

stossLANDSCAPEURBANISM

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21 January 2010

PUBLIC MEETING COMMENTS

PROJECT: **Thoreau Path Improvements**
STOSS PROJECT #: BRA0901

MEETING DATE: **13 January 2010**
MEETING LOCATION: Shriner's Hospital Auditorium

The meeting was held to present refined concepts for Thoreau Path Improvements project, to introduce two different approaches and to engage comments and feedback from the public in attendance. Chris Reed of Stoss presented the project followed by a question and answer period. The following is a summary of the comments made during the question and answer session.

COMMUNITY PRIORITIES

- Pathway should be safe;
- Surface should be accessible, consistent and simple;
- Would like the pathway design to address the existing neighborhood, the existing users and their priorities as developed through the master planning process;
- Would like to focus efforts in the area in front of Pace's Store;
- Would like pathway to remain quiet; do not want it to be a public destination;

PATHWAY SURFACING

- Should be a safe, durable and consistent surface;
- Should address accessibility and mobility issues for people of all abilities and ages at all times of year;
- Interest expressed in some of the textured / patterned concrete surfaces shown;
- Surfacing strategy should be simplified and be one non-slip pavement designed for pedestrian use;
- Surface should be aesthetically-pleasing;
- Would like the entire pathway surface replaced with a unified pavement;
- All currently patched surfaces will be replaced; no asphalt will be used in the new pathway;
- Special paving might be limited to area in front of Pace's;

BENCHES

- Seating should be functional and consistent with the area; some of benches shown seem strange and out of context;
- Scattered seating better than seating along the whole length of the path;
- Seating should be skateboarder resistant;
- Seating should be designed in a way to discourage people from sleeping on it;

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- Seating should not be placed directly adjacent to apartments;
- Seating should not be placed near to other off-site benches; BRA should be aware that there are many unused benches in and around the path; unnecessary benches should not be duplicated;

INTERPRETATIVE PROGRAM

- Would like very limited references to history or geography or river;
- Negative feedback on historical interpretation expressed; Counterpoint that not everyone wants to forget the old west end;
- Limit to a couple of plaques (perhaps what was here 300 years ago; river line; what is here now);
- Sculpture suggested for along the pathway;
- Some of the engravings shown were quite nice; possible to honor what came before and move forward at the same time;
- Negative feedback on site topographies scheme; no need to mark things that have nothing to do with the path and the neighborhood;

SIGNAGE

- Directional signage is useful; pointing toward MassGeneral, individual Charles River Park buildings, etc.

PROPERTY OWNERSHIP/ABUTTORS

- Meetings have begun with adjacent property owners and will continue;
- Question as to whether adjacent property owners can help to fund some pathway improvements;

VEGETATION

- Need plantings that last through the winter, and that are low-maintenance;
- Question as to who will maintain the plantings;
- Both installation and maintenance of plantings will require coordination/meetings between the city and the abutting property owners;
- Plantings add aesthetic value to the path; some neighbors may be willing to provide limited maintenance;
- Plantings in middle of path desirable; raising beds might help deter traffic;
- Plantings should be low to keep existing sightlines open;
- All plantings proposed would occur within the city-owned easement in currently non-paved areas;
- Existing trees will remain but will be pruned to address health and safety concerns;
- Path should celebrate fauna in the area; bird feeders are a possible way to do this;

DRAINAGE

- Drainage improvements are included in the project scope;
- Team civil engineer has already evaluated drainage issues, and surveyor is inspecting drains/clogging;
- Suggestion to approach Pace's building owners about paying for drainage improvements in front of the building;

SCHEDULE + BUDGET

- Would like to know the cost of demolishing and replacing the entire pathway in concrete;

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- Would like to know the cost re-surfacing the entire pathway;
- Would like to know how much new pavement work can happen with the given budget;
- Would like project to move forward; tired of meetings;
- Question as to the public approval process; this is an informal process that occurs through public meeting and the incorporation of the public comments into the design;

NEXT STEPS

- Put the presentation on-line at the BRA website;
- Incorporate feedback and develop design and recommendations to be shared with the public at the next public meeting in early February;
- Coordinate next public meeting with the community – early February 2010;

These Meeting Notes are submitted by STOSS. Please contact **Jill Desimini** with any corrections or additions. If no corrections or additions are received within (10) working days of distribution, the content will be assumed to be agreed upon by all parties.

END OF MEETING SUMMARY