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Subject: MassDOT Highway Division
Allston I-90 Interchange Improvement Project
Brookline Transportation Board Briefing
Meeting Notes of March 20, 2017

Overview

On March 20, 2017, members of the Allston I-90 Interchange team attended a regularly scheduled meeting of the Brookline Transportation Board to provide this body with an update on the project. Members of the public were welcome to attend and provide comment as facilitated by the board. The meeting served primarily to cover changes to the project since the previous appearance before the Brookline Transportation Board on February 29, 2016, while also touching briefly on project history and next steps.

Major items of discussion and the largest changes to the project since the previous meeting included the completion of the Boston Planning and Development Agency's (BPDA) Placemaking Report, numerous refinements to the project concept based on the placemaking study and increased modelling of a possible full or partial north-south vehicular connection. Major concept refinements included the realignment of the Turnpike further south to accommodate a more development-friendly roadway grid within the project area, elimination of the Westbound Soldier's Field off-ramp to River Street in Cambridge in favor of a realigned vehicular connection through the project site and increased park space along the Charles River and creation of an at-grade, uninterrupted non-vehicular connection between Allston and the Charles River Path System.

Much of the conversation at the meeting focused around various ideas for a north-south connection across the project site. As part of the project's environmental filings, the project team has been tasked with looking at the effect of both a non-motorized or motorized connection at this location. Many in attendance approved of allowing a connection for bicycles, pedestrians and transit vehicles, but strongly opposed introducing a new route for private vehicles.

Other items of discussion included the various options under consideration for the narrowest stretch of the I-90 viaduct, commonly referred to as the "Throat". Many in attendance felt that the highway should be de-elevated, but also felt it was necessary to widen and improve conditions on the Paul Dudley White Path.



Detailed Meeting Minutes¹

- C Pamela Zelnick (PZ): Hello, we are here to listen to MassDOT's update on I-90 Interchange Improvement Project.
- C Todd Kirrane (TK): We'll turn it right over to Nate, who is MassDOT's consultant from Howard Stein Hudson.

Remarks from Nathaniel Cabral-Curtis regarding overall status of project

- C Nathaniel Cabral-Curtis (NCC): First, I'd like to say that I am one of a sizable contingent of people working as a consultant on this project, and by no means the most important. I'd also like to acknowledge that Donny Dailey is here, MassDOT's Legislative Liaison and also Mike O'Dowd, the project manager for the job. His job tonight will be to answer any of your questions.

That should handle introductions; next we'll review the project purpose. This is all triggered by the fact that the I-90 viaduct is becoming structurally unsound. This is the portion of the Turnpike as you head west from underneath Commonwealth Avenue, through the site of the old toll plaza and back down under Cambridge Street. This project gives us a chance to straighten the roadway as well. The highway has a sizable curve at this location, which historically, was in part to slow vehicles down as you approach the toll plaza. We also now have a chance to realign Soldiers' Field Road, create a more vibrant Cambridge Street that serves all modes and rather than just functioning just as a highway entrance, create a fully accessible shared use path along the River, rebuild the Franklin Street Pedestrian Bridge, introduce cycle tracks throughout many of the surface streets in the project and create a layover facility and new station for the MBTA Commuter Rail.

This project is being planned and permitted as a single project. I know that there were concerns that the Commuter Rail station would be left out. Due to funding, portions of the project will need to be staged, but in terms of the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR), it will all be in there. The project has the following shared priorities, of which some of you may be familiar with, as they were devised with the project task force, of which Gus from the Town of Brookline, is a part. Our goals are safety first for all modes, realign the Turnpike, create a context sensitive design that works for the neighborhood, don't introduce new cut through traffic through the neighborhoods, create a vibrant Cambridge Street and boost transit accessibility.

Next, we have a view of the project area. When I discuss the throat section, I'm talking about the portion that's part of the viaduct today. Next, I won't read all of this off to you, but a lot of work has gone into this project, and this is a list of past meetings. In February of 20016, we had an open house with the City of Boston at the Jackson Mann School. We had boards available there at the back of the room. One of these boards was a large blow up of what was then the preferred alternative, Alternative 3K-4. Since that meeting, we worked with the Boston Planning and Development Agency (BPDA), then known as the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA), to use Alternative 3K-4 as the baseline for a placemaking study. The goal of this study was the test the design of the project for a wide range of successful outcomes. It looked at all public realm aspects,

¹ Herein "C" stands for comment, "Q" for question and "A" for answer. For a list of attendees, please see Appendix 1. For copies of meeting flipcharts, please see Appendix 2.



including connectivity, development potential and creating a sense of place and a place of sustainability of energy efficiency.

