

**CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
HARVARD SQUARE DESIGN PROJECT
MEETING NOTES**

Subject: Community Meeting #1

Date, Time & Place: November 21, 2002, 6:30 PM – 9:00 PM
Radcliffe College, Cronkhite Graduate Center

Present:

HSDC Members:

Mohsen Kurd
Alex Sagan
Irene Goodman
Sean Peirce

Susan Rogers
Nathalie Beauvais
Mary Parkin
Nelson Goddard

John DiGiovanni
Rohit Chopra
Robert Banker
Don Crane

City of Cambridge

Kathy Watkins (CDD)
Cara Seiderman (CDD)
Sue Clippinger (TP&T)
Jeff Parenti (TP&T)
Lisa Peterson (DPW)

Charlie Sullivan (CHC)
Susan Glazer (CDD)
Roger Boothe (CDD)
Michael Muehe (CPD)

Sarah Burks (CHC)
Hafthor Yngvason (Arts)
Stephanie Anderberg (CDD)
Joshua Kraus (CDD)

CDD = Community Development
Department

CPD = Commission for Persons
with Disabilities

TP&T = Traffic, Parking and
Transportation Department

CHC = Cambridge Historical
Commission

Arts = Cambridge Arts Council

Consultant Team:

Jerry Friedman (TAMS Consultants, Inc.)
Jim Winn (Edwards and Kelcey)
Cynthia Smith (Halvorson Design Partnership)

Rod Emery (Edwards and Kelcey)

80 Members of the Public

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS (Kathy Watkins)

- ◆ **Welcome** to the first community meeting for the Harvard Square Design Project.
- ◆ **Agenda** - Tonight we are going to give an introduction to the project, introduce the Harvard Square Design Committee, present options for circulation changes and breakout into small groups so that city staff and the Design Committee have an opportunity to hear from the larger Harvard Square Community. We will then hear back from the groups and wrap up the meeting.
- ◆ **Committee** - In April 2002, the Harvard Square Design Committee began meeting. The Committee is an appointed group of 16 people representing a variety of interests, businesses, residents, and institutions, and will advise the City on design issues in Harvard Square. A number of standing City committees are represented – including the Bicycle and Pedestrian Committees, Historical Commission, and Planning Board.

- ◆ **Schedule** The project schedule is summarized at the bottom of the printed agenda. Design will occur through next summer with construction in fall 2003 / spring 2004. The first phase of the project is budgeted for \$3.5 million in fiscal year 2004, which begins July 1, 2003.

2. SCOPE AND SCHEDULE OF PROJECT (Kathy Watkins)

- ◆ In 1998 a number of businesses and institutions worked together to develop the *Polishing the Trophy Report*. The report identified a number of key infrastructure issues in Harvard Square and recommended improvements to sidewalks, crosswalks and lighting. *Polishing the Trophy* has served as a catalyst and a starting point for the Harvard Square Design Project. The report did a great job documenting existing conditions.
- ◆ **Basic Infrastructure** – The infrastructure in Harvard Square was last reconstructed in the mid to late 1980's when the MBTA Red Line was extended from Harvard Square to Alewife. It is now time for improvements to the infrastructure – brick crosswalks, condition of pavement materials, lighting, etc. – all of the basic physical elements of the streets, sidewalks and plazas.
- ◆ **Enhancing the Square for All Users** - When we started looking at what it would mean to address these infrastructure deficiencies, we saw a need for significant investment in the Harvard Square infrastructure. We view this as an opportunity to improve the safety and comfort level for all users of the Square – pedestrians, cyclists and drivers. The City typically coordinates transportation improvements with major infrastructure projects. If we are going to be tearing up the street and sidewalk to reconstruct it – we want to make sure that it is put back in the best way.
- ◆ The **Scope of the Project** is very inclusive – lighting, landscaping, street furniture, materials, plazas, roadway and sidewalk improvements. The project goals include improving conditions for people using the square – enhancing key bicycle connections, providing missing crosswalk links, and upgrading sidewalks, roadways, lighting, and landscaping. Accessibility improvements are also an important part of the project – meeting the overall goal of universal design – creating environments usable by all people to the greatest extent possible.
- ◆ The scope of the project does not include addressing the types of businesses, density, zoning, etc. in the Square. All of these things are important to the function and experience of Harvard Square, but are outside the scope of an infrastructure project. We have a large undertaking and are focused on developing a plan that will be constructed. We want to maintain focus so that we can see results from our efforts.
- ◆ **Short Term Improvements** - I would also like to give you an update on some of the things that are already happening in Harvard Square. These are summarized on the printed handout.
 - Benches – 16 new wood benches have been installed throughout Harvard Square and Quincy Square.
 - Landscaping – The grass at Winthrop Park has been replaced.
 - New trees have been planted at Degugliemo Plaza – Brine's block.
 - Approximately 20 bicycle parking post and rings have been installed
 - Lighting – 60 new globes have been installed on the existing "Washington Post" lights. All light poles, traffic signal posts, and signal boxes will be painted this spring.
 - Signage and signals – Countdown signals and directional signage have been installed at various locations in the Square.

