: The current MassDOT plans make no provision for making Salt Creeks cleaner as it empties into the Charles and the plans for ameliorating storm water run-off from new streets and development are narrowly focused and do not examine the larger opportunity.

The Allston Landing Vision Plan incorporates many of the CRWA recommendations into a multipurpose corridor along a day-lighted and relocated Salt Creek.

37. Create a framework for adaptable and well sized blocks

(Placemaking Transformative Standard)

The street layout should allow block sizes and dimensions that can be adapted to a broad range of building and use types.**

Response: Agree- *This is a major goal of this first phase of infrastructure development.*

Issues and Concerns: Building collaboration among the various actors must get started early.

The Allston Landing Vision Plan imagines that most of this will occur in the development of the secondary streets.

The Placemaking Study also identified the following Area-Wide Standards and Considerations for Future Master Planning which generally follow 'best-practices' policies that all can agree upon.

Additional Area-Wide Standards

- 38. Constrain design and operational speeds *
- 40. Provide quality transit accommodations on transit routes *
- 41. Employ smart curbside principles *
- 42. Incorporate Intelligent Transportation Systems into the design *
- 43. Allow for designated truck routes and truck-restricted streets *
- 44. Provide stormwater solutions that will not impact surrounding areas *
- 45. Identify options for robust local and regional transit service in the future *
- 46. Plan adequate capacity for future utility corridors *
- 47. Anticipate District Energy Systems *

Considerations for Future Master Planning

- 48. Create a coordinated balance of open space and buildings that reflect the character of an urban district
- 49. Support an east/west green corridor
- 50. Create a linked network of open spaces
- 51. Plan for future Hubway stations
- 52. Conceal parking supplies
- 53. Optimize orientation of buildings to define district and retain views
- 54. Use the primary streets as visual corridors
- 55. Reinforce context-sensitive development on Cambridge Street
- 56. Reinforce air rights development potential
- 57. Integrate buildings, energy facilities and open space networks with potential flood and stormwater management needs
- 58. Address sea level rise as part of a broader area solution
- 59. Provide District Energy systems and solutions
- 60. Follow best-practice Transportation Demand Management strategies for all new development
- 61. Provide comfortable, attractive connections for pedestrians and bikes above I-90

*Who should it go to? I don't have the names of either the BRA or MassDOT Project Managers
Who should be Copied?... Here's the start of a list...*

In Boston- Golden, Barros, Meyerson, Emanuel, McGuinness, Packnett, Dillon, Councilors Wu, Campbell and Ciommo

At State- Beaton, Roy, Legislators- Brownsberger, Hecht, Livingstone, Moran, Capulano

At MassDOT- Pollack, Fichter, O'Dowd,

On Placemaking team- Steve Cecil,

On Allston Landing participants- (These are people we've discussed the Vision with... all of these should review and comment before it goes out)- Harry Mattison, Pallavi Mande, Ari Ofsevit, Glen Berkowitz, Karl Haglund, Jack Wofford, Renata Von Tscharner, Fred Salvucci, Alana Olsen, Bruce Houghton, Desrosier, Martinez, Ferrer, Loutzenheimer, Packnett

CRA- Bowers, Letts

We need to make sure that Harvard has an advanced copy delivered by the most diplomatic one of us--- Is that you Mr. Wofford???

Attachment 2
 Draft Allston Landing Vision-
Concept Overview

Allston Landing

Looking at the Allston/I-90 Opportunity from the river and the community's Point of View

