CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
HARVARD SQUARE DESIGN PROJECT
MEETING NOTES

Subject: **Community Meeting #2**

Date, Time & Place: May 15, 2003, 6:30 PM – 9:00 PM
Harvard Law School, Pound Hall

Present:

HSDC Members:

Alex Sagan	Susan Rogers	John DiGiovanni
Sean Peirce	Mary Parkin	Robert Banker

City of Cambridge

Kathy Watkins (CDD)	Roger Boothe (CDD)	Rosalie Anders (CDD)
Susanne Rasmussen (CDD)	Sarah Burks (CHC)	Susan Glazer (CDD)
Cara Seiderman (CDD)	Jeff Parenti (TP&T)	Michael Muehe (CPD)

CDD = Community Development Department
CPD = Commission for Persons with Disabilities
CAC = Cambridge Arts Council
TP&T = Traffic, Parking and Transportation Department
CHC = Cambridge Historical Commission

Consultant Team:
Jerry Friedman (TAMS Consultants, Inc.)
Cynthia Smith (Halvorson Design Partnership)
Rod Emery (Edwards and Kelcey)

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1. INTRODUCTIONS / PROJECT BACKGROUND (Susanne Rasmussen)

- **Welcome** to the second community meeting for the Harvard Square Design Project.
- **Agenda** - Tonight we are going to give a brief introduction to the project, particularly for those who were unable to attend our previous public meeting in November; introduce the City and Consultant Staff working on the Project; review the status of some of the transportation options which were discussed at the November meeting; and present conceptual designs for a number of the Plazas in the Square. We will then break out into small groups so that city staff and the Design Committee have an opportunity to hear from you, with a particular focus on the Plaza designs, since the November meeting focused on transportation issues. 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 your agenda. The Committee has made a lot of progress – identified concerns, developed transportation / circulation alternatives.
    - **First community meeting** was held in November 2002. It was a positive meeting with a great turnout (over 100 members of the public). That meeting introduced the transportation alternatives. As we go through the update on transportation

alternatives tonight, you will hear how the comments from that community meeting directly affected the committee's recommendations.
    - **Tonight's** meeting – will focus on conceptual designs for the plazas.
    - A **Community Open House** will be held this winter. This will give the community an opportunity to see the "complete package" of improvements including landscaping, lighting, signage, etc.
    - **Design** will occur through next spring with **construction** in summer / fall 2004. The Project has a budget $3.5 million in FY05 – (begins July 1, 2004.)

- **Polishing the Trophy** - 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 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 call 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 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", i.e. 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.
- **Project Area -** The project encompasses a large area. The Project will develop a master plan for this overall area. By developing a master conceptual plan for the overall project area, a framework is created in which improvements can be made over time. We will have to prioritize improvements in order to have a reasonably sized project.
- **Short Term Improvements -** I would like to give you a quick update on some of the things that are already happening in Harvard Square.
    - **Painting Poles** – all utility boxes, lighting poles and painted signal poles will be repainted black this summer. A contract is currently being finalized with the selected contractor. All of the graffiti, stickers and traffic signs will be removed from the poles.
    - The MBTA **replaced the glass** on the main headhouse in January. This glass had had acid graffiti on it for quite sometime. All of the acid graffiti has been removed. We appreciate the MBTA's quick response on this issue.
    - **Bike parking** – 20 post and rings were installed to increase the amount of available bike parking in the square.

- **Older short term improvements,** most of which had already been completed last fall, include:
    - Benches – 16 wood benches were replaced throughout the Square
    - Landscaping – the grass at Winthrop Park was renewed and trees were replaced in DeGuglielmo Plaza
    - Lighting – 60 new globes were installed on existing Washington Post fixtures to replace cracked and/or yellowed globes.
    - Signage and signals – countdown pedestrian signals, and route 2A directional signs were installed in a number of locations.

- **Overall Issues -** The committee has been meeting since April and their first task was to work with city staff and consultants to identify issues 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.

2. TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS (Jerry Friedman)

- **The first phase of the project** focused on transportation. We conducted a detailed transportation analysis which evaluated the Square for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists. Taking the opportunity to evaluate transportation improvements for people using the Square, allowed us to determine the number of basic travel lanes that are needed. In order to design the plazas, landscaping, lighting, sidewalks, etc. we need to know where the curbs are going to be – i.e. how much of the area is going to be roadway. We then identified any extra space that could be used for other purposes, such as bike lanes, loading zones, parking, and expanded sidewalk or plaza areas.
- I would like to quickly review **2 circulation alternatives** that were on the table at the November Community Meeting that are not being implemented **–** in large part in response to feedback we received from the community at that meeting. The two alternatives are **2-way JFK / 2-way Eliot;** and changes to **Outer Brattle Street.**

2-WAY JFK/2-WAY ELIOT

Under this proposal, JFK Street would function as a normal 2-way city street all the way from Memorial Drive to the Out-of-Town News area, with 1 wide travel lane in each direction, shared by motor vehicles and cyclists. Eliot Street would also be a 2-way street from JFK Street to Brattle Square.

- **Positives** associated with this proposal included:
    - Simplification of connections for drivers and cyclists. We have heard numerous concerns regarding the confusing one-way street pattern in Harvard Square. 2-way streets make it easier and more understandable for people to navigate.
    - Elimination of the left turn at the Curious George store – simplifying the intersection.
    - Improvement of pedestrian crosswalk conditions on inner Brattle (in front of Dickinson Hardware), since traffic would be reduced on this segment, allowing the elimination of one travel lane and lowering vehicle speeds.
- At the **November 21st Meeting**, there was some support for creating 2-way streets in order to improve pedestrian crossings and improve the texture of the urban environment. There was also fair amount of concern about the magnitude of such a change vs. the potential benefits.

- **Specific Concerns** included:
    - Increasing the traffic on JFK Street.
    - Conflicts between loading activities and 2-way traffic.
- The **Committee Recommendation** following the November meeting, was that **2-way JFK / 2-way Eliot** is not a high priority, and there is strong opposition to this change. We are therefore not moving forward with this alternative.

OUTER BRATTLE STREET

The Committee has spent a significant amount of time evaluating alternatives for the section of Brattle Street between Brattle Square and Mason Street, in order to address several issues identified early in the Project.

- **Existing Condition**: This section of Brattle Street is 1-way westbound. There are 2 travel lanes and 2 parking lanes. Motorists and cyclists coming into Harvard Square from the west have to turn at Mason Street.
    - This presents an uninviting welcome into the Square, with "Do Not Enter" signs, barrels, etc.
    - This is an important missing link for cyclists. Brattle Street is an attractive route for cyclists coming from Watertown, Belmont and West Cambridge. Brattle Street provides direct bicycle access on a comfortable street. This was identified early on as a significant issue in Harvard Square. In addition, the City has a policy of encouraging cycling, walking and transit as alternatives to driving.
- **Contra-flow Bike Lane Option** – Contra-flow bike lanes are designated bicycle lanes installed on 1-way streets. They flow in the opposite direction from the motor vehicle flow.
    - The City has contra-flow bike lanes that work well and provide missing connections for cyclists.
    - However, given the nature of Brattle Street and the significant potential for conflicts with vehicles and pedestrians**;** City staff, consultants and the Bike Committee have not been able to identify a design for a contra-flow facility that we can support as a viable alternative on Brattle Street.
- **2-Way Brattle Option -** Under this option, Brattle Street would function as a typical 2-way street.
    - It would be easy for pedestrians, motorists and cyclists to know what to expect.
    - It would reduce traffic on the Mason / Garden / Mass Ave loop – providing a direct route for traffic.
    - The option would bring additional cars to Brattle Street but would operate acceptably. We looked at various ways of controlling the intersection at Brattle Square – "Brattle Only" stop, all-way stop, or traffic signal. The "Brattle Only" stop works best. It would cause some queues to occur on outer Brattle Street which would keep it from being too attractive a route. But, it would not cause excessive queuing.
- At the **November 21st Meeting,** there was support for providing the bicycle connection and for implementing a normal 2-way city street. There were also strong concerns about increasing traffic on Brattle Street and about creating cut-thru traffic on Berkeley Street. Prohibiting the left turn from Mason onto the proposed 2-way section of Brattle would address those concerns – but the Berkeley Street concern raised the issue of the potential for other possible unintended consequences and the magnitude of the change.

