

DORCHESTER AVENUE

Streetscape and Transportation Action Plan




City of Boston
Thomas M. Menino
Mayor



Boston
 Redevelopment
 Authority

The Boston Redevelopment Authority
John Palmieri, Director
in partnership with
Boston Transportation Department
Boston Department of Public Works

December 2007



Report prepared by The Louis Berger Group, Inc.

In association with

Von Grossmann & Company

HighMark Land Design

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CITY OF BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

Office of the Mayor

Thomas M. Menino

December, 2007

Dear Members of the Dorchester and South Boston Community:

I am pleased to present to you the Dorchester Avenue Streetscape and Transportation Action Plan.

This document, which outlines specific plans for streetscape and traffic improvements as well as guidelines for future public and private infrastructure investment, is the product of a partnership between neighborhood residents, property owners, local businesses and city staff. I would like to thank the many members of the Dorchester and South Boston communities who contributed so much time and effort throughout the community planning process.

Dorchester Avenue is one of the most important thoroughfares in our city, and I am pleased to see that the design and guidelines presented in this Action Plan will help improve traffic congestion and pedestrian safety along the Avenue. The City of Boston sees these improvements as an investment that will stimulate other public and private endeavors to further enhance the vibrancy of the commercial districts and residential areas along the Avenue.

As we prepare to move forward toward implementing the streetscape and traffic improvements presented in this Action Plan, I would like to congratulate all of those involved for a job well done, and ask that you continue to show your pride in our city by participating in the planning and design of your neighborhoods.

Thank you for all of your great work!

Sincerely,

Thomas M. Menino

Mayor of Boston

1. INTRODUCTION

Dorchester Avenue is one of Boston's great streets. It runs just over five miles from Lower Mills to South Boston, providing a spine that ties together diverse residential areas and business centers that exemplify the richness of life in Boston's neighborhoods. Dorchester Avenue is also a major part of the City's street network, providing access to and between Dorchester, South Boston, and Downtown for automobiles and trucks, serving bus routes with connections to the MBTA Red Line, and providing a route for walking and bicycling through the neighborhoods.

This major thoroughfare is generally a two-lane roadway with parking, bus stops and sidewalks extending to the curbs lines on both sides. Neighborhood-scale residential and commercial buildings create a strong street edge in many sections, although this edge is broken in many places by parking lots and automotive-oriented land uses. Street trees and other streetscape elements vary considerably along its length. Revitalization efforts are already under way in many places along Dorchester Avenue with investments being made in new businesses and housing as well as renovations of existing residences

As a major arterial street, it is not surprising that traffic volumes on Dorchester Avenue are high. Morning peak hour traffic volumes exceed 2,300 two-way vehicles between Freeport and Hancock Street, and Andrew Square processes a similar total of vehicles entering on all approaches. Traffic is busiest from 7:30 to 8:30 AM and 5:00 to 7:00 PM. Many of the Avenue's major intersections have geometries reflecting 19th century transportation needs that must handle the heavy traffic volumes of today and tomorrow. The result is congestion ranging from moderately to heavily congested in the morning and afternoon peak hours. Inevitably, many traffic accidents occur at these intersections, and pedestrian crossings are difficult. Traffic accidents occur at all hours but are more frequent *between* the morning and afternoon peak hours (9:00 AM to 3:00 PM) and overnight, rather than during the peak hours.

THE DORCHESTER AVENUE CORRIDOR

As the 2006 Dorchester Avenue Business Analysis Report Summary correctly states, Dorchester Avenue "forms the social and economic spine of Boston's largest neighborhood in terms of population and geography." It spans many neighborhoods in terms of geography, racial and ethnic diversity, age and occupation. The population of the corridor from Columbia Road to Lower Mills approached 50,000 people according to the most recent US census. This comprises over half of the total population for Dorchester, Boston's most populous neighborhood.

The census highlights the diversity of the population as well with an ethnic and racial breakdown of:

| | |
|----------------------------------|-------|
| <i>African-American</i> | 32.6% |
| <i>Non-Hispanic Whites</i> | 31.5% |
| <i>Asian or Pacific Islander</i> | 16.9% |
| <i>Hispanic or Latino</i> | 10.6% |

Based on age, the population in the corridor has a much larger percentage of young people between the ages on 5 and 17 than Boston as a whole.

| | |
|---------------------------|-------|
| <i>Under the age of 5</i> | 7.1% |
| <i>5 to 17</i> | 20.4% |
| <i>18 to 34</i> | 29.0% |
| <i>35 to 64</i> | 34.6% |
| <i>65 and over</i> | 8.9% |

Dorchester Avenue Task Force Mission Statement

The Dorchester Avenue Task Force is developing a long-term framework for short-term actions. The Task Force is ensuring Dorchester Avenue's identity as the vibrant, attractive, and safe place where the many hearts of Dorchester come together to shop and play.



Review session at an Andrew Square neighborhood meeting



The Draft Report is reviewed at a combined Task Force session



Presentation in the Dorchester community

The residents of the Dorchester Avenue Corridor have a range of occupations spanning all sectors of industry. The major categories were:

| | |
|--|-------|
| <i>Management, Professional</i> | 29.7% |
| includes jobs in financial and business fields | |
| <i>Professional and Related</i> | 25.3% |
| includes jobs in education, health and social services | |
| <i>Service Occupations</i> | 20.7% |
| includes jobs in health care support and protective services | |
| <i>Production, Transportation</i> | 16.3% |
| including material moving | |

According to a 2005 business inventory, approximately one-third of the 1,474 businesses in Dorchester identified by the American Business Index were located along the Dorchester Avenue corridor. These businesses generated almost \$312 million in retail sales in 2005.

A more detailed analysis of the area can be obtained through the Dorchester Avenue Business Analysis Report Summary found on the City's web site at

<http://www.cityofboston.gov/bra/> or www.dotavenueproject.com.

THE DORCHESTER PLANNING INITIATIVE

The Dorchester Planning Initiative is a comprehensive effort dedicated to the overall improvement of Dorchester Avenue, one of our city's greatest boulevards. The Dorchester Avenue planning initiative consists of two separate planning studies led by the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA), along with an inter-departmental team of several additional city agencies. The first planning study, The Dorchester Avenue Project ("Dot Ave Project") focuses on Dorchester Avenue from Lower Mills to Interstate 93. The second planning initiative, The South Boston-Dorchester Avenue Improvement Study, begins at Interstate 93 and continues up to the Broadway MBTA station.

In February 2005, with the multitude of infrastructure projects and issues affecting the Avenue, it was clear that Dorchester Avenue needed a proactive, concerted plan. That month, under the leadership of Mayor Thomas M. Menino and Boston City Council President Maureen Feeney, an interagency team was convened comprising representatives from the BRA, the Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services, Department of Neighborhood Development, Inspectional Services Department, Boston Public Works Department, Boston Water & Sewer

Commission, Parks Department, the Boston Transportation Department (BTD), and Basic City Services. This specialized approach tapped into the expertise of the city agencies as well as the vision and voice of Dorchester's businesses and residents to recommend improvements regarding transportation, neighborhood businesses, neighborhood housing, and streetscapes.

The following month, three community charrettes were held to solicit input from the residents on how to improve the Avenue. In June 2005, the Mayor appointed a 13-member task force to assist in the creation of an action plan for improvements along the Avenue; two task force positions were reserved for youth representatives, a first for the city of Boston.

In August 2005, the Dot Ave Project was introduced to business and property owners along the Avenue through a series of workshops. Additionally, in November 2005, the BRA conducted a Youth Summit, which over 60 youth attended, to engage the youth along the corridor and select two of their peers to the Task Force.

In September 2005, the South Boston community requested that the BRA extend the Avenue Project study area to the Broadway MBTA station. After internal

discussions, the BRA decided that it would include this portion of Dorchester Avenue into the study area. In January 2006, the BRA held two community charrettes and received nominations for the South Boston Improvement Task Force to assist with the creation of the action plan

DORCHESTER AVENUE STREETScape AND TRANSPORTATION ACTION PLAN

The next step in the Dorchester Planning Initiative was the development of an Action Plan to:

- Enhance the pedestrian environment; improve traffic flow and support neighborhood housing and businesses on Dorchester Avenue, and,
- Develop preliminary designs for streetscape and transportation improvements that will lead to construction projects.

Process

In May 2006, the BRA selected The Louis Berger Group to work with the Task Force and city agencies to determine the best way to allocate the \$5 million set aside to enhance Dorchester Avenue's unique districts and nodes.

Since May 2006, the BRA, BTG, other city departments, and the consultants have engaged in numerous working sessions with the Dorchester Avenue Project &

South Boston/Dorchester Avenue Task Forces and held seven community meetings toward development of the Action Plan. Community meetings were open to the public and were well attended as a result of efforts such as notices and ads to encourage turn-out.

A locus map of the project area as well as the intersections is shown in Figure 3-2. The project team has been working closely with the mayor-appointed Task Forces in South Boston and Dorchester to develop solutions that are responsive to neighborhood objectives and needs. Twelve task force meetings and five community meetings were held in both South Boston and Dorchester during the development of the plan. In addition, meetings have been held with business owners in the areas slated for improvement. Input from these meetings has been used to revise and improve the elements of the plan, resulting in the designs and recommendations presented in this final report. The recommendations of the plan reflect the hard work and thoughtful input of both the Task Forces and the community.

Objectives

The Dorchester Avenue Transportation and Streetscape Improvement Action Plan is an important part of the overall Dorchester Avenue Project. Project objectives include improving traffic operations and safety for vehicles, pedestrians, and bicycles, and

supporting neighborhood goals by creating improved conditions in neighborhood business districts. The Action Plan has three major parts:

- Forge a set of streetscape guidelines to create a consistent look for the corridor that strengthens the image of its neighborhoods and business districts.
- Design traffic and streetscape improvements at three key locations: Fields Corner, Glover's Corner (Freeport and Hancock Streets), and Andrew Square.
- Make smaller-scale traffic improvements at five other locations selected by the two task forces.

Implementation

Mayor Menino has directed the City agencies to move forward in a coordinated effort to put the recommended improvements in place. The next phase of the Dorchester Avenue Planning Initiative will be the implementation of the designs and recommendations contained in this report. A consultant team will be hired in early 2008 to develop the preliminary designs contained in this Action Plan to 100% buildable plans. Construction is anticipated to begin during the Spring of 2009

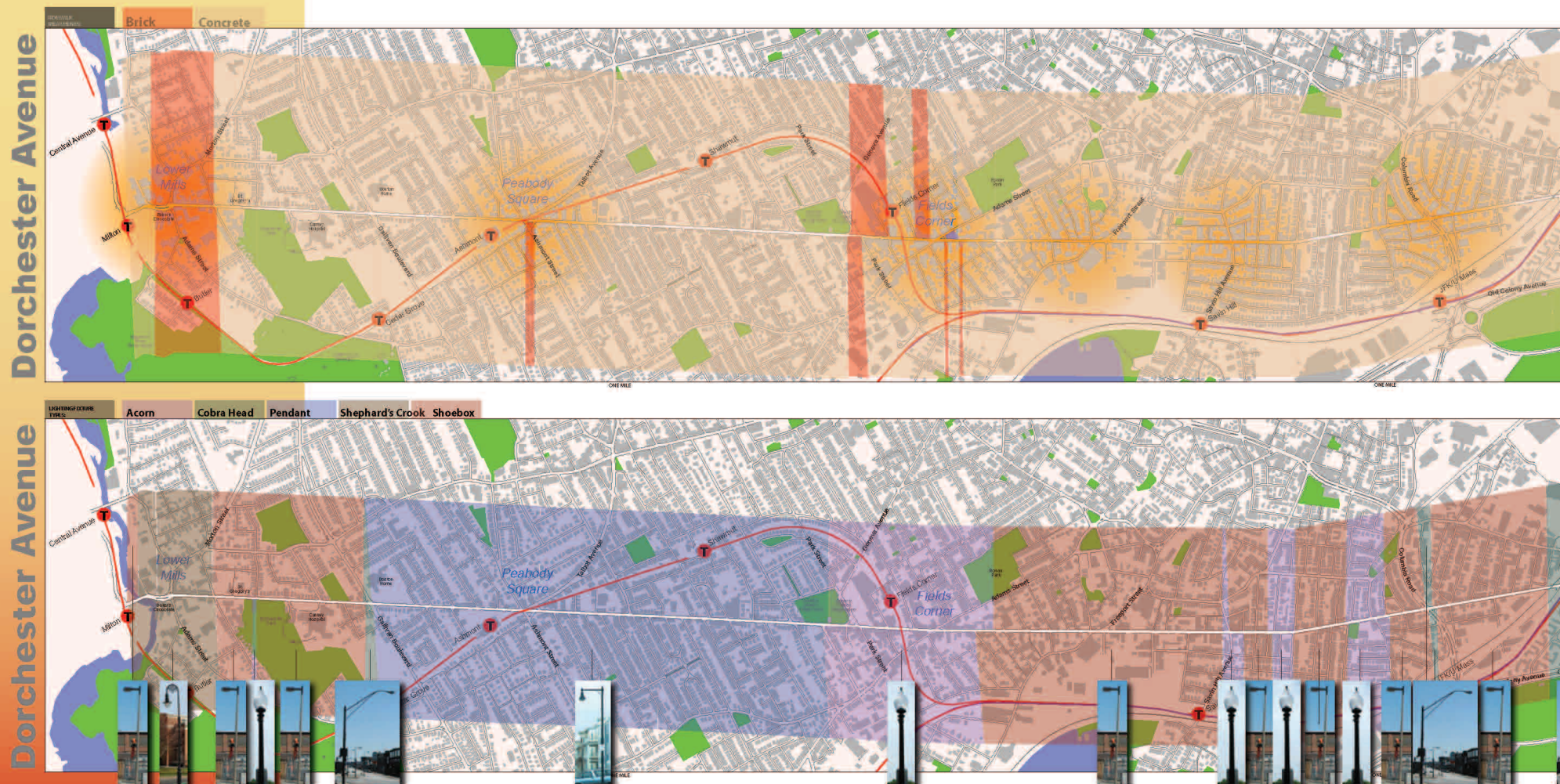
Bicycle Accommodations

The Dorchester Avenue corridor is a major route for bicyclists in the city and providing bicycle accommodations is important to the future of the Dorchester and South Boston communities. This study recommends that a bicycle specialist prepare a detailed analysis of the corridor to determine:

- 1 *Specific types of bicycle accommodations appropriate to the varying conditions along the corridor*
- 2 *Intersection designs that incorporate bicycle needs*
- 3 *A systematic plan for bicycle signing and lane markings*
- 4 *Locations for bicycle parking and storage*

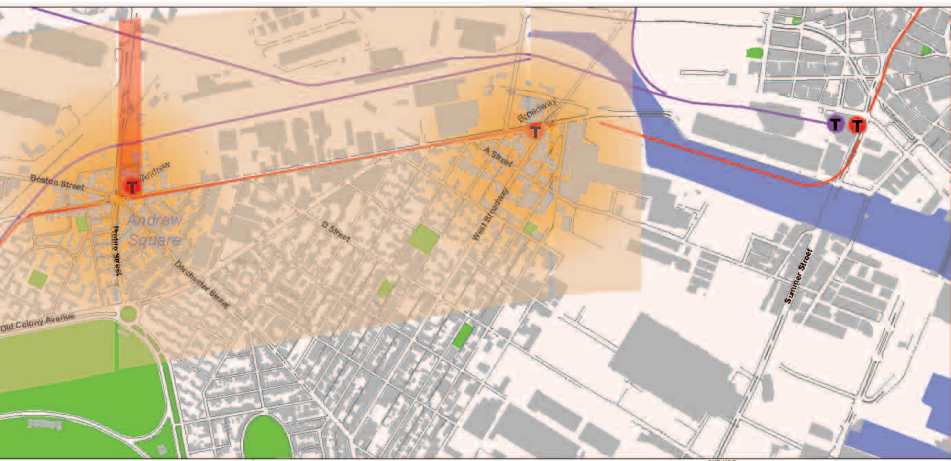
2. THE DORCHESTER AVENUE CORRIDOR

Figure 2.1 and 2.2 Examples of corridor analysis

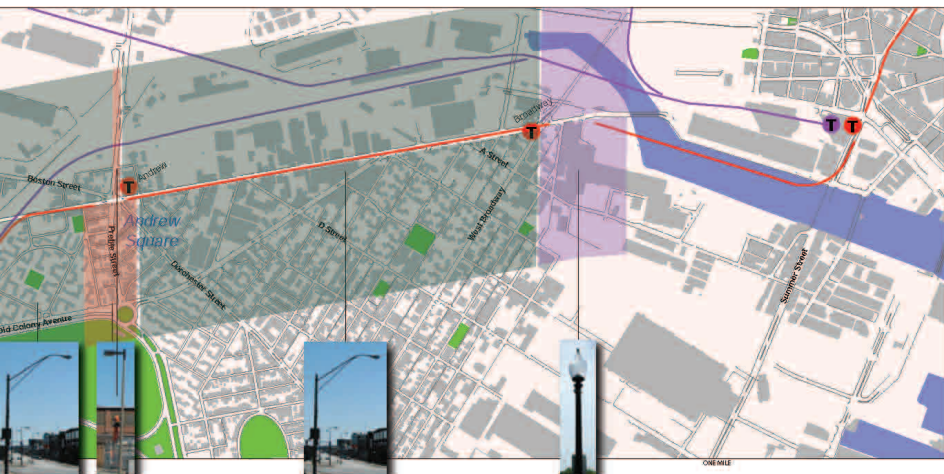


Dorchester Avenue is one of the longest avenues in the city, at just over five miles. It connects bodies of water at both ends: the Fort Point Channel at the north and the Neponset River at the south. In addition to being one of the longest roads in the city, it is also one of the straightest. On a map it is easily distinguished from other major roads

in the city. Although it is a direct route, it is by no means a consistent environment throughout its length. The road gradually rises and falls; passes through industrial, dense residential and small commercial districts; and is frequently crossed by both major and minor streets that connect to many destinations throughout the city.