The BPDA looked at the edges of the Charles River and various ways to better connect the river, and neighborhoods on either side of the highway, with the goal of creating a new district. This led to the creation of a new connection from Soldiers Field Road into the parcel, which also created the chance to create an at-grade pedestrian and bicycle connection to the river at this location. Note that this pushes Soldiers Field Road deeper into the parcel, another recommendation of the BPDA report, and creates a more vibrant and enhanced green space along the River. That gives us the opportunity to create more park space between the Double Tree and the throat section, with that connection completely at grade to the River.

Some of you may have heard about a concept for a road called West Station Bypass Road, which would run from Cambridge Street near the bridge over the Turnpike to back of West Station. It would increase connections to the Turnpike and perhaps improve air rights development opportunities. This is listed as DNP, which stands for to “Do Not Preclude.” While this wouldn’t open at the beginning, nothing in the design precludes it from being built at a later date.

There’s also the idea of creating more connectivity across the site from Cambridge Street to Commonwealth Avenue. This version of the project, along previous versions, have all envisioned a pedestrian and bike path heading up and over the Turnpike, but as of yet no vehicular connection.

Q Name Not Given (NNG): Could you remind us what DNP stands for?

A (NCC): My apologies, it means “Do Not Preclude.” It’s anything that we don’t see as integral to the operations of the project on the first day, but would be nice to add at a later time.

Originally, the project intended to create two streets running from Cambridge Street, up through the parcel to the North. That has since been expanded to three. The study recommended a direct connection between North Harvard Street and Cambridge Street South, which we did not originally have in 3K-4 due to concerns from the community. Now the connection is present, and with the introduction of the three other north-south streets, we intend to divert traffic away from North Harvard Street.

Next, there is the idea of staging Cambridge Street for early redevelopment in the project. This is incorporated, along with a few other ideas, such as limiting slopes on sidewalks and bikeways to less than 5%, organizing blocks into standard block sizes that are easier to develop and create a sense of place.

This all brings together the amendments to the current refined alternative. It has input from the landowner - Harvard University, input from the placemaking report, and incorporates another new change, the removal of the Houghton Chemical railroad spur. Some of you may have seen this, it’s the railroad spur as you drive along Soldiers Field Road towards Boston, just after the hotel as you’re heading towards downtown. It serves Houghton Chemical Corporation with the delivery of raw materials. That company has worked out a deal with Harvard University to relinquish the track space to Harvard, which allows the project to pursue other ideas. It creates one fewer piece of infrastructure that the highway must clear and gives us the flexibility to push Soldiers Field Road into the project site. Furthermore, I-90 is straightened even further, creating a new street grid and reducing slopes along the roads leading up into highway.

The next slide will show some changes we have made to access to Soldiers Field Road. The roadway is now further into parcel and the mainline of Soldiers Field Road enters into a boat



section, similar to underpasses farther north and west. Access to and from Soldiers Field Road into the parcel and into Allston now runs above the roadway. Under the old version, you would turn at River Street to access the highway, Allston or Cambridge. Under this refined alternative, that turn comes earlier.

That also allows us to remove the existing off ramp at River Street and expand the area along the river path commonly referred to as the “Narrows”, which was actually the site of my first ever bicycle accident back in 1986. If you’re going to Cambridge from Soldiers Field, you would turn into the parcel and then take a right onto Cambridge Street to pass over the bridge. There are concerns about that from people in Cambridge and discussions with them are ongoing and will be fully written up in the DEIR comments.

The next slide shows about how much more green space becomes available. It’s a varying amount due to the variations of the throat, and the various schemes associated with the various approaches. We would install bicycle and pedestrian facilities along the north side of Cambridge Street South with a direct connection into the river path system.

That was a big summary of all the recent changes to the project. You don’t have to stare too badly at this on the screen, as we have boards in the back of the room and I am happy to email a copy to anyone as well.

Brookline Specific Remarks

Now, I’d like to talk about Brookline specifically.

This is very much a balancing act. A meeting was organized by some of the task force membership in February, 2017 to discuss various alternatives over the Turnpike. In the DEIR, we will be showing a number of schemes connecting Cambridge Street to Commonwealth Avenue, over the Turnpike. Some people really like the idea of having general travel lanes across the Turnpike, others like having just transit and others believe there should be no vehicular connection there whatsoever except for bicycles. One resident at that last meeting expressed essentially that there is a history of routes and lanes that are intended only for a certain class of vehicles, such as transit vehicles or commercial vehicles, later being opened up to general travel. The idea being that if a bus only connection were established between Cambridge Street and Commonwealth Avenue it would eventually be repurposed to carry general traffic.

As part of the Massachusetts Environmental Protection Act (MEPA) process, we did look at this as a full vehicular connection, to see what that would look like. The above rendering shows the end of Ashford Street, and how a road would come down. There is the potential for some serious congestion, along with a real change to the back side of that neighborhood in Allston near BU. This would have a big impact on Packard’s Corner.

The following slide will show this. There you can see what the model shows for a general purpose vehicular connection from the ramps down Malvern Street and into the back of Commonwealth Avenue. This creates a lot of demand for people get onto Babcock and Pleasant Street.