- **Committee Recommendation**:
    - **The Committee did not reach consensus**. Some members felt strongly that Brattle Street should be a 2-way street. Other members felt strongly that it should not be made 2-way.
    - We will not be making any major changes on Brattle Street. It will remain a 1-way street.
    - We will provide signage to encourage cyclists from Brattle Street to enter Harvard Square via Hawthorne and Mt. Auburn.
    - An important part of the decision is that no changes will be made to Brattle Street that would prevent it from becoming 2-way in the future, as it was recognized that Brattle Street is a significant bike route and we are not providing optimal accommodation for cyclists at this time.

BASIC TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS

The Committee has recommended moving forward with a number of basic transportation improvements. These were presented and discussed in some detail at the November meeting. The **basic principles** which are characteristic of all of these improvements include: providing "missing crosswalks", narrowing pavement, providing accommodation for cyclists, and eliminating confusing merges and weaving movements for motorists. This goes back to what we talked about earlier – the goal of making the square work better for people.

- The above principles are being applied to the overall Project Area. One detailed example of what we are proposing, however, can be seen in the heart of the Square, around the **Out-Of-Town News peninsula**. Specific improvements being proposed include:
    - **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 them to do that in a direct move.
    - **Bike Movement -** Cyclists traveling from 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 some sort of **bike cut-through** in this area would provide an alternative route for cyclists to make this move.
    - **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 also included a parking area that could be provided for loading and quick drop offs and pickups.
    - **Sidewalk Widening –** Another benefit of the lane removal, is the opportunity to widen the sidewalk in front of Nini's – this is currently a significant pinch point for pedestrians.
- At the **November 21st Meeting,** there was strong support for the basic improvements. People talked about how these improvements address most of the ideas that they came to the meeting with.
- The **Committee Recommendation** is to move forward with the design of these improvements**.** We have looked at these in detail in the core area. We are currently developing the conceptual plan for the larger project area and will apply these types of improvement throughout – bicycle accommodation, curb extensions, signal timing improvements, missing crosswalks, etc. You will also see more of these typical improvements when we take a closer look at the plazas.

CHURCH STREET

Another transportation improvement discussed at the November 21st meeting was Church Street.

- **Existing Condition**: Church Street has narrow sidewalks with high pedestrian activity. The goal is to make Church Street work well for pedestrians and be an inviting street.
- **1-Way Option**: Converting Church Street to 1-way operation would allow sidewalks to be significantly widened, while maintaining parking on both sides of the street. This alternative was shown at the November community meeting.
- At the **November 21st Meeting** there was strong agreement that sidewalks need to be improved, but there were concerns about the 1-Way Street Option, including:
    - Eliminates useful loop for visitors.
    - Makes street pattern more confusing.
    - 2-way street provides service for businesses and the church.
    - More of a willingness to eliminate parking than to change direction.
- Following the November meeting, the **Committee decided to keep 2-way traffic** and to improve the sidewalk **by removing some parking**.
    - Considered removing parking from the entire north side (16 parking space impact)
    - Considered removing parking from north side just between Palmer Street and Mass Ave (7-8 spaces impact).
- The **Committee Recommendation** is to remove parking in the 1 block section between Palmer Street and Mass Ave and improve sidewalk conditions along the rest of the street by carefully locating street furniture and signage and installing tree grates. We are looking to add parking in other locations to at least partially offset the loss of parking. When Kathy and Cynthia review the plaza areas you will see several locations where parking is being added.

FLAGSTAFF PARK

One of the connectivity issues we have heard a lot about is cyclists and pedestrians traveling from Harvard Square / Johnston Gate area towards North Mass Ave and 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.
- 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.
- At the **November 21st Meeting,** there was strong support this idea – it has been called a “no-brainer”.
- The **Committee Recommendation** is to move forward with developing this option.

3. PLAZA IMPROVEMENTS (Kathy Watkins and Cynthia Smith)

SHARED STREETS

As we transition between discussing the transportation improvements and the plaza areas, I would like to discuss a concept that is somewhere in between a street and a plaza – a shared street.

