

**Breakout Group Notes: 25% Design**  
**November 5, 2014 Community Meeting**  
**Corcoran Mullens Jennison Community Building**

**Street Design Discussion**

The four breakout groups each discussed the proposed design for Mt. Vernon Street. All groups discussed both the Morrissey Boulevard area of the street and the main stretch of the roadway in front of Harbor Point and the schools – groups 1 and 2 started with the Morrissey Boulevard end, and groups 3 and 4 with the main stretch. The groups were invited to discuss the main elements of the street: cycle tracks, sidewalks, mixing zonings, curb extensions, crosswalks, “the grove,” alcoves, signage and identity, and fencing treatment. Groups were asked to discuss what they thought of the design and these elements, and were encouraged to make suggestions and bring up any issues they believe the design did not address.

In general, the following notes are transcribed from the easel pads used to record group comments. Where necessary, some notes have been *annotated in italics* to clarify points.

**GROUP 1**

**Facilitator: Deneen Crosby**

**Recorder: Erin Pacileo**

**Morrissey Boulevard**

- Traffic counts and future projections *are* based on new developments
- Congestion [*that is, traffic queuing at corner of Mt. Vernon Street and slip lane to Morrissey Boulevard south is*] caused by traffic from circle.
- Special signals for bikes
- Current crossings are dangerous – narrowing will help
- Many buses (MBTA, schools, shuttles); [*however,*] UMass only drops off in Bayside Expo parking [*lot and do not make stops elsewhere on Mt. Vernon Street*].
- University Place development targeting students
- 5' cycle track too narrow for two people to cycle together: where could it be widened to 6'?
- High quality and attractive lighting is important (especially for landscaped areas)
- Removing slip lane is great!
- Landscape lighting
- [*Proposed gateway*] open space for 350 student residents at University Place [*should be designed with future project residents*].
  - Need to enliven space
  - Area to stop and rest after shows or shopping

**Main Road Stretch**

- The semi-circle at UMass [*is used for public*] parking

- Flexible area for farmers' market or performance space?
- Mixing zones: can be difficult for cyclists to move through
  - 5mph posted speed limit for bikes
- One lane in front of Harbor Point: creates congestion and long wait times
  - Friday afternoon back up
  - Visitors going through guard check point slow down line
  - Need a second lane for turning so others can go around to resident entrance
- Pick-up/Drop-off parking for Harborwalk
- Grove is a good idea provided it does not create traffic problems
- Fencing could be improved
- Proposal will make biking safer
- Opening from Harbor Point to schools
  - Closer for students
  - Don't want Harbor Point to be completely open
- Alcoves make walk feel shorter, safer
  - Charging stations

## **GROUP 2**

**Facilitator: Gary McNaughton**

**Recorder: Josh Burgel**

### **Morrissey Boulevard**

- Concern about traffic with only 2 lanes: signal coordination
- Lots of traffic inbound on Morrissey Boulevard
- Signals out of sync near JFK
- Question the need for cycle track
  - Issue of snow plowing and maintenance?
  - Cycling along Harbor Walk
  - Popularity of Hubway at JFK station
  - Existing cycle track not great
  - Feel cycle track idea is being pushed
- Support for eliminating slip lanes
- UMass parking makes getting through to Morrissey Boulevard difficult: 4 lanes might help
- Would like DCR to come to the next meeting
- Project timeline: funding dependent – design and then construction

### **Main Road Stretch**

- Parking at Peninsula: eliminate on street parking
  - Some Peninsula residents park at Harbor Point
- Safety improvements in front of schools
  - Safety markings in the street
  - Improved signage
  - Raised crossing to slow traffic
- Happy to see more policing
- *[Improved] lighting [needed]*