Dorchester Avenue



Dorchester Avenue

Sidewalk

The roadway is congested, serving as both an essential connector between neighborhoods and within them. Dorchester Avenue's paved area is typically used inefficiently. Often, the street functions as one very wide travel lane and parking lane in each direction. At intersections, larger-than-necessary turn radii extend paved areas to the disadvantage of the pedestrian environment. On the sidewalks, lighting fixtures are out-of-date and inconsistent, and paving materials frequently show signs of wear. Finally, frequently narrow sidewalks constrained by the adjacent buildings mean that street trees and pedestrians often have insufficient space.

Along its length, Dorchester Avenue transitions back and forth between residential and commercial areas. At most of the commercial areas nodes have formed around significant neighborhood retail and transportation centers. These nodes are found at:

- Broadway,
- Andrew Square,
- Columbia Road,
- Savin Hill,
- Glover's Corner (Freeport/Hancock Streets),
- Fields Corner,
- Peabody Square (undergoing renovation in a separate process led by the Boston Transportation Department), and
- Lower Mills.

Streetlights

Transit Use in the Corridor

| <i>Subway daily</i> | <i>total</i> | |
|----------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| <u>Station</u> | <u>boardings</u> | <u>in and out</u> |
| <i>Broadway:</i> | 4,115 | 8,230 |
| <i>Andrew Sq:</i> | 5,500 | 11,000 |
| <i>Fields Corner</i> | 5,203 | 10,406 |
| <i>Ashmont</i> | 9,799 | 19,598 |

| <i>Bus Routes</i> | <i>Passengers</i> |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|
| | <u>per day</u> |
| <i>Route 18 Ashmont-Andrew</i> | 740 |
| <i>Route 27 Mattapan-Ashmont</i> | 451 |
| <i>Route 217 Wollaston-Ashmont</i> | 207 |
| <i>Route 240 Randolph-Ashmont</i> | 2,006 |

Source:

These nodes were reviewed with the Task Forces in order to select three locations for further study to improve the traffic and pedestrian environments. After much discussion of which locations would benefit the most from further study, the three selected were:

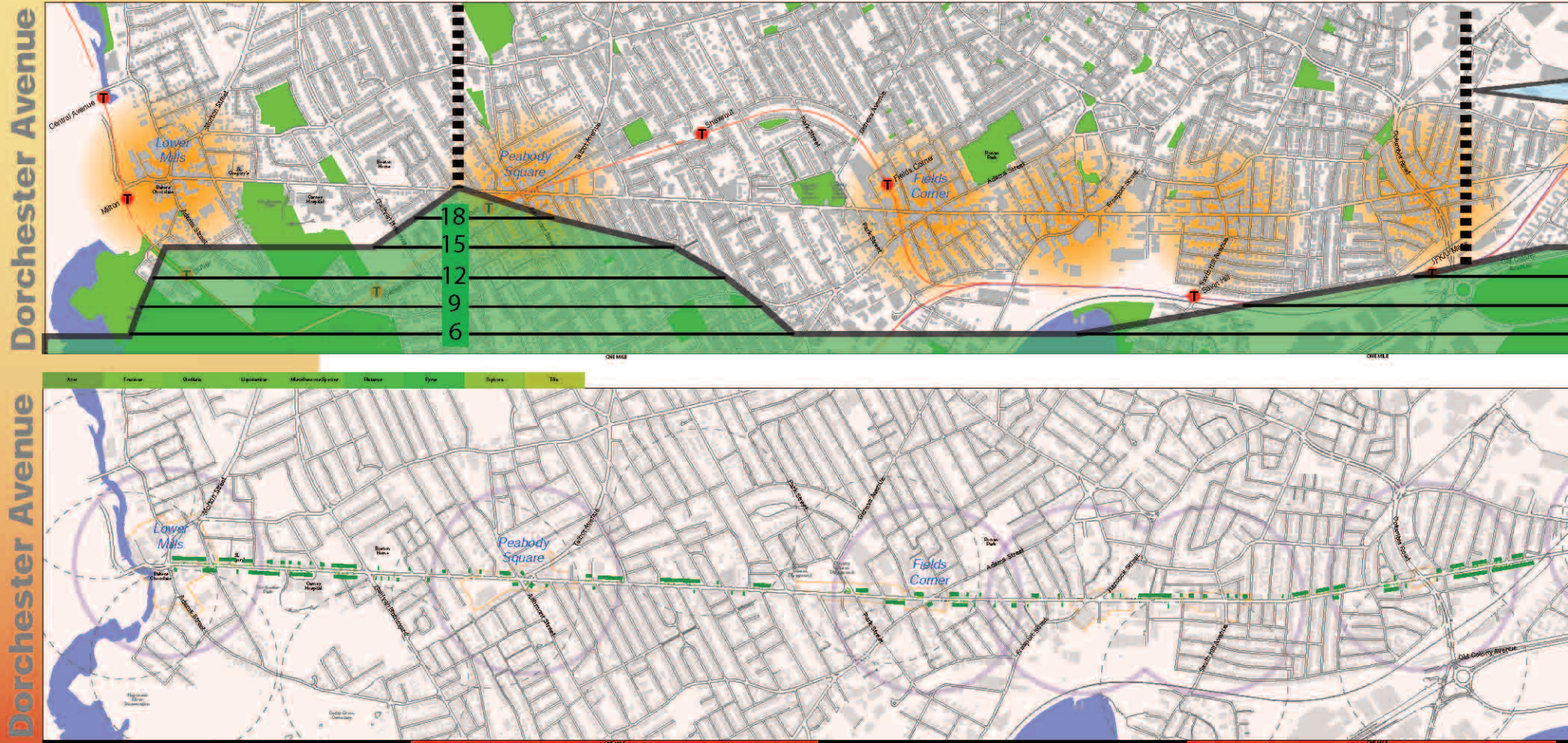
- Andrew Square in South Boston, and in Dorchester,

- Glover's Corner (the intersection of Freeport and Hancock streets with Dorchester Avenue), and
- Fields Corner (Adams Street and Dorchester Avenue).

Analysis maps depicting characteristics of existing conditions were developed as a basis for a design framework. Conclusions drawn from this work include:

- Dorchester Avenue is a very straight corridor, with one shift of direction near Belfort and Victoria streets just south of Columbia Road;
- Sidewalk paving is primarily concrete, with some instances of brick sidewalks in a few of the commercial centers (see Figure 2.1);

Figure 2.3 and 2.4 additional examples of corridor analysis



- Streetlights are inconsistent along the Avenue. Washington or “acorn” fixtures are in: Fields Corner, north of Lower Mills, north of Broadway and a few locations in Savin Hill. Lower Mills has fairly new “shepherd’s crook” fixtures and a significant stretch of blocks around Peabody Square have newer “pendant” fixtures. Remaining areas feature out-

of-date “shoebox” or “cobra” fixtures that are ineffective and offer little in design character. (See Figure 2.2)

- Topographically, the road crests at two points in the corridor: Andrew Square, which features views north to the downtown skyline, and Peabody Square, allowing views north to Fields Corner and south toward Lower Mills. These

two crests also limit views beyond them on approach (see Figure 2.3).

- Sidewalk width varies along the corridor. There are frequent areas with sidewalks less than 7’-6” wide – the minimum city standard for accommodating tree planting. In general, street lights, signs, and utilities are not placed close enough to the curb to allow for the maximum unobstructed walkway width possible. The width of sidewalk is constrained in many places by the limited street cross-section and property lines; efforts should be made to widen sidewalks where compatible with traffic and on-street parking needs.
- Street trees are inconsistent along the corridor. There are no street trees from Andrew Square north to Broadway. Segments north of Columbia Road to the Red Line tracks and south of Gallivan Boulevard to Lower Mills have ample trees, but most areas include infrequent short stretches of trees. An interesting observation derived from this analysis is that trees planted on the west sidewalk along the corridor seem to fare better regardless of species (see Figure 2.4). New trees should be selected and installed so as to maintain healthy growth, and dead or missing trees should be replaced where appropriate.

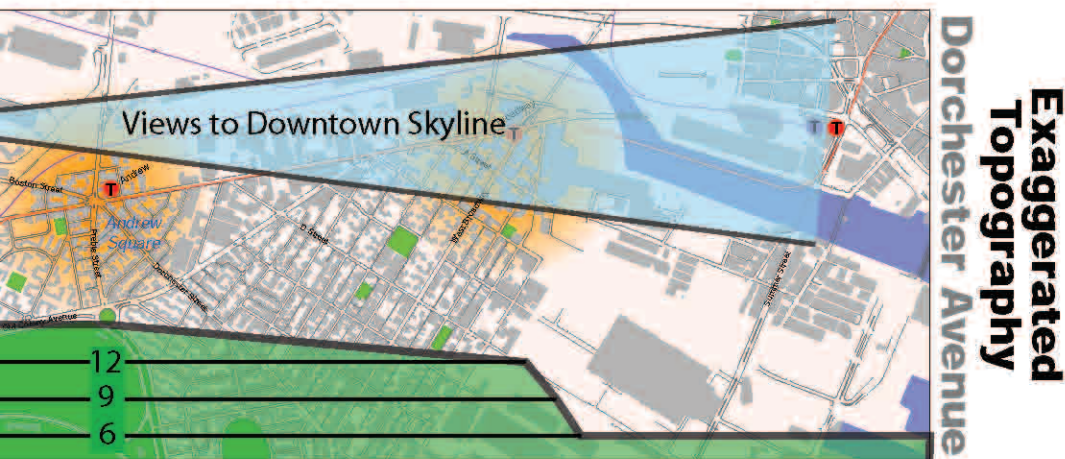


Figure 3.1 Diagram defining the elements of a streetscape “palette”



Major and Minor Streetscape Elements

Street lights

Street trees

Signs

Furniture

Crosswalks

Roadway paving

Sidewalk paving

Public art

Dorchester Avenue runs from the Neponset River to the Fort Point Channel

Figure 3.2 Dorchester Avenue runs through residential and commercial neighborhoods from the Neponset River to the Fort Point Channel



3. CORRIDOR-WIDE GUIDELINES

WHY CORRIDOR-WIDE GUIDELINES ARE IMPORTANT

The purpose of corridor-wide streetscape guidelines is to plan for a level of consistency and quality for the image of the Dorchester Avenue, and to carry its identity through a variety of districts and environments. This consistency will bolster the aesthetics of the Avenue, as well as make it more visually apparent for travelers when they are on Dorchester Avenue. Perhaps most important, the guidelines will increase comfort and amenity for the walking public.

LONG-TERM IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

The establishment of corridor-wide standards allows for staged implementation over time. Some areas are already in partial or full compliance with the corridor-wide standards. Other areas, such as Peabody Square, will be reconstructed and become fully compliant. The standards allow for some variation within a set of parameters as discussed below. Other segments will be improved in conjunction with roadway construction projects or development projects. As various portions of the Avenue are reconstructed, either independently or as part of development projects, more and more of the Avenue will meet the standards. Although there is no timetable set for completion for the areas beyond what is described in this report, the next five to ten years should see the vast

majority of the Avenue incorporating these standards.

EVOLUTION OF PALETTE

The palette of materials included in the streetscape standards are elements that are under the control of the city and for which there are not consistent standards along Dorchester Avenue. These are listed in the table on page 10.

Other elements, for example mailboxes, are under the jurisdiction of the federal government and outside the scope of these standards. Fire hydrants and traffic mast arms are regulated by the Fire Department and Transportation Department, respectively, and are also outside the scope of this project. Additionally, privately-owned storefront elements and building signage are regulated by design guidelines in the Boston Zoning Code. Finally,



newspaper boxes are protected by the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. In Boston no more than five are allowed in one location. A group of this size may be enclosed with a low fence or other structure made of materials that are compatible with other streetscape elements in order to coordinate with the streetscape palette.

For the other elements included in the corridor-wide standards, such as street trees, lights, and signage, a range of possibilities have been established. Because the City is responsible for maintenance of these elements, there is a need to limit the fixture types and corresponding inventory kept on hand.

STREETSCAPE ELEMENTS

Streetlights

There are currently five different types of streetlights in use along Dorchester

Figure 3.3 Dorchester Avenue currently has five different types of lighting fixtures along its length



Typical Streetscape Elements and Responsible City Department

| <i>Element</i> | <i>Department Responsible</i> | <i>City Specifications (Yes/No)</i> |
|------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Street lights | DPW | Yes – range established |
| Street trees | Parks | Yes – range established |
| Regulatory signs | BTD | Yes |
| Benches and trash cans | DPW | No |
| Sidewalk paving | DPW | No |
| Roadway paving | DPW | Yes |
| Crosswalks | DPW | Yes – range established |
| Public Art | Boston Art Commission | No |
| Bus shelters | DPW | Yes – Wall Decraux, Inc. fixtures |

Avenue. These are the Acorn, Cobra Head, Pendant, Shepherd's Crook, and Shoe Box (see Figure 3.3). Three of these fixtures fall into a family with similar characteristics of style, color and materials. The Shepherd's Crook, Pendant, and Acorn fixtures all are constructed of metal and have a black finish. Because these fixtures are already installed along much of the length of Dorchester Avenue, the consultant team's recommendation is to build from this

commercial district with narrow street corridors in which Pendant fixtures would be overscaled. Acorn fixtures, already well-established as part of the district and responsive to the pedestrian/commercial character in that district, should be maintained. All new fixtures would feature the latest in long-lasting, color-corrected, energy-efficient luminaires and electronic controls.

foundation palette, and use the Pendant fixture to replace the current Shoe Box and Cobra Head fixtures. The one exception to this is the Fields Corner area, a dense

Figure 3.4a Example of concrete sidewalk with unit paver feature strip





Figure 3.4b An example of smooth, finished concrete sidewalk with saw-cut joints and a dark, fine surface aggregate in downtown Boston

Sidewalks

Sidewalk pavement is another major element in the streetscape. The past ten years has seen a growing movement away from brick sidewalks because of their tendency to be uneven underfoot due to frost heaves, poor installation or

reinstallation after utility repairs. This movement has been strongly supported by those with physical mobility limitations. While there are examples of smooth, well-constructed and maintained brick sidewalks, many of the sidewalks found in the public realm do not provide a smooth, even surface. For that reason, the consultant team recommends high-quality concrete sidewalks, and the use of a unit-paver edge band in commercial areas where there is adequate sidewalk width. Concrete sidewalks have far fewer joints than brick sidewalks, and therefore fewer bumps, and tend to require less maintenance over time. There are numerous examples of high-quality concrete sidewalks around the city which are characterized by a smooth finish rather



Figure 3.6 Street trees help define a strong edge, and create a sense of enclosure

than a broom finish, saw-cut joints rather than tooled joints, and frequently a dark aggregate added to the surface giving the concrete a stone-like quality when properly executed (see Figure 3.4b).