I’ll leave these figures out for you, but will read a few things from our traffic engineer. Over 50% of this traffic would be people accessing the I-90 ramps. 40% on of this traffic would be originating from Brookline. 20% of traffic would be destined for the Allston area and about 6% would be destined for Longwood. That’s just a sense of what happens when you open this connection up. Our traffic engineer certainly lays it out better than me, but I hope I did it justice. This model assumes general travel is allowed and it does create real concern about how those cars travel across Commonwealth Avenue.



As for a transit connection, that has a few permutations.

First, is to create a 2 way Malvern Street. This would require some changes to the Packard's Corner intersection as you cannot currently take a left at the end of Malvern Street. It's also a long distance to accommodate a vehicle, and would change the behavior of the signal. We also have concerns about how this might impact the Green Line and whether it may involve some taking of private property. These challenges will be fully written up in the DEIR.

Q Scott Englander (SE): Question about the signal disruption, does that assume a transit vehicle would arrive every cycle?

A (NCC): I don't believe it has been looked at that closely yet, but what we do know is that it would take a significant amount of red time for the other movements for a vehicle to clear that space. One option is to create an all red phase triggered by transit, but that suggests not allowing anyone else onto Malvern Street, even if it's just local traffic.

Option number two would use the Packard's Corner intersection as an "in", while weaving through the streets back there to get out. This would require changing a block of Gardner Street to one way and some minor removal of parking at intersections. We recognize that BU currently brings buses back there, but that operates different than a transit bus that comes through regularly and requires reliability.

A third option would require a bit of ramp construction. The ramp would run along the back side of the neighborhood, eventually touching down on Harry Agganis Way. In addition, Agganis Way and Buick Street are privately owned by BU. The University switches the direction of these streets during sporting events to allow vehicles to clear the area and as the owner, has say over how the streets are used. You would also need to make some changes to the signal at Buick Street and Commonwealth Avenue.

Option four would use Malvern Street and the existing street network to bring vehicles onto the Turnpike. This could potentially serve as a transit connection between West Station and the Longwood Area through using the Turnpike and having the buses exit at the Copley off-ramp

Next, I wanted to run through a few quick items – there are a series of items that as they stand now, will be open on opening day, no matter what. This includes separated bike facilities on all the newly built roads within the district, along with protected intersections. If you are unaware, that refers to an intersection where there is a tight turning radius to slow down turning traffic with curb extensions for both pedestrians and for bicyclists, along with separate crossings for each of those modes. This would be on Cambridge Street, Cambridge Street South and the connecting roads within the new district. You would also have the Cambridge Street South protected bike facility extending directly into that at-grade connection to the River, along with the bicycle and pedestrian connections up and over the Turnpike.

We have heard from many people that Franklin Street Footbridge serves as an important connection north and south. We have shown you a possible rendering of it in the presentation. We are trying to make that project an early action item as well. So, in the DEIR document itself, you'll see three variants to the highway viaduct itself. This includes a highway viaduct similar to what you have today, a version with Soldiers Field Road, the Turnpike and the railroad tracks all at grade, which is referred to as the A Better City (ABC) Concept and lastly, you have one created by task force member Ari Ofsevit, referred to as the "Amateur Planner," with the railroad tracks elevated and the turnpike at grade. All of these variants will move forward to the



DEIR and it will include the feasibility that HNTB performed regarding each alternative. The DEIR will dig deeper into air quality concerns, environmental justice and other factors.

Everyone who is here, please do sign in. There is a showing of all these various alternatives at the back of the room so that you can compare them side by side. Each alternative must accommodate the Framingham/Worcester Line, the Grand Junction Line, the Turnpike, Soldier's Field Road and the Paul Dudley White Path.

As we work on the DEIR, we will assemble comments from everyone and bundle them into that document. After the filing we will go back to our task force, and take on continued comment. We are currently in 2017 and are still working on environmental filings and preliminary design.

By 2019, we hope to undergo procurement, with construction as best we can guess, slated for late 2019. I hope I blitzed through that quickly enough to provide everyone in the audience for time for question and answer.

Questions and Comments

C (PZ): If you wouldn't mind saying your name before you speak as well please.

Q Bob Weinberg (BW): My name is Bob Weinberg, I'm been living at 25 Copley Street since 1978. Would you kindly show me the PowerPoint with the red lines?

In the end, for us in Brookline if that much traffic is sent down Babcock Street and Pleasant Street, it would be simply unacceptable. I'd like to refer you to the history of the BU Bridge. Brookline was historically left out of the discussion when the bridge was rebuilt because the bridge doesn't technically cross over into Brookline. I understand that the needs of Allston residents deserve close consideration, but I ask that the interests of Brookline residents not be sacrificed.

