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## CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Community Development Department

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Community Development

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Community Development

### MEMORANDUM

TO: Huron Avenue Business Owners

FROM: Jeff Rosenblum

DATE: January 30, 2013

SUBJECT: Updates to the Design of Huron Ave. Business District Streetscape

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I want to thank all of you for taking the time to meet with the City on December 11, 2012 to further discuss the conceptual design plans for Huron Avenue. The process that leads to the final design includes the input of many stakeholders and the decisions that are made reflect balancing that input with the mandated goals of City policy as well as technical and operational needs.

This memo is a response to the feedback received at that meeting. A meeting has been scheduled for next week to provide an opportunity to discuss this memo in person (thanks again to Sarah for her generosity in hosting).

### **HURON AVENUE RECONSTRUCTION BUSINESS MEETING**

**Tuesday February 5, 2013 9:00 AM – 10:00 AM  
Full Moon Restaurant**

For each item below, first the original design proposal to the public on November 1, 2012 is summarized, next is feedback from businesses, then the City response to this feedback and any changes to the design we are incorporating.

#### **A. Pedestrian scale lighting between Lakeview and Fayerweather.**

**Original proposal:** Pedestrian scale lighting within the business district was not in the scope of this project.

**Your feedback:** There is an emphatic desire by Huron Avenue businesses for the City to include pedestrian-scale lighting into the street reconstruction project. Pedestrian scale lighting will significantly improve the look and appeal of the district. In addition, the light poles will provide opportunities for hanging landscaping and banners. Businesses indicated a willingness to fundraise to help make this happen.

**City response:** The City has reviewed the request from businesses and will be incorporating pedestrian scale lighting into the project. The existing cobra street-scale lighting fixtures will remain in their current locations. Approximately 12 black Selux Saturn-1 LED fixtures (see attached image) will be added to the sidewalk between Lakeview Avenue and Fayerweather Street on both north and south sides. By the end of February, one sample fixture will be installed temporarily in this area for businesses and residents to look at. For now, you can look at a sample of the fixture in front of the West Cambridge Youth Center. These fixtures can accept brackets for hanging landscaping baskets and banners. The City will cover the capital costs for the inclusion of the lighting fixtures into the project. The City appreciates the offer by the businesses to conduct fundraising for the lighting element, but recommends that the efforts of the businesses focus on raising funds to ensure the maintenance of the landscape plantings that are proposed as part of the construction project.

## **B. Business district landscape design capital and maintenance costs.**

**Original proposal:** The City has included landscape design services for the business district between Fayerweather Street and Lakeview Avenue as well as for the plaza at Vassal Lane. For the main business district, the project construction budget includes the capital cost for elements such as a brick “accent strip” along the concrete sidewalk, high-quality planters (and the plantings), hanging planting baskets, trees, benches, trash receptacles, and bicycle parking racks. As part of this public/private partnership, the proposal is for the businesses in the area take responsibility for the maintenance of all of the planted landscape areas between and including Fayerweather Street and Lakeview Avenue, including replanting when needed and watering. The City will assume maintenance responsibility for the other elements of the landscape including trees.

For the Vassal Lane plaza, the project includes the complete renovation and enlargement of the area, to include a large new landscaped area, automatic irrigation system, integrated bus stop seating, and space for a Hubway bicycle share station. The City has agreed to include maintenance of the Vassal Lane plaza landscaped area into its annual budget.

**Your feedback:** The businesses indicated enthusiastic support for these proposed landscape changes, and indicated that businesses would form a landscape maintenance subcommittee to determine how the maintenance would be funded and performed.

**City response:** The City thanks the businesses for their agreement to participate in this public/private partnership whereby the City covers the capital costs for the project and the businesses take ownership for funding the maintenance of the landscape plantings in the business district.

### **C. Proposed crosswalk and curb extension at Standish Street.**

**Original proposal:** The City has proposed introducing an additional crosswalk at Standish Street. Without this crosswalk, the distance between the closest crosswalks at Lakeview and Chilton is 460 feet, while the city standard is to place crosswalks no more than 300 feet apart in business districts when there is an intersection with a perpendicular street. This new crosswalk was presented to the public at the last public meeting, and, as part of the overall plan, met well received. The inclusion of this crosswalk is supported by the Cambridge Pedestrian Committee.

**Your feedback:** The two parking spaces are more important than the crosswalk, which businesses do not feel will improve pedestrian circulation enough to warrant the loss in parking. Fresh Pond Market owners also indicated that the elderly have concerns about parking near curb extensions.

**City response:** The City understands the reservations that the Huron Avenue businesses have regarding the addition of this crosswalk and has seriously taken your feedback into consideration. The City has determined that the addition of this crosswalk results in important pedestrian safety improvements within the business district at a location where many pedestrians wish to cross. Those who walk, bike, or drive to the business district have the need to cross the street safely. Standish Street also provides a direct connection to the Vassal Lane school. This crosswalk has been shown as part of the project through the community process including the September 20, 2012 public meeting, October 10, 2012 meeting with businesses, and November 1, 2012 public meeting.