Street Trees

Dorchester Avenue is a patchwork of heavily planted areas and barren areas with no trees at all. Both the Task Forces and general public were in agreement that continuous tree planting along the length of the avenue was desirable in residential areas but that caution is needed in considering trees for business districts. Street trees temper the environment with shade, contribute to cleaner air and add softness in an urban neighborhood. However, they are also an issue along Dorchester Avenue. Empty tree pits are

Figure 3.5 Street trees with columnar form and pruning to maximize building sign visibility

Figure 3.7 Example of buffer at back of sidewalk screening a parking area



an impediment to walking, and in some locations street trees in a narrow sidewalk mean there is insufficient space to meet accessibility standards. As part of this discussion, three concerns were raised regarding street trees. The first was that any new trees in commercial districts would need to be carefully placed so that trees do not impede pedestrian movement in areas with narrow sidewalks. The second, street trees must be maintained so not to obstruct views of storefront and building signs (see Figure 3.5). The third was to plant and maintain trees in a way that ensured their survival.

Tree planting is limited to sidewalks with sufficient width to maintain an accessible route. Sidewalks must exceed a minimum width of 7 feet, 6 inches (inclusive of the curb) in order to accommodate a tree

pit, meeting City of Boston dimensional criteria (3 feet wide by 8 feet long) and still maintain a walkway width of 4 feet, compliant with the standards of the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board (MAAB).

Street trees offer several advantages to urban neighborhoods. Tree-lined streets have a strong aesthetic appeal both visually and physically. Visually, street trees “soften” the look of a street, reducing the sense of hard edges of paving and buildings. They create a strong edge to the street space, defining it particularly in locations where buildings may be missing (see Figure 3.6). Physically, street trees temper the microclimate, offering shade and coolness in the summer. There are important health considerations as well, such as the fact that street trees contribute to air quality and

lessen urban heat gain in their immediate vicinity.

In areas where there is not adequate width in the sidewalk to allow street trees, a behind-the-sidewalk approach can be applied with the cooperation of the adjacent land owner and adequate space on private property. A number of commercial land owners along the corridor have already established green buffers (see Figure 3.7). One of the most effective uses of these buffers is to screen views of parking lots from the sidewalk. Given the available space, these buffers can range from low shrubs to trees, low walls, and even include benches or a bus stop.

Areas behind the sidewalk on private property contribute greatly to the quality of the environment for pedestrians on the sidewalk. While residential yards, trees and gardens can enhance the sidewalk environment, parking lots may detract due to heat gain and a less attractive view of asphalt and cars. A small planting bed



along the edge of the sidewalk featuring some combination of shrubs, trees, flowers, short fences or walls screens the parking area beyond while enhancing the sidewalk environment. The BRA is working with private property owners to emphasize the benefits of an attractive neighborhood and each property owners role in helping to bring about parking lot buffers. Similarly, parks and institutional properties along Dorchester Avenue offer an excellent opportunity to create an attractive and strong edge to the sidewalk environment through regularly-spaced street trees, shrubs or low fencing and walls.

To promote healthy trees, unit pavers in the sidewalk profile will be dry laid in the vicinity of the tree pit, creating porous pavement in the tree root area. Porous pavement is desired, not only to allow rain water to penetrate, but more importantly, to allow for the exchange of gases, an important factor to long term tree health.

Where appropriate, tree installations will share a continuous rooting zone to

maximize the rooting and nutrition area available to each tree.

Pedestrian Lighting

In the future, roadway changes may create new plazas or small parks along Dorchester Avenue. For those situations, a type of lighting specific to pedestrian environments was selected for the materials palette. The selected fixture is smaller scaled and will cast light directly and efficiently onto the walkway surface, minimizing ambient light or “light pollution”. This improved lighting will help to foster the awareness of Dorchester Avenue as a walkable environment. These will be cut-off fixtures and energy efficient and where possible to reduce night sky light pollution while enhancing a safe walkway environment for pedestrians.

Street Furniture

The palette of street lighting fixtures features black-enameled metal. This is also consistent with the bus shelters being furnished city-wide through the contract with Wall Decaux, Inc.. The family of street furnishings such as benches and refuse containers was selected with a similar black-metal finish to blend with other elements in the streetscape and also

Figure 3.9a, 3.9b Art can be incorporated into everyday streetscape elements. At the far left is a standard bicycle rack to the immediate left is a bicycle rack designed by an artist.

for durability. The design of the benches and refuse container is a contemporary reflection on tradition design.

Bus stops will be enhanced by the installation of benches and/or shelters where appropriate. The increased shelter and ease of travel will hopefully promote the use of public transportation. Where appropriate, bicycles racks will be provided.

Additional trash receptacles will be installed near bus shelters and plaza areas. Wherever feasible, solar powered trash compactors are recommended to reduce the maintenance and collection of these receptacles.

Public Art

Public art is encouraged for several reasons. Large-scale public art adds a unique identifier or landmark to an area which aids in orientation and navigation (see Figure 3.8). Often public art is interpretive of the culture or history of an area and adds richness to the environment as well as a means of public education. Community members who play a role in creating an installed piece feel a sense of ownership in the public



Figure 3.8 Art can be an aid to orientation



Figure 3.10 Examples of sign types

realm. Works of art also add to the beauty and visual interest of an area and the sense of a distinct place representing a distinct community.

Although the traditional image of public art in many people's minds is a statue of someone famous, contemporary public art goes well beyond this. Most American cities have integrated contemporary art pieces into the public realm quite successfully. Some of the more interesting works of public art are artistic enhancements of ordinary elements found in the sidewalk environment; for example, benches, manhole covers or bicycle racks (see Figure 3.9).

In Peabody Square a commissioned art piece will be a bronze moon, a natural timekeeper counterpoint to the existing historic street clock. At Edward Everett Square the artwork will tell the story of a resident who developed a new type of pear. All along Dorchester Avenue are interesting stories of places and history that should be told via public art.

WAYFINDING

An important element in the streetscape is the system of cues that help a driver or pedestrian find their way. Wayfinding elements include landmarks like unusual buildings, public art and signs. Signs support the information in the infrastructure with words.

Input from the two Task Forces and community indicated a sensitivity to visual clutter on the street, and a desire to minimize signs. For that reason, only two sign types are identified as part of the Dorchester Avenue palette:

1. City-standards "Welcome to..." sign particular to a given location— Fields Corner, Andrew Square, Glover's Corner
2. Orientation signs directing to:
 - Routes/streets (Andrew)
 - Interstate highways (Freeport/Hancock)
 - Parking (Fields Corner)

Signs for drivers are most effective when viewed prior to reaching an intersection, and reinforced with the same sign at the intersection. This strategy is incorporated into the following guidelines:

1. "Welcome to..." signs in significant plazas

2. Orientation signs

A. For routes/streets, two notifications

- 200' + before the intersection
- At the intersection

B. For routes to Interstate highways, three notifications

- 200' + before the intersection
- At the intersection
- After the intersection, to confirm the correct route

C. Parking signs 100' + before and at turns towards parking

In each of the three special study intersections, a wayfinding plan was created according to these guidelines to place signs and aid navigation. These plans are shown in the sections on the study areas which follow in Sections 4, 5 and 6.

RECOMMENDED PALETTE

Street Lighting - Pendant fixtures are the primary fixtures for Dorchester Avenue; the Acorn fixture is to be used at Fields Corner and the Shepherd's Crook fixture in Lower Mills.

Sidewalk pavement will be a high quality concrete with a unit paver feature strip at activity centers where there is sufficient sidewalk width.

Street trees will be a hardy species; a columnar form or a species with diffuse leaves will be used in commercial districts to maximize building sign visibility. A minimum 2.5 to 3-inch caliper

Other elements such as pedestrian scale lighting, benches, and trash receptacles will be metal with a black finish

Bus Shelters will be provide by Wall Decaux, Inc under the city-wide contract.



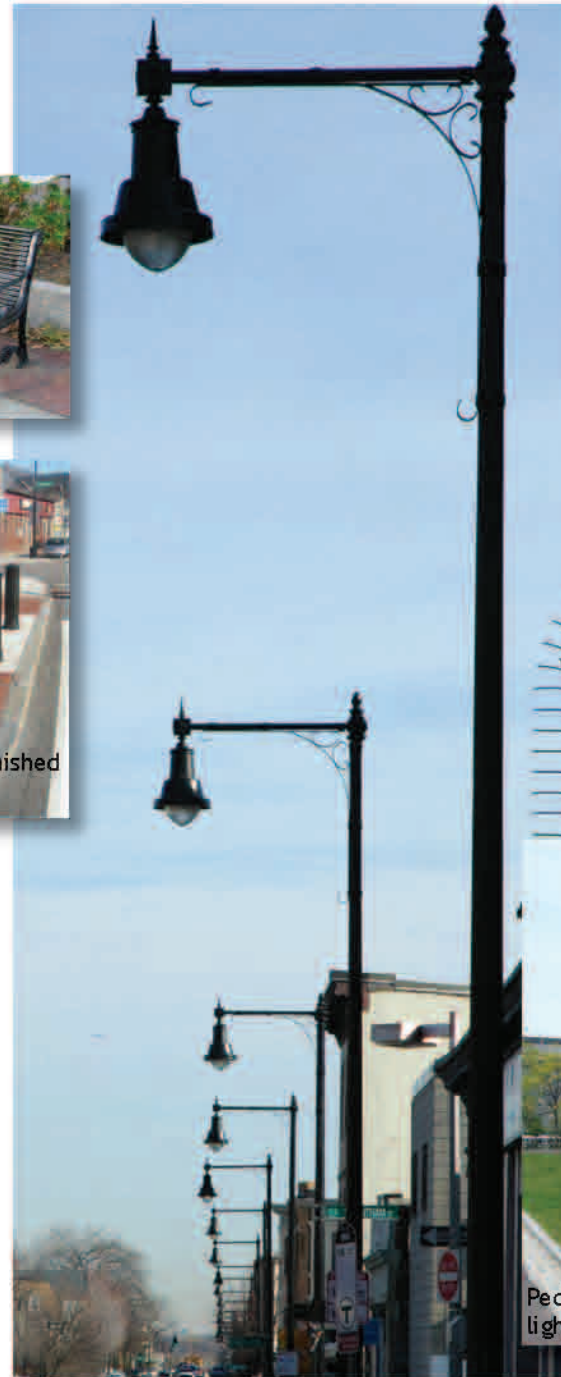
Metal, black finished bench



Metal, black finished bollards



Columnar trees in commercial district



City standard pendant fixture



Pedestrian-scaled light fixture



Typical Acorn fixture

Figure 3.11 Example of the recommended palette of streetscape materials



Figure 4.1 Andrew Square, 1880 and 1930



BOSTON ATLAS



BOSTON ATLAS

Figure 4.2 Existing Land Uses - Within a five-minute walk of Andrew Square, defined by the red circle, Industrial and transportation uses dominate the west side of Dorchester Avenue and predominately residential uses define the east side

Andrew Square was named for John A. Andrew, Governor of Massachusetts during the Civil War

4. ANDREW SQUARE

GOALS AND ISSUES

The over-arching goals for Andrew Square include improving traffic flow for vehicles as well as improving the pedestrian environment and streetscape in the square. The project intends to make Andrew Square a better place for people and a better neighborhood business district. Andrew Square should also be identified as a major gateway to residential South Boston.

A Better Place for People

Andrew Square is on the boundary between the South Boston residential neighborhood to the east – one that has a planted, green character and connects to the nearby parks on Dorchester Bay – and the industrial-transportation corridor on the west. Today the image of Andrew Square is strongly influenced by the industrial and transportation character, and the urban design goal of this project is to change that image so that it relates more to the residential neighborhood character. See Figures 4.1 and 4.2 for past and existing land use information, and 4.3 for an illustration of the concept.

By reducing the amount of pavement in the roadway, adding additional sidewalk area, and screening open lots, more

emphasis will be placed on the pedestrian environment in what is currently a vehicle-dominated environment. Reconfigured curb lines will shorten crossing distances and create space on the sidewalks for additional uses. In new plazas created and on existing sidewalks, street trees and other plantings will be added to soften the impact of a six-road intersection and connect the planted, green character of the residential area further east into Andrew Square. Together, roadway and sidewalk improvements will create a more welcoming place and, encourage additional small commercial and community uses in the square.

As a transportation center, Andrew Square will be a more comfortable area to make a bus connection. Bus stops and taxi stands have been located in areas so as not to conflict with driveways and busy corners, shelters and additional benches have been provided close to trees, new shelves and trash receptacles. Over time, the tree canopy will provide desired shade during the spring and summer months. Accessibility to the transportation centers will be enhanced through improved crosswalk and curb cut layouts.

A Better Neighborhood Business District

The MBTA Red Line station at Andrew Square (opened in 1918, remodeled in the early 1990s) is a major destination,

with 11,000 passengers in and out of the station on weekdays. This station brings many people from the surrounding neighborhoods through the square and provides a ready-made market for small commercial businesses. The majority of the businesses in the square are convenience retail and restaurants. A more attractive, pedestrian-friendly Andrew Square will create an improved atmosphere for businesses. A public-private partnership could greatly improve the quality of the open parking lots that face the center of the intersection by installing low fences, controlling vendor-generated trash, and the addition of seasonal elements, such as potted plants or holiday lights. In addition, the new larger public areas could be used by the community for neighborhood events, markets or charitable efforts, fostering neighborhood cohesion and public vibrancy.

A Better Gateway to South Boston

One of the important characteristics of Andrew Square is its role as a gateway to South Boston. For those traveling east on Southampton Street, Andrew Square forms their first impression of South Boston. Today that impression is dominated by a confusing intersection, where the driver's attention is focused on trying to figure out what direction to go, rather than the attractiveness of the residential neighborhood just beyond the square.

The foregoing streetscape guidelines were employed in working with the Task Forces to redesign three major intersections: Andrew Square, Glover's Corner, and Fields Corner. While goals for these locations differ somewhat, the intent is to improve the pedestrian environment and improve the areas as business districts and neighborhood centers.