I would ask that the Town of Brookline be considered an active stakeholder, and ask that their transportation board be very assertive in those discussions. Anyone looking at this would be a bit perplexed as to what this means for Brookline. Especially after the backups that currently exist at the BU Bridge, I'm cynical that this project wouldn't also lead to increased traffic on Commonwealth Avenue and streets in Brookline.

C (NCC): That's a good comment, and I would urge you to make that heard when the DEIR comes out. We have conflicting voices on this project and are trying to present things as neutrally as possible. We are here tonight to hear your input, but I don't want you to think that the world falls off the cliff hear on Commonwealth Avenue.

C (BW): I would like to point out though that this sort of traffic on Babcock Street and Pleasant Street shouldn't be on the table in the first place, it's simply unacceptable. I urge our town representatives to insert themselves into this discussion because this idea is absurd.

Q Jon Sherman (JS): Hello, I live at 12 Adams Street, which runs parallel to Commonwealth Avenue between Pleasant Street and Babcock Street. I want to talk about the Crowningshield Neighborhood, which was declared a historic district 2 years ago. It has about 60 homes, many of historic nature and architectural significance – It is under a lot of pressure from developments in Brookline. Pleasant Street is built to accommodate traffic in both directions, but it can't support that. In the winter it becomes a disaster. Crowningshield Road's western side of the neighborhood is designated as one way south to north, but almost on a daily basis you see people driving the wrong way on the road to avoid the traffic on Commonwealth Avenue.



If you look at the intersection of Pleasant Street and Commonwealth Avenue, it is a huge mess. As you add more traffic, that traffic surges onto the other nearby streets and is very problematic for us. I have no problem with bicycle and pedestrian access over the Turnpike, that's great, but the traffic burden would be all too great.

- A (NCC): As I said, we are presenting this neutrally. We are examining this based on feedback from the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs. We are not pushing to have traffic over the Turnpike in this manner; I am simply presenting the analysis that was performed.
- A (PZ): Thank you.
- Q David Sevada (DS): – I live at 177 Babcock Street, and I just want to be clear on some of these numbers. As I understand, these are projections of the total traffic on these streets, but what is the increase over what's there today? Also, where is the projected increase in traffic going?
- A (NCC): This diagram is general purpose traffic. As for the increase over traffic volumes today, that's documented in DEIR and I'm sure our traffic engineer has that information and I can get it to you. This is also a projection of the traffic level in the year 2040. The growth seen is a mix of entirely new trips caused by increased development, especially in the area of Beacon Park Yards and trips caused by the opening of a new route that takes some of the traffic heading from the Turnpike into Brookline from streets such as Linden Street and Harvard Avenue.
- C (DS): I'm surprised because there is a big difference between a 10% increase and a 200% increased and I'd expect you to have a rough ballpark.
- A (MOD): It's in excess of 200%, I know for sure. It would be much closer to a 1000% increase in traffic over what is there today.
- Q (TK): Has anyone in any of your letters advocated for general purpose traffic to use this connection?
- A (MOD): It's a small minority, though they do raise the point regularly. A year ago when I was in this room, I heard that there was a desire for transit access. This would serve the Longwood Medical Area, West Station and Harvard Square. What we have had to do is evaluate the various traffic impacts based on various connections over the Turnpike. Now we are essentially showing you the worst case scenario, which is the traffic generated through a full vehicular connection with the maximum number of projected vehicles.
- C (TK): Just so that everyone understands, this analysis is required. It does not mean that anyone has advocated for it. The town has been strongly involved and stated their opposition. This includes a letter that was penned 2 months ago and as far as I understand, no major stakeholder has pushed for this.
- Q (SE): A clarification please, has there been similar analysis for the transit only option?
- A (MOD): Yes, we certainly are doing that and it is still under evaluation. That involves having the Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS) run a regional model for the area. Since that process was started, there has been a lot of back and forth between the stakeholders, and a lot of change to the design based on the BPDA report, so we are running the model once again. This model will specifically look at bicycle, pedestrian and transit trip demand and general purpose travel. There is potential with a new station here to increase people's desire to get to this location. There have been many questions as to whether MassDOT is advancing the station, and



we are. When it would be constructed and where exactly it would lie is still being determined. Harvard is going to develop the site and MassDOT does not want to construct a station that is in their way. However, we also understand the need for new service in this area. However, the size and scope of this project will necessitate phasing.

The overarching need of this project is to fix the structurally deficient viaduct at this location and we will not preclude inclusion of any other aspects of the project in doing that.