3. SUMMARY OF ISSUES AND INTRODUCTION TO CIRCULATION ALTERNATIVES (Kathy Watkins)

- ◆ **Overall Issues** -The committee has been meeting since April and their first task was to work with city staff and consultants to identify issues of concern in Harvard Square. These issues range from missing crosswalks, failure of motorists to yield to pedestrians, circuitous routes for cyclists because of the one-way street patterns, lack of wayfinding signage for motorists, speeding, etc. We will not be able to address all of the issues raised. There are many competing interests for space in Harvard Square and we have to find a balance where all of the different modes of travel and activities can benefit.
- ◆ **Why Circulation Alternatives** - As we discussed, the project includes landscaping, lighting, crosswalks, etc. In order to design those elements we need to know where the curbs are going to be – how much of the area is going to be roadway. We have to determine how many travel lanes we need, and in which direction. That will then allow us to determine what to do with any extra space.
- ◆ The bulk of tonight's meeting is going to focus on circulation alternatives. These were developed as options that directly address issues that have been identified in the Square. The Committee has discussed these alternatives and believes they are worthy of further discussion. The purpose of tonight's meeting is for the Committee to hear from the larger Harvard Square community on these alternatives.
- ◆ **Traffic Analysis** - As we developed the various options, detailed analyses were performed to see if the alternatives would work. Among the physical and operational aspects studied were:
 - a. Volumes and Circulation
 - b. Signal vs. Stop sign control at intersections
 - c. Impact on pedestrians, cyclists and motorists.
 - d. Major structural constraints, such as the MBTA tunnels and support infrastructure
 - e. Open space improvements and the overall effect of the alternatives on the street life of Harvard Square.
- ◆ **Specific Circulation Options** - After going through all of these basic checks, we have identified several circulation options that address issues and concerns identified to date, and which will work from a transportation perspective. Rod Emery and Jerry Friedman from the consultant team will review these in detail in a moment.
- ◆ As the circulation options are presented, it is important to remember that the purpose up to this point has been to determine the **basic road layout** – i.e. the minimum number of moving vehicular travel lanes required. After this has been set, we can determine what to do with any extra space.
- ◆ The main reason these alternatives are being considered is **to improve conditions for pedestrians and cyclists**. These alternatives tend to be neutral for drivers.
- ◆ These are complicated options. We are throwing a lot of information at you tonight. Feel free to take a couple of days, walk around the Square and think more about these options. Use the printed comment sheets to get us your comments.

4. FLAGSTAFF PARK CONNECTION(Jerry Friedman)

- ◆ One of the issues we have heard a lot about is cyclists and pedestrians traveling from Harvard Square / Johnston Gate area towards North Mass Ave / Porter Square. Currently cyclists have to travel on a less than ideal section of roadway and pedestrians have to use a fairly long detour over the Cambridge Street tunnel.
- ◆ This alternative involves creating a bicycle / pedestrian connection through Flagstaff Park which would benefit both pedestrians and cyclists and would also open up this underutilized open space. The alignment shown on the plan is simply to demonstrate the general end points of such a connection. This is only a conceptual plan, and the exact details of path widths and alignments would be developed during the design phase.

- ◆ Cyclists and pedestrians would access the connection at the existing signals at each end of Flagstaff Park.
- ◆ **Summary of Committee Discussion:** The Committee strongly supported this option and one member even called it a “no brainer”.