Bus Routes Serving Andrew Square

| | riders per day |
|---|-------------------|
| CT3: | 1,016 |
| Longwood Medical Area - Andrew | |
| Route 5: | 118 |
| City Point- McCormack Housing | |
| Route 10: | 3,054 |
| City Point - Boston Medical Center - Copley: | |
| Route 16: | 4,350 |
| Forest Hills - U. Mass. Boston | |
| Route 17: | 3,741 |
| Fields Corner - Andrew | |
| Route 18: | 740 |
| Ashmont- Andrew | |

Source: MBTA Ridership and Service Statistics, Ninth Edition, 2003-2004

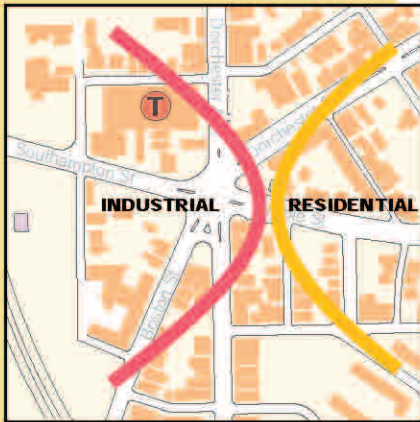


Figure 4.3 The intent of the improvements in Andrew Square is to shift its character from an industrial look to a more residential look

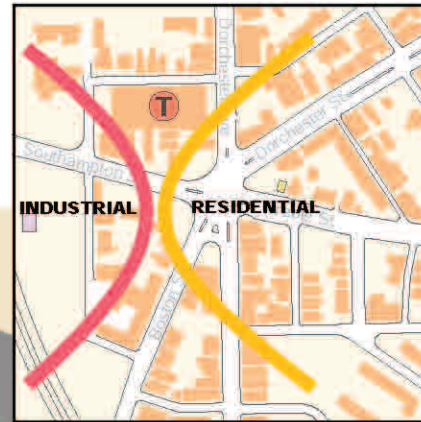


Figure 4.4 Existing roadway conditions, Andrew Square



The new signage, crosswalks, additional landscaping and public art elements proposed will allow drivers to quickly orient themselves and to understand that they are entering the residential neighborhood of South Boston.

IMPROVING TRAFFIC

One of the many issues with Andrew Square is the confusion created by a many-legged intersection with very little directional signing or even basic street name signs. If the vehicular and pedestrian traffic were better organized, both would operate more smoothly. The existing intersection layout is shown in Figure 4.4.

Actions

Berger conducted turning movement counts at Andrew Square. The counts were conducted on Tuesday, September 12, 2006 from 7 AM to 6 PM. The counts showed that there are many movements with low volumes. They also showed that there are significant volumes of pedestrians crossing the various legs of Andrew Square and that a lot of the traffic is oriented toward Southamptton Street, probably destined to the regional highway system (I-93) and/or South Bay Center retail area. A significant amount of traffic also moves north and south along Dorchester Avenue. The existing traffic and pedestrian volumes are shown in Figure 4.5.

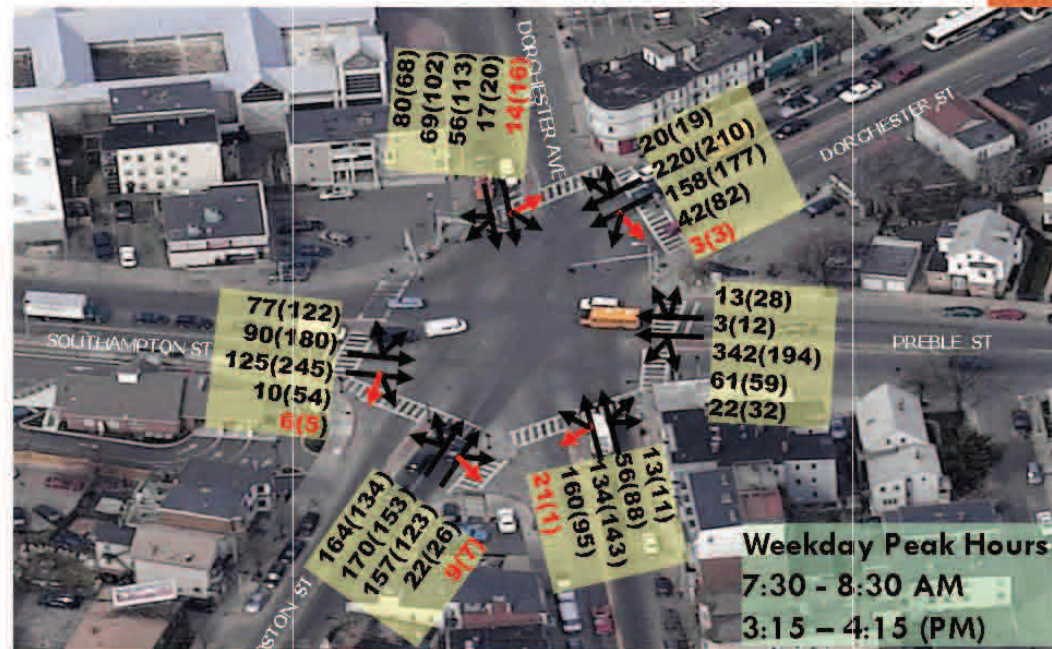


Figure 4.5
2006 Existing Vehicle and Pedestrian Peak Hour Volumes

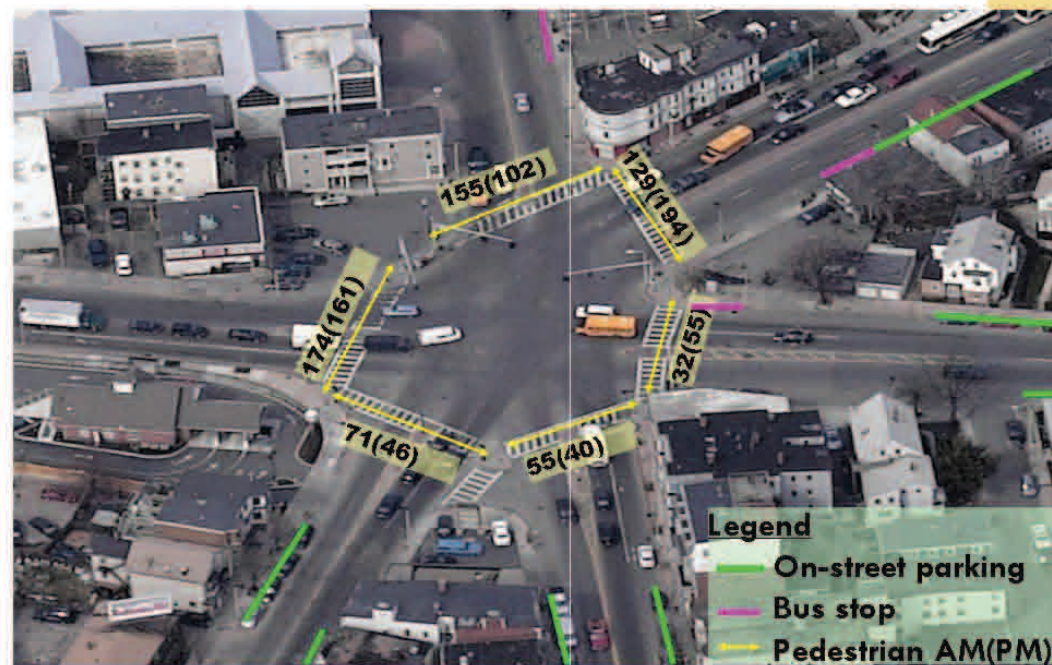


Figure 4.6 Proposed Intersection Layout

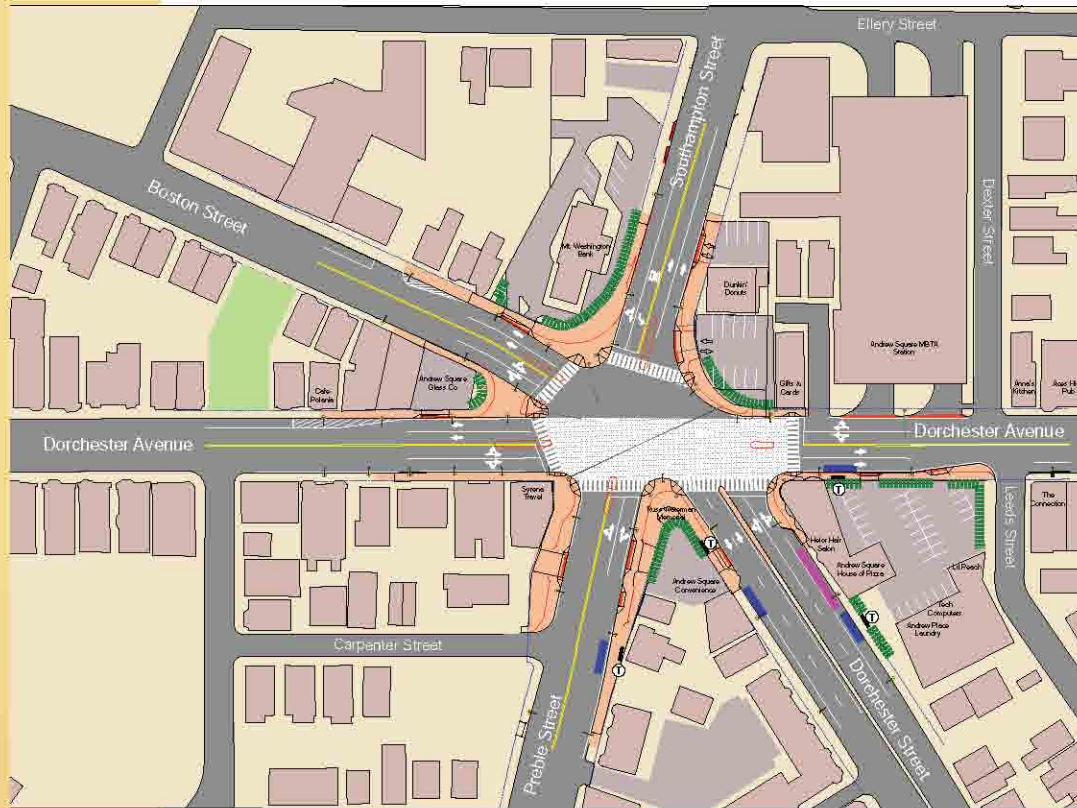


Figure 4.7 Existing and Proposed Crossing Distances



Recommendations

The improvements include complete reconstruction of Andrew Square. The concept is shown in Figure 4.6. The solution includes the following:

- new signals at Andrew Square, including the MBTA busway from Andrew Station;
- extended curb lines in front of Mount Washington Bank, creating a large pedestrian plaza, and decreasing the crossing distances across both Boston Street and Southampton Street;
- extended curb lines on the corner of Preble Street and Dorchester Street, enhancing the memorial located there;
- closure of the right-turn lane onto Dorchester Avenue southbound from Boston Street, resulting in a pedestrian plaza in front of Andrew Square Glass;
- installation of tapers on Dorchester Avenue northbound, Dorchester Avenue southbound, and Boston Street to channel traffic from two lanes to one lane leaving Andrew Square;
- prohibitions of the following turns around the square to improve traffic flow:
 - Southampton Street eastbound right to Boston Street,
 - Dorchester Avenue northbound left to Boston Street,



Rendering by Don Reed
Commissioned by Wyn Glassman & Company

Birds Eye sketch of the revised intersection at Andrew Square

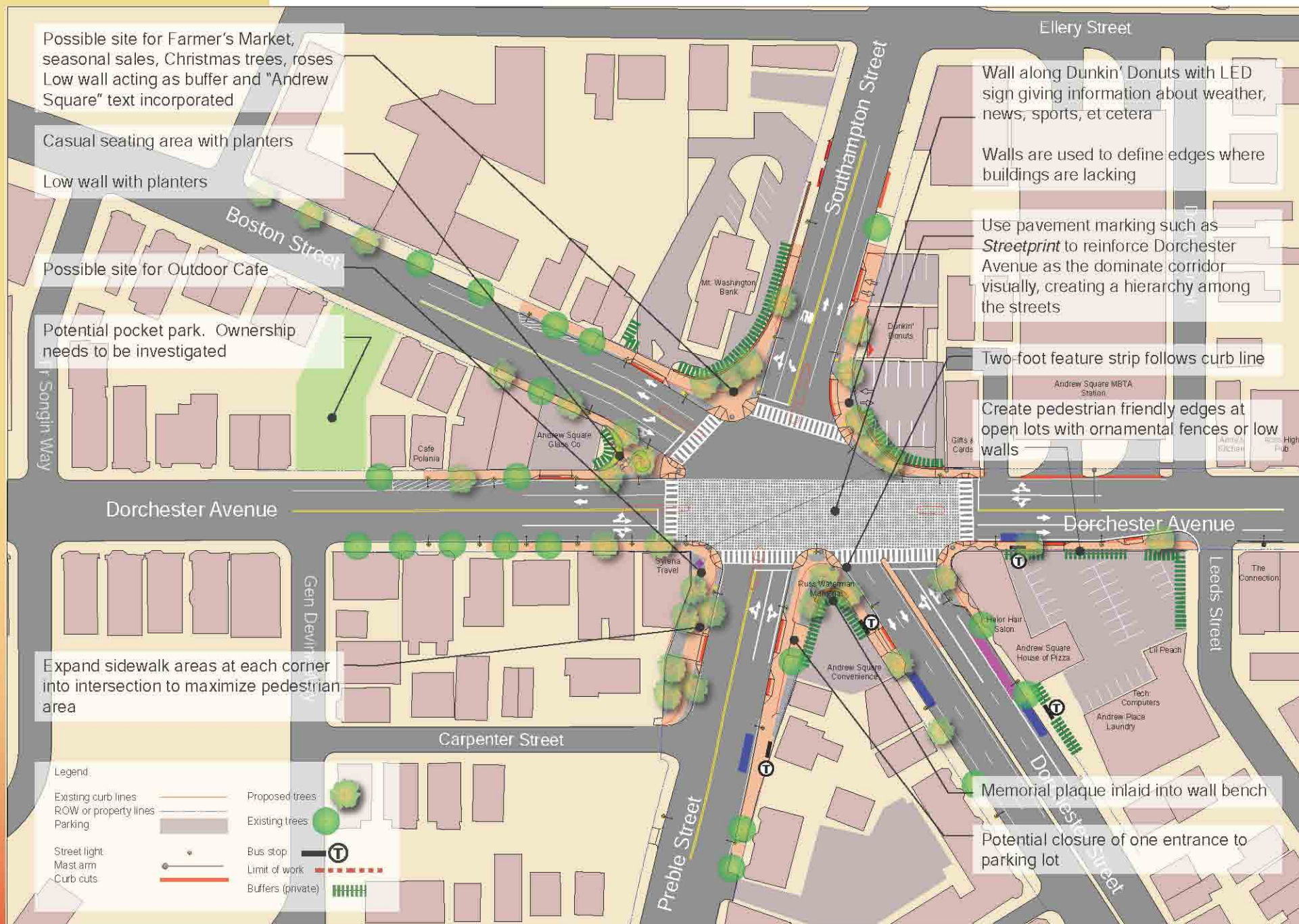


Figure 4.8 Proposed Streetscape Improvements

- Boston Street northeastbound right to Dorchester Avenue southbound, and
- Dorchester Street southwestbound left to Preble Street;
- closure of the Dunkin' Donuts parking lot driveway from Dorchester Avenue, and reorganization of the parking area;
- minimize loss of on-street parking;
- installation of wayfinding signage directing motorists through the square and to/from I-93; and,
- additional trees and other landscape and streetscape elements, described in more detail in later sections.

MOVING CURB LINES TO CREATE MORE SPACE FOR PEOPLE

The new design for Andrew Square relocates the curb lines where this is consistent with the intent to minimize turning radii and receiving lanes to accommodate traffic flow. Preliminary concepts for curb relocation were discussed with both the Andrew Square Task Force and South Boston community. The designs were also reviewed and discussed with Boston Transportation Department and the Boston Public Works Department. The proposed design reflects this public and agency input. The existing and proposed curb lines were shown previously in Figure 4.3. The modifications to the curb lines will provide shorter pedestrian crossings, as shown in Figure 4.7.