The City is preparing a letter to the community that will include an updated design plan and a presentation of changes that have been made subsequent to the November 1, 2012 public meeting. In this letter, we will indicate that the business owners have recently expressed concerns about the inclusion of this crosswalk in the project because of the loss of parking. We will encourage everyone to attend the April 2013 open house (date yet to be determined) to express their opinions on the crosswalk one way or the other.

### **D. Proposed parking regulations between Lakeview and Fayerweather (including partial block up side streets of Chilton, Gurney, Standish).**

**Original proposal:** The project includes a conversion of unregulated and Residential Permit parking to combination 2-hour/ Residential Permit in this area of the business district. This increases parking availability for customers. This concept was developed in response to feedback from the three working sessions with your group last Spring 2012.

**Your feedback.** Instead of implementing the change, the businesses now prefer to leave things exactly as they are today, including leaving all the unrestricted parking that exists today

unchanged. This leaves more unrestricted parking for store owners and staff closer to the businesses, though it will also reduce the availability of customer parking.

**City response.** The City plan will maintain the current proposal for changes to the parking regulations on Huron Avenue itself. This will increase parking availability for customers. Per your request, we will revert the one block of side streets of Chilton, Gurney, Standish to whatever regulations exist today (which is mostly unrestricted parking.) These two components taken together are more consistent with City-wide practice of providing restricted parking on the main street and some unrestricted parking along businesses on the side streets, providing a balance of the various needs. In addition, one parking space in front of 387 Huron will remain unrestricted as a result of extensive discussions with the property owner. (See attached graphic).

#### **E. Parking regulations between Fayerweather and Reservoir Streets.**

**Original proposal:** The proposed design has no change in parking regulations in this segment which is currently mostly Residential Permit Parking only.

**Your feedback:** Businesses request that this segment be changed from Residential Permit Parking only to a combination 2-hour or Residential Permit Parking, similar to what exists today across from Formaggio Kitchen and what is proposed between Lakeview and Fayerweather.

**City response:** At this time, the City is not incorporating this change into this project design. For this project, the business district has been designated between Lakeview and Fayerweather. The City has determined that the parking regulation modifications outlined in D. above are sufficient.

#### **F. Bus stop relocation at Appleton.**

**Original proposal:** The proposed design moves the in-bound bus stop at Appleton Street from the far side (in front of the shops) to the near side (in front of 258 Huron, a residential property). The primary reason for this change was because a curb extension is recommended for the near side to improve sight lines for drivers existing Appleton Street onto Huron. The rationale was for this curb extension to double as a bus stop to minimize loss of 1-hour parking spaces.

**Property owner feedback:** The residential property owner at that corner has expressed concerns about moving the bus stop to in front of their property. The City has met with the homeowner twice, once with the owner of Formaggio Kitchen, to discuss the rationale for this

recommendation. The residential property owner continues to oppose the relocation of the bus stop.

**City response:** After a thorough internal review of the issue, the City has decided that the bus stop will remain at its current location in front of the businesses. The curb extension at the corner of Appleton Street will remain because of its function to improve safety of the intersection by increasing the sight lines but will be shortened to accommodate an additional parking space.

There are several parking changes that will not only make up for the loss of the one 1-hour parking space located in front of 258 Huron today, but also add an additional space (See attached graphic.)

- The bus stop formerly at 271 Huron Avenue is shown in the November 1, 2012 plan to become two new parking spaces designated as unrestricted; these two new spaces will instead be designated combination residential permit / 1-hour spaces.
- The one unrestricted space currently shown in front of 264 Huron will be designated as a combination residential permit / 1-hour space.
- In addition, the November 1, 2012 plan shows a change in the parking regulations for approximately 4 spaces in front of 238 and 234 Huron Avenue from unrestricted to combination residential permit / 1-hour parking which will increase the availability of customer parking.

Again, thank you for your collaborative participation in this process. Please don't hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns at [jrosenblum@cambridgema.gov](mailto:jrosenblum@cambridgema.gov) 617/ 349-4615.

A reminder that there will be an open house scheduled sometime in April 2013 for the community to attend and see the final design for the project.