- Q (SE): Thank you, I wanted to follow up with a question. Regarding the various alternatives for a north-south connection, will that analysis take into consideration the affect that not having a transit connection would have on the existing network? Including any potential increase to traffic based on increasing development in the area.
- A (MOD): Thank you for bringing that up. As you all know, Boston Landing Station will open next month. We don't know what the ridership demand will be there. We are planning to have peak service, but otherwise will wait and see if there is demand for additional service.
- Q (NNG): What is Boston Landing?
- A (MOD): Boston Landing is a Commuter Rail Station under construction, set to open soon, where the New Balance development is taking place. It is only a half mile west of where West Station would be built. We want to make West Station as accessible as possible, but Boston Landing is not far away. We can use ridership there to make an educated decision on the amount of service that can be supported at West Station.
- A (SE): Thank you, my question was more based on whether the analysis will look at the impact not having transit at West Station – bus or train – would have on car traffic. Would it increase traffic?
- A (MOD): Yes, it will.
- Q (NNG): So there is going to be a bicycle and pedestrian up and over the Turnpike regardless?
- A (MOD): Yes.
- Q John Bowman (JB): My name is John Bowman, my first question is a quick one. If you go to slide 48, that shows cycle tracks on both sides of Cambridge Street. My understanding was that it was a 2-way facility on only one side.
- A (NCC): The original Cambridge Street, where it is today has facilities on both sides. Cambridge Street South, which is a new road, has them only one the northern side.
- Q (JB): Is that the only way it would be set forth in the DEIR?
- A (NCC): I believe so. On the north side, you have that connection to the at-grade crossing. On the south side, you have vehicles that are just leaving a car only environment and these would not necessarily be expecting a cyclist.
- Q (JB): My second question is related to the evaluation of the three throat options. Would each of those be evaluated for their ability to support complete streets? Specifically, would you look at the tradeoffs regarding how each option supports bicycle connectivity?
- A (NCC): Yes.



- Q (JB): Thank you. I also had a third question. You have said that there is a clear interest in bringing bicyclists and pedestrians across the Turnpike, but then how would those people be accommodated at Commonwealth Avenue? Packard's Corner is a difficult location for bicyclists and pedestrians. Crossing is also difficult at many of the other locations along Commonwealth Avenue.
- A (MOD): Currently Malvern Street appears to be the preferred method. We haven't looked at the connections to getting to that area. We're focusing on whether we can build these accommodations up and over the Turnpike. Commonwealth Avenue has undergone its own design work as part of a separate project and that looks to improve the street for non-motorized uses. However, we have not dug much into coordinating that project with ours up to this point.
- Q (JB): Will that be accommodated?
- A (MOD): We will ensure that the connectivity is there between West Station, Malvern Street and Brookline.
- Q Anne Lusk (AL): My name is Anne Lusk, I live in Brookline and I work on bike facilities. I've also been advocating separately for improved bike facilities to the Longwood Medical Area. I've been to every one of your meetings and have seen every slide. I always have the same criticism though. I like having the highways and tracks all at grade, however, the small bike path that's leftover is unhealthy due to the level of pollution path users would be exposed to. Boston has a lot of talent and you should hold events for people to design what it might look like to have a park over the highway. It would be like the High Line in New York City or Millennium Park in Chicago. That would have such potential to connect Boston University to the River and instead of just a "People's Pike" you could have a "People's Park."
- Q Jonathan Kapust (JK): Referring to the various transit alternatives you mentioned. Has BU thrown their support behind having transit on streets near the school or offered any other opinion?
- A (MOD): BU has worked very closely with us and they are a major stakeholder in this project. The University has been very supportive of having bicycle and pedestrian access over the Turnpike and is assisting in improving bus and transit access. As with people in this room, they are also cautious of allowing full vehicular access of that corridor. It is their academic area and residential area. The further west of the campus the various alternatives go, the more the University is supportive as it is further from their facilities. Malvern Street seems to be the most ideal, but we would have to use Ashford Street or Gardner Street. We have presented those two as the desire line for buses coming southbound off the Turnpike. BU is supportive of that despite their numerous buildings in that area. Buick Street and Harry Agganis Way are problematic for the institution. This would impact both how vehicles access the garages BU has in that area and would have a negative impact on the intersection of Commonwealth Avenue and Harry Agganis Way, in addition the University Institutional Master Plan points to their interest in building additional residence halls along Buick Street.
- C (AL): That's where the park should go.
- Q (NNG): Could you please explain option four more thoroughly?
- A (NCC): The idea would be to have buses enter Malvern Street from Commonwealth Avenue. It is not as challenging a turn as crossing Packard's Corner. At that point the bus would enter West



Station and would then enter I-90. The bus could then leave the Turnpike near the Prudential Center and enter the Longwood Medical Area.