Existing driveway entrances were examined as part of the design and property owners were consulted. The result of this coordination is that the Dunkin' Donuts curb cut at the corner of Southampton Street and Dorchester Avenue will be closed, reducing conflicts with both traffic in the intersection and pedestrians crossing Southampton Street. Access will continue to be provided at two locations on Southampton Street.

IMPROVING THE STREETScape

Some existing sidewalks in Andrew Square are wide enough to meet City standards for street tree installation. As shown in Figure 4.8, the new curb line will substantially increase pedestrian areas on the corner of Dorchester Avenue and Boston Street, on both sides of Southampton Street as it meets the intersection, and both sides of the first block of Preble Street as it approaches the intersection. Additional gains are made on Dorchester Street in the creation of two more inviting bus shelters. Overall, the streetscape combines street trees with elements unique to Andrew Square such as playful, raised beds which can serve as benches, pots for neighborhood planting, with corridor standard furnishings such as benches, trash receptacles, bus shelters, and pedestrian lights.

New sidewalks shall conform to the Dorchester Avenue palette, that is, concrete walkways with a high-quality finish and a brick accent strips parallel to the curb. The concrete shall have an integral color dye to control the batching, to increase the richness of the color and to compliment the dark sand additive. These elements, combined with the rubbed finish and saw cut joints, and 18-inch-wide unit paver accent band will present a unified and civic finish.

Andrew Square presents a complex combination of utility and signage layout needs, existing amenities including street lights and street trees, and the desired new amenities established by the corridor guidelines. Street trees are located to achieve two primary guideline goals: first, to create a better environment for people, and second, to screen open lots, defining the missing “walls” to reinforce the sense of enclosure for the square. In the new areas created on the western side of Dorchester Avenue, street trees are typically organized away from the curb line, keeping the accent strip area open for signs, pedestrian lights, and larger pedestrian volumes. The street trees are placed closer to the private property lines, screening parking lots in all three cases, and creating a sheltered area further away from the vehicular traffic and out of the flow of pedestrian traffic. The street tree layout on the eastern

Figure 4.9 Sign Plan



side of Dorchester Avenue builds on responding to existing street trees that are in a healthy condition or defining a pedestrian quiet area within the realm of the broader sidewalk. Smaller, flowering pear trees are placed in areas defining the center of the six corners, these ornamental trees are backed up by larger species behind. Benches are placed in combinations, both in social groupings, facing one another, as well as more utilitarian for the commuter, facing the street.

The existing memorial on the corner of Preble and Dorchester Streets will be relocated on the same corner. The memorial will be incorporated into a large raised planter on the outer nose of the block. The existing 12-inch caliper tree will remain as shelter for new benches to define the corner and anchor the newer trees to be installed in the accent strip area.

Strategic use of hedges and fencing at back of sidewalk further defines the edge of the space. Hedges should be employed on the farther edges of the

walkways, where space permits and safety allows. Fences are used in the center of the square to maintain visibility and maximize open space. Four of the six blocks defining the intersection have open lots facing the square, each one of these four has either a fence hedge combination, or fence proposed. The City is working with abutters to encourage them to install these improvements.

Finally, a system of wayfinding cues will be integrated into Andrew Square. As illustrated in Figures 4.9 and 4.10, both City-standard and custom street signs will be positioned at each intersection. Streetprint by Duratherm patterning will highlight the continuation of Dorchester Avenue through the intersection, and a series of signs will show how to find a route through the Square, how to find Interstate 93 on any approach, and a "Welcome" sign will announce Andrew Square to visitors.

Figure 4.10 Examples of Directional Signs, Andrew Square

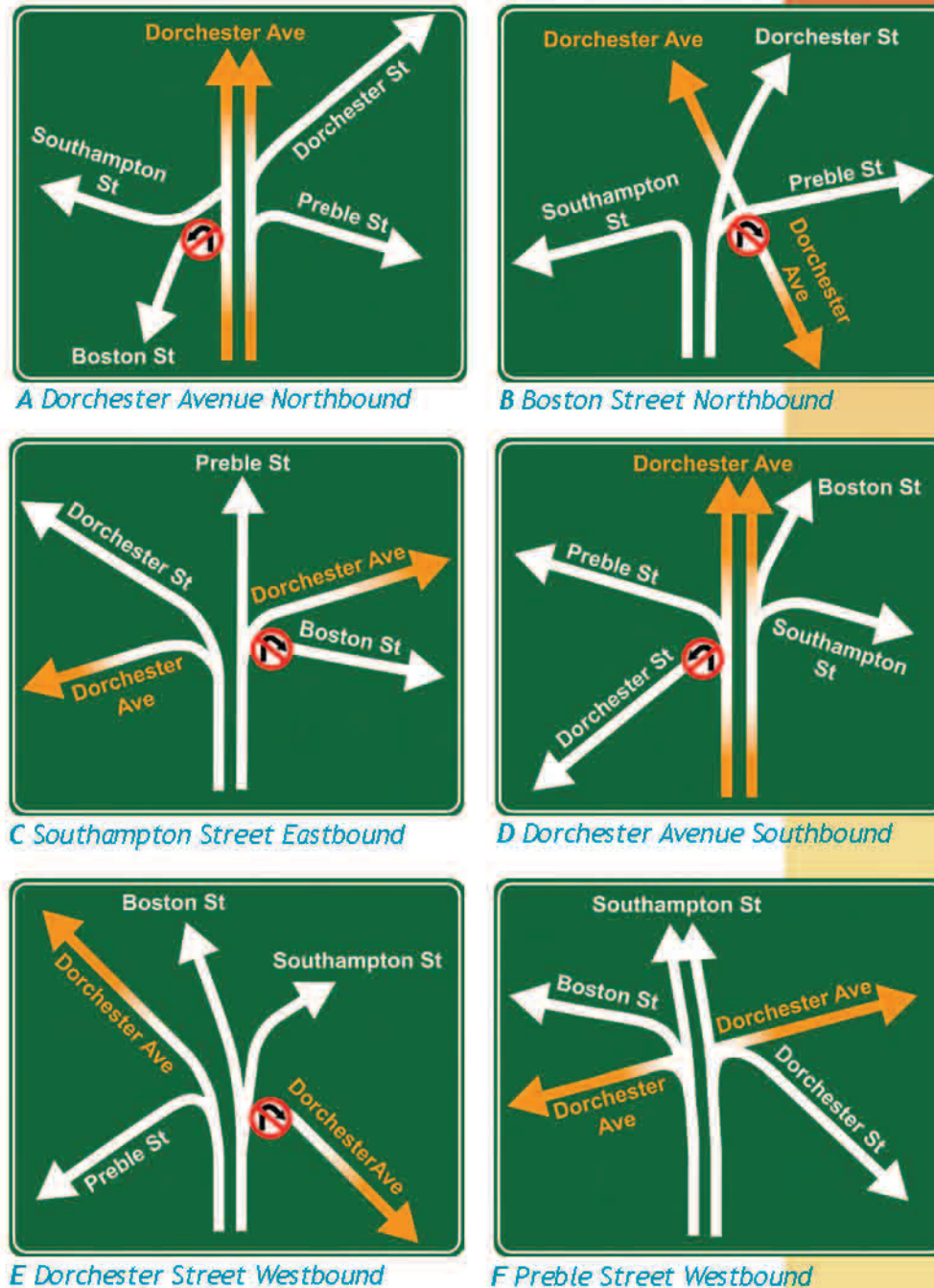




Figure 5.1 Existing Intersection Layout

5. GLOVER'S CORNER

GOALS AND ISSUES

The over-arching goal for Glover's Corner (Hancock/Freeport streets) is to improve traffic flow for both vehicles and pedestrians. Where possible, improving the pedestrian environment and streetscape will also be considered.

A Better Place for People

Today Glover's Corner is dominated by complicated and congested vehicular traffic and large areas of asphalt parking lots, making it unwelcoming for pedestrians. Most of the businesses in the area are auto- and transportation-oriented and appear to attract little walk-in traffic. The few pedestrians that are found in the area appear to be passing through on their way to somewhere else or live within a stone's throw of the intersection.

Current land uses are not a draw for pedestrians, and current walking volumes are low. The urban design goal is to improve the sidewalk areas and add planting where feasible. Because of the limited space to work within the public realm, the most significant opportunity for a more attractive area is to partner with private

land owners to create green buffers between the back of the sidewalk and the parking areas surrounding the intersections at Hancock and Freeport streets. Safer crossings for pedestrians will also improve the area.

A Better Neighborhood Business District

With improved private and public partnership, bus shelters may be accommodated on private land. Currently there is not enough room for shelters within the right of way. In the exposed and auto-oriented environment of Glover's Corner, a bus shelter is highly desirable as there are no stores or canopies under which to take shelter from the heat or rain. With improved amenities for pedestrians, people will gain a sense of comfort and security while in Glover's Corner.

Better Defined Spaces

Defining the public realm by edging the open lots with low fences, hedges or walls will be an important step towards creating a similar perception to infill, urbanization and commercial development at Glover's Corner. Coupled with improved public services, shelters, trash receptacles, street trees and lighting, the ease of use and safety of the area will increase. With an improvement in aesthetics, the area may become a more attractive target for new development.

IMPROVING TRAFFIC

The primary issue with this intersection is the congestion caused by a lack of traffic control at a complex intersection. The intersections of Hancock Street/Hoyt Street/Dorchester Avenue and East Street/Freeport Street/Dorchester Avenue are only about 200 feet apart, and the major movements through the pair of intersections involve right turns onto Dorchester Avenue from one side street followed by left-turns from Dorchester Avenue into the other. Congestion occurs due to the high volume of traffic passing through both intersections and the lack of space for stacking vehicles between the two. If the vehicular traffic were better organized, both intersections could operate more smoothly. The existing layout of Glover's Corner is shown in Figure 5.1.

Actions

The Louis Berger Group conducted turning movement counts at Glover's Corner. The counts were conducted on Tuesday, September 12, 2006 from 7 AM to 6 PM. They showed that there are very few pedestrians crossing in any direction. A significant traffic volume moves north and south along Dorchester Avenue, and a significant traffic volume turns right from Freeport Street westbound onto Dorchester Avenue northbound, followed by a left turn onto Hancock Street eastbound. There is also a significant

Glover's Corner was named for Alexander Glover III, a descendant of one of the original settlers of the Bay Colony and a cabinet maker whose shop was at this location in the mid-1880s.

Bus Routes Serving Glover's Corner

| | <i>riders per day</i> |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| <i>Route 17:</i> | <i>3,741</i> |
| <i>Fields Corner - Andrew Square</i> | |
| <i>Route 18:</i> | <i>740</i> |
| <i>Ashmont - Andrew</i> | |

Source: MBTA Ridership and Service Statistics, Ninth Edition, 2003-2004

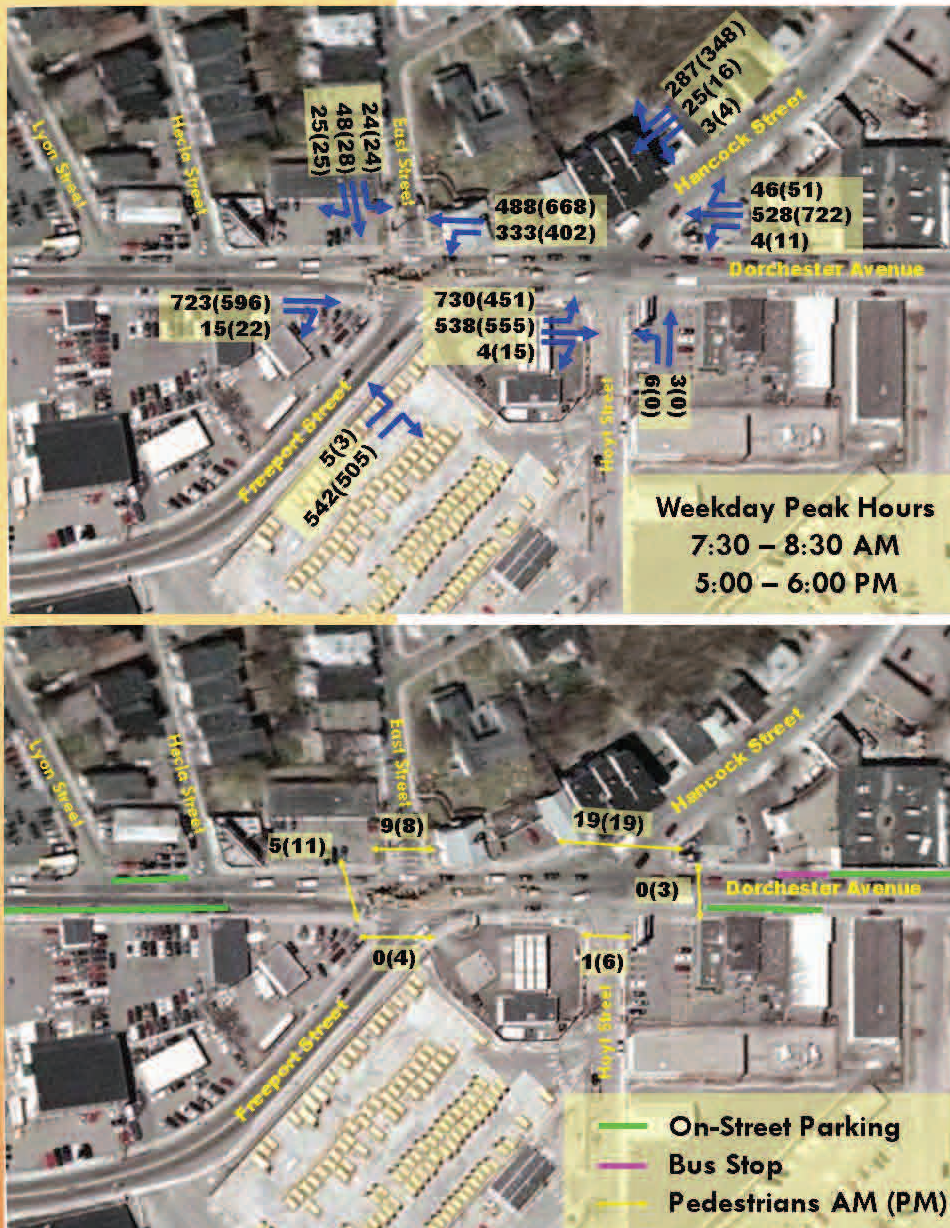


Figure 5.2 Existing Vehicle and Pedestrian Peak Hour Volumes

volume traveling eastbound from Hancock to Freeport via Dorchester Avenue southbound. The existing traffic and pedestrian volumes are shown in Figure 5.2. The count data are contained in the technical appendix, Section A. Capacity analysis of the existing and recommended conditions are also included in Section B of the technical appendix, as is the traffic signal warrant analysis.

Recommendations

The recommended improvements include complete reconstruction of Glover's Corner. The concept is shown in Figure 5.3. The solution includes the following improvements:

- new signals at each of the two intersections, controlled by one controller;
- new pavement markings and signing showing four lanes through the section of Dorchester Avenue between the intersections;
- prohibition of left turns from Freeport Street to Dorchester Avenue southbound;
- installation of wayfinding signage directing motorists to/from I-93; and
- additional trees and other landscape and streetscape

elements, as described in more detail in later sections.

In addition, there are two types of improvements requiring public-private partnerships that would contribute greatly to the safety and sense of place in Glover's Corner. First, eliminating or reducing the width of curb cuts would offer improved traffic circulation and increased security for pedestrians. In particular, the consultant team recommends closure of the center driveway at the Sunoco Station on the east side of the intersection, and the relocation of the northernmost driveway to the Sunoco Station from its current corner apex location to a location on Hoyt Street. These concepts will be the subject of working sessions with the property owner to determine the best way to move forward. Second, options for planted or fenced screens behind the sidewalk at the property line on private property is a streetscape enhancement that needs to be further discussed between the city and individual property owners.

