

Mount Vernon Street Design Community Workshop Breakout Group Notes March 27, 2014

The following are transcribed notes from breakout group discussions conducted at the Mt. Vernon Street Design Community Workshop held on March 27, 2014. Questions used to prompt discussion include the following:

1. Did you hear any ideas in the presentation that inspired you or you feel hold promise for Mt. Vernon Street?
2. What ideas or concerns do you have about Mt. Vernon Street that you think are particularly good or that you haven't heard yet?

GROUP 1:

Facilitated by Deneen Crosby; Notes taken by Jim Fitzgerald

Key Ideas.

- Lighting/ Welcoming Street
- Reduce vehicular Speed
- Add Stores/Cafes
- Accommodate cyclists better (the lanes don't work as they are)- cycletracks would be better

Group 1 Notes:

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- Interested in pedestrian "neck downs" for crossings
- More retail "destinations" (restaurants, etc)
 - o Ice cream
 - o Family oriented
- Curb side drop-off/ pick up activity conflicts with bike lanes
- Safe bike accommodations
- Traffic congestion at "west end" (The "Chute")
- Wayfinding- to help promote walking
- Consolidate bus stops?

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- More destinations
- Break-up long linear feel of the street
- Wayfinding to Harborwalk
- Orientation kiosk at T station



- Improve facades of schools
- Lighting of underpass “decorative”
- Better/new seating for bus stops
- Utilize existing lots for “pop-up” activities
- Sort out on street parking/ bike accommodations

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- Lane widths at right size to temper speeds
- Need good connection for bikes for segment leading into JFK T Station
- Not “inviting”
- Wayfinding for after coming off the T
- Introduce “colors” and materials into the Public Way
- More street trees/ landscaping
- More “Activation” and Life
- Interactive public art
 - o Historical focus?
- Pedestrian Wayfinding

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- Need to reduce vehicle speeds
- Better Safety for school kids on school sites

Group 1 Map: (East to West)

- Underpass- temporary urbanist site lighting
- Wayfinding for JFK Stop users
- Congestion and traffic backup at Morrissey intersection
- North side- colored concrete sidewalk materials by Morrissey Intersection
- Look at natural desire lines – crosswalk
- Pedestrian neck down by Double Tree hotel (west side)
- Bushes near Double Tree (bad), Ground level activation (needed)
- Crosswalk East side of Double Tree: history of area- signage, materials
- Southside Double Tree Crosswalk: wayfinding for all uses
- Ground level activation needed at Santander Parking lot
- St. Christopher’s church parking lot- Farmer’s Market
- By McCormack Baseball field- can teachers park on street – repurpose parking; “more space”; bigger seats, furniture
- Speed limit at Harbor Point blvd crosswalk
- Harbor Point housing- lifeless at night
- McCormack School- façade of Dever/McCormack school- improve
- East of McCormack School: Seats for people waiting for buses; pedestrian neckdowns at crosswalk
- “Walking signs” – block Westwind Blvd and Harbor Point Blvd
- From Dever School to South Point Blvd (in front of apt bldg) – Drop Off/Pick up and bike conflict; separate bikes from road
- South Point Crosswalk- pedestrian neckdown
- Orientation kiosk a JFK (where UMass horseshoe parking lot is)
- Renovate the pump house at the end of Mt. Vernon street

Small Map:

- “Good connection to Southie & MBTA” (by T Morrissey Blvd)
- Community businesses on Mt. Vernon Street



- Activate street edge near JFK to Harbor Point
- Public Art installations drawing from JFK, EMK and Archive

GROUP 2

Facilitated by Gary McNaughton; Notes taken by Christi Apricella

Key Ideas:

- Pedestrian Safety/Amenities:
 - o Crossings/curb extensions
 - o Lighting
 - o Wider sidewalks
- Connectivity
 - o Remove fencing along street to allow more access to Harborwalk/ Harbor Point
- Identity
 - o Gateway and intersection improvements
 - o Wayfinding
 - o Art
 - Crosswalks
 - Sidewalks – history, trivia
- Bicycle
 - o Safety
 - o Better infrastructure will help reduce school congestion
 - o Intersections, Cycle track

Group 2 Notes:

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- Wider sidewalk
- Safe crossing- signals
- Like idea of curb extensions at schools/childcare
- Cyclist access at intersections (Netherlands example)
- Better street lights
- Reconsider bus stop locations
- Cycle track would encourage bicycle use
- Improve pedestrian connections across intersections at T station

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- Health Center needs cross walk to get to parking and bus stop
- Signals are confusing for pedestrians and drivers
- Improved directional signage at West End
- Traffic backs up from Harbor Point guard booth onto Mount Vernon
- Bikes on cycle track vs. Harborwalk
- Sidewalks could contain trivia/history

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- Artistic Crosswalks
- Benches needed at bus stops, crosswalks, park-let idea



Group 2 Map:

