

South Boston Dorchester Avenue Improvement Study
Task Force Meeting
Meeting Summary
Tuesday, February 20, 2007

Location: BRA, Room 933A
Attendees: Brad Washburn, BRA
Jill Zick, BRA
Anna Colamussi, BRA
Pat Hoey, BTD
Carol Houghtaling, Aide to Representative Wallace
Keri Pyke, Howard Stein Hudson
Gretchen Von Grossmann, Von Grossmann & Co.
Ellen Schneider, Highmark Land Design
Linda Zablocki
Denise Lynch
Pattie McCormick
Mary Moore

Brad Washburn began the meeting with introductions and reviewed the meeting agenda. The consultant team then presented the history of Andrew Square and the traffic analysis.

The consultant team estimated improvements would maintain the current level of service even with a 10% growth rate in traffic over the next ten years.

The presentation included Intersection Alternatives (Option A Median Plan & Option B Sidewalk Plan). Keri Pyke listed the following proposed options for prohibitions on particular turn movements and proposed alternative routes:

Dorchester Avenue northbound prohibits right turn onto Preble Street

Some task force members did not agree with the Dorchester Ave. northbound right turn restriction. They noted that people will ignore the no turn sign. If they do pay attention then there will be more traffic on Dorchester St. and Old Colony Ave.

Other task force members agreed that all people coming from Dot. Ave. will impact traffic on Old Colony Ave.. and Dorchester St. and that individuals going to East 8th that live on the beach will not be happy with the turn restriction.

Another task force member indicated that Dexter Street already has significant traffic, and pointed out that other side streets will be impacted.

Carol stated that she does not feel that restricting the right turn will affect the volume. It may also be bad for businesses on Preble Street. Ward Street is a residential street and she does not agree to direct traffic onto that street. Vinton Street is too narrow as well.

A task force member asked if arrows would be installed to direct traffic? Pavement arrows do not work as well because you realize it when you are already in the intersection. Arrows used to exist on Southhampton Street but have faded.

A task force member asked if we could look at shifting some of the existing one-way streets to help with the proposed turning restrictions, and added that perhaps there can be right turn restrictions at certain hours of the day.

Consultant: Prohibiting Dorchester Avenue sharp turn onto Dorchester Street

Carol stated that if they can't take a left then it will take them onto Preble, which is not that busy.

Close cut through street to gain pedestrian space and prohibit right turn from Boston Street.

A task force member said that it is prohibited to use the street off Boston Street due to the school in the morning and afternoon.

The consultant team said that they would check on that restriction.

Right turn to Southhampton to Boston Street eliminated

Brad asked if it was buses or trucks that need the additional turning radius.

A task force member asked about the amount and type of truck traffic.

The consultant team noted that the trucks would most likely take Massachusetts Avenue.

Hard right turn from Preble Street to Dorchester Street prohibited.

Carol said this may push traffic onto the small streets.

A task force member stated that people currently walk down Ward Street, and that more cars would use this street, reducing pedestrian safety.

Another task force member indicated that vehicles drive very fast, and is surprised that more people do not get hurt. People coming out of the housing development turn onto Preble Street so and don't take Old Colony Avenue.

Following the discussion of the traffic analysis, the consultant team discussed the following intersection design alternatives.

Option A (Median Option)

Task Force member: Can you show curb reductions?

Task Force member: Commercial owners would be delighted.

Task Force member: Option A looks much safer.

Task Force member: Is the entire median grass?

The consultant team explained that only a portion of the median is covered due to safety concerns.

Task Force member: Who will maintain the grass?

The consultant team explained the proposed grass would not need regular maintenance.

Task Force member: Can we see successful examples of these medians in other parts of the city, or other areas (e.g. Quincy)?

Option B (Sidewalk Plan)

Task Force member: What happens to the medians in this option? What is the difference in footage on the crossing distance before and after?

Task Force member: People want to know what distance the crosswalks are existing today and for each option. Please show the difference in overlays.

The consultant team said they would send Brad this information as soon as possible.

Task Force member: In both schemes, who maintains them, the city?

Jill indicated that maintenance would be done through a variety of means, both public through public/private partnerships. The proposed improvements would need to be approved by DPW and through PIC. The BRA could work with businesses and get an annual program started and then with that money hire a contractor for the maintenance.

Task Force member: Can there be a CDC to fund the maintenance?

Brad said that we can look into the possibility of CDC to help with maintenance. The existing Andrew Square Civic Association may be able to coordinate the maintenance as well.

Task Force member: We like the planters and medians because they make pedestrians feel safer.

Consultant: With the reduced size of the Andrew Square intersection there will be a shorter walking distance.

Task Force member: We are still concerned for the senior citizens.

Task Force member: Keep medians on Dorchester Avenue but not on South Hampton and Preble Street.

Brad W.: Perhaps we can we have a hybrid option, combining elements of Option A and B.

Task Force member: Can we have a crosswalk in front of the T station?

Task Force member: From your experience what creates a more pedestrian friendly design?

Task Force member: Requests signage to be overhead and prior to the light.

Task Force member: Can speed humps can be placed in alternative routes when traffic is re-routed?

Task Force member: Can you test to see if speed humps will work?

Task Force member: Can we do test scenarios to see where traffic is re-directed. Can the no turns be tested?

Patrick: It has been done before. Maybe we can put barrels down to extend the curbs temporarily.

Task Force member: It would be nice to have pictures of what these sections would look like. Can we see example medians (what the space would look like)?

Task Force member: Can we see overlays with each plan over the existing base conditions, showing distances of crosswalks for each overlay?

Following the presentation on the intersection alternatives, the consultant team presented on the TSM (Transportation System Management) improvements.

The Task Force's consensus was to select Old Colony Avenue as the TSM location.

The meeting ended at approximately 8:30 pm.