- Two streets that the committee has discussed from a conceptual point of view, but have not been designed, are **Palmer and Winthrop**.
    - These streets provide pedestrian connections.
    - Both of these streets cause significant problems for pedestrians. The sidewalks are either non-existent or too narrow to meet basic criteria.
    - The concept with these two streets is to make them into shared streets where pedestrians, motorists and cyclists would all share the same space.
    - Shared streets have been implemented successfully in many different areas of the country and around the world.
    - Palmer and Winthrop provide an opportunity for us to successfully implement 2 shared streets in Cambridge. The volume of traffic on both of these streets is low and speeds are also low. They would provide pleasant, interesting accommodation for pedestrians.
    - The shared street concept provides an opportunity to enhance the pedestrian environment, accommodate loading needs, and improve these two streets.
    - The concept addresses the narrow sidewalk issue by allowing pedestrians to use the entire roadway width instead of being squeezed into the narrow sidwalk space.
    - Design has not been developed, but we wanted to give you a sense of the changes being discussed for Palmer and Winthrop.

PLAZAS - GENERAL

- As you can tell, the Committee has made significant progress on the transportation improvements since the first community meeting. There has also been significant progress made on developing conceptual plans for plaza areas.
- We are focusing on **3 specific plaza areas** tonight because they are the ones that we have heard the most comments about and the ones that have the most potential for improvement. Eliot Square, Wordsworth Triangle (Brattle Square), and the Lampoon Plaza.
- Plazas provide us an opportunity to improve pedestrian connections into and through the plazas, improve the areas for gathering – using the plaza and improve urban design elements.

MINIMUM CHANGE PLAZAS

- We are not proposing significant changes in other plazas in the Square. **Some already work well** like DeGuglielmo Plaza (adjacent to Bertucci's at Brattle Square). We would look at the ramps, sidewalk conditions, plantings and lighting, but not major changes to the overall design.
- Other areas have **limited space and physical constraints** like the area in front of 1 Brattle Square / EMS. It is a fairly tight area that has vents for the MBTA tunnel that cannot be relocated and also a utility bank under the sidewalk. It does not lend itself to major changes.
- Another area where we are not proposing significant changes is the **Out of Town News / Pit area** – the area behind the T headhouse and in front of the Cambridge Savings Bank. There are a lot of different uses that are accommodated in the space – MBTA

headhouse, Out of Town News, MBTA elevator, tourist kiosk. There are Challenging grading issues. The Pit is the roof of the MBTA station and connects to Mass Ave, JFK Street, MBTA headhouse, etc. In addition the committee relied heavily on a report written by an **inter-jurisdictional group** that spent time evaluating the Pit and its current use.

- We are focusing on making modest improvements to the area.
    - One of the positive things that has already been accomplished is that the MBTA replaced the glass in the headhouse that had had acid graffiti on it. We continue to work closely with the MBTA to address these types of maintenance issues.
    - The sidewalk in front of Out-of-Town would be widened to about 20 feet (roughly double what it is now). The sidewalk at Nini's would also be widened, to about 22 feet.
    - We will try to simplify the area by reducing the number of payphones.
    - We are working with DPW to make improvements to the placement of newspaper boxes.
    - We will recommend maintenance items such as repairing the bench at the back of the MBTA headhouse.

WORDSWORTH TRIANGLE / ELIOT SQUARE

- We would now like to discuss 2 of the areas where we are showing more significant changes: The triangular island opposite Wordsworth Books in Brattle Square; and the Eliot Square bus stop location.
- **Wordsworth Triangle – transportation improvements:** As discussed earlier, basic transportation improvements are being provided throughout the Project Area. At Wordsworth Triangle, these include:
    - Bike lanes on Brattle, Eliot, and Mt. Auburn Streets
    - Improvements to the Wordsworth crosswalk. This is presently a difficult pedestrian crossing, with 2 lanes of traffic. We propose to tighten up the corner to reduce vehicle speeds, and reduce the turn to 1 travel lane.
    - The triangle island will become smaller as a result of the roadway changes, but space will be added to the Wordsworth corner.
    - Mt. Auburn Street will be reduced to 1 lane in front of Tweeter. This simplifies the vehicular merge, and allows for addition of parking / loading at Tweeter.
    - We are also looking at feasibility of a crosswalk at the tip of triangle to address pedestrian desire lines.
- **Eliot Square – transportation improvements:** Similarly, at this location, we plan to:
    - Tighten the Mt. Auburn crosswalk
    - Add the missing crosswalk at Charlie's Kitchen
    - Add crosswalk on Eliot Street across from the JFK School
    - Create a formal bus pullout
    - Add parking where possible
- The transportation improvements I just described will not only improve conditions for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists, but they also provide opportunities for the landscaping / urban design improvements that Cynthia is going to review.
- **Wordsworth Triangle – Existing Landscape/Urban Design Conditions**
    - The space is underutilized, in part due to being surrounded by traffic.
    - It is largely used as a pass-through.
    - Even so, we have the opportunity to enhance its function as an important connecting point for various pedestrian desire lines and also the opportunity to provide a pleasant place for people to gather or linger.