5. BASIC IMPROVEMENTS (Rod Emery)

- ◆ One of the things that the Committee asked us to do was to draw up what “basic improvements” could happen in the core area without any changes to circulation. We did this so that people could better understand the incremental benefits of circulation changes.
- ◆ The Basic Improvements are focussed on four general areas as follows:
- ◆ **Out-of-Town News Intersection:**
 - Super crosswalk: People have identified a number of pedestrian desire lines throughout the study area that are currently not served by crosswalks. One of those is coming from Lehman Hall, crossing Mass Ave and wanting to continue across to the Fleet Bank. This larger crosswalk would allow people to do this in a direct move.
 - A curb-extension at the Curious George store would shorten this busy crosswalk and better define the left turn pocket.
 - Cyclists traveling on Mass Ave from Central Square wanting to go out Brattle or Mt. Auburn to the west currently have a very difficult time due to the one-way street patterns. Providing a bike cut-through would provide an alternative route for cyclists to make this move.
 - The vehicular merge just north of the Out-of-Town News has been raised as a problem location. It is confusing for drivers and cyclists heading north on Mass. Ave. towards Porter Square. Removing a travel lane improves the merge situation, allows the sidewalk in front of Out-of-Town News to be widened and we've shown a parking area that could be provided for loading and quick drop offs and pickups.
- ◆ **Brattle Square (Brattle / Eliot / Mt. Auburn):**
 - Pedestrian crossing issues have been raised. People find it difficult to cross Brattle Street and more particularly Mt. Auburn Street in front of Wordsworth.
 - We are showing narrowing the existing 2 lane approach in front of Wordsworth down to 1 lane which would dramatically improve the pedestrian crossing.
 - Similarly on the other leg in front of Tweeter, we are showing a 1 lane approach. In addition to improving the pedestrian crossings, this also eliminates the merge for drivers.
 - Mt. Auburn Street itself between the merge and JFK Street can be narrowed from 3 lanes to 2 lanes.
 - The Mt. Auburn / Eliot intersection can be tightened up, reducing the pedestrian crossing distances. The western leg across Mt. Auburn Street is a very long pedestrian crossing that we have heard numerous complaints about.
 - In addition, the “missing” crosswalk across Eliot Street can be added. This is a location where you can go out there and just watch pedestrian after pedestrian cross with no crosswalk. This is obviously a strong desire line that is currently not served.
- ◆ **Eliot Street/Bennett Street Intersection:**
 - Currently this intersection has a signal. We are showing the signal being removed and replaced with an all-way stop. The intersection would operate better with a stop sign than with a signal. Delay is reduced for both pedestrians and motorists.
- ◆ **Eliot Street/JFK Street Intersection and JFK Street:**
 - We are showing improvements at all intersections – improved alignment for motorists traveling north on JFK Street from the River to Harvard Square and also basic curb extensions along JFK to improve conditions for pedestrians.
 - We can also make signal improvements that will benefit pedestrians. One of our goals is to remove all of the pedestrian push buttons in Harvard Square and instead have the pedestrian phase come up automatically in each signal cycle.

- ◆ **Summary of Committee Discussion:** The Committee expressed support for the overall concepts within the Basic Improvements – adding missing crosswalks, narrowing roadway widths where possible, etc. Many details such as the exact locations of loading zones, how specific crosswalks would function, need to be worked out and would be developed further as the Project advances.

6. OUTER BRATTLE STREET (Jerry Friedman)

- ◆ **Existing Conditions -** Brattle Street between Eliot Street and Mason Street presently consists of two parking lanes and two outbound travel lanes. Motorists and cyclists coming into Harvard Square from the west have to turn at Mason Street.
- ◆ Brattle Street is an **attractive route for cyclists** coming from Watertown, Belmont and west Cambridge. This is a “missing link” for cyclists, who face the alternatives of using Mt. Auburn Street, (a heavily traveled commercial roadway with a difficult crossing of Fresh Pond Parkway); Mason and Garden Streets (both narrow and with heavy commercial and bus traffic) or riding illegally against the direction of traffic on Brattle Street into the Square.
- ◆ For **all users**, Brattle Street currently provides a circuitous and uninviting welcome into the Square, exemplified by the “DO NOT ENTER” signs and diversion at Mason Street.
- ◆ A **Contra-flow Bike Lane** was one option which the Committee considered for facilitating bicycle travel into the Square via Brattle Street. Such a facility would function similar to the one shown here (photo) on Norfolk Street.
- ◆ **2-Way Brattle** – The Committee, however, preferred, the option of converting Brattle Street into a typical 2-way street for all users. The street would retain parking on both sides of the street, and would have one travel lane in each direction. This would be easy for pedestrians, motorists and cyclists to understand, and all users would know what to expect.
- ◆ 2-way Brattle Street would bring **additional cars, but would function well as a typical 2-way city street providing local access into the Square**. We looked at various ways of controlling the intersection of Brattle and Eliot Streets under this scenario – partial stop, all-way stop, or traffic signal. It appears that having a STOP sign for eastbound Brattle Street at this intersection works best. Some queues would occur on outer Brattle Street which would keep it from being too attractive a cut-through route, but the queues would not be considered excessive.
- ◆ **Summary of Committee discussion** – The Committee has expressed strong support for the 2-way Brattle Street alternative. During the discussions, the committee raised questions about how this would affect traffic volumes and traffic operations. We had lengthy discussions about the traffic volumes, etc. Traffic on Brattle Street would approximately double. The stop sign at Brattle Square would cause some queuing to occur which would limit the amount of traffic that chooses to use Brattle Street. The committee was supportive of the simplicity of the 2-way alternative. It would function like a normal city street, provide an attractive entry into the Square and reconnect Brattle Street with the street network. As an additional variation, 2-way Brattle could also be implemented between Mason and Church Streets only, with a contra-flow lane for cyclists along the one block section between Church and Eliot.