- Q (NNG): How would the bus return to this direction?
- A (NCC): It could be rerouted a number of ways, but would need to align with Commonwealth Avenue to make that right turn onto Malvern Street towards West Station. We aren't pushing this in one direction or another, but that is simply a route you could take to avoid the complexities of changes that would take place behind BU. If people like it, we would work more with the MBTA and other providers to see if it would work.
- C (NNG): I simply can't imagine sending that many vehicles down Babcock and Pleasant Street. It would be disastrous.
- A (NCC): We hear you. Again, we are not pushing this. We are simply being asked by a sister state agency to analyze it. As for the bicycle and pedestrian connection, we have heard from people that we should push that, but we are not pushing the vehicular connection.
- C Karen [Last Name Not Provided]: I live on Babcock Street. It's already so unpleasant having Boston University around. It's about time the university shared responsibility with the community. It currently takes 20 minutes to drive around the block to the entrance of the bridge. This should be a no brainer for the University. The students want ample transit access, it would reduce traffic, but as a corporation, they do not take care of the neighborhood.
- C Rebecca Albrecht (RA): My name is Rebecca Albrecht. I'd like to state the need for a direct route from North Brookline to Lower Allston and Harvard Square that avoids Packard's Corner. The way to do this would be to install a crosswalk at Naples Road across the Alcorn Street for pedestrians and bicyclists. There are a large number of people crossing here and it is very dangerous as is. There is an opening in the fence between the tracks and there used to be a crossing at this location. There currently is nothing in your plan to address the north-south connectivity for pedestrians and bicyclists once you get over the Turnpike.
- A (NCC): That is a good idea. We are taking notes and will be sure to follow up with some of the other folks working on Commonwealth Avenue and other coordinating partners.
- Q (NNG): I live on Harrison Street. I think the bike concepts and transit concept is terrific. There will be a lot of development here and I want to know what planning the town is doing to mitigate that impact on the area?
- A (MOD): As we move forward, MassDOT will assess construction impacts and provide proper mitigation for MassDOT construction. This includes keeping access open and preventing gridlock while construction is ongoing. A more detailed plan for this will become available as construction approaches. As far as other concerns regarding effects this may have on your neighborhood, please let us know so that we can change or adjust the mitigation we are providing

As we laid out earlier, we are considering these three concepts for the throat section. If you believe either will have a certain lasting impact on Brookline, please let us know. I am used to hearing feedback that is negative, and tend to not be in a room where we hear a lot of compliments. That's okay.

- C (NNG): 90% of what you are proposing is great and I think people would meet with applause. It's in our backyard though, so we naturally have some reservations.



- C John Harris (JH): I live just one house away from Babcock. I want to turn the tide a little bit and say thank you. You have been very good at incorporating people's comments. I've been to a lot of meetings though and this is the first one I've been to that really focused on Brookline, and I do appreciate that. I want to point out that a lot of the future traffic you project is extra trips. I strongly oppose you sending general traffic through this area as that would not only affect Babcock Street and Pleasant Street, but all the north-south streets in Brookline. Please though, move forward with the bicycle and pedestrian access and work with the Commonwealth Avenue project to ensure that the design for Commonwealth Avenue makes it easier to cross at Packard's Corner. We are an active bunch of people here in North Brookline, and we will continue to hold you accountable.
- Q Abby Swaine (AS): As we all know, the MBTA has been pretty silent on the matter of transit here so far. It makes sense that they would wait to see how development of the project pans out before assigning new routes. As you know, we have Routes 66 and 47 which serve similar corridors to the west and to the east. To what extent do you think a new service between the two would be redundant or would be complimentary to these routes? I know that Route 66 is overcrowded for sure and takes a long slow route. What is your vision for how this would work with the existing transit network?
- A (MOD): I have a lot of visions, but what gets implemented, I'm not sure. I have sat with the MBTA, and the first question we tackled is if this project would result in change to the existing routes or if it would set the stage for creation of a new route. The MBTA is not ready to answer that and there is no commitment on that yet.
- Q (AS): My second question is if there is a way to construct the roadway in a way that it would only be able to accommodate transit, bikes and pedestrians, to avoid the temptation down the road for this to be made into a general travel route?
- A (MOD): Right now we are simply analyzing the various impacts of different levels of service. We recognize that if West Station does become a center of activity, we want to make sure that we can accommodate any sort of changes that can accommodate the needs of the future. This includes the configuration of the roads, ramps, the Green Line and many others. We don't want to preclude anything. Neither do we want to preclude the chance a long time in the future to open this up to general purpose vehicles, if that becomes desired.
- C (AS): It sounds risky to not completely preclude personal vehicles.
- A (MOD): Certainly. Although, we are trying to find a correct solution that will fix the viaduct in the short term but also work for the future.
- C Tom Nally (TN): Hello, my name is Tom Nally, and I am the co-author of the at-grade option for the throat along with a resident of Brookline. I would like to respond to Anne's point regarding slide 44. Our biggest constraint is between BU's property line and the edge of the bank of the river. That's about 200 feet. We have made many compromises to get down the width down, but we are still at 224 feet. That has been a moving target as well. We have negotiated with Boston University about acquiring 14 feet of their property. However, only seven and a half feet of this space could be used to expand the cross section due to the shape of the curve. We have made the Paul Dudley White Path much narrower than it should be and have built out to the edge of the water. The space is also so narrow that there is no room to support a vertical structure over the highway. However, if we could build over the watershed, we could provide space for an expanded park and path, and fix a few of the other current issues with the roadway design. This involves a lot of creativity. We are also addressing issues with maintenance, snow clearance and safety.



