



Institute for Human-Centered Design
[Adaptive Environments]

MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 18, 2009

TO: Peter Gori, Project Manager
Boston Redevelopment Authority

FROM: Charlie Denison, Jackie Douglas – LivableStreets Alliance
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David Watson, Chris Porter – MassBike
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SUBJECT: **Crossroads Projects (Broad St, Summer St, Congress St, Causeway St)**

Our alliance of advocates recently met to discuss the current plans for the Crossroads Project streets that are in the city's pipeline. The following are our collective thoughts for your consideration:

Overall

- Current plans are a huge step forward over what the streets look like now
- Wider sidewalks, bike lanes, and sharrows are great to see
- Glad to hear concurrent, automatic, countdown pedestrian signals are standard policy for the designs
- Would like to see design speeds of 20-25 mph, a standard range for an urban setting
- Would like you to consider slightly or fully raised crosswalks across side streets
- Would like the city to reevaluate its general position against traffic calming such as raised crosswalks and raised intersections, as they could be quite effective in these designs, particularly since the city is taking a new, more inclusive approach to street design

Overarching policy question

Is there an opportunity to relax the requirement to maintain current traffic capacity in order to create streets that further enhance the urban experience, for families, workers, and tourists alike? By seizing an opportunity to really make these streets more people-oriented, Boston will be better situated to compete with successful cities around the world.

Broad Street

Looks good and will be comfortable and attractive to pedestrians and bicyclists. The street carries relatively little, low speed traffic and should work as a site for cafes and an "outdoor life."

Summer St

Looks much improved, although we are still concerned that the street is very wide and may therefore carry traffic at speeds that are too fast to make it truly comfortable for bikes and pedestrians. We think there may be opportunities to narrow travel lanes and introduce other design elements to slow traffic.

Congress St

- A step in the right direction, particularly near the Children's Museum, but there are some missed opportunities
- Seems like too many lanes, although we do understand it's backed by traffic counts (note overarching policy question...). Reducing the number of lanes would create a much calmer street, similar to how it felt during the Congress St bridge reconstruction.
- Very concerned about lack of bike lanes. As a major connecting street, we feel they are key.
- Coordinate design with plans for the South Bay Harbor Trail, which include bike lanes along a segment of Congress St
- If number of lanes is reduced and bike lanes added, use remaining width for wider sidewalks

Causeway St

- Glad to see bike lanes and sharrows throughout
- Glad to see wide pedestrian crossing zones that acknowledge the way pedestrians will actually cross the street, and glad that the city will consider smooth pedestrian crossings and "bumpy" street surfaces to alert drivers and slow travel speeds
- MassBike is currently looking at the left-hand bike lanes; overall we are supportive of the concept (and other innovative designs) but need to consider the pros/cons
- We're concerned that Keaney Square has too many lanes on the approaches, resulting in long crossing distances and sidewalks that are no wider than they are today. This is a gateway into the city and a key link in the Freedom Trail, thus the importance of being truly pedestrian-friendly. Roadway space here should be more fairly allocated between motorized and non-motorized modes.
- Consider adjusting lane widths on Causeway approaching N Washington St so that the eastbound bike lane can go all the way to the intersection

As you can see, we're very pleased with the overall direction these projects are taking, however we feel there are some opportunities that should not be missed. Some of these can be easily incorporated into the current plans, while others would require taking a step back to determine whether motor vehicle capacity can be knowingly reduced in order to achieve other important goals.

We look forward to a continued dialog with you as the process moves forward.