7. CHURCH STREET (Jerry Friedman)

- ◆ **Existing Conditions** – Church Street is characterized by narrow sidewalks with high pedestrian activity. The goal is to make Church Street work well for pedestrians – not only to meet minimum accessibility criteria (which most of the street does at present) but to be an inviting street for pedestrians.

- ◆ **1-Way Church Street** - One option which would allow sidewalks on both sides of Church Street to be widened approximately 3-4', (while maintaining existing parking) would be converting the street to one-way operation. If no other circulation changes are made in the Square, Church Street would run from Mass Ave to Brattle Street – this is the predominant traffic direction.
- ◆ **Spot Improvements** - Another alternative for Church Street would be to keep the 2 directions of traffic and make **spot improvements**. The sidewalk could be widened at the movie theater by eliminating several parking spaces. This would address the location with the narrowest sidewalk. Other spot improvements could be made such as installing tree grates at the existing street trees to facilitate passage of pedestrians.
- ◆ **Summary of Committee Discussion:** The Committee is divided on Church Street solutions, although there is consensus that something needs to be done to improve the conditions for pedestrians. Some committee members support making Church Street 1-way and widening both sidewalks while others believe that the pedestrian issues can be adequately addressed with the spot improvements and are concerned about the impacts of the circulation changes.

8. 2-WAY JFK / 2-WAY ELIOT (Rod Emery)

- ◆ This alternative has as it's defining feature the conversion of JFK and Eliot Streets to 2-way operation. It builds on the Basic Improvements as follows:
 - ◆ **Out of Town News Intersection:**
 - 2-way JFK allows traffic on Mass Ave from Porter Square heading towards the river to travel directly on JFK Street all the way to the river instead of doing the Brattle / Eliot / JFK loop.
 - With reduction of approximately 1/3 of the traffic on Brattle Street, we are able to **reduce "inner" Brattle Street** (between Out-Of Town News to just beyond Palmer Street) **to 1 travel lane**. Vehicular speeds in this section of Brattle Street were measured at over 30 mph. Reducing this to 1 lane could help to address this concern and would allow the sidewalk in front of Nini's to be widened.
 - Traffic on JFK coming from the river and heading west on Brattle or Mt. Auburn Street would go JFK left on to Eliot to Brattle / Mt. Auburn. This connection **eliminates the need for the left turn** at Curious George.
 - With the elimination of the left turn from JFK to Brattle, we **can extend the "super crosswalk"** down to Curious George and make that sidewalk in front of Curious George larger.
 - ◆ **Eliot Street/Bennett Street Intersection:**
 - 2-way traffic allows the intersection to be re-aligned to its **historic alignment**, with Eliot Street flowing as the continuous street, and Bennett Street T'd off into Eliot.
 - Crossing islands would be added on Eliot Street to allow pedestrians to cross one direction of traffic at a time.
 - ◆ **Eliot Street/JFK Street Intersection and JFK Street:**
 - Since the volume of traffic on Eliot Street heading towards the river would be reduced, only one right turn lane from Eliot is needed. This allows a **curb extension** to be added on JFK Street at this intersection. This helps to address some of the concerns people have raised about crossing this busy intersection. It reduces the length of one of the crosswalks and also reduces the number of vehicles turning across this crosswalk. The curb extension would provide for a **protected bus stop** at the Kennedy School on JFK Street.
 - JFK Street would function as a normal 2-way city street. There would be 1 lane in each direction, with drivers and cyclists sharing a wide travel lane. When drivers

make parking maneuvers or if someone is double parked there would still be room for vehicles to pass.

- We do not believe that 2-way JFK Street will increase through traffic, but it will provide a slightly shorter distance for drivers. It saves drivers a few seconds, but more importantly removes traffic from some of the busiest pedestrian crossings and decreases the number of required turning maneuvers.

- ◆ **Summary of Committee Discussion:** The Committee has a very mixed opinion regarding this option. There are some members that believe creating 2-way JFK Street would improve pedestrian crossings and improve the texture of the urban environment. Others think it is an unnecessarily big change, and that loading and other parking maneuvers will block through traffic.