- Wayfinding needed at the T Station
- Improve pedestrian crossing/signal timing from the underpass to the T Station
- Morrissey Blvd intersection- gateway
- Short term parking in front of the health center (north side)
- Add a cross walk to the east side of the health center to other parking lot on south side
- Denney Youth Center
 - o Safe crossing needed outside
 - o Drop off traffic/ U-Turn
 - o Street parking needed
- Harbor Point Blvd- Restore bus stop, curb extensions
- Open up Beach Point & Westwind - pedestrian/bike entrance into Harbor Point
- Include crosswalks at new street (south point drive)
- Street is scary wide- cycle track helps

GROUP 3

Facilitated by Tad Read; Notes taken by Kenya Thompson

Key Ideas:

- Stronger multi-modal connection between JFK, Harborwalk and Mt. Vernon Street
- Gateway- to JFK/UMass, other institutions.
 - o Kids' art on walls of bridge
 - o Transit portal
- Create a strong pedestrian environment along Mt. Vernon Street – lighting and safety

Group 3 Notes:

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- Present research and data of safety of cycle tracks
- Improve the bus system- more frequent service
- Bus stops removed- why?
- There is a senior population that needs stops to be closer
- Add another entrance/exit onto UMass campus to relieve traffic along Mt. Vernon
- Have one side of the street used for the cycle track and the other side for pedestrians
- Long stop lights
- LED signage- especially in the school zone
- Use paving treatment for the school zone area (the crossing)

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- Use the parking lots for activity when not used – temporary urbanism
- Underpass area needs treatment
- Add seating
- Create a public zone along entire street
- Interface between public and private (at the school)
- Activate the street
 - o Widen sidewalk
 - o Community board/ café, kiosk
- Make crosswalks more legible
- Better signage and signals for school



- Lighting and bus stops
- Creating a strong pedestrian environment along the street *
- Preserve parking for the Harborwalk

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- Cycle Tracks-
 - o Clearly distinguish from the vehicular road lane
 - o Problem: the cycle track ends where the DCR section picks up, not pleasant to bike along
- BC High students cross Morrissey Blvd illegally
- The road and sidewalks need improvement
- Wheelchair access is an issue
- Grade separated cycle track
- Possible bus shelter as public art
- Limit traffic

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- Bike bridge over Mt. Vernon
- Add activity along the street or public art to slow down traffic (not to distract the driver)
- No bike connection along DCR section of Mt. Vernon and JFK Station and Harborwalk*
- Long cue line along Mt. Vernon to get into Harbor Point
 - o Needs a left only lane at this location
- Two drop off / pick up areas
 - o Provide a drop off right along the street
 - o The area needs attention
- Question: Should the cycle track be on both sides of the road?

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- Crosswalks Safer
- Make this area a Place (strong identity) – would use the name Columbia Point not just Boston
- Gateway- JFK/UMass Station as a transit portal*
- Underpass on Morrissey Blvd
 - o Highlight Harborwalk – needs wayfinding
 - o More lighting- route to and from T Station
 - o Add a Sign – Welcome to Mt. Vernon
 - o Signage art lighting along wall that supports the underpass

Group 3 Map:

- Lighting at underpass
- Signage/Art on underpass walls, community art
- “Welcome to Columbia Point” Sign at east side Morrissey intersection median
- Start bike lane at south east corner of Morrissey intersection, connect to the other three directions of that intersection
- West of Double Tree hotel - Community art project (open area), painting intersection
- Make all crosswalks legible
- “School Ahead” Signs starting at Double Tree/Santander
- Parking lots for temporary installations or events when not in use for parking?
- Crosswalk to east of DoubleTree- bike overpass at crossings?
- Harbor Point Blvd- bring bus stop back
- Denney Youth Center- Day care pickup/drop-off (5:00pm)
- Harbor Point Blvd- queuing / stacking an issue→ left turn lane needed
- In front of McCormack School- Add pickup space



- “Need open space where people can come together” (general comment)

Small Map:

- East side of T Station – BC High students cross here (by Santander on Morrissey, south of Mt. Vernon)
- Bayside Expo Center- multiple exits needed for UMass Parking not just on Mt. Vernon Street
- From Morrissey to McCormack School- pedestrian focus (needed) – south side
- North side- Bike focus along the shore line/ Harborwalk
- Use gap between McCormack and apartment building (by playground) to improve public zone (park seating)
- Save short term parking for Harborwalk (horseshoe parking by UMass)

GROUP 4

Facilitated by Pat Hoey; Notes taken by Michael Evans

Key Ideas:

- Gateway/ Rebranding
 - o Building a real identity for Columbia Point
- Remaking Mt. Vernon Street as a complete street – catering to all modes of transit, make street for ALL users

Group 4 Notes:

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- Pedestrian Safety
- Underpass lighting
- Gateway elements
- Wayfinding Signage

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- Reinforcing connections to Institutions : UMass / JFK
- How do we rename/rebrand Columbia Point?
 - o There’s a lack of identity.
 - o How do we incorporate this on the ground level?