- **Wordsworth Triangle – Conceptual Design**
    - As we conducted design studies, we were looking to enhance the plazas' function as an important pedestrian connection and also its function as a gathering spot where people can linger and enjoy a nice sunny afternoon.
    - We are not proposing drastic changes, but changes that will improve the function and attractiveness of the space.
    - We propose improved pedestrian connections into and through the plaza – these will open up the plaza for pedestrians.
    - We would provide a small gathering space – as indicated by the circle area.
    - We propose a planting bed along the Eliot Street edge, to bring interest and color into the space for both passing motorists and pedestrians.
- **Eliot Plaza – Existing Conditions**
    - This location is disorganized in terms of its functions
    - It is a major MBTA bus stop
    - It contains a significant amount of bicycle parking
    - It has unrealized potential to be a link in a landscaped connection to the River
    - The trees in the Plaza are not in great shape.
    - The space also suffers from the poor aesthetics of the adjacent exposed parking garage.
- **Eliot Square – Conceptual Design**
    - There is an exciting opportunity to enhance the connection to the river – physically by providing a walkway / tree allee which is aligned with the existing pedestrian connection to JFK Park.
    - We can also enhance the connection to the river with connecting detailing elements (gateways, etc) through the plaza up to DeGuglielmo Plaza.
    - To enhance the plaza's function as a transportation hub, we propose a significant bus shelter as well as covered bike parking**.**
    - We also propose to screen the view of the city's parking lot in the back. This would include replace the existing chain link fence with screen planting.
- **General Adjacent Improvements** which would be provided not only at this location, but throughout the Project Area, would include additional street trees, benches and other urban design and landscape elements.

LAMPOON PLAZA

- **Location** – This refers to the area around the Harvard Lampoon building, where Mt. Auburn and Bow Streets diverge. Bow Street is part of the historic street grid of Harvard Square. Mt. Auburn Street was constructed later as a toll road to Boston, and was overlaid on top of the existing street grid.
- **Existing conditions.** The area is characterized by:
    - An **excessive amount of asphalt,** making it a somewhat confusing area for everyone.
    - Few crosswalks.
    - **Many pedestrian desire lines**, especially between the Harvard River Houses and Harvard Yard. It is a disorganized area with lots of random pedestrian and vehicular movements.
    - This is an historic area, including the "Gold Coast" structures built by Harvard in the 1920's, as well as the Lampoon Building.
    - It is also a location we have consistently heard concerns about.

- **Conceptual Design**
  - In thinking about ways to reduce the conflicts between vehicles and pedestrians, it was important to respect the historic street network – to maintain view corridors and street patterns.
  - The concept design changes the angled parking to parallel parking, adds a crossing island and adds a number of new pedestrian crossings. It attempts to be respectful of the surroundings.
  - This alternative allows the context of the Lampoon building to be maintained and addresses the pedestrian desire lines.
  - There is **no net loss of parking** in the overall area. Converting the angled parking to parallel parking reduces the number of parking spaces along the north edge of Mt. Auburn/Bow Streets, but this is made up for by adding several spaces at the existing bus loading area, at the expanded Lampoon Island, and along Plympton Street.
  - The new crossing island would serve as a framing element for the Lampoon building, through the use of low-level plantings, lighting, furniture, etc.
  - The new island is not intended (nor sized for) gathering or lingering. Rather it is a convenient pass-through point.