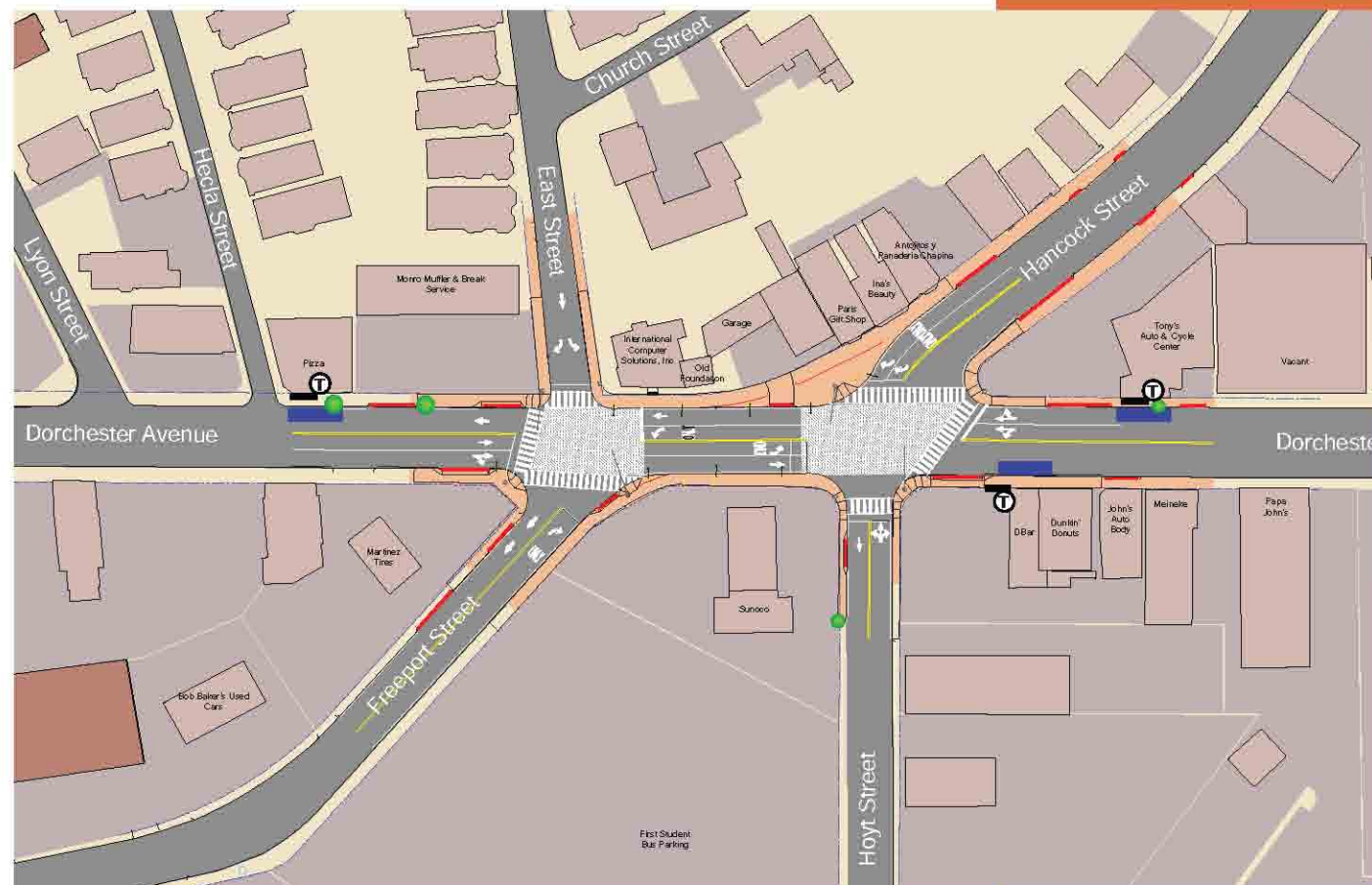
MOVING CURB LINES TO CREATE MORE SPACE FOR PEOPLE

The design team examined one alternative that reconfigured traffic patterns sufficiently that Dorchester Avenue could be narrowed by one lane and that space reallocated to create wide sidewalks and

incorporate street trees. By prohibiting left turns from Dorchester Avenue southbound to Freeport Street eastbound, and shifting those left turns to Linden Street a block further south, the need for a left turn lane at Freeport Street would be eliminated and space would be available for sidewalks. In this option, Freeport Street would become one-way westbound from Linden Street to Dorchester Avenue, and also could be narrowed and have space reallocated to sidewalks. In meetings with the community, concern was expressed that Linden Street could not support the new volume of traffic anticipated, and this option was dropped.

IMPROVING THE STREETScape

Because the entire existing street width is required to accommodate vehicular traffic, there is little opportunity to expand the sidewalks to create a more generous sidewalk area and to add street trees or other plantings. Only one location is suitable for sidewalk widening, the southwest corner of the intersection of Hancock Street with Dorchester Avenue. At this location the turning radius from Hancock Street to Dorchester Avenue is reduced from the existing condition but is still sufficient to accommodate a standard sized vehicle. By reducing the corner radius, the pavement on Hancock Street is narrowed, which allows for an expanded sidewalk area - including



planting, furnishings, and a welcome sign - and reduces the length of the crosswalk significantly.

The street trees proposed for the Glover's Corner area are among the tougher urban street tree species. The new pedestrian area at the corner of Hancock Street and Dorchester Avenue will come alive with color in late spring when the Golden Rain tree blooms. The corridor will be reinforced with Slovak and Turkish Filbert

trees. Slovak Filbert trees exist along the corridor and are generally in a healthy condition. The Turkish Filberts are not currently present along the corridor, nor are they particularly colorful but they are one of the toughest species in terms of tolerating dust particles on their leaves, drought, damage, and insects. The Filbert is used along Hancock Street in conjunction with the more ornamental Golden Rain Tree.

Figure 5.3 Proposed Intersection Layout

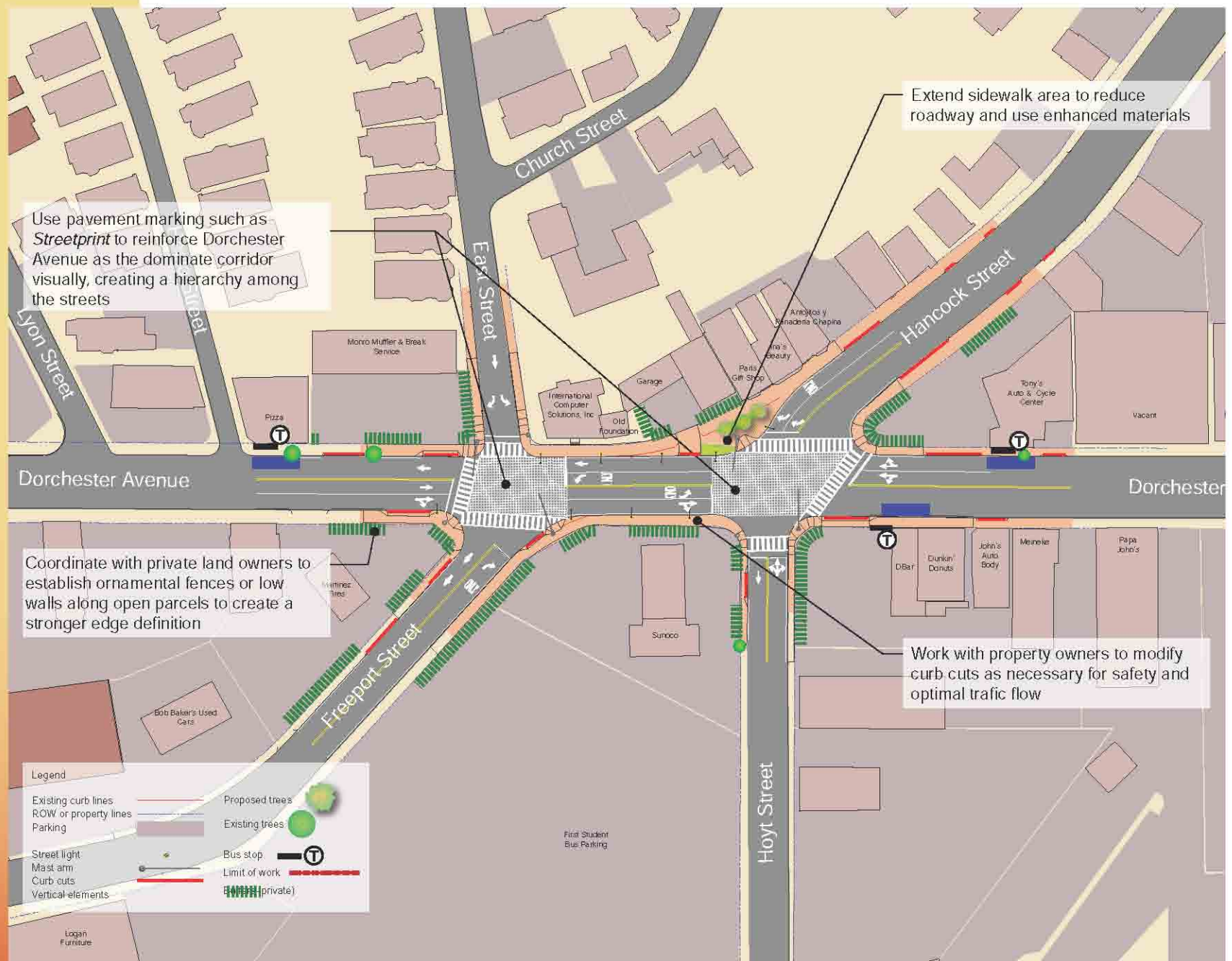


Figure 5.4 Proposed Streetscape Improvements

Wayfinding elements will allow drivers and pedestrians to understand how to continue their trips through these intersections. City-standard street signs will be positioned at each intersection. Streetprint by Duratherm patterning will highlight the continuation of Dorchester Avenue through the intersection. A series of signs will show how to find Interstate 93 on any approach, and a “Welcome” sign will announce Glover’s Corner to visitors.

Key

D

Directional

W

Welcome

I

Interstate

WELCOME TO

GLOVERS CORNER

DORCHESTER

CITY OF BOSTON

MAYOR THOMAS M. MENINO

A detailed map of the Glover's Corner intersection in Boston. The map shows Dorchester Avenue running horizontally, with Church Street, East Street, and Hayt Street intersecting it. Other streets shown include Hecla Street, Lyon Street, and Hancock Street. Various buildings and landmarks are labeled, such as 'International Computer Graphics', '1642 BOWDOIN', 'Pete's Art Shop', 'OH! HONOLULU', 'Museum of Contemporary Art', '1642 BOWDOIN', 'Pete's Art Shop', 'OH! HONOLULU', 'Museum of Contemporary Art', '1642 BOWDOIN', 'Pete's Art Shop', 'OH! HONOLULU', 'Museum of Contemporary Art'. The map highlights the proposed sign locations with colored markers: yellow for Directional signs, orange for Welcome signs, and red for Interstate signs. The map also shows the proposed streetprint highlighting the continuation of Dorchester Avenue through the intersection.

INTERSTATE

93

SOUTH

←

INTERSTATE

93

SOUTH

↑

INTERSTATE

93

SOUTH

→

DEAD

END

Figure 5.5 Proposed Sign Plan

Figure 5.6 Proposed Sign Schedule

The Loud Berge Group 31



Figure 6.1 Existing Roadway Conditions

6. FIELDS CORNER

GOALS AND ISSUES

The over-arching goals for Fields Corner are similar to those at Andrew Square and at Glover's Corner: improve traffic flow for both vehicles and pedestrians and encourage urban design improvements. The project intends to make Fields Corner a better place for people and a better neighborhood business district.

A Better Place for People

Fields Corner is already a thriving commercial center and the goal here is to enhance the experience for pedestrians by reducing friction with cars and, where possible, with other pedestrians. In addition to dozens of businesses serving the surrounding neighborhood, the Fields Corner MBTA Red Line station is located on the south side of the study area, bringing hundreds of additional pedestrians to the sidewalks each day. Unlike typical commercial centers, the activity in Fields Corner peaks on Sunday with both local and regional shoppers arriving to patronize the various shops and restaurants. With a senior citizen center and family housing in close proximity, an easy, convenient, safe and clean environment for people to gather outdoors is highly desirable.

A Better Neighborhood Business District

Most neighborhood commercial centers can only envy the activity and vibrancy that defines Fields Corner. The issue here is not so much to increase the business but rather to improve access and enhance the experience by creating a more pleasant environment for driving, walking and shopping.

IMPROVING TRAFFIC

The primary issue with this intersection is the congestion caused by left-turning vehicles from Dorchester Avenue to Adams Street, and low-volume turning movements that force a motorist to slow to complete due to the skewed geometry of the intersection. If traffic patterns were accommodated through changes to the signal timing, and sharp movements eliminated, traffic could flow more smoothly. In addition, the proximity of several commercial driveways adds complexity and delay at the intersection, while introducing potentially dangerous conditions. The existing layout of Fields Corner is shown in Figure 6.1.

Actions

Berger conducted traffic and turning movement counts at Fields Corner on Tuesday, September 12, 2006 from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Results showed that there are significant volumes of pedestrians crossing in several directions. A significant amount

of traffic moves north and south along Dorchester Avenue as well as east and west on Adams Street. There are enough vehicles turning left in either direction from Dorchester Avenue that they interfere with the through-moving traffic, creating congestion. The existing traffic and pedestrian volumes are shown in Figure 6.2.

Recommendations

The recommended improvements include complete reconstruction of Fields Corner. The proposed concept is shown in Figure 6.3. The solution includes the following:

- new traffic signals interconnected with several other intersections located to the south of Fields Corner;
- closure of the right-turn cut through from Dorchester Avenue southbound to Adams Street westbound (Hero Square) creating a significant plaza (A proposed temporary closure will be tested prior to implementation through construction);
- prohibition of left turns from Adams Street to Dorchester Avenue in both directions;
- prohibition of right turns from Dorchester Avenue to Adams Street in both directions;
- closure of the shared access driveway serving the Boston School Department and abutting property owners on the west side of the intersection;

Field's Corner, the commercial center running along Dorchester Avenue from the Adams Street intersection (Hero Square) south to Gibson Street was named for Isaac and Enos Field, who ran a general store there in the mid-1800s.

Bus Routes Serving Fields Corner

| | riders per day |
|---|-------------------|
| Route 17: Fields Corner - Andrew Square | 3,741 |
| Route 18: Ashmont - Andrew | 740 |
| Route 210: Quincy Center - Fields Corner | 703 |

Source: MBTA Ridership and Service Statistics Ninth Edition, 2003-2004



Figure 6.2 2006 Existing Peak Hour Traffic Volumes

- modification of Citizens Bank driveway and parking area to move the driveway farther northwest, away from the stop line;
- replacement of the brick sidewalks with new fine aggregate concrete sidewalks; and,
- installation of wayfinding signage directing motorists to/from public parking.

In five to ten years, these short-term improvements are predicted to no longer meet the traffic demands. If congestion returns with future increases in traffic volumes, at that time the following changes can be made to pavement markings, signing, and traffic signal to further improve the intersection:

- prohibit parking on both sides of the south leg of Dorchester Avenue;
- re-stripe the travel lanes to provide one exclusive left-turn lane and one through lane on Dorchester Avenue northbound; and
- add a protected left-turn phase for Dorchester Avenue northbound to the signal phasing.

Prior to implementing the long-term improvements, the intersection traffic volumes should be collected and reassessed to ensure that the long-term improvements still meet the needs of the traffic.