### **GROUP 3**

**Facilitator: Tad Read**

**Recorder: Ellen Lohe**

#### **Main Road Stretch**

- Single lane is a problem at Harbor Point entrance
  - Holds up cars, buses, emergency vehicles
  - Need additional left turn lane into Harbor Point, others can then go around
  - Backed-up check-in process: potential solution to move guard post?
  - Peak hours issue
  - Want two lanes
- Public parking for visitors?
- Concern that street furniture will attract loitering, skateboarding
- Opportunity to rename street for way finding clarity and for neighborhood identity?
- Maintenance on DCR and CoB road sections
  - Who is responsible for trees, snow, trash?
  - Utilities under bike lanes difficult to maintain
- Cycle tracks and single lane traffic will slow cars and improve safety
  - Raised cycle lanes will also improve safety
- Lighting increases feelings of safety
- Plan enlivens street
  - Area by Santander could be more vibrant
- Bus stops moved from Harbor Point to schools inconvenient for the elderly
- Bike lanes by Harbor Point force cars [*exiting Harbor Point*] further [*out*] into street [*creating an*] unsafe [*condition*]

#### **Morrissey Boulevard**

- Will removal of right lane back traffic up to the rotary?
- Sidewalk in front of hotel is narrow and in bad condition
  - Does not accommodate wheel chairs
- Overpass gateway proposal is inviting and welcoming
- Intersection by T is a mess at peak times

### **GROUP 4**

**Facilitator: Corey Zenghebot**

**Recorder: Cecilia Nardi**

- Need bus stop by Harbor Point (moved to school)
- Bollards are confusing: need to be able to make a safe left turn
- Current bike striping is too wide [*meaning wide enough to invite buses to drive through*]
- Traffic congestion leading up to Harbor Point entrance
- Dual head light fixtures are a good solution to dark conditions
- Mixing zones can sometimes be unclear
  - Need strong design for clear pedestrian/bike delineation
- New opening at Harbor Point: UMass students will walk through
- Seating along the street for those who want to stop and rest
- Alcove ideas

- Mini-library or book share
- Celebrate diversity and users of the street
- Public, interactive art
- Pop-up retail (coffee?)
- Food trucks near Harbor Point

**Breakout Group Summary: 25% Design**  
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**Safety**

Participants overall commented that the plans improved safety on the street. Specific elements that people saw as helpful are:

- Narrowing street at crosswalks
- Improved lighting
- Raised crossings
- Raised cycle tracks

Further changes participants would like to see include:

- Improved signage/safety markings by schools

**Harbor Point Entrance Queuing**

Many participants were very concerned about the congestion at the entrance to Harbor Point caused by one-lane of vehicle traffic. People noted commented that the slow-check in process and inability to move around cars waiting in line causes serious delays. Participants noted:

- Long wait times at peak hours and on Fridays
- Desire to go past visitor entrance to resident entrance
- Potential to improve situation by moving guard post
- Having two lanes to reduce congestion

**Cycle Tracks**

Comments on cycling tracks were mixed. Many participants liked the proposal and thought the tracks would make cycling safer, while some felt that current low demand does not warrant their inclusion in the street design. Comments on the design of the tracks include:

- Desire for wider tracks so cyclists can ride side-by-side
- Need for clear delineation of biking/walking in mixing zones
- Need for bike signals

**Bus Stops**

Several participants voiced concerns that the bus stop had been moved from in front of Harbor Point to by the schools, inconveniencing elderly residents.

**Congestion at Morrissey Boulevard**

Participants expressed concern about the current chaotic intersection at the Morrissey Boulevard end of the street, noting that traffic can back up to the rotary at peak times. Several participants expressed support for the removal of the slip lane.

**Lighting**

Overall, participants were excited by the lighting ideas shown in the presentation and supported creative lighting design to make the street safer and more vibrant.

### **Parking**

Participants expressed concern and some confusion about how parking would be handled at various points along Mount Vernon Street – how on-street parking would be managed and where there will be parking for visitors, residents, and the public.

### **Street Character**

Overall, participants felt the design enlivened the street and created identity. Some suggestions for further interventions, mainly in proposals for the alcoves, are:

- Mini-libraries or book share stations
- Charging stations
- Public art (underpass gateway design well-received)
- Pop-up retail or food
- Seating along the street