4. <u>SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS (Susanne Rasmussen)</u>

We will now 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.

The focus of the breakout groups will be on the 3 plaza areas that Cynthia described. Wordsworth Triangle, Eliot Square and Lampoon Plaza. These are the new pieces of information brought to the community tonight and we want to hear from you regarding these conceptual plans. There will also be time reserved to hear from you regarding other plaza areas and the transportation improvements.

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 groups or on the comment sheets will be summarized for the committee and posted on the web.

At the end of the breakout groups we will have the Harvard Square Design Committee member report back the groups 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.

5. <u>BREAKOUT GROUPS REPORTING (Kathy Watkins and Breakout Group Recorders)</u>

<u>(NO GROUP 1)</u>

<u>GROUP 2</u>

<u>Wordsworth Triangle</u>

- Hope new design slows traffic.
- Safety issues at existing crossings. Existing walk edge too narrow.
- Extra crosswalks are good – will draw people to center of island.
- Consider narrowing Brattle to one lane at Eliot.
- Keep island wide enough not to impact plantings.
- Tighten left-hand curve even more.

- Concerned about sightlines at crosswalks.
- Consider raised crosswalk to slow traffic.
- Provide more bike parking near Tower Records, and elsewhere.
- Consider super-crosswalk at Brattle/Eliot intersection.

Eliot Square

- Promenade is good.
- How many existing trees being removed? *(This design calls for the complete reconstruction of the plaza. All of the 10 existing trees would need to be removed. 4 of which are in poor / fair health.)*
- Security problems with added trees? *(No, the new street trees will be pruned up to 7 feet clearance, which will provide good visibility for pedestrians as well as drivers and cyclist.)*
- Provide wider curb cuts and crosswalk at Brattle/Eliot intersection.
- Provide minimum 8-feet between curb and street furniture at bus stop to allow for accessible bus loading and unloading.

Lampoon Plaza

- Extend island all the way to Holyoke Street (Boulevard effect).
- Add parking to north side of new island.
- Remove curb extension at Holyoke Street.
- Like additional crosswalks.
- Consider copper sculpture as a reference point/visual link.
- Larger sidewalks preferable to larger planters in island.
- Make left-hand turn slot smaller (between existing and new islands).
- Will enough bus layover space be left on Mt. Auburn? *(Loading zones, taxi zones and bus layover areas will be evaluated throughout the entire project area.)*

General

- Consider accessibility when selecting surface materials at all plazas (Universal design, ADA, Code Issues).
- Combine historical character with vibration-free paths.
- Brick over concrete slab recommended where brick is desirable.
- Safety statistics at crosswalks should be used to determine which ones are hazardous and need improving.
- Good to recognize/accommodate pedestrian desire lines.
- Don't use cobblestones anywhere and remove existing cobbles.
- More seating is good – provide even more.
- Support shared streets.
- Consider making Church Street one-way towards Mass Ave.
- Provide good weather protection at all bus stops.
- When placing trees, consider potential impact on drop-off activities.
- Think about grading at bus stops. Need to make it easy for handicap access.

GROUP 3

Wordsworth Triangle

- Why are crosswalks angled rather than straight? *(The crosswalks are located to maximize pedestrian visibility. As we move into detailed design, the locations of the crosswalks will continue to be refined.)*
- Drivers must be able to see the crosswalks and pedestrians for safety.
- Plan is missing crosswalk across Brattle Street (outer). *(This was an oversight on the plans. This crosswalk has been included in the plans.)*
- Wheelchair concern – don't have crosswalks fight against gradient

- Why not make intersection more squared-off? *(Have to provide access for trucks).*
- Left-turn from Brattle to Mt. Auburn seems too wide. (*Have to provide access for trucks).*
- Mt. Auburn/Eliot: Confusion about who has right-of-way. Geometry changes may help
- Bump-outs good: Narrows vision, shortens crosswalks and keeps cars from parking in intersection.
- True that bump outs are required to obtain Federal $$? *(Curb extensions are provided to improve conditions for pedestrians, not because of any federal requirements.)*
- Colorful plantings will be good.
- Triangle is isolated – don't spend time there.
- Concerned about visibility of crosswalk at tip of island.
- Concerned about how grading will work.