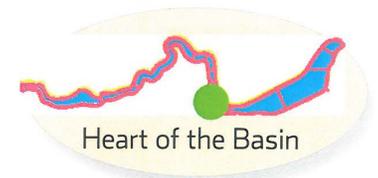
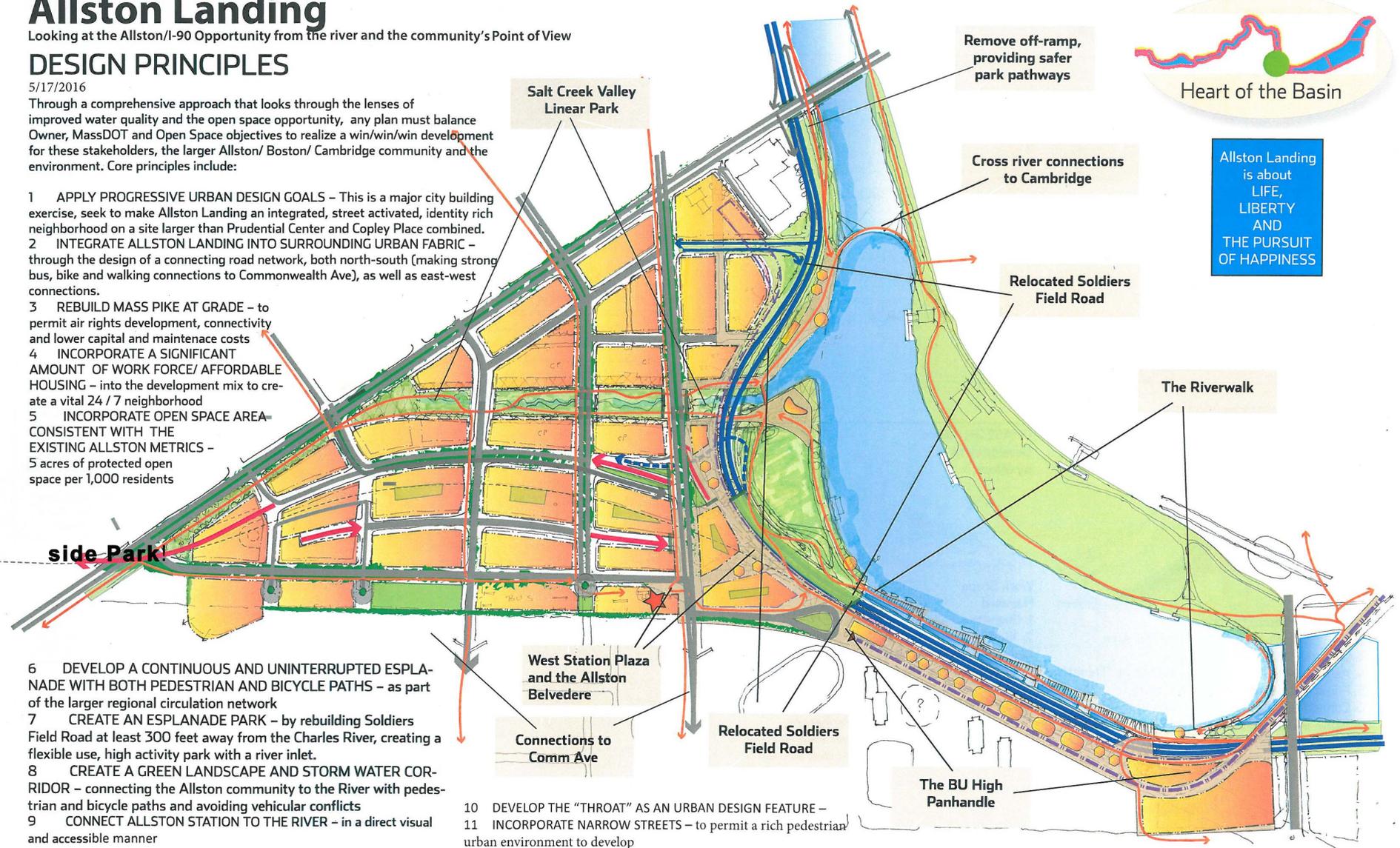
DESIGN PRINCIPLES