We're doing our best to fine tune this option to address all the needs of the corridor and respond to people's comments.

- C Bob Sloane (BS): Hello, I've been attending these meetings since 2014, along with Anne. I've heard a lot about the issues Allston residents face as well. I'd like to point out that the general purpose travel map really stemmed from a feeling that there is too much traffic on Harvard Street and Linden Street. People in Allston really want to see the bicycle, pedestrian and transit connection as well, so there are a lot of common themes. The other shared belief is for more park space. All of these plans you show of the throat leave just a small 8 foot Paul Dudley White Path, similar to what is out there today. The path is too narrow and too close to the highway. It in no way is adequate. We need to expand the path and figure out a way to do so. I think the next step is to seriously consider filling in portions of the river. Hopefully this would allow you to deck portions of the highway, but at the very least, you could get an at-grade highway with expanded park space.
- C Frank Carrow (FC): Hello, I live close to Coolidge Corner and used to live in the Crowningshield neighborhood. I'd like to follow up on Abby's point regarding public transportation. I understand we are discussing development that could happen over a period of 20 years, rather than right away. As this moves forward, we really need to discuss how this can shape public transportation access in Brookline and nearby. There are places where there is no public transportation access and places that need more service and less crowded service. Harvard to Longwood should not be the only route up for discussion. We should look at Coolidge Corner to Harvard Square and others as well. The 66 is not serving the route well enough and people will also want to get to West Station. The Town of Brookline should take an active role in this discussion as it unfolds.
- Q (JB): Following up on what Frank was saying, there are several different options for public transportation. Do some of the transit options you mentioned preclude the opportunity to serve Brookline with additional transit service? Option four seems to completely bypass Brookline.
- A (MOD): Our intention is to not preclude anything. The idea is that any of the improvements possible today would still be possible years from now. We have outlined the various options, and all of them are in the table for either today or the long term. Much has not yet been planned as to how those services would interact with Commonwealth Avenue and further. We welcome your feedback to try to make a connection that works for all.
- Q Chris Dempsey (CD): As to my understanding, there is no group pushing for a north-south general traffic connection. Could you then please explain why it is being looked at?
- A (MOD): Thank you. The primary reason is that it was identified in the scope of the environmental filings, so we are meeting that obligation. Second, a few task force members have mentioned the need to look at alleviating traffic on Linden Street and Harvard Avenue. In that regard, we are just trying to do all the necessary analysis. Essentially there will be points of contention though that boil down to transferring some of the pain from one neighborhood onto another neighborhood.
- Q (CD): Could we review the timing and phasing? You have made clear that you want to move forward with West Station, but are not sure how late it would be built. Is there a scenario where a potential bicycle, pedestrian and transit connection across the Turnpike is opened up before West Station is?
- A (MOD): Yes, that's a good point. First, that desire for a north-south bicycle and pedestrian connection is a high priority for DOT and the most likely route would be along Malvern Street. There is room for a place to land, with some takings from the driveway of the business there.



People have identified Babcock as a desire line as well. Independent of west station, we intend to maintain bicycle and pedestrian access across the site.

- Q (CD): To clarify, a bus or transit connection across would be tied to the construction of West Station, but a bicycle and pedestrian connection is not?
- A (MOD): Correct.
- Q (JK): Could you show what portion of West Station would be built opening year if you built those pedestrian and bicycle facilities.
- A (MOD): If West Station is pushed into the future, and based on future development, you would just be looking at a bridge connection. It would extend over the tracks, the layover yard and onto Cambridge Street South. It's a long area, in excess of about 250 feet. The other route as I mentioned earlier, would be through Babcock Street. There would be switch back built to get over the highway.
- Q (JK): Would those be temporary structures or would they be structures built with the intention of building them into the design of West Station? In essence, would you lose those connections?
- A (MOD): I wouldn't say the structures would be temporary, but increase demand down the road could necessitate some changes such as widening them.
- Q (JK): So for Malvern Street, you could start with a smaller structure, and then expand upon it later for vehicular use?
- A (MOD): That is how we see it at this point.
- Q Carol [Last Name Not Provided]: Hi I live on Beacon Street. Does the Route 47 serve Longwood Medical Area?
- A (Audience): Yes it does.
- Q Gustaaf Driessen (GD): Could we get across the river in some way at the throat area?
- A (MOD): It's not something that we are studying right now, but is something that could be evaluated in the future. One of the issues we would concern ourselves with, is where such a structure would touch down. Depending on the alternative, there could or could not be space for a place to touch down.
- C Frank [Last Name Not Provided]: Hi, I own a family home in North Brookline. It sounds like your analysis can be broken into a few different categories. First you have the studies on local traffic and local connections. You are planning bicycle, pedestrian and transit improvements as a way to tackle this. But there is also a lot of regional demand here. In 15 years when you have all this development, it's going to be so busy. We need more information on where people are going to and from. This is a huge interchange. You have people using side streets such as Highgate Road to get through the neighborhood, and even so around North Brookline. Can you track the plates of the trucks and tractor trailers that come through here? We need to know how those services can be best provided to the various areas and avoid the huge jam that we know will come to this neighborhood.
- A (MOD): That would be rather time consuming as it takes a lot of effort to track all those license plates. What we do today, is we use cellular data. We have tracked that information. This