Eliot Square

- Concern about removal of crossing island between One Brattle and Eliot Square
- Why does stop line exist on Mt. Auburn at Eliot intersection? *(There should not be a stop line for Mt. Auburn Street traffic. This was installed due to an error by the painting crews.)*
- Applaud changes.
- Make sure bus shelter is maintained.
- Does alignment with allee really work? *(The alignment of the new trees would work well with the existing allee of trees and will enhance the pedestrian connection between Harvard Square and the Charles River through the JFK Park.)*
- Like covered bike parking – good improvement.
- Use same species tree in new allee as in existing allee to JFK Park.
- Large expanse of brick is a problem for wheelchairs.
- Provide visual cue / vibration-free zone for the primary path of travel.
- Prefer look of brick as an accent, not for wide expanse.
- Brick is slippery.

Lampoon Plaza

- Looks like an improvement.
- Revisit crosswalk alignments – try to make straighter.
- Add crossing from tapered tip of island.
- Concern about loss of parking spaces. Sometimes follow-up addition of spaces elsewhere doesn't happen.
- Will Harvard maintain the new island? *(As the project moves into detailed design, maintenance of the various plaza areas will be discussed with adjacent property owners.)*
- Like way it looks, but concerned parallel parkers will block traffic when backing in.
- Replacement parking on Plympton is not convenient – have to go to Memorial Drive to access.
- Great idea if parking can be maintained.
- Good idea. Will change character of the area.
- Don't put tree in front of Lampoon.

General

- Square has limited outdoor café spaces. Opportunities at Charlie's Kitchen, Café Paradiso, Eliot Square, adjacent to EMS store (One Brattle).
- Crosswalk signage is important for safety.
- Why does Church Street have to have the chicane and bump outs at the easterly end? *(The chicane and bump outs are needed to transition between the taxi / loading zone on the south side of the street and the parking on the north side of the street.)*

GROUP 4

Wordsworth Triangle

- Like shortened crosswalks.
- Did not know sculpture existed.
- Underutilized now – mostly on weekends.
- Added crosswalks will make it more attractive to pedestrians.
- Reduction in traffic lanes is good.
- Crosswalk ahead of triangle (across Brattle @ Wordsworth) is not visible enough; timing of traffic is difficult. Signal at Out-Of-Town should be retimed, or a walk signal should be added at Wordsworth which is coordinated with Out-of-Town.
- New paths are an important improvement.

Eliot Square

- Problems in past clearing snow and ice from this area.
- Would like to see sign identifying "Eliot Square".
- Sidewalk needs wider passage for peds.
- Bike parking should be recessed or at different level to stay clear of pedestrian route. Access to bike parking should be separate from pedestrian way.
- Bus shelter is great.
- Need two more trees on JFK Park side of allee (closer to Bennett St curb) to help connect the plaza with the path to the river.
- Plaza is messy now; these are good improvements.
- Bike parking is needed.
- Crossing at Bennett St has tricky walk signals – buses turn right on red.
- Needs better lighting.

Lampoon Plaza

- Need to guarantee that cars will yield to peds at crosswalks. Consider barrels in crosswalks.
- An inspired design.
- May be too many crosswalks. A lot of stopping for cars. Crosswalks at tip of Lampoon Building are superfluous.
- Add crosswalk from new island to Lampoon Island.
- Looks beautiful.
- Sidewalk on north side of Mt. Auburn is very bumpy and difficult to traverse – needs immediate repairs.
- Don't mind all the crosswalks. They remind drivers to slow down. Would be mistake to eliminate any.
- This is an important pedestrian area – no sympathy for cars here.
- If traffic is slowed too much, it will back-up through the Square.
- Will parking changes result in changes to traffic patterns? *(The number of parking spaces being relocated is not significant and will not affect overall traffic patterns in the Square.)*

General

- There are ped/vehicle conflicts at JFK/Mt. Auburn intersection. Exclusive ped phase, or left turn only phase from Mt. Auburn onto JFK would help.
- Trouble crossing Bow/Arrow intersection to St. Pauls Church. Sightlines are obscured.
- Zebra crosswalks made pedestrians more visible.
- Senior citizens fall on the poorly maintained brick sidewalks. These injuries are serious and can be life threatening.