9. INTRODUCTION TO BREAKOUT GROUPS AND CLARIFICATION QUESTIONS (Kathy Watkins)

- ◆ We will take a 10 minute break and then spend 40 minutes in breakout groups. Each group will have a staff person facilitate the discussion and a Harvard Square Design Committee member taking notes. There will also be 4 of us floating around available to answer questions. The facilitators are there to help run the discussions; they are not expected to know all of the answers to your traffic questions.
- ◆ At the end of the breakout groups we will have the Harvard Square Design Committee member report back each group's discussions to the larger group. The reporting back should be a quick summary of the group's discussion on each of the topics. Please keep your comments brief and focused. It is important that each person get an opportunity to give input on each topic.
- ◆ If you have comments on these topics that you don't get to share, or on any other topic in Harvard Square, please use the comment sheets. All of the comments received – either in the breakout group or on the comments sheets – will be summarized for the committee and posted on the web.

10. BREAKOUT GROUPS REPORTING (Kathy Watkins and Breakout Group Recorders)

Group 1

- ◆ **Flagstaff Park** – Supportive of Flagstaff Park connection.
- ◆ **Basic Improvements** – General support for concept, but concerned about removing signal and providing all-way stop at Eliot / Bennett.
- ◆ **2-way Brattle** – Positive about 2-way Brattle Street. Unclear about whether it should just be to Church Street.
- ◆ **Church Street** – Need to widen sidewalks on Church Street. Keep 2-way traffic, remove parking if necessary.
- ◆ **2-way JFK / 2-way Eliot** – Currently the loading works, 2-way JFK would change the loading. Getting vehicles through the square is not a goal – discussion about whether this alternative did or did not get vehicles through the square faster. Would adversely affect access to parking lots. No consensus on this alternative.

Group 2

- ◆ There is a general problem of parking in the square. We need to solve that problem.
- ◆ **Flagstaff Park** – positive, need to liven the space up.
- ◆ **Basic Improvements** – logical improvements. Increase pedestrian safety for Mt. Auburn Street, improves left turn at Curious George, better super crosswalk,.
- ◆ **2-way Brattle** – Could add traffic, especially if extended all the way in. If 2-way Brattle Street is all the way to Brattle Square, drivers will hit 3 all-way stops.
- ◆ **Church Street** – pedestrians need room.

- ◆ Concern about loading and parking areas. Investigate timed loading areas.
- ◆ **2-way JFK / 2-way Eliot** – Consensus – don't like it. The problem with traffic in Harvard Square is Mass Ave. towards Central Square. 2-way JFK does not solve anything. Will interfere with deliveries.

Group 3

- ◆ **Flagstaff Park** – Cyclists won't like it. The 1,000 islands interface will be a disaster. Connection would be good for pedestrians.
- ◆ **Basic Improvements** – overall liked the improvements. Few operational concerns, but overall positive. Like super crosswalk and bike crossing at Out of Town News.
- ◆ **2-way Brattle** – support 2-way Brattle. Undecided about whether it should be all the way in to Brattle Square or just to Church Street.
- ◆ **Church Street** – no consensus about the solution, but strong agreement that something needs to be done for pedestrians.
- ◆ **2-way JFK / 2-way Eliot** – Skeptical that 2-way will work. Like the concept, but concerned that 2-way traffic makes the traffic more confusing.

Group 4

- ◆ **Flagstaff Park** – like it. Need to see the details of how it will work.
- ◆ **Basic Improvements** – Support for concepts – with a few questions. Concern about eliminating third lane on Mt. Auburn Street at JFK Street. Super crosswalk is a great idea, but need to make it work – how will you clear the pedestrians and vehicles? All-way stops can be confusing – concern about installing them in Harvard Square.
- ◆ There are currently lots of informal loading and drop off areas in the Square. Need to consider these in the planning.
- ◆ **2-way Brattle** – might be a good idea. Question about whether 2-way Brattle Street would be safe for cyclists without a bike lane.
- ◆ **Church Street** – Uncomfortable with 1-way. Church Street is useful in the parking loop. Need it to be 2-way.
- ◆ **2-way JFK / 2-way Eliot** – Debate about whether it makes getting through the Square faster. Concern about bike safety. Concern about people missing the turn from northbound JFK onto Eliot Street. Concern about bike safety on 2-way segment of JFK Street. Concern about removing signal.