## Selux Saturn-1 LED fixture

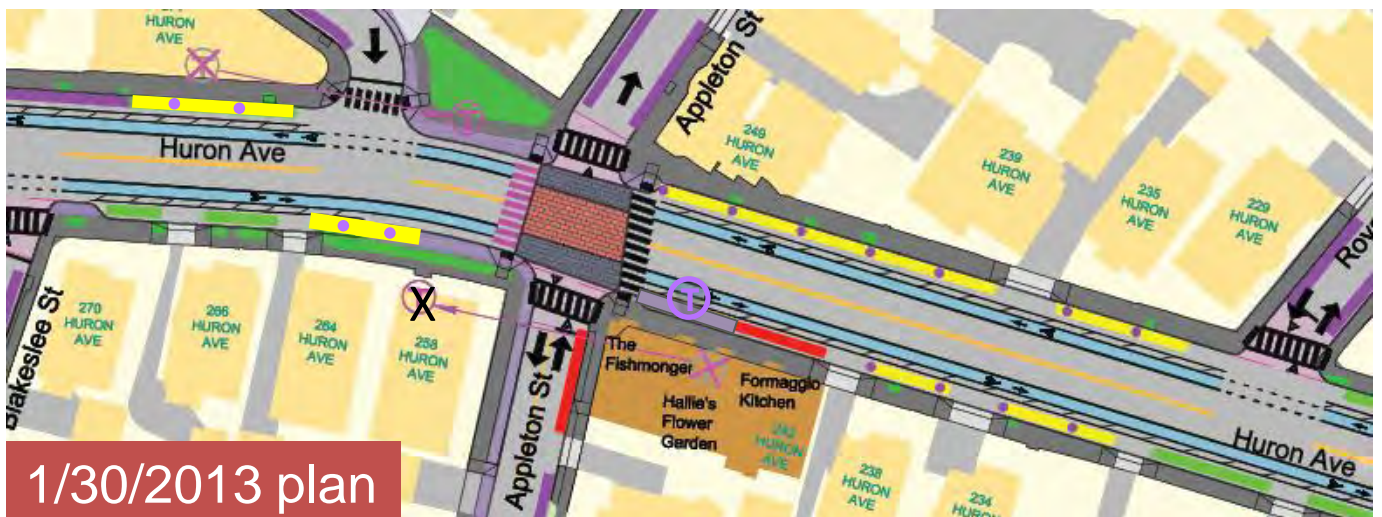
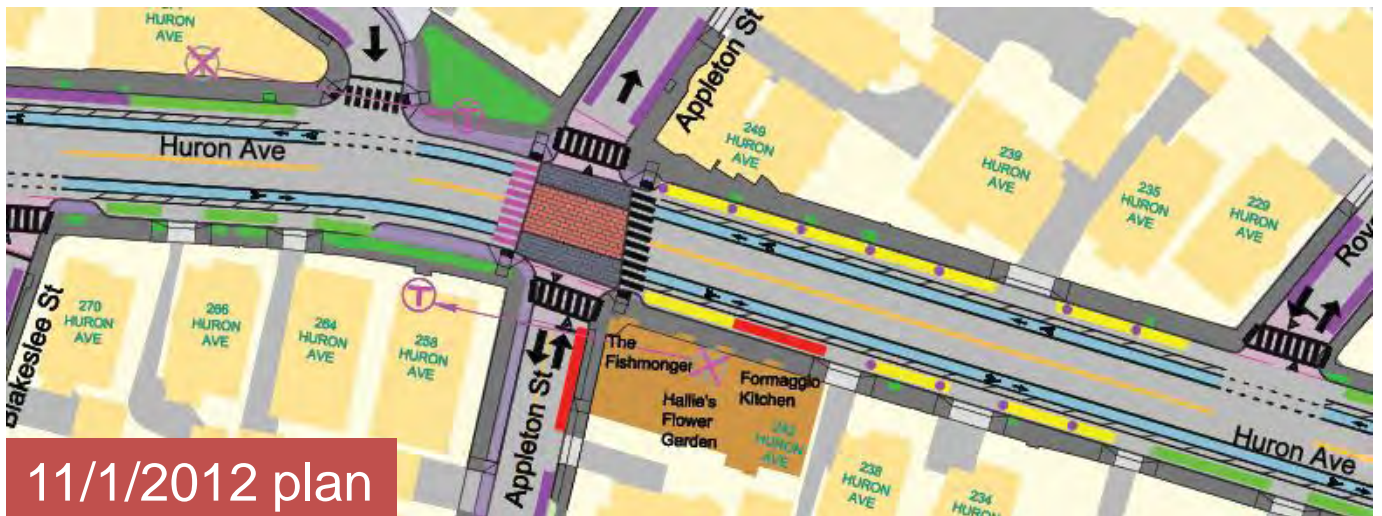




# Appleton Business District Parking

Updated proposal, 1/30/2013

- UNREGULATED PARKING
- MBTA BUS STOP
- DISABILITY PARKING
- LOADING ZONE
- PERMIT PARKING EXCEPT SUNDAYS
- 1 HOUR RESTRICTED PARKING
- 1 HOUR PARKING OR PERMIT PARKING





# Central Business District Parking

Updated proposal, 1/30/2013

- UNREGULATED PARKING
- MBTA BUS STOP
- DISABILITY PARKING
- LOADING ZONE
- PERMIT PARKING EXCEPT SUNDAYS
- 2 HOUR RESTRICTED PARKING
- 2 HOUR PARKING OR PERMIT PARKING



Existing conditions



11/1/2012 plan



1/30/2013 plan