includes volumes of traffic going far out west, down south to the Cape and all around the region. Some people are getting off at I-90 are going quite far from here.

- Q Frank [Last Name Not Provided]: Another idea, Partners healthcare is an important partner. They run shuttle services all around the City because the MBTA can't provide the services people need.
- C (MOD): If it was an easy project, we would have already started construction.
- A Frank [Last Name Not Provided]: I know you're trying, I just think we need enough information to really provide something that works for the region.
- C (SE): First I'd like to thank Tom for a clarification he made on the Town's position. Certainly as we heard now, access on foot and bike to the park is a huge priority. Now, currently there is a huge amount of traffic going through Brookline, in large part due to the poor access between the Turnpike and the LMA. Your option four for transit shows that it would be possible today, and has been possible for decades. If it was feasible people would be doing it today, but they are not. It's such a roundabout route. As part of this project, is MassDOT looking at alternative ramp locations to get people closer to the Longwood Medical Area.
- A (MOD): MassDOT certainly has. As stated, we have a clear scope for this project that has been outlined by those at a high level. We cannot look at things outside of the scope of this project. However, there are other studies that MassDOT has undertaken to see if there are other possible ramp locations along the Turnpike. It is clearly outside the scope of this project and it has been a complex study with a lot of uncertainty.
- C (SE): By asking, I'm not saying I think it will reduce congestion. It is quite clear and we all know at this point, that when you build more roadway capacity, more people will drive. I would argue that if you allow vehicle access across the Turnpike, it might not actually even reduce traffic on Harvard Street or Linden Street.
- Q (SE): So far, when we discuss West Station, it seems to be in a context of all or nothing. Has there been consideration of a smaller or temporary station in the interim?
- A (MOD): Yes, maybe you have been reading some of the meeting minutes. We are looking at that now. It has not been completely vetted at this point, but it is a possibility.
- Q (SE): My last question is regarding the timeline. When will the Town have a chance to comment on the published DEIR?
- A (MOD): We are striving to have the DEIR published for comment by September and will meet with all the various municipalities and stakeholder groups at that point.
- C (PZ): Thank you very much for coming tonight.

Next Steps

Over the coming months following the meeting, the project team will continue to progress the Draft Environmental Impact (DEIR). This document will analyze the current preferred alternative, 3K-4



Refined, for a host of impacts, including environmental impacts, such as greenhouse gases, impact on environmental justice populations, trip generation and various other impacts associated with the project. All of the comments received on the project from members of the public will be included in the document as feedback. In addition, when the report is finished, it will be made available to comment and meetings will be arranged with the various municipalities, stakeholders, abutters and concerned members of the public, involved with the project. Once the DEIR is complete, further design and engineering work will continue, with the goal of having a final design for the project in late 2018. At that point procurement will begin, with a goal of starting construction in late 2019 and completion in 2024.

The next public appearance for the project team is scheduled for April 13 at the Morse School in Cambridgeport. That meeting will serve as a briefing for the Cambridgeport Neighborhood Alliance and as follow up to a January meeting where public comment was cut short due to the closure of the venue.



Appendix 1: Meeting Attendees

First Name	Last Name	Affiliation
Rebecca	Albrecht	
Joshua	Benedikt	
John	Boulimar	Bicycle Advisory Committee
Nathaniel	Cabral-Curtis	Howard Stein Hudson
Abby	Cox	
Donny	Dailey	
DM	Goldstein	
Josen	Harren	
Shael	Herman	
Jeremy	Hunter	Bikes, Brookline
Kare		
Matt	Kramer	
David	Kroop	
Virginia	LaPlante	
Paul	Larrabee	
Anne	Lusk	
Miriam and Jerry	Luzar	
Charlotte	Mao	
Jacob	Meunier	Livable Streets, Bicycle Advisory Committee
Meredith	Moory	Boston University
Thomas	Nancy	
Michael	O'Dowd	MassDOT
Fred	Pinchez	Resident
Barbara & John	Sherman	Resident
Bob	Sloane	Walk Boston, Resident
Cynthia	Snow	Bicycle Advisory Committee
Abby	Swaine	
David	Trevvet	
Bob	Weintraub	