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- Reinforce the connection to the Harborwalk – a direct tie to the universities and museums
- Special attention to transportation management of school buses and MBTA
- Traffic calming
- Implementation of temporary cycle track
- Physical separation of cyclists and car drivers

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- Needs more activity at night
 - o Creative lighting
 - o Activate retail, commercial business- improves public safety
 - o Make Mt. Vernon Street more inviting- encouraging people to interact outside, on the street, make it more welcoming for everyone
 - o Expand the pedestrian network

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- Landscaping, trees



- More green space, more street trees especially on the west side, its barren. Some shade needed
- More on-street parking
- Public art as a gateway
 - Explore opportunities with Santander and their open space
- Preserve public access to the Harborwalk from Mt. Vernon / UMass
- Highlight the pump house as a focal point.

Group 4 Map:

- No comments

GROUP 5

Facilitated by Corey Zehngebot; Notes taken by Cecilia Nardi

Key Ideas:

- Safety / Crosswalks and sidewalks (shift to one side of street)
- Lighting
- Parking Pick-up / Drop-off
- Clearly marked/ wayfinding of Harborwalk
- Playground could be much better

Group 5 Notes:

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- Crosswalk from Boys & Girls Club to parking lot
- Not enough access from Harbor Point to Mt. Vernon Street
 - Desirable to have more access points
- Long, boring street, only sidewalks, nothing going on
- Lighting is key, more than just street lights- safety
- Improve: schoolyard - make it more pronounced, more beautiful
- Intersection with Morrissey too busy, positive that there are some pedestrian refuges
- Barren feel to the street, not welcoming to bikes or pedestrians → more trees
- Vertical / green walls, variety of plantings
- Some existing greenery / shrubs create walls that force you into street, not friendly
- More peaceful experience along street- especially for kids
- Solar personal rapid transit (SPRT) could be a sustainable transportation option

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- Shipping container tactical urbanism – no, safety concerns
- Look at bus and solar opportunities – solar personal rapid transit
- Parking Pick-Up/ Drop-Off- for Boys & Girls Club / Denney and schools
- Crosswalks – possibly raised for traffic calming/ speed, especially near schools
- Street benches
- Kiosk near Harborwalk path
- Wayfinding and signage from T Station (Library, Harborwalk)
 - Expressed in minutes, length of walk
- Strategic parking/temporary urbanism to slow traffic
- Current bike lane paint not working and unsafe



- Cycle track: separate bikes from pedestrians
 - o Separate with bollards and trees

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- Cycle tracks, desirable but design is critical and how they connect to adjacent uses, more so than whether at-grade or not
- Walking in bike lanes → if bike lane is at roadway level, intuitive that it's not meant for pedestrians
- Snow plowing
- Gateway opportunities: at T Station and start of Mt. Vernon Street
- Update to JFK/UMass Station
- Open space in front of Double Tree: Café, fountain/ water feature
- Alternative transportation opportunities
- Coordinate UMass Shuttles with existing transit systems, more/increased integration
- Access/ in to Harbor Point, backs up traffic

Group 5 Map:

- Morrissey Blvd underpass- safety issues → worst place to walk
- Gateway opportunity at Morrissey overpass by T Station
- Gateway opportunity at East side of Morrissey overpass- parking lot area and open grassy area
- Make crosswalk to T Station entrance straight shot instead of 2 separate ones
- Morrissey intersection is bad for walking (The Chute)
- Lighting between the underpass and Morrissey
- On ramps onto Morrissey (north side) hard to see cars
- Light cycle too long on Morrissey intersection
- Median in street?
- Sidewalk
 - o Get rid of sidewalk on north side of the street from Morrissey Chute westward → all pedestrian traffic on the south side, wider sidewalk, better crossing.
- Double Tree Hotel – Walls and shrubs = bad
 - o Open space- café, water feature, play ground
- Lighting in parking lots off of street (Santander)
- Vertical walls along street? With parking lots on both sides of the street, doesn't feel like Boston (Santander and double tree)
- New cross walk at Walter Denney Youth Center
- Lighting in the baseball field across from Denney
- "TOO FAR" - park at Harbor Point Blvd
- At Harbor Point Blvd- queuing in Mt. Vernon Street- access creates line and backup
- Crosswalks at Harbor Point Blvd and McCormack School raised to slow traffic → this zone is critical
- McCormack School- "Think About the Kids!"
- Safety & Lighting at Dever School
- Queuing in front of Dever School as well
- Opening opportunity at Beach Point Place continued by McCormack School
- Opening opportunity at Westwind Rd into Harbor Point
- Add crosswalk at South Point Drive (750 UMass students live in Harbor Point)
- Harborwalk- need to engage sooner (identify from Mt. Vernon Street)- wayfinding
- Kiosk on east side of Harborwalk?
- "?" at horseshoe parking by UMass future dorm site