MOVING CURB LINES TO CREATE MORE SPACE FOR PEOPLE

The most significant opportunity to improve the pedestrian environment is through the expansion of Hero Square. By closing off the short, right-turn section of roadway connecting Dorchester Avenue southbound and Adams Street westbound, the existing square is reconnected to the sidewalk and creates the opportunity to redesign the area around the memorial and create a significant public plaza Hero Square. In conjunction with new crosswalks in the intersection that more closely follow pedestrian desire lines, the walking experience is vastly improved. A more modest improvement on the opposite corner created by reducing a corner radius will also enhance the pedestrian area.

IMPROVING THE STREETSCAPE

Sidewalks and street furnishings in Fields Corner would be upgraded to match the Dorchester Avenue palette.

Hero Square will be redesigned as a public gathering space, including additional trees and other plantings, benches, and lighting. The new gathering space will be opportunities for tables in support of adjacent businesses. Pavements that are accessible and coordinated with the Dorchester Avenue palette will be used. The memorial will be relocated to become a centerpiece of the space, and to create an

appropriate setting for it. This location will also feature a welcome sign as described in the section on wayfinding to follow.

Fields Corner currently has a collection of mature street trees that add both shade and character to the area. The proposed plan includes a few additional street trees, but with several caveats. First, any new street trees should be placed in a position where they do not obscure building signs for local businesses. The visibility of signs can further be insured by selecting tree species that are columnar in form or with diffuse, transparent foliage and by pruning to further control the shape and height of foliage. Secondly, the City of Boston specifies that trees not be planted within 15 feet of a streetlight to ensure that light illuminates the sidewalk. By following this standard, an often-heard concern at project community meetings will be addressed, that safe lighting levels are maintained along sidewalks. Finally, trees grow and change, and routine, consistent maintenance is necessary to help them thrive and ensure that they do not block important views or paths.

Traditionally, street trees are found along the curb side of the sidewalk, but a number of locations in the area offer opportunities for planting behind the sidewalk in cooperation with private land owners. The entrances to the parking lots at Bank of

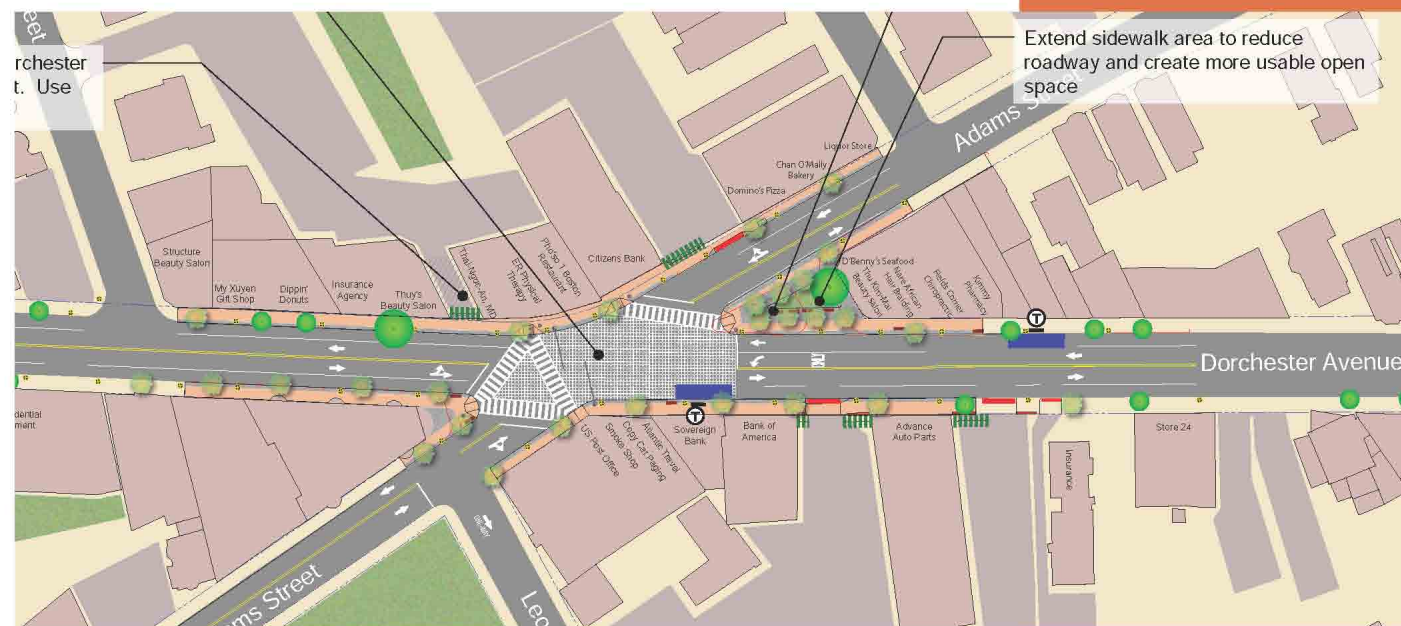


Figure 6.3a Proposed Short-Term Intersection Layout

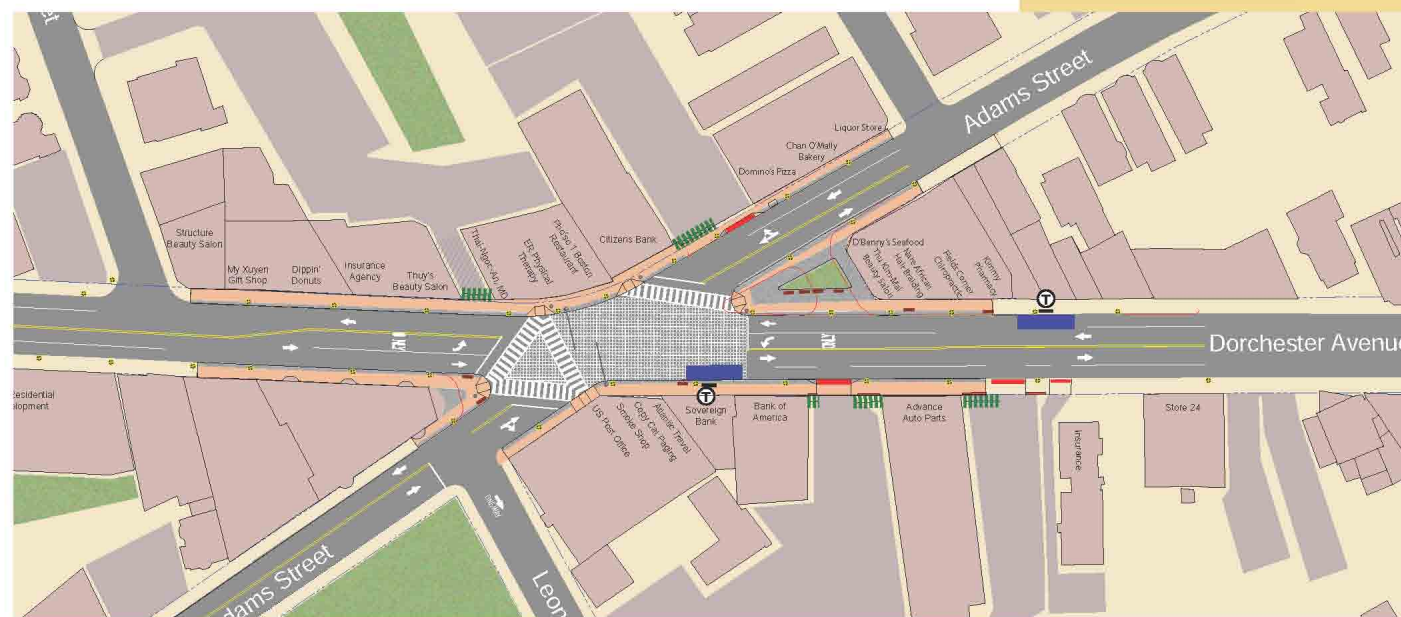


Figure 6.3b Proposed Long-Term Intersection Layout

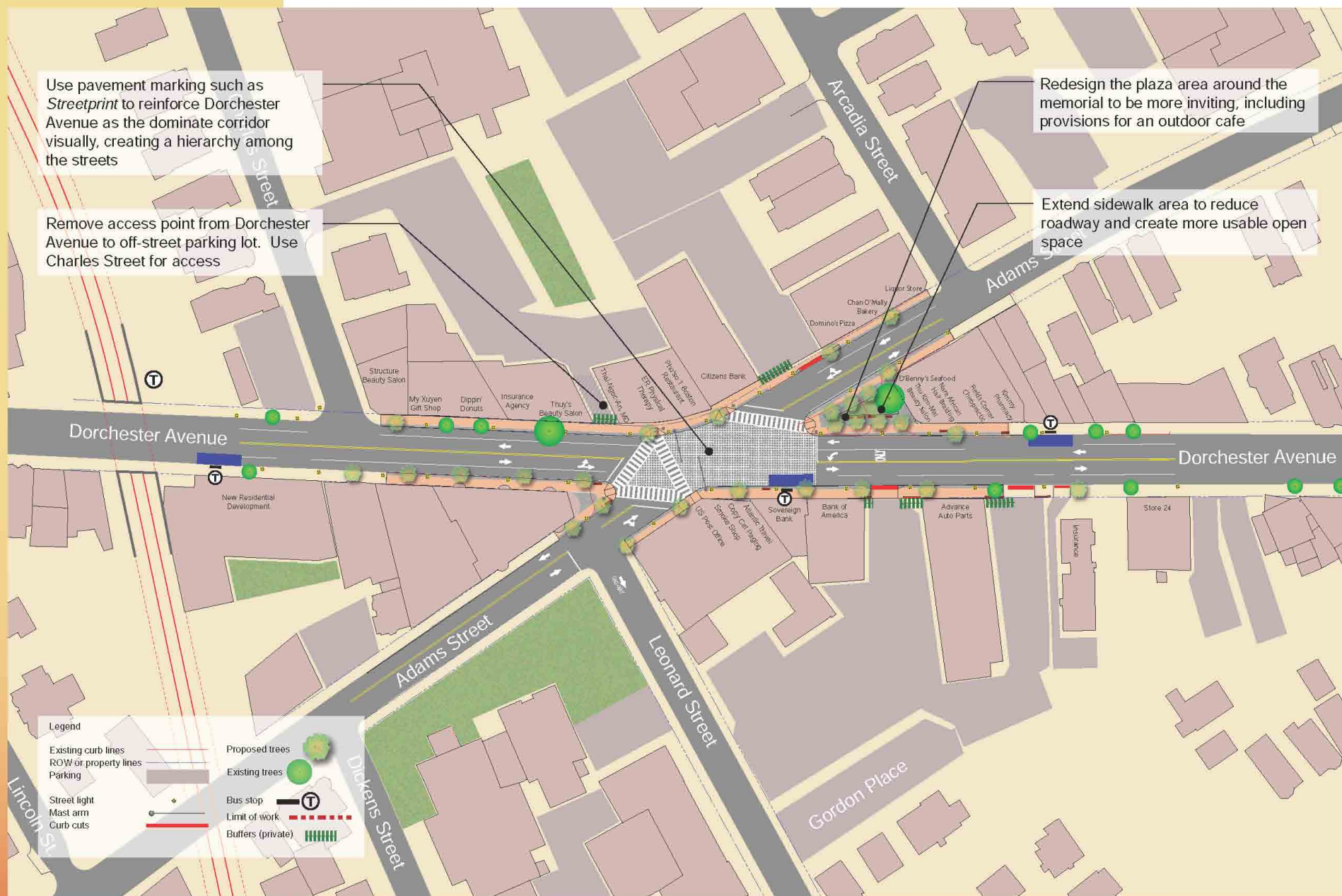


Figure 6.4 Proposed Long-Term Streetscape Improvements



Renderings by Don Zick
Commissioned by the City of St. Louis, B. Company

Sketch of Hero's Square with
expanded plaza area and
landscaping

America and Citizens Bank and the access drive to the Cleveland Middle School lot stand out as good opportunities for a private-public partnership. This approach has several advantages: it allows for more generous tree pits and planting beds which promote healthier trees; it locates trees out of the way of any building signage while still creating shade and color along the sidewalk; and, it screens the large asphalt parking areas from view.

The existing trees on the western side of Dorchester Avenue are typically Japanese Pagoda Trees and are, for the most part, in healthy condition and growing well. The same species has been utilized to infill missing trees and line Adams Street on both sides of the Dorchester Avenue intersection as space permits. On the eastern side of Dorchester Avenue, missing and new trees along the corridor are Maidenhair, or Ginkgo trees. These trees are columnar in youth, have wonderful seasonal qualities, and are culturally significant to many Asian communities, a currently dominant demographic in the square. Hero Square has been physically united to the nearest block as well as woven into the block by extending the row of Honey Locust trees that exist along the corridor in this area into the new plaza area. Honey Locust trees are a popular urban tree due to their tolerance of street

conditions and three-season beauty. In addition, the foliage allows for light to penetrate and is wispy enough not to obscure views of store fronts.

Finally, a system of wayfinding cues will be integrated into Fields Corner. City-standard street signs will be positioned at each intersection. Streetprint by Duratherm patterning will highlight the continuation of Dorchester Avenue through the intersection. A series of signs will show how to find public parking on any approach, and a “Welcome” sign will announce Fields Corner to visitors.

OFF-STREET PARKING

One issue which requires further coordination is the balance of parking resources in the district. Shared parking cooperation among the public and private land owners in the area may offer solutions to a perceived lack of parking supply, or may even improve traffic circulation. This issue will continue to be discussed between property owners and the BRA and will include:

- a. Existing parking
- b. Opportunities for daytime and overnight parking
- c. Bank of America lot
- d. Citizens Bank lot
- e. Verizon property



Key

| | |
|------------------|--------|
| P Parking | Blue |
| W Welcome | Orange |



Figure 6.5 Proposed sign plan and example of welcome sign

7. IMPROVEMENTS AT OTHER INTERSECTIONS

In addition to the major improvements at Andrew Square, Glover's Corner, and Fields Corner, the Action Plan includes smaller-scale traffic and pedestrian improvements at five other Dorchester Avenue intersections:

- Old Colony Avenue
- Savin Hill Avenue
- Park Street
- Gibson Street
- Welles Avenue and Lonsdale Street

These improvements are of a type known as Transportation System Management (TSM). They are intended to make the most cost-effective use of available funding by modifying signal phasing and timing, and in some cases re-striping lanes.

In general, traffic flow along the corridor would benefit from updating the traffic signal equipment and coordinating signals that are close together. Modern traffic controllers have many capabilities that their older counterparts do not, such as actuated control, where the signal and associated equipment are responsive to the traffic volumes on each leg of an intersection. Interconnecting the signals to BTDC's Traffic Control Center would also be beneficial, and the City already has some of the infrastructure, such as conduit, in place to accomplish this.

DORCHESTER AVENUE AND OLD COLONY AVENUE, SOUTH BOSTON

Issues

The primary issue at the intersection of Old Colony Avenue and Dorchester Avenue is the lack of direction at the intersection.

Actions

Berger conducted turning movement counts at Old Colony Avenue. The counts were conducted on Thursday, March 15, 2007 from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. The existing traffic volumes are shown in Figure 7.1.

Recommendations

The intersection operates at an acceptable level, despite the high volumes of vehicles passing through it. West Seventh Street and B Street are not controlled by the signal. People frequently turn left illegally over the flush median from Dorchester Avenue southbound to both West Seventh Street and B Street.

The recommendations at the intersection include new pavement markings as well as new wayfinding signage.