5/17/2016

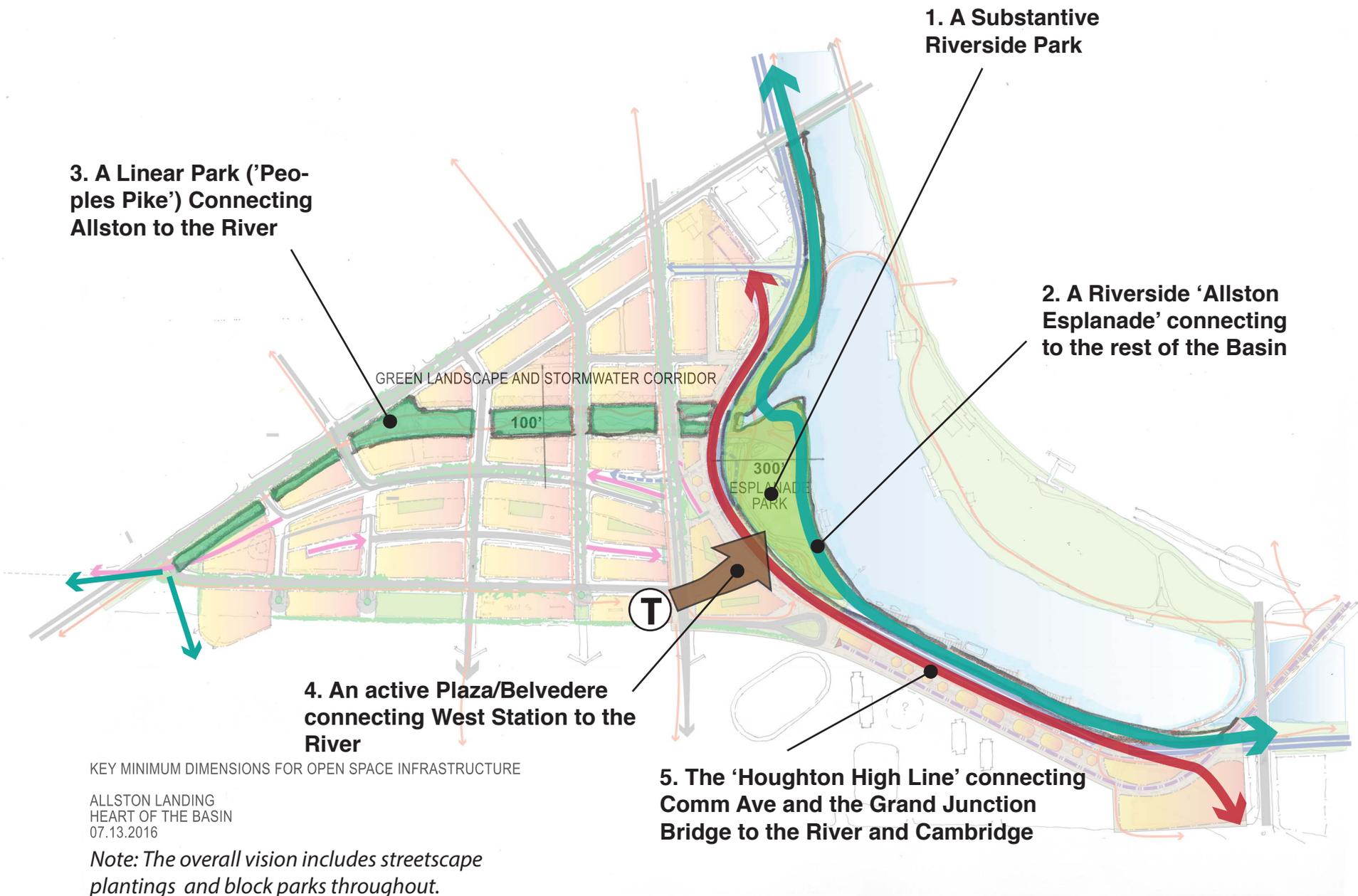
Through a comprehensive approach that looks through the lenses of improved water quality and the open space opportunity, any plan must balance Owner, MassDOT and Open Space objectives to realize a win/win/win development for these stakeholders, the larger Allston/ Boston/ Cambridge community and the environment. Core principles include:

- 1 APPLY PROGRESSIVE URBAN DESIGN GOALS – This is a major city building exercise, seek to make Allston Landing an integrated, street activated, identity rich neighborhood on a site larger than Prudential Center and Copley Place combined.
- 2 INTEGRATE ALLSTON LANDING INTO SURROUNDING URBAN FABRIC – through the design of a connecting road network, both north-south (making strong bus, bike and walking connections to Commonwealth Ave), as well as east-west connections.
- 3 REBUILD MASS PIKE AT GRADE – to permit air rights development, connectivity and lower capital and maintenance costs
- 4 INCORPORATE A SIGNIFICANT AMOUNT OF WORK FORCE/ AFFORDABLE HOUSING – into the development mix to create a vital 24 / 7 neighborhood
- 5 INCORPORATE OPEN SPACE AREA – CONSISTENT WITH THE EXISTING ALLSTON METRICS – 5 acres of protected open space per 1,000 residents
- 6 DEVELOP A CONTINUOUS AND UNINTERRUPTED ESPLANADE WITH BOTH PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE PATHS – as part of the larger regional circulation network
- 7 CREATE AN ESPLANADE PARK – by rebuilding Soldiers Field Road at least 300 feet away from the Charles River, creating a flexible use, high activity park with a river inlet.
- 8 CREATE A GREEN LANDSCAPE AND STORM WATER CORRIDOR – connecting the Allston community to the River with pedestrian and bicycle paths and avoiding vehicular conflicts
- 9 CONNECT ALLSTON STATION TO THE RIVER – in a direct visual and accessible manner

- 10 DEVELOP THE "THROAT" AS AN URBAN DESIGN FEATURE –
- 11 INCORPORATE NARROW STREETS – to permit a rich pedestrian urban environment to develop

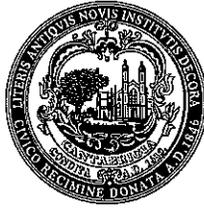


Allston Landing
 is about
**LIFE,
 LIBERTY
 AND
 THE PURSUIT
 OF HAPPINESS**



City of Cambridge

Richard C. Rossi • City Manager



Executive Department

Lisa C. Peterson • Deputy City Manager

July 15, 2016

Gerald Autler
Senior Planner, Boston Redevelopment Authority
One City Hall Square
Boston, MA 02201

Dear Mr. Autler,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the BRA's recent Allston Place-Making Study that will inform the MassDOT's I-90 project and future development by Harvard of this new neighborhood in Allston. Cambridge applauds that the study offers a positive vision of a lively mixed-use neighborhood with an emphasis on sustainable transportation and improved multi-modal connections to adjacent neighborhoods like Cambridgeport across the river.

The study includes many well thought out recommendations and standards to guide the development of the district and create the type of neighborhood that the BRA and neighbors are envisioning. In the interest of creating greater connections between this area of Allston and Cambridge, as well as to encourage the most livable and sustainable neighborhood possible, Cambridge offers the following comments:

- Cambridge is highly supportive of creating additional green space along the river and better connections from this area to the river. The method of doing this should continue to accommodate a way for people traveling by all modes to access the River Street bridge and cross into Cambridge. Cambridge would like to part of this discussion as changes are contemplated.
- We appreciate the inclusion of creating strong a strong connection from the People's Pike multi-use path to the river paths, and continuing to a future Grand Junction pedestrian and bicycle path in Cambridge.
- The recommendations and standards should clearly consider strategies for reducing noise generation and reflection to mitigate noise impacts in residential neighborhoods, including those nearby in Cambridge.
- The concept of providing improved public transit, as well as additional north/south shuttle connections between Cambridge and this area is vital to ensuring that future travel by transit mode may be maximized. This should include direct transit connections through West Station to Commonwealth Avenue.
- Including consistent and strong transportation demand management measures for new development, including on-going monitoring, as well as "right sizing" the parking supply will help in limiting trip growth, allow more development, and ultimately create a more livable and sustainable neighborhood.

Cambridge looks forward to being a strong partner with the City of Boston, MassDOT and Harvard as projects and development in this neighborhood progress. Please contact Bill Deignan at wdeignan@cambridgema.gov or 617-349-4632 with any questions. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Richard C. Rossi in black ink.

Richard C. Rossi
City Manager