Group 5

- ◆ **Flagstaff** – positive. It increases circulation.
- ◆ Can the s curve for vehicles be improved – tunnel to Mass Ave to Garden Street? There are a lot of weaving vehicles.
- ◆ **Basic Improvements** – favored this option. Need to include wayfinding signage for pedestrians and drivers. People are often lost in Harvard Square.
- ◆ **2-way Brattle** – Generally not in favor. Would change character of the pedestrian environment. Could you do a shared street for Brattle?
- ◆ **Church Street** – Increase the pedestrian environment – shared street.
- ◆ **2-way JFK / 2-way Eliot** – mixed review. Concern about how loading and double parking would work. Need to keep left turn at Curious George. Concern about removing the signal at Eliot and Bennett. Need to focus on the streetscape environment – island at Eliot Street had mixed reviews.

Group 6

- ◆ **Flagstaff** – good concept, concerned about shared use of path.
- ◆ **Basic Improvements** – Good improvements – like super crosswalk. Concern about unsignalized crosswalks – will need to address with design. Like the additional crosswalk at Church and Brattle. Need to improve the Johnston Gate crossing.

- ◆ **2-way Brattle** – concern about contra-flow bike lane and conflicts with pedestrians. 2-way is a bad idea because it would change the character of the street, increase vehicle volumes and become like Concord Avenue.
- ◆ **Church Street** – 1-way is a bad idea if combined with 1-way Brattle Street. Favor 1-way Church Street and wider sidewalks. Add drop off area at Mass Ave. for the T stop.
- ◆ **2-way JFK / 2-way Eliot** – support eliminating left turn at Curious George.
- ◆ People come to the Square not through the Square.
- ◆ Provide bus shelters at Dawes Island.

Group 7

- ◆ **Flagstaff** – support idea and want it to work.
- ◆ **Basic Improvements** –
 - Make the super crosswalk work – will improve pedestrian environment.
 - Provide a compass rose in the sidewalk at the top of the main MBTA headhouse. Need directional signs.
 - Need to focus on accessibility issues. How big should curb cuts be? Concern about the materials in the sidewalks and curb cuts.
 - Concern about how pedestrians interact at all-way stop signs, particularly with 2 lanes. Keep signal at Eliot / Bennett.
- ◆ **2-way Brattle** – not enthusiastic about changes. Concern about loading.
- ◆ **Church Street** – 2-way Church provides role in the parking loop. There is a trade off – give up parking or travel lane. Need to keep the parking. Emergency vehicles use Church Street as a standing area.
- ◆ **2-way JFK / 2-way Eliot** – skepticism about loading. No consensus on this option.

Group 8

- ◆ **Flagstaff** – Great idea, make it work.
- ◆ **Basic Improvements** – positive about the improvements. Add bike lanes throughout the Square.
- ◆ **2-way Brattle** – Positive about this alternative. Concern about how contra-flow bike lane would function. Support 2-way Brattle all the way to Brattle Square.
- ◆ **Church Street** – If Church Street is 1-way it needs to go from Mass Ave to Brattle.
- ◆ **2-way JFK / 2-way Eliot** – How will this work. Concern about double parking and loading issues. No consensus on this alternative.
- ◆ Provide traffic free areas in Harvard Square. Move parking, create bike lanes.

11. ADDITIONAL DETAILED COMMENTS

The following additional detailed comments were expressed within the breakout groups, and/or were received by the City subsequent to the meeting: (Duplicate comments have been condensed.)

General

1. Provide bus shelters at Dawes Island, Johnston Gate and Eliot at Bennett.
2. You should be considering larger scale changes. Remove parking and provide bike facilities. Move parking underground and out of sight, e.g. under the Cambridge Common.
3. Important to maintain access to the parking garages.
4. Provide pedestrian only areas.
5. Accommodate north / south bike move in the Cambridge Common. This project is considering too small an area. Need to focus on larger bike connections.
6. Bicycle travel needs to be integrated more completely into the process.
7. Provide better signage for parking lots to get visitors around the Square.
8. Need to consider needs of mobility impaired pedestrians.