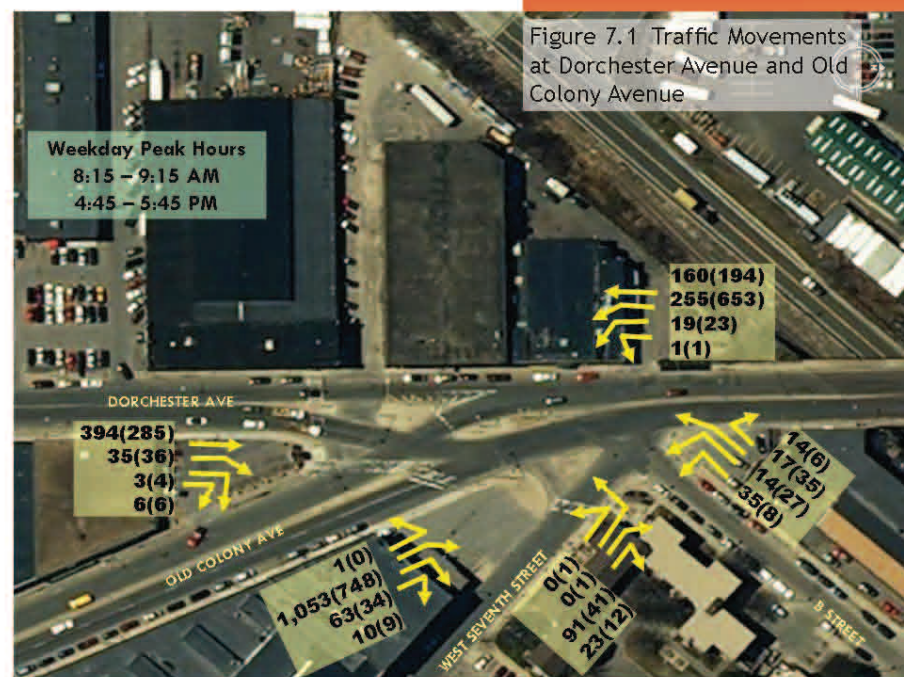


Figure 7.1 Traffic Movements at Dorchester Avenue and Old Colony Avenue

DORCHESTER AVENUE AND SAVIN HILL AVENUE, DORCHESTER

Issues

The primary issue at the intersection of Savin Hill Avenue and Dorchester Avenue is one of capacity. The intersection is close to operating at capacity.

Actions

Berger conducted turning movement counts at Savin Hill Avenue. The counts were conducted on Wednesday, February 7, 2007 from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. The existing traffic volumes are shown in Figure 7.2.

Recommendations

The recommended improvements include upgrade of the existing traffic controller. An advance left-turn phase should be included for the Savin Hill Avenue westbound approach. The exclusive pedestrian phase should be maintained due to the presence of school children and crossing guards at various times on the weekdays.

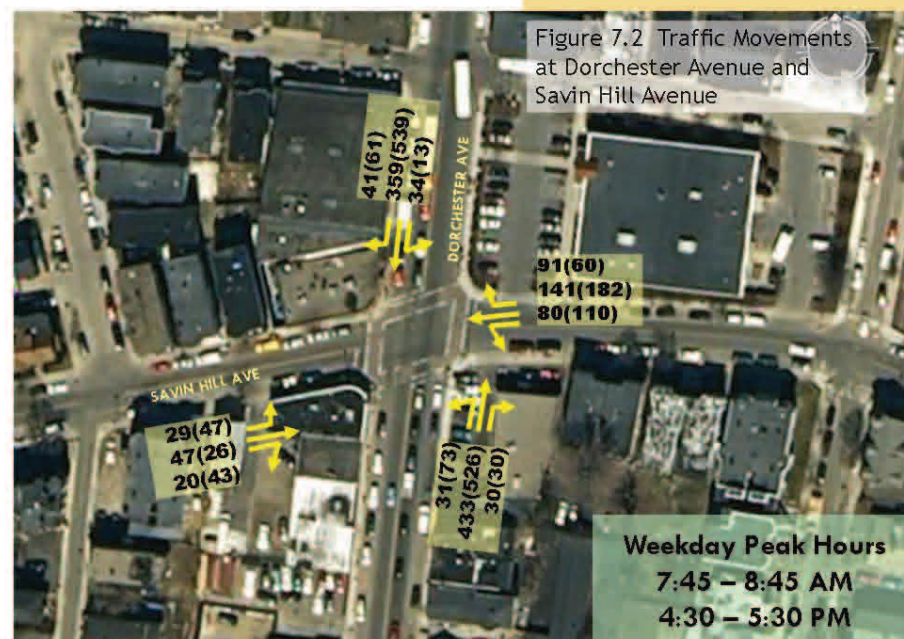
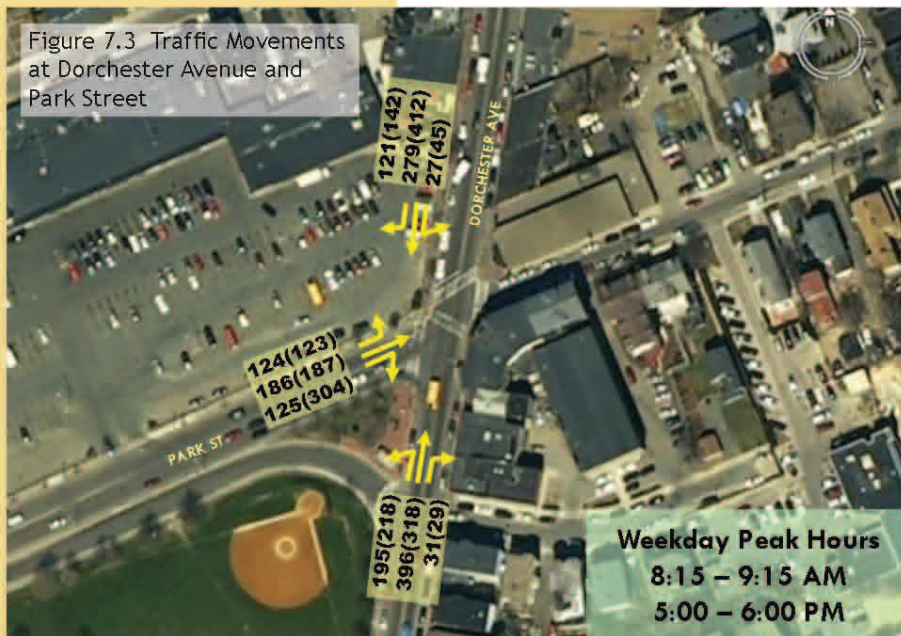


Figure 7.2 Traffic Movements at Dorchester Avenue and Savin Hill Avenue

Figure 7.3 Traffic Movements at Dorchester Avenue and Park Street



DORCHESTER AVENUE AND PARK STREET, DORCHESTER

Issues

The primary issue at the intersection of Park Street and Dorchester Avenue is that there are significant volumes of vehicles turning right from Park Street eastbound as well as turning left from Dorchester Avenue northbound.

Actions

Berger conducted turning movement counts at Park Street. The counts were conducted on Wednesday, February 7, 2007 from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. The existing traffic volumes are shown in Figure 7.3.

Recommendations:

The recommended improvements include upgrade of the existing traffic signal system as well as interconnection with other proximate signals.

A left turn lane should be installed on the Dorchester Avenue northbound approach, with an advance left-turn phase. A right-turn lane should be installed on Park Street westbound, with an overlapping phase while Dorchester Avenue northbound left turning vehicles are moving. The crosswalk that exists from the southeast to the northwest corner of the intersection should be removed. This would allow the exclusive pedestrian phase should be changed to concurrent phasing.

7.4 Traffic Movements at Dorchester Avenue and Gibson Street



DORCHESTER AVENUE AND GIBSON STREET, DORCHESTER

Issues

The primary issue with this intersection appears to be delay to left-turning vehicles from Gibson Street to Dorchester Avenue. The intersection is also located adjacent to Doherty-Gibson Playground, and there are pedestrian crosswalks across Dorchester Avenue at the intersection.

Actions

Berger conducted turning movement and pedestrian counts at Gibson Street. The counts were conducted on Thursday, June 14, 2007 from 7 AM to 6 PM. The existing traffic volumes are shown in Figure 7.4.

Recommendations

The intersection does not meet either vehicular or pedestrian volume warrants for signalization. The accident experience does not meet indicates that there were less than five accidents per year, thus not meeting the accident warrant for signalization. No further study of the intersection is recommended.

DORCHESTER AVENUE AND WELLES AVENUE/LONSDALE STREET, DORCHESTER

Issues

The primary issue with this intersection is that vehicles have a difficult time making movements out of the side streets due to the level of traffic on Dorchester Avenue.

Actions

Berger conducted turning movement counts at Welles Avenue/Lonsdale Street. The counts were conducted on September 29, 2006 from 7 AM to 6 PM. The existing traffic and pedestrian volumes are shown in Figure 7.5.

Recommendations

The intersection meets signal warrant 1B for the installation of a traffic signal, thus, the recommended improvements include complete installation of a traffic signal





SUMMARY

The Dorchester Avenue Project began as an initiative which called for the coordination of City resources to look at how the City could improve the quality of life for Dorchester residents and business owners along the Avenue. Since the initiative began three years ago, many programs have been implemented during the process to engage the community along the avenue. The Project has held monthly Task Force meetings, quarterly community meetings, numerous business workshops on signage and storefront improvements, and released various publications. A business brochure was created in English and Vietnamese to assist business owners through the signage permitting process. Additionally, the Dorchester Avenue Business Analysis Summary captures the current business and economic climate of Dorchester Avenue. The analysis also provides customer demographic information that can inform future business development along the Avenue. Ultimately, the collaboration between neighborhood residents, business owners, City departments and The Boston Main Streets program has culminated in this Dorchester Avenue Streetscape and Transportation Action Plan to improve the overall quality of life along the corridor.

The Action Plan is the result of a comprehensive process that involved the city, citizen Task Forces in Dorchester and South

Boston, and the community. Working together with the consultant team, city agencies and the Task Forces addressed pedestrian and traffic issues at Fields Corner, Glover's Corner, and Andrew Square. As a team, they developed design plans that reflect community input to improve traffic and ensure these major intersections are healthier and safer places for people to live, work, walk, shop and do business. The City will also be analyzing six additional locations for transportation improvements and will be making equipment upgrades at all of the intersections along the Avenue. As part of Mayor Thomas M. Menino's Dorchester Avenue Initiative, this Plan fulfills the mission of the Task Forces by providing not only a blueprint for near term improvements to begin construction in 2009, but also by developing Streetscape Guidelines that will apply to all of Dorchester Avenue. In order to ensure that the appropriate dollars are allocated along the Avenue, one of the Action Plan's recommendations is that as development occurs along the corridor, required project mitigation should cover streetscape and traffic improvements not included in this study as appropriate to their location impacts, and scale. These improvements will help Dorchester Avenue achieve its full potential as the spine that connects vibrant neighborhoods and business destinations for years to come.

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Dorchester House Multi-Service Center
St. Gregory's Parish
St. Mark's Parish
Vietnamese American Community Center
I.B.E.W Local 103
South Boston Boys and Girls Club

In memoriam

James M. Kelly

Boston City Councilor



APPENDIX A: CONTACT & PROGRAM INFORMATION

CONTACT NUMBERS

Dorchester Avenue Project

For more information on the Dorchester Avenue Project, visit www.dotavenueproject.com, or contact the Boston Redevelopment Authority at 617.722.4300, and online at www.cityofboston.gov/bra.

South Boston/Dorchester Avenue Improvement Study

For more information on the South Boston/Dorchester Avenue Improvement Study, visit www.cityofboston.gov/bra or contact the Boston Redevelopment Authority at 617.722.4300, and online at www.cityofboston.gov/bra.

Constituent Services

The Mayor's 24-Hour Constituent Services hotline is available to accept requests and complaints. Calls are referred to the appropriate departments. For more information, visit www.cityofboston.gov/mayor/24 or contact 617.635.4500.

The Boston Transportation Department

Boston Transportation Department mission is to promote public safety, manage the city's transportation network, and enhance the quality of life for residents of our city neighborhoods. For more information, visit www.cityofboston.gov/transportation or contact the Boston Transportation Department at 617.918.4680.

The Department of Public Works

The Public Works Department provides a quality environment for the City of Boston and ensures that the City's roadways, streets and bridge infrastructure are safe, clean, and attractive. For more information, visit www.cityofboston.gov/publicworks or contact the Public Works Department at 617.635.4900.

Inspectional Services Department

The Inspectional Services Department is comprised of five regulatory divisions whose aim is to protect and improve the quality of life for all Boston residents by effectively administering and enforcing building, housing, health, sanitation and safety regulations mandated by City and State governments. For more information visit www.cityofboston.gov/isd, or contact 617.635.5300

BUSINESS RESOURCES

Publications

Dorchester Avenue Business Analysis Report

The Dorchester Avenue Business Analysis Report is a key component of Mayor Thomas M. Menino's Dorchester Avenue Project. The report represents

collaboration between the City of Boston and the Dorchester Avenue community and is designed to capture the current business climate of Dorchester Avenue. The intent of the report is to provide baseline information to those interested in business and economic development along Dorchester Avenue. To download a copy, visit www.dotavenueproject.com or visit www.cityofboston.gov/bra.

Dorchester Avenue Signage Regulations Brochure

The Dorchester Avenue Signage Regulations Brochure Provided an illustrative summary of signage regulations and the permitting process related to Dorchester Avenue. To download a copy in English or Vietnamese, visit www.dotavenueproject.com or visit www.cityofboston.gov/bra.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS ADMINISTERED BY THE BOSTON REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Boston Loan Development Corporation (BLDC)

The BLDC is a private, 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation administered by the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA). It provides loans of up to \$150,000 for small businesses in, or relocating to, Boston. The BLDC provides loans that are not provided by banks or second loans, ranging from \$25,000 to \$200,000 with an average loan of \$85,000. A \$2,500 credit is administered for each employee residing in the City of Boston. For more information, call 617-722-4300.

Back Streets Program

Sponsored by the BRA, the Back Streets Program supports the growth of Boston's businesses through the preservation of industrial space. The Back Streets staff of neighborhood business managers will assist businesses in accessing information, technical assistance, and funding. For more information, call 617-722-4300. www.cityofboston.gov/bra/backstreets/backstreets.asp.

PROGRAMS ADMINISTERED BY THE BOSTON DEPARTMENT OF NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT

Department of Neighborhood Development (DND), Office of Business Development
The Office provides entrepreneurs and existing businesses access to financial and technical resources.

Boston Business Assistance Center

The Business Assistance Team and its Small Business Technical Assistance Program focus on the following services: administration, development, marketing, and business recruitment services. www.cityofboston.gov/dnd/OBD/G_Boston_Business_Assistance_Center.asp.

Boston Main Streets

Boston Main Streets works in collaboration with a range of community groups and with the Office of Business Development Business Assistance Team to bring technical assistance resources to small business owners throughout the city. The program offers the following services: design assistance, financial management, inventory management, business planning, customer service training, investment tax credit advice, marketing assistance, web page development, window display assistance, and façade and sign improvement assistance.
www.cityofboston.gov/mainstreets

Fields Corner Main Streets can be reached at 617-474-1432 or <http://www.fieldscorner.org/>.

St. Marks Main Streets can be reached at 617-825-3846 or <http://www.smams.org/>.

ReStore Boston

ReStore Boston helps neighborhood business and property owners with matching grants and design assistance of up

to \$7,500 for the exterior design and renovation of commercial façades.
www.cityofboston.gov/dnd/OBD/G_Restore_Boston.asp

ADDITIONAL CITY-SPONSORED PROGRAMS

Boston Industrial Development Financing Authority (BIDFA)

BIDFA promotes economic growth and increased employment in Boston by issuing bonds that finance the capital needs of the city's businesses and institutions. For more information, call 617-722-4300.

Small & Local Business Enterprise Office

Formerly known as Minority and Women Business Enterprise, this office promotes economic opportunities in the public and private sectors for small, Boston-based, minority, and women-owned businesses through outreach, certification, and advocacy. The office certifies businesses to bid on City contracts and also offers seminars and a yearly trade fair to assist businesses with accessing information about contract opportunities.
www.cityofboston.gov/minorityandwomen/