9. Why are the bollards in Harvard Square? Are they needed?
10. Can a traffic signal be provided at Johnston Gate?
11. Brick crosswalks are hard for drivers to see and are hazardous for pedestrians – trip hazards, slippery, etc.
12. Too much bike riding on sidewalks, and against flow of traffic on one-way streets.
13. The Square's role as part of a through traffic route conflicts with its other role as a pleasant destination.
14. How much of Square could be made pedestrian only?
15. Most streets work well and have extra room for occasional loading.
16. Existing circulation loops work well for access to shops and parking.
17. Proposed options seem drastic. Present circuitous routes serve as traffic calming.
18. Would like to see more details of the origin-destination study and traffic analysis.
19. Need dry secure bike parking at MBTA station. Use underutilized space in the bus tunnel.
20. Improve street furniture, sidewalk conditions, landscape, etc. Don't spend money on changing street directions.
21. Need to ban cell-phone use while driving.
22. Hawthorne Street – vehicles improperly use two lanes. Bicycles use bike lane, vehicle lane, and sidewalk.
23. Hawthorn street bike lane should be on left side – away from parking,
24. Core of the Square should be car-free. Use Church Street and Quincy Streets as alternatives to JFK and Mass Ave.
25. Remove parking as required to allow for bike lanes without adjacent parallel parking on major north-south and east-west axes. Replace with multi-level lots and/or underground parking.
26. Consider angle parking on Story Street – people park on sidewalk now. Would slow traffic, but would be problem for bikes?
27. Consider additional use of lag-green at signals, to allow for left-turns.
28. Like Concord Avenue islands and Rindge Avenue raised intersections – consider similar treatments for Harvard Square?
29. Consider making Acacia Street one-way.
30. Large trucks travel too fast on Brattle Street.
31. Need to understand/acknowledge formal and informal loading and drop-off which occurs throughout the Square.
32. Need public restrooms or signage to existing public restrooms.

Flagstaff Park

1. Like idea of providing bicycle and pedestrian connections.
2. It is currently a blank slate. This is an opportunity to do something fun with the space.
3. How will bikes and pedestrians interact?
4. Great idea.
5. How will crossings work at Thousand Islands signal? This is known to cyclists as the “pit of despair”.
6. Cyclists should use Peabody Street.
7. Use Flagstaff Park area for other uses – i.e. shops.

Basic Improvements

1. Great improvements that include a lot of the ideas that I came here with tonight.
2. Like super crosswalk.
3. Concern about how bike cut through will function.
4. How will all-way stops work. Concern about removing signal.
5. Do 4-way stops frustrate drivers? Will people understand what to do?
6. Johnston Gate crosswalk needs more attention.
7. Super crosswalk is great, but why doesn't it extend further toward Curious George.

8. Will clearance time required for the super-crosswalk come from vehicle phases, and therefore lead to frustration and more aggressive driving?
9. Bike cut through at Out of Town News is good idea.
10. How will cyclists enter into traffic at bike cut through? Required to dismount?
11. Still need better bicycle routes from Square to Cambridge Common / Garden Street and to Cambridge Street overpass.
12. Should definitely only be 1 travel lane at Wordsworth. That will make crosswalk much safer for pedestrians.
13. Need to maintain third lane on Mt. Auburn at JFK. Left turns are difficult here given pedestrian traffic.
14. Great! When can we get them?
15. JFK / Eliot – is this enough? Ped time is too short – people walk against the lights.
16. Can you provide left turn from Mass to Church?
17. Concern about queues at Bennett / Eliot if signal is removed.
18. Concern about ped crossings at Bennett/Eliot without signals or islands.
19. Is stop-only at Bennett Street workable with 2-lanes on some approaches?
20. All-way stop leads to increased fuel consumption, and is on direct ped route to river. Does location meet any signal warrants? Please provide queuing and delay details.
21. Is overall westbound delay increased by this scheme? Bus radii accommodated? Adequate storage for peds on the median?
22. What are impacts from Mem. Drive signal on the 1-lane section of JFK south of Eliot?
23. Concern about vehicles using opposing lane to pass double parkers.
24. Good improvements for vehicle merges.
25. Curious George – this left turn definitely needs to be fixed. Good improvement.
26. Proposed crosswalk at the top of the triangle (Mt. Auburn Street) is a good improvement.
27. Wordsworth corner – important to fix the sightlines. 1 travel lane will be better.
28. How will curb cuts be designed at super crosswalk? It is difficult for everyone to use 1 small curb cut. Need to make it easy for people to use crosswalk. People should not have to line up at one small curb cut.
29. Need to ensure that curb cut design comfortably accommodates visually impaired pedestrians.
30. Establish standards for sidewalk materials that provide level surface.
31. Install and maintain tree grates over all sidewalk tree wells.
32. Address the sidewalks with cross-slopes greater than 2%.
33. Provide more seating in Harvard Square, especially at bus stops.
34. Remove or relocate granite bollards, pay phones, electrical outlets and signs that create obstructions on the sidewalk.
35. Providing “missing” crosswalk from Mt. Auburn to Winthrop is good idea.
36. Super-crosswalk favors pedestrians too much – they already have upper hand here. Ped desire line from Lehman is not a major one.
37. Curb extensions at Church/Mass Ave may impact informal drop-off which goes on here, particularly for seniors.

2-way Brattle

1. 2-way travel patterns simplify things for drivers and provide better routing options.
2. What happens at Brattle Square?
3. Concern about creating cut-through traffic on Berkeley Street. Drivers on Concord will go Concord / Craigie / Berkeley / Phillips Place / Mason / Brattle to avoid signals.
4. Will create hazardous situation. Brattle Street is already clogged artery, with delivery trucks, drop offs, many pedestrians and bikes.
5. Like 2-way traffic and the feel of a normal street.
6. Contra-flow bike lane will cause conflicts with pedestrians.
7. O.k. with contra-flow bike lane – good option for providing bike access into Harvard Square.

8. If you construct a contra-flow bike lane, it has to be physically separated from the travel lane.
9. Like contra-flow lane – snow issues are only for limited times of year. Implement with shared use of curb-ramps to mitigate concern on cross-movements at intersections.
10. Concern about increasing truck traffic on Story Street.
11. If Brattle is only 2-way to Church Street, have to switch direction of Story Street.
12. 2-way Brattle will be a positive change.
13. Will destroy quiet of street and impact truck loading zones.
14. Will impact Brattle Street historic district,
15. Provide angle parking on Brattle Street.
16. Concern about cycle track and side street traffic.
17. Cycle track would provide off-street facility for cyclists.
18. Will it attract too much traffic?
19. What are delay and queue for an all-way stop at Brattle Square?
20. Should go all the way to Brattle Square as long as it doesn't bring too much traffic.
21. Concerned that it may lead to further traffic flow changes in the Square.
22. Traffic will back-up at Eliot Street, converting present "bike-friendly" street to congested un-friendly street.
23. Harder for peds to cross a 2-way street without signals or islands.
24. Good way to provide bike access into Square, and to Mt. Auburn Street and Mass Ave south.
25. Adds confusion to what is now an excellent pedestrian environment.

Church Street

1. Provide kiss and ride space at Mass. Ave for MBTA stop.
2. One-way Church Street does not work well with 1-way Brattle. This would make circulation patterns very difficult.
3. One-way eliminates useful loop for visitors.
4. Like 1-way Church Street and providing wider sidewalks.
5. Keep 2-way and widen sidewalk. Hopefully you can keep the parking, but something has to give. Parking isn't critical on Church Street.
6. Add bike lanes.
7. Should it be 1-way from Mass. to Palmer and then 2-way?
8. Could it be 2-way from Brattle to Palmer and then ped only to Mass Ave?
9. Biggest sidewalk issue is at the movie theater. Spot improvements address that problem.
10. Make Church Street a woonerf (shared street) to make it better for pedestrians.
11. Pedestrians need more space. Something has to be done.
12. Need the loading between the cinema and Mass Ave. How will taxis be affected?
13. How does 1-way Church work with other changes?
14. Church Street is impossible for pedestrians who use wheelchairs – particularly if they are traveling with other people. The sidewalk is just too narrow.
15. Is traffic faster on a 1-way street?
16. Leave 2-way – Church Street is a service street for businesses and First Parish Church.
17. Ability to drop-off/pick-up is important particularly for church functions, and for seniors.

2-way JFK / 2-way Eliot

1. Interesting concept – intriguing idea.
2. If drivers miss the turn at Eliot Street, they will use Winthrop Street. Do not want to increase traffic on Winthrop Street. If they miss Winthrop Street, they will be forced out of the Square and at least up to Cambridge Common. This is a critical flaw.
3. Do not support this alternative. It is too big a change for the potential benefits.
4. Concern about impacts to deliveries.
5. Remove parking on JFK Street and provide bike lanes.
6. Provides too direct a route through the Square. It does serve the Square.

7. Eliot / Bennett – need to leave the signal. 2-way makes it too busy and confusing.
8. What are the benefits?
9. Makes JFK more attractive for cut-through traffic. Creates too much of a highway feel – getting people through the square.
10. Curious George – how will eliminating the left turn improve the intersection? Creates confusion for drivers.
11. JFK / Brattle / Eliot – function as a loop for people parking in the Square. This is important for circulation. Need to keep this loop.
12. You lose more than you gain.
13. It works now, why change it?
14. Concern that visitors will be funneled north out of the Square and not come back.
15. Will cause merge problems on Mass Ave SB at Out-Of-Town, and on JFK NB at Eliot.
16. Loading will be worse.
17. The real traffic problem is Mass Ave traffic and you haven't done anything to address that.
18. Won't these effectively reduce capacity vs. one-way pairs?
19. People will want to turn left from JFK on to Mt. Auburn Street. This does not solve this problem.
20. Improves traffic on the JFK/Eliot loop.
21. 2-Way Streets are not bicycle-friendly. Are recommended widths for shared travel lanes met?
22. Missing a crosswalk at entrance to Kennedy School?